

YSGOL GYFUN CYM RHONDDA Ministerial Advice and Supporting Information

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

From: SCfL - Education Infrastructure,
Governance and Finance
03000625544
Cleared by: Emyr Harries
Deputy Director
Date: 16 July 2025

MINISTERIAL ADVICE

For decision by: Lynne Neagle MS, Cabinet Secretary for Education

Copied to: Ken Skates MS, Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales

Subject	Sustainable Communities for Learning – Business Cases and Variations – Schools – June 2025
100-word summary	To approve the recommendations of the Education Investment Panel which met on 19 June 2025
Timing	Routine
Recommendation	The Cabinet Secretary for Education is asked to approve the recommendation of the Education Investment Panel for the following: Business Cases: • Rhondda Cynon Taf – Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda – SOC REDACTED
Decision report	This decision does require a Decision Report, which may be published at any point.

ADVICE**REDACTED****BUSINESS CASES****Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) – Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda - SOC**

1. This proposal aims to build a new Welsh medium secondary school for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda, with new teaching facilities for 750 pupils aged 11-16 and 150 sixth form pupils, meaning a total capacity of 900 pupils. This is a reduction from its current capacity of 1023 pupil places. Associated primary school projections over the next 5 years show a gradual decrease in pupil numbers, therefore the reduction in capacity in the new school is considered reasonable. This investment will improve the offer for Welsh medium education in enhanced facilities and create a continuum of learning to support Cymraeg 2050 targets.
2. The existing school site is made up of seven buildings varying in construction methods, across several level changes. There are significant site constraints that have resulted in the initial high project cost. However, no alternative sites are available for development.
3. Due to the site constraints including the topography and flood zones, construction will need to be phased alongside demolition works and the use of temporary accommodation.
4. This investment will see the phased delivery of a new facility with a hall/dining area, sports hall, enhanced outdoor space and specialist teaching and learning areas to cater for the needs of all pupils; with an improved traffic management system this will mean that it can be safely used, both during and after the school day.
5. The project has an estimated total cost of £77,500,000 with a proposed WG funding contribution of £50,375,000.

Element	Total Cost	WG Contribution	WG %
Project Cost (Inc. NZC)	77,500,000	50,375,000	65
NZC Cost	within project cost at this stage		
Overall Project Cost	77,500,000	50,375,000	65

Recommendation

Approval of the SOC, noting that costs will need to be closely monitored. Note that Cymraeg 2050 colleagues requested a Welsh Language Impact Assessment which has now been submitted.

REDACTED

Doc 1

REDACTED**1. Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) – Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda – SOC**

Project Title	Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) – Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda			
Business Case Stage	SOC			
Summary of Project	This proposal aims to build a new Welsh medium secondary school for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda (YGCR), with new teaching facilities for 750 pupils (ages 11-16) and 150 sixth form pupils (total capacity: 900 pupils). This will improve the offer for Welsh medium education with enhanced facilities suitable to meet demand and create a continuum of learning to support Cymraeg 2050 targets. It is proposed that a new school will be built on the existing school site, and it will open during the 2030 academic year. Investment will provide a modern, flexible learning environments for all pupils which will include: • a hall/dining area, sports hall, and specialist teaching and learning areas to cater for the needs of all pupils. • Dedicated facilities within the school boundary that the local community will be able to safely use, both during and after the school day. • Enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities. • Improved traffic management systems including on-site pupil bus drop off, and onsite staff and visitor parking.			
Cost Summary	Element	Total Cost	WG Contribution	WG %
	Project Cost (Inc. NZC)	£77,500,000	£50,375,000	65
	NZC Cost	within project cost at this stage		
	Overall Project Cost	£77,500,000	£50,375,000	65
Cost Review	REDACTED The developable area of the site is also limited due to part of site being in Flood zone 2 & 3 (surface water and small water courses), however no alternative sites are available. REDACTED			
Cymraeg 2050 / WESP	Whilst the project will result in a reduction to Welsh medium places at the school from 1023 to 900, this is proportionate to demand as there are currently just 625 pupils on roll. Pupil projections within the school are set to rise over the next 4 years (647 2028/29), however associated primary school projections show a gradual decrease over the same time, therefore the reduction in capacity in the new school is considered reasonable. This project			

