

Complete Agenda

CABINET

GWYNEDD COUNCIL

DATE	Tuesday, 9th November, 2021
TIME	1.00 pm
LOCATION	Virtual Meeting – this meeting will be available via Webcast https://gwynedd.public-i.tv/core/portal/home
CONTACT POINT	Annes Siôn 01286 679490 / cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET MEMBERS

Members	
Dyfrig L. Siencyn	Leader
Dafydd Meurig	Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing
Craig ab Iago	Cabinet Member for Housing
Gareth Wyn Griffith	Cabinet Member for Environment
Nia Wyn Jeffreys	Cabinet Member for Corporate Support
Dilwyn Morgan	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
Gareth Thomas	Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Community
Ioan Thomas	Cabinet Member for Finance
Catrin Elen Wager	Cabinet Member for Highways and Municipal
Cemlyn Rees Williams	Cabinet Member for Education

AGENDA

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8	PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND PROPERTY	Cllr. Craig ab Iago	Carys Fon Williams	306 - 312
9	EDUCATION DIGITAL STRATEGY	Cllr. Cemlyn Williams	Gwern ap Rhisiart	313 - 348
10	<p>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC</p> <p>The Chairman shall propose that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion on the following items due to the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and Paragraph 16 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government act 1972 - Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.</p> <p>There is an acknowledged public interest in openness in relation to the use of public resources and related financial issues. It is also acknowledged that there are occasions, in order to protect the financial and commercial interests that matters related to such information need to be discussed without being publicised. The report deals specifically with financial and business matter and related discussions. Publication of such commercially sensitive information could adversely affect the interests of the company and</p>			

the Councils. It also includes legal advice received in relation to determining the way forward. The ability to receive and discuss such information is protected by legal privilege. Publishing this information would be contrary to the wider public interest of securing the the best overall outcome.

11	THE SCHOOLS IT STRATEGY AND CWMNI CYNNAL	Cllr. Ioan Thomas	Iwan Evans and Dafydd Edwards	
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Agenda Item 4

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report to a meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Date of meeting:	9 NOVEMBER 2021
Scrutiny Member:	Councillor Beth Lawton, Chair of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
Contact officer:	Vera Jones – Democracy and Language Services Manager
Contact Number:	32267
Subject:	Referral back to the Cabinet by the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee – Cabinet Decision on 28/09/21, Item 8: Ysgol Abersoch

THE DECISION SOUGHT

That the Cabinet reconsiders its decision on the grounds of concern by the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee that a sufficient response had not been received to the second reason for calling in, namely: -

“2. The report does not take future Housing and Employment that would come to force in the village into consideration

(a) A new development to construct a new hotel that would create a minimum of 40 full-time posts in the area - employees and their families would need resources, including education for our children.

(b) Welsh Government, Gwynedd Council's Housing and Property Department and a Housing Association (which owns land in the village) are currently exploring the potential to construct more homes - Welsh Government has stated that a grant is available to develop this land to potentially construct 15 homes.

The Housing Association has confirmed that plans have already been drawn up for the Bryn Garmon site.

There is no mention in the report of the new plan by the Housing and Property Department and nothing about the developments under-way in the village and therefore, by not doing so, the Education Department has

not responded to the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

REASONS FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

In accordance with section 7.25 d of the Council's constitution:

“If, having considered the decision, the Scrutiny Committee is still concerned about it, then it may refer it back to the decision making body for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns or refer the matter to Full Council. If referred to the decision maker they shall then reconsider within a further 15 clear working days, amending the decision or not, before adopting a final decision.”

INTRODUCTION AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

BACKGROUND

1. The Cabinet's decision regarding Item 8: Ysgol Abersoch, at the meeting held on 28/09/21, was called in for scrutiny by the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee. That decision was:-

“To finally confirm the proposal issued through statutory notice to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 December 2021, and to provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 January 2022 in accordance with Section 53 of the School Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013 and the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018.”

2. This request, in accordance with Section 7.25 of the Council's Constitution, was made by Councillors Beth Lawton (Chair of the Scrutiny Committee), Alwyn Gruffydd and Elwyn Jones within the necessary requirements and timeframe.
3. The reasons for calling in, namely the aspects of the decision that were considered should be scrutinised, were noted as follows:

“1. The report is inaccurate and misleading in terms of the impact on the community, for example, the Welsh language and culture - it states that there is no impact on the language in the table on page 714.

2. The report does not take future Housing and Employment that would come to force in the village into consideration

(a) A new development to construct a new hotel that would create a minimum of 40 full-time posts in the area - employees and their families would need resources, including education for our children.

(b) Welsh Government, Gwynedd Council's Housing and Property Department and a Housing Association (which owns land in the village) are currently exploring the potential to construct more homes - Welsh Government has stated that a grant is available to develop this land to potentially construct 15 homes.

The Housing Association has confirmed that plans have already been drawn up for the Bryn Garmon site.

There is no mention in the report of the new plan by the Housing and Property Department and nothing about the developments under-way in the village and therefore, by not doing so, the Education Department has not responded to the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

3. Concern has been stated in relation to the footpath between Abersoch and Sarn Bach; the Education Department stated that contact had been made with the Highways Department but nothing definite has been submitted in terms of resolving this risk which places pupils at risk. The Education Department mentions transport arrangements which will inevitably have an effect on climate and is a poor example to the children of how the Council considers climate impact.

4. One child is ineligible for the offer of transport due to age policies - in future, when the number of children increases as a result of (a) and (b), it is likely that other children will be refused this transport and, therefore, suffer in terms of their education.

5. The decision is to close the school in the middle of the academic year and there is no doubt that this will be confusing for the children. Again, this will have a negative impact on their education and there is no explanation why and what is the logic here.”.

4. A meeting of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee was held on 21st October 2021. The members of the scrutiny Committee decided:

That the scrutiny committee refers the matter back to the Cabinet for reconsideration on the grounds that a sufficient response had not been received to the second reason for calling in, as noted and highlighted in point 3 (2) above.

The matter was referred back to the Cabinet as concern was expressed that full consideration had not been given to the potential impact of proposed developments on the projection figures for Ysgol Abersoch before reaching a decision.

ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

The Monitoring Officer:

The report traces the Process which was followed following a call in request in request under Part 7.25 of the Constitution. The Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee determined that the mater should be referred back to the Cabinet for re-consideration of the decision made on the 28th of September 2021. In accordance with the provisions of the Constitution this decision has been suspended from implementation until the call in process has been completed. The Scrutiny Committee has noted the matters it wished the Cabinet to consider.

The Cabinet needs to give careful consideration to the opinion of the Scrutiny Committee and whether or not it needs to amend the decision. However, the decision on the response to the Scrutiny Committee recommendations remains a Cabinet decision as to whether it should confirm the statutory notice in relation to Ysgol Abersoch in accordance with Section 53 of The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. Therefore in reviewing its original decision it remains a mater which needs to be assessed within the framework of considerations and requirements which are relevant to it. In the same way the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee have to be placed in this context. This is solely a decision for the Cabinet. This will be the final decision.

Head of Finance:

The reason for asking the Cabinet to re-consider its decision on 28/09/2021 does not change the current budgetary situation. The reasons for closing Ysgol Abersoch on 31 December 2021 remain, including the creation of an annual saving of £96,062 in revenue costs, and it is emphasised again that the cost per pupil is £17,404 at Ysgol Abersoch compared to a county average of £4,198. Even if the developments that are referred to in the report above are realised, leading to an increase in the number of pupils in the school, there is no compelling evidence that any such increase would be sufficient to make a significant change to this fundamental situation.

I continue to support the Cabinet's decision at its meeting 28/09/2021."

Appendices

- APPENDIX 1 Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee Decision Notice (21/10/21)
- APPENDIX 2 Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee papers (21/10/21) that include
 - APPENDIX 2a Cover report
 - APPENDIX 2b The Education Department's response to the aspects of the decision that were scrutinised
 - APPENDIX 2c Cabinet Decision Notice on 28/09/21, Item 8
 - APPENDIX 2d Cabinet Report on 28/09/21, Item 8

GWYNEDD COUNCIL
EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE DECISION NOTICE

(Section 100C of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020)

Date of EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE Meeting	21 October, 2021
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SUBJECT

Item 5: THE CABINET'S DECISION – 28-09-21 – ITEM 8 – YSGOL ABERSOCH

DECISION

That the scrutiny committee refers the matter back to the Cabinet for reconsideration on the grounds that a sufficient response had not been received to the second reason for calling in, namely:-

"2. The report does not take future Housing and Employment that would come into force in the Village into consideration.

(a) A new development to construct a new hotel that would create a minimum of 40 full-time posts in the area – employees and their families would need resources, including education for our children.

(b) Welsh Government, Gwynedd Council's Housing and Property Department and a Housing Association (which owns land in the village) are currently exploring the potential to construct more homes – Welsh Government has stated that a grant is available to develop this land to potentially construct 15 homes.

The Housing Association has confirmed that plans have already been drawn up for the Bryn Garmon site.

There is no mention in the report of the new plan by the Housing and Property Department and nothing about the developments underway in the Village and therefore, by not doing so, the Education Department has not responded to the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act."

THE RESULT OF THE VOTE

In favour	8
Against	6
Abstentions	1

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND PROTOCOL MATTERS

Councillor Dewi Roberts declared a personal interest as he was a governor at Ysgol Abersoch, however, as he had been appointed to this role by the Authority, he was of the opinion that it was not a prejudicial interest, and he did not withdraw from the meeting during the discussion on the item.

COMMITTEE	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
DATE	21 October 2021
SUBJECT	Cabinet Decision 28/09/2021. Item 8 - Ysgol Abersoch
AUTHOR	Geraint Owen, Head of Democratic Services

1. The following decision has been called in for scrutiny, in accordance with section 7.25 of the Council's Constitution.

Item 8: Ysgol Abersoch, Cabinet decision 28/09/2021.

“To finally confirm the proposal issued through statutory notice to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 December 2021, and to provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 January 2022 in accordance with Section 53 of the School Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013 and the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018.”

2. The request to call in the item to be scrutinised was made by Councillors Beth Lawton (Chair of the Scrutiny Committee), Alwyn Gruffydd and Elwyn Jones within the necessary requirements and timeframe.
3. The reasons for calling in, namely the aspects of the decision that it is considered should be scrutinised, and within the requirements of the constitution have been noted as follows:

“1. The report is inaccurate and misleading in terms of the impact on the community, for example, the Welsh language and culture - it states that there is no impact on the language in the table on page 714.

2. The report does not take future Housing and Employment that would come to force in the village into consideration

(a) A new development to construct a new hotel that would create a minimum of 40 full-time posts in the area - employees and their families would need resources, including education for our children.

(b) Welsh Government, Gwynedd Council's Housing and Property Department and a Housing Association (which owns land in the village) are currently exploring the potential to construct more homes - Welsh Government has stated that a grant is available to develop this land to potentially construct 15 homes.

The Housing Association has confirmed that plans have already been drawn up for the Bryn Garmon site. There is no mention in the report of the new plan by the Housing and Property Department and nothing about the developments under-way in the village and therefore, by not doing so, the Education Department has not responded to the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

3. Concern has been stated in relation to the footpath between Abersoch and Sarn Bach; the Education Department stated that contact had been made with the Highways Department but nothing definite has been submitted in terms of resolving this risk which places pupils at risk. The Education Department mentions transport arrangements which will inevitably have an effect on climate and is a poor example to the children of how the Council considers climate impact.

4. One child is ineligible for the offer of transport due to age policies - in future, when the number of children increases as a result of (a) and (b), it is likely that other children will be refused this transport and, therefore, suffer in terms of their education.

5. The decision is to close the school in the middle of the academic year and there is no doubt that this will be confusing for the children. Again, this will have a negative impact on their education and there is no explanation why and what is the logic here.”.

4. In order to assist the Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the matter in accordance with the aspects of the decision that it is considered should be scrutinised, the following documents are enclosed with this report.
- Appendix 1 - the Education Department's response to the aspects of the decision that it is considered should be scrutinised
 - Appendix 2 - Cabinet Decision Notice (Item 8, 28/09/2021)
 - Appendix 3 - Cabinet Report (Item 8, 28/09/2021)

Committee	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
Report Title	Ysgol Abersoch
Meeting date	21 October 2021
Relevant Officer	Gwern ap Rhisiart, Area Education Officer
Relevant Local Member	Councillor Cemlyn Rees Williams

1. The Cabinet’s decision, 28 September 2021

Following a Cabinet decision on 15 June 2021, a statutory notice was issued on 25 June 2021 on the intention to implement a proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch, and provide a place for pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach, commencing a 28 day objection period, in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation Act 2013, and the School Organisation Code.

To remind members, here are the statutory elements of the process involved in a proposal (in this case) to close a school:

1. Undertake a statutory consultation on the proposal
2. Consider the results of the consultation and decide whether or not to proceed with the proposal
3. Issue a statutory notice of intention to implement a proposal with a 28 day objection period
4. Consider any objections received during the objection period, and decide whether or not the proposal should be implemented.

On 28 September 2021, the Cabinet considered the objections received during the objection period (stage 4). It should be considered that the previous statutory actions have been completed, and those decisions are now final. The proposal cannot therefore be revisited and modified, and the Committee is scrutinising the Cabinet's decision to implement the proposal following its consideration of the objections received during the objection period. In particular it will consider those issues given as reasons for calling in the decision.

The School Organisation Code states:

“Where a local authority’s proposals have received objections, and require determination under section 53 of the 2013 Act, the local authority must not approach the determination of these proposals with a closed mind. Objections must be conscientiously considered alongside the arguments in respect of the proposals and in the light of the factors set out in section 1.3 – 1.14 of this Code.”

2 The Council’s Response to the Objections

The Education Department is confident that the objections report deals with and responds to the objections in accordance with the Schools Standards and Organisation Act 2013 and the associated Code. The Cabinet report discussed on 28 September refers to objections relating to the impact on the community and the Welsh language, possible developments in the area, transport and travel and the proposal’s implementation date. The Council’s response to those objections is noted below.

It should also be noted that the objections that referred to the impact on the community and the Welsh language, transport and travel and the proposal’s implementation date were highlighted and discussed further during the Cabinet meeting - the webcast for the meeting can be viewed [here](#) .

i. Impact on the Community and the Welsh Language

“The Report is incorrect and misleading in terms of the Community impact for example the Welsh language and culture, the table on page 714 says there is will be no impact on Language.”

The above refers to page 714 of the 15 June 2021 Cabinet report, which has already been implemented. However, below is a summary of the Council’s response to the objections relating to the impact on the community and the language, as noted in the report presented to the Cabinet on 28 September 2021.

During the objection period, a number of comments were received that referred to the school’s influence on language and culture in Abersoch and that losing the school would have a negative impact on the amount of Welsh spoken in everyday circumstances in the village of Abersoch.

In response to those comments, the Authority acknowledged the efforts made by Ysgol Abersoch to develop learners’ bilingual skills and also promoting the importance of the Welsh language and culture more widely in the community, conveying an appreciation of the community support to the school and the Welsh language as a result. It is also noted that the Council acknowledges the concerns regarding the potential impact on the Welsh language. However, it is the Authority’s expectation that all primary schools in the county support and improve the use of the Welsh language as the medium of education and the social language of pupils, as the linguistic expectations are the same for all primary schools in Gwynedd.

To mitigate any potentially negative impact on the community should the proposal be realised, the community impact assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the Abersoch community is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the community in Abersoch, where appropriate. Additionally, the Council noted that the impact assessment notes that some negative impact was anticipated as a result of the school’s closure. However, it is noted that 9 (35%) of Nursery – year 3 pupils living the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attend Ysgol Sarn Bach, as a result, it is concluded that a link between the school and the wider area is already established.

It is confirmed that the above matter has been the subject of discussion during the Cabinet meeting on 28 September 2021.

ii. Developments in the area e.g. housing and a hotel

“The Report does not take into consideration the future Housing and Constructions that is to come to the village (a) There is a New Development underway to build a New Hotel that will generate at least 40 full time jobs in the area – Staff and Family will need resources including Education for our children.

(b) The Welsh Government’s Housing and Property Department, Gwynedd Council and the Housing Association (who owns the land in the village) are currently looking at means of Building more houses The Welsh Government has said that a grant is available to develop this land and there is a possibility of 15 houses.

The Housing Association has confirmed that plans are underway for the Bryn Garmon site.

The report does not mention the Housing and Property Department’s new plans nor does it mention the new developments in the Village and therefore the Education Department has failed to respond to the requirements of the National Wellbeing Act in not doing this.”

It should be noted that no comments were received during the objection period that specifically referred to the development of 15 houses in the village of Abersoch, nor the intention to develop the Bryn Garmon site.

During the objection period some expressed their dissatisfaction that there was no mention of the 150 new jobs that building and opening a new hotel in Abersoch would create, encouraging local families to stay in the area and creating an opportunity for new families to come to the area.

In response to the comment, it was noted that there is no certainty that future demographic changes and an increase in the number of jobs locally would increase pupil numbers at Ysgol Abersoch. Children in the catchment area would be offered high quality education at Ysgol Sarn Bach which is 1.4 miles from the village of Abersoch.

Additionally, several comments were received noting the problem of second homes in Abersoch and the impact that this had on the school. In addition, a number of comments were received stating that one of the reasons why the pupil numbers had not increased in recent years is the lack of affordable housing.

In response to the objections received, it was noted that the Council noted the observations / objections, however, the Council wishes to note that it does not have control over the open housing market. In December 2020, Gwynedd Council adopted an Action Plan that will invest £77m in over 30 specific plans to tackle the increasing challenge of a lack of suitable housing for the County's residents, including increasing the number of affordable housing available for local people. The Plan will be implemented over the next six years, including projects such as increasing the number of social housing in Gwynedd; purchasing former social housing and private houses to let at an affordable rent to the residents of Gwynedd; developing our own houses to increase the opportunities for Gwynedd residents to compete; refusing applications to remove a local person condition on former "Council houses"; Homebuy Scheme and First Time Buyers' Grants to renovate empty houses. The exact locations of some of these schemes are to be confirmed following an exercise of consulting with communities in order to establish their housing needs.

The Council is aware that a set of measures will be required, a number of them currently beyond the direct control of the Council, if we are to be able to achieve genuine fairness for local residents in the field of housing. This Housing Action Plan is one of these measures and allows us to aim to directly act to the best of our abilities in order to attempt to reconcile the current situation. We also acknowledge that we will continue to campaign for further national changes in order to strengthen our ability to operate within Gwynedd and the Council will continue to do so at every possible opportunity in the field of housing, taxation, licensing and planning.

iii. Transport and travel

“Concerns over the footpath between Abersoch and Sarn Bach have been expressed and the education Department has said that contact has been made with the Highways Department but that nothing specific has been presented in terms of solving the risk here that endangers pupils. The Education Department mentions transport arrangements, which obviously adds to the climate and presents a negative example for the children in how the council considers the impact on the climate.”

It is confirmed that the objections relating to transport and travel were discussed at the Cabinet meeting on 28 September 2021.

Some comments were received expressing concerns over the potential impact of travelling to school, highlighting that the footpath from Ysgol Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach is dangerous.

In response to those objections, it was noted that the Gwynedd Council Strategy for primary education aims to restrict travel from home to school to a one-way journey of no more than 30 minutes. Free transportation is available for primary school pupils who live two miles or more from the school in their catchment area.

As the route from Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach is considered a dangerous one, transport would be provided in accordance with the County's school transport policy.

Some objectors also noted that the proposal would have an impact on the environment as there would be a need to travel further to school. In response to those comments, as a bus already transports key stage 2 children from Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach, and we anticipate that there will be enough space on that bus (or a larger bus) for the children in the Abersoch catchment area, no significant increase in CO2 emissions is anticipated.

“One child misses out on transport in this proposal because of age policies – in the future when the number of children increases due to (a) and (b) it is likely that other children will be rejected this Transport and therefore will suffer in terms of their education.”

Objections were received noting dissatisfaction about the lack of transport provision for nursery age pupils. In response to those objections, it was noted that Gwynedd Council provides free transport for learners receiving primary education who live 2 miles or further from the school in their catchment area, or the nearest school (not including nursery class pupils). In accordance with Gwynedd’s Transport Policy, it is the parent’s responsibility to arrange transport for nursery age pupils.

Following the Cabinet meeting, the Education Department contacted the parent of the only nursery age pupil attending Ysgol Abersoch this term. Following discussing a number of options, it became apparent that there is no practical means for the parent to collect their child from the nursery provision at the alternative school and that not responding would deprive the pupil of the rest of their nursery education.

It has been agreed to amend the transport policy to note that we will provide transport for nursery pupils if the school they have started their education is to close during the school year. As a result, the pupil will be provided with transport to and from the alternative school for the remainder of the academic year.

iv. Proposal implementation date

“The decision is to close the school in the middle of the school year and there is no doubt that this will confuse the children and again will negatively impact on their education and there is no explanation why and what is the reasoning here.”

It is confirmed that the above matter has been the subject of discussion during the Cabinet meeting on 28 September 2021.

Objections were received which questioned implementing the proposal in the middle of a school year. In response to those objections, although the consultation was held on the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 August 2021 and provide a place for pupils in Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 September 2021, after considering the comments received in the consultation expressing concerns about the outline timetable, it was decided that deferring implementation until 31 December 2021 would allow more time for the Education Department to put arrangements in place in order to ensure a smooth transition for pupils from Ysgol Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach.

Subject to the Cabinet’s decision, it is anticipated that this will allow enough time for the Education Department to work with the two schools to put all the necessary arrangements in place prior to transferring pupils to Ysgol Sarn Bach at the beginning of January 2022.

With the co-operation of the staff at Ysgol Abersoch it is anticipated that the transition to the alternative school could begin gradually over time.

GWYNEDD CABINET DECISION NOTICE

Date of Cabinet Meeting:	28 September 2021
Date decision will come into force and be implemented, unless the decision is called in, in accordance with section 7.25 of the Gwynedd Council Constitution	13 October 2021

SUBJECT

Item 8: YSGOL ABERSOCH

DECISION

To finally confirm the proposal issued through statutory notice to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 December 2021, and to provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 January 2022 in accordance with Section 53 of the School Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013 and the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

At its meeting in September 2019, the Cabinet supported a recommendation to commence formal discussions with the Governing Body of Ysgol Abersoch in order to consider options for its future following a decline in the number of pupils at the school. During the meetings, a number of options were considered for primary education in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area in order to ensure a sustainable provision for the future, and respond specifically to the main challenges facing the school.

In September 2020, the Cabinet resolved to undertake a statutory consultation process, in accordance with the requirements of section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, on the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 August 2021 and to provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 September 2021. The decision was confirmed by the Cabinet on 3 November 2020, after the original decision was called in and referred back to the Cabinet by the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee.

The Education Department commenced the consultation on 5 January 2021 originally, but as no child attended the School site that day due to the latest Covid-19 restrictions, there was local discontent that the authority had not acted in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code to publish the consultation on a "school day". Welsh Government published a temporary modification to the School Organisation Code and it was decided to re-publish the consultation after 8 January 2021, and hold the consultation between 12 January and 23 February 2021.

154 responses had been received to the statutory consultation and the Cabinet considered the observations received during the statutory consultation period and the response to those observations, prior to making its decision to:

- i. Approve issuing a statutory proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 December 2021, and provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 January 2022
-

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- ii. Approve the publication of statutory notices on the proposal in (i) above in accordance with the requirements of Section 48 of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

In accordance with this decision, a statutory notice was issued in accordance with the Schools Standards and Organisation Act 2013 and the Schools Organisation Code (011/2018), which commenced a 28-day statutory objection period.

211 objections and two petitions had been received and following the objection period, the Cabinet was required to consider a formal report of the objections and the response to them prior to reaching a final decision.

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Declaration of interest by Cllr. Dewi Roberts as he is a member of the Governors of Ysgol Abersoch.

ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

The Statutory Officers were consulted to seek their views, which had been included in the report.

A Statutory Consultation was undertaken and the Local Member's observations were received, which have been included in the report.

MEETING	Gwynedd Council Cabinet
DATE	28 September 2021
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Cemlyn Rees Williams
OFFICER	Gwern ap Rhisiart
TITLE OF ITEM	Ysgol Abersoch

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

The Cabinet is requested to consider the objections received during the statutory objection period and the response to those objections, and determine whether to:

- i. Finally confirm the proposal issued through a statutory notice to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 December 2021, and provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 January 2022 in accordance with Section 53 of the School Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013 and the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018.

2. THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to report to the Cabinet following conducting an objection period on the proposal issued through a statutory notice to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 December 2021, and provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 January 2022, and ask them to confirm the proposal. The Statutory Notice was published on 25 June 2021, commencing a 28-day objection period. The objection period ended on 23 July 2021 and 211 objections and 2 petitions were received.

3. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its meeting on 17 September 2019, the Cabinet supported a recommendation to commence formal discussions with the governing body of Ysgol Abersoch in order to consider options for the future education provision in the catchment area. The decision came about as a result of concerns regarding a reduction in pupil numbers at the school. Pupil numbers at the school have fallen consistently since 2016 and has been fragile for some time.
- 3.2 Following these meetings, a report was presented to the Cabinet on 15 September 2020, where the recommendation to undertake a statutory consultation process, in accordance with the requirements of section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, on the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 August 2021 and to provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 September 2021, was approved. The decision was confirmed by the Cabinet at its meeting on 3 November 2020, after the original decision was called in and referred back to the Cabinet by the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 8 October 2020.
- 3.3 The report submitted to the Cabinet on 15 September 2020 outlined the challenges facing the school, in particular:

- i. school numbers are a cause for concern. In September 2020, there were 8 full-time pupils and 2 nursery pupils.
- ii. the class sizes are small - with 10 pupils being taught in one mixed-age class.
- iii. projections show 10 pupils in 2021, 12 pupils in 2022, and 12 pupils in 2023.
- iv. September 2020 data shows that 26 pupils live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area with 21 of them attending other schools. It also shows that 5 pupils from outside the Abersoch catchment area attend Ysgol Abersoch.
- v. Ysgol Abersoch receives an additional amount to the usual allocation via the minimum staffing protection policy (which ensures at least a headteacher and teacher at each school, and a headteacher and an assistant in schools with fewer than 15 pupils). The total additional funding for the 2020/21 financial year (based on the numbers in September 2019) was £52,582.
- vi. The per pupil cost for Ysgol Abersoch during the 2020/21 financial year was £17,404, compared with the county-wide average per pupil cost of £4,198 for the same period.
- vii. Number of surplus spaces - 76% surplus places at the school (32 in total).

4. THE STATUTORY CONSULTATION

- 4.1 In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018 and the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, a period of statutory consultation on the proposal was held with relevant consultees between 12 January 2021 and 23 February 2021.
- 4.2 A statutory consultation document was produced in accordance with the requirements and guidance of the School Organisation Code 011/2018 and an electronic copy was distributed to all relevant consultees. In addition, hard copies of all documents were sent out at the request of consultees. The consultation document together with all background documents can be seen on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation.
- 4.3 During the consultation period, Gwynedd Council officers held virtual "drop-in" sessions via Microsoft Teams software, where invitations had been sent out to governors, teaching and ancillary staff, parents/guardians of Ysgol Abersoch pupils and any stakeholders from the community of Llanengan who wished to ask questions about the proposal. During the sessions, officers from relevant departments were available to explain and respond to enquiries, in order to enable the individuals to contribute to the consultation. 7 people attended the virtual drop-in sessions.
- 4.4 Also, a consultation document was created for primary school children with accompanying questionnaires. Arrangements were made for an independent facilitator to hold virtual sessions with the 2 schools that were subject to the consultation in order to ascertain the views of pupils on the proposal.
- 4.5 154 responses were received to the statutory consultation, elaborating on the following issues:
 - Objections to the proposal
 - Comments on the statutory process
 - Alternative options
 - Educational matters
 - Financial matters
 - Assessment against the Well-being Act
 - Post-use of the school site
 - Nearby schools
 - Transport and travel
 - The community
 - The Welsh language
 - Abersoch Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi
 - Other

4.6 Also, during the consultation period, a response was received from Estyn which noted that the proposal was "likely to at least maintain the existing standards of primary education in the area".

4.7 Other alternative options suggested during the statutory consultation

4.7.1 The School Organisation Code 011/2018, notes that consultees are able to suggest other alternative options as well as observations on the proposal in question during the consultation.

4.7.2 5 other alternative options were suggested during the consultation. (A number of the responses suggested that further consideration should also be given to the option to extend the school's age range to 3-9) However, after appraising these options against the factors of the 'Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd' strategy (whilst considering the School Organisation Code 011/2018 and other relevant considerations), it was concluded that the proposal of closing Ysgol Abersoch and providing a place for all the children of the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area at Ysgol Sarn Bach remained the most appropriate option to respond to the challenges faced by the school (for the reasons noted in section 4.1 and 4.7 of the report on the consultation www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation).

4.8 Changing the date of implementation

4.8.1 Despite the consultation being held on the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 August 2021 and provide a place for pupils in Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 September 2021, following consideration of the observations received from the consultation expressing concern about the outline timetable, it was recommended that the implementation date be adapted. It was considered that deferring implementation until 31 December 2021 would allow more time for the Education Department to put arrangements in place in order to ensure a smooth transition for pupils from Ysgol Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach.

4.8.2 Following the consultation, it was reported back to Cabinet on 15 June 2021, and the Cabinet considered the consultation report, the observations and alternative options received during the statutory consultation period, and resolved to:

- i. Approve the issuing of a statutory proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 December 2021, and provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 January 2022.
- ii. Approve the issuing of statutory notices on the proposal in (i) above in accordance with the requirements of Section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

5. STATUTORY OBJECTION PERIOD

5.1 In accordance with the Cabinet's decision of 15 June 2021 a statutory notice was issued, in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and School Organisation Code 011/2018, commencing a 28-day statutory objection period between 25 June and 23 July 2021.

5.2 The statutory notice was issued on 25 June and placed on the gates of Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach and on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation . Electronic copies of the notice were distributed in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, and the relevant stakeholders received an e-mail with a link to the website to inform them of the objection period and procedure. It was clearly stated in the notice that it was possible for anybody to object and how it was possible to do so.

5.3 The objection period ended on 23 July 2021, and 211 objections had been received and 2 petitions. Following the objection period, the Cabinet is required to consider a formal report of the objections and the response to them prior to reaching a final decision to implement the proposal or not. **Appendix A** includes an analysis of the objections received and the Council's response to those objections.

6. OBJECTIONS RECEIVED DURING THE OBJECTION PERIOD

The purpose of this part of the report is to present a summary of the objections received during the objection period, together with the Council's response. All the objections and comments and the Council's response to them are noted in **Appendix A** of this report.

6.1 The Objections

Correspondence (letter or e-mail)	Petition	Total
211	2 (1 online + 1 Friends of Ysgol Abersoch)	213

6.1.1 A total of 211 objections were received via e-mail or letter. It is worth noting that many of the comments received were submitted during the statutory consultation period and re-submitted as part of the objection period.

6.1.2 As well as the individual objections, two petitions were received:

- An online petition with 1,884 signatures stating *"The Ysgol Abersoch opened in 1924. Unfortunately, the school is under pressure to close. The staff of the school are incredibly passionate to keep the school open and to celebrate 100 years in 2024! The school is at the very heart of the village of Abersoch, North Wales, and also in the hearts of all students, former, current or future, parents and all the locals. Please, sign this petition to show support for this school and stop the closure. Sign to support the local community, please!"*
- A petition by the Friends of Ysgol Abersoch with 1,115 signatures stating *"Gwynedd Council is consulting on the proposal to close the school from 31 August 2021. Please sign this petition in support of Ysgol Abersoch, which provides an excellent education and is crucial in the safeguarding of the Welsh language and culture in the heart of our community."*

6.1.3 After the objection period closing date, the objection comments were analysed and the Council response to these was provided under the following headings:

- Objections to the proposal without comment
- The community
- Educational matters
- The Welsh language
- Abersoch Cylch Meithrin / Cylch Ti a Fi
- Comments on the statutory process
- Transport and travel
- Impact on learners
- Staff
- Nearby schools
- Financial matters
- Alternative options
- Well-being Act
- Post-use of the school site
- Implementation date of the proposal
- Other

6.1.4 The analysis can be seen in full in **Appendix A** but a summary of the main objection comments received, together with the Council's response to these, is provided below.

6.2 Objections to the proposal without comment

6.2.1 63 expressed opposition to the proposal only without including any comment or reason why, e.g. "I object to the closure of Ysgol Abersoch.", "I'm against this school closing!!" and "I do not agree that this school should be closed and I reject any attempt to close it."

6.3 The community

6.3.1 The main comments raised during the objection period was to the impact of the proposal on the community and related to the following issues:

- **The school is the heart of the village**
- **The school supports village life and is a key part of the village**
- **Closing the school would have a negative impact on the village and the Welsh language**
- **Lack of relationship with the community of Ysgol Sarn Bach**

6.3.2 The Council notes the comments in relation to the importance of the school to the life of the village and community of Abersoch.

6.3.3 When developing any proposals relating to education modernisation, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the community.

6.3.4 As part of the consultation process, an assessment of the community impact of the options under consideration was carried out in order to gauge the probable impact the options would have on the communities in question. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation

6.3.5 The assessment noted that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch would affect some elements of community events and that there would be some negative impact from closing the school. However, it was noted that 9 (35%) of Nursery - Year 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attended Ysgol Sarn Bach. Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the alternative school and the broader area.

6.3.6 To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.

6.3.7 Consequently, , should the proposal be implemented, it will be required as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of Ysgol Abersoch pupils so that parents and pupils take advantage of their facilities and after-school activities, and to encourage the alternative school to also take advantage of the facilities of the community of Abersoch.

6.4 Educational matters

The main comments raised during the objection period related to the following issues:

6.4.1 Numbers - comments were received stating that there is a possibility that Ysgol Abersoch pupil numbers could increase in the future.

6.4.2 The Authority has prioritised Ysgol Abersoch for a review of the educational provision as it faces a number of challenges. Pupil numbers at the school have fallen consistently since 2016 and the figure has been fragile for some time.

6.4.3 As a result of the current low numbers, and projections that numbers will remain low at Ysgol Abersoch for the next five years, the school is in a vulnerable position and under increasing budgetary pressures.

6.4.4 The Council notes the comments; however, bearing in mind the size of the projected increase in pupil numbers, it is likely that the challenges facing Ysgol Abersoch will continue.

- 6.4.5 Although 2 nursery pupils and 3 reception pupils started in September 2020, unfortunately this has not led to a significant increase in the numbers.
- 6.4.6 In September 2020, 8 full-time pupils and 2 part-time pupils were registered at the school, compared with 2 part-time pupils and 7 full-time pupils in September 2019.
- 6.4.7 As a result of the low pupil numbers, the number of surplus places in Ysgol Abersoch (Reception - Yr 3) is 26 (76%).
- 6.4.8 It is noted in the School Organisation Code 011/2018 that "It is important that funding for education is cost effective. Relevant bodies should consider the following factors in relation to the resourcing of education: What effect proposals will have on surplus places in the area; Some spare places are necessary to enable schools to cope with fluctuations in numbers of pupils, but excessive numbers of unused places that could be removed mean that resources are tied up unproductively."
- 6.4.9 Projections - Comments were received which questioned the accuracy of the projections contained in the consultation document and suggesting that numbers may increase in the future.**
- 6.4.10 In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, the proposers are asked to note "five year forecasts of pupil on roll at all existing schools likely to be affected by the proposals, currently (i.e. based on the existing configuration of schools)".
- 6.4.11 The five-year pupil projections have been created by using information about past trends. Three-year projections are provided by the headteachers of the individual schools and the year 4 and 5 projections are calculated by the Authority.
- 6.4.12 It is acknowledged that calculating projections is not a science, and numbers may vary a little in reality. Nevertheless, the Education Department is of the opinion, based on the numbers in September 2020, and the average admission numbers of the previous 3 years, that the numbers will remain low at Ysgol Abersoch for the next five years:

Table 1 - Number projections for Ysgol Abersoch

	M	D	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
September 2020	2	3	2	0	3	-	-	-	10
September 2021 Projection	3	2	3	2	0	-	-	-	10
September 2022 Projection	2	3	2	3	2	-	-	-	12
September 2023 Projection	2	2	3	2	3	-	-	-	12
September 2024 Projection	2	2	2	3	2	-	-	-	11
September 2025 Projection	2	2	2	2	3	-	-	-	11

- 6.4.13 In September 2020, of the 26 pupils (3-8 years) who lived in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area, 5 of those children attended Ysgol Abersoch, with 21 (81%) of them attending schools outside the catchment area. As a result, in response to comments noting that the numbers and population of children in the area will increase over the next 20-25 years, based on the figures for September 2020, it is concluded that it cannot be guaranteed that those children would choose to attend Ysgol Abersoch.
- 6.4.14 Class sizes - Some responses questioned the size of mixed classes that existed at Ysgol Sarn Bach. Concerns were noted that nearby schools already exceeded 20, which is contrary to the Education Department's Strategy, and that implementing the proposal would exacerbate the situation. Concern was noted that the proposal would mean that pupils were educated in overfull classes.**

6.4.15 With 21 surplus places (and 4 surplus places in the Nursery), Ysgol Sarn Bach has sufficient capacity for the number of pupils from Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach, currently and for the next five years.

6.4.16 Should the proposal be realised, it is anticipated that there would be 21 children in the Foundation Phase and 37 in KS2 at Ysgol Sarn Bach. It would be expected for the Headteacher and Governing Body of the alternative school to give due attention to determining suitable class sizes and school staff resources to respond to the latest numbers. The increase in their annual budget would facilitate options to consider additional class(es) and staff.

6.4.17 In accordance with the School Organisation Code 011/2018, in the case of a proposal to reorganise schools, the consultation document had to include details about all the surrounding schools to which it might reasonably be considered that pupils may wish to transfer. As a result, details of Ysgol Sarn Bach, Ysgol Llanbedrog and Ysgol Foel Gron were included in the document in addition to the details of Ysgol Abersoch.

6.4.18 It is emphasised that the proposal that was the subject of the statutory consultation was to close Ysgol Abersoch and to offer a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach. As noted in the consultation document, *"This consultation only relates to Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach; therefore, responses to this consultation should only refer to the proposal as described in paragraph 1.1 above."* Therefore, it is not considered that the class sizes of nearby schools (Ysgol Foel Gron and Ysgol Llanbedrog) are relevant to the proposal.

6.4.19 Advantages of small schools - A comment was received suggesting that the fact that Ysgol Abersoch had a low number of pupils had been of advantage during the COVID-19 period.

6.4.20 All schools in Gwynedd have followed appropriate procedures for keeping pupils and staff safe in accordance with Public Health Wales, Welsh Government and Authority guidelines.

6.4.21 Quality of the education - Some comments noted that the education at Ysgol Abersoch was excellent. Others were of the opinion that the proposal would not strengthen the education, and believed that the documentation did not note the successes and strengths of the school.

6.4.22 Based on the outcome of the assessment of the Probable Impact on the Quality and Standards of Education, it is concluded that the quality of the education provided at Ysgol Sarn Bach is at the same level as the quality of education at Ysgol Abersoch. Consequently, it is not anticipated any negative impact would derive in terms of the quality and standards of education from the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and transfer the pupils to Ysgol Sarn Bach. The information in the assessment followed the latest Estyn inspections of the schools in question, noting that each of the schools had been placed in at least an equivalent category to Ysgol Abersoch, and each of the schools had been placed in the yellow or green in terms of the Welsh Government's support category.

6.4.23 A summary of the latest Estyn reports:

School	Inspection year	How good are the outcomes?	How good is the provision?	How good are leadership and management?
Abersoch	June 2017	Good	Good	Good

** (Note that Estyn had introduced five areas for inspection by October 2017.)*

School	Inspection year	Standards	Well-being and attitudes to learning	Teaching and learning experiences	Care, support and guidance	Leadership and management
Sarn Bach	October 2017	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good

- 6.4.24 In assessing the likely impact of the proposal on Estyn's five inspection areas, in the context of 'Leadership and Management' the Authority identified that the likely impact of implementing the proposal would be neutral, given that Estyn's judgment of the quality of leadership at Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach was that they were as good as each other.
- 6.4.25 In addition, Estyn noted in its response to the statutory consultation that it was "of the opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the existing standards of primary education in the area".
- 6.4.26 Realising this option would give pupils an opportunity to be educated in peer groups with much less of an age range and an opportunity to improve the educational and social experience of the pupils, on a daily basis. The needs of any vulnerable groups, including children with additional learning needs, would be assessed and implemented in line with the Authority's policy and procedures. The quality and standards of education are elaborated upon further in Section 7.2 of the consultation document and a full assessment of the probable impact on the quality and standards of education can be seen on the website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation.

6.5 The Welsh language

- 6.5.1 A number of comments were received referring to the school's influence on the language and culture of Abersoch and in losing the school, this would have a negative impact on the amount of Welsh being spoken in everyday circumstances in the village of Abersoch.**
- 6.5.2 Comments were received noting that the residents and businesses of Abersoch were aware of the existence of the Welsh language because of all the work done by the teachers and pupils to promote the language, with a number of shops displaying bilingual signage as a result.**
- 6.5.3 In response to these observations, the Council acknowledged Ysgol Abersoch's efforts to develop the learners' bilingual skills as well as promote the importance of the Welsh language and culture more broadly in the community, and conveyed appreciation of the community's consequent support to the school and to the Welsh language. In response to the comments, it was noted that the Council also acknowledged the concerns regarding the potential impact on the Welsh language. Nevertheless, the Authority expects that all primary schools in the county support and improve the use of the Welsh language as a medium of education and as the social language of pupils, as the linguistic expectations are the same for all Gwynedd primary schools.
- 6.5.4 To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the language impact assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate. In addition, the Council noted that the community impact assessment notes that it is anticipated that there would be some negative impact as a result of closing the school. However, it was noted that 9 (35%) of Nursery - Yr 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attended Ysgol Sarn Bach; therefore, it is concluded that a link already exists between the school and the broader area.
- 6.5.5 Reference was also made to the success of Ysgol Abersoch in gaining the Welsh Language Charter gold award for its efforts to promote social use of Welsh, thus realising one of the main priorities of the Council and Welsh Government.**
- 6.5.6 It is acknowledged that Ysgol Abersoch has worked hard to develop the learners' bilingual skills and promote the importance of Welsh culture and that the school gained the Welsh Language Charter gold award in 2019. Therefore, it is vital that the proposal acknowledges the need to support and continue with this work.

6.5.7 A number of the respondents also refer specifically to the ambitious aspiration of Welsh Government to promote Welsh-medium education and the use of Welsh in the workplace, in order to reach the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050, and that the proposal to close the school is contrary to this national goal.

6.5.8 In response to the comments, it was noted that the Council, in the consultation document, had noted that any discussions relating to reorganisation needed to acknowledge Welsh Government's effort to reach the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. It was also noted that the Council acknowledged the concerns regarding the possible impact on the Welsh language and had completed an assessment of the proposal's linguistic impact from closing Ysgol Abersoch and educating the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach. In the assessment, it is concluded that no negative impact is anticipated on the Welsh language should the proposal be implemented, mainly as a result of the expectations of the Language Policy, so the provision would be the same for the pupils, regardless of what school they choose to attend. It also appears that the linguistic situation of Ysgol Sarn Bach is strong, with 57% of the school's pupils coming from Welsh-speaking homes, compared with 33% of Ysgol Abersoch pupils who come from Welsh-speaking homes.

6.6 Cylch Meithrin / Cylch Ti a Fi

6.6.1 It was felt that the school was sustainable due to the impact of the Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi.

6.6.2 The Authority recognises the influence of Cylchoedd Ti a Fi and Cylchoedd Meithrin on pupil numbers in schools where they are located. However, in the case of Ysgol Abersoch, given the scale of the increase that would result from the Cylch Meithrin, it was likely that the challenges facing Ysgol Abersoch would continue.

6.6.3 The projections in the consultation document were based on three-year projections submitted by school headteachers. Estimated five-year projections are based on average school admission numbers over the last three years. As a result, the Education Department is of the opinion, based on the numbers in September 2020, and the average admission numbers of the previous three years, that the numbers will remain low at Ysgol Abersoch for the next five years:

Table 1 - Number projections for Ysgol Abersoch

	M	D	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
September 2020	2	3	2	0	3	-	-	-	10
September 2021 Projection	3	2	3	2	0	-	-	-	10
September 2022 Projection	2	3	2	3	2	-	-	-	12
September 2023 Projection	2	2	3	2	3	-	-	-	12
September 2024 Projection	2	2	2	3	2	-	-	-	11
September 2025 Projection	2	2	2	2	3	-	-	-	11

6.6.4 It should be noted that the projections above were calculated on the basis of numbers in the September following the establishment of the Cylch Meithrin.

6.6.5 In addition to this, in September 2020, of the 26 pupils (3-8 years) who lived in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area, 5 of those children attended Ysgol Abersoch, with 21 (81%) of them attending schools outside the catchment area. As a result, in response to comments noting that the numbers and population of children in the area will increase over the next 20-25 years, based on the figures for September 2020 and previous trends, it is concluded that it cannot be guaranteed that those children would choose to attend Ysgol Abersoch.

6.6.6 As shown in the table above, we note a projected increase of 2 by September 2022. In order for any option to respond to the challenges facing the school, the increase in numbers would have to be substantial. The Authority is not of the opinion that an increase of 2 pupils is an adequate increase to address the school's challenges.

6.6.7 The Future of the Cylch Meithrin - Several of the comments noted concerns regarding the future of the Cylch Meithrin and the Cylch Ti a Fi in Abersoch, should the proposal be implemented and that the Council should have begun to discuss options for its future before now.

6.6.8 In response to the comments, it is noted that closing the Cylch Meithrin is not part of the proposal under consideration and that the Council is eager to see the continuation of the Cylch in Abersoch. It is noted in the community impact assessment "A Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi is held in the school building. Should a decision be made to close the school, options for the post-use of the school would have to be considered, taking the activities currently held at the school into account."

6.6.9 Should the proposal go ahead, the Council is eager to discuss the possibilities with the relevant representatives - the possibilities could include staying at the current location, relocating to the alternative school, or moving to another site in the village of Abersoch.

6.6.10 Discussing these possibilities with the Cylch before the Cabinet made the final decision on the future of Ysgol Abersoch would have been premature and created a risk that the Council would be seen as prejudicing the process.

6.7 The Statutory Process

6.7.1 A number of comments were received noting discontent with the decision to hold the consultation, specifically in relation to the COVID-19 restrictions. In addition, some responses expressed discontent with the decision to hold virtual meetings instead of public meetings.

6.7.2 The Education Department is confident that the statutory consultation process held was in compliance with the requirements and guidance of the School Organisation Code 011/2018. As part of the statutory consultation:

- A consultation document was published, as well as the relevant background documents, in the form of an electronic copy on the Council's website (with hard copies available upon request).
- Electronic copies of the document were distributed to the relevant stakeholders.
- Written observations/responses were received through the post and via e-mail.

6.7.3 The Code does not impose a requirement to hold public/consultation meetings. Instead, the Code notes that "Proposers may use other ways to engage consultees as they think appropriate".

6.7.4 In previous consultations, the Education Department has held "drop-in" sessions to discuss the proposal with the parents, governors and staff of the school in question. As a result of COVID-19 restrictions, it was not possible to conduct the "drop-in" sessions in the same manner. Nevertheless, in order to ensure that the stakeholders of Ysgol Abersoch had the same opportunity to receive information, ask for an explanation and make insertions, "drop-in" sessions were held via virtual meeting software. A maximum of 3 was set for each virtual session in order to ensure that everyone who attended benefited from a comprehensive and fair discussion. 0 sessions were offered over 4 evenings, and 7 people attended the virtual drop-in sessions.

6.7.5 In addition, an opportunity was given to stakeholders to submit questions regarding the proposal via e-mail to the Education Department.

6.7.6 Sympathy was expressed with the concerns of holding a consultation during the pandemic; nevertheless, it is emphasised that we, as an Authority cannot commit not to deal with the school for an unspecified time. In addition, Welsh Government published a notice on 8 January 2021 to allow proposals regarding school organisation to continue, where not all schools were open.

- 6.7.7 It is believed that the number of responses received to the consultation is evidence that conducting it during the COVID-19 period has not unduly disrupted the consultees' ability to participate.
- 6.7.8 Some respondents noted discontent with the process of consulting with children and young people.**
- 6.7.9 In accordance with the School Organisation Code 011/2018, it is required, as part of any statutory consultation, to hold a consultation with the children and young people of the schools that are the subject of the consultation in order to ascertain their feelings about the proposal.
- 6.7.10 Virtual consultation sessions were held with a representation of pupils from the primary schools that were the subject of the consultation. Arrangements were made for an independent facilitator to hold virtual sessions with schools that were part of the consultation in order to ascertain the views of pupils.
- 6.7.11 As part of the consultation with children and young people, appropriate documents were prepared for the pupils of Ysgol Abersoch and the Ysgol Sarn Bach School Council, and arrangements were made that a facilitator held three meetings over the internet (Google Meet) with both schools to discuss the proposal with the children in order to ensure that they understood what was being proposed and in order to give them an opportunity to express an opinion about the proposal. The parents of Ysgol Abersoch were present and they were encouraged by the facilitator to speak on behalf of their children in order to strengthen the process of ascertaining the views of the children on the potential impact on them, should the school close.
- 6.7.12 Each session took forty-five minutes to complete, and pupils were divided into three groups, Year 3 Pupils in Ysgol Abersoch, Foundation Phase Pupils in Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach School Council. The session included an explanation of the proposal and gave the pupils an opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings.
- 6.7.13 Some comments were received which noted the opinion that the impact assessments and the details noted on the response form were insufficient.**
- 6.7.14 As part of the statutory process, when developing a proposal(s) for school reorganisation, the Authority must carry out assessment in accordance with the School Organisation Code 011/2018. We are of the opinion that the assessments submitted as part of the consultation correspond with Welsh Government's national guidance for school reorganisation. Similarly, the Authority is confident that our processes and response form met the requirements of the Code.
- 6.7.15 A number of objections were received noting that the Cylch Meithrin had not been included in the consultation process.**
- 6.7.16 We received a response from Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin and Cylch Meithrin Abersoch as part of the consultation. Unfortunately, after the consultation closing date, it became apparent that the representatives of the Cylch Meithrin had not received a copy of the e-mail, informing them of the statutory consultation. As noted in the consultation document, we had included the Cylch as a consultee in the distribution list for sharing information about the consultation, but it appears that the Cylch's e-mail address was spelt incorrectly and so the information was not received. We wish to apologise for this error.
- 6.7.17 In order to ensure that the representatives of the Cylch Meithrin had an opportunity to consider the consultation document in accordance with the timetable provided in the Organisation Code 011/2018, the Cylch was given an opportunity to send any further comments to us by 1pm on Wednesday, 21 April 2021. No further response was received from the representatives of the Cylch during the extended consultation period.

6.7.18 Some noted that there were errors in the consultation document, and that this undermined their confidence in the consultation.

6.7.19 The Council is confident in the accuracy of the information submitted in the consultation document. The Council accepts that the location of Ysgol Sarn Bach on the map in the document is incorrect but that this did not affect the consultation.

6.7.20 Comments were received alleging that the decision had been made and that the Council had not taken sufficient account of comments received from stakeholders during the statutory consultation.

6.7.21 In response to the comments that the decision had already been made, it is emphasised that the consultation on the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and offer a place for pupils in Ysgol Sarn Bach, was held between 12 January and 23 February 2021 and, in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the statutory consultation, a report on the consultation was submitted to the Cabinet in order to summarise the matters raised by the consultees and note the Council's response to those matters. After considering this comprehensive report, the Cabinet approved the issuing of a statutory notice on the proposal and held an objection period to give anyone the opportunity to object to the proposal. This report sets out the objections and the Council's response to them for the Cabinet's consideration and final decision on the future of Ysgol Abersoch. It is believed that these actions are clear evidence that the decision has not been made and that the Authority's processes ensure that fair consideration is given to stakeholders' comments and objections before deciding.

6.7.22 Comments were received asking why one response to the statutory consultation was not published in the Cabinet report of 15 June 2021.

6.7.23 There was one response received which referred to the arrangements and standard of a presentation given at consultation meeting (School Review Panel) held with stakeholders in Ysgol Abersoch, citing concerns regarding a lack of inclusivity as not everyone could follow the presentation.

6.7.24 As this part of the response did not respond directly to the proposal and contained personal information about the author of the comment as well as that of another individual present at the meeting, it was felt that it would not be appropriate to publish the response in full. It was therefore decided to respond to the issue and complaint in question by contacting the individual directly, stating:

"We can confirm that part of your response was edited because it contained personal information and was considered a complaint about the arrangements of a specific meeting held prior to the statutory consultation and that the comments raised were not in relation to the consultation itself.

It was felt that the appropriate way to respond to this particular matter was to reply to you directly. I would therefore like to apologise sincerely that the format of our meetings has caused you concern. In response to your concerns, when arranging future meetings, particular attention will be paid to the format of the presentations, and we assure you that invitations to the meetings will include the opportunity for participants to note any further requirements."

6.7.25 The remainder of the letter was published, along with responses to the other relevant points, as part of the report presented to Cabinet on 15 June 2021.

6.8 Transport and Travel

6.8.1 Some comments noted how convenient Ysgol Abersoch is as it is possible to walk to the school and that taking the children to Ysgol Sarn Bach would be inconvenient for parents. Others noted concern at the potential impact on travel arrangements to the school, drawing attention to the fact that the walking route from Ysgol Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach is dangerous.

