

Programme: Sustainable Communities for Learning – Band B
LA: Neath Port Talbot
Variation: SOP Revision
Request: Increase Programme Envelope and reallocation of Welsh Government grants between projects

Request

NPT Council are requesting to increase their SOP envelope by adding additional projects and realign projects with current education strategy. The variation request is outlined in the table below.

Changes to Band B

Project	Change	Type	Proposed New cost	% WG funding
Ysgol Newydd Swansea Valley	Remove		(£22.7m)	N/A
Godre'rgraig Primary School	New	New Build	£17m	65%
Ysgol Maes Y Coed	New	Extension	£10m	75%
Skills and Vocational Hub	New	Refurbishment	£9m	65%
		Difference	£13.3m	

Reasons for request

Cabinet determined not to progress the **Ysgol Newydd Swansea Valley** proposal, which would have resulted in the amalgamation of Alltwen, Llangiwg and Godre'rgraig English-medium primary schools. As a result, the £14.7m approved funding to construct the new school building is no longer required.

In July 2019, **Godre'rgraig Primary** was relocated from Godre'rgraig to Parc Ynysderw, adjacent to Cwmtawe Community School after geological experts found there was a potential landslide risk to the school's playground. Currently Godre'rgraig Primary School is operating from temporary accommodation and a new build replacement is proposed in Godre'rgraig village. There are no alternative proposals for Alltwen and Llangiwg.

Ysgol Maes y Coed is a special school for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) / Social Communication Difficulties, in addition to Severe and Profound Multiple Learning Difficulties (SLD/ PMLD). NPT has identified the need for specialist places is exceeding the number of places available. The new extension will allow the school to reorganise its provision appropriately.

Skills Centre and Vocational Hub provision for young people requiring an alternative to the more usual academic route the hub will offer a skills and vocational curriculum. It is proposed to create the hub in the vacant former Education Learning Resource Service (ELRS) building at Velindre. Learners will remain on roll at their mainstream school but will be able to access the provision as required. The facility will also be a central base for providing outreach work across all the schools.

Recommendation

It is recommended that

Project	Change	Recommendation
Ysgol Newydd Swansea Valley	Remove	Approved
Godre'rgraig Primary School	New	Not Approved
Ysgol Maes Y Coed	New	Approved, subject to business case approval
Skills and Vocational Hub	New	Approved, subject to business case approval

The reasons are as follows:

Ysgol Newydd Swansea Valley – Programme Team agree with the removal of this project following NPT Cabinet's decision not to progress with the proposal. We have previously paid out a total of £105,118 which we would clawback if the project is removed from the Band B programme.

Ysgol Maes Y Coed – Programme Team agree with the analysis around the need for ALN provision and the proposal to create a new build extension on site as this is being experienced across Wales. The project will be subject to business case approval where the detail will be assessed.

Skills and Vocational Hub – Programme Team agree with the refurbishment of the existing building to meet the needs of these learners.

Godre'rgraig Primary School – Programme Team and Cymraeg 2050 colleagues do not consider there to be sufficient evidence provided to approve this project. One of the main concerns regarding the original Swansea Valley proposal was the potential impact on the Welsh language, which is why the funding was approved, subject to completion of a WLIA. There are similar concerns regarding this revised project and it is recommended that the project is not approved without sight of a full WLIA with mitigations, if required. The Programme Team also note that there are surplus places in other nearby schools that could accommodate the learners. In January 2023 Godre'rgraig had 112 pupils on role. There are 100 surplus places between Alltwen (47) Llangwig (53). YGG Pontardawe new build is also nearby with 75 surplus places. For parents/carers travelling north there are schools in Ystradgynlais, Powys, including Golwg y Cwm with 50 surplus places. The proposed project cost is also very high for the proposed building size which would need greater justification.