	supports Cymraeg 2050 targets and RCT's Outcome 1 of its WESP. An impact assessment has been undertaken.
Community Facilities	There will be areas designed within the new school for the local community to safely access and benefit from use of the new facilities, both during and after the school day. This will enhance the already well-used community facilities and allow for the further expansion of wider community engagement. The project will include community room, with ICT equipment whereby there could be an offer of ICT support, Welsh learners' sessions etc. Also, the existing offer of internal, and external sports facilities for community use will be strengthened.
Sustainability	Net Zero Carbon in operation and BREEAM Excellent will be achieved, in accordance with current requirements of planning and building control legislation. It will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010. This project will include a review of safe routes to school and, if required, an investment in improvements to walkways, road crossings and traffic calming measures to ensure the required safety standards are met. Traffic/Highways will form part of the Client Engagement Meetings (CEM) process, which will be used in this project from initial contractor appointment to build the project brief and keep all stakeholders involved in the project. The new school will allow for public enabled Wi-Fi which will facilitate the delivery of adult learning and other community activities. The school is in walking distance to Porth town centre.
Main Benefits	• Delivering a significant improved educational provision, having a noteworthy positive impact upon the educational performance of the pupils and staff morale. • Building to net zero carbon in operation with a BREEAM rating of 'excellent'. • Providing dedicated facilities will be designed within the site so that the local community will be able to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day. • Deliver external areas that would allow pupils and staff to experience a greater breadth of teaching and learning experiences, in line with the New Curriculum for Wales. • Provide sustainable and attractive Welsh Medium education opportunities to support Welsh Government's Cymraeg 205: A Million Welsh Speakers and RCT's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

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Recommendation:

To approve the SOC subject to submission of a WLIA at OBC stage and noting that costs will be closely monitored. To note WLIA has now been received.

REDACTED

From:

SCfL – Education Infrastructure,
Governance and Finance



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

MA/LN/0627/26

030000625544

Cleared by:

Emyr Harries
Deputy Director

Date:

10 December 2025

MINISTERIAL ADVICE

For decision by: Lynne Neagle MS, Cabinet Secretary for Education

Copied to: Ken Skates MS, Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales

Subject	Sustainable Communities for Learning (SCfL) - Business Cases - Schools - Strategic Outline Cases and Outline Business Cases - December 2025
100-word summary	To approve the recommendations of the Education Investment Panel which met on 4 December regarding programme business cases for schools.
Timing	Routine, though a decision prior to Christmas would be appreciated, if possible, to enable projects to progress.
Recommendation	The Cabinet secretary for Education is asked to approve the recommendations of the Education Investment Panel to approve the following business cases: • REDACTED • RCT – Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg – Cwm Rhondda – OBC
Decision report	This decision does require a Decision Report, which may be published at any point.

ADVICE

BACKGROUND

1. The Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme was launched in 2014 with Band A. The second wave, Band B, commenced in April 2019 and in May 2024 we transitioned to the third wave known as the 9-year Rolling Programme.
2. Programme funding is based on the relevant Welsh Government intervention rates with the remaining funding provided by the delivery partner. The Band B and Rolling Programme intervention rates are:
 - 65% for capital schemes.
 - 75% for capital funded special schools and pupil referral units (PRUs).
 - 85% for capital funded voluntary aided schools; and
 - 81% for projects delivered through the revenue funded Mutual Investment Model (MIM).
3. Local authorities and colleges outline their delivery priorities through the submission of a Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) at the beginning of each wave. The Rolling Programme SOPs have now been approved. Each individual project is then subject to business case approval (based on the Green Book five case model). Projects requiring more than £7.5 million of funding must normally follow a three-stage process and submit a Strategic Outline Case (SOC); an Outline Business Case (OBC) and a Full Business Case (FBC).
4. The business justification case threshold for straightforward projects was originally set at £5 million when the Programme began in 2014. This has now been increased to £7.5 million due to construction inflation, as noted under MA/VH/3024/25.
5. At each of the stages business cases are scrutinised by policy officials from across the Welsh Government. Following approval from policy officials, business cases are submitted for consideration by the Education Investment Panel (EIP), a group of senior policy officials. The recommendations agreed by EIP are then sent to the Cabinet Secretary for consideration. Cabinet Secretary approval of an FBC or BJC will allow grant award letters to be prepared for capital schemes.
6. Following business case approval, delivery partners can submit variation requests to amend project scope, or the level of funding required. These are generally in response to cost increases incurred during the construction phase.
7. The recommendations discussed at December's EIP are outlined below.

BUSINESS CASES**REDACTED****RCT – Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg – Cwm Rhondda – OBC**

8. This proposal aims to build a new Welsh medium secondary school for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda with new teaching facilities for 750 pupils (ages 11-16) and 150 sixth form pupils.
9. As the school is currently operating with significant surplus places, the investment will enable a reduction of the school capacity by 123 places in line with demand through the provision of new, enhanced facilities.
10. It is proposed that the new 8888m² school will be built on the existing site and will open during the 2030 academic year. The investment will provide a modern, flexible learning environment for all pupils including a new hall/dining area, sports hall, specialist teaching and learning areas, community facilities and external sports provision.
11. The project cost has been noted as high, due to the challenging site topography and the requirement to phase works on the existing site to minimise disruption to learning.