- 6.8.2 The Gwynedd Council Strategy for primary education aims to restrict travel from home to school to a one-way journey of no more than 30 minutes. Free transportation is available for primary school pupils who live two miles or more from the school in their catchment area.
- 6.8.3 By moving to the alternative school, it is not anticipated that any pupil will need to travel an unreasonable distance to reach an educational site, in accordance with the strategy. Ysgol Abersoch is located 1.4 miles from the current Ysgol Sarn Bach site and it is anticipated that the journey would take approximately five minutes each way in a car or bus.
- 6.8.4 In line with Gwynedd Council's transport policy, learners who receive a primary or secondary education (with the exception of learners with additional learning needs or disabilities), would be expected to walk up to two miles to meet any modes of transport provided by Gwynedd Council along the shortest route.
- 6.8.5 As the route from Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach is considered a dangerous one, transport would be provided in accordance with the County's school transport policy.
- 6.8.6 Clarification was sought on the increase in transport costs if the proposal were implemented, and how the estimated transport costs were calculated.**
- 6.8.7 A primary school bus is already operational between Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach, and it is anticipated that there would be enough empty seats for the current pupils of Ysgol Abersoch - therefore, no additional transport costs are anticipated from implementing the proposal.
- 6.8.8 However, as noted in the consultation document, if transport would need to be provided for all pupils in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area, including those pupils already attending Ysgol Sarn Bach, then there would be a need to adapt the current transport arrangements at Ysgol Sarn Bach.
- 6.8.9 The current cost of transporting pupils from Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach is £16,500. If the current arrangements would need to be amended, it is estimated that a 49 seater bus would be needed, to provide transport for all pupils in Reception to Year 6 in the catchment area, at a cost of £30,500. Therefore, this would lead to an increase in costs of £14,000.
- 6.8.10 Some comments noted that the proposal would have an impact on the environment as there would be a need to travel further to the school.**
- 6.8.11 As a bus already carries key stage 2 pupils from Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach, and we anticipate that there will be enough room on that bus (or a larger bus) for children in the Abersoch catchment area, an increase in CO2 emissions is not envisaged.
- 6.8.12 It was asked how many pupils will need transport to Ysgol Sarn Bach.**
- 6.8.13 Should the proposal be implemented, we will arrange a survey with the parents/guardians of children who wish to transfer to Ysgol Sarn Bach in order to ascertain how many pupils will require free transportation from Abersoch. This will give the Authority definitive numbers to decide whether a larger bus will be needed.
- 6.8.14 It was asked how many pupils were taking advantage of the empty seats scheme, and whether those pupils were paying for the transport in accordance with the policy.**
- 6.8.15 As part of the Empty Seats Scheme, the Council is willing to consider applications from learners who attend a school (or school site) other than the catchment area school (or school site) to take advantage of any

empty seats on contracted vehicles by paying the current out-of-catchment fee. Taking advantage of the scheme is subject to:

- The availability of empty seats
- The vehicle not having to divert from its usual route
- No additional costs to the Council
- Paying the current fee for empty seats.

6.8.16 All learners who applied for transportation would have paid for an empty seats scheme to travel on the designated school bus. Between 3 and 6 learners have taken advantage of this scheme since 2017.

6.8.17 Discontent was noted about the lack of a transport offer for nursery age pupils.

6.8.18 In accordance with the Gwynedd transport policy, it is the responsibility of parents to make transportation arrangements for nursery age pupils.

6.9 Impact on learners

6.9.1 Comments were received that children would suffer if Ysgol Abersoch closed as they would have to start again at a new school.

6.9.2 In response to these comments, the Authority acknowledges that this period is one of uncertainty that could lead to stress and an impact on learners. However, should the proposal be implemented, the Authority would make every effort to assist the learners to transfer and settle at their new school.

6.9.3 The Council is of the opinion that the option of closing Ysgol Abersoch and offering a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach would lead to:

- Reducing the number of surplus places within the schools
- Offering experiences for pupils to socialise and collaborate with peers on a daily basis
- Educating the children in more suitably-sized classes
- Reconciling the cost per pupil range for all pupils in the County
- Ensuring that the children transfer only once in their primary and secondary education, rather than twice

6.9.3 The alternative school also offers an education of equivalent standard at least, and provides pupils with more opportunities for collaborating and socialising with their peers, and enables the pupils to gain a range of curricular and extracurricular experiences.

6.10 Impact on staff

6.10.1 An objection was received which questioned what would happen to school staff if a decision was made to implement the proposal.

6.10.2 Should the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch be implemented, it is anticipated that the staffing implications will lead to redundancies as the posts will end when the school closes. There was consultation with staff and Union representatives specifically as part of the statutory consultation period. Any redundancies arising as a result of the proposal will be required to comply with the relevant employment law and the Gwynedd Redundancy scheme. Clear and open communication with staff will be a core part of the implementation of any proposal.

6.10.3 During the consultation, virtual drop-in sessions were held where arrangements could be made for officers from the Council's Human Resources service to be in attendance, if any member of staff wished to discuss his/her situation. Staff were informed that they were welcome to contact the Human Resources service directly if they wished to have one-to-one discussions. A support package will be offered, including training, if appropriate, to all staff affected by the proposal.

6.10.4 Subject to the Cabinet decision, the Human Resources Service will follow relevant processes with the school staff in accordance with employment law.

6.11 Nearby schools

6.11.1 A number of objections were received noting that Ysgol Llanbedrog was over capacity.

6.11.2 In response to these comments, it is noted that Gwynedd Council operates in accordance with the County's School Admissions Policy. The admissions policy corresponds to the requirements of Welsh Government's School Admissions Code.

6.11.3 The Authority is not of the opinion that the situation regarding numbers at Ysgol Llanbedrog is relevant to the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and offer a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach.

6.11.4 An objection was received which questioned whether there was enough space at Ysgol Sarn Bach for Abersoch children.

6.11.5 With 21 surplus places (and 4 surplus places for Nursery), Ysgol Sarn Bach has sufficient capacity for the number of pupils currently at Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach and for the next five years.

6.11.6 One or two referred to the impact of building an extension at Ysgol Llanbedrog on the pupils' education.

6.11.7 In response to this, it was explained that there was no intention to build an extension to Ysgol Llanbedrog as a part of the proposal that was the subject of the consultation. For clarity, the proposal is to close Ysgol Abersoch, and offer a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach.

6.11.8 One objector noted that plans were afoot to develop new housing on the Penrhos Polish site which would create between 70-100 units over the next 3-4 years and questioned the wisdom of closing Ysgol Abersoch as there would not be room for them at Ysgol Llanbedrog.

6.11.9 In response to the objection, it is noted that the Penrhos Polish site falls within the catchment area of Ysgol Gynradd Llanbedrog therefore any children in the new houses would be offered a place at that school.

6.12 Financial Matters

6.12.1 Many objectors felt that the proposal focussed excessively on financial criteria.

6.12.2 It is emphasised that the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch was not decided solely on financial grounds.

6.12.3 The school has been prioritised for a review of the educational provision as it faces a number of challenges. Pupil numbers at the school have fallen consistently since 2016 and has been fragile for some time. Consequently, it is likely that the school is facing increasing challenges, including:

- Low pupil numbers: In September 2020, 8 full-time pupils and 2 part-time nursery pupils were registered at the school.

- Projected numbers: It is anticipated that the numbers will continue to be low over the coming years (September 2021 = 10; September 2022 = 12; September 2023 = 12).
- High percentage of surplus places: Based on the figures for September 2020, there were approximately 76% of surplus places at the school (26 in total) (R - Yr 3).
- Small class sizes: The 10 pupils are taught in one mixed-age class.
- Broad age ranges within classes: The pupils are taught in one class with an age range of up to five years (3-8 years).
- Pupil residence: 2020 data shows that 26 children between 3-8 year old live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area with 21 (81%) of them attending schools outside the catchment area.

6.12.4 A comment was received that cost per pupil is a flawed concept. Usually, in a small school where numbers fluctuate from year to year, the theoretical cost per pupil will go up and down correspondingly, but the actual amount of money spent will remain the same.

6.12.5 Because of low pupil numbers, Ysgol Abersoch has for some years been receiving an additional amount to the usual allocation via the minimum staffing protection policy (which ensures at least a headteacher and teacher at each school, and a headteacher and an assistant in schools with fewer than 15 pupils).

6.12.6 As a result, the cost per pupil at Ysgol Abersoch in the 2020/21 financial year was £17,404 which is significantly higher than the average cost in the county per pupil for the same year of £4,198.

6.12.7 Projections suggest that low numbers will continue and mean that the need for additional funding will also continue.

6.12.8 Clarification was requested on how the savings estimate was calculated.

6.12.9 Ysgol Abersoch's allocation for 2020/21 was £137,140, and transferring the pupils at Ysgol Abersoch would lead to an additional allocation of £27,078 for Ysgol Sarn Bach. From the balance of £110,062 there will be potential additional transport costs of £14,000, leaving a likely saving of £96,062.

6.12.10 It was asked whether redundancy, consultation and maintenance costs were included in that estimate.

6.12.11 The figures do not take into account any maintenance costs at the Ysgol Abersoch or Ysgol Sarn Bach site. If these costs had been considered, it would mean more savings as there would be no future maintenance costs for Ysgol Abersoch.

6.12.12 Any redundancy costs will be funded from these savings.

6.12.13 Consultation costs have not been included in the calculation of savings as they are independent of the actual running costs of the schools concerned.

6.12.14 It was asked, should the proposal proceed, whether Ysgol Sarn Bach would require an additional resource, and whether the children would receive a school uniform grant.

6.12.15 Ysgol Sarn Bach has an official school uniform and the school encourages everyone to wear it. It is expected for the parents of year 3 pupils to buy a school uniform when they transfer to Ysgol Sarn Bach in any case. The children who transfer from Ysgol Abersoch can continue to wear their school (Ysgol Abersoch) uniform up to the end of year 3, if this is their parents' wish.

6.13 Alternative options

6.13.1 Objections were received asking the Council to delay the process and give the school an opportunity to increase the numbers and give the Cylch Meithrin an opportunity to thrive.

6.13.2 In response to these objections, we as an Authority cannot commit not to deal with the school for an unspecified period. Pupil numbers at Ysgol Abersoch have fallen consistently since 2016 and the figure has been fragile for some time. The Authority is of the opinion that continuing with the current education provision is not a viable option for the future. The Education Department is of the opinion that it is impractical to continue with the current situation, mainly because of:

- Very small classes.
- Low numbers and a lack of daily opportunities for pupils to socialise and collaborate with peers.
- Projections for the future, showing that numbers will remain low over the next five years, with 11 pupils attending by 2025.

6.13.3 The Council is aware that a Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi opened on the school site in February 2020. However, and despite acknowledging the potential positive impact that locating the Cylch Meithrin on the Ysgol Abersoch site can have on numbers, it is not possible to guarantee that it would lead to a substantial increase in numbers, and it is anticipated that the school's challenges would continue.

6.13.4 In addition, it is noted that Ysgol Abersoch already receives additional funding on top of the usual allocation through the minimum staffing policy (which guarantees at least a headteacher and a teacher at every school, and a headteacher and assistant at schools with fewer than 15 full-time pupils). The total additional funding for the 2020-21 financial year (based on the numbers in September 2019) is £52,582. The cost per pupil at Ysgol Abersoch is £17,404 (2020-21); the average cost in the county per pupil is £4,198.

6.13.5 This is not sustainable in the long term because the projected numbers remain low and consequently, the financial challenges would continue.

6.13.6 As noted in the consultation process, the Authority considered 10 different options following discussions with Ysgol Abersoch. It is not anticipated that allowing more time to do further work would offer any resolution to the challenges facing the school.

6.13.7 Some questioned why options for changing the age range to 3-9 were not considered for the future of the school.

6.13.8 In any procedures like this, it is essential to give detailed consideration and weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of any model, and this is what can be seen in the Options Appraisal (www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation).

6.13.9 As noted in the consultation document and then in the consultation report, the option favoured locally was the option to extend the school's age range to 3-9 years, including the development of the Cylch Meithrin. This option was favoured locally for practical reasons, such as improved use of the empty space in the school and providing a location for the Cylch Meithrin, and to mitigate the potential impact that the change could have on the numbers of Ysgol Sarn Bach (the school that provides an education for 9-11 year old pupils in the Ysgol Abersoch area).

6.13.10 The 3-9 years option was disregarded for the following reasons:

- It is not anticipated that adding one educational year would lead to a sufficient increase in the numbers. Consequently, the challenges facing the school would continue.
- The age range would not be consistent with the majority of the county's primary schools.

- It would not allow for the school to offer a comprehensive KS2 provision. The pupils would continue to transfer to Ysgol Sarn Bach to complete their primary education.

6.13.11 In September 2020, all Ysgol Abersoch (Nursery to Yr 3) pupils were educated in one class with 10 pupils. The average class size at Ysgol Sarn Bach in September 2020 was 24.

6.13.12 The table below shows the class sizes of Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach in September 2020.

School	Nursery	Reception	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Total	Number of classes	Largest class	Smallest class	Average class size
Abersoch	2	3	2	-	3	-	-	-	10	1	10	10	10
Sarn Bach	3	2	5	4	8	5	10	11	48	2	34	14	24

Source: September 2020 Annual School Census

6.13.13 Delivering the proposal would mean that Ysgol Abersoch pupils would be educated in more sustainably sized classes, with more children from the same age group.

6.13.14 With 21 surplus places (and 4 surplus places in the Nursery), Ysgol Sarn Bach has sufficient capacity for the number of pupils currently delivered at Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach and for the next five years.

6.13.15 If the proposal is realised, it is expected that the Governing Body of Ysgol Sarn Bach will give due attention to determining class sizes and the distribution of school staff resources.

6.13.16 After further consideration, it was concluded that the option to extend the school's age range to 3-9 years would not be a sustainable solution to the future for the school. It is not anticipated that adding one educational year would lead to a sufficient increase in the numbers. Consequently, the challenges facing the school would continue. It is anticipated that the numbers and projections would remain low, classes would remain small, and the broad age range within classes would continue.

6.13.17 Some questioned why options for federalisation were not considered for the future of the school.

6.13.18 In any such procedure, it is essential to give detailed consideration and weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of any model, and this is what can be seen in the Options Appraisal (www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation).

6.13.19 A discussion was held and consideration was given to the three different versions of the federalisation option as part of the statutory consultation. In addition, it was suggested during the consultation that consideration should be given to two further versions of the option, namely:

- Federation between Ysgol Abersoch, Ysgol Llanbedrog, Ysgol Sarn Bach and collaboration arrangement with Ysgol Foel Gron
- Enlli Federation (Abersoch, Llanbedrog, Sarn Bach, Pont-y-gof, Crud-y-werin, Botwnnog Secondary and collaboration arrangement with Ysgol Foel Gron).

6.13.20 Officers from the Education Department met the headteacher and chair of governors of Ysgol Sarn Bach and Ysgol Llanbedrog in January 2020 to discuss the option of federalisation with Ysgol Abersoch. Because of the informal nature of these discussions, the meetings were not minuted. This meeting was also an opportunity to update headteachers and chairs regarding the options discussed at the local meetings, highlighting any potential impact that some of the options could have on their school. Neither of the two schools declared an interest in carrying out a further investigation into a federal model.

6.13.21 Note that in order to get the best from a federal model, the schools usually, but not necessarily, share a headteacher. As there is a headteacher in post at both schools, the Council is of the opinion that the most effective federal model could lead to compulsory redundancies.

6.13.22 Despite the advantages of federalisation, the Authority is of the opinion that it is unlikely that the option would address the main challenges faced by Ysgol Abersoch, such as low numbers, small class sizes, and consequently, the school's financial challenges would continue.

6.13.23 After weighing up the pros and cons of the model, it was concluded that federalisation would not be a sustainable solution for the school. There is no clear evidence that federalisation would lead to an increase in numbers. Consequently, should this option be realised, it is anticipated that the challenge of low numbers, small class sizes and the financial challenges faced by the school, would continue. Therefore, it is considered that federalisation is not the best option for the school's situation.

6.13.24 Two objections were received that recommended considering an option to establish a Multi-site School between Ysgol Abersoch, Ysgol Llanbedrog and Ysgol Sarn Bach.

6.13.25 During the Local School Review meetings, many possible models were proposed and discussed, in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018. In the case of the Multi-site Area School model, the school would be one school and a single legal entity that serves a broad area. However, a multi-site area school provides an educational provision on a number of sites.

6.13.26 The benefit of this type of model is the ability to restructure the managerial arrangements, yet retaining the presence of education in more than one community. It is a model that can work well in very rural areas where there are long travelling distances before arriving at the alternative school. Also, it means that small school sites are not left in isolation, but rather as part of a larger education establishment. Therefore, better use can be made of resources, e.g. one headteacher for more than one site, sharing resources and staff between sites and bringing pupils from sites together to hold activities with a higher number of pupils.

6.13.27 After weighing up the pros and cons of the model, following the statutory consultation, it was concluded that a Multi-site School would not be a sustainable solution for the school. There is no clear evidence that it would lead to an increase in numbers. Consequently, should this option be realised, it is anticipated that the challenge of low numbers, small class sizes and the financial challenges faced by the school, would continue. Therefore, it is considered that a Multi-site School is not the best option for the school's situation.

6.13.28 A number of objections recommended possible developments to the school, e.g. Beach School, Cultural Centre, Complete Education and Knowledge of the Locality.

6.13.29 The Council notes the options for developing the school.

6.13.30 Ysgol Abersoch has been prioritised for a review of the educational provision as the school is facing a number of challenges. Pupil numbers at the school have fallen consistently since 2016 and has been fragile for some time. Consequently, it is likely that the school is facing increasing challenges.

6.13.31 It is acknowledged that these options can make better use of the school building. However, when considering the options against the factors of the Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd Strategy, it is concluded that the options would not manage to address or resolve the main challenges faced by the school, e.g. low pupil numbers, small class sizes, broad age-range within classes and high pupil costs per head.

6.13.32 Some objections were received that questioned why a catchment area review was not considered.

6.13.33 In response to these comments, it is noted that the Council Cabinet, at its meeting on 17 September 2019, had permitted the Education Department to hold formal discussions with Ysgol Abersoch to enable a range of possible options relating to the future of the school, as a result of concerns regarding pupil numbers at the school and concerns regarding the projections that anticipated numbers remaining low.

6.13.34 The Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd Strategy notes:

"Relevant professional information should also be considered so as to draw attention to urgent situations within the County that directly impact quality of pupils' education and experiences (e.g. very low pupil numbers within a school, very poor condition of a school building, difficulties in headteacher recruitment).

Situations of serious and immediate concern as evidenced by relevant professional specialist information and including specific requests from individual schools will be a key consideration when prioritizing catchment areas for review."

6.13.35 It is emphasised that the review of the situation of Ysgol Abersoch is not a part of a broader strategy for education in the area, but rather, is a response to a crisis situation at an individual school.

6.13.36 Some comments claimed that alternative options raised during the consultation had not been fully considered and discussed thoroughly.

6.13.37 The School Organisation Code 011/2018, notes that consultees can suggest other alternative options as well as observations on the proposal in question during the consultation.

6.13.38 Five other alternative options were suggested during the consultation. (A number of the responses also suggested that further consideration should be given to the option to extend the school's age range to 3-9) However, after appraising these options against the factors of the *Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd* strategy (whilst considering the School Organisation Code 011/2018 and other relevant considerations), it was concluded that the proposal of closing Ysgol Abersoch and providing a place for all the children of the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area at Ysgol Sarn Bach remained the most appropriate option to respond to the challenges faced by the school (for the reasons noted in section 4.1 and 4.7 of the report on the consultation www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation).

6.14 Well-being Act

6.14.1 An objection was received noting that the seven aims of the Well-being Act had not been considered in full.

6.14.2 The Council has committed to the principles within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) in order to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of the communities of Gwynedd. The Council's vision:

"Our vision as a Council is to support all the people of Gwynedd to thrive and live full lives in our community, in a county which is one of the best counties to live in."

6.14.3 It was noted in the statutory consultation document - following consideration and an assessment in line with the requirements of the Well-being Act, the conclusion was reached that the proposal did satisfy the seven well-being goals within the Act, and the Council's well-being objectives. The proposal will allow us to respond to and meet the children's needs today, and also strengthen their future well-being.

6.15 Post-use of the school site

6.15.1 Some questioned where community activities held at the school will be provided if the school is closed, and what will happen to the school buildings and grounds if the school is closed. Some also highlighted that the land and building were a gift to the community.

6.15.2 Should the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch be implemented, the Council has a school building post-use policy and this policy would be followed when considering the future of the site.

6.15.3 The Council would need to discuss and consider any binding legal terms or restrictions that could come into force if the school site would cease to be a site for an educational provision.

6.15.4 We are aware that the Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi are held on the school site. Should a decision be made to close the school, options for the post-use of the school would have to be considered, taking the activities currently held at the school into account.

6.15.5 Therefore, in terms of the Cylch Meithrin provision, if this proposal goes ahead, the Council is eager to discuss the possibilities with relevant representatives. The possibilities for discussion could include staying at the current location, relocating to the alternative school, or moving to another site in the village of Abersoch.

6.16 Implementation date of the proposal

6.16.1 Objections were received which questioned the intention to implement the proposal in the middle of a school year.

6.16.2 Despite the consultation being held on the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 August 2021 and provide a place for pupils in Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 September 2021, after considering the comments received in the consultation expressing concerns about the outline timetable, it was decided that deferring implementation until 31 December 2021 would allow more time for the Education Department to put arrangements in place in order to ensure a smooth transition for pupils from Ysgol Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach.

6.16.3 Subject to the Cabinet's decision, it was considered that this would allow enough time for the Education Department to work with the two schools to put all the necessary arrangements in place prior to transferring pupils to Ysgol Sarn Bach at the beginning of January 2022.

6.17 Other

6.17.1 Merched y Wawr submitted in their objection that its principles should be considered “To promote any cause for the benefit of women in Wales, and in particular to empower public education and to promote Welsh culture, education and the arts in Wales through the Welsh language” in considering the proposal.

6.17.2 Our expectation is that the County's primary schools support and enhance the use of the Welsh language as their pupils' social language and educational language.

6.17.3 When developing any proposals relating to schools' reorganisation, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the Welsh language. Sustaining and improving the use of the Welsh language as a social language and educational language is always a key consideration when drawing up proposals and when assessing options.

- 6.17.4 In accordance with the School Organisation Code 011/2018, an assessment was completed of the linguistic impact of the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and educating the children at Ysgol Sarn Bach. The assessment is available on the Council website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation.
- 6.17.5 It is concluded in this assessment that no negative impact on the Welsh language is anticipated, should the proposal be realised. This is specifically so as the alternative school offers a Welsh-medium education, as currently offered at Ysgol Abersoch. The Language Policy is the same for all Gwynedd primary schools, therefore the provision would be the same for the pupils, regardless of which school they would choose to attend.
- 6.17.6 Others noted that it is beneficial for children to be educated close to home.**
- 6.17.7 If the proposal is realised, the children of the catchment area would be offered a high-quality education at Ysgol Sarn Bach, which is 1.4 miles from the village of Abersoch.
- 6.17.8 Some noted that Llanengan Parish contributes over 4% of the tax collected in Gwynedd and that a small proportion of the money generated by these second homes could be allocated to support the village school.**
- 6.17.9 The Council notes the comments/objections and notes that the school receives an additional amount to the usual allocation via the minimum staffing protection policy (which ensures at least a headteacher and teacher at each school, and a headteacher and an assistant in schools with fewer than 15 pupils). The total additional funding for the 2020-21 financial year (based on the numbers in September 2019) was £52,582. The cost per pupil at Ysgol Abersoch is £17,404 (2020-21); the average cost in the county per pupil is £4,198. This is not sustainable in the long term because the projected numbers remain low and consequently, the financial challenges would continue.
- 6.17.10 One objector expressed dissatisfaction that there was no mention in the report of the 150 new jobs when a hotel is built and opened in Abersoch, encouraging local families to stay in the area and creating an opportunity for new families to come to the area.**
- 6.17.11 In response, it is noted that there is no guarantee that demographic changes in the future and an increase in local jobs would increase pupil numbers at Ysgol Abersoch. The children of the catchment area would be offered a high-quality education at Ysgol Sarn Bach, which is 1.4 miles from the village of Abersoch.
- 6.17.12 Some objections were received that questioned the decisions of Gwynedd Council committees, and questioned whether a fair hearing would be held in the case of Ysgol Abersoch.**
- 6.17.13 A decision taken by the Cabinet on 15 September 2020 was called in for scrutiny by the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee. In its meeting on 8 October 2020, the committee considered the Council Cabinet's decision to hold a statutory consultation to the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 August 2021, and provide a place for pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach on 1 September 2021.
- 6.17.14 After careful consideration, the Committee decided that it remained concerned about the situation and that the matter should be referred back to the Cabinet for reconsideration.
- 6.17.15 Following careful consideration and a detailed discussion of the Scrutiny Committee's views at its meeting held on 3 November 2020, the Council's Cabinet decided that its original decision taken on 15 September 2020 to conduct a statutory consultation on the proposal, should not be amended, and to adopt this as its final decision.
- 6.17.16 A number of comments were received noting the second home problems in Abersoch and the impact that this had on the school. In addition, a number of comments were received noting that one of the reasons why the number of pupils had not increased over the past years was the lack of affordable housing.**

6.17.17 *The Council notes the comments/objections, however, the Council wishes to note that it does not have control over the open housing market.* In December 2020, Gwynedd Council adopted an Action Plan that will invest £77m in over 30 specific plans to tackle the increasing challenge of a lack of suitable housing for the County's residents, including increasing the number of affordable housing available for local people. The Plan will be implemented over the next six years, including projects such as increasing the number of social housing in Gwynedd; purchasing former social housing and private houses to let at an affordable rent to the residents of Gwynedd; developing our own houses to increase the opportunities for Gwynedd residents to compete; refusing applications to remove a local person condition on former "Council houses"; Homebuy Scheme and First Time Buyers' Grants to renovate empty houses. The exact locations of some of these schemes are to be confirmed following an exercise of consulting with communities in order to establish their housing needs.

6.17.18 The Council is aware that a set of measures will be required, a number of them currently beyond the direct control of the Council, if we are to be able to achieve genuine fairness for local residents in the field of housing. This Housing Action Plan is one of these measures and allows us to aim to directly act to the best of our abilities in order to attempt to reconcile the current situation. We also acknowledge that we will continue to campaign for further national changes in order to strengthen our ability to operate within Gwynedd and the Council will continue to do so at every possible opportunity in the field of housing, taxation, licensing and planning.

7. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

7.1 Several impact assessments were conducted in line with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, including:

- *Assessment of the probable impact on different transport arrangements*
- *Assessment of the probable impact on the community*
- *Assessment of the probable impact on the quality and standards of education*

7.2 Following the consultation period, in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternatives considered was completed and included as an appendix to the report submitted to of the Cabinet on 15 June 2021. A copy of the full assessment can be viewed on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation

7.3 The conclusions of the assessment of the likely impact on different travel arrangements are noted, which would mean that the option of closing the school would require pupils from Ysgol Abersoch to travel further to their school each day. Ysgol Sarn Bach is located 1.4 miles from Ysgol Abersoch, and it is anticipated that the journey takes approximately five minutes each way in a car or on a bus, which is within the reasonable distance expected for primary children to travel to their school in accordance with the '*Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd Strategy*' of 30 minutes each way. Transport to the alternative school would be offered in line with Gwynedd Council transport policy.

7.4 The assessment of the probable impact on the community states that there would be some negative impact from closing the school. In addition, it is noted that a vast number of responses to the consultation emphasised that the proposal to close the school would have a negative impact on the village and the local community. Nevertheless, the Authority notes that 35% of pupils (N-Yr 3) who live in the Abersoch catchment area already attend Ysgol Sarn Bach; therefore, it is concluded that a connection already exists between the school and the broader area. To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community

of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.

7.5 The assessment of the probable impact on the quality and standards of education notes that it is concluded that the standard of education provided at Ysgol Sarn Bach is of the same level as the quality of education at Ysgol Abersoch. Consequently, it is not anticipated any negative impact would derive in terms of the quality and standards of education from the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and transfer the pupils to Ysgol Sarn Bach.

7.6 The Education Department remains of the opinion, that after holding the objection period, none of the other options, including federalisation and extending the age range of the school, would address the main challenges facing the school, namely:

- low pupil numbers,
- projections showing a further decline over the next five years,
- current pupils being taught in classes that are small in number with a broad age range within those classes.

8. FURTHER CONSIDERATION

8.1 In addition to the impact assessments noted above, a number of other impact assessments were undertaken and updated during the process. These assessments are included as an appendix to this report (Appendix C) and to the report presented to Cabinet on 15 June 2021 and their conclusions are summarised below.

8.2 Well-being Assessment (Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015)

8.2.1 Following consideration and an assessment in line with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015, the conclusion was reached that the proposal did satisfy the seven well-being goals within the Act, and the Council's well-being objectives. This proposal will allow the Council to respond to and meet the children's needs today, and also strengthen their future well-being.

8.2.2 It is acknowledged that should the Cabinet decide to proceed with this proposal, it may result in the closure of a school in the community of Abersoch, however a large number of the children living within the school's catchment area already attend other schools, including the alternative school, and therefore there is already a link between Ysgol Sarn Bach and the community of Abersoch. Every effort will be made to mitigate the impact on the community by encouraging links between the communities. Should the proposal be approved, discussions will take place to discuss the possibility that Ysgol Sarn Bach's community activity includes the Abersoch community, where appropriate.

8.2.3 The proposal will ensure that the children of the area are educated on a site that is suitable and in a naturally Welsh-speaking society, thus increasing the opportunities to socialise and collaborate with others, and to give them a fair opportunity to thrive among their peers.

8.3 Equality Assessment

8.3.1 Policies and procedures are in place to ensure that the proposal considers and complies with equal rights.

8.3.2 An equality assessment was held on the options, which focuses on different elements of equality such as race, sex, disability, language, religion or belief, and age.

8.3.3 The equality assessment stated the importance of positively promoting equal opportunities in light of the proposal, and that measures should be in place to ensure that unlawful discrimination and harassment does not occur. Arrangements are also in place to monitor and review the situation. The assessment can be seen in **Appendix C**.

8.4 Language Impact Assessment

8.4.1 It is not anticipated that the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach would have a negative impact on the linguistic ability of the children. The option would mean that pupils at Ysgol Abersoch continue to be educated in a Welsh medium school. It is noted that a higher percentage of pupils in Ysgol Sarn Bach come from Welsh-speaking homes (57%), compared with Ysgol Abersoch (33%). When transferring pupils from Ysgol Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach, it is anticipated that the percentage of pupils who come from Welsh-speaking homes would be around 54%. On the basis of this, it is anticipated that there would be more opportunities for the pupils of Abersoch to use the Welsh language informally with their peers both inside and outside the classroom, and that the level of vibrancy of Welsh and the informal use of the language would strengthen. Ysgol Abersoch has worked hard to develop the children's bilingual skills and promote the importance of Welsh culture. Therefore, it is important that the proposal to move the children acknowledges the need to support and continue with this work.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 Although the Authority received a total of 211 objections and 2 petitions during the objection period, having considered all the objections received, the Council remains convinced that this proposal is the most appropriate response to the main challenges faced by the school.

9.2 Analysis of the comments and objections received is examined in *Section 6* of this report, and the responses are available in full in **Appendix A**.

9.3 It is envisaged that the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and offer the pupils a place at Ysgol Sarn Bach will respond to the challenges facing Ysgol Abersoch (outlined in section 3.2) and will lead to more consistent opportunities for children in the catchment area, by aiming towards the strategic aspirations of Gwynedd Council to "*offer education of the highest possible quality that will give the County's children the experiences, skills and confidence that would enable them to develop to be bilingual, successful and full citizens*". This would be in line with the targets of the 'Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd' Strategy:

- Class sizes (and age ranges) - Pupils to be educated in more suitably-sized classes than the current situation. Implementing the proposal would lead to better consistency in class sizes and reduce the age range within primary school classes in the area.
- Population and Pupil Numbers - Pupils to be educated at a school where the numbers and projections are more robust and sustainable for the future, and reduce the rate of surplus places in the area's schools.
- Leadership - robust leadership and management in a school with numbers gives fairness to the Headteacher to be able to professionally lead and manage at the school.
- The Community - To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community.
- Financial Resources - Rationalising the per pupil cost in schools which would reduce the range in the per pupil cost for all Gwynedd children. It is estimated that realising the proposal would lead to a per pupil cost of £4,683 at Ysgol Sarn Bach compared to the current £17,404 per pupil cost at Ysgol

Abersoch. The county-wide average for the same period is £4,198 per pupil. It is estimated that the proposal would create an annual saving of £110,062, less additional transport needs costs (£14,000) - which is approximately £96,062 per annum.

- The Welsh Language - Pupils to be educated at a Welsh-medium school, as the current situation, and at a school where social use of the Welsh language is strong.
- Geographical Factors - Pupils would continue to receive their education at a school within reasonable distance of their homes and receive transport in accordance with Council policy.

10. RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 Following consideration of the objections and comments received, it is recommended for the Cabinet to finally confirm the proposal issued through statutory notice, to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 December 2021, and provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 January 2022, in accordance with Section 53 of the School Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013 and the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018.

11. NEXT STEPS

- 11.1 Following the Cabinet's final decision, in accordance with section 54 of the 2013 Act, within 28 days of the Cabinet's decision, the following bodies can refer the proposal to Welsh Ministers for a decision:
- Another Local Authority affected by the proposals;
 - The appropriate religious body for any school affected;
 - The governing body of a voluntary or foundation school subject to proposals;
 - A trust holding property on behalf of a voluntary or foundation school subject to proposals;
 - A further education establishment affected by the proposals.
- 11.2 The body making the referral will have to note why it believes that the decision made by the local authority is wrong. Welsh Ministers will decide whether the proposals affect the bodies and whether they need to consider the proposals.
- 11.3 If the final decision by the Cabinet is to proceed with the proposal and if the proposal is not referred, the next steps and timetable will be as follows:

November - December 2021	<p>The Education Department to collaborate with the two schools to put all the necessary arrangements in place prior to transferring pupils to Ysgol Sarn Bach at the beginning of January 2022.</p> <p>The Human Resources Service will follow relevant processes with the school staff in accordance with employment law.</p>
31 December 2021	<p>Implementation of the proposal: Ysgol Abersoch officially closes, subject to the Cabinet's decision.</p>

12. THE VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

The Monitoring Officer:

The report has been the subject of advice from Legal Services no observations to add in relation to propriety.

Head of Finance:

I confirm that the financial figures within sections 3.3 (v) and (vi), 6.12, 6.13, 6.17 and 9 of the report, and also the figures in Gwynedd Council's response within Part (Ng) of Appendix A, reflect the true cost or a fair estimate (where appropriate) having considered the cost of transport.

There are clear reasons to support the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 December 2021, including financial reasons such as an annual saving of £96,062 in revenue costs, and a per pupil cost of £17,404 at Ysgol Abersoch compared to a county average of £4,198. Therefore, I support the recommendation.

The Local Member:

"... my response dated 22/07/21 which opposes the closure of the school, the reasons and comments are still relevant and nothing has changed.

In addition to the report which emphasizes the negative impact on the Welsh language and culture in the village- the negative effect on the children's education. The loss of an important historic resource to the Village and so important in many ways to the area.

I have recently received information from the Housing and Property Department that they are looking at building houses in the Village and that the housing association already owns land that lies within the development boundary and is hopeful through a Welsh Government grant application to build houses for local people.

It is clear that when this development comes into force that educational resources will not reach the requirement- there is no word in the report on the ability to respond to this type of development. It must be recognized that the capacity of schools in the area is overcrowded and the capacity does not accommodate more children.

Recently I was listening to the Planning Committee discussing the erection of 12 houses in the Penygroes area and that there is a local demand for this type of development for local people. One of the concerns raised was the capacity of local schools to accept more children that will increase with this development. It highlights the fact that resources within the society are important in the upcoming plans. This decision is completely opposite to the Council's ambition.

I have to say that the decision to close the school was unwise but to close the school in the middle of the School Year and move the children to another School does not make any sense and will have a negative impact on the children's education, if the School will have to close, then why not defer it until the end of the School Year.

I am disappointed that again I am in the position of having to respond to a report within two days although I have complained in the past that this is unfair in terms of giving me appropriate time to communicate with Parent Governors and society as a whole, you could say that this is intentional because this has happened repeatedly throughout the process. For these reasons I ask the Cabinet to reconsider its decision and keep this resource open or at least until the School Year is over."

Appendices:

Appendix A: Analysis of objection comments

Appendix B: Statutory Notice

Appendix C: Equality and Wellbeing Assessments

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTATION - All relevant background documentation on the proposal is available on the Council's website through the following link: www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation.

**Objections to the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 December 2021, and provide a place for pupils at Ysgol Sarn
Bach from 1 January 2022**

(Objection Notice Period 25 June – 23 July 2021)

211 objections and 2 petitions were received and are grouped under the following headings:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Objections received without comments b) Effect on the community c) Educational Matters d) Welsh Language e) Cylch Meithrin f) Comments on the Statutory Process g) Travel and Transport h) Effect on learners i) Staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> j) Nearby Schools k) Financial Matters l) Alternative Options m) Wellbeing Act n) Future use of site o) Implementation Date p) Other q) Petitions |
|--|--|

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Comments		Gwynedd Council's response	
A	Objections received without comments		
1	E-mails received objecting to the proposal but not commenting on why they objected.	63	The objections have been noted.

B	Community		
2	Ysgol Abersoch is at the heart of the community and children who are fortunate enough to have their first previous education within its walls are confident and happy throughout their remaining years of education.		The Council notes the comments in relation to the importance of the school to the life of the village and community of Abersoch.
3	Abersoch School also acts as a valuable bridge, welcoming and integrating newly arrived families at the heart of our diverse community, encouraging and promoting the benefits of bilingualism and celebrating Welsh culture.		When developing any proposals relating to modernising education, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the community.
4	It is accepted that rural schools are almost always small schools, but their size is not indicative of their importance to their community.		As part of the consultation process, the Council conducted an assessment of the community impact of the options under consideration in order to assess the likely impact the options would have on the communities in question. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation
5	Stealing this from the future generations would deprive the whole community.		
6	I feel VERY Strongly in favour of the treasured continuance of Ysgol Abersoch, in order that "Community" and our precious local children might continue to be revered and properly served.		
7	It's the heart of the small village. We have already lost our local doctor's surgery which is a tragedy for the village elders, and losing another core service would be a tragedy for the village's young people as well.		The assessment noted that by closing Ysgol Abersoch, some elements of community events would be affected and there would be some negative impact deriving from closing the school. However, it was noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Year 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attended Ysgol Sarn Bach.
8	The school is an integral part of the community. Under the careful guidance of our headteacher, Linda Jones, the pupils play a key role in promoting the Welsh language and culture, through successful initiatives such as encouraging local shops to display bilingual signs and participating in local events. These are great opportunities to capitalize on our unique offering and promote our heritage to a wider audience.		Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the alternative school and the broader area.
9	Finally, I would like to remind you of the vital role that Ysgol Abersoch plays in the area. It is not just a school, but an organization that provides hopes of revitalizing the Welshness of the area.		To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.
10	If the school attendance fails to be maintained, I believe this will be the fate of Abersoch. Having such an education gives the village hope in a unique way that would not be reflected by any other amenity; it must also be remembered that education is an investment in an area, and taking this away would be an unprecedented college for the community.		Consequently, should the proposal be implemented it will be required as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of Ysgol Abersoch pupils so that parents and pupils take advantage of their facilities and after-school activities, and to encourage the alternative school to also take advantage of the facilities of the community of Abersoch.
11	An aspect that is unique in Ysgol Abersoch is the community that surrounds it. The pupils are at the center of the village, and often see Abersoch residents who		

	will create an open and comfortable atmosphere; this is an opportunity you cannot get in other schools.		Should a decision be made to close the school, there will be an opportunity to consider the options for the post-use of the school, taking the community activities currently held at the school into account.
12	The school is now the most important resource in the village in driving regeneration, and a decision to close the school would be tantamount to a decision to abandon the community in terms of Welshness, and to abandon the local hard-working crew who could be valuable partners in a regeneration strategy.		
13	If the school were to close, then these connections and engagement with the local community will be lost.		
14	To close the local village school would severely damage the fabric of Abersoch village retaining its status as a thriving local village community with an integrated school of many years standing to continue and preserve the ability to provide local education of children from aged 3 to 8 into the Welsh language, history and culture. No other village in the area under consideration has such an integrated village with Abersoch having local businesses, shops, pubs, cafes, beaches, a harbour, tourist office, garages, golf course etc. and now a school under threat of closure. To close the school would 'Rip the heart out of the village', no longer would residents, second home owners, tourists and visitors see and hear the voices of young pupils going to and from school or hear them enjoying playing in the yard during school breaks.		
15	Loss to the community and the engagement in the community of the pupils.		The Council notes the comments regarding the negative impact that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch may have on the village. When developing any proposals relating to education modernisation, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the community. As part of the consultation process, the Council conducted an assessment of the community impact of the options under consideration in order to assess the likely impact the options would have on the communities in question. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation
16	Without the School, Abersoch will be dead, miserable and lifeless, like Hamelin when the young children were attracted to the mountain. The village and its environs will only be a playground for visitors and the natives and inhabitants, like the natives of America, in sanctuaries here and there.		
17	The school is an essential part of village life. It is a place where the local children learn to socialise and where they gain a sense of village community spirit and which is so essential in these rural areas. We no longer have a bank or doctors here and the school has become the hub of the village- the children give concerts at Xmas, visit the local Panad group and their visits are very much enjoyed by the local residents who attend.		
18	The school is at the heart of the community and generations who are educated there feel a sense of place and contribute to the whole village.		

19	A huge mistake closing the heart of our village, our community's voice, the future of our children, for what? £££ that is trebled and more in terms of second home taxes.		
20	The children and the school are the heart of the community and its those families who keep this village going all year round. It would be a huge loss if they were to be pushed out due to the closure of their incredible school.		The assessment noted that by closing Ysgol Abersoch, some elements of community events would be affected and there would be some negative impact deriving from closing the school. However, it was noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Year 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attended Ysgol Sarn Bach. Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the alternative school and the broader area.
21	As a local to Abersoch born and bread in the village it's very sad to hear of the possible closure of Ysgol Abersoch...I admit that Abersoch over the years has become a very popular tourist destination and from that has been subject to a lot of homes bought up by holidaymakers however there are still young local families in the village wanting to send there kids to the school,it just seems the village has been written off as a tourist attraction and has no passion from the council to try and sustain locals in the village community... the school closing would be a huge loss to the village, I've watched 2 generations myself come through there and even when we'd left the school we still use to attend the Christmas plays the teachers put on for the village which drew in a lot of local families to get together. The families that are still lucky enough to be in the village have tried there utmost to help with fundraisers and so on and are more than willing to help further in the future.		To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate. Consequently, should the proposal be implemented it will be required as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of Ysgol Abersoch pupils so that parents and pupils take advantage of their facilities and after-school activities, and to encourage the alternative school to also take advantage of the facilities of the community of Abersoch.
22	What sort of amenities are available for the local community? No banks, no GP surgery, no nhs dentist, a school awaiting closure and a downsized police station that's hardly ever manned. Both my children had an excellent education at Abersoch school, were fluent in Welsh and both went on to attend university. Unfortunately, neither of them has been able to live in the village of their birth to raise their families due to the extortionate house prices. It seems the quality of life of the local residents and their wishes are not taken into consideration when these decisions are made.		Should a decision be made to close the school, there will be an opportunity to consider the options for the post-use of the school, taking the community activities currently held at the school into account.
23	What a true shame it would be to lose the local primary school in Abersoch. It has and still is a large part of the community and has educated many many children local to the area for years. It is so important for children to feel that their school is part of where they live and to learn alongside friends and neighbours.		The Council notes the comments regarding the negative impact that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch may have on the village. When developing any proposals relating to modernising education, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the community.

24	<p>TOTALLY AGAINST THE CLOSURE OF YSGOL ABERSOCH!!! XI am disheartened by Gwynedd Council, am angry, shocked, and so upset!! I cannot believe that a Small Welsh School is to be closed, the children will be pushed out of the way, as if they were dust. What is left of the Welsh in the village? No community left, no doctor, no bank and now no School!! But an ugly hotel has been given the go ahead, plenty of new summer homes – congratulations you have sold out to England once again! Abersoch = Tryweryn 2! Sad! Sad! Sad!!!</p>		<p>As part of the consultation process, the Council conducted an assessment of the community impact of the options under consideration in order to assess the likely impact the options would have on the communities in question. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p>
25	<p>I would like to raise my strong objection to the closure of Ysgol Abersoch. This school is, and should remain, at the heart of this small and very special community.</p>		<p>The assessment noted that by closing Ysgol Abersoch, some elements of community events would be affected and there would be some negative impact deriving from closing the school. However, it was noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Year 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attended Ysgol Sarn Bach.</p>
26	<p>I strongly object to the proposed closure of Ysgol Abersoch. Schools are the heart and future of communities.</p>		<p>Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the alternative school and the broader area.</p>
27	<p>I state that I object to the closure of Abersoch school on the grounds of the impact to the local community.</p>		
28	<p>Taking education from the local community will damage the opportunities for local children and teachers and will just further push away locals from the village in favor of seasonal tourists, damaging any history or heritage the village has.</p>		<p>To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.</p>
29	<p>is central to the village and linked closely to the community and its activities</p>		
30	<p>It's more than a school, it's a vital part of our community and it's closure will erode further Abersoch's heart.</p>		
31	<p>Taking education from the local community will damage the opportunities for local children and teachers and will just further push away locals from the village in favor of seasonal tourists, damaging any history or heritage the village has.</p>		<p>Consequently, should the proposal be implemented it will be required as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of Ysgol Abersoch pupils so that parents and pupils take advantage of their facilities and after-school activities, and to encourage the alternative school to also take advantage of the facilities of the community of Abersoch.</p>
32	<p>People point out that Abersoch's community is dwindling, but if the school is closed what chance does Abersoch have of local children being part of the community and wanting to take over family business and stay local, what attraction to new families will there be? Every child and family deserve a chance for a great easily accessible education for their children and the children to feel part of their local community.</p>		<p>Should a decision be made to close the school, there will be an opportunity to consider the options for the post-use of the school, taking the community activities currently held at the school into account.</p>
33	<p>The damage to a community will be devastating and irreplaceable for locals & visitors</p>		

34	Please do not close Abersoch school, it is such an important part of the community. It means the world to the children who go there.		The Council notes the comments regarding the negative impact that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch may have on the village.
35	You are taking away so much opportunity for children to learn and cherish their early years of education in the unique and individual way that this school provides, as well as the community link and support for the Welsh language being second to none.		When developing any proposals relating to modernising education, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the community.
36	Closing such a wonderful little school with have a huge and lasting effect on the community in Abersoch.		As part of the consultation process, the Council conducted an assessment of the community impact of the options under consideration in order to assess the likely impact the options would have on the communities in question. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation
37	I am disgusted at your decision to close our community school and your lack of support for our local community.		
38	I write a formal note to display my objection to the closure of Ysgol Abersoch. This decision is not a constructive one for the community. It is important to keep it open.		
39	The loss of the school in the community would be devastating.		
40	It is a valued commodity within the village. My Grandchildren attended the school and we're given the opportunity to develope and progress. There is a myriad of things that could be done to make the school more viable.		The assessment noted that by closing Ysgol Abersoch, some elements of community events would be affected and there would be some negative impact deriving from closing the school. However, it was noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Year 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attended Ysgol Sarn Bach.
41	<p>The school's importance as a resource is also evident but perhaps not fully appreciated when they can be seen going around the village either singing carols at Christmas, holding outdoor classes on the beach or indeed visiting elderly residents thru coffee mornings. In fact, it's recently been recognised that interaction between young children and elderly persons is enormously beneficial. Indeed, as the local elderly welsh residents often speak little English the children are a godsend. Therefore, the loss of the school would be felt throughout Abersoch village and beyond. We would really miss this mini Ambassadors of the Welsh language.</p> <p>I have recently received a survey regarding second/holiday homes. The survey highlighted the impact of such on local resources including the school. This would suggest that the local council recognise that the school closure would be a tragedy and have a massive negative impact.</p>		<p>Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the alternative school and the broader area.</p> <p>To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.</p> <p>Consequently, should the proposal be implemented it will be required as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of Ysgol Abersoch pupils so that parents and pupils take advantage of their facilities and after-school activities, and to encourage the alternative school to also take advantage of the facilities of the community of Abersoch.</p>

			Should a decision be made to close the school, there will be an opportunity to consider the options for the post-use of the school, taking the community activities currently held at the school into account.
42	Our son would be attending this school and we feel it is a vital contribution to our village. There are more young families moving in to the area who need a local school to teach our children. I encourage my little boy to speak Welsh and also learning Welsh for our business here.		The Council notes the comments regarding the negative impact that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch may have on the village. When developing any proposals relating to modernising education, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the community.
43	The village of Abersoch has lost so much over the past few years. I beg you to not dispose of the small village School that is so important to this community!!! Without a school what will the future hold for Abersoch!! A holiday resort for visitors and no one living here over the Winter !!!		As part of the consultation process, the Council conducted an assessment of the community impact of the options under consideration in order to assess the likely impact the options would have on the communities in question. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation
44	In my opinion, it looks as though you have given up too quickly on this school. If I have read correctly, the school is 25% full. Would it not be possible to make an example of this school and show that repossession is possible and ensure that they will be part of the future of our communities. Often I have praised Gwynedd Council, and have considered you to be an example of how a Council ought to deal with the decisions impacting the Welsh communities; but it is a shame, it looks as though you have given up on this matter.		The assessment noted that by closing Ysgol Abersoch, some elements of community events would be affected and there would be some negative impact deriving from closing the school. However, it was noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Year 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attended Ysgol Sarn Bach. Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the alternative school and the broader area.
45	As a passionate advocate of quality education for early years and young people I write to you today to implore you to reconsider your decision to close Ysgol Abersoch which is vital to the survival of the Abersoch community and a shining beacon in its provision of outstanding learning opportunities for its children and their impact on promoting the Welsh language and culture within the village and wider community.		To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.
46	The school is an integral part of the village as a whole. Fundraising for and by the school has always been hugely successful, as the community is so entwined with the school and its pupil's success. The children interact with village businesses and residents to make great use of the natural resources on their doorstep. I assure you many schools envy Ysgol Abersoch PE lessons on the beach!		Consequently, should the proposal be implemented it will be required as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of Ysgol Abersoch pupils so that parents and pupils take advantage of their facilities and after-school activities, and to encourage the alternative school to also take advantage of the facilities of the community of Abersoch.

