

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.
Governance and Audit Committee

10 February 2022

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Phyl Davies
Portfolio Holder for Education and Property

REPORT TITLE: 21st Century School Programme Gateway Review findings

REPORT FOR: Information

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report sets out to inform you of the Delivery Confidence Assessment rating of the Welsh Government Gateway Review 0 of 21st Century Schools Programme in Powys. The full report is available at Appendix one.
- 1.2 The primary purposes of a Gateway Review 0: Strategic assessment are to review the outcomes and objectives for the programme (and the way they fit together) and confirm that they make the necessary contribution to Ministers' or the departments' overall strategy.
- 1.3 The Delivery Confidence Assessment rating was Amber Green; successful delivery appears probable. However, constant attention will be needed to ensure risks do not materialise into major issues threatening delivery.

2. Background

- 2.1 The review team were commissioned by the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) of Transforming Education to provide independent guidance to the SRO on how best to ensure that the 21st Century Schools element of the Transforming Education programme is successful.
- 2.2 It should be noted that the '*Gateway Assurance methodology is widely used across the United Kingdom's public sector's Programmes and Projects. The methodology uses a Delivery Confidence Assessment (RAG rating) that independent Review Teams use to determine the successful delivery of a Programme or Project at key milestones within their lifecycles. Around 10% of all Programmes and Projects (circa years 2020/2021) receive an Amber/Green outcome. In 2020, only 8% of Programmes and Projects across Welsh Government and wider Welsh public sector received an outcome of Amber/Green.*

3. Advice

- 3.1 The Review Team found that Powys County Council has made an excellent start to 21st Century Schools Band B, under strong leadership and well-anchored in the fulfilment of Welsh Government Policy and the Powys Improvement and Transformation Portfolio.
- 3.2 The approved Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) is well crafted and there is high confidence in its deliverability. Powys County Council is ambitious and has developed a revised SOP to expand the scope and include additional pipeline projects. The funding of that expanded scope is a current topic of discussion and will be informed by an asset review currently underway and led by the Director of Economy and Environment and Head of Planning, Property & Public Protection.
- 3.3 Governance is evolving and is appropriate for the present time, though there will be opportunities to map respective decision-making accountabilities to Portfolio, Programme and Project levels as the pace and complexity increases during delivery.
- 3.4 The review team made the following recommendations:
 - Set out the financial options for match funding the enhanced programme including the Value for Money proposition of investing in the future and the cost of doing nothing, so that all parties have a common understanding of options available.
 - Reiterate the Transformation and Improvement Vision and situate 21st Century Schools as an essential component in that narrative.
 - Develop a form of mapping across the Outputs/Outcomes/Benefits that clearly sets out who is responsible for what and how the dependencies will be managed to ensure benefits realisation.
 - Differentiate the governance levels, and memberships, required for each layer of Transformation Portfolio, 21st Century Schools Programme, and build Project.
 - Develop a Roadmap to assist in planning potential resources and funding needs during the Band B implementation.
- 3.5 The Senior Responsible Officer has accepted the recommendations which have subsequently been endorsed by Cabinet/EMT.

4. Resource Implications

- 4.1.1 The Deputy Head of Finance (Deputy Section 151 Officer) notes the content of the report and can confirm there are no additional budgetary requirements from this report.

4. Legal implications

4.1 Legal: the recommendations can be accepted from a legal point of view

4.2 The Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: “ I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report”.

6. Comment from local member(s)

6.1 Not applicable.

7. Integrated Impact Assessment

7.1 Not applicable.

8. Recommendation

That the recommendations within the Gateway review report are noted. Officers will take forward the recommendations within the financial year 2021/22.

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