Key benefits.

12. The project will significantly improve educational provision through the replacement of poor condition facilities and a reduction of surplus places through new enhanced facilities for Welsh medium education to create a continuum of learning to support Cymraeg 2050 targets.
13. Dedicated facilities will be designed within the site so that the local community will be able to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.
14. The improved external areas that would allow pupils and staff to experience a greater breadth of teaching and learning experiences, in line with the New Curriculum for Wales.

Total cost of project.

15. The estimated cost of the project at OBC stage is outlined in the table below:

Element	Total Cost	WG Contribution	WG%
Project Cost (Excl. NZC)	£73,730,980	£47,925,137	65
NZC Cost	£3,769,020	£3,769,020	100

Overall Project Cost	£77,500,000	£51,694,157	67
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Panel recommend approval of the OBC to enable the project to proceed to FBC, on the understanding that abnormal cost elements will be reviewed and where applicable included in the project cost, with changes reflected at FBC.

REDACTED

Doc 1**REDACTED****3. RCT – Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Cwm Rhondda - OBC**

Project Title	Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Cwm Rhondda			
Business Case Stage	OBC			
Summary of Project	This proposal aims to build a new Welsh medium secondary school for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda, with new teaching facilities for 750 pupils (ages 11-16) and 150 sixth form pupils (total capacity: 900 pupils). Investment will improve the school building offer for Welsh medium education and create a continuum of learning to support Cymraeg 2050 targets. The existing school is made up of seven buildings varying in construction methods, across several level changes. Recent condition survey grade was C with backlog maintenance of c£4.097m. The overall mechanical and electrical services are functioning but are near the end of their expected life span. Some buildings need significant investment.' A number of buildings are also known to contain asbestos. It is proposed that a new school will be built on the existing school site (proposed start on site is Sept 2026), and it will open during the 2030 academic year. Investment will provide a modern, flexible learning environments for all pupils which will include: - a hall/dining area, sports hall, and specialist teaching and learning areas to cater for the needs of all pupils i.e. science labs, food technology classrooms and ICT suites. - Dedicated facilities within the school boundary that the local community will be able to safely use, both during and after the school day. - Enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities. - Improved traffic management systems including on-site pupil bus drop off, and onsite staff and visitor parking. A Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) will be undertaken for this project, and a PAC report will be submitted. An initial presentation was made to key internal stakeholders including a Planning Officer on 7th August 2025. This presentation also provided the opportunity for questions to be asked and observations to be shared.			
Cost Summary	Element	Total Cost	WG Contribution	WG %

	Project Cost (Excl. NZC)	£73,730,980	£47,925,137	65
	NZC Cost	£3,769,020	£3,769,020	100
	Overall Project Cost	£77,500,000	£51,694,157	67
Cost Review	The size of the hall and the inclusion of a multi-gym is the recommended guidelines for a school of this size with community use, however is slightly larger than current benchmarks. Various stakeholders already use the school and as part of the proposal there is an opportunity to provide a setting for Rhondda Netball group to compete at a 'Club' level and support their links with Rhondda Schools Rugby and Welsh Rugby Union. REDACTED			
Cymraeg 2050 / WESP	This project supports Cymraeg 2050 targets and RCT's Outcome 1 of its WESP. An impact assessment has been undertaken.			
Community Facilities	There will be areas designed within the new school for the local community to safely access and benefit from use of the new facilities, both during and after the school day. This will enhance the already well-used community facilities and allow for the further expansion of wider community engagement. The project will include community room, with ICT equipment whereby there could be an offer of ICT support, Welsh learners' sessions etc. Also, the existing offer of internal, and external sports facilities for community use will be strengthened.			
Sustainability	Net Zero Carbon in operation and BREEAM Excellent will be achieved, in accordance with current requirements of planning and building control legislation. It will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010. This project will include a review of safe routes to school and, if required, an investment in improvements to walkways, road crossings and traffic calming measures to ensure the required safety standards are met. Traffic/Highways will form part of the Client Engagement Meetings (CEM) process, which will be used in this project from initial contractor appointment to build the project brief and keep all stakeholders involved in the project. An initial presentation has been made to key internal stakeholders include highways, on 7 August 2025; providing an opportunity to ask questions and share observations of the plan. The new school will allow for public enabled Wi-Fi which will facilitate the delivery of adult learning and other community activities. The school is in walking distance to Porth town centre.			