			Should a decision be made to close the school, there will be an opportunity to consider the options for the post-use of the school, taking the community activities currently held at the school into account.
47	<p>The school is unique and is key to preserving the culture of this amazing village, closure will destroy a key part of local life in an area already under threat from second home owners.</p> <p>The council is rightly concerned about the loss of local housing and is trying to do what it can to encourage more people to live and work on the Llyn, closing the school will discourage young families from living and working in the village and make it far more difficult to keep the local culture and community alive.</p> <p>Closing the school will rip the heart out of the village, and our council should be doing more to rebuild the Abersoch community, rather than taking away one of its foundations.</p>		<p>The Council notes the comments regarding the negative impact that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch may have on the village.</p> <p>When developing any proposals relating to modernising education, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the community.</p> <p>As part of the consultation process, the Council conducted an assessment of the community impact of the options under consideration in order to assess the likely impact the options would have on the communities in question. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p>
48	I understand the importance of Ysgol Abersoch to the local community. Without those community pillars the village is much the poorer for it.		
49	<p>Ripping the heart out of our village, and our community is not modernising, its going backwards. Modernising, would be rebuilding our community, providing a unique education for young families and attracting people to live and work in Abersoch, a jewel in the crown of the Llyn and Gwynedd. Destroying our community will just make Abersoch a shell of its former self, shaped by Gwynedd council for tourists.</p> <p>Think again and stop destroying the community on the Llyn.</p>	49	<p>The assessment noted that by closing Ysgol Abersoch, some elements of community events would be affected and there would be some negative impact deriving from closing the school. However, it was noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Year 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attended Ysgol Sarn Bach.</p> <p>Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the alternative school and the broader area.</p>
50	<p>This is a small community where friendliness and unity are essential. Ysgol Abersoch provides a nurturing environment for the children of this village to grow physically and emotionally before moving to a larger school. They are a big part of everything that Abersoch stands for and it would be a disgrace if it was to close.</p>		<p>To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.</p>
51	<p>I strongly object to the closure of this school which would have such a negative impact on the village and the community.</p> <p>Although I am not a local and have visited Abersoch for holidays for many years, I have been lucky enough to see the school in action and see the children around the village in their school group.</p>		<p>Consequently, should the proposal be implemented it will be required as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of Ysgol Abersoch pupils so that parents and pupils take advantage of their facilities and</p>

	What a very sad day that would be for the local children. The removal of this local service would be a step closer to Abersoch turning into a hotspot rather than a beautiful welsh community. These are the things that keep Abersochs charm alive.		after-school activities, and to encourage the alternative school to also take advantage of the facilities of the community of Abersoch. Should a decision be made to close the school, there will be an opportunity to consider the options for the post-use of the school, taking the community activities currently held at the school into account.
52	I am writing to say that I fully object to the closure of Ysgol Abersoch after witnessing the march which took place in the village. I do not agree that this school should close at all, and think it would be a significant shame for the community.		The Council notes the comments regarding the negative impact that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch may have on the village.
53	Please keep Abersoch school open. It will be best for the children's education and show that Abersoch is a community who care for local children.		When developing any proposals relating to modernising education, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the community.
54	I wholly object to the closure of Ysgol Abersoch. I think it would be very damaging to the community, and the children.		As part of the consultation process, the Council conducted an assessment of the community impact of the options under consideration in order to assess the likely impact the options would have on the communities in question. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organization Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation
55	Abersoch has a strong community and it would be a great loss to lose the local and much loved school. This will discourage families from living in the village which is already overrun with tourists in the holidays. Surely it is imperative to keep an excellent and forward thinking school open and provide children with the opportunity to learn by attending their local school		
56	I wholeheartedly object to the closure of Ysgol Abersoch. This lovely a school is at the heart of a community that needs to keep thriving all year round - rather than becoming simply a destination just living for tourism. When affordable homes have been built in the centre of the village and created the opportunity for the next generation of Abersoch based families - with the potential to continue building the local economy and be Abersoch born and bred, shouldn't they have the opportunity to walk their children to school?? Please reconsider the closure of Ysgol Abersoch, you know it's not right to deprive the village of children.		The assessment noted that by closing Ysgol Abersoch, some elements of community events would be affected and there would be some negative impact deriving from closing the school. However, it was noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Year 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attended Ysgol Sarn Bach. Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the alternative school and the broader area. To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.
57	To take away funding and close the school in Abersoch would be like ripping the soul, the identity of self, and belonging, from the young children who attend.		Consequently, should the proposal be implemented it will be required as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of

	<p>To deny local children the ability to learn and grow into young responsible adults, safely within their local community, is the wrong decision and should not be supported.</p> <p>Abersoch School provides a valuable societal resource to local families, to these children and their parents, Abersoch is their home, for these families it not a temporary holiday destination that the council often sees Abersoch as. This is part of the structure of life in Abersoch, for these families you would be turning your back on, you would be denying them the local education that every member of Welsh Society deserves.</p> <p>To remove one of the last standing Welsh institutions from the village, which is a force for good, conducting lessons and teaching in Welsh, passing on the history of North Wales and the values of the Nation, would indeed indicate that you have lost Abersoch to the rest of the United Kingdom.</p> <p>You have a duty to provide local education and to close this school would be tantamount to dereliction of your duty.</p> <p>You should fight to help keep the School alive. Any other course of action is a gross failure and misconduct on your part.</p>		<p>Ysgol Abersoch pupils so that parents and pupils take advantage of their facilities and after-school activities, and to encourage the alternative school to also take advantage of the facilities of the community of Abersoch.</p> <p>Should a decision be made to close the school, there will be an opportunity to consider the options for the post-use of the school, taking the community activities currently held at the school into account.</p>
58	<p>The village and the community already suffer as local people are priced out of being able to live in their area thanks to the unaffordable prices of housing there, and closing this school will be the final nail in the coffin of the Welsh language within the village.</p> <p>I fully understand that the low numbers at present is expensive for the council, but I am also aware that there are a number of local children that could attend the school but choose to attend nearby schools such as Llanbedrog, which is allegedly “full”?!</p>		<p>The Council notes the comments regarding the negative impact that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch may have on the village.</p> <p>When developing any proposals relating to modernising education, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the community.</p> <p>As part of the consultation process, the Council conducted an assessment of the community impact of the options under consideration in order to assess the likely impact the options would have on the communities in question. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p>
59	<p>There is so much bad press around Abersoch regarding second home ownership. If this school closes what is left that’s for the locals? The post office closed to be replaced as a small counter in Londis. The hair dressers went because the rent was so high. There’s no bank just a cash machine. High street brand shops came and went. And now the school.</p> <p>I feel that this community has suffered enough and the families must be so stressed out something they don’t need especially in these uncertain times.</p> <p>There’s very little of the old Abersoch left the school is a focal point of the village it would be such a tragic mistake to take the heart of this village away.</p> <p>I am happy to continue to support this lovely school, dedicated parents and governors who are doing everything to keep the school open.</p>		<p>The assessment noted that by closing Ysgol Abersoch, some elements of community events would be affected and there would be some negative impact deriving from closing the school. However, it was noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Year 3 pupils who</p>

			live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attended Ysgol Sarn Bach. Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the alternative school and the broader area.
60	The closure of Abersoch school will affect many generations, not just those who are or should be going there in the future. It is the centre of our village, our community and many lives. The children and the area need this local resource and by closing it you be removing an important part of our local community structure.		To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.
61	There are generations of families that have been able to walk to this school where they received an outstanding start to their education at the heart of their community, and what we now need is the appropriate support to ensure that there are enough families living in the village to gain a sustainable amount again.		Consequently, should the proposal be implemented it will be required as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of Ysgol Abersoch pupils so that parents and pupils take advantage of their facilities and after-school activities, and to encourage the alternative school to also take advantage of the facilities of the community of Abersoch.
62	Please do not close the above school the children of the community need the school desperately. Save Ysgol Abersoch Achubwch Ysgol Abersoch.		Should a decision be made to close the school, there will be an opportunity to consider the options for the post-use of the school, taking the community activities currently held at the school into account.
63	Ysgol Abersoch has so much too offer. Situated in the middle of a busy village, it is within easy walking distance to the beach, shops and local businesses. The active chapel is across the road and our large village hall is next door. A village hall that the school is able to use frequently, at no cost to the council. The playing fields are nearby and the school has held sports days there in the past. All of this helps to give the pupils a sense of community, respect and love for their village.		The Council notes the comments regarding the negative impact that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch may have on the village.
64	Without the beating heart of a school and Cylch Meithrin there simply will not be enough families living and working locally to provide fit and able staff for these crews leaving a dangerous gap in the provision of what are essential emergency services.		When developing any proposals relating to modernising education, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the community. As part of the consultation process, the Council conducted an assessment of the community impact of the options under consideration in order to assess the likely impact the options would have on the communities in question. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation
65	I note this morning that certain references to the plight of another famous Welsh school have been highlighted, namely the School and Village of Tryweryn, which I am sure you will all be familiar with, as this proved the real foundation for the formation and subsequent expansion of the political party we all know today as Plaid Cymru. The destruction of that village and its community school sent shock waves round Wales, the shock wave that ensued leading to the formation of your party is the same as the community of Abersoch are feeling right now, only this time it is being perpetrated, not by some distant English private members bill, but by the very party that outrage created. Your very ethos, as has previously been		

	<p>mentioned is the preservation of the Welsh language, Welsh culture and Welsh communities, but you seem hell bent on destroying what little we have left and hold so dear.</p> <p>Now I am not suggesting for one moment Abersoch will disappear, slowly but surely though, the community of Abersoch and its local residents, are seeing its community disappear. Over that last few years Abersoch has seen the closure of its Doctors Surgery, Post Office, Bank, Hairdressers, and Vets. It now looks to its 100-year-old primary school as the focal point and future of the small but passionate community, a school dedicated to preserving its Welsh heritage and above all its Welsh language. Without the school, Abersoch has no focal point, the very heart and soul will have disappeared along with so many other necessities that a modern community demands, although it won't be destroyed in the same way as Tryweryn, Gwynedd County Council and Plaid Cymru's constant cost cutting exercises are destroying a community, cost cutting is not always the answer some things are worth more than money.</p>		<p>The assessment noted that by closing Ysgol Abersoch, some elements of community events would be affected and there would be some negative impact deriving from closing the school. However, it was noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Year 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attended Ysgol Sarn Bach. Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the alternative school and the broader area.</p> <p>To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.</p> <p>Consequently, should the proposal be implemented it will be required as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of Ysgol Abersoch pupils so that parents and pupils take advantage of their facilities and after-school activities, and to encourage the alternative school to also take advantage of the facilities of the community of Abersoch.</p>
66	<p>I know from personal experience of the school and its pupils how very much the school is appreciated today and what a contribution it makes to the life of the village.</p>		
67	<p>The school provides an excellent education to the children of Ysgol Abersoch and its closure would have an immeasurable effect on our community, language and culture.</p>		
68	<p>I would like to register my objection to the closure of Ysgol school In Abersoch. It is such an important part of the Abersoch village community.</p>		<p>Should a decision be made to close the school, there will be an opportunity to consider the options for the post-use of the school, taking the community activities currently held at the school into account.</p>
69	<p>Please don't destroy the community that lives in the village and surrounding areas.</p>		
70	<p>It is so important that Abersoch families have access to a local school - without it Abersoch will just become a holiday place for tourists for a few months a year and a ghost town for the remaining months.</p>		
71	<p>Please we urge you the Gwynedd Education Department to reconsider this closure as the village will suffer a loss of a valuable asset to this very important community.</p>		<p>The Council notes the comments regarding the negative impact that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch may have on the village.</p>
72	<p>I do not agree with the statutory proposed closure of Ysgol Abersoch, the school has major potential and is indispensable in the local community. We Live in Llanbedrog and having had children who attended 'ti a fi" there know how much crucial babies and young child need the place of learning, taking this</p>		<p>When developing any proposals relating to modernising education, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the community.</p>

	away will have a huge negative impact not just in Abersoch but in neighbouring villages.		<p>As part of the consultation process, the Council conducted an assessment of the community impact of the options under consideration in order to assess the likely impact the options would have on the communities in question. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p> <p>The assessment noted that by closing Ysgol Abersoch, some elements of community events would be affected and there would be some negative impact deriving from closing the school. However, it was noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Year 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attended Ysgol Sarn Bach. Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the alternative school and the broader area.</p> <p>To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.</p> <p>Consequently, should the proposal be implemented it will be required as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of Ysgol Abersoch pupils so that parents and pupils take advantage of their facilities and after-school activities, and to encourage the alternative school to also take advantage of the facilities of the community of Abersoch.</p> <p>Should a decision be made to close the school, there will be an opportunity to consider the options for the post-use of the school, taking the community activities currently held at the school into account.</p>
73	Closing Ysgol Abersoch would give out the wrong and damaging impression of other corporate aims by the Council – in terms of the Welsh language, in terms of caring for the environment and listening to the Public. It would give the impression that Gwynedd Council have “given up” on the community of Abersoch, and therefore set off a slippery slope in terms of the future of our Welsh communities that expect the leadership of the Council.		
74	Please don't close the school it is the heart of the village.		
75	The school provides an excellent education to the children of Ysgol Abersoch and its closure would have an immeasurable effect on our community, language and culture.		
76	I object to the closure of Ysgol Abersoch Rural communities in these small welsh villages are losing all amenities and it should not be allowed to happen		
77	The school provides an excellent education to the children of Ysgol Abersoch and its closure would have an immeasurable effect on our community, language and culture.		
78	I am writing to express my concern regarding the proposed closure of Cyffillion Ysgol School Abersoch. Schools like this are essential to the community and local children. Being able to be educated in a local village school, increasing the Welsh language and encouraging young families to settle in Abersoch are vital to the area. The area has increased house prices due to the tourist trade, more needs to be done to encourage young families to the area. Affordable housing for local families and a school are fundamental to this.		
79	Please accept this email as my objection to the closure of Ysgol Abersoch. The school is vital to the community.		
80	With the closing of local amenities and prohibitive housing situation, the village school is one of the few institutions that still support the essence of community and village life. Generations of my family and so many others have benefited from this excellent and unique facility, and it's obvious, unquantifiable potential to enrich the lives		

	<p>of so many families who live, or are yet to come and live, in the area is now more important than ever.</p> <p>It would be a tragic and deeply detrimental blow to the village of Abersoch , the surrounding area, and all it's people, if this vital resource were to cease to provide so much for those who depend on it; directly and immediately, the community at large, and those many in the future who are now in danger of being denied the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from the extraordinary vital and nourishing support of this village school and it's staff.</p>		
81	I am emailing to record my objection at the closure of Abersoch school. This is a vital part of the local community.		The Council notes the comments regarding the negative impact that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch may have on the village.
82	Schools like these are crucial to small communities. I have been in the same situation in the past with my children's school in Coombs in derbyshire and we won. The school subsequently went from strength to strength and is hugely popular with the wider area.		When developing any proposals relating to modernising education, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the community.
83	<p>I do not agree with shutting the school in Abersoch.</p> <p>I am a teacher myself in a small village school and understand the importance of community, culture and heritage for all.</p> <p>It is what moulds us as people for further life. Those small, what maybe insignificant moments and events that happen at a local school which mixes within the community and uses its natural outdoor classroom impact hugely on all ages from children to the elderly.</p> <p>It's all about celebrating the cultural capital of each and every child in the local community school.</p> <p>This would be lost for ever and again becomes a declining community spirit with the loss of the school which is the heart of a village Abersoch village.</p>		<p>As part of the consultation process, the Council conducted an assessment of the community impact of the options under consideration in order to assess the likely impact the options would have on the communities in question. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p> <p>The assessment noted that by closing Ysgol Abersoch, some elements of community events would be affected and there would be some negative impact deriving from closing the school. However, it was noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Year 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attended Ysgol Sarn Bach.</p>
84	I am really at a loss trying to understand why the authorities, who are making these far reaching decisions, think that it is of benefit to the Welsh language and local community, to remove the main artery. Take away the school and there will be no future for the language, culture or community, as this is where the seeds are sown and nurtured, for decades Ysgol Abersoch has always interacted with the village community, unlike the neighbouring hamlets!! I know of a young family who are in the process of moving into the village at the moment and it is wrong that their two young children could be denied the opportunity of attending their local school.		<p>Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the alternative school and the broader area.</p> <p>To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.</p>
85	This school has been part of the community for many years. My late grandfather was schooled here and he would be heartbroken to know that the young people		

	<p>of Abersoch are to be deprived of their education being provided within the local community.</p> <p>Abersoch has an amazing tourism industry but to many it is still their home, and the children deserve to have a school at the heart of that.</p> <p>Please consider the loss to them before this decision is made.</p>		<p>Consequently, should the proposal be implemented it will be required as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of Ysgol Abersoch pupils so that parents and pupils take advantage of their facilities and after-school activities, and to encourage the alternative school to also take advantage of the facilities of the community of Abersoch.</p>
86	<p>So i ask the Head of Education to do the right thing, To change its decision, To Continue supporting and growing Ysgol Abersoch, together with our support, local businesses, the families and friends, and the Abersoch community to ensure this school remains The Heart of village of Abersoch and not just become a statistic of money.</p>		<p>Should a decision be made to close the school, there will be an opportunity to consider the options for the post-use of the school, taking the community activities currently held at the school into account.</p>
87	<p>It is a vital part of the local community and ensures that the heart of Abersoch remains alongside the tourism that supports the local economy.</p>		
88	<p>I want to see the local community protected. I object to the closure of Ysgol Abersoch</p>		
89	<p>I object to the closure of Ysgol Abersoch! I means so much to the area and the village will be worse of without it!</p>		
90	<p>Please accept this e mail as my objection to the closure of Ysgol Abersoch...crucial part of the local community</p>		
	<p>I would like to Object to the closure of ysgol Abersoch this ysgol has been part of the community for so many years it would be terrible for it to close.</p>		
91	<p>I am saddened and object to the proposal to Ysgol Abersoch. Young children should be able to go to a local school. It helps build a community, something we all need to protect. Not everything modern is beneficial. I sincerely hope you reconsider and keep this beautiful Welsh community school open and don't close it, only to sell the land and build houses on.</p>		<p>The Council notes the comments regarding the negative impact that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch may have on the village.</p>
92	<p>This school provides an excellent education for the children of Ysgol Abersoch and its closure would have an immeasurable impact on Abersoch community, language and culture. Young families will not move to Abersoch without a school, and are the future of the Abersoch community. Former pupils have gone on to gain excellent qualifications with careers worldwide, why close such an asset?</p>		<p>When developing any proposals relating to modernising education, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the community.</p> <p>As part of the consultation process, the Council conducted an assessment of the community impact of the options under consideration in order to assess the likely impact the options would have on the communities in question. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p>
93	<p>I manage a cafe in Abersoch, and we all love to see the children come in and sing around the village every Christmas. Not just me, but everyone in the community. We even hold a window decoration competition in which the children take part</p>		

	<p>to vote for who has the best window dressing. It's not often a school is so involved with local businesses. It brings us all together as it is a small community, but growing as we speak. Therefore, I object the closure.</p>		<p>The assessment noted that by closing Ysgol Abersoch, some elements of community events would be affected and there would be some negative impact deriving from closing the school. However, it was noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Year 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attended Ysgol Sarn Bach. Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the alternative school and the broader area.</p>
94	<p>Has the impact of closing this school on the community and language been considered, not to mention the children's education? We have fought hard to protect the language and nurture immigrants to be bilingual and closing it will take this foundation away from us.</p> <p>If there is no school here in Abersoch, the children living here – if there will be any – won't know us and we won't know them and the social use of the language will be no more; we will lose another piece of our language and identity.</p> <p>One of Mercher y Wawr's incentives are: "hybu unrhyw achos er budd merched yng Nghymru, yn arbennig i rymuso addysg gyhoeddus a hyrwyddo diwylliant Cymreig, addysg a'r celfyddydau yng Nghymru trwy gyfrwng yr iaith Gymraeg". The Members of Abersoch's Branch – the seventh established throughout Wales in 167 with a membership of 110 – requests to stick to the incentives but, without a school, it will not be possible to do so. We plead Gwynedd Council to reconsider its decision and not to further fragment this village community.</p>		<p>To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.</p> <p>Consequently, should the proposal be implemented it will be required as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of Ysgol Abersoch pupils so that parents and pupils take advantage of their facilities and after-school activities, and to encourage the alternative school to also take advantage of the facilities of the community of Abersoch.</p> <p>Should a decision be made to close the school, there will be an opportunity to consider the options for the post-use of the school, taking the community activities currently held at the school into account.</p>
95	<p>This school is essential to the local community. Closure of this school will mean that fewer local people with families can actually live in Abersoch village .</p>		
96	<p>I object to the closure of Ysgol school, it is the heart of the village struggling with being take over with holiday homes, please don't take the school too or what would be left for the locals?!</p>		
97	<p>This school is essential to the local community with many young families settling in the village as the school is present. My family has has a house in Abersoch for over 50 years and the school has always been part of the heart of the community. Closure of this school will mean that fewer local Welsh people with families can actually live in Abersoch village, and could ultimately lead to the demise of the village in one form or another. A community without a school is a community no more</p>		<p>The Council notes the comments regarding the negative impact that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch may have on the village.</p> <p>When developing any proposals relating to modernising education, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the community.</p>

98	This school is essential to the local community. Closure of this school will mean that fewer local Welsh people with families can actually live in Abersoch village.		As part of the consultation process, the Council conducted an assessment of the community impact of the options under consideration in order to assess the likely impact the options would have on the communities in question. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation
99	Closure of this School and many like it, will have a negative impact on this and would make it very difficult for families who want the best for their children to live in Abersoch and hence lose the contribution to the local community, its economy and culture.		
100	Closing this school would be detrimental to this lovely community. It's so important to keep these small schools going. I've often seen the children on the beach learning, it's such a wonderful school. Please don't close it..!		
101	<p>If we have all I learnt anything over the last 16 months it is that communities are far more important than material things like money. We have all relied on that community spirit and togetherness to get through a very difficult time.</p> <p>You have a beautiful part of the country here. This beauty brings many visitors who bring trade to your local business's. This "beauty" isn't just what we see in the Landscape, beaches, sea, mountains and green fields. It is also in the small community we walk amongst, that obviously care a great deal about their homes and lives. They help create this place and make it the envious visitor destination it is. You must stop removing your local community and do more to help keep such a community in place. Otherwise this place will loose its village identity and become a soulless place full of the pretentious and part time residents. It will loose its attraction, visitors will go elsewhere and local government will loose revenue. But most of all your local community who you are supposed to look after and care for will loose another valuable facility. Put your children and community above finance. People are more important than money, we have surely learnt this recently.</p>		<p>The assessment noted that by closing Ysgol Abersoch, some elements of community events would be affected and there would be some negative impact deriving from closing the school. However, it was noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Year 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attended Ysgol Sarn Bach. Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the alternative school and the broader area.</p> <p>To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.</p> <p>Consequently, should the proposal be implemented it will be required as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of Ysgol Abersoch pupils so that parents and pupils take advantage of their facilities and after-school activities, and to encourage the alternative school to also take advantage of the facilities of the community of Abersoch.</p> <p>Should a decision be made to close the school, there will be an opportunity to consider the options for the post-use of the school, taking the community activities currently held at the school into account.</p>
102	Ysgol Abersoch is unique and is the beating heart of Abersoch village. There is no need to prove how central this small school is to the village – so much evidence has already been presented in support of this, as I can also testify as a former pupil that has supported the school over the years. There is no question about the standard of education provided. Educating children in a small school is		<p>The Council notes the comments regarding the negative impact that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch may have on the village. When developing any proposals relating to modernising education, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the community.</p>

	expensive but the cost of its closure and the impact that would have is much more far-reaching. The school is an integral part of Abersoch's future – where culture, the Welsh language, economic prosperity, 'the right to live at home', affordable housing and education all intertwines – values that are central to Gwynedd Council I believe. Is it not the duty of Gwynedd Council to look at the bigger picture and at the prosperity of this village other than considering the school's future out of context? If this was the case it would lead way to something innovative, unique and different in Abersoch.		As part of the consultation process, the Council conducted an assessment of the community impact of the options under consideration in order to assess the likely impact the options would have on the communities in question. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation
103	I know from personal experience of the school and its pupils how very much the school is appreciated today and what a contribution it makes to the life of the village. It is very much part of village life and being in the centre of the village children have easy and safe access to the school which is located right in the middle of the village.		The assessment noted that by closing Ysgol Abersoch, some elements of community events would be affected and there would be some negative impact deriving from closing the school. However, it was noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Year 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attended Ysgol Sarn Bach.
104	I believe that the idea shows a lack of understanding of the importance of community, and the advantages of children feeling part of their local areas.		Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the alternative school and the broader area.
105	The cultural cost of loosing this school is far greater than the monetary cost you will save by closing it - this wil have a far reaching impact not just on Abersoch but also in the wider community.		To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.
106	I urge you, please do not close this beautiful, significantly important, much loved 'little school' which nurtured its small people on entry and releases them into this world, as kind, thoughtful, mannerly individuals who care about the environment around them. Please, do the right thing, I promise you will feel so much better, knowing that you have also saved a village together with its gorgeous community.		Consequently, should the proposal be implemented it will be required as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of Ysgol Abersoch pupils so that parents and pupils take advantage of their facilities and after-school activities, and to encourage the alternative school to also take advantage of the facilities of the community of Abersoch.
107	Firstly, I wish to confirm my full support to the objections that have been sent to you by Governing bodies, and Ysgol Abersoch's Friends, the statements are excellent and thorough, and a great example of the cause the Community supports, undoubtedly you will acknowledge the insightful work completed by the Governors and Community to the recommendations of closing the School here in Abersoch. Historically, Ysgol Abersoch has been under threat of closure, but by conversing and discussing the previous Officers and Members have deemed the school essential to the Community and the Welsh Language in a Village similar to Abersoch, and this was priorities in their decision, and we have been grateful to them for standing up for these principals.		Should a decision be made to close the school, there will be an opportunity to consider the options for the post-use of the school, taking the community activities currently held at the school into account.

	<p>But times change, and finance seem to dominate many decisions, and we understand that Local Government has received huge funding cuts through the Conservative Party in London, and that you are under pressure to maintain the services and make financial decisions in accordance with the guidance.</p> <p>Your recommendation to close Ysgol Abersoch will create a social divide, completely disregarding that which the School has achieved to sustain our language and culture and reaching the Welsh language out to businesses, communities and emergency services, therefore is essential to the future of the Welsh Language.</p> <p>Therefore, I view this proposal similar to that the Conservatives have done in terms of Brexit and Northern Ireland, without realising the devastation it has cause Society, because it has not considered every option available, the same as your proposal here in terms of this catchment's Education.</p> <p>For the benefit of our Children and Community's futures we hope that you will respond favourably to the committed School Governors.</p>		
108	<p>It is a fabulous school and is at the very heart of the community. The school provides an excellent education to the children of Abersoch and its closure would have an immeasurable effect on the community, language and culture.</p>		<p>The Council notes the comments regarding the negative impact that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch may have on the village.</p>
109	<p>We are writing, as local residents who also work in the village, in support of the campaign to maintain Ysgol Abersoch for the benefit of Abersoch village and its immediate surroundings.</p> <p>Abersoch is a unique village. It is immensely popular with visitors and tourists which, whilst bringing lots of benefits to the area, also brings unique pressures to the fabric of the village and the sustainability of the community.</p> <p>With exceptionally high house prices and an almost entirely seasonal economy, that sustainability is exceedingly fragile. The village needs a Strategic Plan to secure it's future but, in the meantime, it is vital that the school in the heart of the village is retained if the village is to retain its character as a true community with a village life that has a realistic future.</p> <p>At present the school provides an opportunity for local families to see their children schooled in the village where they grew up, cementing local bonds with their class-mates and helping to define the future character of the village as a place where local families grow and develop, and have a chance to contribute to to village life and the local community and economy, rather than simply a seasonal place with no roots and no sustainable fabric.</p>		<p>When developing any proposals relating to modernising education, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the community.</p> <p>As part of the consultation process, the Council conducted an assessment of the community impact of the options under consideration in order to assess the likely impact the options would have on the communities in question. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p> <p>The assessment noted that by closing Ysgol Abersoch, some elements of community events would be affected and there would be some negative impact deriving from closing the school. However, it was noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Year 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attended Ysgol Sarn Bach. Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the alternative school and the broader area.</p>

	<p>I know from my role as Executive Editor as Abersoch Life magazine just how important the school is to the future, as well as the history, of the village and the local community. It's also clear how the unique opportunities the location of the school present is able to further add to the sustainability of the village, as the pupils are able to immerse themselves in the environmental issues that affect the village as well as enjoy the unique outdoor learning opportunities the adjacent beach and harbour offer. It is also clear how very important the existence of the school is to the seasonal economy. I'm able to see from my role that, whilst tourists and visitors may not be here all year, they truly appreciate the community nature of Abersoch that contributes to its value as a destination. Despite the pressures on the village it is still a 'real' place, so just as the local community are passionate about the importance of it staying that way, visitors equally want to know that the place they love to visit has a future as a sustainable community, a true village with its fabric intact. The role of the school in that future and fabric cannot be over-stated.</p> <p>Sally is a former Early Years teacher of over 40 years experience and equally from her perspective in many different schools and roles in many different locations, from urban to rural, understands just how crucial a role a local school plays in the life and sustainability of that community. Family members follow family members to the same school, generations follow generations. There is a timeless link created in that way which, once broken, can never be rebuilt.</p>		<p>To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.</p> <p>Consequently, should the proposal be implemented it will be required as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of Ysgol Abersoch pupils so that parents and pupils take advantage of their facilities and after-school activities, and to encourage the alternative school to also take advantage of the facilities of the community of Abersoch.</p> <p>Should a decision be made to close the school, there will be an opportunity to consider the options for the post-use of the school, taking the community activities currently held at the school into account.</p>
110	<p>As a former pupil, parent, governor and shop manager in the village, I am aware that loosing our small and special School here in Abersoch will have a huge impact on our community and language.</p> <p>Very few schools can offer the experiences children have here, through weekly swimming lessons all year round, natural learning resources, nature lessons and keeping fit on the beach, a yard and a safe field nearby to enjoy their play times on the bikes and to have outdoor lessons when weather permitting, keeping the language alive by communicating with local people and shop keepers, receiving Gold from the Menter Iaith.</p> <p>I have enjoyed many concerts by the children at Abersoch Village Hall throughout the year. As a business we have raised a lot of money for the school and have enjoyed doing so. The customers and the community loves to offer their support, especially supporting Ysgol Abersoch.</p>		<p>The Council notes the comments regarding the negative impact that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch may have on the village.</p> <p>When developing any proposals relating to modernising education, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the community.</p> <p>As part of the consultation process, the Council conducted an assessment of the community impact of the options under consideration in order to assess the likely impact the options would have on the communities in question. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p>
111	<p>I strongly believe that it is a serious mistake by the Education Department of Gwynedd Council to propose the closure of this school, which has, and continues</p>		

	<p>to be an important culture centrepiece in the village and community of Abersoch.</p> <p>If the decision is to close the school, the loss to the village and the community as a whole will be far greater than the financial costs that is under consideration as present.</p> <p>This is an opportunity to look to the future to try and develop the culture and Welsh within the community and the children by postponing the decision to close the school.</p>		<p>The assessment noted that by closing Ysgol Abersoch, some elements of community events would be affected and there would be some negative impact deriving from closing the school. However, it was noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Year 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attended Ysgol Sarn Bach. Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the alternative school and the broader area.</p>
112	This school is such an important part of the village and its closure will be very detrimental as other schools in the area are over capacity.		<p>To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.</p>
113	I think the school should be given a better opportunity to prove it should not be closed down and get the support needed. It's so important to find ways to make it work and maintain the visual reminder to all the tourists that Abersoch is a thriving community outside of the holiday season, and the language and culture is as important now as it ever has been.		<p>Consequently, should the proposal be implemented it will be required as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of Ysgol Abersoch pupils so that parents and pupils take advantage of their facilities and after-school activities, and to encourage the alternative school to also take advantage of the facilities of the community of Abersoch.</p> <p>Should a decision be made to close the school, there will be an opportunity to consider the options for the post-use of the school, taking the community activities currently held at the school into account.</p>
114	A better community spirit is learned and appreciated in a local school and will remain in the pupil's lives. Abersoch school has maintained values that are in keeping with the education that underpins the early years of children in a small school while laying the foundations of language, ethics and social communication in a close family and village atmosphere... Small schools are more successful in terms of the Welsh language, as the pupils are immersed in it on a daily basis... Each small school in its own community is a unique entity- with its values and aspirations that it wants to protect and develop for the future.		<p>The Council notes the comments regarding the negative impact that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch may have on the village.</p> <p>When developing any proposals relating to modernising education, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the community.</p> <p>As part of the consultation process, the Council conducted an assessment of the community impact of the options under consideration in order to assess the likely impact the options would have on the communities in question. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p>
115	[The school] is an integral part of the community and, indeed, has been strongly encouraged to develop this relationship over many years. The proposal would break this important, successful and valuable link that cannot be reproduced by Ysgol Sarn Bach. There is no doubt that the decision to close Ysgol Abersoch is contrary to the wishes of the community. The time and effort invested in the		

	consultation by all concerned undoubtedly merits a fuller investigation and scrutiny of the case against closure, particularly given the clear feeling of support and the expression of the importance of early years Welsh medium education that should remain in the center of Abersoch village.		<p>The assessment noted that by closing Ysgol Abersoch, some elements of community events would be affected and there would be some negative impact deriving from closing the school. However, it was noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Year 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attended Ysgol Sarn Bach. Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the alternative school and the broader area.</p> <p>To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.</p> <p>Consequently, should the proposal be implemented it will be required as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of Ysgol Abersoch pupils so that parents and pupils take advantage of their facilities and after-school activities, and to encourage the alternative school to also take advantage of the facilities of the community of Abersoch.</p> <p>Should a decision be made to close the school, there will be an opportunity to consider the options for the post-use of the school, taking the community activities currently held at the school into account.</p>
116	Nowhere is this more apparent than in the case of Abersoch, a community which is overrun with second homes, where the school is virtually the only remaining symbol of Welsh language, culture and heritage in the village.		
117	Ysgol Abersoch gives the children an excellent start in life, a school that offers a sense of belonging and family, where the younger and older children naturally learn from each other. It is not possible to put a price on what Ysgol Abersoch gives our children.		
118	<p>7.4. Impact on the Community</p> <p>There is considerable concern about the impact of losing the school from the community of Abersoch village. The Education Department states that "it is concluded that a link between the school and the wider area already exists" on the basis that Abersoch children already attend Ysgol Sarn Bach but, again, Ysgol Sarn Bach does not have a profile in Abersoch and, given the challenges of location and transport, it is difficult to see how that will change. Bringing the children of Ysgol Sarn Bach into the village would require bus hire as well as other costs such as parking charges and the need for additional staff; this is currently done free of charge at Ysgol Abersoch. A non-village school cannot generate or reproduce the same level of interest, support or community involvement within the local community and businesses.</p>		
119	<p>5.3. Strengths and Weaknesses of the Current Situation Weakness - Lack of opportunity to socialise</p> <p>There is the Urdd, Craft Clubs, and of course plenty of out of school clubs and sports opportunities. The school is for learning and children have plenty of friends outside of this environment.</p>		
120	<p>Close Ysgol Abersoch and the pupils to be educated at Ysgol Sarn Bach "some negative impact on the community"</p> <p>...</p> <p>On behalf of the staff, pupils, and governors, we find this dismissive remark very offensive after the huge effort and impact the school's activities have within the community. Ysgol Abersoch pupils are ambassadors for the village of Abersoch.</p>		

	Ysgol Sarn Bach does not have a profile in Abersoch and given the location and transport challenges it is difficult to see how this would change. We cannot see how a school that is not in the village will generate or replicate the same level of community interest, support or involvement within the local community and businesses.		
121	(Community connection) This could not be done in Sarn Bach, as it is a school in the middle of a field, due to transport requirements / bus hire costs and consequently the community connection will be lost.		
122	The table in CIAR 4.4 lists all the facilities offered in Abersoch village. The community facilities offered by Ysgol Sarn Bach are no match for this. That this table showing is not presented here is highly biased against Ysgol Abersoch.		The Council notes the comments regarding the negative impact that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch may have on the village.
123	The community support for the school is overwhelming. We have two petitions in place that are attached in full for your consideration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Electronic petition with 1,870 signatures · Paper petition with 1,050 signatures In closing Ysgol Abersoch the Council is going against the community's wishes and refuses to accept its role in the situation that we now find ourselves in. Ysgol Abersoch plays a pivotal role in our community, promoting and using the Welsh language and has close links with both the voluntary and business sectors as well as the community Village Hall. No value can be put on the loss associated with closing Ysgol Abersoch.		When developing any proposals relating to modernising education, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the community. As part of the consultation process, the Council conducted an assessment of the community impact of the options under consideration in order to assess the likely impact the options would have on the communities in question. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation
124	The school is an integral part of the community. Under the careful guidance of our headteacher, Linda Jones, the pupils play a key role in promoting the Welsh language and culture, through successful initiatives such as encouraging local shops to display bilingual signs and participating in local events. These are great opportunities to capitalize on our unique offering and promote our heritage to a wider audience.		The assessment noted that by closing Ysgol Abersoch, some elements of community events would be affected and there would be some negative impact deriving from closing the school. However, it was noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Year 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attended Ysgol Sarn Bach. Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the alternative school and the broader area.
125	The school is a very special gem in the center of the village and an integral part of the heart of Abersoch Welsh society.		
126	Our Schools and the infrastructure that surrounds them are at the heart of our communities. Whether it is a village, town or city the significant role of civic functions is rooted in especially coming out of a pandemic and a time when recovery and resilience were more important than ever. I say this from a personal and professional perspective as a member of the Royal Town Planning		To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.

	Institute with considerable experience in economic regeneration and town centre management.		Consequently, should the proposal be implemented it will be required as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of Ysgol Abersoch pupils so that parents and pupils take advantage of their facilities and after-school activities, and to encourage the alternative school to also take advantage of the facilities of the community of Abersoch. Should a decision be made to close the school, there will be an opportunity to consider the options for the post-use of the school, taking the community activities currently held at the school into account.
127	Also, the CIAR 4.4 table remains factually incorrect. There is no chapel or church in Sarn Bach, and as far as we know, no Cylch Meithrin / Ti a Fi in Ysgol Foel Gro, while Abersoch has a post Office. Llanbedrog and Mynytho both have village halls that have not been noted on the table.		The Council notes the comment and has updated the information/tables where appropriate - a revised version of the assessment was presented as an appendix to the report on the consultation.
128	CIAR 4.6 incorrectly shows that Cylch Meithrin and Ti a Fi interacts regularly with Ysgol Sarn Bach		The Council notes the comment and has updated the information/tables where appropriate - a revised version of the assessment was presented as an appendix to the report on the consultation.
129	7.8 The Community table 1: The below table notes the present community usage made of both school buildings. Cross reference to Section 2.6 of the LIAR document also. Ysgol Sarn Bach does not host an Urdd. The Urdd is held at the Community Centre in Llanengan, though they occasionally (once in 2 years) use Ysgol Sarn Bach's field to host their rugby practice sessions. Ysgol Abersoch have many after school clubs that are not acknowledged, e.g. Gardening Club, Hunaniaith craft club, Urdd Tudwal. Ysgol Sarn Bach does not interact effectively with its community or the wider community either. For example, Pwllheli Rotary Club's 2020 Christmas Concert and Rotary Santa; Ysgol Sarn Bach were not present... CIAR 4.5 does not show that there are after school activities at Ysgol Abersoch.		The Council notes the comment and has updated the information/tables where appropriate - a revised version of the assessment was presented as an appendix to the report on the consultation.
130	7.8 Community table 2: Activities or groups with which the school are regularly involved are set out in the table below. Ysgol Sarn Bach is not involved in any Cylch Meithrin or Ti a Fi. The Cylch Meithrin at Llanengan Community Center closed because there was no committee willing to run the Cylch.		The Council notes the comment and has updated the information/tables where appropriate - a revised version of the assessment was presented as an appendix to the report on the consultation.
131	6.3.3. Community Likely Impact Assessment Closure of Ysgol Abersoch and pupils to be educated at Ysgol Sarn Bach "link already exists between school and		The considerations included in the Impact Assessment address the suggestions of what could be included in a Welsh Language and Community Impact Assessment, which can

	<p>wider area" "importance of ensuring Abersoch community is included in the alternative school activities"</p> <p>Quantify with supporting evidence what is meant by "existing link between school and the wider area" other than the fact that the children attend Ysgol Sarn Bach.</p>	<p>be seen in Appendix C: Assessments of the community impact and the impact on the Welsh language, <i>The School Organisation Code 011/2018</i>.</p> <p>The Authority proposed the Impact Assessments and ascertained the views of stakeholders on the proposed impact by means of the consultation. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p> <p>In acknowledging the negative impact that closing the school could have on the community of Abersoch, it is noted that 9 (35%) of pupils (3-8) who live in the Abersoch catchment area already attend Ysgol Sarn Bach. Therefore, it is believed that a link already exists between the alternative school and the Abersoch community. In implementing the proposal there will be an opportunity to build upon these links between the community in Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach by holding discussions that will promote including the Abersoch community in the school's community activity.</p>
132	<p>5.2. Safety and the Environment</p> <p>The journey from Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach was classed as 'dangerous' and meant transport was required. Annex C states the 'Community Impact' of the School Organisation Code, "bidders might include the following: the impact on health and well-being, e.g. if pupils were less able to walk or cycle to school " .</p>	<p>Travel and transport arrangements were further detailed in Section 7.10 of the consultation document and a copy of the full assessment of the Likely Impact on Travel Arrangements can be found on our website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p> <p>The Authority proposed the assessment of the likely Impact on different travel arrangements and ascertained the views of stakeholders on the proposed impact by means of the consultation. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p> <p>As a bus already carries key stage 2 pupils from Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach, and we anticipate that there will be enough room on that bus (or a larger bus) for children in the Abersoch catchment area, an increase in CO2 emissions is not foreseen.</p>
133	<p>4.2 School statistical information</p>	<p>The Council notes the comment.</p>

	<p>The table under point 4.2 of pupil numbers at Ysgol Llanbedrog is 95 on the register, but the next table indicates 103.</p> <p>These obvious errors undermine confidence and jeopardise the integrity of the Consultation.</p>		<p>For clarity, there were 102 pupils (N-Yr6) at Ysgol Llanbedrog in September 2020 - as noted in section 4.6 of the consultation document</p>
134	<p>MODEL 3 Federation Impact on other facilities / services provided at CIAR school</p> <p>Isn't it the point of Federation that other facilities / services provided at the school are improved by sharing staff and resources? So should this be positive? Overall impact on the local community - "opportunities are identified for the Abersoch community and the other school that would be part of the federal model to come together". Why is this not positive?</p>		<p>The Council notes the comment and has addressed the point by re-visiting the community assessment. The latest version (May 2021) can be seen on our website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p>
135	<p>MODEL 4 - CLOSURE OF ABERSOCH SCHOOL AND PROVIDE A PLACE FOR PUPILS IN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL Impact on other facilities / services provided at the school This is very subjective and should be negative. If Ysgol Abersoch closes, it is difficult to predict that the Cylch Meithrin and Ti a Fi would continue.</p>		<p>The Council is aware that the Cylch Meithrin is held on the Ysgol Abersoch site, and it is emphasised that they are not part of the proposal given through the statutory notice. If the proposal proceeds, the Council is eager to discuss the possibilities in terms of the Cylch Meithrin with relevant representatives - the possibilities could include remaining at the current location, or move to another site in the Abersoch area.</p>
136	<p>Ysgol Abersoch Equality Impact Assessment Report Encouraging good relationships, "opportunities to build further on the relationship with the community in Abersoch can come from implementing the proposal." We do not agree with this statement. How will this happen and what opportunities have been identified? This is not stated. Logistically children cannot access the village amenities in a 'formal' capacity.... 6. Conclusion of the Community Impact Report "In order to mitigate this impact, opportunities are identified to ensure that the Abersoch community is aware of the alternative school's activities, and community co-operation between the alternative school and Abersoch community is encouraged, where appropriate." How will this be done given earlier caveats about the lack of a long-standing relationship between Ysgol Sarn Bach and the Abersoch community. This report does not reflect the views of the community since it was completed without asking residents and community members. Therefore, by default it does not show what impact the loss of a school has on the community and is prejudiced against the school.</p>		<p>In acknowledging the negative impact that closing the school could have on the community of Abersoch, it is noted that 9 (35%) of pupils (3-8) who live in the Abersoch catchment area already attend Ysgol Sarn Bach. Therefore, it is believed that a link already exists between the alternative school and the Abersoch community. In implementing the proposal there will be an opportunity to build upon these links between the community in Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach by holding discussions that will promote including the Abersoch community in the school's community activity.</p> <p>The considerations included in the Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment address the suggestions of what could be included in a Welsh Language and Community Impact Assessment, which can be seen in Appendix C: Assessments of the community impact and the impact on the Welsh language, <i>The School Organisation Code 011/2018</i>.</p> <p>The Authority proposed the Impact Assessments and ascertained the views of stakeholders on the proposed impact by means of the consultation. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options</p>

			<p>considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p> <p>The Authority would like to note that it is completely unbiased and transparent in what has been submitted as part of the consultation documentation.</p>
137	I am not aware that other schools in the area offer such broad experiences. In the consultation document it is clear that Ysgol Abersoch has far more local amenities available than other schools in the local area. This aspect is not sufficiently addressed in the proposal as it is clear that there is a difference with the location of Ysgol Sarn Bach, which is largely separate from any community amenities.		<p>The Council notes the comments regarding the negative impact that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch may have on the village.</p> <p>When developing any proposals relating to modernising education, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the community.</p> <p>As part of the consultation process, the Council conducted an assessment of the community impact of the options under consideration in order to assess the likely impact the options would have on the communities in question. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p>
138	The location of the school is worthwhile in the middle of the village which enables parents to walk their children to and from school, being able to guide the pupils to the beach, local shops and, of course, to the nearby Village Hall next door to school - THIS IS NOT A SCHOOL IN A VILLAGE . It is a school on the doorstep of everyone in the village and contributes to the life of everyone living in Abersoch, e.g. Over 50 Club; older adults can walk to the School and the Hall to see Christmas shows and pupils' concerts etc.		<p>The assessment noted that by closing Ysgol Abersoch, some elements of community events would be affected and there would be some negative impact deriving from closing the school. However, it was noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Year 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attended Ysgol Sarn Bach.</p> <p>Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the alternative school and the broader area.</p> <p>To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.</p>
139	"Community collaboration between the alternative school and Abersoch community where appropriate" is encouraged. How? Nothing in common, no connection for sure on the business side.		
140	It is wonderful to see the children taking part in services - in both chapels - such as Christmas and Easter over the years. This would not happen if the children moved to Sarn Bach. The village would lose the activities, which make such a significant contribution to keeping the Welsh language alive in the village of Abersoch.		
141	By closing the school, the children will be alienated from their village - here is their place, in their own village where everyone knows each other. Children learn and appreciate a better community spirit in a local school and this continues for the rest of their lives.		
142	Chapel congregations are reducing due to the age of the members and, certainly, as there are no affordable homes for young families, they will probably close too. With the closure of the school, there is no hope of attracting new members, as most houses in Abersoch are now holiday homes.		<p>Consequently, should the proposal be implemented it will be required as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of</p>

143	Residents and businesses in Abersoch are aware of the existence of the Welsh language because of all the work that teachers and pupils do to promote it by visiting them regularly - our school is at the heart of its community.		Ysgol Abersoch pupils so that parents and pupils take advantage of their facilities and after-school activities, and to encourage the alternative school to also take advantage of the facilities of the community of Abersoch.
144	There is a sense of a happy little family at Ysgol Abersoch - a sense of a family community that gives the children solid foundations. They make an important contribution to the area's cultural events and activities.		Should a decision be made to close the school, there will be an opportunity to consider the options for the post-use of the school, taking the community activities currently held at the school into account.
145	The village would lose the activities that make such a significant contribution to keeping the Welsh language in the village of Abersoch.		
146	If the school is closed, the children will be alienated from their village, the community would be anglicized and would be responsible for reinforcing the perpetual stereotype picture that hurts the village as non-Welsh speaking rifieria		
147	Residents and businesses in Abersoch are aware of the existence of the Welsh language because of all the work that teachers and pupils do to promote it by visiting them regularly - our school is at the heart of its community.		
148	I was concerned to discover that Ysgol Abersoch is to close so soon – a school at the heart of its community. Please reconsider as I know personally the value of a good education especially considering the pandemic also, and its impact on mental health and education.		
149	A school is the heart of a community and if there is always a threat of closing this school, as there has been over the last few years how is it meant to attract more pupils?? One of the reasons is that it isn't viable to stay open but it needs support not closure!!! And then maybe more children will families will consider using its services in the heart of Abersoch instead of choosing the larger schools. Some children thrive in a smaller, nurturing school as I have seen by many a testament. Please reconsider your decision to close the school.		The Council notes the comments regarding the negative impact that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch may have on the village. When developing any proposals relating to modernising education, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the community. As part of the consultation process, the Council conducted an assessment of the community impact of the options under consideration in order to assess the likely impact the options would have on the communities in question. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation
150	The school is central to the social life of Abersoch and regular use is made of the Hall, which was donated (like the school) for the use of villagers to socialize and hold activities.		The assessment noted that by closing Ysgol Abersoch, some elements of community events would be affected and there would be some negative impact deriving from closing the school. However, it was noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Year 3 pupils who
151	Closing a school can affect the community - not only is Welsh not the language of the children on the street but, there are no children on the street.		
152	The special virtue of a school is the sense of family community that gives the children solid foundations. They make an important contribution to the culture of the area.		

153	One key thing is lost - connection with the community and that community's commitment to the school.		live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attended Ysgol Sarn Bach. Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the alternative school and the broader area.
154	Natural community dies - loss of heritage and language and turning village into a holiday resort full of holiday homes, no families.		
155	The school is central to Abersoch's social life.		
156	Children learn and appreciate a better community spirit in a local school and this continues with them for the rest of their lives.		To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.
157	There is a sense of a happy little family at Abersoch School - a sense of a family community that gives the children solid foundations. They make an important contribution to the area's cultural events and activities.		
158	The special virtue of a school is the sense of family community that gives the children solid foundations. They make an important contribution to the culture of the area.		Consequently, should the proposal be implemented it will be required as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of Ysgol Abersoch pupils so that parents and pupils take advantage of their facilities and after-school activities, and to encourage the alternative school to also take advantage of the facilities of the community of Abersoch.
159	The school is in the center of the community and can offer new families a reason for moving back to the village and encouraging the Welsh Language to thrive in our community. Without a school the village will not have the same offerings it once did.		
160	I am writing to you, on behalf of the Chapel Officers and Members, to express our complete opposition to the proposed closure of Abersoch School... We urge you to reconsider your decision to close Ysgol Abersoch as a matter of urgency. In doing so, it is hoped that it will continue to uphold the values that underpin the early years education of children in a small school while laying the foundations for language, ethics and social communication in a close, family and village.		Should a decision be made to close the school, there will be an opportunity to consider the options for the post-use of the school, taking the community activities currently held at the school into account.
161	Lots of people have come forward to offer us their support, and have expressed a keen interest in the future of the school. The children from this school are excellent advocates and ambassadors of a truly inspiring village school. Head teacher Mrs Jones means the world to these children and her passion and commitment cannot be rivaled. To close this school would have a detrimental impact on the Welsh Language, the community, the children and yourselves, you will be known as the council who failed to support a school and keep it open in a community which is as financially successful as Abersoch. You will drown out the voices of past and future generations of children in the community, this situation only serves to highlight the injustices caused to communities like Cofiwch Dryweryn, an apology 40 years too late. Dim Ysgol, Dim Cymuned, Dim Gobaith.		

162	The effects of the closure would have implications that would echo much further than has been considered by the Council. As part of the next generation of Abersoch, I feel that this is a strong mistake on your part, and I urge you to reconsider for the benefit of the community, our education and future generations.		
163	Rather less well-known outside the area is that Abersoch lies fully within a rural heartland of Welsh speaking communities and the threat to Ysgol Abersoch and Cylch Meithrin a Ti a Fi Abersoch represents a direct challenge to the survival of the Welsh speaking culture within Penrhyn Llŷn; indeed, many believe that by closing the school and threatening the CMA you will be removing the beating heart of the village and forcing yet more families to move out of Abersoch which has already seen its village medical centre, banks and independent post office all closed. With the school and Cylch Meithrin closed, no doctor's and very few local shops, the village will become just a summer resort and shopping street for visitors, empty in the Winter months not the thriving village it could and should be showcasing all the best that the Welsh language and culture have to offer.		
164	I have been very disappointed to see the superficial nature of the Community and Lanugage Impact Assessments, which appear to be ready without a real community input. Simply put, I do not accept the result that no impact will be had on the Welsh lanugae in Abersoch if the school were to close.		The considerations included in the Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment address the suggestions of what could be included in a Welsh Language and Community Impact Assessment, which can be seen in Appendix C: Assessments of the community impact and the impact on the Welsh language.
165	It was a shock to read that the Council completed its community impact assessment on the options – how and who was questioned? The summary notes it is not foreseen that any of these options will have a negative impact on the community.		In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessments can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation
166	In discussing the Community throughout your options, you concentrated on drawing attention to the positives of Ysgol Sarn Bach therefore I wish you to include more diversity of representation of Ysgol Abersoch in these findings to ensure any bias, so that the public can come to their own decisions based on facts rather than misleadership. Perhaps you have noticed that Ysgol Sarn Bach and Ysgol Foel Gron were chosen to represent the area in Pwllheli's Christmas Rotary, the absence of Ysgol Sarn Bach and Llanbedrog further confirms that there is support for Ysgol Abersoch within the community. Ysgol Abersoch were also selected for the Christmas float by the Rotary again in the absence of Ysgol		The considerations included in the Impact Assessment as part of the Statutory Consultation addressed the suggestions of what could be included in a Welsh Language and Community Impact Assessment, which can be seen in Appendix C: Assessments of the community impact and the impact on the Welsh language, <i>The School Organisation Code 011/2018</i> . The Authority proposed the Impact Assessment and ascertained the views on the proposed impact by means of the consultation.

	Sarn Bach. These are things I have not seen in your testimony to support that Ysgol Abersoch's children will receive a richer education in other schools. My children were very proud when the Rev. Andrew Jones closed Rotary Pwllheli's show with a story about how a pupil from Ysgol Aberesoch had made him think of things differently, and how the pupil had questioned and made the Reverend see something from a different perspective, he mentioned nothing else but Yssgol Abersoch yn his closing speech, not another school was mentioned, and my little girl said 'we have made a real difference for someone as important to talk about our school.'		In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessments can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation Following this statutory consultation period, in accordance with the requirements of the Schools Organisation Code 011/2018, a report on the consultation was submitted to the Cabinet in order to summarise the matters raised by the consultees and note the Council's response to those matters. After considering the report, the Cabinet resolved to proceed with the proposal and to hold a statutory objection period on the proposal.
167	I wish to draw attention to after school activities that have happened that you have not mentioned in your detailed report: - 6-week HIIT classes and sports payed for by the Parent Society – 6-week rugby class payed for by the Parents Society – 6-week gardening club payed for by the Parents Society – 6-week yoga course held during school hours payed for the by Parents Society – alongside other after school activities held all year round. The Parent's Society have enquired for a 6-week Life Saving course, but this has been postponed due to Covid 19.		The Council notes the comment. Should a decision be made to close the school, options for the post-use of the school would have to be considered, taking the activities currently held at the school into account.
168	Rural community sustainability everywhere is under the threat of maintenance costs, important facilities such as chapels, libraries and village halls. Our village is incredibly fortunate that Abersoch Hall is well funded by the car park's revenue, and it is a privilege that the school is close by to enjoy using the facilities free of charge.		The Council notes the comment. It is noted in the community assessment "as there is no hall at Ysgol Abersoch, the school makes regular use of the nearby community hall." Should the option of closing Ysgol Abersoch and offering a place for the pupils at a nearby school be realised, it is anticipated that it would have some impact on some elements of community events. Consequently, should the proposal be implemented, it will be required as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of Ysgol Abersoch pupils so that parents and pupils take advantage of their facilities and after-school activities, and to encourage the alternative school to also take advantage of the facilities of the community of Abersoch.
169	7.3. Community Connection The community facilities offered in Abersoch is better than that offered by Sarn Bach (CIAR 4.4, background document) but, interestingly, this was not presented in the main report, and appears bias against Ysgol Abersoch.		The Council notes the comments and emphasises that the consultation document has been drafted in accordance with the requirements of the Schools Organisation Code 2018. This Code lists specific information that has to be included in the consultation document
170	Incorrect tables regarding the community use...		

	<p>Activities / groups – incorrect in terms of Ysgol Sarn Bach. Cylch Meithrin was not held in the school – rather at Llanengan Community Centre and this came to an end in 2019 because of a lack of committee...</p> <p>Adrannau not Aelwydydd yr Urdd. There is no Adran in Ysgol Sarn Bach – the pupils are trained for the Eisteddfod there but Adran yr Urdd Llanengan is held at the Community Centre at night. Adran Tudwal is held straight after school in Ysgol Abersoch and former pupils also attend.</p>		<p>The Council accepts the comment and has updated the information/tables where appropriate.</p> <p>In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessments can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p>
171	<p>The tables in these assessments continue to be false, for example there is no church or chapel in Sarn Bach. As a former pupil of Ysgol Sarn Bach, I was shocked to discover that the school, according to the map, has moved to the fields of Fferm Ty Newydd. Inaccuracies in such simple information undermine my confidence in the more complex fields of this report.</p>		
172	<p>The support this school has received in obvious and strong, but perhaps more so surprising is the support given by the non-Welsh. This is a clear indication, despite the apparent anglicising of Abersoch, that the Welsh language and culture is highly valued, and needless to see represent the need to protect, sustain and strengthen these assets.</p>		<p>The Council notes the comments regarding the negative impact that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch may have on the village.</p> <p>When developing any proposals relating to education modernisation, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the community.</p>
173	<p>The Welsh community in Abersoch, although small by now, is a Strong one. The school is an important part of this, proven by the gold award presented by the Language Charter.</p>		<p>As part of the consultation process, the Council conducted an assessment of the community impact of the options under consideration in order to gauge the probable impact the options would have on the communities in question. The considerations included in the Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment address the suggestions of what could be included in a Welsh Language and Community Impact Assessment, which can be seen in Appendix C: Assessments of the community impact and the impact on the Welsh language, <i>The School Organisation Code 011/2018</i>.</p> <p>In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessments can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p>
174	<p>I write this email to object to the proposal to close this wonderful village school. I see the children always looking so happy around the village. The pastoral care that the children receive at this village school is a great help to children from English-only homes. The fact that Gwynedd Council is constantly trying to find new ways to enable more local young families to buy property and live in the village and then making the decision to close the village school makes no sense at all . It runs counter to what Gwynedd Council is promoting that they are trying to achieve for the local community.</p>		
175	<p>I attach my previous letter that I would also like to be counted as an objection, and urge Cabinet members to think again and take this opportunity to make a stand and show support for the children and community of Abersoch, above all the presence of Welsh as a living language in the heart of the village.</p>		<p>The assessment noted that by closing Ysgol Abersoch, some elements of community events would be affected and there would be some negative impact deriving from</p>

176	<p>The school is the true heart of the rejuvenating community so that we see more families wanting to live in the area and receive the special education from a team of committed teachers, parents and staff. The school is an integral part of the village and I am very pleased to see the decision to continue to improve standards and provide a great education for the children of the village. As a former teacher, I have never seen such a commitment to a school and community before and I think it would be appalling to take this away. Centralising education is not beneficial to many pupils and developing friendships in such an environment is something to celebrate and aspire to.</p>		<p>closing the school. However, it was noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Year 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attended Ysgol Sarn Bach. Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the alternative school and the broader area.</p> <p>To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.</p>
177	<p>The impact of closing the school on the Welsh language and on the community is only skin-deep. The study advises on any impact on the children's education medium (of course that does not change as they go to another Welsh-medium school, and the community impact study advises on formal social meetings, rather than texture The school is Abersoch's Welsh center where the language and the local community are under great pressure - partly because of the inadequacies of Local Government and the Center over the years to protect them. self-evidently will have a very detrimental effect on the community and the language ... see governors and conscientious members of the local community as partners, not as enemies to defeat.</p>		<p>Consequently, should the proposal be implemented it will be required as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of Ysgol Abersoch pupils so that parents and pupils take advantage of their facilities and after-school activities, and to encourage the alternative school to also take advantage of the facilities of the community of Abersoch.</p> <p>Should a decision be made to close the school, there will be an opportunity to consider options for the post-use of the school, taking the community activities currently held at the school into account.</p>
178	<p>There is increasing awareness of the cultural and economic importance of ensuring the survival of small, rural seaside villages. How has this been failed by Gwynedd Council? Your proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch contradicts the policies and objectives of the Welsh Government and therefore of its people and voters.</p>		<p>The Council notes the comment.</p>

C	Educational Matters		
	Niferoedd Disgyblion		
179	there are more pupils proposed for the next school year		The Authority has prioritised Ysgol Abersoch for a review of the educational provision as it faces a number of challenges. Pupil numbers at the school have fallen consistently since 2016 and the figure has been fragile for some time.
180	If in fact capacity data is not considered particularly important, then why should it be used as a factor in building the case to close a school?		
181	Please note that due to Coronavirus more people have realised that they can work from home and they can move to Abersoch, so the numbers of children needing a quality education may well grow. I feel that it would be detrimental to the village to allow this closure to go ahead and I ask you to reconsider		<p>As a result of the current low numbers, the school is in a fragile position and under increasing budgetary pressures, specifically:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. School numbers are concerning. In September 2020, there were eight full-time pupils and two nursery pupils. ii. The class sizes are small - with 10 pupils being taught in one mixed-age class. iii. Projections show 10 pupils in 2021, 12 pupils in 2022, and 12 pupils in 2023. iv. September 2020 data shows that 26 pupils live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area with 21 of them attending other schools. It also shows that five pupils from outside the Abersoch catchment area attend Ysgol Abersoch. v. Ysgol Abersoch receives an additional amount to the usual allocation via the minimum staffing protection policy (which ensures at least a headteacher and teacher at each school, and a headteacher and an assistant in schools with fewer than 15 pupils). The total additional funding for the 2020/21 financial year (based on the numbers in September 2019) is £52,582. vi. The per pupil cost for Ysgol Abersoch during the 2020/21 financial year is £17,404, compared with the county-wide average per pupil cost of £4,198 for the same period. vii. Number of surplus spaces - 76% surplus places at the school (32 in total) <p>The Council notes the comments; however, bearing in mind the size of the projected increase in pupil numbers, it is likely that the challenges facing Ysgol Abersoch will continue.</p>
182	I hope under the circumstances that more fairness will be considered and more time given to the school to raise the figures without a cloud of uncertainty looming over its head.		
183	It is unfair to use the excuse that there are not enough children at the school. That is how it has always been from time to time over the years. Sometimes there are a fair amount and others there are not so many!!!		
184	As displayed by the Education Department's tables the number of pupils at the Schools have risen as suddenly as they have fallen but the numbers have remained steady of late and parents have shown interest in registering their children to attend the school in the future despite the cloud that has loomed over the school over the past year. The nursery group and Ti a Fi have been busy and is developing fruitfully and the experience at other locations have led to a rise in pupil numbers.		
185	On the subject of 'numbers': I am sure that Ysgol Foel Gron cannot sustain 61 children, and Ysgol Abersoch could not sustain 42. I know of both schools, and these figures seem way too high. Could you confirm that figures in 'Appendix 4' are correct, in case they are misleading?		Capacity and admittance numbers reflect a school's ability to admit children based on the school's surface area which is calculated using a Welsh Government formula.
186	The amount reported depends on pupil numbers and with an ambitious look at this if the numbers rise as one hopes to dom the sum of £52,582 will not		It is fair to say that the cost per pupil would reduce with any increase in numbers. However, the school's numbers would need to increase substantially to bring the cost closer to the county average and the projections do not sugest that this is likely to happen.

	apply. I refer to response v. this difference may well not exist if the numbers increase.																																												
187	There is selective use of statements here. "Pupil numbers at the school have reduced consistently since 2016..." fails to acknowledge the increase in intake in September 2020 when 5 pupils commenced Ysgol Abersoch.		<p>Pupils numbers at Ysgol Abersoch have been stated in full in section 7.5 of the consultation document. Although two nursery pupils and three reception pupils started in September 2020, unfortunately this has not led to a significant increase in the numbers.</p> <p>In September 2020, eight full-time pupils and two part-time pupils were registered at the school, compared with two part-time pupils and seven full-time pupils in September 2019.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>School</th> <th>Nursery</th> <th>Reception</th> <th>Yr 1</th> <th>Yr 2</th> <th>Yr 3</th> <th>Yr 4</th> <th>Yr 5</th> <th>Yr 6</th> <th>Total</th> <th>Number of classes</th> <th>Largest class</th> <th>Smallest class</th> <th>Average class size</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Abersoch</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>10</td> <td>1</td> <td>10</td> <td>10</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sarn Bach</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>5</td> <td>4</td> <td>8</td> <td>5</td> <td>10</td> <td>11</td> <td>48</td> <td>2</td> <td>34</td> <td>14</td> <td>24</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><small>Source: September 2020 Annual School Census</small></p>	School	Nursery	Reception	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Total	Number of classes	Largest class	Smallest class	Average class size	Abersoch	2	3	2	-	3	-	-	-	10	1	10	10	10	Sarn Bach	3	2	5	4	8	5	10	11	48	2	34	14	24
School	Nursery	Reception	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Total	Number of classes	Largest class	Smallest class	Average class size																																
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188	Disagreement with the suggestion that "... any increase in the numbers at Ysgol Aber-soch as a result of extending the age range would lead to a reduction in the numbers of Ysgol Sarn Bach and, possibly, the neighboring schools"; it is thought that the transfer would be delayed.		The Council notes the comment.																																										
189	<p>The school has a beach and an opportunity to learn and research nature. I discovered a lot on the seashore and have memories of having fun and doing experiments there.</p> <p>Unfortunately the numbers of Abersoch pupils have declined in recent years which is disappointing, but the discipline or education has not deteriorated and I have every fact that the numbers will rise again as parents hear about proposals here, and the education available locally.</p>		The Council notes the comment.																																										
190	'Reduce the number of surplus places in schools' - surplus places have not affected education yet. It is felt that more concern is given to these than the children themselves.		As a result of the low pupil numbers, there are also a number of surplus places in Ysgol Abersoch (Reception - Yr. 3) 26 (76%).																																										

			The School Organisation Code (Welsh Government) notes that "It is important that funding for education is cost effective. Relevant bodies should consider the following factors in relation to the resourcing of education: What effect proposals will have on surplus places in the area; Some surplus places are necessary to enable schools to cope with fluctuations in numbers of pupils, but excessive numbers of unused places that could be removed mean that resources are tied up unproductively."
	Projections		
191	The numbers of pupils projected for future years, are at best, a guess based on past recent trends but the historically pupil numbers have fluctuated with around 20 being a reasonable benchmark. If there is no village school then the numbers will not have a chance to increase.		The projected number of pupils have been created by using information about past trends. Three-year projections are provided by the headteachers of the individual schools and the year 4 and 5 projections are calculated by the authority.
192	I am very concerned that the Council is basing its decision on deeply flawed pupil estimates that are out of line with Gwynedd Council estimates which indicate that the number of school age children will increase over the next 20 years as well as recent data showing that pupil numbers at Ysgol Abersoch and surrounding schools have been growing over the last 5 years. This is in stark contrast to the Education Department's forecasts which show a steep decline in numbers. The source of these estimates needs to be substantiated and differences from common population trends justified.		It is acknowledged that calculating projections is not science, and numbers may vary a little in reality. Nevertheless, the Education Department is of the opinion, based on the numbers in September 2020, and the average admission numbers of the previous three years, that the numbers will remain low at Ysgol Abersoch for the next five years:
193	The pupil projections by the Education Department is impossible to confirm, and in the new world post-Covid, the figures are subject to substantial chance in the long and short term.		
194	Where is the evidence that the projections increase by only two in 2023 as has been shown in the future pupil number increments can happen quickly and unexpectedly therefore the report is misleading.		
195	Every school goes through peaks and troughs.		

Table 1 - Number projections for Ysgol Abersoch

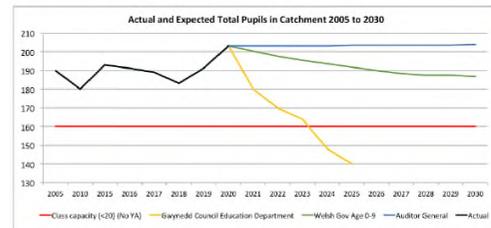
	M	D	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
September 2020	2	3	2	0	3	-	-	-	10
September 2021 Projection	3	2	3	2	0	-	-	-	10
September 2022 Projection	2	3	2	3	2	-	-	-	12
September 2023 Projection	2	2	3	2	3	-	-	-	12
September 2024 Projection	2	2	2	3	2	-	-	-	11
September 2025 Projection	2	2	2	2	3	-	-	-	11

In September 2020, of the 26 pupils (3-8 years) who lived in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area, five of those children attended Ysgol Abersoch, with 21 (81%) of them attending schools outside the catchment area. As a result, in response to comments noting that the numbers and population of children in the area will increase over the next 20-25 years, based on the figures for September 2020, it is concluded that it cannot be guaranteed that those children would choose to attend Ysgol Abersoch.

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The Gwynedd Council Audit Summary 2020 issued 12 February 2021 states “Gwynedd’s population is projected to increase by 5.3% between 2020 and 2040 from 124,670 to 131,314, including a 0.4% increase in the number of children, a 0.9% increase in the number of the working-age population and a 20.8% increase in the number of people aged 65 and over.”

Ffigur 1: Gwir Gyfanswm a Disgwyliedig Disgyblion yn y Dalgylch 2005 i 2030



The Council notes the comprehensive comments regarding the number projections and the potential impact on classroom sizes in the area.

The projected numbers have been created by using information about past trends. Three-year projections are provided by the headteachers of the individual schools and the year 4 and 5 projections are calculated by the authority.

It is acknowledged that calculating projections is not science, and numbers may vary a little in reality. Nevertheless, the Education Department is of the opinion, based on the numbers in September 2020, and the average admission numbers of the previous three years, that the numbers will remain low at Ysgol Abersoch for the next five years:

Table 1 - Number projections for Ysgol Abersoch

	M	D	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
September 2020	2	3	2	0	3	-	-	-	10
September 2021 Projection	3	2	3	2	0	-	-	-	10
September 2022 Projection	2	3	2	3	2	-	-	-	12
September 2023 Projection	2	2	3	2	3	-	-	-	12
September 2024 Projection	2	2	2	3	2	-	-	-	11
September 2025 Projection	2	2	2	2	3	-	-	-	11

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2.3 Projection Numbers

Pupil population forecasts are important in understanding whether there is sufficient capacity at the four schools to offer class sizes of between 12 and 20 now and in the future. The Education Department has prepared a 5-year projection of pupil numbers in the four schools. This is shown below (Figure 1) alongside the Auditor General ‘Gwynedd Council Annual Audit Summary 2020’ projections and the Welsh Government estimate of population changes of those aged 0 – 9 years in Wales. Our finding is that the Education Department estimate shows a significantly different trend that out of step with Gwynedd Council’s Auditor General published forecasts and that of the wider Welsh population and as a result needs careful consideration to ensure a realistic range of scenarios is considered.

Figure 1: Actual and Expected Total Pupils in Catchment 2005 to 2030

We also have evidence from several families with children which is not reflected in these numbers. For example, there are least 11 potential children that we know of who would be eligible to start at Ysgol Abersoch in the next 3 years compared to the Education Department’s projected 7. The Commissioner for Future Generations also suggests that we should be looking 25 to 50 years into the future, stressing the importance of balancing

In September 2020, of the 26 pupils (3-8 years) who lived in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area, five of those children attended Ysgol Abersoch, with 21 (81%) of them attending schools outside the catchment area. As a result, in response to comments noting that the numbers and population of children in the area will increase over the next 20-25 years, based on the figures for September 2020, it is concluded that it cannot be guaranteed that those children would choose to attend Ysgol Abersoch.

Our expectation is that there should be appropriately-sized classes in primary schools, as far as possible, so that children in the county receive the best possible experiences and opportunities.

The following table demonstrates the class sizes of Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach in September 2020:

short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.

To assist with decision making it is reasonable to consider three scenarios of future pupil numbers and how this might impact mixed class capacity if Ysgol Abersoch remains open or closes and the pupils go to Ysgol Sarn Bach (Appendix B- Review of Class Sizes, Capacity and Population Forecasts - A report by Cyfeillion Ysgol Abersoch Friends, February 2021). In summary, across the four schools:

- High case of 25 pupils per year group per year / 200 pupils in total in line with the average of recent years and the opinion of the Auditor General.
- Mid case of 22 pupils per year group per year / 176 pupils in total in line with the most frequent number of pupils in recent years.
- Low case of 18 pupils per year group per year / 144 pupils in total in line with the Council's orecast by 2025.

Using the projections from above, if the Low case is realised, as per the Council's forecasts and if Ysgol Abersoch is closed, the remaining three schools will operate at close to full capacity, providing little scope for normal fluctuations in annual school numbers or provide a pathway for economic and housing development in the area. In both the Mid and High scenarios an increasing number of pupils will be educated in mixed age classes greater than 20. Taking the High scenario, which broadly reflects the Auditor General projections for Gwynedd, if Ysgol Abersoch closes 100% of children will be educated in oversized, mixed age classes.

On average, it must be considered that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch will mean that all pupils in the three remaining schools will be educated in oversized classrooms to their educational detriment and against Gwynedd Council's stated strategy of educational excellence in primary schools.

On average, it must be considered that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch will mean that all pupils in the three remaining schools will be educated in oversized classrooms to their educational detriment and against Gwynedd Council's stated strategy of educational excellence in primary schools.

School	Nursery	Reception	Yr 1	Yr2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Total	Number of classes	Largest class	Smallest class	Average class size
Abersoch	2	3	2	-	3	-	-	-	10	1	10	10	10
Sarn Bach	3	2	5	4	8	5	10	11	48	2	34	14	24

Source: September 2020 Annual School Census

Should the proposal be realised, it is anticipated that there would be 21 children in the Foundation Phase and 37 in KS2 at Ysgol Sarn Bach. It would be expected for the Headteacher and Governing Body of the alternative school to give appropriate attention to determine suitable class-sizes and school staff resources to respond to the latest numbers. The increase in their annual budget would facilitate options to consider an additional class(es) and staff.

As a result of the low pupil numbers, there is a number of surplus places in Ysgol Abersoch (Reception - Yr. 3) 26 (76%). There are 21 (32%) surplus places at Ysgol Sarn Bach. By including the Nursery capacity and numbers for both schools, Ysgol Abersoch has 32 (75%) surplus places and Ysgol Sarn Bach has 25 (34%) surplus places. With 21 surplus places (and four surplus places in the Nursery), Ysgol Sarn Bach has sufficient capacity for the number of pupils from Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach, currently and for the next five years. Currently, between Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach, there are 47 (47%) surplus places in the area. Delivering the proposed option would reduce the number of surplus places in the area to 19 (29%) (Reception - Yr.6).

In response to the comment that the "pupil numbers have reduced since 2016" statement is misleading - it is confirmed that this is a reference to the pupil number of Ysgol Abersoch. As can be seen in the following graph, the school's pupil numbers have fallen consistently since 2016 and the figure has been fragile for some time:

<p>198</p>	<p>Gwynedd Council is committed to a strategy of Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd Council. In this strategy class sizes are identified as an important factor so that children acquire the best possible experience and opportunities. All the four schools in the area (Ysgol Abersoch, Ysgol Sarn Bach, Ysgol Llanbedrog, Ysgol Foel Gron) have mixed age classes as the norm.....Using the forecasts based on Welsh Government projections (see Report on Class Sizes, Capacity and Population Projections" if the low case is realised and if Ysgol Abersoch is closed, the remaining three schools will operate at close to full capacity, providing little scope for normal fluctuations in annual school numbers or provide a pathway for economic development in the area. In both the Mid and High scenarios, an increasing number of pupils will be educated in classes greater than 20. In the worst-case scenario, this may be as many as a class size of 25. On average, it must be considered that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch will mean that all schools pupils in the three remaining schools will be educated in oversized classrooms to their educational detriment and against Gwynedd Council's stated strategy of educational excellence in Primary Schools.</p>		<table border="1"> <caption>Number of pupils at Ysgol Abersoch (September 2010-2020)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Number of pupils</th> <th>Capacity</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2010</td><td>19</td><td>38</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>20</td><td>38</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>19</td><td>38</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>17</td><td>38</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>19</td><td>38</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>19</td><td>38</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>20</td><td>38</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>18</td><td>38</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>17</td><td>38</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>17</td><td>38</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>19</td><td>38</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Number of pupils	Capacity	2010	19	38	2011	20	38	2012	19	38	2013	17	38	2014	19	38	2015	19	38	2016	20	38	2017	18	38	2018	17	38	2019	17	38	2020	19	38
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<p>199</p>	<p>"Pupil numbers have reduced consistently since 2016" This statement is misleading for the local area. The table on p14 shows that the number of children educated in the area have been consistent since 1980. Pupils have increased by 5% between 2005 and 2020 (190-204). 204 pupils in 2020 is the third highest on record with pupil numbers steadily rising in the past 5 years. The basis for the projection numbers at Ysgol Abersoch is unclear. We know of at least 11 potential children in Ysgol Abersoch catchment area to start in the next 3 years compared to the Education Department's projected 7. There is also post-pandemic potential for further increase in numbers as people move out of urban areas to rural areas. We question the validity of the projected Ysgol Sarn Bach pupil numbers, 40 in 2021 reducing to 17 in 2025. The Gwynedd Council estimate shows a significantly different trend to the wider Welsh population. As a result, these projections need careful consideration to ensure a realistic range of scenarios is considered (See Appendix B: Review of Class Sizes, Capacity and Population Forecasts - A report by Cyfeillion Ysgol Abersoch Friends) and for a sufficient duration of time. The Future Generations Commissioner has stated that</p>																																						

	consideration should be given to the long-term trends i.e. 25-50 years into the future.		
200	Gwynedd Council Education Department has used a lower end of the range of 18 pupils in each year group across the four schools in total to forecast future pupil numbers. This estimate is out of step with forecasted population trends in Wales and the Auditor General projection for Gwynedd.		
201	<p>Conclusions:</p> <p>Review of the three scenarios shows that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively small changes in annual pupil numbers can have a significant impact on mixed class size in the four schools under consideration. • If the Low case is realised and if Ysgol Abersoch is closed, the remaining three schools will operate at close to full capacity, providing little scope for normal fluctuations in annual school numbers or provide a pathway for economic development in the area. • In both the Mid and High scenarios, an increasing number of pupils will be educated in mixed classes greater than 20. • In the High scenario, which reflects the Auditor General projections, 100% of children are educated in oversized mixed-age classes, with as many as 26 per mixed-age class. The closure of Ysgol Abersoch results in Gwynedd Council not meeting its objectives and compromises education provision to the pupils. • On average, it must be considered that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch will mean that all schools pupils in the three remaining schools will be educated in oversized mixed classes to their educational detriment and against Gwynedd Council's stated strategy of educational excellence in primary schools. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition, the closure of Ysgol Abersoch will be to the detriment of the Abersoch community and the lack of capacity in the remaining schools will result in pupils not being able to choose their local school from an early primary age. 		
202	A difference between the local area pupil projections presented in the consultation documents that appear to suggest a large reduction in pupil numbers, and the Welsh Government and Gwynedd Council estimates which		The Council notes the comments regarding the concerns about accuracy and the basis of the number projections.

	are stable and increasing numbers across Wales and Gwynedd. It can be proposed that this is a result of projections made by non-resident headteachers, basing their projections on recent trends rather than evidence that provides more reliable estimates. For example, we know of at least 11 children in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area who would be eligible to start in the next 3 years compared to the Education Department's projection of 7. Should the Council not take into account noticeable changes in the local population and formal, published projections rather than potentially unfounded and misleading projections?		The projected number of pupils have been created by using information about past trends. Three-year projections are provided by the headteachers of the individual schools and the year 4 and 5 projections are calculated by the authority.																																																																						
203	<p>The Education Department's forecasts suggest that pupil numbers at Ysgol Sarn Bach will decline within the next five years. These appear to be based on head teacher assessments but, again, Gwynedd Council's Annual Audit Summary 2020/21 project a 5.3% population increase between 2020 and 2040 including a 0.4% increase in the number of children. The Education Department appears to favor relying on informal assessments of headteachers that do not live in the community to support its arguments for closure, rather than formal predictions issued by the Council.</p> <p><i>How accurate is the analysis of pupil numbers trends identified in the report?</i></p>		<p>It is acknowledged that calculating projections is not science, and numbers may vary a little in reality. Nevertheless, the Education Department is of the opinion, based on the numbers in September 2020, and the average admission numbers of the previous three years, that the numbers will remain low at Ysgol Abersoch for the next five years:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Table 1 - Number projections for Ysgol Abersoch</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>M</th> <th>D</th> <th>1</th> <th>2</th> <th>3</th> <th>4</th> <th>5</th> <th>6</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>September 2020</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>0</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September 2021 Projection</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>0</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September 2022 Projection</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September 2023 Projection</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September 2024 Projection</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September 2025 Projection</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>11</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>In September 2020, of the 26 pupils (3-8 years) who lived in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area, five of those children attended Ysgol Abersoch, with 21 (81%) of them attending schools outside the catchment area. As a result, in response to comments noting that the numbers and population of children in the area will increase over the next 20-25 years, based on the figures for September 2020, it is concluded that it cannot be guaranteed that those children would choose to attend Ysgol Abersoch.</p>		M	D	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	September 2020	2	3	2	0	3	-	-	-	10	September 2021 Projection	3	2	3	2	0	-	-	-	10	September 2022 Projection	2	3	2	3	2	-	-	-	12	September 2023 Projection	2	2	3	2	3	-	-	-	12	September 2024 Projection	2	2	2	3	2	-	-	-	11	September 2025 Projection	2	2	2	2	3	-	-	-	11
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204	It is noted that projections remain low over the next five years. The Future Generations Commissioner states that we should look 25 - 50 years to the future and, by studying the indicators, Abersoch should thrive during this time.		The Council notes the comment. Nevertheless, in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2018, the proposers are asked to note "five-year forecasts of pupil rolls at all existing schools likely to be affected by the proposals ... currently (i.e. based on the existing configuration of schools)".																																																																						
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205	Further I do not accept the argument that smaller classes are detrimental to the education of pupils. It makes intuitive sense that more individual attention will lead to better outcomes.		Ysgol Abersoch has been prioritised for a review of the educational provision as the school is facing a number of challenges. Pupil numbers at the school have fallen consistently since 2016 and the figure has been fragile for some time. Consequently, it is likely that the school is facing increasing challenges, including:																																																																						
206	Sending Ysgol Abersoch children to larger classes in Ysgol Sarn Bach with a mixture of ages and abilities does not seem a better alternative option. Currently the children at Ysgol Abersoch are taught thr new Welsh language																																																																								

	Curriculum, and this should be celebrated. Perhaps the children's latest results highlight how excellent and beneficial Ysgol Abersoch is.		
207	Perhaps you are mixing your report up with Ysgol Sarn Bach, where larger groups of mixed age ranges are taught in one room. In fact I feel sad that my daughter who will move to year four in Ysgol Sarn Bach will be taught with Year three, I feel that the children lose their identity, as they are taught in this larger group of very mixed abilities, whereas previously at Ysgol Abersoch she was very much an independent learner who was allowed to explore and encouraged to the very best of her abilities whilst following the curriculum thus allowing her and my son to excel.		
208	Gwynedd Council is committed to a strategy of Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd Council. In this strategy class sizes are identified as an important factor so that children acquire the best possible experience and opportunities. All the four schools in the area (Ysgol Abersoch, Ysgol Sarn Bach, Ysgol Llanbedrog, Ysgol Foel Gron) have mixed age classes as the norm.....Using the forecasts based on Welsh Government projections (see Report on Class Sizes, Capacity and Population Projections" if the low case is realised and if Ysgol Abersoch is closed, the remaining three schools will operate at close to full capacity, providing little scope for normal fluctuations in annual school numbers or provide a pathway for economic development in the area. In both the Mid and High scenarios, an increasing number of pupils will be educated in classes greater than 20. In the worst-case scenario, this may be as many as a class size of 25. On average, it must be considered that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch will mean that all schools pupils in the three remaining schools will be educated in oversized classrooms to their educational detriment and against Gwynedd Council's stated strategy of educational excellence in Primary Schools.		
209	There are two physical classrooms, and the children spend approximately 50% time with 2 teachers (split into 2 classrooms), and 50% of their time with 1 teacher and 1 assistant. In Ysgol Sarn Bach there are two classes - one for Nursery to Year 3 (four age ranges) and one for Years 3,4,5 and 6 (four age ranges). Please explain how closing Ysgol Abersoch would improve the education provision?		
210	"Implementing this option would give pupils an opportunity to be educated in peer groups with much less of an age range and an opportunity to improve the educational and social experience of the pupils, on a daily basis." What is		

- Low pupil numbers: In September 2020, eight full-time pupils and two part-time nursery pupils were registered at the school.
- Projected numbers: It is anticipated that the numbers will continue to be low over the coming years (September 2021 = 10; September 2022 = 12; September 2023 = 12).
- High percentage of surplus places: Based on the figures for September 2020, there were approximately 76% of surplus places at the school (26 in total) (R - Yr. 3).
- Small class sizes: The 10 pupils are taught in one mixed-age class.
- Broad age ranges within classes: The pupils are taught in one class with an age range of up to five years (3-8 years).
- Financial Resources: Ysgol Abersoch receives an additional sum to the usual allocation via the minimum staffing protection policy. The total amount during the 2020-21 financial year is £52,582. The cost per pupil at Ysgol Abersoch in the 2020/21 financial year is £17,404 - the average cost in the county per pupil is £4,198.
- Pupil residence: 2020 data shows that 26 3-8-year-old children live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area with 21 (81%) of them attending schools outside the catchment area.

Section 7.3 of the Consultation Document provided information of the current class sizes in Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach.

With 21 surplus places (and four surplus places for Nursery), Ysgol Sarn Bach has sufficient capacity for the number of pupils from Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach currently and for the next five years.

Should the proposal be realised, it is anticipated that there would be 21 children in the Foundation Phase and 37 in KS2 at Ysgol Sarn Bach. It would be expected for the Headteacher and Governing Body of the alternative school to give appropriate attention to determine suitable class-sizes and school staff resources to respond to the latest numbers. The increase in their annual budget would facilitate options to consider an additional class(es) and staff.

In accordance with the School Organisation Code 2018, in the case of a proposal to reorganise schools, the consultation document has to include details about all the surrounding schools to which it might reasonably be considered that pupils may wish to

	the evidence for this? Ysgol Sarn Bach class sizes are Nursery, Reception, Years 1,2 in one class, then Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 in a second class. In Ysgol Abersoch the class is Nursery – Year 3 but split across 2 teachers. Specify in which ways the education would improve.		transfer. As a result, details of Ysgol Sarn Bach, Ysgol Llanbedrog and Ysgol Foel Gron were included in the statutory consultation document in addition to the details of Ysgol Abersoch.
211	7.3 Class Sizes and Appropriate Age Range “Gwynedd Council aim to have no more than 2 age range within the same class” The classes at Ysgol Sarn Bach all exceed the two-age ranges within the same class objective. Ysgol Sarn Bach has 2 classes of 4 age ranges: Nursery, Reception, Years 1,2 in one class, then Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 in a second class. As a result of not meeting the stated strategic objectives we feel that Ysgol Sarn Bach cannot accommodate additional children due to the nature of the classrooms available at Ysgol Sarn Bach. There will be a negative outcome for the schooling of children at both schools.		It is emphasised that the proposal that was the subject of the statutory consultation, and subsequently published through statutory notice, is to close Ysgol Abersoch and offer a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach. Therefore, it is not considered that the class sizes of nearby schools (Ysgol Foel Gron and Ysgol Llanbedrog) are relevant to the proposal. Based on the conclusions of the assessment of the Probable Impact on the Quality and Standards of Education, it is concluded that the standard of education provided at Ysgol Sarn Bach is the same level as the quality of education at Ysgol Abersoch. Consequently, it is not anticipated any negative impact would derive in terms of the quality and standards of education from the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and transfer the pupils to Ysgol Sarn Bach. The information in the assessment of the likely impact on the standard of education follows the latest Estyn inspections of the schools in question, noting that each of the schools have been placed in at least an equivalent category to Ysgol Abersoch, and each of the schools have been placed in the yellow or green in terms of Welsh Government's support category. Consequently, it is not anticipated any negative impact would derive in terms of the quality and standards of education from the proposal.
212	7.16 Expected advantages and disadvantages of the proposal “Class sizes” Class sizes at Ysgol Sarn Bach are already above Gwynedd Council recommendation for mixed-age class size of 20 “Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd”. Closing Ysgol Abersoch will make the situation worse.		
213	The analysis below shows that in the four schools, the class sizes for 2020-21 are above 20 in 6 classes out of 9. In addition, over 80% of pupils are being educated in oversized mixed classes. Conclusion: Class size needs to be carefully considered in the decision-making so that Gwynedd Council can achieve its strategy from this current situation.		
214	The table below summarises the current class sizes for all four schools. It can be observed that there are a number of ‘big years’, however the typical range of annual pupil numbers per year group ranges from 18 to 33, with an overall average of 25 pupils per year group and a most common number of 22.		
215	Whilst in education terms there may be one “class” in Ysgol Abersoch, we want to check that the cabinet members realise that actually there are two separate classrooms in Ysgol Abersoch, with a third separate classroom dedicated to the Cylch Meithrin. If the pupil numbers increased in the school and there was a pressure on space, the Cylch Meithrin would be happy to relocate into a suitable building in the school yard. Incidentally the layout of the school has sufficient		

	provision for totally separate toilet facilities for the Cylch children and the school pupils, which has been particularly advantageous during the pandemic.		
216	class size ideal for each individual child if council valued and promoted the future of Ysgol Abersoch positively ; therefore preventing the current class overcrowding in the other local 3 schools .		
217	<p>The officers’ conclusions to the consultation’s responses are based on generic and stereotypical arguments, with no grounds for evidence, and without being specific to Abersoch – this being opposite to the Council’s responsibility to review the situation according to the specific school’s circumstances</p> <p>* It is presented as fact that the mixed-age classes are an educational disadvantage. The reality is more complex. Of course it means more work for teachers, but the educational value that the older pupils have mentoring the younger ones, and the strategies in places so that the clas as a whole studies one theme but on suitable levels for every pupil individually. No evidence has been presented that schools with mixed-age classes have worse educational results than larger schools. A study of the relative achievements of pupils in secondary education could be conducted, but no evidence is offered, only to set the point of fact. With proof of the emptiness of the argument, the pupils would probably be referred to another school where there would also be mixed-age classes, again with quite satisfactory results.</p>		
218	Much of the Cabinet’s discussion was focused on the classroom age range, with the implication that a much smaller age range would be had at Ysgol Sarn Bach. Yet, as part of the decision making process the Education Department did not seek to clarify to the Cabinet (in case they had not read the documentation) that in fact Ysgol Sarn Bach has a similar class age range (Meithrin – Bl 2 in one classroom) compared to Meithrin – Bl 3 at Ysgol Abersoch (split between 2 classrooms and one full-time and one part-time teacher). It seems disingenuous that such weight was put on this one side without weighing it up against the proposed alternative.		
219	What is presented regarding the concerns about the age difference within one class is misleading as this also the case in the school assigned for the pupils of Ysgol Abersoch.		

220	Further I do not accept the argument that smaller classes are detrimental to the education of pupils. It makes intuitive sense that more individual attention will lead to better outcomes.		The quality of education is the greatest influence on pupil attainment. Ysgol Abersoch pupils are taught in one classroom with an age range of up to 5 years (3-8-year-olds). The 10 pupils are taught in one mixed-age class.
221	In terms of Class sizes concerns have been displayed by the welsh government in terms of class sizes saying that it is better to have smaller class sizes. Therefore there is a positive element to a small class.		This poses a significant challenge for the teachers to prepare work that will challenge and stretch every child. The Authority is of the opinion that very low pupil numbers in each year could lead to reduced academic competition and stimulation, and fewer opportunities to take advantage of a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular experiences.
222	There are currently 12 children under 3 who would benefit from attending the school and, having taught for 35 years, I truly believe that small class sizes are the best. I have taught in schools where 30 was the average class size and in other schools where 4 was the average. Teachers are multi-talented but even the most diligent, committed teachers cannot give the same attention to 30 children as they can to 4!		There is evidence that nearly 80% of what children learn can be learned from each other and therefore limiting the number of children of the same age to one or two can affect progress.
223	The best start to any child, Welsh, English or any other language, they would be priviledged to be part of the school with the brilliant and dedicated teachers. Because this is a small school and is not over crowded as some nearby schools, they benefit from "one to one" time by teachers, which would not be possible in full classrooms.		It is nearly impossible for a small school to introduce the same range of curricular, extra-curricular and social experiences as a larger school, for instance, more children are needed to play team games. Also, being in a larger school could highlight to the children more effectively the natural differences between children and families from different backgrounds, a key part of a child's development.
224	While class sizes are smaller than those in neighboring schools, most people would testify that it is beneficial for the children in terms of better educational outcomes. By comparison, large classes were noticed in nearby schools which, incidentally, are larger than the class sizes identified by Gwynedd Council itself, which could lead to poorer results. Unsurprisingly, the Education Department places more emphasis on social interaction than educational attainment.		The Authority is of the opinion that this could affect the school's capacity to develop pupils to their full potential. Gwynedd Council aims to have suitable class sizes, with no more than two age-ranges within the same class in the primary sector.
225	Again, it is agreed that "the closure of Abersoch School and the education of the pupils at Sarn Bach would improve their educational and social experience". Small classes enable higher attainment and meet their peers in other out of school clubs.		Schools with higher numbers of children can offer a more robust structure to planning and providing the curriculum by establishing middle management teams and subject and curriculum leaders. In addition, a number of responsibilities can be centralised, such as those relating to the curriculum and managerial matters, which can be a burden for small organisations, e.g. evaluation arrangements, development plans, performance management. It is a greater challenge for small schools to be able to create professional development training programmes and specific development plans, as well as offering fair opportunities for staff to develop subject expertise and share good practice with peers.
226	Disagree with the comment that "the very small classes and low numbers affect children's experiences of socializing and working daily with peers" - they are members of different clubs such as Clwb Syrffio Llŷn and football / rugby clubs either here in Abersoch or Pwllheli and after school swimming / sailing lessons / activities after school like other school pupils.		Estyn (2013) noted:
227	The presence of children of different ages in the same class can be a more accurate reflection of society and home life than the larger groups found in larger schools ... The small classes enable higher attainment and low		

	numbers do not affect children's experiences of socializing and working daily with peers		"Leadership and processes to improve quality are usually better developed in large primary schools. In small primary schools, many headteachers have a significance teaching responsibility which limits the time they could assign to lead and manage and they have fewer opportunities to evaluate standards and stimulate improvement."
228	A very special building, space and atmosphere (close, warm and supportive). I can say, as a former pupil and parent of two children who have attended school, that having spent the early years of our education there has been very beneficial. Being taught in a small group of pupils in the early years of your education is not a disadvantage. The family atmosphere is a great help to the transition from home-grown to an educational setting. It is a special school for babies and early years.		Based on the conclusions of the assessment of the Probable Impact on the Quality and Standards of Education, it is concluded that the standard of education provided at Ysgol Sarn Bach is the same level as the quality of education at Ysgol Abersoch and transferring pupils to Ysgol Sarn Bach. The information in the assessment of the likely impact on the standard of education follows the latest Estyn inspections of the schools in question, noting that each of the schools have been placed in at least an equivalent category to Ysgol Abersoch, and each of the schools have been placed in the yellow or green in terms of Welsh Government's support category. Consequently, it is not anticipated any negative impact would derive in terms of the quality and standards of education from the proposal.
229	We believe that staffing levels at Ysgol Sarn Bach include a full-time headteacher, part-time teacher and substitute teachers, as well as teaching assistants. The children are divided into two formal classes in three classrooms. The headteacher teaches Nursery - Year 2 and the part-time teacher Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 in two classrooms supported by a teaching assistant. We believe that the children in Years 5 and 6 are taught by a classroom assistant two days a week. It is reasonable to ask why increasing class sizes, by involving pupils at Ysgol Abersoch, is "Offering the highest possible quality of education" and "teaching the children at Ysgol Sarn Bach would have a positive impact" In comparison, the children of Ysgol Abersoch are always taught by a teacher, as is expected in a school		Section 7.3 of the Consultation Document provided information of the current class sizes in Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach. Should the proposal be implemented, it would be expected for the Headteacher and Governing Body of the alternative school to give due attention to determining suitable class sizes and school staff resources to respond to the latest numbers. The increase in their annual budget would facilitate options to consider additional class(es) and staff.
230	Why are staffing levels at Ysgol Abersoch but not Ysgol Sarn Bach referred to here? What are the staffing levels at Ysgol Sarn Bach, per class and classroom, with teacher to child ratios? Does each classroom have a teacher in it every day? We have reason to believe there is 1 full-time headteacher, 1 part-time teacher, an occasional teacher as well as teaching assistants.....		The most suitable staffing structure will be a matter for the Governing Body of the Catchment Area School. Should the number of pupils increase Ysgol Sarn Bach could decide to amend the staffing structure to include more teachers. The Council cannot anticipate the Governing Body's decision and consequently it would not be appropriate to highlight future potential staffing levels. Should the pupil numbers increase beyond the statutory guidelines the school would be required to change the staffing structure.

	<p>This statement does not reflect the present teaching offer at Ysgol Sarn Bach and does not inform parents that children are routinely not being taught by a qualified teacher.</p> <p>We understand that classes in Ysgol Sarn Bach are taught by 1 full-time headteacher, 1 part-time teacher, and occasional teachers, as well as teaching assistants. The children are split into 2 formal classes, across 3 classrooms. The headteacher teaches Nursery - Year 2 in a single classroom, the part-time teacher Years 3,4,5 and 6 across 2 classrooms supported by a teaching assistant. There are regular days per week when the children in Years 3,4, 5 and 6 are taught by the teaching assistant only. For example, in the Year 5 and 6 classroom, the children are taught by the part-time teacher 2 days per week, by an occasional teacher 1 day per week and by a teaching assistant 2 days per week. There are 21 children in this classroom, plus a further 13 children in the Year 3 and 4 classroom. Therefore 34 children combined across two separate classrooms being taught by a combination of part-time teacher, occasional teacher, and teaching assistant.</p> <p>In what way, by including Ysgol Abersoch pupils, does increasing class sizes meet the objective of 'providing education of the best possible quality' when the classes are larger and in some cases exceed Gwynedd Council's legal limit of 30 and pupils are not being taught by a teacher on a number of days per week?</p> <p>Conversely, at Ysgol Abersoch children are always taught by a teacher, as would be expected to "Provide education of the best possible quality".</p>	<p>A vast number of schools make use of senior assistants to provide non-contact time for class teachers to plan, prepare and assess. The work presented will have been prepared beforehand by the teacher and it will mostly be a continuation of what the class teacher has already presented to the class.</p> <p>The additional allocation received by Ysgol Abersoch in light of low numbers of children ensures staffing levels that are above that provided at schools that are outside this protection. Ysgol Sarn Bach does not receive a high level of protection and consequently they face a challenge to maintain similar staffing levels to Ysgol Abersoch. However, it can be seen from the Estyn survey from Ysgol Sarn Bach in 2017 that this does not affect the quality of the children's learning experiences.</p>
231	<p>The Council has not provided an impact assessment on class sizes if the pupils of Ysgol Abersoch are transferred to Ysgol Sarn Bach as proposed. If this were to occur, then the class sizes at Ysgol Sarn Bach will be 21 and 37 respectively. This is clearly in excess of the started 20 as a maximum mixed class size. In addition to my own concerns, I believe that the governors and parents of Ysgol Sarn Bach would also be concerned and their views need to be taken into account in the consultation.</p>	<p>Section 7.3 of the Consultation Document provided information of the current class sizes in Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach.</p> <p>Should the proposal be implemented, it would be expected for the Headteacher and Governing Body of the alternative school to give due attention to determining suitable class sizes and school staff resources to respond to the latest numbers. The increase in their annual budget would facilitate options to consider additional class(es) and staff.</p>
232	<p>There is no mention of the Head and Governors of Abersoch under Management and Leadership; and an Acting Headteacher is present due to an unusual situation due to sad reasons.</p>	<p>Information on the school's staffing structure was provided in the consultation document published in January 2021 (page 28). The Council is of the opinion that it would not have been appropriate to focus on the personal situation of any staff members in a statutory consultation document relating to a proposal for school reorganisation.</p>

233	The current class size at Ysgol Abersoch is 10 children, and at Ysgol Sarn Bach the average class size is 24, which is more than Gwynedd Council's statement in 'Education of the Best Quality Strategy'. It is puzzling that Gwynedd Council can justify pushing through a decision that will increase class sizes above its own best practice on a 'wellbeing' basis. Given the context of the consultation documents, it appears that the Education Department is not considering the current education provision at Ysgol Abersoch to produce 'bilingual, successful and full citizens' in a 'naturally Welsh society'.		Should the proposal be realised, it is anticipated that there would be 21 children in the Foundation Phase and 37 in KS2 at Ysgol Sarn Bach. It would be expected for the Headteacher and Governing Body of the alternative school to give appropriate attention to determine suitable class-sizes and school staff resources to respond to the latest numbers. The increase in their annual budget would facilitate options to consider additional class(es) and staff.
234	'Educate the children in more suitable size classes' - the average class size at Ysgol Sarn Bach in September 2020 is stated to be 24. If so, they will be increased with the pupils of Ysgol Aber-soch, as a result, this would be contrary to what is noted in point 4.1.3 Best Quality Primary Education for Gwynedd's Children when stating		Should the proposal be realised, it is anticipated that there would be 21 children in the Foundation Phase and 37 in KS2 at Ysgol Sarn Bach. It would be expected for the Headteacher and Governing Body of the alternative school to give appropriate attention to determine suitable class-sizes and school staff resources to respond to the latest numbers. The increase in their annual budget would facilitate options to consider additional class(es) and staff.
235	I also see the means which the Council comes to its conclusions also inaccurate. In comparing 'Excellent Primary Education for the Children in Gwynedd' strategy to this decision, it is my understanding that the children currently taught at Ysgol Abersoch will be at a disadvantage by joining the multi-year classes of nearby schools. This will also have a negative effect on the education of other children in the area. It appears that financial savings is the Council's motivation rather than the value of education that is priceless in our communities today and to the future.		
236	I am extremely frustrated at the Council's claims about class sizes. We can no longer disagree with the suggestion that smaller classes are detrimental to a child's education. I strongly believe that if I had not accepted the purposeful and empathic teaching given by the smaller classes of Ysgol Abersoch, my academic potential would not have been recognised or nurtured. Nothing throughout my education compares to the personal attention and support I received at Abersoch School, until the one-on-one engagement I receive at Cambridge University.		<p>The quality of education is the greatest influence on pupil attainment. Ysgol Abersoch pupils are taught in one classroom with an age range of up to 5 years (3-8-year-olds). The 10 pupils are taught in one mixed-age class.</p> <p>It is a significant challenge for teachers to prepare work that will challenge and develop every child. The Authority is of the opinion that very low numbers of children each year can lead to less competition and academic stimulation, and less opportunity to benefit from a diverse range of curricular and extra-curricular experiences.</p> <p>There is evidence that nearly 80% of what children learn is learned from each other and therefore limiting the number of children of one age to one or two can impact progress.</p> <p>It is almost impossible for a small school to deliver the same range of curricular, extra-curricular and social experiences as a larger school could, for example more children are</p>

		<p>needed to hold team games. In addition, being in a larger school can more effectively highlight to children the natural differences that exist between children and families from different backgrounds, a key part of a child's development.</p> <p>The Authority is of the opinion that this can affect a school's ability to develop pupils to their full potential.</p> <p>Gwynedd Council aims to have suitable class sizes, with no more than two age ranges within the same primary class.</p> <p>Schools with a higher number of children can offer a stronger structure for curriculum planning and delivery by establishing middle management teams with subject and curriculum leaders. Additionally, a number of responsibilities can be centralised such as those relating to the curriculum and management issues, which can be a burden for small organizations, e.g. arranging appraisals, development plans, performance management. It is more challenging for smaller schools to be able to create professional development training programs and specific development plans as well as offer fair opportunities for staff to develop subject specialism and share good practice with peers.</p> <p>Estyn (2013) noted:</p> <p>“Leadership and processes to improve quality are usually better developed in large primary schools. In small primary schools, many headteachers have a significant teaching responsibility that limits the time they can devote to leadership and management and have fewer opportunities to evaluate standards and drive improvement.”</p> <p>Based on the outcome of the assessment of Possible Impact on Education Standards and Quality, it is concluded that the standard of education provided at Ysgol Sarn Bach is at the same level as the standard of education at Ysgol Abersoch and transferring pupils to Ysgol Sarn Bach. The information in the assessment of the possible impact on the quality of education following the most recent Estyn school inspections concerned indicates that all of the schools have been placed in at least an equivalent category to Ysgol Abersoch, and all of the schools were categorized as yellow, or green in terms of the Welsh Government support category. Therefore, it is not anticipated that there</p>
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			would be a negative impact on the education quality and standards arising from the proposal.
	Advantages of a smaller School		
237	I also could not find anything in the report regarding the current Covid Pandemic, looking at things such as; pupil attendance throughout this period. I know of several children from other schools in the area who did not attend school, because parents were concerned with larger class sizes. Ysgol Abersoch benefitted from smaller class sizes as parents felt confident to send them to school as the R rate would be significantly lower. Do you have figures of absenteeism during September to December 2020? I also noted that Ysgol Llanbedrog had to have two pick up times for children as the public footpath where parents wait to greet their children was too congested, this is not mentioned anywhere either. However the benefit of Ysgol Abersoch includes its location next to a large Car Park enabling parents to collect children in a safe manner and I feel that this should also be noted when drawing up your assessment.		All schools in Gwynedd have followed appropriate procedures relating to social distancing rules and schools have adapted the times for collecting children due to coronavirus. It is not appropriate to share sensitive information about pupil attendance.
38	With regard to the Covid situation, as you know, there is a need to consider how much fresh air and distance there is between pupils. Having fewer children in class and school is vitally important in the new life ahead of lockdown. In terms of the health and well-being of Abersoch children and the surrounding area, the Council should see the value of a small school and the fact that there is a beach just five minutes down the lane. Ironically, your argument of closing the school because of a small number of pupils and transporting them in a bus together to a school with more pupils is completely unreasonable and does not fit what is needed because of the pandemic and wanting to benefit the children of Abersoch.		All schools in Gwynedd have followed appropriate procedures relating to social distancing rules and ventilation due to coronavirus.
	Quality of Education		
239	I completely object the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch. This exceptional school provides the highest standard of education provision and the decision to close the school based on the education quality makes no sense at all. I am the parent of a child that attended the school and can confirm that the education provided here is of the highest standard and has steered my son towards the best possible path for his future.		Based on the conclusions of the assessment of the Probable Impact on the Quality and Standards of Education, it is concluded that the standard of education provided at Ysgol Sarn Bach is the same level as the quality of education at Ysgol Abersoch. Consequently, it is not anticipated any negative impact would derive in terms of the quality and standards of education from the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and transfer the pupils to Ysgol Sarn Bach. The information in the assessment follows the latest Estyn inspections of the schools in question, noting that each of the schools have been placed in at least an equivalent category to Ysgol Abersoch, and each of the schools have been
240 I particularly like the Montessori model developed by Italian Physician Maria Montessori 'emphasizing Independence' this is clear to see when the		

	<p>children take their weekly bus and travel to Swimming, they ask and pay the driver with their own money, every child can swim by the time they leave Ysgol Abersoch at 8 years old. The children independently telephone and order school meals, they also telephoned the R.S.P.C.A to report a hurt bird that was later caught and had to be put to sleep. The man was so impressed that these young children showed such maturity and compassion asking questions that showed intelligence and empathy. I feel that Gwynedd Council can boast hosting a school offering these exacting high standards.</p>		<p>placed in the yellow or green in terms of Welsh Government's support category. Realising this option would give pupils an opportunity to be educated in peer groups with much less of an age range and an opportunity to improve the educational and social experience of the pupils, on a daily basis. The needs of any vulnerable groups, including children with additional learning needs, would be assessed and implemented in line with the Authority's policy and procedures. The quality and standards of education were elaborated upon further in Section 7.2 of the consultation document and a full assessment of the probable impact on the quality and standards of education can be seen on the website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation.</p>														
241	<p>With regards to Educational benefits, the children of Ysgol Abersoch won £1,000 in a competition hosted by Llaeth y Llan, only 8 children in Ysgol Abersoch put their creative minds together with their inspirational Teachers and they won. The teachers encourage learners to adapt using natural resources and encourage development through learning, encompassing all children reach their potential and all the differentiation and individual learning styles are met. The children were happy just to take part in this challenge however they worked collaboratively and won, thus reinforcing my opinion that a small school can provide excellent education and inspire confidence.</p>																
42	<p>7.2.2. The Quality of the Education and Standards at the Two Schools Included in the Consultation Estyn reports Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach. Regarding Ysgol Sarn Bach "In addition, it was noted that the school benefited from clear leadership that is based on raising standards and ensuring the pupil's welfare." Selective use of quotes from Estyn reports are biased against Ysgol Abersoch. No recognition of the leadership at Ysgol Abersoch where in fact the Ysgol Abersoch Estyn Report 2017, p8 stated: " Since being appointed, the teacher in charge, with the skilful support and contribution of the governors, has begun to set a purposeful strategic direction for developing the school. Within a short period of time, she has implemented robust strategies and has succeeded in creating an ethos of teamwork among the staff. She has begun to put robust processes in place that are based on raising standards..."</p>		<p>The Council notes the comments.</p> <p>The Authority included Estyn's opinion on the five inspection fields openly and with transparency in the consultation document:</p> <p>Summary of Estyn reports:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>School</th> <th>Inspection year</th> <th>How good are the outcomes?</th> <th>How good is the provision?</th> <th>How good are leadership and management?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Abersoch</td> <td>June 2017</td> <td>Good</td> <td>Good</td> <td>Good</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>* (Note that Estyn had introduced five areas for inspection by October 2017.)</i></p>	School	Inspection year	How good are the outcomes?	How good is the provision?	How good are leadership and management?	Abersoch	June 2017	Good	Good	Good				
School	Inspection year	How good are the outcomes?	How good is the provision?	How good are leadership and management?													
Abersoch	June 2017	Good	Good	Good													
243	<p>7.2.2. The Quality of the Education and Standards at the Two Schools Included in the Consultation "The table below shows the likely impact of the proposal on the five relevant Estyn inspection fields."</p>		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>School</th> <th>Inspection year</th> <th>Standards</th> <th>Well-being and attitude</th> <th>Teaching and learning</th> <th>Care, support and guidance</th> <th>Leadership and management</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	School	Inspection year	Standards	Well-being and attitude	Teaching and learning	Care, support and guidance	Leadership and management							
School	Inspection year	Standards	Well-being and attitude	Teaching and learning	Care, support and guidance	Leadership and management											