Main Benefits	• The project will significantly improve educational provision, while providing a building to net zero carbon in operation with a BREEAM rating of 'excellent'. It will also be fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010. • Dedicated facilities will be designed within the site so that the local community will be able to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day. • The improved external areas that would allow pupils and staff to experience a greater breadth of teaching and learning experiences, in line with the New Curriculum for Wales.
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Recommendation:

Panel recommend approval of the OBC to enable the project to progress to FBC, on the understanding that abnormal cost elements will be reviewed and where applicable included in the project cost, with changes reflected at FBC.

REDACTED

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

From: SCfL – Education Infrastructure,
Governance and Finance

03000252039

Cleared by: Emyr Harries
Deputy Director

Date: 11 March 2026

MINISTERIAL ADVICE

For decision by: Lynne Neagle MS, Cabinet Secretary for Education

Subject	Sustainable Communities for Learning - Business Cases - Schools – Revised SOPs, Full Business Cases, Business Justification Cases and Variations – February 2026
100-word summary	To approve the recommendations of the Education Investment Panel which met on 26 February regarding programme business cases for schools.
Timing	Urgent, to enable projects to progress to grant award letter and for contracts to be awarded.
Recommendation	The Cabinet secretary for Education is asked to approve the recommendations of the Education Investment Panel in relation to the following business cases: Revised SOPs REDACTED Business Cases REDACTED RCT - Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Cwm Rhondda – FBC REDACTED
Decision report	This decision does require a Decision Report, which may be published at any point.

ADVICE

BACKGROUND

16. The Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme was launched in 2014 with Band A. The second wave, Band B, commenced in April 2019 and in May 2024 we transitioned to a 9-year Rolling Programme.
17. Programme funding is based on the relevant Welsh Government intervention rates with the remaining funding provided by the delivery partner. The Band B and Rolling Programme intervention rates are:
 - 65% for capital schemes.
 - 75% for capital funded special schools and pupil referral units (PRUs).
 - 85% for capital funded voluntary aided schools; and
 - 81% for projects delivered through the revenue funded Mutual Investment Model (MIM).
18. Local authorities and colleges outline their delivery priorities through the submission of a Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) at the beginning of each wave. The Rolling Programme SOPs have now been approved. Each individual project is then subject to business case approval (based on the Green Book five case model). Projects requiring more than £7.5 million of funding must normally follow a three-stage process and submit a Strategic Outline Case (SOC); an Outline Business Case (OBC) and a Full Business Case (FBC). For smaller or more straightforward projects (typically below £7.5m) a single Business Justification Case (BJC) can be submitted
19. The business justification case threshold for straightforward projects was originally set at £5 million when the Programme began in 2014. This has now been increased to £7.5 million due to construction inflation, as noted under MA/VH/3024/25.
20. At each of the stages business cases are scrutinised by policy officials from across the Welsh Government. Following approval from policy officials, business cases are submitted for consideration by the Education Investment Panel (EIP), a group of senior policy officials. The recommendations agreed by EIP are then sent to the Cabinet Secretary for consideration. Cabinet Secretary approval of an FBC or BJC will allow grant award letters to be prepared for capital schemes.
21. Following business case approval, delivery partners can submit variation requests to amend project scope, or the level of funding required. These are generally in response to cost increases incurred during the construction phase.
22. The recommendations discussed at February's EIP are outlined below.

BUSINESS CASES

REDACTED

Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) – Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda – FBC

23. This project relates to the construction of new replacement facilities for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda on the existing school site, including new teaching facilities for 750 pupils aged 11-16 and a 150-place sixth form provision. This represents a reduction of 123 pupil places to the existing school capacity.
24. Facilities include teaching facilities to meet the full curriculum offer, alongside a sports hall, dining provision, dedicated community facilities and an enhanced on-site pupil bus drop off.
25. Costs are notably high due to the significant site abnormal costs associated with construction on the sloping school site. RCT is proposing to minimise the requirement for temporary accommodation through the refurbishment of existing facilities during a phased construction period.

Key Benefits

26. The replacement of poor condition facilities with new NZC school buildings and enhanced external facilities that maximise opportunities for community use.
27. The project will provide new facilities that create sustainable and attractive Welsh Medium education opportunities to support Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 goals and RCT's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

Total cost

28. The total cost of the project is outlined in the table below.

Element	Total Cost	WG Contribution	WG %
Project Cost (Excl. NZC)	£73,730,980	£47,925,137	65
NZC Cost	£3,769,020	£3,769,020	100
Overall Project Cost	£77,500,000	£51,694,157	66.7

Panel recommend approval of the FBC to enable a grant award letter to be issued, subject to additional clarity being provided on realistic future demand and long-

term sustainability of the 150-place sixth form, and alignment with wider Welsh medium tertiary planning across RCT.