<p>These are more accurately “possible” positives rather than likely positives. Again, misleading against Ysgol Abersoch. See below two rows.</p>			<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>s to learning</td> <td>experie nces</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sarn Bach</td> <td>October 2017</td> <td>Good</td> <td>Good</td> <td>Good</td> <td>Good</td> <td>Good</td> </tr> </table>				s to learning	experie nces			Sarn Bach	October 2017	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	<p>In assessing the likely impact of the proposal on Estyn's five inspection areas, in the context of 'Leadership and Management' the Authority identified that the likely impact of implementing the proposal would be neutral, given that Estyn's judgment of the quality of leadership at Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach was that they were as good as each other.</p> <p>The Authority disagrees with the comment on the use of the word 'likely' when considering the proposal on Estyn's five inspection areas and the comment that it is misleading against Ysgol Abersoch. By holding the assessment on the likely impact of the proposal on Estyn's five inspection areas it is concluded that five out of the seven criteria would have a likely neutral impact, with two out of the seven having a likely positive impact.</p>
			s to learning	experie nces														
Sarn Bach	October 2017	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good												
<p>14</p>	<p><i>"Based on the findings of the Assessment of Likely Impact on Quality and Standards of Education, it is concluded that the standard of education provided at Ysgol Sarn Bach is of the same quality as that of Ysgol Abersoch." "The alternative school offers at least an equal standard of education, .. " By using the term "at least", are you suggesting that Ysgol Sarn Bach offers a better standard of education? Class sizes at Ysgol Sarn Bach are larger and by default this means less individual attention, and, in some classes, children at Ysgol Sarn Bach are taught by a teaching assistant only on 2 days a week. Please explain the basis on which you are making this statement. The children attend swimming lessons throughout the year with Ysgol Abersoch, and it will be detrimental to the children to miss this as our ethos is "every child who attends Ysgol Abersoch until Year 3 will leave school being able to swim ".</i></p>		<p>The Council notes the comment.</p> <p>In response to the comments, the Council wishes to note that Ysgol Abersoch pupils are taught in one classroom with an age range of up to five years (3-8 years old). The 10 pupils are taught in one mixed-age class (September 2020)</p> <p>Gwynedd Council aims to have suitable class sizes, with no more than two age-ranges within the same class in the primary sector.</p> <p>Realising this proposal would give pupils an opportunity to be educated in peer groups with much less of an age range and an opportunity to improve the educational and social experience of the pupils, on a daily basis.</p> <p>In response to the comment on the Ysgol Sarn Bach staffing situation, the Council wishes to note that determining the most suitable staffing structure is a matter for the Governing Body of the individual school. Should the number of pupils increase Ysgol Sarn Bach could decide to amend the staffing structure to include more teachers. The</p>															

		<p>Council cannot anticipate the Governing Body's decision and consequently it would not be appropriate to highlight future potential staffing levels.</p> <p>Should the pupil numbers increase beyond the statutory guidelines the school would be required to change the staffing structure.</p> <p>A vast number of schools make use of senior assistants to provide non-contact time for class teachers to plan, prepare and assess. The work presented will have been prepared beforehand by the teacher and it will mostly be a continuation of what the class teacher has already presented to the class.</p> <p>The additional allocation received by Ysgol Abersoch in light of low numbers of children ensures staffing levels that are above that provided at schools that are outside this protection. Ysgol Sarn Bach does not receive a high level of protection and consequently they face a challenge to maintain similar staffing levels to Ysgol Abersoch. However, it can be seen from the Estyn survey from Ysgol Sarn Bach in 2017 that this does not affect the quality of the children's learning experiences.</p>
	<p>There is no basis for the statement "educating the children at Ysgol Sarn Bach would have a positive impact" and is highly subjective. The new headteacher at Ysgol Abersoch had just started when the Estyn review took place. The nature of this statement inappropriately biases against Ysgol Abersoch. The layout of the report changed between the two inspections in 2017, with Ysgol Abersoch reporting only "wellbeing" and Ysgol Sarn Bach being assessed on "wellbeing and attitudes to learning". The text for both schools is very similar. The difference may possibly be down to attendance rates; by nature, a small school is more sensitive to attendance rate changes where every child counts. Attendance rates in recent years are consistently high, even more so impressive given the school is in a seasonal location where parents are required to work during school holidays (2018-2019 = 96.3%, 2017-2018 = 94.2%). Ysgol Abersoch: " Nearly all pupils feel safe and happy at school and know who to approach if anything is worrying them. They treat each other with care and respect and offer support to their fellow pupils spontaneously in lessons or in more informal situations. In general, most pupils are enthusiastic and show an interest in their work and stay on task for specific periods. By being aware of their targets, many know how well they are achieving and what they need to do to improve.</p>	<p>The Council notes the comments. However, in relation to the comment about publishing the performance data of individual schools, in 2018 Welsh Government introduced significant changes to how performance measures are reported. Following Welsh Government's consultation on publishing teacher assessments, comparative data for the Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage at the school, on a Local Authority or a consortia level is no longer published. Therefore, beyond comparison with the national average, there is no comparative or benchmark information available.</p>

	<p>In general, nearly all pupils are aware of the importance of eating and drinking healthily and staying healthy. They participate enthusiastically in physical activities within the curriculum and through extra-curricular activities. Pupils play an important part in school life, and many enjoy shouldering responsibilities, for example when telephoning a nearby school to order lunch each day. The school council, the 'Sgwad Syniadau' (Ideas Squad), is beginning to develop an awareness of its responsibilities. It has begun to take action in the school and organises fundraising activities for those in need. Members understand their responsibility to support others when raising money for charities, such as the Mike Peters Walk and Children in Need. As a result, pupils develop a good sense of social responsibility. Over the last four years, attendance levels have placed the school in the bottom 25% in comparison with similar schools. Pupils' punctuality is good" Ysgol Sarn Bach: "Nearly all pupils have a thorough understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily. Many pupils in the foundation phase talk confidently about which foods are healthy or less healthy for them, and which foods have a harmful effect on their teeth. Older pupils have a sound understanding of the need to stay healthy by drinking water, eating sensibly, and taking part in physical activities to ensure their fitness. Pupils appreciate opportunities to take part in gymnastics and swimming at the leisure centre, which enables them to take part in competitions. Opportunities to go on residential visits, for example to Plas Menai, make a positive contribution to developing their fitness and social skills. Nearly all pupils are well-behaved and treat each other, staff, and visitors with respect. The school's oldest pupils are very caring towards the youngest pupils; for example, the 'faithful friends' (ffrindiau ffyddlon) ensure that the youngest pupils are safe and happy on the swimming bus. Most pupils are confident that the school responds promptly to any concerns they may have and deal well with any cases of bullying. Pupils take regular advantage of valuable opportunities to express an opinion on what they learn by choosing the term's theme. Each week, pupils express their opinion on the activities that they would like to do next within the theme. Most pupils' attitudes towards learning is one of the school's strengths. Nearly all pupils are enthusiastic and work diligently for extended periods when completing their activities. They support each other's learning effectively by receiving support from their peers before asking for support from an adult. This develops their</p>		
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	<p>independent skills and prepares them to be helpful adults. From an early age, most pupils have a sound understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. The youngest pupils explain the school's marking code clearly and understand how this helps them to improve their work. Most pupils are aware of the importance of attending school regularly and punctually."</p> <p>7.5 Management and Leadership 7.5.1. Impact on Management and Leadership Schools with higher numbers of children can offer a more robust structure to planning and providing the curriculum by establishing middle management teams and subject and curriculum leaders.</p> <p>Are things likely to change at Ysgol Sarn Bach at this point if Ysgol Abersoch is absorbed? Unlikely, this is a moot point.</p> <p>Ysgol Abersoch offers socially enriched community projects on a daily weekly basis. The children engage and interact with all age groups in the community and were encouraged to think outside the box. The disadvantages of this loss of enriched experiences should be made clear.</p> <p>Whilst we acknowledge that Wales does not compare schools in league tables, we request in Gwynedd Council's response the outcomes for each school in terms of achieving KS D5+ indicators for each school (Ysgol Abersoch, Ysgol Sarn Bach, Ysgol Llanbedrog, Ysgol Foel Gron) for the past 5 years. We do not believe that there is a valid reason as to why Gwynedd Council would not fulfil this request.</p>		
246	<p>It is felt that the education provided at Ysgol Abersoch in the 'Well-being and Learning Aspects' of Estyn's Five Areas of Inspection Table is disparaged by saying that "... it is concluded that educating the children at YSB would have a positive impact". It is emphasized that Abersoch children can also "teach independently".</p>		<p>In the Five Estyn Inspection Areas referred to, what the Authority is doing is drawing a comparison between ESTYN's comments and opinion on Ysgol Abersoch and the alternative school, namely Ysgol Sarn Bach. 'Adequate' was the outcome of the Estyn inspection for the 'Well-being' indicator at Ysgol Abersoch during their last inspection in 2017, whilst the outcome at Ysgol Sarn Bach was 'Good'. Therefore, based on the outcome of these Estyn inspections, it is concluded that educating the children at Ysgol Sarn Bach would have a positive impact in the context of 'Well-being'.</p>
247	<p>The Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd Strategy is realized, namely: "Provide education of the best possible quality that will provide the county's children with the experiences, skills and confidence to develop into bilingual, successful and well-rounded citizens."</p>		<p>The Council notes the comment.</p> <p>Unfortunately, as a result of the current low numbers, the school is in a fragile position and under increasing budgetary pressure, specifically:</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. School numbers are concerning. In September 2020, there were eight full-time pupils and two nursery pupils. ii. The class sizes are small - with 10 pupils being taught in one mixed-age class. iii. Projections show 10 pupils in 2021, 12 pupils in 2022, and 12 pupils in 2023. iv. September 2020 data shows that 26 pupils live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area with 21 of them attending other schools. It also shows that five pupils from outside the Abersoch catchment area attend Ysgol Abersoch. v. Ysgol Abersoch receives an additional amount to the usual allocation via the minimum staffing protection policy (which ensures at least a headteacher and teacher at each school, and a headteacher and an assistant in schools with fewer than 15 pupils). The total additional funding for the 2020/21 financial year (based on the numbers in September 2019) is £52,582. vi. The per pupil cost for Ysgol Abersoch during the 2020/21 financial year is £17,404, compared with the county-wide average per pupil cost of £4,198 for the same period. vii. Number of surplus spaces - 76% surplus places at the school (32 in total)
248	<p>Quality of Education</p> <p>The Consultation report appears selective in its choice of content and wording, highlighting the benefits of Ysgol Sarn Bach and yet excluding those of Ysgol Abersoch. For example, the head of Ysgol Abersoch, Linda Jones has been appointed as the Language Charter Cluster Coordinator to support the Secondary Sector but yet none of this is acknowledged. This suggests that there is more to be gained than is to be lost from the closure of Ysgol Abersoch. Smaller class sizes would be seen by most people as an attractive opportunity with better educational outcomes. Surprisingly, the Education Department places more emphasis on the social aspects of larger classes over better educational outcomes. We do not feel that the report was written in such a way as to give Ysgol Abersoch a level playing field.</p>		<p>The Authority would like to note that it is completely unbiased and transparent in what was submitted as part of the consultation documentation in January 2021.</p> <p>In relation to the observation about the role of the Cluster Coordinator, the Authority invited expressions of interest for the role across Gwynedd, and as a result, there are 13 Cluster Coordinators in the county, namely one for each catchment area. Consequently, the Authority is not of the opinion that the role is specifically relevant in the context of creating an advantage or disadvantage to Ysgol Abersoch.</p>
249	<p>The Education Department report and Cabinet discussion indicated that ‘the only way to ensure a reduction in the potentially negative impact of transfer is by reducing the periods when children have to transfer during their education career in the first place’. Will the council therefore be pursuing closure of other infant schools that require a transfer during their primary schooling in Gwynedd, e.g. Ysgol Morfa Nefyn? (Section 6.6.8 and 6.6.12)</p>		<p>The Council believes that moving schools or bridging from one school to another at any time during an educational career, can lead to disruption to the progress of some children as they settle in a school and a new environment, and it could undermine the resilience of some pupils.</p> <p>As the situation of Ysgol Abersoch is relatively unique in terms of when the children move, the evidence to prove or disprove this presumption for bridging at the end of</p>

		<p>year 3 is scarce. However, evidence can be received from other sources, where reference is made to normal primary/secondary bridging, such as the recent Estyn report (Learner resilience - building resilience in primary schools, secondary schools and pupil referral units), which notes "Transitions, such as moving school, are periods where children can suffer emotional distress, or a decline in progress and commitment to learning, all of which can also undermine resilience."</p> <p>By reducing the number of occasions that children transition, the Council believes that it would be less likely for the children to suffer from emotional distress, reduced progress and commitment to learn.</p> <p>Consistency and co-planning are key for effective bridging.</p> <p>When the children transfer to another school is not the only factor to consider when attempting to reduce the impact. The Council believes that the only way to ensure a reduction in the potentially negative impacts of transfer is by reducing the periods when children have to transfer during their educational career in the first place.</p>
50	Furthermore, there is no evidence to support that the education provision at Ysgol Sarn Bach will be better, when the Estyn report states no difference between the two settings. It is therefore questionable whether the decision was made based on full facts, or only those the Education Department wished to emphasise with regards to Ysgol Abersoch.	<p>The Council notes the comments.</p> <p>The Authority would like to note that it is completely unbiased and transparent in what was submitted as part of the consultation documentation published in January 2021.</p>
251	Can you explain to me why the Council believes it will strengthen future education for the area? What evidence do you have that will support this claim? I am also interested in what the Teaching Unions think about such statements, are you therefore suggesting that my child will get a better education taught by a Teaching Assistant as opposed to a Fully Qualified Teacher? I have no doubts about the Merits of Teaching Assistants, however it seems that you are undermining the importance of someone with a level 8 as opposed to a level 4 certificate.	<p>Based on the conclusions of the assessment of the Likley Impact on the Quality and Standards of Education, it is concluded that the standard of education provided at Ysgol Sarn Bach is the same level as the quality of education at Ysgol Abersoch. Consequently, it is not anticipated any negative impact would derive in terms of the quality and standards of education from the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and transfer the pupils to Ysgol Sarn Bach. The information in the assessment follows the latest Estyn inspections of the schools in question, noting that each of the schools have been placed in at least an equivalent category to Ysgol Abersoch, and each of the schools have been placed in the yellow or green in terms of Welsh Government's support category. Realising this option would give pupils an opportunity to be educated in peer groups with much less of an age range and an opportunity to improve the educational and social experience of the pupils, on a daily basis. The needs of any vulnerable groups, including children with additional learning needs, would be assessed and implemented</p>
252	<p>The inadequacies I find [in the report] are as follows:</p> <p>Ysgol Abersoch is an excellent school, the quality of education is of a very high standard, in fact exceptional, the children engage with each other, their teachers and the community. My son recently went on his only school trip to</p>	

<p>the beach, the same beach when he was at Ysgol Abersoch he visited several times a week to engage in his daily outdoor learning. Therefore, Sarn Bach offers less opportunities regarding outdoor excursions and engagement within the community. The children of Ysgol Abersoch recently went to the Rabbit Farm in Criccieth, just highlighting the day to day differences in the two schools as you have so often compared and contrasted. I feel that you keep referring back to an Estyn report that has not had a chance to be updated because of the Covid Pandemic. Therefore, you can only base your evidence on the children's test results going back three years, however you have not done this. Perhaps you might want to compare and contrast them with Ysgol Sarn Bach, as educational progress is surely a priority.</p>	<p>in line with the Authority's policy and procedures. The quality and standards of education was elaborated upon further in Section 7.2 of the consultation document and a full assessment of the probable impact on the quality and standards of education can be seen on the website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation.</p>
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D	The Welsh Language		
253	Are Plaid Cymru members ready to turn their backs on this community? The decision ought to be on the Cabinet members' conscious in terms of our community's language and culture – this is the death of Welsh in Aber-soch		The Council notes the observations and concerns regarding the impact on the Welsh language.
254	Members remain unanimous that the school should be kept open in order to further promote the Welsh language in Abersoch and would boost the Welsh Government's target of a million people speaking the language by 2050.		In accordance with the School Organisation Code 011/2018, an assessment was completed of the linguistic impact of the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and educating the children at Ysgol Sarn Bach. The assessment is available on the Council website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation
255	an important hub for the Welsh language.		
256	It is a hub for the Welsh language in Abersoch, somewhere in real need of it.		
257	Million Welsh Speakers 2050 - keeping it open would be a significant boost to this by raising the awareness of incomers and visitors of the existence of the language		It is concluded in this assessment that no negative impact on the Welsh language is anticipated, should the proposal be realised. This is specifically so as the alternative school offers a Welsh-medium education, as currently offered at Ysgol Abersoch. The Language Policy is the same for all Gwynedd primary schools; therefore, the provision would be the same, regardless of which school they would choose to attend.
258	We are astounded that Gwynedd Council is turning its back on this Welsh focal point that is an excellent hub for Gwynedd Council and our local Abersoch community.		
259	It also promotes the Welsh language and culture and provides an excellent grounding for children's educational development. Both my children went to Abersoch school and became fluent Welsh speakers and have gone on to become well grounded, successful adults with fond memories of ysgol Abersoch and all it had to offer.		In addition, it appears that the linguistic situation at Ysgol Sarn Bach is strong. With 57% of Ysgol Sarn Bach pupils coming from Welsh speaking homes. In comparison, 33% of Ysgol Abersoch pupils come from Welsh speaking homes.
260	The impact and the loss of the Welsh language in the community will be irreplaceable.	2	Ysgol Abersoch has worked hard to develop the learners' bilingual skills and promote the importance of Welsh culture. The school managed to win the gold Welsh Language Charter in 2019. Therefore, it is vital that the proposal acknowledges the need to support and continue with this work.
261	This unique school has a long special history and in addition :- *promotes and treasures the Welsh Language and culture ,		
262	It is an example of good practice of a village school that Champions the Welsh Language and Culture .		
263	Still not followed up and positively highlighted . * impact on welsh language not fully assessed		
264	Social impact - This is an area that I have personnel experience of. I have a friend who has children at the school. When we moved to live here we spoken to her re learning Welsh. This was important to us as we wanted to support the Welsh language and as we are expecting a first grandchild we felt that requirement to learn even greater. When we started the lessons in Abersoch village hall we would often hear the children in the main hall. We		

	loved to hear their chatter in Welsh trying to recognise the occasional word. As our learning progressed on occasion we were even able to converse with the children. This was so rewarding to both sides. It increased our confidence and I felt the children gain something to.		
265	Small schools are more successful in terms of the Welsh language, as the pupils are immersed in it on a daily basis...		The Council notes the observations and concerns regarding the impact on the Welsh language.
266	If the school is closed and pupils move to Sarn Bach their good Welsh education will be continued but Abersoch will lose a vital facility of a local school to bind the village together, there will be less Welsh spoken and the community will suffer.		In accordance with the School Organisation Code 011/2018, an assessment was completed of the linguistic impact of the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and educating the children at Ysgol Sarn Bach. The assessment is available on the Council website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation
267	Closing Ysgol Aber-soch will drive out any young families (speaking Welsh) away and stop any more (that can afford it) from moving here.		
268	Abersoch is renowned locally and nationally as an area under extreme duress from house prices and second home ownership, house affordability, intense tourism and the pressures these bring on the Welsh language and culture		It is concluded in this assessment that no negative impact on the Welsh language is anticipated, should the proposal be realised. This is specifically so as the alternative school offers a Welsh-medium education, as currently offered at Ysgol Abersoch. The Language Policy is the same for all Gwynedd primary schools; therefore, the provision would be the same, regardless of which school they would choose to attend. In addition, it appears that the linguistic situation at Ysgol Sarn Bach is strong. With 57% of Ysgol Sarn Bach pupils coming from Welsh speaking homes. In comparison, 33% of Ysgol Abersoch pupils come from Welsh speaking homes. Ysgol Abersoch has worked hard to develop the learners' bilingual skills and promote the importance of Welsh culture. The school managed to win the gold Welsh Language Charter in 2019. Therefore, it is vital that the proposal acknowledges the need to support and continue with this work.
269	The school carries out outstanding work in helping the children understand the history and culture of their village and in promoting the Welsh language. The children that come from a non-Welsh speaking family have learnt the language fluently and the parents are very proud of that.		
270	I feel privileged to have a property in the village as my love for Abersoch spans 62 years and the local community has always made me feel welcome and inclusive. Over the recent years I have witnessed first hand the local school using the beach and natural beauty of their environment to enhance the children's learning, encouraging and empowering the local businesses to incorporate the Welsh language in their literature, promotions and teach visitors the language to allow them to embrace and respect the village and its community.		
271	Gwynedd Council seriously needs to respond to the threat facing our communities as a result of the demand for second homes, closing schools is only one result of this problem.		The Council notes the comments; however, the Council wishes to note that it does not have control over the open housing market.

	The decision to close the school is a substantial blow to the Welsh language in the village, the school provided hope and a new generation of Welsh speakers.		
272	It will be the end of village life, and the death of the Welsh language in the area. This is a special school that should be celebrated and copied, not closed.		The Council notes the comments.
273	Can you not reconsider and try and promote the school, its cosy ethos, and its uniqueness to other families in the area? Abersoch is English enough as it is with out closing the village's Welsh school, that will be the end of the language's growth in Abersoch! As a person born and raised in the area witnessing the language's demise in the village is heartbreaking and your choice to close the only positive hub in promoting the language by means of children within the community is a huge error on your behalf.		In accordance with the School Organisation Code 011/2018, an assessment was completed of the linguistic impact of the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and educating the children at Ysgol Sarn Bach. The assessment is available on the Council website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation It is concluded in this assessment that no negative impact on the Welsh language is anticipated, should the proposal be realised. This is specifically so as the alternative school offers a Welsh-medium education, as currently offered at Ysgol Abersoch. The Language Policy is the same for all Gwynedd primary schools; therefore, the provision would be the same, regardless of which school they would choose to attend.
274	As an ex-pupil, a godson of a previous Headmistress, grandson of a governor in years gone by, it has played a huge part in my life and has instilled my Welsh culture right at the heart of my being. Please don't rob the current and future generations of the same sense of pride and good fortune. Use it as a way of modernising education in a real heartland of the language and culture as opposed to ending it in its tracks.		In addition, it appears that the linguistic situation at Ysgol Sarn Bach is strong. With 57% of Ysgol Sarn Bach pupils coming from Welsh speaking homes. In comparison, 33% of Ysgol Abersoch pupils come from Welsh speaking homes.
275	Ysgol Abersoch is an essential symbol of Welsh culture and heritgae at the centre of our village, playing a very important part of promoting and strengthening the Welsh language. Children from all backgrounds are welcome to attend the school and greeted with open arms and receive the best start to life, and develops a sense of community and belonging that lasts a lifetime, as well as the precious gift of the Welsh language.		Ysgol Abersoch has worked hard to develop the learners' bilingual skills and promote the importance of Welsh culture. The school managed to win the gold Welsh Language Charter in 2019. Therefore, it is vital that the proposal acknowledges the need to support and continue with this work.
276	...Abersoch/any other village without a school will not attract Young Welsh to live there, if they could afford to buy a house there. This will lead to more rich immigrants, and ultimately, the end of the language in Abersoch.Losing the strong centre of Young Welshness would be a tragedy, leaving nothing but the older generation to speak Welsh, and for how long.....?		The Council notes the observations and concerns regarding the impact on the Welsh language. In accordance with the School Organisation Code 011/2018, an assessment was completed of the linguistic impact of the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and

277	I write to object the plans to close Ysgol Abersoch. By closing the school, you will ensure the end of the Welsh Language, and any hopes to establish a young community in Abersoch. I beg you to stop this happening.		educating the children at Ysgol Sarn Bach. The assessment is available on the Council website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation
278	Why would you consider closing the school that will impact the Welsh within a community.		It is concluded in this assessment that no negative impact on the Welsh language is anticipated, should the proposal be realised. This is specifically so as the alternative school offers a Welsh-medium education, as currently offered at Ysgol Abersoch. The Language Policy is the same for all Gwynedd primary schools; therefore, the provision would be the same, regardless of which school they would choose to attend. In addition, it appears that the linguistic situation at Ysgol Sarn Bach is strong. With 57% of Ysgol Sarn Bach pupils coming from Welsh speaking homes. In comparison, 33% of Ysgol Abersoch pupils come from Welsh speaking homes. Ysgol Abersoch has worked hard to develop the learners' bilingual skills and promote the importance of Welsh culture. The school managed to win the gold Welsh Language Charter in 2019. Therefore, it is vital that the proposal acknowledges the need to support and continue with this work.
279	One of my members of staff has moved from Blackburn to Abersoch and have put the English children in Ysgol Abersoch and after three months the children communicate fluently in both languages. One parent is already welsh and the other is willing to learn the Welsh language. A great example of the School and the important education I hope that the Council will re-consider its decision and wait and see for a while longer to see what the effect of the new houses in Penrhos will have and the demand for local education.		
280	I strongly object to the closure of Ysgol Abersoch. When this school was built, my grandfather, Frank Minoprio, donated the wood for the construction of the building, and my family have always had close connections with the village and it's inhabitants. Surely something can be done to save this school, particularly since it is a Welsh language school. It is also very sad to read that the language could be dying out.		The Council notes the observations and concerns regarding the impact on the Welsh language. In accordance with the School Organisation Code 011/2018, an assessment was completed of the linguistic impact of the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and educating the children at Ysgol Sarn Bach. The assessment is available on the Council website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation
281	The families who donated the land and built the school (to promote education in the village) back in the 1920's had a vision and were willing to invest in the future. Gwynedd Council 's Language Policy is powerful and robust - and in this case at Ysgol Aber - soch and the wider community - it really needs to be used, as language and culture are at the heart of its rescue.		It is concluded in this assessment that no negative impact on the Welsh language is anticipated, should the proposal be realised. This is specifically so as the alternative school offers a Welsh-medium education, as currently offered at Ysgol Abersoch. The Language Policy is the same for all Gwynedd primary schools; therefore, the provision would be the same, regardless of which school they would choose to attend.
282	It deeply concerns me, that with all the focus & emphasis on the Welsh Language in Penllyn & North Wales in general, that you would rule to close such a pivotal source of both local community & language.		

	<p>Without this school, Abersoch becomes merely a tourist village - an extension of the Warren caravan park.</p> <p>WITH this little school, Abersoch still holds onto its roots. It's Welsh Culture. It's Welsh language & more importantly, it's Welsh future.</p> <p>The future of our children to aspire to live and work where they grew up. To live & speak the Welsh language and keep it going in this small village for long past our lifetimes...</p> <p>Ysgol Abersoch breathes light into all of our lives and given the chance, will grow & prosper. Once it's gone, it cannot be replaced & yet plans are in place to help bring back local families to the village with social housing & affordable homes... let's think out of the box & towards a future, where Welsh can still be heard in the village streets & in the shops & on the beach. Yes it may more costly right now, but in a few years it will be worth every penny.</p>		<p>In addition, it appears that the linguistic situation at Ysgol Sarn Bach is strong. With 57% of Ysgol Sarn Bach pupils coming from Welsh speaking homes. In comparison, 33% of Ysgol Abersoch pupils come from Welsh speaking homes.</p> <p>Ysgol Abersoch has worked hard to develop the learners' bilingual skills and promote the importance of Welsh culture. The school managed to win the gold Welsh Language Charter in 2019. Therefore, it is vital that the proposal acknowledges the need to support and continue with this work.</p>
283	<p>Our head teacher along with her colleagues and helpers, are instrumental in encouraging the very survival of the welsh language being spoken. Herself along with the children are often to be found walking around the village entering shops with hand written and painted posters to be hung in shop windows with either competitions or easy welsh words to encourage shopkeepers and visitors to converse in welsh.</p>		
284	<p>I can only conclude that the authorities are not really concerned or bothered about the Welsh language, culture or community if they continue to force the closure of the heart of the village.</p>		<p>The Council notes the comments.</p>
285	<p>There will be a serious impact on the Welsh Language and culture if this school is to close and despite the fact that there is a financial burden at present you cannot measure the local loss in an area where its own language and culture is facing such challenges and what will be the cost of an idea or project in response to save the language and culture here – it's likely there will be savings made by closing the school but more will be spent down the line on much less effective matters in the future.</p>		<p>Our expectation is that the County's primary schools support and enhance the use of the Welsh language as their pupils' social language and educational language.</p> <p>When developing any proposals relating to schools' reorganisation, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the Welsh language. Sustaining and improving the use of the Welsh language as a social language and educational language is always a key consideration when drawing up proposals and when assessing options.</p>

286	<p>7.2. Initiatives and Impact on the Welsh Language</p> <p>Ysgol Abersoch hosts a number of initiatives that promote and celebrate the Welsh language, including the Urdd, Hunaniaith activities, as well as being part of the 'Shwmae S'mae' scheme. Taking the language to our local community and businesses has been such a success that many of the bilingual sign shops now show. Section 7.9 of the consultation document states, "It is concluded ... that a negative impact on the Welsh language is not envisaged should the proposal be implemented." However, the loss of promotion and use of the language through relationships with the community and business is significant.</p>	<p>In accordance with the School Organisation Code 011/2018, an assessment was completed of the linguistic impact of the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and educating the children at Ysgol Sarn Bach. The assessment is available on the Council website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p> <p>It is concluded in this assessment that no negative impact on the Welsh language is anticipated, should the proposal be realised. This is specifically so as the alternative school offers a Welsh-medium education, as currently offered at Ysgol Abersoch. The Language Policy is the same for all Gwynedd primary schools; therefore, the provision would be the same, regardless of which school they would choose to attend.</p>
287	<p>The 2050 Million Welsh Speakers is a key Welsh Government strategy. Why is there no reference to this and the impact of closing the school on this strategy?</p>	<p>The Council notes the comments.</p> <p>As noted in the consultation document "Any discussions regarding reorganisation needs to note Welsh Government's efforts to reach the aim of a million Welsh speakers by 2050."</p> <p>The Authority proposed the Impact Assessments and ascertained the views of stakeholders on the proposed impact by means of the consultation held earlier this year.</p> <p>In terms of the language impact assessment, an observation was received questioning why there was no reference to the Million Welsh Speakers 2050 strategy. As a result, those details and information were included in the latest version linguistic impact assessment (May 2021) www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/moderneiddioaddysg</p>
288	<p>7.9 The Welsh Language "It is concluded in this assessment that no negative impact on the Welsh language is anticipated, should the proposal be realised." And 3. IMPACT ON THE WELSH LANGUAGE 3.1 Options Background pack p211</p> <p>Assessing the linguistic impact of closing Ysgol Abersoch and offering pupils a place at Ysgol Sarn Bach compared to the current situation.</p> <p>Using Welsh in the community. This is a neutral statement which we believe is strongly a negative impact. Ysgol Abersoch pupils are widely involved with</p>	<p>The Council notes the comments.</p> <p>The considerations included in the Linguistic Impact Assessment address the suggestions of what could be included in a Welsh Language Impact Assessment, which can be seen in Appendix C: Assessments of the community impact and the impact on the Welsh language, The School Organisation Code 011/2018.</p>

	<p>promoting the language and are integrated outside of the school in the local Welsh speaking community compared to Ysgol Sarn Bach, who do not venture out.</p> <p>There is more to this than a Welsh-medium education. This assessment simply looks at the schools and the community seems to be treated separately to the school. How has the impact on the Welsh Language in the community been assessed? Ysgol Abersoch is highly involved in promoting the Welsh language in Abersoch, with tangible results (e.g. action resulted in the introduction of bilingual signage in shops).</p> <p>Furthermore, there is no assessment of the impact of the <i>Cylch Meithrin</i> and <i>Cylch Ti a Fi</i> on supporting and strengthening the Welsh language and its role in contributing to the Welsh Government Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers strategy.</p>	<p>A copy of the linguistic assessment is available on the Council’s website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p> <p>It is concluded in this assessment that no negative impact on the Welsh language is anticipated, should the proposal be realised. This is specifically so as the alternative school offers a Welsh-medium education, as currently offered at Ysgol Abersoch. The Language Policy is the same for all Gwynedd primary schools; therefore, the provision would be the same, regardless of which school they would choose to attend.</p> <p>It appears that the linguistic situation at Ysgol Sarn Bach is strong. With 57% of Ysgol Sarn Bach pupils coming from Welsh speaking homes. In comparison, 33% of Ysgol Abersoch pupils come from Welsh speaking homes.</p> <p>In addition, the community impact assessment notes that it is anticipated that there would be some negative impact as a result of closing the school. However, it is noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Yr. 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attend Ysgol Sarn Bach. Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the school and the broader area.</p> <p>To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.</p> <p>The Council is aware that the <i>Cylch Meithrin</i> is held on the Ysgol Abersoch site, and the <i>Cylch Meithrin</i> and <i>Cylch Ti a Fi</i> have not been included as part of the Linguistic Impact Assessment as they are not part of the proposal. If the proposal proceeds, the Council is eager to discuss the possibilities in terms of the <i>Cylch Meithrin</i> with relevant representatives - the possibilities could include remaining at the current location, or move to another site in the Abersoch area.</p>
289	2. LINGUISTIC PROFILE OF ABERSOCH CATCHMENT AREA 2. 5 Language Charter Statistics (Summer 2019)	<p>In response to the comment regarding the size of the sample of children who completed the language web questionnaire, the Authority can confirm that a sample of Foundation Phase children had been used in each of the schools used in the Linguistic Impact Assessment, in order to ensure a fair and meaningful</p>

	<p>These statistics and data are not that reliable, relevant nor representative because of the small numbers involved and the most recent is a year old + anyway (Spring 2019, PLASC Jan 2020).</p> <p>Please provide evidence that the sample of children that completed this questionnaire were representative of the entire school demographic. What age groups at Ysgol Llanbedrog completed this questionnaire, and what is their home language?</p> <p>For Ysgol Llanbedrog (n=9/102) it was reported that 100% of children who speak Welsh with their teachers compared to Ysgol Abersoch (n=6/10) which reported 67% Ysgol Abersoch.</p> <p>Ysgol Abersoch children are a younger group (age 3-8) and (assuming the PLASC 2020 results still hold true) more come from non-Welsh speaking homes than other schools, therefore it is not surprising that some of the younger children at Ysgol Abersoch are only just learning to speak Welsh.</p>		<p>comparison across the schools. As a result of the low numbers at Ysgol Abersoch, it is acknowledged that the sample size was too small, however, the data is based on the information presented by the pupils themselves in the questionnaire, noting their practices in terms of using the Welsh language in different situations.</p> <p>Although pupils of the same age group had completed the questionnaire in each of the schools, it is not unexpected for the data of Ysgol Abersoch to show that the pupils were most confident to speak Welsh under the leadership of a teacher or assistant, as 67% of Ysgol Abersoch pupils came from non-Welsh speaking homes, and that the education system had not had sufficient opportunity to immerse them in Welsh to ensure that they had the confidence and the skills to use Welsh in various contexts.</p>
290	<p>3. IMPACT ON THE WELSH LANGUAGE 3.1 Options Assessing the linguistic impact of closing Ysgol Abersoch and offering pupils a place at Ysgol Sarn Bach compared to the current situation.</p> <p>Since Ysgol Abersoch pupils move up to Ysgol Sarn Bach anyway, any "positives" are already being experienced when the Ysgol Abersoch children move up therefore none of these should be "positives" but "neutrals" at the most.</p>		The Council notes the comment.
291	<p>3. IMPACT ON THE WELSH LANGUAGE 3.1 Options Assessing the linguistic impact of closing Ysgol Abersoch and offering pupils a place at Ysgol Sarn Bach compared to the current situation.</p> <p>"Before/After school activities"</p> <p>Why is "Before/After school activities" listed as a positive when Ysgol Abersoch have more clubs e.g. Gardening Club, Hunaniaith craft club, Urdd Tudwal. This should be a negative rather than a positive and again biases against Ysgol Abersoch.</p>		The Council notes the comment.
292	<p>Equality Assessment Impact Report Ysgol Abersoch</p> <p>The Welsh language</p> <p>We do not believe this statement of no impact on the Welsh language to be valid.</p>		<p>The Council notes the comment.</p> <p>In accordance with the School Organisation Code 011/2018, an assessment was completed of the linguistic impact of the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and educating the children at Ysgol Sarn Bach. The assessment is available on the Council website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p>

		<p>It is concluded in this assessment that no negative impact on the Welsh language is anticipated, should the proposal be realised. This is specifically so as the alternative school offers a Welsh-medium education, as currently offered at Ysgol Abersoch. The Language Policy is the same for all Gwynedd primary schools; therefore, the provision would be the same, regardless of which school they would choose to attend.</p>
293	<p>The Consultation documents propose that the language and community will not be unduly affected by the closure of Ysgol Abersoch. Again, the nature of this 'tick box' exercise does not involve community input and therefore cannot consider the actual impact on the language and community. Pupils at Ysgol Abersoch are ambassadors for the future of Welsh language and culture with the capacity to effect real change, as evidenced by their success in increasing bilingual signage in village shops. The continuity of the community is evident throughout the school family; the Headteacher, Chair and Vice Chair together with Governors and parents are former pupils. This proves the importance of the lifelong connection of a small village school with individuals willing to step into prominent roles in the community and contributing and strengthening the social threads that make up a community.</p> <p><i>The school is a beacon of Welsh language and culture, showcasing our heritage today and ensuring its future relevance</i></p>	<p>The Council notes the comments.</p> <p>The considerations included in the Linguistic Impact Assessment address the suggestions of what could be included in a Welsh Language Impact Assessment, which can be seen in Appendix C: Assessments of the community impact and the impact on the Welsh language, The School Organisation Code 011/2018.</p> <p>Also, the Authority proposed the Impact Assessments and ascertained the views of stakeholders on the proposed impact by means of the consultation held earlier this year.</p> <p>A copy of the latest linguistic assessment is available on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p> <p>It is concluded in this assessment that no negative impact on the Welsh language is anticipated, should the proposal be realised. This is specifically so as the alternative school offers a Welsh-medium education, as currently offered at Ysgol Abersoch. The Language Policy is the same for all Gwynedd primary schools; therefore, the provision would be the same, regardless of which school they would choose to attend.</p> <p>It appears that the linguistic situation at Ysgol Sarn Bach is strong. With 57% of Ysgol Sarn Bach pupils coming from Welsh speaking homes. In comparison, 33% of Ysgol Abersoch pupils come from Welsh speaking homes.</p> <p>In addition, the community impact assessment notes that it is anticipated that there would be some negative impact as a result of closing the school. However, it is noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Yr. 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch</p>

			<p>catchment area already attend Ysgol Sarn Bach. Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the school and the broader area.</p> <p>To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.</p>
294	it is a special link for incomers and non-Welsh speakers who live and run local businesses in the village, by promoting and encouraging them to be aware of the importance of using the Welsh language on a daily basis day.		The Council notes the comment.
295	Why wasn't the percentage of Welsh speakers at Ysgol Aber-soch (PLASC 2020) noted as it was with the three schools within this catchment area?		The linguistic data (PLASC 2020) for Ysgol Abersoch and nearby schools (Ysgol Foel Gron, Ysgol Llanbedrog and Ysgol Sarn Bach) is noted in section 2.3 and 2.4 of the language impact assessment.
296	In the same way, why wasn't the percentages of Welsh speakers (2011 Census) at Ysgol Llanbedrog and Foel Gron mentioned?		<p>The Ysgol Abersoch catchment area is within the Abersoch area, the Ysgol Sarn Bach and Ysgol Foel Gron catchment area is within the Llanengan ward and the Ysgol Llanbedrog catchment area is within the Llanbedrog ward (Office for National Statistics). The linguistic profile of the wards of these schools has been summarised in the table in section 2.2.1 in the language impact assessment.</p>
297	Comparing the number of Welsh speakers (2011 Census) is bound to be different due to the lack of affordable family housing in Abersoch and the majority of children at Ysgol Sarn Bach come from indigenous agricultural families.		The Council notes the comment.
298	Options Appraisal - It is felt that these were not considered in sufficient detail, especially in terms of the threats to the community and the Welsh language.		The Authority is considering closing Ysgol Abersoch as a result of the trend of low numbers attending the school for some years. In September 2020, 10 pupils were registered at the school. Gwynedd Council has considered many options for primary education in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area in order to ensure a sustainable provision for the future, responding specifically to the low pupil numbers.
299	It is also felt that a school's contribution to the language of the area was not considered when considering its future.		<p>In accordance with the School Organisation Code, the Council completed an assessment of the community and linguistic impact of the options in order to compare the likely impact they would have on the communities in question and</p>

			the language. A copy of the full reports are included in the background pack on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation
300	It is wonderful to see the children taking part in services - in both chapels - such as Christmas and Easter over the years. This would not happen if the children moved to Sarn Bach. The village would lose the activities, which make such a significant contribution to keeping the Welsh language alive in the village of Abersoch.		<p>The Council notes the comments.</p> <p>To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.</p>
301	I would also like to draw your attention to a comment with regards that the closure of Ysgol Abersoch would have no detrimental effect on the Welsh Language in the community as taken from Section 7.9 of the consultation document "It is concluded...that no negative impact on the Welsh Language is anticipated, should the proposal be realised." Therefore does this contradict and suggest that your 'Welsh Language Charter' has no impact in a community? I do hope you are not merely suggesting that this decision was made purely on a tick box exercise, please could you provide evidence to support your claims in more detail		<p>The Council notes the comments.</p> <p>The considerations included in the Linguistic Impact Assessment address the suggestions of what could be included in a Welsh Language Impact Assessment, which can be seen in Appendix C: Assessments of the community impact and the impact on the Welsh language, The School Organisation Code 011/2018.</p> <p>It is concluded in this linguistic assessment that no negative impact on the Welsh language is anticipated, should the proposal be realised. This is specifically so as the alternative school offers a Welsh-medium education, as currently offered at Ysgol Abersoch. The Language Policy is the same for all Gwynedd primary schools; therefore, the provision would be the same, regardless of which school they would choose to attend.</p> <p>It appears that the linguistic situation at Ysgol Sarn Bach is strong. With 57% of Ysgol Sarn Bach pupils coming from Welsh speaking homes. In comparison, 33% of Ysgol Abersoch pupils come from Welsh speaking homes.</p> <p>In addition, the community impact assessment notes that it is anticipated that there would be some negative impact as a result of closing the school. However, it is noted that nine (35%) of Nursery - Yr. 3 pupils who live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attend Ysgol Sarn Bach. Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the school and the broader area.</p> <p>To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and</p>
302	there is an opportunity here for a 'good news story'. Abersoch, for better or worse, has a high profile in Gwynedd. We are a community that is not without our challenges, struggling to keep our 'Welshness' alive, there are housing difficulties and employment opportunities all year round. And yet, as a village, it pours above its weight; there are over 50 thriving shops, which provide employment and income for the Council. The future is bright, with plans for a large hotel now underway with employment; there is energy within our village to push boundaries, improve our proposals and do this in a way that showcases Welsh culture. Thinking sensibly, the small cost of keeping Ysgol Abersoch open gives the Welsh language and culture the visibility it deserves, rather than giving it the wave of anglicization. Keeping the school open is an essential part of this.		
303	I feel that if Ysgol Abersoch were not present and took an active role in the community, the use of the Welsh language would have disappeared altogether from the village, and our rich culture and history would have been lost.		
304	The Impact Assessment recognises, however reluctantly, the self-evident truth that closing the school would have a negative impact on the		

	community, and in particular the Welsh language. The effect on the language of limiting the exercise to a statistical analysis of the medium of education, the children's home language, and the number of formal activities cannot be quantified. The governors testify rather to a much more fundamental effect in shaping attitudes in the local community, including immigrants, towards the Welsh language and feeling ownership of it and seeing the language in the context of the community in which they live.		to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.
305	As a former pupil and former parent I am afraid that closing this school will threaten the Welsh nature of this village. Has the council truly considered the impact on our communities and the Welsh language if Ysgol Abersoch school closes? I live and work in the village, and have done all my life, and know not of anyone asked for their opinion to complete an impact assessment.		<p>The considerations included in the Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment address the suggestions of what could be included in a Welsh Language and Community Impact Assessment, which can be seen in Appendix C: Assessments of the community impact and the impact on the Welsh language, The School Organisation Code 011/2018.</p> <p>The Authority proposed the Impact Assessments and ascertained the views of stakeholders on the proposed impact by means of the consultation held earlier this year.</p> <p>In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessment can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p> <p>It was noted in the latest assessment that a vast number of responses to the consultation had emphasised that the proposal to close the school would have a negative impact on the village and the local community.</p> <p>To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.</p>
306	We are bound by our shared feeling of heritage and belonging to this special place, and it is our strong belief that Abersoch deserves a school, alongside the decision not to loose the Welsh as a living language at the heart of the village.		The Council notes the comment.

E	Cylch meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi																																																																							
307	is sustainable due to school increasingly building on important extra activities such as Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti & Fi	<p>The Authority acknowledges the relationship between Cylch Ti a Fi and Cylch Meithrin with Gwynedd schools; however, in the case of Ysgol Abersoch, considering the size of the increase deriving from the Cylch Meithrin, the challenges facing Ysgol Abersoch would continue.</p> <p>The projections presented in the consultation document were based on three-year projections submitted by school headteachers. Estimated five-year projections are based on average school admission numbers over the last three years. As a result, the Education Department is of the opinion, based on the numbers in September 2020, and the average admission numbers of the previous three years, that the numbers will remain low at Ysgol Abersoch for the next five years:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Table 1 - Number projections for Ysgol Abersoch</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>M</th> <th>D</th> <th>1</th> <th>2</th> <th>3</th> <th>4</th> <th>5</th> <th>6</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>September 2020</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>0</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September 2021 Projection</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>0</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September 2022 Projection</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September 2023 Projection</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September 2024 Projection</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September 2025 Projection</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>11</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>It should be noted that the projections above were calculated on the basis of numbers in the September 2020 following the establishment of the Cylch Meithrin.</p> <p>In addition to this, in September 2020, of the 26 pupils (3-8 years) who lived in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area, five of those children attended Ysgol Abersoch, with 21 (81%) of them attending schools outside the catchment area. As a result, in response to comments noting that the numbers and population of children in the area will increase over the next 20-25 years, based on the figures for September 2020, it is concluded that it cannot be guaranteed that those children would choose to attend Ysgol Abersoch.</p>		M	D	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	September 2020	2	3	2	0	3	-	-	-	10	September 2021 Projection	3	2	3	2	0	-	-	-	10	September 2022 Projection	2	3	2	3	2	-	-	-	12	September 2023 Projection	2	2	3	2	3	-	-	-	12	September 2024 Projection	2	2	2	3	2	-	-	-	11	September 2025 Projection	2	2	2	2	3	-	-	-	11
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308	They've started a cylch there which is slowly growing and have put it to the council to allow kids to stay on an extra year at the school before going on to Sarn Bach.																																																																							
309	The school is proactive in its drive to increase pupil numbers as it has the following initiatives underway by creating Cylch Meithrin Abersoch, early years childcare, in a dedicated room in the school, and Cylch Ti&Fi, a weekly parent and toddler group. Both initiatives will involve families with young children in the area in the school community.																																																																							
310	I am anxious about the impact closing Ysgol Abersoch will have on the community and the Welsh language's strength, or furthermore the <i>existence</i> , in the village. The sudden birth of Cylchoedd Meithrin and Ti a Fi represents the school's second breath, and is a solid foundation for its future development. How can we take the report seriously when it fails to acknowledge its impact on the school's projections?																																																																							
311	the forward thinking head mistress has also recently begun a Cylch meithrin to encourage younger children to begin their education journey at Ysgol Abersoch.																																																																							
312	It is for others to determine the precise future role of the school, but it is our belief that the village would be best served if the school functioned by strengthening its Nursery provision for all local families in order to secure a future flow of pupils into the Reception class and above, and retaining provision up to Year 3. This strengthened Nursery provision is crucial - it provides continuity of education for parents and children at the most important early years of their school life. The added benefit of this is that by starting more local children in their local nursery, the school can help to secure its sustainable future and thus the sustainability of the village. We would be very happy to amplify our thoughts, in writing or (should conditions permit) in person.																																																																							
313	The School has set up a Cylch Meithrin and this has proven to be very successful in a very short period and even though the school is under threat of closure. The Cylch Meithrin has also has the added benefit of acting as a feeder for attending Ysgol Abersoch from reception year onwards, just as this would also benefit Ysgol Sarn Bach as the children tend to move onto this																																																																							

	school at the end of Year 3. In the village we have approximately 12 children all under three who would benefit from using the Cylch and eventually the school. It is within walking distance of the village and perfectly located and convenient for those who work in the village of Abersoch.		As shown in the table above, we note a projected increase of two by September 2021 and 2022. In order for any option to respond to the challenges facing the school, the increase in numbers would have to be substantial. The Authority is not of the opinion that an increase of two pupils is an adequate increase to address the school's challenges.
314	Our position is that it is anticipated that numbers will increase and that this is a more plausible scenario than Gwynedd Council's statement of no guarantees.		
315	I am confident that over time the Cylch Meithrin and Ysgol Traeth initiatives will support a thriving school in our local community. In doing so, there is the potential for huge progress as we promote our Welshness.		
316	We question why there is no acknowledgement of the loss of the Cylch Meithrin and Ti a Fi.		
317	Closing the school would be a huge shock to Abersoch and the community as a whole !!! Everyone that has attended the School over the generations have high praise for the education they received there .Nobody wishes to see it close – the cylch meithrin has not yet had a chance to establish itself and in time I am sure more children would attend the School and cylch meithrin.		
318	<p>CMA was formed as a response to reduced numbers of children attending Ysgol Abersoch to create a natural feed <i>and</i> to create much needed local childcare provision in Abersoch and surrounding villages: "<i>[to allow families to take] advantage of the opportunity to begin their <u>children's journey to Welsh medium education</u></i>" (Mudiad Meithrin 22/01/2021).The Mudiad Meithrin has fully committed to creating a Cylch Meithrin in the area through a generous <i>Sefydlu a Symud/Startup and Succeed (SAS)</i> grant as part of its aim to open 40 new Cylchoedd by 2021 under the Cymraeg 2050 programme. The Welsh Government through Cyngor Gwynedd has also backed the CMA through its Covid Welsh Government Start Up Grant.</p> <p>As part of our strategy to move towards providing a full time Cylch Meithrin a Ti a Fi, the CMA has registered with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Charities Commission as a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) • The Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) • The 30 hour Cynnig Gofal Plant/Childcare scheme 		<p>The Council notes the comments.</p> <p>Unfortunately, after the consultation, it became apparent that the representatives of the Cylch Meithrin had not received the consultation document, as required under the School Organisation Code 011/2018; it appears that an administrative error occurred when sending the e-mail publishing the consultation.</p> <p>As noted in the consultation document, we had included the Cylch as a consultee in the distribution list for the publication e-mail, but it appears that the Cylch's e-mail address was spelt incorrectly and we wish to apologise for this error.</p> <p>To ensure that the Cylch had an opportunity to consider the consultation document in line with the timescale provided in the Organisation Code, the Cylch's representatives were given an opportunity to send any further comments to us by 1pm on Wednesday, 21 April 2021, and their comments would be accepted and considered as a response to the statutory consultation.</p> <p>The Council is aware that the Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi are currently held on the Ysgol Abersoch site and notes the comments.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HMRC as a (much needed) local employer <p>As we approach better times, the CMA is set to resume providing nurturing care and early stage education in a Welsh medium and will again provide an extremely valuable social resource for families in both the Cylch and the Ti a Fi. The CMA will be re-opening its doors as soon as possible after the half term and, due to the efforts of our fantastic Cylch leader, within an hour of this decision being reached we have children signed up to attend.</p>	<p>It is true to say, if the proposal is realised, that the alternative school would provide an education from 3 years and up. But, in terms of the Cylch Meithrin provision, if this proposal moves ahead, the Council is eager to discuss the possibilities with the relevant representatives - the possibilities could include staying at the current location, relocating to the alternative school, or moving to another site in the village of Abersoch.</p> <p>It is noted in the community impact assessment "A Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi is held in the school building. Should a decision be made to close the school, options for the post-use of the school would have to be considered, taking the activities currently held at the school into account."</p>																																																																						
319	In summary, the CMA is under direct threat of closure if Ysgol Abersoch is closed... with the loss of two jobs in addition to the loss of this necessary service.	The Council notes the comments.																																																																						
320	The Governing Body is proud, and excited, to support and welcome the Cylch Ti a Fi and the Cylch Meithrin in a dedicated classroom in the school building, as these groups have experienced an increase in pupil numbers at other schools in the area .	If the proposal would go ahead, there would be a need to consider the school's post-use, taking the activities currently held at the school into account.																																																																						
321	The proposals have not considered the impact of losing Cylch Meithrin. There is clearly a demand for this service, with no other Cylch being in the Ysgol Abersoch/Ysgol Sarn Bach catchment area and the Llanbedrog Cylch is full, or near full.	But, in terms of the Cylch Meithrin provision, if this proposal moves ahead, the Council is eager to discuss the possibilities with the relevant representatives - the possibilities could include staying at the current location, relocating to the alternative school, or moving to another site in the village of Abersoch.																																																																						
322	Alongside our worries about being forced to close CMA, there have been serious omissions of due process in the consultation which I bring to your attention and would like a response to.	Whilst acknowledging the potential positive impact that locating a Cylch Meithrin on the Ysgol Abersoch site could have on the numbers, this cannot be guaranteed. It is anticipated that the numbers and projections would remain low, classes would remain small, and the broad age range within classes would continue.																																																																						
323	7.16 Expected advantages and disadvantages of the proposal "Other considerations." We question why there is no acknowledgement of the loss of the Cylch Meithrin and Ti a Fi.	<p>Table 1 - Number projections for Ysgol Abersoch</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>M</th> <th>D</th> <th>1</th> <th>2</th> <th>3</th> <th>4</th> <th>5</th> <th>6</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>September 2020</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>0</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September 2021 Projection</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>0</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September 2022 Projection</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September 2023 Projection</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September 2024 Projection</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September 2025 Projection</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>11</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		M	D	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	September 2020	2	3	2	0	3	-	-	-	10	September 2021 Projection	3	2	3	2	0	-	-	-	10	September 2022 Projection	2	3	2	3	2	-	-	-	12	September 2023 Projection	2	2	3	2	3	-	-	-	12	September 2024 Projection	2	2	2	3	2	-	-	-	11	September 2025 Projection	2	2	2	2	3	-	-	-	11
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			As shown in the table above, we note a projected increase of 2 in the numbers by September 2021 and 2022. In order for any option to respond to the challenges facing the school, the increase in numbers would have to be substantial. The Authority is not of the opinion that an increase of two pupils is an adequate increase to address the school's challenges.
324	Following research, and with the full support of Mudiad Meithrin, an independent committee was formed and both initiatives were set up in a very short time, opening in February 2020. Yet, the Education Department chose to ignore any potential impact of these efforts on numbers the pupils.... <i>The fact that the Education Department has ignored the impact of the Cylch Meithrin on pupil numbers is a serious omission</i>		The Council is aware that the Cylch Meithrin is held on the Ysgol Abersoch site, however, it is emphasised that the Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi are not part of the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch. The school has been prioritised for a review of the educational provision as it faces a number of challenges. Pupil numbers at the school have fallen consistently since 2016 and the figure has been fragile for some time. Consequently, it is likely that the school is facing increasing challenges, including:
325	6.1 Comparing Options Option 1 - Status Quo Option 8 - Establish a Cylch Meithrin at Ysgol Abersoch " Whilst acknowledging the potential positive impact that locating a Cylch Meithrin on the Ysgol Abersoch site may have on the pupil numbers, this cannot be guaranteed, and it is anticipated that the challenges would continue" The impact on Cylch Meithrin Abersoch is summarily dismissed. There is evidence to show that a Cylch Meithrin does increase numbers. For example, at Ysgol Llanbedrog, even though the Cylch is across the road it is a reason that people have chosen to send children to Ysgol Llanbedrog.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low pupil numbers: In September 2020, eight full-time pupils and two part-time nursery pupils were registered at the school. • Projected numbers: It is anticipated that the numbers will continue to be low over the coming years (September 2021 = 10; September 2022 = 12; September 2023 = 12). • High percentage of surplus places: Based on the figures for September 2020, there were approximately 76% of surplus places at the school (26 in total) (R - Yr. 3). • Small class sizes: The 10 pupils are taught in one mixed-age class. • Broad age ranges within classes: The pupils are taught in one class with an age range of up to five years (3-8 years). • Pupil residence: 2020 data shows that 26 3-8-year-old children live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area with 21 (81%) of them attending schools outside the catchment area.
326	The dismissive manner in which the potential of the newly established Cylch Ti a Fi and Cylch Meithrin has been treated, is a cause of great concern. This leads me to question the sincerity of the Council's intention, expressed in the first stakeholder meeting of the informal review, to support and help the school to find ways to increase pupil numbers to a more sustainable level.		The Authority acknowledges the relationship between Cylch Ti a Fi and Cylch Meithrin with Gwynedd schools; however, in the case of Ysgol Abersoch, considering the size of the increase deriving from the Cylch Meithrin, it is anticipated that the challenges facing Ysgol Abersoch would continue. If the proposal proceeds, the Council is eager to discuss the possibilities in terms of the Cylch Meithrin with relevant representatives - the possibilities could include remaining at the current location, or move to another site in the Abersoch area.

327	There is now a new on-site Cylch Meithrin recently installed and the governors have urged the Cabinet to allow the program “time to flourish”, which may influence new pupils to join.		The Council notes the comments asking for time for the Cylch Meithrin to develop and increase in numbers.
328	Although acknowledging that a high percentage of the village’s children attend out-of-catchment schools, there is a disagreement with thte view that “the current provision is not a viable option for the future” why not give the Cylch Ti a Fi and the Cylch Meithrin time to flourish? Also, this was affected by the pandemic.		We acknowledge the relationship between Cylch Ti a Fi and Cylch Meithrin with Gwynedd schools; however, in the case of Ysgol Abersoch, considering the size of the increase deriving from the Cylch Meithrin, the challenges facing Ysgol Abersoch would continue.
329	Our positive actions and suggestions in response to this, including the Mudiad Meithrin supported initiatives, along with the Beach School concept, and the addition of an extra school year, are all options that have a real chance of positively impacting the long term sustainability of Ysgol Abersoch, and I, along with many others, believe they should be given a fair chance to flourish.		<p>As an authority we cannot commit not to deal with the school for an unspecified period. Pupil numbers at Ysgol Abersoch have fallen consistently since 2016 and the figure has been fragile for some time.</p> <p>The Authority is of the opinion that continuing with the current education provision is not a viable option for the future. The Education Department is of the opinion that it is impractical to continue with the current situation, mainly because of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very small classes. • Low numbers and a lack of daily opportunities for pupils to socialise and collaborate with peers. • Projections for the future, showing that numbers will remain low over the next five years, with nine pupils attending by 2025. <p>The Council is aware that the Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi has opened on the school site in February 2020. Nevertheless, and despite acknowledging the potential positive impact that locating the Cylch Meithrin on the Ysgol Abersoch site can have on numbers, it is not possible to guarantee that it would lead to a substantial increase in numbers, and it is anticipated that the school's challenges would continue.</p> <p>The table below shows that no significant increase in numbers is anticipated over the next five years.</p>

		Table 1 - Number projections for Ysgol Abersoch									
		M	D	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	
		September 2020	2	3	2	0	3	-	-	-	10
		September 2021 Projection	3	2	3	2	0	-	-	-	10
		September 2022 Projection	2	3	2	3	2	-	-	-	12
		September 2023 Projection	2	2	3	2	3	-	-	-	12
		September 2024 Projection	2	2	2	3	2	-	-	-	11
		September 2025 Projection	2	2	2	2	3	-	-	-	11
330	We find it disingenuous that the Education Department has ignored the impact of the Cylch Meithrin on the future pupil numbers at Ysgol Abersoch yet are “eager to discuss the possibilities” with the Cylch Meithrin and Ti a Fi.	The Council notes the comments.									
331	On a personal note I would be devastated if the school closed. As I’ve said I’m expecting a grandchild and was hoping to enrol him for some preschool/nursery classes. So it’s closure would directly impact me and my family.	The Council is aware that the Cylch Meithrin is held on the Ysgol Abersoch site, however, it is emphasised that the Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi are not part of the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch.									
332	Cylchoedd Meithrin and Ti a Fi have brilliant ideas to increase the numbers of pupils and an outstanding introduction to Welsh medium education for those from a non-Welsh speaking household, but because of Covid they haven’t been given the chance to come into fruition yet.	The school has been prioritised for a review of the educational provision as it faces a number of challenges. Pupil numbers at the school have fallen consistently since 2016 and the figure has been fragile for some time. Consequently, it is likely that the school is facing increasing challenges, including:									
333	The closing of <i>Ysgol Abersoch</i> with the side effect of the almost certain forced closure of <i>Cylch Meithrin a Ti a Fi Abersoch</i> , that both have the Welsh language and culture at the heart of their teaching and play, is a sad reflection on the short term thinking and decision making so prevalent in politics today. Whilst the sole reason for the proposed closure is economical the Welsh government is pouring money – described as a <i>mere</i> £38M currently (Cymraeg 2050) to achieve the million speakers by 2050. This initiative results in highly subsidised courses benefitting mainly older learners who, to be frank, are for the most part nearer the end of their journey than the beginning; I can speak personally on this as I am one of the beneficiaries paying a mere £45 for a full year’s, 32 weeks face to face tuition. Pit this against the immersive teaching of Cymraeg at the school, Cylch Meithrin and Ti a Fi which will be entirely removed from Pentref Abersoch by these closures leaving the village a mere holiday centre with no school, Cylch Meithrin, doctor’s surgery or other services essential to attract families with children to live and work here. The Welsh Government also has a stated aim of opening 40+ cylchoedd (below) which is directly at odds with the forced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low pupil numbers: In September 2020, eight full-time pupils and two part-time nursery pupils were registered at the school. • Projected numbers: It is anticipated that the numbers will continue to be low over the coming years (September 2021 = 10; September 2022 = 12; September 2023 = 12). • High percentage of surplus places: Based on the figures for September 2020, there were approximately 76% of surplus places at the school (26 in total) (R - Yr. 3). • Small class sizes: The 10 pupils are taught in one mixed-age class. • Broad age ranges within classes: The pupils are taught in one class with an age range of up to five years (3-8 years). • Pupil residence: 2020 data shows that 26 3-8-year-old children live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area with 21 (81%) of them attending schools outside the catchment area. <p>The Authority acknowledges the relationship between Cylch Ti a Fi and Cylch Meithrin with Gwynedd schools; however, in the case of Ysgol Abersoch,</p>									

	closure of Cylch Meithrin Abersoch through the closure of Ysgol Abersoch and the loss of affordable premises.		considering the size of the increase deriving from the Cylch Meithrin, it is anticipated that the challenges facing Ysgol Abersoch would continue. If the proposal proceeds, the Council is eager to discuss the possibilities in terms of the Cylch Meithrin with relevant representatives - the possibilities could include remaining at the current location, or move to another site in the Abersoch area.
334	The ability of Cylch Meithrin Abersoch to reopen in September is now in serious doubt due to a lack of staff, ironically not a lack of funds, which is a situation directly caused by the uncertainty surrounding the future of the school.		The Council notes the comment.
335	I am hoping to attend the Ti a Fi sessions in Ysgol Abersoch when they are allowed to be held again as I think this would enable us to meet some more local toddlers.		The Council notes the comment.
336	<p>Cylch Meithrin Abersoch committee members are extremely disappointed to learn that the Cabinet have voted to close Ysgol Abersoch on the 31st December 2021, subject to the objection period.</p> <p>We continue to object in the strongest terms to the plans to close Ysgol Abersoch and attach our previous letter which we request is now considered and counted as an official objection.</p> <p>Most unfortunately, this decision has left us without a Cylch leader for September, since due to uncertainty around the future of the school and thus the continuity of the Cylch, this member of staff resigned from a job she loved in favour of a more secure opportunity elsewhere. Our Cylch assistant is returning to education in September and has therefore also now left.</p> <p>We are finding it extremely difficult to fill these positions, in no doubt due to the ongoing uncertainty of this sorry situation, which understandably detracts from the appeal of applying for the roles. In fact, we are currently advertising these jobs for the third time.</p> <p>Despite noting point 6.16.4 in your report published at the end of May, "the Council is eager to discuss the possibilities with the relevant representatives",</p>		<p>The Council is aware that the Cylch Meithrin is held on the Ysgol Abersoch site, however, it is emphasised that the Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi are not part of the statutory proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch.</p> <p>It was noted in the community impact assessment "A Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi is held in the school building. Should a decision be made to close the school, options for the post-use of the school would have to be considered, taking the activities currently held at the school into account."</p> <p>Should the proposal go ahead, the Council is eager to discuss the possibilities with the relevant representatives - the possibilities could include staying at the current location, relocating to the alternative school, or moving to another site in the village of Abersoch.</p> <p>It is unfortunate that the Cylch is losing staff but as already noted, should a decision be made to close the school, the authority would have to consider options for after school use, taking into account the activities being undertaken are currently held at the school. Should the proposal go ahead, the Council is keen to discuss the possibilities for the Cylch Meithrin with relevant representatives - possibilities could include staying at the current location, or moving to another site in the Abersoch area.</p>

	<p>we are surprised that we are yet to receive any communication regarding “possibilities”, although having been initially missed out of the original Statutory Consultation arrangements, it is perhaps not altogether unexpected. We also find the Education Department’s approach here of a disingenuous nature given their insistence that the Cylch Meithrin would have no impact on Ysgol Abersoch numbers, yet it appears that the thought of losing this excellent resource does not appeal. It is very much a case the Education Department appearing to want to both ‘have a cake and eat it too’.</p>		<p>As a response to the comment that the Authority should have begun discussing these possibilities with the Cylch sooner, it must be noted that doing this before the Cabinet made its final decision on the future of Ysgol Abersoch, would have been premature and could possibly prejudice the process.</p>
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F	Comments on the Statutory Process		
337	I also cannot believe that you have continued with the plans to close in the middle of a pandemic, this has had a negative impact on the children's wellbeing and their education. I believe a good council would listen to it's community, otherwise it is undemocratic. I am aware of the e-mails and letters you have received, and believe the children's voices resonate loudest as they have to protest against the closure of their own school.		The Council notes the criticism presented in terms of the timing of the consultation, specifically in terms of the restrictions of the Covid pandemic. Nevertheless, we are confident that the statutory consultation process undertaken complies with the requirements and guidance of the School Organisation Code 011/2018. As part of the statutory consultation:
338	Yet AGAIN , Gwynedd Council have commenced a Statutory Consultation on the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch . It is particularly out of order and underhand during this stressful and abnormal time of Lockdown and Covid 19 . The cost of the meetings , councillors and bureaucracy over the years have been at a massive cost already to us , the taxpayers . They have also caused huge uncertainty affecting parent education choice , undermined the staff teaching \ planning and everyone's confidence in the future .		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A consultation document was published, as well as the relevant background documents, in the form of an electronic copy on the Council's website (with hard copies available upon request) • Electronic copies of the document were distributed to the relevant stakeholders (in accordance with the requirements of the Code) • Written observations/responses were received through the post and via e-mail. <p>The Code does not impose a requirement to hold public/consultation meetings. Instead, as noted in the Code, proposers may use other methods of engaging with consultees, as they see fit.</p>
339	<i>Even though I am just 10 years old, I think it is wrong to try to close a school during a Covid pandemic my sister feels anxious already, maybe you should think more like Roah Dahl and ask what is best for the kids?</i>		In previous consultations, the Education Department has held "drop-in" sessions to discuss the proposal with the parents, governors and staff of the school in question. As a result of Covid-19 restrictions, it was not possible to conduct the "drop-in" sessions in the same manner. Nevertheless, in order to ensure that the stakeholders of Ysgol Abersoch have the same opportunity to receive information, ask for an explanation and make insertions, "drop in" sessions were held via virtual meeting software. In addition, an opportunity was given to stakeholders to submit questions regarding the proposal via e-mail to the Education Department.
340	Also at this time of global concerns re COVID should we be progressing this closure. Any concerned parties can't meet effectively to either discuss concerns or generate support, without risking breaching guidelines. In my opinion to continue this process at this time is oppressive against freedom of speech and effective representation. This would only lead to lengthy appeals and further delays and anguish.		
341	I would also like to ask the council why during a time of National crisis do they deem it an appropriate time to hold a public consultation period when gatherings of people are expressly forbidden?, surely the most logical decision would be to stop the closure altogether and have a proper consultation with all parties, after this national crisis as been contained, and to seek, not the closure of the school but how it can be integrated into the current teaching programme for the area. To this end I would propose this consultation period be closed and the school be given a minimum of twelve months or one full school year, starting September 2021 to come up with		We sympathise with the concerns regarding holding a consultation during the pandemic; nevertheless, it is emphasised that we, as an Authority, cannot commit not to deal with the school for an unspecified time. In addition, Welsh Government published a notice on 8 January 2021 to allow proposals regarding school organisation to continue, where not all schools are open.

	proposals on how the school can move forward too ensure it remains a viable proposition for another 100 years.		
342	Ysgol Abersoch is the beating heart of Abersoch Village and has been for 98 years, The councils decision to go ahead with a statutory procedure and consultation during the covid 19 pandemic is heartless, selfish and blatantly biased against the school and allowed no real chance of objections but certainly has favoured the council decision.		
343	We write to you again as Merched y Wawr members to convey our disappointment in Gwynedd Council's Cabinet's decision on 15 June 2021 to present a Statutory Warning to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 December 2021. As a results, we can only write to convey our complete objection to the proposal and kindly ask the Members to reconsider their decision. We also Express our shock at the proposed date, which is at the end of the first term of the academic year – a very unfair date for any pupil as it disturbs their education.		
344	I would like to object to the closing of Abersoch school. I feel it is important for the village to have a school where the local children can go. I think it is vital to finish at the end of the school year if it does have to shut so that the children can have a bit of normality after all the time they have been through in the last 18 months and then change schools over the summer holidays if it has to be closed.		
345	As a former pupil, I am not sure what is scarier, the fact that Ysgol Abersoch is in danger of closing – or that this is based on a seriously flawed and misleading report – or that the Statutory Consultation was held under the restrictions of a pandemic, during the absence of the head teacher due to a personal tragedy.		
346	The fact that the Decision by the Cabinet has been called in by the Education Scrutiny Committee is a strong indication that there are concerns regarding the Cabinet's Decision to continue with the consultation process... I am of the opinion that it is impossible to have a full and fair consultation under COVID circumstances the consultation shows there is a clear objection to the school's closure and it this goes ahead it goes against the wishes of the		

	community including the children the parents the residents, School staff, Community Council Local Member and the Member of Parliament.		
347	The determination and urgency to achieve this aim has been prepared to ignore the unprecedented restrictions on society of a pandemic, forging ahead with a process which, although legally allowed, is considered by many to be morally wrong.		
348	We continue to be disappointed that it was felt appropriate to continue with the Statutory Consultation, despite the current pandemic and associated extreme constraints, which prevented us from holding any staff, parent or community meeting or any natural, effective discussion on the serious matter.		
349	In the current situation of Covid 19 and all its restrictions, to not to be able to discuss this matter further face to face, is very unfortunate and in its self may be a good enough reason to postpone the decision until we know the outcome of 'Lockdown' is clearer		
350	We believe however that it was a mistake on the part of the Authority, although the Minister for Education urgently amended the Code on 7.1.21 to allow this, to choose to hold the all-important statutory consultation while the school was closed for the whole period, parents and governors were under pressure because of the pandemic and their ability to arrange opposition to the proposal limited because of a "stay at home" rule. We believe that the Authority should take this into account in reaching a decision		
351	More importantly perhaps, the decision to continue caused considerable distress to the children, who have had to cope not only with the absence of their Headteacher and the terrible conditions of Covid but also with the upsetting thought of closing their school. We feel strongly that this decision was not made for the benefit of the children.		
352	There seems to be an element of box ticking going on here. The process has felt rather different from the stakeholder perspective than it appears to from Gwynedd Council's angle		A series of local meetings were held to discuss the challenges facing Ysgol Abersoch and the possible options that would respond to them before reaching an agreement on the option that would be likely to best respond to those challenges.
353	Unfortunately, witnessing this lack of interest confirmed my suspicions that the decision to go forward with the Consultation had already been made, well before the Cabinet members entered the meeting, and furthermore, that the whole process has been a tick box exercise from the beginning, with		A consultation was undertaken on that proposal, namely to close Ysgol Abersoch and to provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach, between 12 January and 23 February 2021 and, in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation

	the council just going through the motions to give the impression of meaningful consultation.		Code 011/2018. Following this statutory consultation period, a report was submitted on the consultation to the Cabinet in order to summarise the matters raised by the consultees and note the Council's response to those matters. After considering this comprehensive report, the Cabinet approved the issuing of a statutory notice on the proposal and held an objection period to give anyone the opportunity to object to the proposal.
354	I remain to be convinced of a good reason why not a single option suggested by the stakeholders merited inclusion in the final three options. Therefore, I hope you understand why it is hard to shake the feeling that, despite the informal review process, the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch has actually been the only item on the agenda from the start.		
355	It is unclear what input from stakeholders has been included within the proposal leading us to question whether the views of stakeholders really listened to. It feels rather as if the Gwynedd Council are pursuing their own agenda and are determined to close Ysgol Abersoch.		An objection period was held on the proposal between 25 June and 23 July 2021. This report sets out the objections and proposes the Council's response to them for the Cabinet's consideration and final decision on the future of Ysgol Abersoch. It is believed that these actions are clear evidence that the decision has not been made and that we are giving fair consideration to stakeholders' comments before any final decision is made.
356	Closing a school is a serious matter and I would expect serious questions, and challenging debate over the detail of the consultation documents, along with fair consideration of the matters raised by stakeholders received during the consultation period, before any decision is made.		In accordance with the School Organisation Code, a report on the consultation must be submitted to the Cabinet in order to summarise the matters raised by the consultees and to note the Council's response to those matters. The Cabinet will discuss the report and decide whether or not to proceed with the proposal.
357	is there any reference to the extraordinary circumstances and impact of Covid 19, let alone the long-term implications of Coronavirus which should surely be reflected in strategy and planning of resources from now on?		The Council has considered the implications of Covid throughout the process and has adapted arrangements in line with the changing situation, whilst ensuring that the requirements of the statutory process were met. The Council will follow national guidance in relation to Covid when delivering or planning future strategies. There is no assurance that future demographic changes would increase the pupil numbers of Ysgol Abersoch. Should the proposal be implemented, the children and young people of the catchment area would be offered a high-quality education at Ysgol Sarn Bach, which is 1.4 miles away from the village of Abersoch.
358	I consider much of the content of the consultation documents to be presented in a misleading and unfair manner. For example, the age range at Ysgol Abersoch is three years less than the age range of the neighbouring schools, with whom it is constantly compared across a range of data, meaning a lot of the information presented is not comparing like with like, rendering it at best very confusing, and at worst almost meaningless.		The Authority would like to note that it is completely unbiased and transparent in what has been submitted as part of the consultation documentation. In relation to the comment about the age-range of Ysgol Abersoch, compared with the age-range of nearby schools, the Authority considers each school as a whole entity, regardless of their age-range, and despite the differences, it would not be meaningful to draw comparison between Ysgol Abersoch and some specific years only at nearby schools.

359	<p>We also believe that the timescale given is unfortunate. If the offer were to be approved, only a month's time at the end of the summer term would have informed parents of the final decision for them to then consider the most appropriate option for their children's education – and this is legally their decision. This is contrary to recognised best practice of giving parents a whole term of notice of any fundamental change. Setting a more realistic date of September 2022 to initiate any new regime would allow sufficient time for the alternative options referred to to be discussed before a final decision is announced.... sticking to a date of September 2021 to implement any change would be totally unreasonable. The options would not have been properly worded, and a month's notice to parents of the new regime would not be fair at all.</p>		<p>The Council notes the comment.</p> <p>In response to those concerns expressed during the consultation period, the implementation date of the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch was amended to 31 December 2021, and for a place to be provided for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach on 1 January 2022.</p>
360	<p>You would be able to discuss these (alternative options) informally this year, seeking agreement, and then undertake a statutory consultation on proposing a new way forward when the pandemic would not restrict meaningful discussion. We therefore call on Gwynedd Council's Cabinet, when considering the report on the consultation responses, to delay the process until November to allow time for schools and communities in the area to seek an agreed way forward that meets the Authority's objectives. A process would then go through quickly in late 2021 either because there was an agreement or because all options were completely vinded, and any change could be implemented promptly to September 2022.</p>		<p>The Council notes that they held a series of local meetings over an extended period of time where stakeholders were given an opportunity to air alternative options. The Council appraised these options before drawing up the proposal. This took place pre-Covid.</p> <p>The Council is of the opinion that the key stakeholders have been able to participate in full in this consultation, and the number of participants bears witness to this.</p> <p>The Council is of the opinion that extending the consultation process further than necessary leads to more uncertainty and concern for all stakeholders. Consequently, the Council is pressing on with the process in accordance with what is practically possible.</p>
361	<p>We highlight our concerns about the legality of the consultation process ... The consultation with the pupils was unfair given their age and intelligence... .. The Statutory Children's Consultation document contains leading questions, is misleading and biased. The document states that there will be 'better use of resources, e.g. IT equipment, 'a chance to meet and play with new friends', 'more teachers' at Ysgol Sarn Bach. This wording is designed to attract children and suggests that there is better IT and more teachers at Ysgol Sarn Bach; we do not believe this to be the case. Furthermore, only apparent benefits (if correct) are identified, with no reference to what might be lost.</p>		<p>As part of the consultation with children and young people, appropriate documents were prepared for the pupils of Ysgol Abersoch and the Sarn Bach School Council, and arrangements were made that a facilitator held three meetings over the web (Google Meet), with both schools to discuss the proposal with the children in order to ensure that they understood the propsoal and in order to give them an opportunity to express and opinion about the proposal. The parents of Ysgol Abersoch were present and they were encouraged by the facilitator to speak on behalf of their children in order to strengthen the process of gathering the views of the children about the possible impact on them should the school close. In the case of Ysgol Sarn Bach, four School Council pupils represented each year from the Junior</p>

362	There are concerns over the nature of the children's consultation. The Consultation Document for Children provides leading questions, is misleading and is biased against Ysgol Abersoch.		Department, and one parent (of a School Council member) was present (and contributed but only to further clarify her child's views to the facilitator).
363	(Consultation Document for children) It is not made clear that they will be going from ratio of 10:1 to above 20:1		It was explained that the change would mean: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That Ysgol Abersoch would close. - That the Ysgol Abersoch pupils would transfer to Ysgol Sarn Bach in September 2021.
364	(Consultation Document for children) Is this factually correct? How are there more teachers - there are 2 at Ysgol Sarn Bach, 2 at Ysgol Abersoch. Isn't the teacher to pupil ratio much higher? We request that you provide this information.		
365	(Consultation Document for children) How is a child meant to interpret this statement? What is not fair at the moment?		Each session took forty-five minutes to complete, and after dividing them into three groups, Year 3 Pupils in Ysgol Abersoch, Foundation Phase Pupils in Ysgol Absersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach School Council. It included providing an explanation of the proposal and giving the pupils an opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings. The facilitator had previously received questionnaires before commencing the enquiry process via GoogleMeet. Following the meeting, the comments of one Ysgol Abersoch pupil was received in the form of a video clip filmed by his mother and sent for the attention of the facilitator via the school.
366	(Consultation Document for children) This is an invalid point - the pupils will already have been at Ysgol Sarn Bach for 3 years presecondary school regardless under the current scenario.		
367	I feel sad that you did not think to actually ask me and my other friends who went to ysgol Abersoch about our time at the school. If you really wanted to do a report about the two schools then you should have interviewed people that had been to both schools.		
			In response to the questions regarding the staffing situation, it was noted in the consultation document that "the current staffing structure of Ysgol Abersoch includes one full-time headteacher, a part-time teacher, a part-time CPA teacher, and a part-time assistant. The headteacher teaches for 70% of the time and receives 30% of non-contact time for management and leadership matters. At Ysgol Sarn Bach, there is a headteacher, two part-time teachers (equivalent to 1.0 FTE), and three part-time assistants. The Headteacher teaches for 80% of the time and receives 20% of non-contact time for management and leadership matters."
			In relation to the statement "When it is time for you to attend Secondary School, you will know more children who will be moving there with you." - the Council accepts that it is not a valid point as the pupils already transfer to Ysgol Sarn Bach after year 3.
368	...concerns regarding the legalities of the consultation Process... The response form is inadequate. There is no details on how people can ask further questions regarding the proposal or the alternative options. The consultees have been informed of the opportunities to comment on alternative options to closing the School that has been recognised by		The Authority is confident that our processes and the response form provided during the statutory consultation addresses the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018.

	Gwynedd Council alongside its main option. Consultees have not been informed of the opportunity to propose alternative options to closure that would also respond to closing reasons (i.e. the main challenge facing the School).		It was noted on page 38 of the consultation document "During this consultation, the responses could include observations or questions on any aspect of the proposal, or they could suggest other options."
369 Concerns about the legality of the consultation process. There is a lack of explanation / rationale for the 5 year projection of the school's pupil numbers. Gwynedd Council's decision not to consider the impact of Ti a Fi and the Cylch Meithrin on the School's objective numbers is unfair..		The Council acknowledges that projecting future pupil numbers is difficult, particularly as there is no onus on the parents to send their children to the catchment area school. The projections in the consultation document were based on three-year projections submitted by school headteachers. Estimated five-year projections are based on average school admission numbers over the last three years. The Authority acknowledges the relationship between Cylch Ti a Fi and Cylch Meithrin with Gwynedd schools; however, in the case of Ysgol Abersoch, considering the size of the increase deriving from the Cylch Meithrin, the challenges facing Ysgol Abersoch would continue.
370	The content and nature of the completion of the impact assessments appears to be a ticking of the limited box completed by Council staff, rather than a recognized attempt to find a true representation of the impact within the affected community.... The overall effect of closure on the local community LIAR CIAR Yet the Community and Language Impact Assessments are tick box exercises completed by headteachers who live outside of the community. These do not adequately address the overall effect of closure on the local community.		The Council notes the comments. The considerations included in the Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment address the suggestions of what could be included in a Welsh Language and Community Impact Assessment, which can be seen in Appendix C: Assessments of the community impact and the impact on the Welsh language, The School Organisation Code 011/2018. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and each of the alternative options considered was completed. A copy of the full assessments can be found on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation
371	The School Organization Code requires that "There are specific factors to consider for proposals to add or remove nursery classes". Firstly, the Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi who are on site were not consulted on the Statutory Consultation despite being a recognized stakeholder and no discussion took place regarding the implications of closing the school on the provision of early years education in Abersoch. This omission undermines		Unfortunately, after the consultation, it became apparent that the representatives of the Cylch Meithrin had not received the consultation document, as required under the School Organisation Code 011/2018; it appears that an administrative error occurred when sending the e-mail publishing the consultation. As noted in the consultation document, we had included the Cylch as a consultee in the distribution list for sharing information about the publication e-mail, but it

	<p>the trust of the conduct of the consultation.... How many other organisations that were due to be informed were not informed? This omission undermines the process and compromises faith that the process is being carried out fairly.... It is not apparent that any consideration has been made of the impact of the closure of the school on these services..... The effect of proposals on other institutions including private and third sectors providers (Cylch Meithrin Abersoch) and the extent to which the proposals will integrate early years education with childcare services has not been included within the consultation.</p>	<p>appears that the Cylch's e-mail address was spelt incorrectly and we wish to apologise for this error.</p> <p>To ensure that the Cylch had an opportunity to consider the consultation document in line with the timescale provided in the Organisation Code, the Cylch's representatives were given an opportunity to send any further comments to us by 1pm, Wednesday 21 April 2021, and those observations would be accepted and considered as a response to the statutory consultation.</p> <p>The Council is aware that the Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi are currently held on the Ysgol Abersoch site and notes the responses to the statutory consultation.</p> <p>It is true to say, if the proposal is realised, that the alternative school would provide an education from 3 years and up. But, in terms of the Cylch Meithrin provision, if this proposal goes ahead, the Council is eager to discuss the possibilities with the relevant representatives - the possibilities could include staying at the current location, relocating to the alternative school, or moving to another site in the village of Abersoch.</p> <p>It is noted in the community impact assessment "A Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi is held in the school building. Should a decision be made to close the school, options for the post-use of the school would have to be considered, taking the activities currently held at the school into account."</p>
372	<p>These three options [short list options] are all Gwynedd Council suggestions, Ysgol Abersoch proposed options have been disregarded leading us to believe that we have not been listened to.</p>	<p>The Council notes the comment. It is emphasized that the purpose of the statutory consultation period was to gather the views and opinions of stakeholders on the proposed proposal.</p> <p>Following the statutory consultation, a report on the consultation was presented to Cabinet to summarize the issues raised by the consultee and to note the Council's response to those issues. Following consideration of this comprehensive report Cabinet approved the release of a statutory notice on the proposal and held an objection period so that anyone could object to the proposal.</p> <p>An objection period on the proposal ran from 25 June to 23 July 2021. This report sets out the objections received and proposes the Council's response to them for Cabinet to consider and decide on the future of Ysgol Abersoch.</p>

			It is believed that these actions are clear evidence that the authority are giving fair consideration to stakeholder comments before making any final decision.
373	There is an implication here that as part of the “review panel” Ysgol Abersoch agreed with the proposal that was “developed”. This is not the case. Please clarify.		<p>The Abersoch School Review Panel (SRP) was established in October 2019 and a series of meetings were held between October 2019 and January 2020, with the last of these held on 6 January 2020. The SRP included the school's headteacher, governors, the Local Member, parents and staff. During the meetings, a number of options were considered for primary education in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area in order to ensure a sustainable provision for the future, and respond specifically to the low pupil numbers, and the small class sizes.</p> <p>The Education Department completed an appraisal of all options was completed in order to summarise the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the options under consideration. All options were appraised against the factors of the Excellent Primary Education for the Children of Gwynedd strategy, whilst also considering the School Organisation Code and other relevant considerations.</p> <p>Following an appraisal of the options, the preferred direction and the proposal was the subject of a statutory consultation and consequently the statutory notice is to close Ysgol Abersoch, and for the pupils to be educated at Ysgol Sarn Bach.</p>
374	6.1 Comparing Options (Option 4) - Why would both schools then be reliant on minimum staffing policy?		It is anticipated that this option would lead to an increase in the number of Ysgol Abersoch Foundation Phase pupils, but would reduce numbers at the nearby school. An age range of up to four years would continue in the foundation phase class and key stage 2 class. Although it would reduce the financial protection sum at Ysgol Abersoch, it is possible that it would lead to a situation where both schools included in the federation would be reliant on an additional financial allocation by means of the minimum staffing protection policy as it would reduce numbers at the nearby school (Ysgol Sarn Bach).
375	6.1 Comparing Options Option 5 - “... it would lead to a situation where the three schools included in the federation would be reliant on an additional financial allocation by means of the minimum staffing protection policy”. Is this a credible foreseeable option if Ysgol Abersoch, Ysgol Sarn Bach and Ysgol Llanbedrog were to federalise as 3 schools? There are more than 160 pupils at all 3 schools at present, dropping to no less than 100 if the school projections are to be believed.		It is anticipated that this option would lead to an increase in the number of Ysgol Abersoch Foundation Phase pupils, but would reduce numbers at the two nearby schools. An age range of up to four years would continue in the foundation phase class. Although it would reduce the financial protection sum at Ysgol Abersoch, it is possible that it would lead to a situation where the three schools included in the federation would be reliant on an additional financial allocation by means of the minimum staffing protection policy.

		<p>The funding arrangements for federal schools mean that the three schools will receive separate budgets and consequently, the total number of children on the three sites is not a factor.</p> <p>One of the disadvantages of the model is that it means that children will need to move from one site to another, and thus would be unable to relate as effectively with their local area as they currently do.</p> <p>In discussing the options with the School Review Panel in January 2020, a concern was noted that the change could lead to parents choosing not to send their children to the school - it is fair to note therefore that the change could lead to a reduction in the numbers of pupils at the three schools in the federation, and consequently, it could lead to a situation where the three schools included in the federation would be reliant on an additional financial allocation through the minimum staffing protection policy.</p>
376	<p>"Nevertheless, after appraising the options against the factors of the Excellent Primary Education for the Children of Gwynedd strategy, it was concluded that these options did not manage to meet, or resolve, the main challenges faced by the school (as detailed in section 5.1)."</p> <p>On what basis was this concluded? Why is there no mention of the implication on the maximum recommended mixed age class sizes and higher pupil: staff ratios?</p>	<p>In developing the proposal, an appraisal was carried out of all the option to summarise the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the options under consideration. All options were appraised against the factors of the Excellent Primary Education for the Children of Gwynedd strategy, whilst also considering the School Organisation Code and other relevant considerations.</p> <p>'Class sizes and age-range' was one of the factors considered when appraising the options, and the '<i>Age range of up to four years</i>' was noted as one of the disadvantages of the preferred option. If the proposal is implemented, it is expected that the Ysgol Sarn Bach Governing Body will give due attention to determine class sizes and the distribution of the school's staff resources.</p> <p>A copy of the full options appraisal can be seen on our website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation.</p>
377	<p>...Change the age range of Ysgol Abersoch Option increase to 3-11 Why was this not put forward? Gwynedd Council encouraged Ysgol Abersoch to look at age range 3-11, then disregarded it. This was never really an option but a smokescreen.</p>	<p>Two options to extend the school's age range were discussed, namely extending to 3-9 and extending to 3-11.</p> <p>It should be noted that the option favoured locally was the option to extend the school's age range to 3-9, including the development of development of the Cylch Meithrin. This option was preferred locally for practical reasons such as better use made of the empty space in the school building as a result of providing a location for the Cylch Meithrin, and to mitigate against the potential impact that the change could</p>

			<p>have change could have on the numbers at Ysgol Sarn Bach (the school that provides an education for the 9-11-year-old pupils from the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area).</p> <p>When comparing the two options, it was concluded that the best option to be considered further was the option to extend the age range to 3-11. The 3-9 age option was disregarded for many reasons, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not anticipated that adding one educational year would lead to a sufficient increase in the numbers. Consequently, the challenges facing the school would continue. • The age range would not be consistent with the majority of the county's primary schools. • It would not allow for the school to offer a comprehensive KS2 provision. The pupils would continue to transfer to Ysgol Sarn Bach to complete their primary education. <p>It is believed that the option to extend the age range to 3-11 would offer more advantages from the perspective of having an opportunity to increase the numbers at the school. The option would also rationalise the age range with the rest of the county's schools, and would mean that the school offers a comprehensive KS2 provision.</p> <p>In order for the option to respond to the challenges facing the school, this increase would have to be substantial. Nevertheless, it is likely that any increase in the numbers at Ysgol Abersoch after extending the age range, would cause a reduction in the numbers of Ysgol Sarn Bach and, potentially, at nearby schools.</p> <p>After further consideration, it was concluded that the option would not be a sustainable solution for the future for the school, and that it could affect pupil numbers in nearby schools.</p>
378	<p>Impact on Welsh Language</p> <p>Different data has been used compared to the draft assessment - Summer 2019 as opposed to October 2019.</p> <p>Why is an older dataset being used in this version? Is this to present data that reflects Gwynedd Council's own purposes?</p>	2	<p>In response to the comment regarding the size of the sample of children who completed the language web questionnaire, the Authority can confirm that a sample of Foundation Phase children had been used in each of the schools used in the Linguistic Impact Assessment, in order to ensure a fair and meaningful comparison across the schools. Similar information was not available for the Autumn Term 2019.</p>

			As a result of the low numbers at Ysgol Abersoch, it is acknowledged that the sample size was too small, however, the data is based on the information presented by the pupils themselves in the questionnaire, noting their practices in terms of using the Welsh language in different situations.
379	<p>7.15 Potential Risks Lack of decision-making - An inability to put change into practice due to a lack of decision-making which increases the likelihood of disturbing the pupils' education. It could harm the Council's reputation.</p> <p>It will be harmed if Gwynedd Council insist on pushing through unpopular plans during a pandemic and without due care and attention to detail and the impacts on the community and language in Abersoch.</p>		The Council notes the comment.
380	<p>7.15 Potential Risks The quality of the education in the short-term whilst the school's situation is under review - Reduced quality of education provision for the pupils</p> <p>This is an insulting remark to the dedication of Ysgol Abersoch teaching and support staff. We request that you retract this statement and issue an apology.</p>		<p>In relation to the observation about the possible impact on the quality of education, the Authority can confirm that it was not referring to the workforce of Ysgol Abersoch specifically, but rather it was conveying and acknowledging the impact that a process of change, such as school reorganisation, can have on the performance of the workforce affected during the period.</p> <p>Many Organisational Change Management studies confirm (even in cases where the workforce is outstanding and the management and leadership of the change is robust), there is an astounding risk that the quality of the performance is expected to reduce and this needs to be acknowledged as part of the process.</p> <p>"Self-esteem and performance can drop during periods of change. In a sense this is unavoidable – a natural and normal reaction to change affecting individuals" (<i>MAKING SENSE OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT Esther Cameron and Mike Green 2012</i>)</p> <p>The Roffrey Park (Devine 1999) study, also confirms this when it notes that conflict between 2 different standpoints and cultural views (which leads to consultations of organisational change) unavoidably leads to a reduction of between 25% - 30% in the quality of performance because of the possibility of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attention turns to an "us and them" mind-set, instead of a united direction • Effort and energy spent on the process of either Changing or protecting what exists • Informal and formal coalitions attempt to lead • Portrays either side better than the other.

			The authority acknowledges that periods of change can create instability and cause personal concern to each individual, which also increases the risk of reduced performance. The efforts implemented by the authority to include school staff viewpoints and encouraging them to be "a part of the change" has led to the likelihood of less impact on the quality of the education and the day-to-day work of teaching, and thus less risk of impacting performance.
381	How parents' and pupils' engagement with the alternative school and any facilities it may offer could be supported This has not been addressed despite being part of the SOC.		As part of the statutory process, when developing a proposal(s) for school reorganisation, the Authority must carry out assessment in accordance with the School Organisation Code (011/2018). We are of the opinion that the impact assessments submitted correspond with Welsh Government's national guidance for school reorganisation.
382	"Proposals which affect charities must be consistent with charity law or the stated purpose of the charitable trust" We have contacted the Charities Commission and await response.		The Council notes the comment.
383	It is notable that parents opinions are not recorded in the consultation document.		The purpose of the statutory consultation was to gather the views of stakeholders, including the parents, on the proposal. Later, a statutory objection period was held, and as part of the process, there was an opportunity for anyone to object to the proposal.
384	The Consultation report appears selective in its choice of content and wording, highlighting the benefits of Ysgol Sarn Bach but, again, excluding those of Ysgol Abersoch. For example, the head of Ysgol Abersoch, Linda Jones has been appointed as the Language Charter Cluster Coordinator to support the Secondary Sector but yet none of this is acknowledged. This suggests that there is more to be gained than lost from the closure of Ysgol Abersoch.		The Authority would like to note that it is completely unbiased and transparent in what was submitted as part of the consultation documentation. In relation to the observation about the role of the Cluster Coordinator, the Authority invited expressions of interest for the role across Gwynedd, and as a result, there are 13 Cluster Coordinators in the county, namely one for each catchment area. Consequently, the Authority is not of the opinion that the role is relevant to the proposal, considering that it does not create an advantage or disadvantage to Ysgol Abersoch.
385	I am hard pressed to find anything in the documents that shines a light on the success or achievements of the school.		The Council notes the comment. It is emphasised that the content of the consultation document was drawn up in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2018.
386	Ysgol Sarn Bach is not located at the centre of the village – it is on the outskirts.		The Council accepts the comments. This is an amended map, noting the location of Ysgol Sarn Bach.
387	It is worth noting that the location of Ysgol Sarn Bach, as identified on page 35 of the Statutory Consultation Document, is incorrect. Perhaps the Education Department has taken up our idea of a Beach School (Appendix C)		

	and wishes to develop Ysgol Sarn Bach into a Farm School? This leads to concern above all about the accuracy of the more complex parts of the report.		
388	It is worth noting that the location of Ysgol Sarn Bach, as identified on page 35 of the Statutory Consultation Document, is incorrect. Perhaps the Education Department has taken up our idea of a Beach School (Appendix C) and wishes to develop Ysgol Sarn Bach into a Farm School? This leads to concern above all about the accuracy of the more complex parts of the report.		
389	The substantial amount of information made it impossible for us to respond, as requested by the Department of Education, in any way during the first weekend of the consultation, especially when the hard copies we requested on 6/1 were not received until 19/1.		<p>In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code, the e-mail was sent to the relevant consultees, which included a link to the electronic consultation document. Hard copies were also supplied upon request.</p> <p>The consultation was re-published on 12 January 2021 (with an amended closing of 23 February), and the Education Modernisation Team distributed current hard copies by 19 January 2021.</p>
390	The CMA committee and staff have not been informed of the intention to close the school or consulted despite it being a statutory requirement under the Schools Organisation Code (SOC) . We have not been invited to stakeholder meetings so our input has been completely ignored....The CMA has not received the consultation document in any format and it is far too late now for us to have any meaningful input to a process so far advanced unless a delay is introduced into this process!		<p>Unfortunately, after the consultation, it became apparent that the representatives of the Cylch Meithrin had not received the consultation document, as required under the School Organisation Code 011/2018; it appears that an administrative error occurred when sending the e-mail publishing the consultation.</p> <p>As noted in the consultation document, we had included the Cylch as a consultee in the distribution list for sharing information about the publication e-mail, but it appears that the Cylch's e-mail address was spelt incorrectly and we wish to apologise for this error.</p>
391	The Council has manifestly failed to consult or consider the CMA in this whole process which, particularly in the middle of a pandemic, is very hard to justify.		<p>To ensure that the Cylch had an opportunity to consider the consultation document in line with the timescale provided in the Organisation Code, the Cylch's representatives were given an opportunity to send any further comments to us by</p>

			1pm, Wednesday 21 April 2021 , and those observations would be accepted and considered as a response to the statutory consultation.
392	Families are disheartened from sending their children to Ysgol Abersoch and the CMA as they fear their closures.		The Council notes the comment.
393	Option 9...This is the favoured option by Ysgol Abersoch but was disregarded by Gwynedd Council. It should be noted that parents might be more inclined to feel it's more worth sending their children to Ysgol Abersoch should an extra year be offered. This would both increase pupil numbers and reduce the cost per head and as stated above it is a natural and common approach to teach Years 3 and 4 together in a single classroom.		The Council notes the support for the option to extend Ysgol Abersoch's age range to 3-9 years. As noted in the consultation document (section 6.4), the option favoured locally was the option to extend the school's age range to 3-9 years, including the development of the Cylch Meithrin. This option was favoured locally for practical reasons, such as improved use of the empty space in the school and providing a location for the Cylch Meithrin, and to mitigate the potential impact that the change could have on the numbers of Ysgol Sarn Bach (the school that provides an education for 9-11-year-old pupils in the Ysgol Abersoch area).
394	Change the age range of Ysgol Abersoch "It is not anticipated that adding one educational year would lead to a sufficient increase in the numbers." This is a matter of opinion. This option would provide up to 7 years of continuous education at a single site (1 year Cylch Meithrin, Nursery, Reception, Years 1,2,3,4, plus a potential further 2 years at Ti a Fi). It has been asked for by the parents and children and it would have a positive financial impact, reducing the cost per pupil. Years 4-6 at Sarn Bach are projected to continue to be above 20 for the next 2 years. Allowing an extra year at Ysgol Abersoch would help to relieve the pressure on the oversized classes at Ysgol Sarn Bach (as well as probably Ysgol Llanbedrog).		The 3-9 years option was disregarded for the following reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not anticipated that adding one educational year would lead to a sufficient increase in the numbers. Consequently, the challenges facing the school would continue. • The age range would not be consistent with the majority of the county's primary schools. • It would not allow for the school to offer a comprehensive KS2 provision. The pupils would continue to transfer to Ysgol Sarn Bach to complete their primary education. <p>In September 2020, all Ysgol Abersoch (Nursery to Yr. 3) pupils were educated in one class with 10 pupils. The average class size at Ysgol Sarn Bach in September 2020 is 24.</p>

The table below shows the class sizes of Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach in September 2020.

School	Nursery	Reception	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Total	Number of classes	Largest class	Smallest class	Average class size
Abersoch	2	3	2	-	3	-	-	-	10	1	10	10	10
Sarn Bach	3	2	5	4	8	5	10	11	48	2	34	14	24

Source: September 2020 Annual School Census

Delivering the proposal would mean that Ysgol Abersoch pupils would be educated in more sustainably sized classes, with more children from the same age group. With 21 surplus places (and four surplus places in the Nursery), Ysgol Sarn Bach has sufficient capacity for the number of pupils from Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach, currently and for the next five years.

If the proposal is delivered, it is expected that the Governing Body of Ysgol Sarn Bach will give due attention to determining class sizes and the distribution of school staff resources.

After further consideration, it was concluded that the option to extend the school's age range to 3-9 years would not be a sustainable solution to the future for the school. It is not anticipated that adding one educational year would lead to a sufficient increase in the numbers. Consequently, the challenges facing the school would continue. It is anticipated that the numbers and projections would remain low, classes would remain small, and the broad age range within classes would continue.

395

....School Federalisation with a nearby school. "Discussions were held with Ysgol Sarn Bach and Ysgol Llanbedrog.."
What were the findings of these discussions? Why are there no records of these discussions? If Gwynedd Council do not report this then this should not be raised as a point.

Despite the advantages of federalisation, the Authority is of the opinion that it is unlikely that the option would address the main challenges faced by Ysgol Abersoch, such as low numbers, small class sizes, and consequently, the school's financial challenges would continue.