REDACTED

DOC 1

REDACTED**5. RCT - Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Cwm Rhondda - FBC**

Project Title	Rhondda Cynon Taf - Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Cwm Rhondda			
Business Case Stage	Full Business Case			
Summary of Project	This proposal aims to build a new Welsh medium secondary school for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda (YGCR), with new teaching facilities for 750 pupils (ages 11-16) and 150 sixth form pupils (total capacity: 900 pupils). Investment will improve the school building offer for Welsh medium education and create a continuum of learning to support Cymraeg 2050 targets. SOC was approved in June 2025. It is proposed that a new school will be built on the existing school site (proposed start on site is Sept 2026), and it will open during the 2030 academic year. Investment will provide a modern, flexible learning environments for all pupils which will include: • a hall/dining area, sports hall, and specialist teaching and learning areas to cater for the needs of all pupils i.e. science labs, food technology classrooms and ICT suites. • Dedicated facilities within the school boundary that the local community will be able to safely use, both during and after the school day. • Enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities. • Improved traffic management systems including on-site pupil bus drop off, and onsite staff and visitor parking. Kier, with scrutiny from Aecom have benchmarked the construction costs and an opportunity schedule has been developed since submission of the OBC. Kier and Aecom, are confident further opportunities can be identified as the project progresses through the RIBA stages. The project cost with this business case has been completed using a Stage 2 Plus Cost Plan. This is predominantly based on the RIBA Stage 2 design, including elements of the Stage 3 design which have been developed to date. The latest benchmarked cost data has been used to inform this cost plan. This ensures the costs included are robust and a reflection of the current market rates. The preliminary costs and design fees are based on tendered sums submitted by Kier.			
Cost Summary	Element	Total Cost	WG Contribution	WG %
	Project Cost (Excl. NZC)	73,730,980	47,925,137	65
	NZC Cost	3,769,020	3,769,020	100
	Overall Project Cost	77,500,000	51,694,157	66.7
Cost Review	REDACTED			
Cymraeg 2050 / WESP	This project supports Cymraeg 2050 targets and RCT's Outcome 1 of its WESP. An impact assessment has been undertaken.			
Community Facilities	There will be areas designed within the new school for the local community to safely access and benefit from use of the new facilities, both during and after the school day. This will enhance the already well-used community facilities and allow for the further expansion of wider community engagement. The project will include a community room with ICT equipment whereby there could be an offer of ICT support, Welsh learners' sessions etc. Also, the existing offer of internal, and			

	external sports facilities for community use will be strengthened – this includes a much-improved sports hall and an all-weather sports pitch.
Sustainability	Net Zero Carbon in operation and BREEAM Excellent will be achieved, in accordance with current requirements of planning and building control legislation. It will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010. This project will include a review of safe routes to school and, if required, an investment in improvements to walkways, road crossings and traffic calming measures to ensure the required safety standards are met. Traffic/Highways will form part of the Client Engagement Meetings (CEM) process, which will be used in this project from initial contractor appointment to build the project brief and keep all stakeholders involved in the project. An initial presentation has been made to key internal stakeholders include highways, on 7 August 2025; providing an opportunity to ask questions and share observations of the plan. This project will include a review of safe routes to school and, if required, an investment in improvements to walkways, road crossings and traffic calming measures to ensure the required safety standards are met. Where possible, we will look to increase opportunities for pupils, staff and the community to walk/cycle/scooter to school. The promotion and implementation of active travel will also feature within the design of the new school. The new school will allow for public enabled Wi-Fi which will facilitate the delivery of adult learning and other community activities.
Main Benefits	• Delivering a significant improved educational provision, having a noteworthy positive impact upon the educational performance of the pupils and staff morale. • Building to net zero carbon in operation with a BREEAM rating of 'excellent'. Be fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010. • Providing dedicated facilities will be designed within the site so that the local community will be able to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day. • Deliver external areas that would allow pupils and staff to experience a greater breadth of teaching and learning experiences, in line with the New Curriculum for Wales. • Provide sustainable and attractive Welsh Medium education opportunities to support Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers and RCT's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

Recommendation:

Panel recommend approval of the FBC to enable a grant award letter to be issued, subject to additional clarity being provided on realistic future demand and long-term sustainability of the 150-place sixth form, and alignment with wider Welsh medium tertiary planning across RCT.

REDACTED