	This was disregarded on the basis that it was “Not the best option” - well it’s better than closing Ysgol Abersoch. It would keep a school and the language in the community.		Officers from the Education Department met the headteacher and chair of governors of Ysgol Sarn Bach and Ysgol Llanbedrog in January 2020 to discuss the option of federalisation with Ysgol Abersoch. Because of the informal nature of these discussions, the meetings were not minuted. This meeting was also an opportunity to update headteachers and chairs regarding the options discussed at the local meetings, highlighting any potential impact that some of the options could have on their school. Neither of the two schools declared an interest in carrying out a further investigation to a federal model.
396	Federation option has positives but has been disregarded for unclear reasons. There is insufficient evidence to indicate why federalisation has not been pursued further.		
397	<i>... concerns about the legality of the consultation process. There is a lack of transparency about how Gwynedd Council consulted with neighboring schools and in particular the views of schools and its governing bodies regarding federation are unknown. This lack of information has had an impact on consultees ability to respond meaningfully to the proposals... We do not believe that federation has been adequately explored.</i>		
398	It is stated that this has been considered, but the decision made by Gwynedd Council was that this was not relevant since it would not affect the pupil numbers. Yet Ysgol Llanbedrog is overfull. There is a strong case here that this has not been fully justified. What evidence has been provided? Gwynedd Council response email 8/12/20 “Mewn ymateb i’ch ymholiad ynglŷn â natur yr ymgynghoriad a wnaed gydag Ysgol Sarn Bach ac Ysgol Llanbedrog parthed yr opsiwn i ffederaleiddio gydag Ysgol Abersoch, cadarnhaf ein bod wedi cwrdd â phennaeth a chadeirydd llywodraethwyr y ddwy ysgol ar wahân yn ôl ym mis Ionawr 2020 i drafod yr opsiwn o ffederaleiddio gydag Ysgol Abersoch. Oherwydd natur anffurfiol y trafodaethau hyn, ni chofnodwyd y cyfarfodydd. Roedd y cyfarfodydd hyn hefyd yn gyfle i ddiweddarau penaethiaid a’r cadeiryddion ynghylch yr opsiynau a drafodwyd yn y cyfarfodydd lleol, gan amlygu unrhyw effaith bosib gallai rhai o’r opsiynau hynny gael ar eu hysgol.”		After weighing up the pros and cons of the model, it was concluded that federalisation would not be a sustainable solution for the school. There is no clear evidence that federalisation would lead to an increase in numbers. Consequently, should this option be realised, it is anticipated that the challenge of low numbers, small class sizes and the financial challenges faced by the school, would continue. Therefore, it is considered that federalisation is not the best option for the school's situation. The funding arrangements for federal schools mean that the three schools will receive separate budgets that would be based on the numbers of children at each school. The Council is of the opinion that the federal model would not offer any financial saving. In order to get the best from a federal model, the schools usually, but not necessarily, share a Headteacher. As there is a Headteacher in post at each of the schools, the Council is of the opinion that the most effective federal model could lead to compulsory redundancies.
399	There will also be concerns regarding the options presented and the explanations given regarding the means these options were chased, an example of this was the option to federalise with another school.		
400	We do not consider that the consultation with the neighbouring schools had been conducted appropriately and with due care and attention. This is confirmed by the lack of minutes from local authority officers’ meeting with the Governing Bodies of Ysgol Llanbedrog and Ysgol Sarn Bach. Within the local authority papers, these meetings are referred to as informal meetings taking place in December 2019/January 2020. This is a further confirmation		The Council notes the comment. Officers from the Education Department met the headteacher and chair of governors of Ysgol Sarn Bach and Ysgol Llanbedrog in January 2020 to discuss the option of federalisation with Ysgol Abersoch. Because of the informal nature of

	of how the local authority has approached the process of the closure of Ysgol Abersoch as a tick box exercise rather than a meaningful and open process.		these discussions, the meetings were not minuted. This meeting was also an opportunity to update headteachers and chairs regarding the options discussed at the local meetings, highlighting any potential impact that some of the options could have on their school. Neither of the two schools declared an interest in carrying out a further investigation to a federal model.
401	The part of the Introduction to the Report that mentions the initial process' meetings there have been concerns regarding the means these meetings were held and there will be a few complaints regarding the presentations and discussions standards.		The Council notes the comment.
402	The enormous response to the Statutory Consultation is driven completely by a campian led by the Governors, parents, Friends, and it was a huge feat during the lockdown period and a scare-filled pandemic. However, our efforts have been in vain. On the contrary, perhaps a large number of correspondence produced have worked against us, as the huge document presented to the Cabinet was sweeping, and I wonder how many of the members have read through the reasonings, evidence and the findings gathered by the schools supporters in great detail?		<p>A series of local meetings were held to discuss the challenges facing Ysgol Abersoch and the possible options that would respond to them before reaching an agreement on the option that would be likely to best respond to those challenges.</p> <p>A consultation was undertaken on that proposal, namely to close Ysgol Abersoch and to provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach, between 12 January and 23 February 2021 and, in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018. Following this statutory consultation period, a report was submitted on the consultation to the Cabinet in order to summarise the matters raised by the consultees and note the Council's response to those matters. After considering this comprehensive report, the Cabinet approved the issuing of a statutory notice on the proposal and held an objection period to give anyone the opportunity to object to the proposal.</p> <p>An objection period was held on the proposal between 25 June and 23 July 2021. This report sets out the objections and proposes the Council's response to them for the Cabinet's consideration and final decision on the future of Ysgol Abersoch.</p> <p>It is believed that these actions are clear evidence that the decision has not been made and that the Authoirty are giving fair consideration to stakeholders' comments before any final decision is made.</p>
403	Others have picked massive holes and inaccuracies in your Satutory Consultation Document which I will not enter into here, but what is important is that you have chosen to dimiss these innacuracies as not being important enough, however I disagree. Surely when your decision will have		The Council notes and has already greeted the comment as part of the consultation report, where it was noted:

	such a massive impact, is it not important that all the facts are presented in a correct and accurate manner?. If I produced a report for work in such a fashion it would have implications, either for myself or for the company I represent!!		<p>“The Council is confident in the accuracy of the information submitted in the consultation document. The Council accepts that the location of Ysgol Sarn Bach on the map in the document is incorrect but that this does not affect the consultation.”</p> <p>During the consultation the Authority also received comments regarding the errors in the impact assessments, and in response to those it was noted that “the Council accepts the comment and has updated the information/tables where appropriate – a revised version of the assessments is presented as an appendix to the consultation report ...” The latest assessments are available at www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p>
404	<p>A strong community objection to the Statutory Consultation proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch has been presented to the Council and we request that each and one of these responses, issued during the Statutory Consultation period January – February 2021, is considered as an objection.</p> <p>We are of the firm belief that the evidence so far observed in the decision making process indicates that this process is very much a tick box exercise to satisfy the Schools Organisation Code and this decision to close Ysgol Abersoch was long previously made. It is apparent that the process is skewed in favour of the Council as yet again the voice of the community is disregarded without basis. The questions raised in the responses to the Statutory Consultation are not satisfactorily answered.</p> <p>We therefore question the validity of this decision</p>		<p>A series of local meetings were held to discuss the challenges facing Ysgol Abersoch and the possible options that would respond to them before reaching an agreement on the option that would be likely to best respond to those challenges.</p> <p>A consultation was undertaken on that proposal, namely to close Ysgol Abersoch and to provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach, between 12 January and 23 February 2021 and, in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018. Following this statutory consultation period, a report was submitted on the consultation to the Cabinet in order to summarise the matters raised by the consultees and note the Council's response to those matters. After considering this comprehensive report, the Cabinet approved the issuing of a statutory notice on the proposal and held an objection period to give anyone the opportunity to object to the proposal.</p>
405	<p>We continue to reiterate the heavy-handed approach dealt by the Education Department in insisting that this consultation process continues despite the pandemic. Whilst the Cyfeillion Ysgol Abersoch group have done excellent work as observed in the exceptional number of responses and objections to the consultation process, this virtual response does not replace the opportunity afforded by proper, face to face contact and public meetings.</p> <p>There is a shameful lack of will within the Council to pursue a more open public engagement, justified by hiding behind the minimum standards required of the Schools Organisation Code.</p>		<p>An objection period was held on the proposal between 25 June and 23 July 2021. This report sets out the objections and proposes the Council's response to them for the Cabinet's consideration and final decision on the future of Ysgol Abersoch.</p> <p>It is believed that these actions are clear evidence that the decision has not been made and that we are giving fair consideration to stakeholders' comments before any final decision is made.</p>
406	<p>Whilst technically correct the Education Department report states ‘that the majority of respondents express objections’ it is clearly apparent that this is</p>		<p>The Council notes the comment.</p>

	an overwhelming majority and again demonstrates the Council's determination to present facts in a way that suits themselves (Section 6.2).		
407	It is hard to believe that over 150 objections were sent to the consultation - and It proves that Ysgol Aber-soch has strong support from the community. I wonder if any other school has received such good support without holding community meetings?		The Council notes the comment.
408	However, Members just made the decision, ie confirm one made before any discussion or consultation began.		<p>A series of local meetings were held to discuss the challenges facing Ysgol Abersoch and the possible options that would respond to them before reaching an agreement on the option that would be likely to best respond to those challenges.</p> <p>A consultation was undertaken on that proposal, namely to close Ysgol Abersoch and to provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach, between 12 January and 23 February 2021 and, in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018. Following this statutory consultation period, a report was submitted on the consultation to the Cabinet in order to summarise the matters raised by the consultees and note the Council's response to those matters. After considering this comprehensive report, the Cabinet approved the issuing of a statutory notice on the proposal and held an objection period to give anyone the opportunity to object to the proposal.</p> <p>An objection period was held on the proposal between 25 June and 23 July 2021. This report sets out the objections and proposes the Council's response to them for the Cabinet's consideration and final decision on the future of Ysgol Abersoch.</p> <p>It is believed that these actions are clear evidence that the decision has not been made and that we are giving fair consideration to stakeholders' comments before any final decision is made.</p>
409	<p>I am writing to you as I was a pupil at Ysgol Abersoch and you have not asked us our thoughts about our school time, it was a very important time for me.</p> <p>I loved my old school, I liked the teachers so much they were very helpful all the time, they helped me to improve my thinking skills and to use my imagination in a creative way.</p>		<p>In accordance with the School Organisation Code, it is required of any statutory consultation to consult with the children and young people of the schools subject to the consultation. A report on the consultation with children and young people has been included as an appendix to the consultation report (www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation)</p> <p>As part of the children and young people consultation, appropriate documents were prepared for pupils at Ysgol Abersoch and the School Council at Ysgol Sarn Bach, and a facilitator arranged 3 web meetings (via Google Meet) with both schools to discuss</p>
410	We believe that the consultation with the learner process was inappropriately conducted and was once again conducted as tick box		

	<p>exercise. The wishes and feelings of the learners who were all under the age of 8 years old was not taken into consideration.</p> <p>The consultation with the learners took place on 10th February through a virtual platform. The parents received notification through text message from the school that two separate virtual meetings were being held. There was no correspondence in advance from the local authority and no preparatory documentation was provided which would have allowed the school staff or the parents to prepare the children for the meeting to allow them to contribute to the discussions. Accordingly during the meeting, the main contributors were the parents. The children were shy and nervous and it was clear that the children were out of their comfort zone. One child refused to participate as he was distressed and the other children were tearful. There was a mix up with the time of the meeting with the younger learners which was unhelpful. The audio of the meeting was at times quite poor and there was a constant echo.</p> <p>The children's questionnaires were received by the learners between 8-10th February. These questionnaires had to be returned by the 12th February which provided an unreasonable timeframe. The same questionnaire was circulated to the learners of Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach irrespective of their ages. It is unclear whether all the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach received the questionnaires. The questions within the paper questionnaire in the view of Ysgol Abersoch Board of Governors are unfair and misleading. One of such questions was "Does anything worry you?"</p> <p>The questionnaires were to be returned to Ysgol Sarn Bach, and this led to some pupils being hesitant and asking "Who will see the questionnaires?"</p>	<p>the proposal with the children to ensure that they understood what was being offered and to give them an opportunity to voice their opinions on the proposal.</p> <p>In response to the comment that parental permission was not sought, please note that parents at Ysgol Abersoch attended the consultation session and were encouraged by the facilitator to speak on behalf of their children in order to strengthen the process of gathering the children's views on the possible impact of the school's closure. In Ysgol Sarn Bach's case, the four pupils of the School Council represented each year of the Junior Department and one parent (of a member of the School Council) was present (and contributed only to make her child's views clearer to the facilitator).</p> <p>It was explained that the change would mean:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Closing Ysgol Abersoch. - That the pupils of Ysgol Abersoch would transfer to Ysgol Sarn Bach in September 2021. <p>Each session took three-quarters of an hour to an hour to complete and was divided into three groups, Year 3 pupils from Ysgol Abersoch, Foundation Phase pupils Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach's School Council. It included explaining the proposal and giving pupils the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings. The facilitator had already received questionnaires prior to the process of questioning via Google Meet. Following the meeting one pupil from Ysgol Abersoch's comments were received in the form of a video taken by his mother and sent to the facilitator via the school.</p> <p>The Authority is confident that our processes meet the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018.</p>
411	<p>I as a parent was disgusted at the way you have treated our children throughout this process, the leaflets you sent out were an insult to our children, the inaccuracies on the paperwork trying to mislead the children only served to show that in fact it was you that had not done your research properly 'more teachers' 'better IT' 'make more friends' when we went to view Ysgol Sarn Bach we were told that year 4 children ate lunch in a room they had been working in and away from the other children. I realise this is because of Covid, however you sent those leaflets out during the covid</p>	

	<p>pandemic therefore you should have made sure they were accurate. I want to make this very clear at no point did you seek the parents permission to hold an interview with our children.</p> <p>On page 303 of your report 'Appropriate documents were prepared for pupils of Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach Council' What documents are you referring to? Are you alluding to the inaccurate misleading and confusing leaflets?</p> <p>Page 304 'seven questionnaires were received from Ysgol Sarn Bach some days after the consultation sessions with pupils at both schools' My son received his questionnaire on the 10th of February (The day my daughter had her consultation) it stated on the form 'to be completed by the 12th of February at 12oclock, to be handed in to Ysgol Sarn Bach, I have the dated envelope and a photo of this form. Therefore you seemed to have sent these forms out to some of the children as an afterthought. I know several people that did not even receive one of these forms. Also worth noting that Year six children were given one of these forms to fill in, in my mind this was a pointless exercise as they would not need to be included as they would no longer be at the school when the children from Ysgol Abersoch moved up. Therefore not everyone had a form, the seven late replies were because you actually sent them out late, please amend your report with this more accurate turn of events.</p> <p>Myself and other parents also expressed that if you were to do your report justice, you might ask the previous students of Ysgol Abersoch for their thoughts on the education they received at Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach this would give a true representation of both schools.The education received at Ysgol Abersoch is of a very very high quality and I think this cannot be disputed. Out of all the children at Ysgol Sarn Bach you only received back 19 questionnaires, why was this? In your interviews that were conducted at Ysgol Sarn Bach, how many children on the council are in year 6?</p>		
412	<p>I write to strongly object to the Cabinet decision on 15 June 2021 to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 December 2021. I find the basis of this decision unclear. As a result, I think the decision is unfounded because it relies on a biased set of facts that fails to incorporate a broader perspective of education in neighboring schools. In addition, I feel that the Council's overall</p>		<p>Following the consideration of the consultation report, on 15 June 2021, Gwynedd Council's Cabinet supported the recommendation to issue a statutory notice on the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch. The recmmendation to approve the proposal</p>

	<p>conduct was to reject any evidence that contradicts their narrow view and at times their behavior has been disrespectful.</p> <p>Garem Jackson stated at the Cabinet meeting (15 June) that he is not against this being a financial decision and about the quality of education and experiences provided for the children. I find it hard to believe that the Education Department and the Cabinet can make an assessment of the quality of education and experiences provided for the children without even setting foot inside the school doors. Estyn's 2017 report on Ysgol Abersoch classifies the school well and the children consistently achieve and exceed the expected educational targets while making the most of the outdoor environment that Ysgol Abersoch is surrounded by. with her. It is hard to believe that the decision to close the school was based on the quality of education and experiences, and questioned whether the Cabinet was well informed enough to make such an important decision.</p>	<p>came after consideration of a range of options and these options were evaluated in full in comparing the main advantages and disadvantages against specific factors.</p> <p>Following consideration of every response received during the statutory consultation period, it was considered that the proposal consulted upon continued to offer the best option for the future of education in the Abersoch catchment area. It was concluded that this proposal would be the most appropriate response to the main challenges that face the school for the reasons noted in sections 4.1 and 4.7 of the consultation report. A copy of the full report can be found at www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p>
413	<p>5.3. Strengths and Weaknesses of the Current Position “It is noted that the weakness outweigh the strengths” On what basis was this assessed? The layout itself of the table makes it look like there are more weaknesses than strengths as all strengths are listed in a single row rather than multiple rows and so immediately skew against the school. Other strengths are omitted e.g. the presence of Cylch Meithrin.</p>	<p>The Council notes the comment.</p> <p>If the proposal goes ahead, there would be a need to consider the school's post-use, taking the activities currently held at the school into account.</p> <p>But, in terms of the Cylch Meithrin provision, if this proposal goes ahead, the Council is eager to discuss the possibilities with the relevant representatives - the possibilities could include staying at the current location, relocating to the alternative school, or moving to another site in the village of Abersoch.</p> <p>Whilst acknowledging the potential positive impact that locating a Cylch Meithrin on the Ysgol Abersoch site could have on the numbers, this cannot be guaranteed. It is anticipated that the numbers and projections would remain low, classes would remain small, and the broad age range within classes would continue.</p> <p>As shown in the consultation document, we note a projected increase of 2 in the numbers by September 2021 and 2022. In order for any option to respond to the challenges facing the school, the increase in numbers would have to be substantial. The Authority is not of the opinion that an increase of two pupils is an adequate increase to address the school's challenges.</p>

414	<p>Firstly I would like to ask what are your reasons for closing the school? because after reading your report and listening to the cabinet meeting, it has not been clarified and I feel that you have not answered the question. Everyone who read your report and watched your meeting is at a loss. Some of the information in your report is not entirely accurate and I feel that you have based some of the evidence on vague reasoning. Submitting a report with these inadequacies in my mind would not be a true representation of the people you presented to in not having all the facts and certainly not entirely accurate findings, so how can you base your decision to close a school with this evidence?</p>	<p>The reasons behind the need to consider the future of Ysgol Abersoch have been clear from the start of local discussions with Ysgol Abersoch, following Cabinet permission to do so on 15 September 2020, as the main challenges facing the school were outlined then, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. school numbers cause concern. In September 2020, there were 8 full-time pupils, and 2 nursery pupils. ii. small class sizes - with 10 pupils taught in one mixed-age class. iii. projections show 10 pupils in 2021, 12 pupils in 2022, and 12 pupils in 2023. iv. September 2020 data shows that 26 pupils live in the Abersoch catchment area with 21 attending other schools. It also shows that 5 pupils outside Abersoch catchment area attend Ysgol Abersoch. v. Ysgol Abersoch receives an additional amount to the normal allocation through the minimum staffing protection policy (which guarantees at least a headteacher and teacher in each school, and a headteacher and assistant in schools with fewer than 15 pupils). This additional amount during the financial year 2020/21 (based on September 2019 numbers) was £52,582. vi. The cost per pupil of Ysgol Abersoch in the financial year 2020/21 was £17,404 compared to the County average cost per pupil for the same period of £4,198 vii. Number of surplus places - there are 76% surplus places at the school (32 in total) <p>The Council is of opinion that closing Ysgol Abersoch and providing a place for children at Ysgol Sarn Bach would respond to these challenges.</p> <p>Following consideration of the consultation report, on 15 June 2021, Gwynedd Council's Cabinet supported the recommendation to issue a statutory notice on the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch. The recommendation to approve the proposal came following consideration of a range of options and these options were evaluated in full when comparing main advantages and disadvantages against specific factors.</p> <p>Following consideration of all the responses received during the statutory consultation period, it was considered that the proposal consulted upon continued to offer the best option for the future of Abersoch catchment education. It was concluded that this proposal would be the most appropriate response to the main</p>
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		challenges facing the school for the reasons set out in sections 4.1 and 4.7 of the consultation report. A copy of the full report can be found at www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation
415	My letter number 101 was partially re-edited, I did not give you permission to do this, I gave you permission to use my letter, however, it took you 112 days to tell me that I had been re-edited, ironically 36 minutes before you submitted the report to cabinet, however, at the meeting you said that 'all responses, where consent was obtained, were printed in full'. However, I did not give you permission to re-edit it, again you have shown another inaccuracy by re-editing my voice as a Parent Governor you are trying to silence me. I find this offensive and you have shown that your skewed information is the only information you disclosed in your report. As Head of Education you should hang your head in shame, first about the way you conducted your meetings by failing to adhere to the Equality Act 2010, and secondly about re-editing my voice when, in my letter, I reported the way I felt - I was discriminated against at the meetings. I am afraid that this problem will not go away. I feel great sadness that this could happen to someone else in the future and I'm going to make sure this never happens, especially from an Education Department where adhering to these standards should be a priority!	<p>During the statutory consultation, one response was received which referred to the arrangements and standard of presentation given at an engagement meeting (School Review Panel) held with stakeholders in Ysgol Abersoch and raised concerns about the lack of inclusivity as it was not possible to follow the presentation.</p> <p>As this part of the response did not directly relate to the proposal, and included the personal information of the author of the comment as well as another person present at the meeting, it was not considered appropriate to publish the response in full. For this reason it was decided to respond to the issue and complaint in question by contacting the individual directly.</p>
416	I feel very disappointed that you have disregarded the voices of the children attending the school, parents, teachers, Governors and the community. The children recently took part in a demonstration to make their views known, to prevent them being silenced. The children also represent the voices of the school and the community in the past as this is gifted and as part of their history, the ancestors' voices can be heard echoing through the ten children. The kids got great attention and several spreadsheets have asked for photos so they can follow this story.	<p>A series of local meetings were held to discuss the challenges facing Ysgol Abersoch and possible options that would respond to them before agreeing on the option that would most likely respond to the challenges.</p> <p>A consultation was held on the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and offer pupils a place at Ysgol Sarn Bach, from 12 January to 23 February 2021 and, in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, there was an opportunity for anyone to respond to the proposal. This included consulting with pupils from both schools. Following the statutory consultation, a report on the consultation was presented to Cabinet summarising the issues raised by the consultees and noting the Council's response to those issues. Following consideration of this comprehensive report Cabinet approved the release of a statutory notice on the proposal and held an objection period for anyone to object to the proposal.</p>
417	I also object because I believe that this proposal for closure has not been given a fair hearing, and the proposals that we as Governors have put forward have not been considered. I do not feel that we, as Parents, Governors, Teachers and the community, have had our say in this process, from my perspective our voices have not been listened to, they are being ignored and erased.	

		<p>The objection period on the proposal was held from 25 June to 23 July 2021, during which there was an opportunity for anyone to object to the proposal. This report sets out the objections received and proposes the Council's response to them for Cabinet to consider and decide on the future of Ysgol Abersoch.</p> <p>It is therefore considered that we considered stakeholder comments before reaching a final decision.</p>
418	<p>In terms of the questionnaire you gave the pupils, I feel I need to address some of your statements and issues that I and other parents have raised. My daughter read your brochure before reading the questionnaire and she, at the age of 8, said it was misleading, 'pupils will have the option to move to Sarn Bach'. Therefore, the word 'option' is defined as; Something that can be chosen or not' and so my daughter said she doesn't choose to leave Ysgol Abersoch. Another quote is ' More Teachers Will... ..'- check if that's factual because at present my daughter is being taught by Fully Qualified Teachers, I don't think this is the case at Ysgol Sarn Bach so I would be grateful if you could elaborate further on this. 'Better use of resources e.g. IT ', - Could you also check if that is factual, all pupils at Ysgol Abersoch have excellent IT equipment and I myself have found it difficult to operate more than one device at once, however, if more equipment is needed the Parent's Association provides this for the children at no cost to the council. 'A chance to meet and play with friends' - Are you suggesting that the children of Ysgol Abersoch don't already have friends? My children have friends all over Gwynedd, however we chose Ysgol Abersoch because of its educational merits, do you suggest making friends is more important? Most of my children's friends attend Ysgol Llanbedrog so if I wanted them to choose friends over education I would have moved them to Ysgol Llanbedrog.</p>	<p>In accordance with the Schools Organisation Code, it is required, as part of any statutory consultation, to hold a consultation with the children and young people of the schools that are the subject of the consultation. A report on the consultation with children and young people is included as an appendix to the report on the consultation (www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation)</p> <p>As part of the consultation with children and young people, appropriate documents were prepared for the pupils of Ysgol Abersoch and the Sarn Bach School Council, and arrangements were made that a facilitator held three meetings over the web (Google Meet), with both schools to discuss the proposal with the children in order to ensure that they understood the proposal and in order to give them an opportunity to express and opinion about the proposal. The parents of Ysgol Abersoch were present and they were encouraged by the facilitator to speak on behalf of their children in order to strengthen the process of gathering the views of the children about the possible impact on them should the school close. In the case of Ysgol Sarn Bach, four School Council pupils represented each year from the Junior Department, and one parent (of a School Council member) was present (and contributed only to further clarify her child's views to the facilitator).</p> <p>It was explained that the change would mean:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That Ysgol Abersoch would close. - That the Ysgol Abersoch pupils would transfer to Ysgol Sarn Bach in September 2021. <p>Each session took forty-five minutes to complete, and after dividing them into three groups, Year 3 Pupils in Ysgol Abersoch, Foundation Phase Pupils in Ysgol Absersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach School Council. It included an explanation of the proposal and giving the pupils an opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings. The facilitator had previously received questionnaires before commencing the enquiry</p>

		<p>process via GoogleMeet. Following the meeting, the comments of one Ysgol Abersoch pupil was received in the form of a video clip filmed by his mother and sent for the attention of the facilitator via the school.</p> <p>In response to the questions regarding the staffing situation, it is noted in the consultation document that "the current staffing structure of Ysgol Abersoch includes one full-time headteacher, a part-time teacher, a part-time CPA teacher, and a part-time assistant. The headteacher teaches for 70% of the time and receives 30% of non-contact time for management and leadership matters. At Ysgol Sarn Bach, there is a headteacher, two part-time teachers (equivalent to 1.0 FTE), and three part-time assistants. The Headteacher teaches for 80% of the time and receives 20% of non-contact time for management and leadership matters.</p> <p>In relation to the statement "When it is time for you to attend Secondary School, you will know more children who will be moving there with you." - the Council accepts that it is not a valid point as the pupils already transfer to Ysgol Sarn Bach after year 3.</p>
419	<p>My Son received a questionnaire sent by post on February the 8th which required him to be posted back by February the 12th asking him the same questions as you asked Ysgol Abersoch pupils. I can't see the relevance of this questionnaire, the questions were not very clear, on Q4, which school are you referring to? Was this a universal questionnaire and not really tailored to the individuals? I also found it very strange that the questionnaires were sent back to Ysgol Sarn Bach and not directly to yourself. My son said that he did not feel that he could be open to expressing his thoughts and feelings in case his Headteacher knew his handwriting, I think this is the case for some of the other children as well. Can you tell me why the letters were not sent back directly to Gwynedd Council? Can you also tell me how many responses you received from Ysgol Sarn Bach? The reason I'm asking this is because I know of some families that didn't get a questionnaire, so was the questionnaire a pointless exercise that isn't really a representation of figures?</p>	
420	<p>It's strange that no one in attendance asked why a large part of one of the consultation responses was mysteriously blackened, showing a lack of</p>	<p>During the statutory consultation, one response was received which referred to the arrangements and standard of presentation given at an engagement meeting</p>

	curiosity and attention to detail, or perhaps by the 101st letter everyone had lost interest?		(School Review Panel) held with stakeholders in Ysgol Abersoch and raised concerns about the lack of inclusivity as it was not possible to follow the presentation.
421	I object on the grounds that not all the communities voices are been heard as you redacted my sisters letter, therefore silencing her voice, when her daughter attends the school. Who made that decision? Who decides who's voice is going to be heard, and who's is not? Is that a decision that you as a council should have made?		As this part of the response did not directly relate to the proposal, and included the personal information of the author of the comment as well as another person present at the meeting, it was not considered appropriate to publish the response in full . For this reason it was decided to respond to the issue and complaint in question by contacting the individual directly.
422	I noticed you had redacted (name deleted) letter and feel that democracy has been tampered with here The children need their voices represented not silenced.		
423	Redaction – We are alarmed at the redaction observed to (name deleted) letter (response 101) to the consultation, which appears to be redacted since the Education Department did not like the content of the letter. The respondent has been silenced despite approving for full publication Gareem Jackson stating that all responses to the Consultation are available in full in Appendix Ch. No satisfactory response has been received as to why the redaction took place and this undemocratic act is not in the public interest and should be removed with immediate effect.		
424	I also wander how much of the information from the initial objection letters has been passed on to the cabinet members and find it outrageous that you have seen fit to redact large sections of (name deleted) objection letters although she gave you her permission to publish in full. Did you seek permission to redact her letter? Perhaps the information you redacted put the education department in bad light due to the disregard to the Equality Act experienced by (name deleted) and other persons present in those meeting?		
425	I also am of the understanding that a statutory consultation should be fair and transparent and all correspondence heard - therefore I ask why all voices have not been heard thoroughly? I am aware that a letter that was submitted by (name deleted), parts of it were redacted about how the school had been treated and also potentially breached the Equality Act. These may of been ways of the past, But Is this really the way Gwynedd Council conducts its business in modern day?		

426	It is strange that no one present asked why a large section of one of the responses to the consultation had been mysteriously blacked out, demonstrating a lack of curiosity and attention to detail, or perhaps by the 101st letter everyone had already lost interest?		
427	<p>In the responses made by the Council to date they have paid little or any attention to the additional evidence and insights provided by the hundreds of interested parties who have written in to support the continuation of the school. The Council seems not to want to listen to the Community that it serves. As a result I think that the Council and those that work in the Council should be ashamed of the way in which they have conducted what to all intents and purposes is a 'sham process' where the decision is already made.</p> <p>I query why letter 101 has been redacted despite Garem Jackson stating that all responses, where permission was received, were made available in full. To redact this accurate description of events which show the Education Department in bad light is undemocratic. For what reason do the council not want this information published since it is fully relevant to the consultation process that the Council has imposed on Ysgol Abersoch.</p>		
428	also question why (name deleted) letter (respondent 101) has been subject to such significant redaction despite Garem Jackson stating in the Cabinet meeting that all responses, where permission was received, were printed in full. The redacted text is an accurate description of events that occurred as part of this Consultation process, yet the Education Department has silenced this voice, presumably since the content presented them in bad light. The behaviour of the Education Department representatives during the informal consultation process was at times highly disrespectful. In one meeting, handouts laid out at the entry door, were snatched away from attendees who picked them up at the start of the meeting, the presentations were frequently unreadable and we felt that the Head of Education's answers to a number of our questions were patronising in nature. Selectively redacting text which highlights unacceptable practice by Gwynedd Council employees		

	demonstrates a closed, single-minded approach where the council is unable, or unwilling, to accept public criticism.		
429	I was very angry that you redacted letter number 101 who is my daughter, she was voicing her concerns regarding the inappropriate manner in which your meeting was conducted, this serves to show people that not everyone was treated equally and not eligible to give their full input and able to take part in such a meaningful discussion regarding the school. My daughter has several disabilities not all visible and to remove her voice in such a way is a disgrace, especially by an education department.		
430	<p>Before casting their vote, it appears that the Cabinet members are relying on information and opinions, often presented as facts, in summary form prepared by the Education Department, whilst disregarding the detailed case presented by children, parents, governors and the community who are determined to support Ysgol Abersoch.</p> <p>I wonder how many of the Cabinet Members would vote for the closure of a school in their own village or community? Perhaps a visit to Ysgol Abersoch could be arranged before a final decision is made? This would seem a reasonable request, since due to the pandemic, the public have not been able to sit in to observe the Cabinet meetings which would normally have been possible, and it would bring the issues alive for members that have been considering this matter so remotely online</p>		<p>In order to be able to consider the proposal, the Cabinet is receiving a summary of all objections and observations received from children, parents, governors and the community during the objection period (Appendix A).</p> <p>The Cabinet is also aware of the reasons behind the proposal since they approved the commencement of local discussions with Ysgol Abersoch on 15 September 2020, as the main challenges faced by the school were outlined at the time, specifically:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. school numbers are a cause for concern. In September 2020, there were eight full-time pupils and two nursery pupils. ii. the class sizes are small - with 10 pupils being taught in one mixed-age class. iii. projections show 10 pupils in 2021, 12 pupils in 2022, and 12 pupils in 2023. iv. September 2020 data shows that 26 pupils live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area with 21 of them attending other schools. It also shows that five pupils from outside the Abersoch catchment area attend Ysgol Abersoch. v. Ysgol Abersoch receives an additional amount to the usual allocation via the minimum staffing protection policy (which ensures at least a headteacher and teacher at each school, and a headteacher and an assistant in schools with fewer than 15 pupils). The total additional funding for the 2020/21 financial year (based on the numbers in September 2019) was £52,582. vi. The per pupil cost for Ysgol Abersoch during the 2020/21 financial year was £17,404, compared with the county-wide average per pupil cost of £4,198 for the same period. vii. Number of surplus spaces - 76% surplus places at the school (32 in total).
431	We suggest that at least Cabinet members visit Abersoch and Sarn Bach Schools before reaching a final decision. The school and the community are very real as will the heartache and sadness of the proposed closure. It seems completely unfair that such a vitally important decision is made at a virtual meeting by people who have never visited the school or engaged with the staff, children, individuals and community whose future is at risk. The dry report prepared at arm's length by the Education Department does not convey the reality of the situation. Visiting both schools to see the		

	<p>locations and their facilities would undoubtedly be helpful in understanding the situation.</p>		<p>It is not anticipated that visiting Ysgol Abersoch would offer any further clarity to assist the Cabinet members to better understand these challenges.</p>
432	<p>As a resident of Abersoch, I am only too well aware of the widely held view of my village, which is often dismissively “written off” by others, as nothing more than a wealthy English holiday resort. It seems entirely fair and appropriate that a small portion of the funds generated by these second homes could be allocated to support the village school as a vital part of the community that has been severely affected. I am hoping that Cyngor Gwynedd will be making every effort to address the impact of second homes on our village, and they can make a great start right now by listening to local opinion and investing in the young people who wish to continue to learn and grow up in a sustainable Abersoch.</p> <p>The lack of support demonstrated by Plaid Cymru has been really shocking to me, and as a result neither myself nor anyone else in my family will ever again lend our vote to that party. I know that we are not alone in feeling this way.</p> <p>I attach my previous letters which I also wish to be counted as an objection, and I urge the Cabinet members to think again and take this opportunity to make a stand and show support for the children and community of Abersoch, not least the presence of Welsh as a living language in the heart of the village.</p>		<p>The Council Tax Premium on second homes is being earmarked to fund some of the Housing Action Plan's projects. Details of the individual projects and funding sources can be found here: https://democratiaeth.gwynedd.llyw.cymru//documents/s27957/Eitem%206%20-%20Atodiad%20A%20-%20Cynllun%20Gweithredu%20Tai.pdf?LLL=1</p> <p>In December 2020, Gwynedd Council adopted an Action Plan that will invest £77m in over 30 specific plans to tackle the increasing challenge of a lack of suitable housing for the County's residents, including increasing the number of affordable housing available for local people. The Plan will be implemented over the next six years, including projects such as increasing the number of social housing in Gwynedd; purchasing former social housing and private houses to let at an affordable rent to the residents of Gwynedd; developing our own houses to increase the opportunities for Gwynedd residents to compete; refusing applications to remove a local person condition on former "Council houses"; Homebuy Scheme and First Time Buyers' Grants to renovate empty houses. The exact locations of some of these schemes are to be confirmed following an exercise of consulting with communities in order to establish their housing needs.</p> <p>The Council is aware that a set of measures will be required, a number of them currently beyond the direct control of the Council, if we are to be able to achieve genuine fairness for local residents in the field of housing. This Housing Action Plan is one of these measures and allows us to aim to directly act to the best of our abilities in order to attempt to reconcile the current situation. We also acknowledge that we will continue to campaign for further national changes in order to strengthen our ability to operate within Gwynedd and the Council will continue to do so at every possible opportunity in the field of housing, taxation, licensing and planning.</p>

433	<p>It feels like this process has been highly undemocratic from the start. The decision-making lies solely with the elected officials of the Cabinet based on the recommendations of the Education Department. The hundreds of voices (and thousands if you take into account the petition) of the community are selectively ignored, with little more than lip-service paid, hidden behind meeting only the most basic, statutory requirements as outlined in the Schools Organisation Code. It feels like this decision was made long before the consultation process commenced, and the Education Department seems determined to push through with this closure at all costs.</p>	<p>A series of local meetings were held to discuss the challenges facing Ysgol Abersoch and the possible options that would respond to them before reaching an agreement on the option that would be likely to best respond to those challenges.</p> <p>A consultation was undertaken on that proposal, namely to close Ysgol Abersoch and to provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach, between 12 January and 23 February 2021 and, in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, where there was an opportunity for anyone to submit a response to the proposal. Following this statutory consultation period, a report was submitted on the consultation to the Cabinet in order to summarise the matters raised by the consultees and note the Council's response to those matters. After considering this comprehensive report, the Cabinet approved the issuing of a statutory notice on the proposal and held an objection period to give anyone the opportunity to object to the proposal.</p>
434	<p>I sit here wondering what is the point of writing this objection, as so far all other reasoned arguments for keeping this School open have been denied, dismissed, loosely encouraged or argued away based on inaccurate and outdated information.</p> <p>We are told in one breath, that it is the standard of education (although the education standards are good as judged by Estyn), on the other it is the dwindling number of pupils and cost per pupil that has contributed to this proposed closure. However I firmly believe that this so-called democratic process has been a sham from the beginning and the fate of Ysgol Abersoch has been sealed long before. I feel disappointed that the Teachers, Governors and other wonderful people who have massively contributed their precious time were given the false hope and promises by your officers that they would do everything in their powers to help keep this school open.</p>	<p>An objection period was held on the proposal between 25 June and 23 July 2021, where there was an opportunity for anyone to object to the proposal. This report sets out the objections and proposes the Council's response to them for the Cabinet's consideration and final decision on the future of Ysgol Abersoch.</p> <p>It is believed that these actions are clear evidence that the decision has not been made and that we are giving fair consideration to stakeholders' comments before any final decision is made.</p>
435	<p>We believe that misleading statements during the Cabinet discussion meeting meant that the decision was not based on facts. We remain unclear on what basis the decision to close Ysgol Abersoch has been made. Despite our email to the Education Department on 24th June 2021, we have not received a satisfactory answer as to the basis on which the decision to close Ysgol Abersoch was made.</p>	<p>The reasons behind the need to consider the future of Ysgol Abersoch have been clear from the start of local discussions with Ysgol Abersoch, following Cabinet permission to do so on 15 September 2020, as the main challenges facing the school were outlined then, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. school numbers cause concern. In September 2020, there were 8 full-time pupils, and 2 nursery pupils. ii. small class sizes - with 10 pupils taught in one mixed-age class. iii. projections show 10 pupils in 2021, 12 pupils in 2022, and 12 pupils in 2023.

		<p>iv. September 2020 data shows that 26 pupils live in the Abersoch catchment area with 21 attending other schools. It also shows that 5 pupils outside Abersoch catchment area attend Ysgol Abersoch.</p> <p>v. Ysgol Abersoch receives an additional amount to the normal allocation through the minimum staffing protection policy (which guarantees at least a headteacher and teacher in each school, and a headteacher and assistant in schools with fewer than 15 pupils). This additional amount during the financial year 2020/21 (based on September 2019 numbers) was £52,582.</p> <p>vi. The cost per pupil of Ysgol Abersoch in the financial year 2020/21 was £17,404 compared to the County average cost per pupil for the same period of £4,198</p> <p>vii. Number of surplus places - there are 76% surplus places at the school (32 in total)</p> <p>Following consideration of the consultation report, on 15 June 2021, Gwynedd Council's Cabinet supported the recommendation to issue a statutory notice on the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch. The recommendation to approve the proposal came following consideration of a range of options and these options were evaluated in full when comparing main advantages and disadvantages against specific factors.</p> <p>Following consideration of all the responses received during the statutory consultation period, it was considered that the proposal consulted upon continued to offer the best option for the future of Abersoch catchment education. It was concluded that this proposal would be the most appropriate response to the main challenges facing the school for the reasons set out in sections 4.1 and 4.7 of the consultation report – www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p>
436	<p>given the question raised by Ioan Thomas in the Cabinet meeting regarding availability of transport and bus capacity for the children to Ysgol Sarn Bach, the answers to which are clearly laid out in the Education Department's report, has led us to believe that the not all Cabinet members had read neither this report nor previous reports to the Cabinet, where the transport plan is repeatedly described.</p>	<p>The Council notes the comments.</p>

437	<p>Further to the Gwynedd Council Cabinet Meeting held 15th June 2021 we are left</p> <p>wondering where exactly the detailed and careful consideration and discussion about the future of Ysgol Abersoch has taken place. It certainly has not happened in the Cabinet meetings as far as we are concerned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Ioan Thomas' query regarding transport demonstrated that the prepared documents had not actually been read by the member in much detail. · Nia Jeffreys' question regarding the impact on the Welsh language asking for details about what measures Ysgol Sarn Bach will undertake to replicate the relationship between Ysgol Abersoch and its community was not satisfactorily answered. (The truth of the matter is that there will be a negative impact upon the community and the use of Welsh in Abersoch and it is simply not possible for Ysgol Sarn Bach to meaningfully connect with the community of Abersoch in the same way given its location and historical lack of ties with Abersoch.) <p>Clearly the only criteria considered to be relevant to their decision are those presented by the Education Department, whose opinions and views are presented as facts and appear to be accepted unchallenged by the Cabinet members.</p> <p>The Education Department appears to shelter behind the rigid interpretation of the consultation process guidelines, as if robotically following this advice is sufficiently acceptable. We disagree, and wish to say that from our perspective the whole process feels a most unsatisfactory</p>	The Council notes the comments.
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	<p>experience, which seems governed by an unequal balance of power, highly biased in favour of the Council and Education Department. We feel steamrollered, as if our voices have not been heard, and our views are consistently dismissed and ignored.</p>		
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G	Travel and Transport	
438	The school children walk from Ysgol Abersoch and take part in many activities on the beach. It is a delight to see the children so well engaged with their local environment.	The Council notes the comments.
439	Ysgol Abersoch forms in my opinion the centre of the wheel of village life. It allows parents who don't drive easy access as well as a vital meeting point for single parents. It's well documented the benefits of such with regard to family finances and mental health. If the school was to close how might I ask would these single parents who don't drive on low income get the children to a school miles away.	<p>In line with Gwynedd Council's transport policy, learners who receive a primary or secondary education (with the exception of learners with additional learning needs or disabilities), would be expected to walk up to two miles to meet any modes of transport provided by Gwynedd Council along the shortest route.</p> <p>As the route from Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach is considered a dangerous one, transport would be provided free of charge in accordance with the County's school Transport Policy.</p>
440	Ysgol Abersoch is well placed in the centre of the village, enabling easy access to so many natural resources without the burden of prohibitive transport costs, and the pupils even use the economic and environmentally friendly option of the public service bus to attend weekly swimming lessons in Pwllheli.	Should the proposal be implemented, it is not anticipated that any pupil will need to travel an unreasonable distance to reach the education site, in line with the strategy. Ysgol Abersoch is located 1.4 miles from the current Ysgol Sarn Bach site and it is anticipated that the journey would take approximately five minutes each way in a car or bus.
441	Pupils at Ysgol Abersoch walk or cycle to school for their health, social interaction and the environment. Traveling to Sarn Bach adds to an increase in the carbon footprint of transporting them by bus / car - not good for the environment, especially in these days of significant climate change.	Transport would be provided in accordance with the County's school Transport Policy, it is not anticipated that additional costs would be incurred from providing transport to the current Ysgol Abersoch children as the bus already carries pupils from Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach, and we understand that there are a sufficient number of empty seats available on this bus. Consequently, an increase in CO2 emissions is not anticipated.
442	It is very much part of village life and the village children have easy and safe access to the school which is located right in the middle of the village. To attend Sarn Bach school, the proposed alternative, the majority will require transport there and back causing parents considerable inconvenience. The road to Sarn Bach from Abersoch is a busy road and there is no pavement so children will be in danger if they walk to Sarn Bach.	
443	Also please mention that the road to Sarn Bach is too dangerous to walk on and therefore it is virtually impossible for parents to walk their children should they wish to.	
444	To attend Sarn Bach school, the proposed alternative, the majority will require transport there and back causing parents working in the village considerable inconvenience.	

445	Children's education is critical to a child's development and they shouldn't have to travel far to get the vital education that they require.	
446	Local people will be forced to send their children to schools some distance away. Primary age children need to go to school in their own locality. Closure will also deter those people who are wanting to live permanently in Abersoch and raise a family.	
447	I still want to ask why you think it is okay to close a school that children and parents can walk to, it is not environmentally friendly and for some children this daily walk through their community, spending precious time with parents is invaluable.	
448	<p>7.10 Geographical factors - new location</p> <p>The route to Ysgol Sarn Bach is classified as "dangerous" yet the CIAR (Model 4) states "Children can be dropped off in the car park, whether by car or taxi /minibus, and there is a bus stop (public bus service) outside the school boundaries. Therefore, if pupils are less able to walk or cycle, we do not anticipate difficulty in reaching the school." Is Gwynedd Council recommending that children should be walking or cycling to school along a dangerous route? The Schools Organisation Code, Annex C, Community Impact states "proposers might include the following: impact on health and wellbeing e.g. if pupils would be less able to walk or cycle to school". This has not been addressed.</p> <p>Vehicular transport is associated with an environmental impact, is contrary to principles such as "live globally, act locally" and instils a belief from an early age that environmental issues are of no importance.</p>	<p>In line with Gwynedd Council's transport policy, learners who receive primary or secondary education (with the exception of learners with additional learning needs or disabilities), would be expected to walk up to two miles to meet any modes of transport provided by Gwynedd Council along the shortest route. Ysgol Sarn Bach is the catchment schools for pupils between 8 and 11 years old in the Abersoch area. As the route to the school is considered dangerous, the authority already provides free transportation for eligible pupils. A primary school bus is already operational between Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach, and it is anticipated that there would be enough empty seats for the current pupils of Ysgol Abersoch.</p> <p>As a bus already carries key stage 2 pupils from Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach, and we anticipate that there will be enough room on that bus (or a larger bus) for children in the Abersoch catchment area, an increase in CO2 emissions is not foreseen.</p>
449	If you asked me to stay at Abersoch until Botwnnog I would say yes, I would like to go back to the school, I am very sad that I have left the school. I don't like going to school on a bus, sometimes older kids are mean to the little ones and I feel sad about this, I tell the teachers and the bus driver. Once the driver had to stop the bus and wait for the kids to calm down as it was too dangerous for him to drive because of the distraction.	The Council notes the comment. However, It is a matter for the school and the bus company to ensure that children behave appropriately on the bus. We trust that the bad behaviour came to an end following raising the issue with the school and bus driver.

450	<p>The walking paths marked on the map are not all in frequent use, and do not provide a complete, safe walking route to the school from Abersoch. The roads do not have pavements. Gwynedd Council incorrectly understands the location of Ysgol Sarn Bach. We do not believe it to be located in Ty Newydd Farm.</p>	<p>The Council notes the comments regarding the footpaths to the alternative school.</p> <p>In line with Gwynedd Council's transport policy, learners who receive a primary or secondary education (with the exception of learners with additional learning needs or disabilities), would be expected to walk up to two miles to meet any modes of transport provided by Gwynedd Council along the shortest route.</p> <p>As the route from Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach is considered dangerous, the authority already provides free transportation for some eligible pupils. A primary school bus is already operational between Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach, and it is anticipated that there would be enough empty seats for the current pupils of Ysgol Abersoch.</p> <p>As a bus already carries key stage 2 pupils from Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach, and we anticipate that there will be enough room on that bus (or a larger bus) for children in the Abersoch catchment area, an increase in CO2 emissions is not foreseen.</p>
451	<p>We do not believe Ysgol Sarn Bach to have a carpark as such. There is a small car parking area on the side of the road where teaching staff park, but the number of spaces is limited. The arrangements to drop and collect children require parents to park on the verge/roadside; car doors must either open straight onto the road or into a dip in the verge. This is dangerous.</p>	<p>The Council notes the comment.</p> <p>Children from Abersoch will be offered transport to Ysgol Sarn Bach if the proposal is realised, in accordance with Gwynedd Council's transport policy.</p>
452	<p>At this stage I feel that you need to elaborate more on the transport issues, I mentioned this to Gwern at the Zoom meeting on the 3rd February. In your report you have included a sum of £14,000 next to transport, I asked Gwern if this figure was realistic, I also asked if Gwynedd council had compiled a survey asking all parents of Ysgol Sarn Bach if they would be taking Gwynedd Council up on their free transport? Gwern said 'the school would need to do this in September', Is September not too late to be asking this question? Consequently I have taken it upon myself to ask some parents who currently drive their children to school as they cannot afford to pay for the bus. Of the parents that I have asked so far all said Yes they would then send them on the bus.</p>	<p>The Council notes the comments.</p> <p>A primary school bus is already operational between Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach, and it is anticipated that there would be enough empty seats for the current pupils of Ysgol Abersoch - therefore, no additional transport costs are anticipated from implementing the proposal.</p> <p>However, if transport would need to be provided for all pupils in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area, including those pupils already attending Ysgol Sarn Bach, then there would be a need to adapt the current transport arrangements at Ysgol Sarn Bach. This could mean that a purposeful bus (morning and afternoon) may be needed for the pupils of Ysgol Sarn Bach, at an additional cost of approximately £14,000 per annum and, consequently, the net savings anticipated are likely to be £96,062 per annum.</p>

	<p>Pre covid the bus to Sarn Bach was a public service bus, however, I feel this to be inappropriate and have concerns with young children getting on to a bus with members of the public.</p> <p>I think the cost of the transport needs to be looked into further as I think the figure of £14,000 is unrealistic and would welcome to see the evidence of how you have reached this sum. Also if the projection figures are inaccurate or perhaps pupil numbers fluctuate, or if the bus is full, or for instance two more children join Ysgol Sarn Bach, will you provide another bus? These situations need to be accounted for and the public have a right to know the costs involved.</p>	<p>Should the proposal be implemented, we will arrange a survey with the parents/guardians of children who wish to transfer to Ysgol Sarn Bach in order to ascertain how many pupils will require free transportation from Abersoch once any decision has been made. This will give the Authority definitive numbers to decide whether a larger bus would be needed.</p> <p>Pre-Covid, the public service bus which used to take children to Ysgol Sarn Bach in the morning, was successful and there were no concerns or incidents. Should the morning arrangements change to use a purposeful school bus, rather than public transport, the Authority would face additional costs of approximately £14,000 per annum.</p>
453	Can you also mention the transport costs as previously asked.	The current cost of transporting pupils from Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach is £16,500. If the current arrangements would need to be amended, it is estimated that a 49-seater bus would be needed, to provide transport for all pupils in Reception to Year 6 in the catchment area, at a cost of £30,500. Therefore, this would lead to a higher cost of £14,000.
454	If you asked me to stay at Abersoch until Botwnnog I would say yes, I would like to go back to the school, I am very sad that I have left the school. I don't like going to school on a bus, sometimes older kids are mean to the little ones and I feel sad about this, I tell the teachers and the bus driver. Once the driver had to stop the bus and wait for the kids to calm down as it was too dangerous for him to drive because of the distraction.	The Council notes the comment. However, it is a matter for the school and bus company to manage behaviour on the buses and we assume that this unfortunate matter has been resolved after informing the teachers and bus driver.
455	7.10.1 Proposed Travel and Transportation Arrangements "There would be no additional costs associated with providing transport for the current 8 pupils of Ysgol Abersoch (Reception-Yr.3) as well as pupils from the Abersoch catchment area that already attend Ysgol Sarn Bach. It is understood that a bus already transports pupils from Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach, and we understand that there would be sufficient empty seats on the bus for the current pupils at Ysgol Abersoch. It could be argued that implementing the proposal would make more cost effective use of the existing transport arrangements for transporting pupils to Ysgol Sarn Bach." "The additional costs of transport would be approximately £14,000 per year if all pupils in the current Ysgol Abersoch catchment area chose to attend Ysgol Sarn Bach in the future, and required transport."	<p>A primary school bus is already operational between Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach, and it is anticipated that there would be enough empty seats for the current pupils of Ysgol Abersoch - therefore, no additional transport costs are anticipated from implementing the proposal.</p> <p>If transport would need to be provided for all pupils in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area, then there would be a need to adapt the current transport arrangements at Ysgol Sarn Bach. This could mean that a purposeful bus (morning and afternoon) may be needed for the pupils of Ysgol Sarn Bach, at an additional cost of approximately £14,000 per annum and, consequently, the net savings anticipated are likely to be £96,062 per annum.</p> <p>Should the proposal be implemented, we will arrange a survey with the parents/guardians of children who wish to transfer to Ysgol Sarn Bach in order to ascertain how many pupils will</p>

	<p>Is there an additional transport cost or not? These two points are contrary to each other.</p> <p>On what basis has the cost of £14,000 pa been estimated and is this representative?</p> <p>Has Gwynedd Council ascertained how many children will need bus transport to Ysgol Sarn Bach, considering the Abersoch children aged 3 - 8 who currently attend Ysgol Sarn Bach out of catchment? For school trips and leisure centre outings - how many buses would Ysgol Sarn Bach need if Ysgol Abersoch were to close, and what are these costs? Gwynedd Council appears to attempt to justify its own reasoning behind its proposal by suggesting that it would make more cost-effective use of transport arrangements.</p> <p>We have also repeatedly requested Gwynedd Council provide information on what proportion of children at Ysgol Sarn Bach who attend Ysgol Sarn Bach out of catchment (Nursery to Year 3) receive public transport for free when they are obliged to pay for it. We have reason to understand that a number of children in these years catch the bus at no charge, and the cost to Gwynedd Council of providing this service. This may influence others to follow when it appears there is no recourse for flouting the rules.</p>	<p>require free transportation from Abersoch once any decision has been made. This will give the Authority definitive numbers to decide whether a larger bus would be needed.</p> <p>Pre-Covid, the public service bus which used to take children to Ysgol Sarn Bach in the morning, was successful and there were no concerns or incidents. Should the morning arrangements change to use a purposeful school bus, rather than public transport, the Authority would face additional costs of approximately £14,000 per annum.</p> <p>The current cost of transporting pupils from Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach is £16,500. If the current arrangements would need to be amended, it is estimated that a 49-seater bus would be needed, to provide transport for all pupils in Reception to Year 6 in the catchment area, at a cost of £30,500. Therefore, this would lead to a higher cost of £14,000.</p> <p>As part of the Empty Seats Scheme, the Council is willing to consider applications from learners who attend a school (or school site) other than the catchment area school (or school site) to take advantage of any empty seats on contracted vehicles by paying the current out-of-catchment fee. Taking advantage of the scheme is subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The availability of empty seats - The vehicle not having to divert from its usual route - No additional costs to the Council - Paying the current fee for empty seats.
456	<p>5.1. Costs</p> <p>An extra cost of transporting the children of Ysgol Abersoch to and from Ysgol Sarn Bach has been estimated at £ 14,000 per year by the Education Department. Again, the Council recognizes that this may be an underestimate, given that many Abersoch children aged three to eight already attend Ysgol Sarn Bach and that the cost of transporting these children should also be included in the final amount.</p>	<p>All learners who applied for transportation would have paid for an empty seats scheme to travel on the designated school bus. Between 3 and 6 learners have taken advantage of this scheme since 2017.</p>
457	<p>Whilst at this meeting we also posed the question 'are all the children who are under eight and live in Abersoch but attend Ysgol Sarn Bach paying for their bus pass?' You said that you would look into this and get back to us on this point. I am still unaware of the answer, therefore, as your tables throughout your consultation process revert back to 2017, please can you provide me with the following information: If all bus passes from 2017 until the present day have been paid in full for each pupil under 8years old using the bus service? We also highlighted that if this was indeed the case that some children</p>	

	might not have paid for bus passes that should have and therefore we needed to be made aware of this with immediate effect as this facilitates children to bypass the catchment area policy and go against your own policies.	
458	Looking at local nursery provision, the dosbarth meithrin at Ysgol Sarn Bach does not allow children below the age of 5 to travel on its bus so families would need to have their own transport in order to send their young children which is not possible for many families as this often implies a 2+ car family.	The Council notes the comments. Gwynedd Council provides free transport for learners who receive primary education and who live 2 or more miles from the school in their catchment area, or the closest school (not including nursery pupils).
459	5.3. Admission for "Nursery Year" Children A public transport timetable restriction means that it is almost impossible for Nursery children, who come to school between nine and 11 am, to be able to attend without personal transport.	In accordance with the Gwynedd transport policy, it is the responsibility of parents to make transportation arrangements for nursery age pupils.
460	MODEL 4 – CLOSE YSGOL ABERSOCH AND OFFER PUPILS A PLACE AT AN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL Implications of the change on public transport provisions This is highly subjective and should be a negative. How will children without access to private transport be able to attend the Nursery year, 9-11am, and have no car? Public transport services are not a workable option: Service bus times: Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach 08.40 - 08.46, next bus Ysgol Sarn Bach to Abersoch 10.00 - 10.09. Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach 10.52 - 10.58, next bus Ysgol Sarn Bach to Abersoch at 10.58 - 12.36 (1hr 38 minutes), or Ysgol Sarn Bach to Abersoch 12.50 - 12.59. The impact would be that these children would be excluded from Nursery, young families may be less likely to move into the community.	
461	I found it alarming in my Zoom meeting when I asked what provisions you had put in place regarding children aged 3 to 5 who would attend school for two hours? These children learn vital skills and promote learning through play using the Medium of Welsh (which for some is the first time they have heard or used the language), to be able to get to school, if their parents have no means of transport. Gwern said that it is not a statutory requirement, just because that is the case does not make it acceptable. I see no mention of this in your report and I feel	The Council notes the comments. Gwynedd Council provides free transport for learners who receive primary education and who live 2 or more miles from the school in their catchment area, or the closest school (not including nursery pupils).

	<p>this needs to be made transparent, some families may lose this lifeline and I feel it is more important during this time of uncertainty for children to go to school, this may have a very negative impact on the mental health of the parents and children. Has the Council looked into this matter and addressed parents whose children should require the two hours of school and explained the issues surrounding this? Please can you provide further information and advice as to how you will achieve this?</p>		<p>In accordance with the Gwynedd transport policy, it is the responsibility of parents to make transportation arrangements for nursery age pupils.</p>
462	<p>Equality Assessment Impact Report Ysgol Abersoch Age We disagree with this statement. Younger children ages 3 - 4 in the Nursery will be excluded if they do not have access to private transport.</p>		
463	<p>I previously asked you about the children who are aged five and under who attend the school for two hours in the morning. Some parents do not drive and are unable to get them to Ysgol Sarn Bach. Gwern mentioned in a Zoom meeting that the children would not be allowed to use the public transport, nor would any parent want to send their children under five on the school bus alone. Without a mode of transport you are closing their early years education, you are taking away a child's right to their education, I think you need to mention more of this in your report.</p>		

H	Effects on learners		
464	Children will suffer if Ysgol Abersoch is to close as they will have to start all over again at a new school. Despite the fact that some children feel comfortable at a new school within a few weeks, others need more time to adapt. Is there a real need to force these Young children to feel scared and anxious?		<p>The Councils notes the comments, and acknowledges that this period is one of uncertainty that could lead to stress and impact on learners.</p> <p>The Council is of the opinion that the option of closing Ysgol Abersoch and offering a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach would mean that we would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduce the number of surplus places within the schools - Offering experiences for pupils to socialise and collaborate with peers on a daily basis - Educating the children in more suitably-sized classes - Reconciling the cost per pupil range for all pupils in the County - Ensuring that the children transfer only once in their primary and secondary education, rather than twice
465	I object for the closure of the school in Abersoch - Sarn Bach . What are the poor children going to do? So unfair. Please rethink your decision before shutting this school.		
466	<p>The children should be your main concern here, and I see no evidence to show from your report that the children of Ysgol Abersoch have been put first. Why remove them from a school that they love, where they have exceptional education and are supported throughout a community, where everyone knows their names.</p> <p>I think you should hold this school up as a beacon of hope, you should be proud of this school, you should work with it, as the Council is doing with the school in Conwy with 10/12 pupils.</p>		<p>The alternative school also offers an education of equivalent standard at least, and provides pupils with more opportunities for collaborating and socialising with their peers, and enables the pupils to gain a range of curricular and extracurricular experiences.</p> <p>If the proposal were to be implemented, the Authority notes the intention to make every effort to assist the learners to settle at their new school.</p>

I	Staff	
467	<p>It will not just be the children that will suffer. What about the teachers? Not only are you taking away their school, but also jobs, jobs that are essential in paying bills and living. Have you considered the impact this could cause on mental health and money worries?</p>	<p>The Council notes the comment.</p> <p>Should the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch be implemented, it is anticipated that the staffing implications will lead to redundancies as the posts will end when the school closes. A consultation was held with staff and Union representatives specifically as part of the statutory consultation period. Any redundancies arising as a result of the proposal will be required to comply with the relevant employment law and the Gwynedd Redundancy scheme. Clear and open communication with staff will be a core part of the implementation of any proposal.</p> <p>During the consultation, virtual drop-in sessions were held where arrangements could be made for staff from the Council's Human Resources Service to be in attendance, if any member of staff wishes to discuss his/her situation. Staff were informed that they were welcome to contact the Human Resources service directly if they wished to have one-to-one discussions. A support package will be offered, including training, if appropriate, to all staff affected by the proposal.</p>

J	Nearby Schools																																																											
468	<p>I wish to voice my concerns over the fact that Gwynedd Council now intends on closing Ysgol Abersoch and loosing a School that is so important to a community.</p> <p>I am of the opinion that the Council have jumped in too quickly to try and reduce very small costs, being the cost of maintaining Ysgol Abersoch without considering the local needs.</p> <p>Plans are underway to provide new houses on the Penrhos Polish site that house over 70-100 units over the next 3-4 years which will be affordable housing for local people and therefore local children/ Ysgol Llanbedrog is already over its capacity and Abersoch should be used more effectively to provide for the educational community. Building more houses in Penrhos will demand a local education and therefore I believe that the Council should consider this before closing a school and regret it further down the line.</p>		<p>The Council notes the comments.</p> <p>The table below shows how many pupils attend catchment area and out-of-catchment schools in Ysgol Abersoch, Ysgol Sarn Bach and nearby schools.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" rowspan="2"></th> <th colspan="5">Home catchment area (September 2020)</th> <th rowspan="2">Total School (N-Yr6) * (N-Yr 3 for Abersoch School)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Abersoch</th> <th>Sarn Bach</th> <th>Llanbedrog</th> <th>Foel Gron</th> <th>Other</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <th rowspan="5">Attending School... (September 2020)</th> <th>Abersoch</th> <td>5</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>4</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <th>Sarn Bach</th> <td>9</td> <td>28</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>9</td> <td>48</td> </tr> <tr> <th>Llanbedrog</th> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> <td>58</td> <td>15</td> <td>17</td> <td>102</td> </tr> <tr> <th>Foel Gron</th> <td>2</td> <td>4</td> <td>4</td> <td>24</td> <td>9</td> <td>43</td> </tr> <tr> <th>Other</th> <td>4</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2">Total</th> <td>26</td> <td>41</td> <td>64</td> <td>42</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><small>Source: September 2020 School Census</small></p>			Home catchment area (September 2020)					Total School (N-Yr6) * (N-Yr 3 for Abersoch School)	Abersoch	Sarn Bach	Llanbedrog	Foel Gron	Other	Attending School... (September 2020)	Abersoch	5	1	-	-	4	10	Sarn Bach	9	28	-	2	9	48	Llanbedrog	6	6	58	15	17	102	Foel Gron	2	4	4	24	9	43	Other	4	2	2	1			Total		26	41	64	42		
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469	<p>Large housing developments are in the pipeline, one in Penrhos is ongoing - where will these Children go to? some will inevitably go to oversubscribed Llanbedrog - I wonder if you have considered what will be the knock effect of this?</p>																																																											
470	<p>I have already responded to some of the points and won't repeat myself but I am worried about both nearby school's Ysgol Llanbedrog and Ysgol Sarn Bach, capacities. There is mention of Ysgol Abersoch's capacity of 32 yet the school has never reached this number?</p>																																																											
471	<p>I do not believe that Ysgol Sarn Bach's building is suitable in terms of layout to increase the number of pupils.</p>		<p>The Authority is of the opinion that the situation regarding numbers at Ysgol Llanbedrog is not relevant to the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and offer a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach, for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In September 2020, 26 (81%) of pupils (3-8 years) in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area attended out-of-catchment schools - only six of those pupils attended Ysgol Llanbedrog. In September 2020, only 5 (20%) of pupils from the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area chose to attend the school. The remainder of the school's pupils (5, namely 50% of the school's numbers), came from outside the school's catchment area. 																																																									

			<p>With 21 surplus places (and four surplus places in the Nursery), Ysgol Sarn Bach has sufficient capacity for the number of pupils from Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach, currently and for the next five years.</p> <p>In accordance with the School Admissions Code, the Authority will comply with the parents' choice until the school's admission number has been reached. The admission number reflects a school's capacity to admit children based on the school's surface area, calculated using a Welsh Government formula.</p> <p>It is noted that the Penrhos Polish site falls within the catchment area of Ysgol Gynradd Llanbedrog so any children in the new houses would be offered a place at that school.</p>
472	There is not a single child living in Sarn Bach itself. Many of the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach are live outside the catchment area as well, not to mention those that transferred at eight years old from Ysgol Abersoch.		A table in section 5.1 of the consultation document notes the location of the homes of Ysgol Abersoch pupils and nearby schools, including Ysgol Llanbedrog and Ysgol Sarn Bach.
473	Why was the number of out-of-catchment area children at Ysgol Llanbedrog not mentioned? Many of them are from Aber-soch.		<p>In September 2020, 20 out of 48 pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach lived outside the catchment area. 6 pupils at Ysgol Llanbedrog (102) lived in the catchment area of Ysgol Abersoch.</p> <p>It should be noted that Ysgol Sarn Bach already admits pupils from the Abersoch area in the September following their eighth birthday (the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area relates to the Ysgol Sarn Bach catchment area for pupils in Years 4 - 6). If the proposal is implemented, the catchment area of Ysgol Sarn Bach would be adapted to include the area of the existing school, as well as the existing catchment area of Ysgol Abersoch.</p>
474	4.2 Inappropriate and incorrect comparisons. Recognizing that a percentage of Abersoch pupils attend schools outside their catchment area, we disagree that this figure can be as high as 81% as many of the children legally transferred to		

	Ysgol Sarn Bach after Year 3. This is like a black and white situation and is misleading and inaccurate.		The table below shows how many pupils attend catchment area and out-of-catchment schools in Ysgol Abersoch, Ysgol Sarn Bach and nearby schools.																																																									
475	This is also the case for Ysgol Sarn Bach; 15 out of 42 home catchment area pupils attend Ysgol Llanbedrog. This is not unusual due to the WG parental choice policy.																																																											
476	This table is wholly misleading. Ysgol Abersoch only takes pupils up to Year 3, therefore the numbers by default are biased against the school. Several of the Ysgol Abersoch pupils attending Ysgol Sarn Bach will be attending since they have already transferred in year 4. The comparisons are inappropriate and compare apples with pears. It would be more appropriate to compare all 3-8 year olds.																																																											
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477	Ysgol Sarn Bach catchment area extended Given Welsh Government policy, the relevance of catchment areas is questionable since parents have free choice of schools, even if a non-catchment area school is over-capacity, as exemplified by Ysgol Llanbedrog.		The Authority operates a catchment area policy and, normally, pupils attend the school in the catchment area where they live, and where the Authority will have made provisions in terms of space, staffing and other resources including school transport. Every school has a defined catchment area, and maps of the																																																									

			boundaries are and may be examined in the Education Office or at the individual schools. The Authority will comply with the parents' choice until the admission number of the school has been reached. The admission number reflects a school's capacity to admit children based on the school's surface area, calculated using a Welsh Government formula.
478	<i>Again, Ysgol Llanbedrog's numbers are oversubscribed by over 20%, with 102 children attending compared to its capacity of 83, with 43% of the pupils attending it being out of catchment area. We do not believe that Gwynedd Council follows the School Organization Code or its own policies regarding admission, maximum class sizes of 20 pupils for children of mixed age classes or, in some cases, the Council's own legal level of 30 in a class</i>		Gwynedd Council's Education Authority is the Admissions Authority for community schools and those under voluntary control, and admission to those schools is in accordance with the County's Schools Admissions Policy. The admissions policy corresponds to the requirements of Welsh Government's School Admissions Code.
479	We question why Gwynedd Council allows Ysgol Llanbedrog to continue to accept children from out of catchment when they are already above capacity if there is surplus elsewhere.		
480	In addition Ysgol Llanbedrog is has continued to accept children in excess of its capacity limits and is education children in class sized of more than 20 for mixed-age class. Both these factors contravene Gwynedd Council's "Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd" position. It seems that the Education Department and Ysgol Llanbedrog has allowed this over-subscription to occur to the potential detriment of the education of the Ysgol Llanbedrog pupils whilst threatening the continuation of other schools in the catchment area. This situation needs to be corrected.		The School Admissions Code notes: "LAs must not suggest that parents should express a preference for the school in whose catchment area they live, or that they have been allocated a place at that school before they have expressed a preference. Although they should explain the possible consequences of not doing so, LAs must make it clear that parents are allowed to express a preference for any school."
481	My daughter has asked why you have allowed 20% over capacity to attend a school only 2 miles away, allowing children from the village of Abersoch to move from their catchment area to attend a school that is already over capacity, whilst you knew Ysgol Abersoch had surplus spaces. This seems to contravene your own policies, so please can you answer my 8 year old child and explain how this has happened?		In accordance with the School Admissions Code, the Authority will comply with the parents' choice until the school's admission number has been reached. The admission number reflects a school's capacity to admit children based on the school's surface area, calculated using a Welsh Government formula.
482	The act states there is a need to "balance short term needs against the ability to meet long term needs" and "deploy their resources to prevent problems from getting worse or from occurring in the first place". Can Gwynedd Council comment on the significance of going over capacity in Ysgol Llanbedrog and subsequent problems for neighbouring schools? The Future Generations Commissioner has stated that consideration should be given to the long-term trends i.e. 25-50 years into the future.		The table below shows how many pupils attend catchment area and out-of-catchment schools in Ysgol Abersoch, Ysgol Sarn Bach and nearby schools (Section 5.1 in the consultation document).
483	The report highlights a very worrying situation in Ysgol Llanbedrog, where we see pupil numbers well over school capacity, leading to a situation where children from that village are not able to attend their own village school.		

484	The Education Department places great emphasis on data of surplus places and a school's capacity, which I understand is calculated using a formula. This appears to have been completely disregarded in the case of Ysgol Llanbedrog, and I would suggest this could lead to an impact upon pupil learning outcomes, not to mention possible health and safety issues of over-crowding?																																																											
485	Gwynedd Council's failure to maintain its own published capacity and parental choice policies. The fact that the Education Department has allowed Ysgol Llanbedrog to admit more than 20% of its capacity, with 43% of its pupils from outside the catchment area where capacity is available in neighboring schools is an example of this. The Education Department, to serve its own need, is clearly selective in which of its policies it chooses to implement and is therefore directly accountable for the situation in which we find ourselves. I would expect that, in the public interest, the Cabinet will hold the Education Department to account for its failure to follow its own written policies.		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" rowspan="2"></th> <th colspan="5">Home catchment area (September 2020)</th> <th rowspan="2">Total School (N-Yr6) * (N-Yr 3 for Abersoch School)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Abersoch</th> <th>Sarn Bach</th> <th>Llanbedrog</th> <th>Foel Gron</th> <th>Other</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <th rowspan="5">Attending School... (September 2020)</th> <th>Abersoch</th> <td>5</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>4</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <th>Sarn Bach</th> <td>9</td> <td>28</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>9</td> <td>48</td> </tr> <tr> <th>Llanbedrog</th> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> <td>58</td> <td>15</td> <td>17</td> <td>102</td> </tr> <tr> <th>Foel Gron</th> <td>2</td> <td>4</td> <td>4</td> <td>24</td> <td>9</td> <td>43</td> </tr> <tr> <th>Other</th> <td>4</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2">Total</th> <td>26</td> <td>41</td> <td>64</td> <td>42</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: September 2020 School Census</p>			Home catchment area (September 2020)					Total School (N-Yr6) * (N-Yr 3 for Abersoch School)	Abersoch	Sarn Bach	Llanbedrog	Foel Gron	Other	Attending School... (September 2020)	Abersoch	5	1	-	-	4	10	Sarn Bach	9	28	-	2	9	48	Llanbedrog	6	6	58	15	17	102	Foel Gron	2	4	4	24	9	43	Other	4	2	2	1			Total		26	41	64	42		
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486	Ysgol Abersoch is, as you say in your consultation document, under subscribed, but it is worth noting the Ysgol Llanbedrog is over subscribed. There are a fare number of children in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area attending Llanbedrog, I would have to ask the Council, how can they allow a neighbouring village school to be over subscribed and yet you are doing your best to close Ysgol Abersoch, when the over capacity at Llanbedrog could be easily be taken up by Abersoch?. Is it not also contravening Health and Safety regulations to have too many children in a school which has a specific capacity for the safety of all who attend?		<p>The Authority is of the opinion that the situation regarding numbers at Ysgol Llanbedrog is not relevant to the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and offer a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach, for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In September 2020, 26 (81%) of pupils (3-8 years) in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area attended out-of-catchment schools - only 6 of those pupils attended Ysgol Llanbedrog. • In September 2020, only 5 (20%) of pupils from the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area chose to attend the school. The remainder of the school's pupils (5, namely 50% of the school's numbers), came from outside the school's catchment area. 																																																									
487	<p>Whilst reading the Consultation's background pack, I was shocked by the numbers of Ysgol Llanbedrog (Appendix 4). Through some means, it is allowed to accept fourteen children over the capacity! Fourteen that should be dispersed between nearby schools! How has the Education Department allowed this? How is this possible? How was this allowed?</p> <p>From the 'pupil projections' (figure 5.2) and the quote underneath: "To the contrary, Ysgol Llanbedrog numbers have increased 15% in the same period" – the same 15% that the school is over its capacity! I don't know how these projections are calculated but I sincerely hope that you are not trying to close a school on the count of less than 10 children. I understand that there are a number of children under the school age that attend the cylch – eleven apparently. If Ysgol Llanbedrog hadn't been allowed to be over its capacity, Ysgol Abersoch would probably not be in a situation where it faces its closure.</p>		<p>With 21 surplus places (and four surplus places in the Nursery), Ysgol Sarn Bach has sufficient capacity for the number of pupils from Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach, currently and for the next five years.</p>																																																									

488	It's come to our attention as a group that ysgol llanbedrog who are already thriving as a school have kids almost on a waiting list which I'm sure could be diluted to Abersoch to keep more pupils in the school,		<p>Gwynedd Council's Education Authority is the Admissions Authority for community schools and those under voluntary control, and admission to those schools is in accordance with the County's Schools Admissions Policy. The admissions policy corresponds to the requirements of Welsh Government's School Admissions Code.</p> <p>The School Admissions Code notes: "LAs must not suggest that parents should express a preference for the school in whose catchment area they live, or that they have been allocated a place at that school before they have expressed a preference. Although they should explain the possible consequences of not doing so, LAs must make it clear that parents are allowed to express a preference for any school."</p> <p>In accordance with the School Admissions Code, the Authority will comply with the parents' choice until the school's admission number has been reached. The admission number reflects a school's capacity to admit children based on the school's surface area, calculated using a Welsh Government formula.</p> <p>The Authority is not of the opinion that the situation regarding numbers at Ysgol Llanbedrog is relevant to the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and offer a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach.</p> <p>With 21 surplus places (and four surplus places in the Nursery), Ysgol Sarn Bach has sufficient capacity for the number of pupils from Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach, currently and for the next five years.</p> <p>There is no intention to build an extension to Ysgol Llanbedrog as a part of the proposal. For clarity, the proposal is to close Ysgol Abersoch, and offer a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach.</p>
489	It is also difficult to understand why the Ysgol Llanbedrog over-capacity issue is brushed aside by the Education Department. In the Cabinet meeting (15 th June), Garem Jackson stated that the Council policy does not allow the promotion of one school over the other. Yet they have allowed Ysgol Llanbedrog to go significantly over-capacity (>20%). This is contrary to the Gwynedd Council 'Information For Parents 2021 / 2022' which states that "The Authority will comply with parental preference until the school's admission number has been attained". Surely this is part and parcel of the present conundrum and cannot be so easily dismissed?		
490	Failing to question why numbers are allowed to go over capacity at Ysgol Llanbedrog should be of greater importance, especially when you was initially so keen to push your federalisation plans with this school.		
491	It is sadly no secret that the next nearest school in Llanbedrog is dangerously oversubscribed with now more than 102 pupils.		
492	In your report you disregarded the fact that Ysgol Llanbedrog is running at 20% over capacity, why would you not want to focus more on this point? Who has allowed this to happen?		
493	It is felt that it is against the grain to build more space at Ysgol Llanbedrog, as a member of the Education Department suggested at an informal meeting, when there is a suitable capacity school in Abersoch.		

			<p>By including the Nursery capacity and numbers for both schools, Ysgol Abersoch has 32 (75%) surplus places and Ysgol Sarn Bach has 25 (34%) surplus places. With 21 surplus places (and four surplus places in the Nursery), Ysgol Sarn Bach has sufficient capacity for the number of pupils from Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach, currently and for the next five years.</p> <p>In September 2020, between Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach, there are 47 (47%) surplus places in the area. Should the proposal be realised, it is anticipated that approximately 19 (29%) of surplus places (Reception - Yr.6) would remain in the alternative school.</p>
494	The Welsh Government's parental choice policy, and Gwynedd Council's failure to adhere to its own policies, led to the situation of one school being over-capacity and yet another struggling to remain open showing that the criteria for Catchment Review.		<p>Gwynedd Council's Education Authority is the Admissions Authority for community schools and those under voluntary control, and admission to those schools is in accordance with the County's Schools Admissions Policy. The admissions policy corresponds to the requirements of Welsh Government's School Admissions Code.</p> <p>The School Admissions Code notes: "LAs must not suggest that parents should express a preference for the school in whose catchment area they live, or that they have been allocated a place at that school before they have expressed a preference. Although they should explain the possible consequences of not doing so, LAs must make it clear that parents are allowed to express a preference for any school."</p> <p>In accordance with the School Admissions Code, the Authority will comply with the parents' choice until the school's admission number has been reached. The admission number reflects a school's capacity to admit children based on the school's surface area, calculated using a Welsh Government formula.</p> <p>Gwynedd Council's Cabinet, at its meeting on 17 September 2019, permitted the Education Department to hold formal</p>
495	The council states that the over-capacity situation at Ysgol Llanbedrog has no bearing on this decision yet this makes no sense and is another attempt to deflect attention away from their failure to follow their own class sizes policies as laid out in their 'Excellent Primary Education for children in Gwynedd' policy. Furthermore, the Education Department's explanation for not undertaking a Catchment Area Review, when there are oversubscription problems at Ysgol Llanbedrog which is grounds for a Catchment Area review, is not satisfactory.		
496	decisions (or lack of decisions) in public policy by Local and Central Government have contributed to the problems, therefore there is a special responsibility to look for all possible solutions.		
497	If pupil numbers were better managed across the four schools in the catchment area, then class sizes of 12-20 would be more common at all the schools to the benefit of all pupils in the catchment. The continuation of classes at Ysgol Abersoch is required to meet this aim at all the schools in the catchment. In addition, it is likely that the average cost per pupil in the catchment area would then be more in line with educational norms.		

		<p>discussions with the governing body and other relevant stakeholders of Ysgol Abersoch to enable the formulation of a range of potential options relating to the school's future, as a result of concerns regarding pupil numbers at the school. Following the Cabinet's decision on 17 September 2019, a School Review Panel (PAY) was established to discuss the school's position, and to consider possible options with the school's stakeholders. During the meetings, a number of options were considered for primary education in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area in order to ensure a sustainable provision for the future, and respond specifically to the main challenges facing the school.</p> <p>A record of the meeting can be seen on our website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p>
498	There is a possibility that the pupils could transfer to schools other than Ysgol Sarn Bach, as the choice is available to parents.	The Council notes the comment.
499	Why have parents the right to send their children to a school outside of their catchment area when those schools are over their capacities? This makes no sense.	<p>Gwynedd Council's Education Authority is the Admissions Authority for community schools and those under voluntary control, and admission to those schools is in accordance with the County's Schools Admissions Policy. The admissions policy corresponds to the requirements of the Schools Admissions Policy, Welsh Government.</p> <p>The School Admissions Code notes: "LAs must not suggest that parents should express a preference for the school in whose catchment area they live, or that they have been allocated a place at that school before they have expressed a preference. Although they should explain the possible consequences of not doing so, LAs must make it clear that parents are allowed to express a preference for any school."</p> <p>In accordance with the School Admissions Code, the Authority will comply with the parents' choice until the school's admission number has been reached. The admission number reflects a</p>
500	<p>I understand that the reason behind the closure is the low numbers and that it is unsustainable, but I think there are so many other options you should consider before coming to the rushed decision to close the school.</p> <p>If the numbers are low at ysgol abersoch, the most sensible thing would probably be investigating into the reasons why so many parents choose not to send their children to school. Let's set up a survey to understand their reasons.</p> <p>Having understood the reasons I suggest an action plan to increase the numbers in the school.</p>	
501	I am also aware that Ysgol Llanbedrog is over its capacity of 19 pupils. I am also aware that there are at least 10 newborns in Abersoch village this year. The fact that Llanbedrog is over capacity suggests that it is under great pressure and ysgol Abersoch's closure will have a detrimental effect on the school. Surely this is a strong case for keeping the school open.	
502	As a parent of children that have attended the school since 2008, one thing stands out to me and I see fault with the Council's policy / rules here is how easy it is for parents to move their children from one school to another. This is not permitted in England. Since 2009 this has happened a number of times at Ysgol Abersoch, without strong / good explanation, as one went along others	

	followed suit (like sheep!!!). If this had not been allowed, school pupil figures at Ysgol Abersoch would be very strong.		school's capacity to admit children based on the school's surface area, calculated using a Welsh Government formula.
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K	Financial Matters	
503	The financial savings are only a tiny amount.	
504	<p>Would it be possible for Gwynedd Council to provide a detailed analysis of costs that you have mentioned briefly in your report. Everything else seems to have more emphasis and detail than this matter, please can you elaborate as I feel that you need to be more transparent on areas such as: - Transport - Staffing - Redundancies - Costs for the process of the consultation to date; - First class stamps x 2 to all pupils of Sarn Bach, then the delivery of letters from Sarn Bach to yourselves? - Mr Arwel Jones- interviewer - Counseling for the children should they need it. - Public Meetings that Gwynedd Council hosted - Petrol and mileage expenses - Translator for meetings - Will the children be given a uniform Grant? (if they change schools, the uniforms bought will be redundant).</p>	<p>In the 2020-21 financial year, a total of £366,030 was allocated to the Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach. In terms of revenue costs, it is anticipated that operating the estimated proposal would create an annual saving of £110,062, less additional transport needs, which is approximately £14,000 per annum. As a result, estimated net savings will likely be £96,062 a year.</p> <p>The figures do not take into account any maintenance costs at the Ysgol Abersoch or Ysgol Sarn Bach site. If these costs had been considered, it would mean more savings as there would be no future maintenance costs for Ysgol Abersoch.</p> <p>Clustering the costs of the 4 local schools together to reach average cost of £5,000 doesn't decrease Ysgol Abersoch's high cost per head.</p>
505	How much money are you going to save? Redundancies? Loss of payment on your transport, as some children travel to sarn Bach from Abersoch who are not eligible for free transport at the moment, but we are still waiting for you to answer this question, which we asked you at one of the meetings, in fact we are still waiting for you to answer several questions from those meetings.	<p>Any redundancy costs will be funded from these savings.</p> <p>Consultation costs have not been included in the calculation of savings as they are independent of the actual running costs of the schools concerned.</p>
506	<p>The proposal of closure is very much linked to money, Who has the right to place a monetary value on a child's education, a fabulous Welsh language school and a striving Beach School for others to follow? It seems money talks. Abersoch as a village may become a thriving tourist destination for day trippers, holiday makers and second home owners, but where is the complaint from the council that, all the extra money this generates is of no interest to the council? They don't! Abersoch as a village generates a much much higher revenue for the council than Sarn Bach so why won't the council work with Ysgol Abersoch to help and support the school? Or as it seems they just want to take the extra money and close it? The decision to increase the council tax to 200% for second home owners is to deter buyers, it may or may not, but I ask where does this extra money for nothing now go? It most probably doesn't go on education!</p>	<p>Ysgol Sarn Bach has an official school uniform and the school encourages everyone to wear it. It is expected for the parents of year 3 pupils to buy a school uniform when they transfer to Ysgol Sarn Bach in any case. The children who transfer from Ysgol Abersoch may continue to wear their school (Ysgol Abersoch) uniform up to the end of year 3, if this is their parents' wish.</p> <p>It is emphasised that issuing the statutory notice on the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch was not decided solely on financial grounds.</p> <p>The school has been prioritised for a review of the educational provision as it faces a number of challenges. Pupil numbers at the school have fallen consistently since 2016 and the figure has been fragile for some time. Consequently, it is likely that the school is facing increasing challenges, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low pupil numbers: In September 2020, eight full-time pupils and two part-time nursery pupils were registered at the school.

507	The costs to finance the continuation of funding Ysgol Abersoch as stated appear high and are not transparent enough to comment upon.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projected numbers: It is anticipated that the numbers will continue to be low over the coming years (September 2021 = 10; September 2022 = 12; September 2023 = 12). • High percentage of surplus places: Based on the figures for September 2020, there were approximately 76% of surplus places at the school (26 in total) (R - Yr. 3). • Small class sizes: The 10 pupils are taught in one mixed-age class. • Broad age ranges within classes: The pupils are taught in one class with an age range of up to five years (3-8 years). • Pupil residence: 2020 data shows that 26 3-8-year-old children live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area with 21 (81%) of them attending schools outside the catchment area.
508	<p>The consultation document indicates that there will be a net annual saving of approximately £96k. This is about 0.01% of the overall Gwynedd Education Department budget. How the saving has been calculated is unclear, with no breakdown of costs provided e.g. are the costs of educating the children at another school and the ongoing maintenance of the school, which is a responsibility of the Council, included? It is highly concerning that decisions are being put forward to the Cabinet with an argument based on a cost per pupil rather than an absolute cost of running the school.</p> <p>Taking all four schools together, as a catchment the cost per pupil is approximately £5k per pupil. This is in step with other rural schools in the area.</p>		
509	<p>8.1. Estimated Savings</p> <p>The savings of £ 110,000 represent a small average (0.1%) of Gwynedd Council's total budget of £ 90.4 million. But, again, in terms of transparency, it is not clear what costs were and were not included in these estimates. Given that the majority of Gwynedd Council 's argument depends on cost, it is surprising that it does not say much about this compared to the detail found in the rest of the documentation....</p>		
510	In the interests of transparency, we request Gwynedd Council provided the calculations to support this projected saving. It is unclear what costs have been included or excluded in these calculations. Given that much of the Gwynedd Council's argument hinges on cost, it is surprising that the same level of detail afforded to the rest of the document is not conferred to the costing exercise.		
511	<p>7.16 Expected advantages and disadvantages of the proposal "Impact on staff employment"</p> <p>Redundancy is expensive and potentially unnecessary if Ysgol Sarn Bach needs to employ more teachers. Have redundancy costs been included in the cost calculations? Do the financial arguments include any additional costs at Ysgol Sarn Bach? For transparency, please provide this detail. Given that much of the Gwynedd Council's</p>		

	argument hinges on cost, it is surprising that the same level of detail afforded to the rest of the document is not transparent.		
512	It is understood there is a cost to continue keeping the school open but surely the benefits would outweigh the costs of maintaining the existing status quo.		The Council notes the comment.
513	Closing Ysgol Abersoch will make an immaterial impact on the budget, but would seriously erode education standards for the 200 pupils in Abersoch and the surrounding schools.		It is emphasised that issuing the statutory notice on the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch was not decided solely on financial grounds. The reasons for prioritising the review are summarised in the box above. Based on the conclusions of the assessment of the Probable Impact on the Quality and Standards of Education, it is concluded that the standard of education provided at Ysgol Sarn Bach is the same level as the quality of education at Ysgol Abersoch. Consequently, it is not anticipated any negative impact would derive in terms of the quality and standards of education from the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and transfer the pupils to Ysgol Sarn Bach. Realising this proposal would give pupils an opportunity to be educated in peer groups with much less of an age range and an opportunity to improve the educational and social experience of the pupils, on a daily basis.
514	A small school is all about a sense of belonging. Naturally, it costs more to maintain but we overlook this matter as compensation.		The Council notes the comment.
515	The report does not address the impact on additional resources needed at Sarn Bach to support the continued educational standard by including the additional children. Please specify what these will be and the anticipated costs.		Should the proposal be implemented, based on the allocation for 2020/21, transferring the pupils of Ysgol Abersoch would lead to an additional allocation of £27,078 for Ysgol Sarn Bach. It is expected that the Governing Body of Ysgol Sarn Bach would decide how best to use this additional allocation.
516	We continually point out that it is inappropriate to compare the cost per pupil to larger schools. Provide a cost per pupil comparison compared to other similar small schools.		Ysgol Abersoch has the fewest number of pupils and the highest cost per head in Gwynedd, therefore drawing comparisons with larger schools and the county average is the only option.
517	At the start of the informal review, in September 2019, we accepted that lower pupil numbers were indicative of the need for change, and thanks to the impetus of the initial meetings, a number of new things were discovered to improve the sustainability of the school. We have now also made sure that the staffing structure matches the budget. During challenging times, Ysgol Abersoch has seized the opportunity and introduced sustainable measures to address low pupil numbers		The Council notes the comment that Ysgol Abersoch now has balanced its budget for 2020-21. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Ysgol Abersoch receives an additional sum to the usual allocation via the minimum staffing protection policy. The total amount during the 2020-21 financial year was £52,582. The cost per pupil at Ysgol Abersoch in the 2020/21 financial year was £17,404 - the average cost in the county per pupil for the same year was £4,198.
518	Ysgol Abersoch undertook to balance its budget in terms of financial allocation and staffing structure. Any budget deficits for 2021 - 2022 have now also been resolved.		

519	<p>5.3. Strengths and Weaknesses of the Current Situation Ysgol Abersoch continues to receive an additional sum to the usual financial allocation via the minimum staffing policy. This is Gwynedd Council policy and not a weakness.</p>	<p>It is emphasised that issuing the statutory notice on the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch was not decided solely on financial grounds.</p> <p>The school has been prioritised for a review of the educational provision as it faces a number of challenges. Pupil numbers at the school have fallen consistently since 2016 and the figure has been fragile for some time. Consequently, it is likely that the school is facing increasing challenges, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low pupil numbers: In September 2020, eight full-time pupils and two part-time nursery pupils were registered at the school. • Projected numbers: It is anticipated that the numbers will continue to be low over the coming years (September 2021 = 10; September 2022 = 12; September 2023 = 12). • High percentage of surplus places: Based on the figures for September 2020, there were approximately 76% of surplus places at the school (26 in total) (R - Yr. 3). • Small class sizes: The 10 pupils are taught in one mixed-age class. • Broad age ranges within classes: The pupils are taught in one class with an age range of up to five years (3-8 years). • Pupil residence: 2020 data shows that 26 3-8-year-old children live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area with 21 (81%) of them attending schools outside the catchment area.
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L	Alternative options																																																																								
	Postponing the process																																																																								
520	Please reconsider your proposal or at least defer the decision for at least another 2 years to see what effect post Covid 19 has on our local community.		The Council notes the comments.																																																																						
521	It is possible that the number of people who have now experienced working from home in towns and cities will continue to grow and will realise they can live and work anywhere may give a boost to more families moving to live in a village with integrated good education etc. in say Abersoch, another reason to defer any school closure.		However, we as an Authority cannot commit not to deal with the school for an unspecified period. Pupil numbers at Ysgol Abersoch have fallen consistently since 2016 and the figure has been fragile for some time.																																																																						
522	And there is an opportunity for this. As we showed in our response in the appendix, there is a window of opportunity. The current notice proposes the unusual closure of Ysgol Abersoch in the middle of an academic year - December 2021. The Education Minister's permission not to immediately implement the Notice could be obtained specifically to discuss the alternatives with stakeholders next season. Accordingly, in the spring term, either (1) a different and better proposal, with local support, could be put forward or (2) if the intensive discussions on alternative options did not lead to consensus, there would still be an opportunity for a second - issue a Notice to close the school at the end of the same academic year in July 2022.		<p>The Authority is of the opinion that continuing with the current education provision is not a viable option for the future. The Education Department is of the opinion that it is impractical to continue with the current situation, mainly because of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very small classes. • Low numbers and a lack of daily opportunities for pupils to socialise and collaborate with peers. • Projections for the future, showing that numbers will remain low over the next five years, with 11 pupils attending by 2025. <p>The table below shows that no significant increase in numbers is anticipated over the next five years.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Table 1 - Number projections for Ysgol Abersoch</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>M</th> <th>D</th> <th>1</th> <th>2</th> <th>3</th> <th>4</th> <th>5</th> <th>6</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>September 2020</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>0</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September 2021 Projection</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>0</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September 2022 Projection</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September 2023 Projection</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September 2024 Projection</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September 2025 Projection</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>11</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		M	D	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	September 2020	2	3	2	0	3	-	-	-	10	September 2021 Projection	3	2	3	2	0	-	-	-	10	September 2022 Projection	2	3	2	3	2	-	-	-	12	September 2023 Projection	2	2	3	2	3	-	-	-	12	September 2024 Projection	2	2	2	3	2	-	-	-	11	September 2025 Projection	2	2	2	2	3	-	-	-	11
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523	<p>They want to extend the age range so that more pupils can attend</p> <p>extending the age range of the school has not been sufficiently explored</p> <p>Indeed, the above also supports the argument that the school needs to extend its age range to include years 3 and 4. There are many benefits to allowing the range of learning and admitting more mature pupils to progress next school.</p>		<p>The Authority wishes to note that two options to extend the school's age range were discussed, namely extending to 3-9 and extending to 3-11.</p> <p>It should be noted that the option favoured locally was the option to extend the school's age range to 3-9, including the development of the Cylch Meithrin. This option was preferred locally for practical reasons such as better use made of the empty space in the school building as a result of providing a location for the Cylch Meithrin, and to mitigate against the potential impact that the change could have on the numbers at Ysgol Sarn Bach (the school</p>																																																																						

	<p>We know that there are a handful of children ready to start school through first attending the successful and new "Ti a Fl" and cylch meithrin, my nephew being one of them, and also definitely my sons would have stayed on for the extra year (year 4), if that was an option.</p>	<p>that provides an education for the 9-11-year-old pupils from the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area).</p> <p>When comparing the two options, it was concluded that the best option to be considered further was the option to extend the age range to 3-11. The 3-9 option was disregarded for many reasons, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not anticipated that adding one educational year would lead to a sufficient increase in the numbers. Consequently, the challenges facing the school would continue. • The age range would not be consistent with the majority of the county's primary schools. • It would not allow for the school to offer a comprehensive KS2 provision. The pupils would continue to transfer to Ysgol Sarn Bach to complete their primary education. <p>It is believed that the option to extend the age range to 3-11 would offer more advantages from the perspective of having an opportunity to increase the numbers at the school. The option would also rationalise the age range with the rest of the county's schools, and would mean that the school offers a comprehensive KS2 provision.</p> <p>In order for the option to respond to the challenges facing the school, this increase would have to be substantial. Nevertheless, it is likely that any increase in the numbers at Ysgol Abersoch after extending the age range, would cause a reduction in the numbers of Ysgol Sarn Bach and, potentially, at nearby schools.</p> <p>After further consideration, it was concluded that the option would not be a sustainable solution to the future for the school, and that it could affect pupil numbers in nearby schools.</p>
524	<p>Transfer at the End of Year 3</p> <p>The proposal suggests that by being taught solely at Ysgol Sarn Bach, and that pupils will not need to be transferred during their primary education, it is a tangible benefit but, again, no evidence is provided to support this point. We are not aware of any negative impact associated with this transfer. The statement is unfounded and highly subjective.....</p> <p>7. The Proposal e) Ensure that pupils transfer once during their primary and secondary education rather than twice.</p>	<p>The Council believes that moving schools or bridging from one school to another at any time during an educational career, can lead to disruption to the progress of some children as they settle in a school and a new environment, and it could undermine the resilience of some pupils.</p> <p>As the situation of Ysgol Abersoch is relatively unique in terms of when the children move, the evidence to prove or disprove this presumption for bridging at the end of year 3 is scarce. However, evidence can be received from other sources, where reference is made to</p>

	<p>On what basis is this a valid point? What evidence can you provide that this is a problem. Given the policy of the Welsh Government, it seems that children are cutting and changing schools on a whim.</p> <p>Children who are learning to adapt to change are arguably more resilient and ready for the transition to secondary school. Discussion with current and former pupils and parents, as well as Governors who attended the school have not identified any negative impact associated with this transfer. Have any problems been reported by children at Ysgol Morfa Nefyn, which provides the same age range?</p>	<p>normal primary/secondary bridging, such as the recent Estyn report (<i>Learner resilience - building resilience in primary schools, secondary schools and pupil referral units, July 2020</i>), which notes "Transitions, such as moving school, are periods where children can suffer emotional distress, or a decline in progress and commitment to learning, all of which can also undermine resilience."</p> <p>By reducing the number of occasions that children transition, the Council believes that there is less opportunity for the children to suffer from emotional distress, reduced progress and commitment to learn.</p> <p>Consistency and co-planning are key for effective bridging.</p> <p>When the children transfer to another school is not the only factor to consider when attempting to reduce the impact. The Council believes that the only way to ensure a reduction in the potentially negative impacts of transfer is by reducing the periods when children have to transfer during their educational career in the first place.</p>
	<p>4.4. Change the age range from 3 - 8 to 3 - 9</p> <p>We are firmly of the view that extending the age range to include Year 4 is a possible and practical solution but, again, is ignored by the Council without adequate explanation. This suggestion is not unreasonable given that Years 3 and 4 are generally taught in mixed age classes in Gwynedd schools...</p> <p>We know that parents expressed a wish to keep their children at Ysgol Abersoch for an extra year if there was a choice and it would tie in neatly with the system of teaching children in Years 3 and 4 together...</p> <p><i>6.1 Comparing Options Option 2b - change age range to 3-9 years</i></p> <p><i>The justification for saying no is insufficient.</i></p> <p><i>In most mixed age classes years 3 and 4 are taught together therefore this is a natural step. "It would not allow for the school to offer a comprehensive Key Stage 2 provision." It seems unclear why this would be an issue. It has been successful in doing so for many decades. Please provide evidence and justification for this point...</i></p> <p><i>Increasing the age range may make parents more likely to choose the school. This is a positive.</i></p>	<p>The Council notes the support for the option to extend Ysgol Abersoch's age range to 3-9 years.</p> <p>The Council believes that moving schools or bridging from one school to another at any time during an educational career, can lead to disruption to the progress of some children as they settle in a school and a new environment, and it could undermine the resilience of some pupils.</p> <p>As the situation of Ysgol Abersoch is relatively unique in terms of when the children move, the evidence to prove or disprove this presumption for bridging at the end of year 3 is scarce. However, evidence can be received from other sources, where reference is made to normal primary/secondary bridging, such as the recent Estyn report (<i>Learner resilience - building resilience in primary schools, secondary schools and pupil referral units, July 2020</i>), which notes "Transitions, such as moving school, are periods where children can suffer emotional distress, or a decline in progress and commitment to learning, all of which can also undermine resilience."</p>

526	I have written to ask Kirsty Williams 'Why cant my sister stay at Ygol Abersoch until Year four she said " I don't know why your sister can't stay in the school until Year 4 but the local authority should be able to tell you" So I am asking you WHY CANT MY SISTER STAY AT THE SCHOOL FOR ONE MORE YEAR UNTIL YEAR 4?		<p>By reducing the number of occasions that children transition, the Council believes that there is less opportunity for the children to suffer from emotional distress, reduced progress and commitment to learn.</p> <p>Consistency and co-planning are key for effective bridging.</p>
527	<p>Together with Ti a Fi, education including Year 4 could offer a child and his parents a long-term package of commitment, continuity and stability up to eight or nine years of age. This has great potential to build links at all levels within the school and the wider community and would also encourage more parents to make Ysgol Abersoch their main choice. It is unclear to us why the Education Department disagrees with this extra year or why the wishes of the children and parents are disregarded.</p> <p><i>Adding Year 4 makes sense and is in line with the wishes of the children and parents?</i></p>		<p>When the children transfer to another school is not the only factor to consider when attempting to reduce the impact. The Council believes that the only way to ensure a reduction in the potentially negative impacts of transfer is by reducing the periods when children have to transfer during their educational career in the first place.</p> <p>The option favoured locally was the option to extend the school's age range to 3-9 years, including the development of the Cylch Meithrin. This option was favoured locally for practical reasons, such as improved use of the empty space in the school and providing a location for the Cylch Meithrin, and to mitigate the potential impact that the change could have on the numbers of Ysgol Sarn Bach (the school that provides an education for 9-11-year-old pupils in the Ysgol Abersoch area).</p>
528	This would not be the first time that the children of Abersoch would transfer to Sarn Bach at the age of 9 by changing the age range from 3-8 to 3-9, this was done until the beginning/mid fifties.		<p>The 3-9 years option was disregarded for the following reasons:</p>
529	<p>Why has Gwynedd Council not seriously considered allowing Ysgol Abersoch to host a year 4, putting them in line with other schools? My child is currently in year 3 at Ysgol Abersoch and she has asked several times why she cannot stay until year four? I cannot answer this question and I can see absolutely no reason why this cannot be set in place. We as parents and Governors have also put forward and asked you this question. Whenever this has been put to you, your responses are always 'it will be detrimental to Ysgol Sarn Bach,' however at Ysgol Sarn Bach the years 3&4 are already taught together. It seemed to me when my son started in year 4 in Sarn Bach that he was going over old work he had previously done in year three at Ysgol Abersoch. The very detailed pupil report set out by Head Teacher Mrs Linda Jones would confirm this. Therefore, I feel that the children of Ysgol Abersoch would benefit more, by going to Sarn Bach in Year 4. I also feel the children of Sarn Bach would benefit from this as well to avoid the strain of larger class sizes and the upheaval caused by children joining their teaching part way through the syllabus.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not anticipated that adding one educational year would lead to a sufficient increase in the numbers. Consequently, the challenges facing the school would continue. • The age range would not be consistent with the majority of the county's primary schools. • It would not allow for the school to offer a comprehensive KS2 provision. The pupils would continue to transfer to Ysgol Sarn Bach to complete their primary education. <p>In September 2020, all Ysgol Abersoch (Nursery to Yr. 3) pupils were educated in one class with 10 pupils. The average class size at Ysgol Sarn Bach in September 2020 is 24.</p> <p>The table below shows the class sizes of Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach in September 2020.</p>

<p>530</p>	<p>The figures show that the natural number of pupils would be 19, rather than 10, except for a decision to restrict the age of pupils to the earliest years.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>School</th> <th>Nursery</th> <th>Reception</th> <th>Yr 1</th> <th>Yr 2</th> <th>Yr 3</th> <th>Yr 4</th> <th>Yr 5</th> <th>Yr 6</th> <th>Total</th> <th>Number of classes</th> <th>Largest class</th> <th>Smallest class</th> <th>Average class size</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Abersoch</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>10</td> <td>1</td> <td>10</td> <td>10</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sarn Bach</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>5</td> <td>4</td> <td>8</td> <td>5</td> <td>10</td> <td>11</td> <td>48</td> <td>2</td> <td>34</td> <td>14</td> <td>24</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><small>Source: September 2020 Annual School Census</small></p> <p>Delivering the proposal would mean that Ysgol Abersoch pupils would be educated in more sustainably sized classes, with more children from the same age group.</p> <p>With 21 surplus places (and four surplus places in the Nursery), Ysgol Sarn Bach has sufficient capacity for the number of pupils from Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach, currently and for the next five years.</p> <p>If the proposal is delivered, it is expected that the Governing Body of Ysgol Sarn Bach will give due attention to determining class sizes and the distribution of school staff resources.</p> <p>After further consideration, it was concluded that the option to extend the school's age range to 3-9 years would not be a sustainable solution to the future for the school. It is not anticipated that adding one educational year would lead to a sufficient increase in the numbers. Consequently, the challenges facing the school would continue. It is anticipated that the numbers and projections would remain low, classes would remain small, and the broad age range within classes would continue.</p>	School	Nursery	Reception	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Total	Number of classes	Largest class	Smallest class	Average class size	Abersoch	2	3	2	-	3	-	-	-	10	1	10	10	10	Sarn Bach	3	2	5	4	8	5	10	11	48	2	34	14	24
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<p>531</p>	<p>In your report you seemed to think that the children at Ysgol Abersoch are all taught in one room with all age groups together, as you know this incorrect because we told you before that this is the case, further pointing out another inaccuracy. This may be why you refused the parents' request for their children in year three to stay for another year at Ysgol Abersoch until year 4. Why was the request from Children, Teachers, Parents and Governors to extend the age range not further inspected? After all, you emphasised so much importance on parental choice in your meetings when discussing other schools, when our parents and children's choices have been taken away.</p>	<p>The option of allowing Ysgol Abersoch to admit children aged 3-9 years instead of 3-8 years was discussed during the initial meetings between Gwynedd Council and Ysgol Abersoch and was not favoured for the reasons outlined in the Statutory Consultation Document, i.e. it is anticipated that the numbers and projections would remain low, classes would remain small, and the broad age range within classes would continue.</p> <p>It would also be impractical to implement this arrangement even for a year because, according to Schedule 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, extending the age range of a school is considered a 'regulated alteration', which must not be carried out unless the relevant local authority and/or the governing body have complied with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018. Therefore, in order to</p>																																										

		<p>extend the age range, the Authority would be required to publish a proposal and undertake a statutory process in advance of any alterations, which would not be possible as it would need to take place before September if we were to implement the proposal.</p> <p>As a result, the Education Department is not in a position to agree or implement your proposal to extend the age range of Ysgol Abersoch to 3-9 years and offer places to pupils from reception to Yr. 4 for a year from September 2021.</p> <p>The tabl below shows the size of the classes in Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach in September 2020.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>School</th> <th>Nursery</th> <th>Reception</th> <th>Yr 1</th> <th>Yr2</th> <th>Yr 3</th> <th>Yr 4</th> <th>Yr 5</th> <th>Yr 6</th> <th>Total</th> <th>Number of classes</th> <th>Largest class</th> <th>Smallest class</th> <th>Average class size</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Abersoch</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>10</td> <td>1</td> <td>10</td> <td>10</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sarn Bach</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>5</td> <td>4</td> <td>8</td> <td>5</td> <td>10</td> <td>11</td> <td>48</td> <td>2</td> <td>34</td> <td>14</td> <td>24</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><small>Source: September 2020 Annual School Census</small></p>	School	Nursery	Reception	Yr 1	Yr2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Total	Number of classes	Largest class	Smallest class	Average class size	Abersoch	2	3	2	-	3	-	-	-	10	1	10	10	10	Sarn Bach	3	2	5	4	8	5	10	11	48	2	34	14	24
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532	If both children would have been allowed to stay the numbers would have risen to 12 this year, wouldn't that have rescued us from the dangerous situation we find ourselves in with 10 children?	The Council notes the comments; however, given the size of the projected increase in pupil numbers referred to in the comment, which is an increase of only two pupils, the challenges facing Ysgol Abersoch would continue.																																										
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533	You seemed to want to spend two meetings discussing the possible federalisation with Ysgol Llanbedrog, however why were the meetings with Ysgol Llanbedrog and Ysgol Sarn Bach not formally documented. They seemed to play an integral part within the meetings so much so that you failed to listen to any of our voices and suggestions. I find it incredible that something that holds this much importance was not given more care and consideration, at the very least allowing all the Governors from both schools to be present and involved in the process. I find this process to be undemocratic and again I would like to see your minutes and notes made from your meetings. Why was a meeting of this magnitude not officially recorded?	<p>The Council notes the comments.</p> <p>In any such procedure, it is key to give detailed consideration and weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of any model, and this is what can be seen in the Full Options Appraisal.</p> <p>Despite the advantages of federalisation, the Authority is of the opinion that it is unlikely that the option would address the main challenges faced by Ysgol Abersoch, such as low numbers, small class sizes, and consequently, the school's financial challenges would continue.</p>																																										
534	The school can play a very important role in the local school federation plan.																																											

535	An option to federalize with a neighboring school is outlined as an option in the consultation document. This option has not been given equal consideration from a cost perspective with no figures available to understand what cost savings could be made if Ysgol Abersoch were federalized.	The Council notes the reasons for not proceeding with Option 4 and 5 (Federalisation) in the Consultation Document. Federalisation with nearby schools would not be a solution to the challenges facing Ysgol Abersoch.
536	<p>Option 3 - Models of Collaboration with Neighboring Schools</p> <p>b. Federation of a number of schools - The document only discusses establishing a federation with one other school while the Federation Regulations allow a number of schools to form a federation. There could be a federation between Ysgol Llanbedrog, Abersoch and Sarn Bach. Although no Federal Board of Governors could also manage Ysgol Foel Gron (because of its voluntary status), the formal federation was able to co-operate (sometimes called a "soft federation") with Ysgol Foel Gron for special arrangements and activities. There would be potential benefits (and savings) in integrated administration and leadership, potential in utilizing capacity for federation-wide purposes, and the potential to broaden educational experience through different schools focusing on different activities. The Government's Small and Rural Schools Fund usually means that a sum is available to cover any additional costs (eg traveling to another school to join in an activity) that broaden the educational and social experiences of a federation.</p> <p>c. "ENLLI" FEDERATION - Federation could take an even more ambitious form e.g. a new innovative form of education could be established in the area by all schools federating - Llanbedrog, Abersoch, Sarn Bach, Pontygof and Crud y Wern (working informally with Ysgol Foel Gron). The Regulations on Federation allow a federation to include a secondary school. Including Ysgol Botwnnog in a federation would therefore strengthen development through from primary to secondary level, and consolidate local education in a very innovative way that would certainly attract support from the Welsh Government because of the lessons that could be learned. As well as expanding experiences, there would also be clear potential for rationalizing administrative costs and creating integrated structures.</p>	<p>School federalisation does not lead to any significant changes for parents or children. Although schools would share a single governing body, they would continue as two separate schools and retain their current names, and would continue to be funded separately in accordance with Gwynedd Council's formula. The children would continue to receive their education in the same schools and from the same staff.</p> <p>Officers from the Education Department met the headteacher and chair of governors of Ysgol Sarn Bach and Ysgol Llanbedrog in January 2020 to discuss the option of federalisation with Ysgol Abersoch. Because of the informal nature of these discussions, the meetings were not minuted. This meeting was also an opportunity to update headteachers and chairs regarding the options discussed at the local meetings, highlighting any potential impact that some of the options could have on their school.</p> <p>After weighing up the pros and cons of the model, it was concluded that federalisation would not be a sustainable solution for the school. There is no clear evidence that federalisation would lead to an increase in numbers. Consequently, should this option be realised, it is anticipated that the challenge of low numbers, small class sizes and the financial challenges faced by the school, would continue. Therefore, it is considered that federalisation is not the best option for the school's situation.</p> <p>The Authority has prioritised Ysgol Abersoch for a review of the educational provision as it faces a number of challenges. Pupil numbers at the school have fallen consistently since 2016 and the figure has been fragile for some time. The Council does not intend to undertake a catchment area consultation at present.</p>

	Any of the collaboration options (not yet addressed) could also be combined with option (1) or / and (2) for Ysgol Abersoch itself so that the unique nature of that school would be of wider benefit to pupils in the area.		
537	We propose that Ysgol Abersoch is ideally placed to provide a successful alternative model, by developing its educational provision through Cylch Ti a Fi, Cylch Meithrin and leading on the idea of an innovative Beach School that could be part of a federation or multi-site school. By committing to keep Ysgol Abersoch open as a long-term education provision in the center of Abersoch, and supporting it with a housing and employment strategy, there is a unique opportunity to publish an economic success story for Gwynedd. This can only benefit the whole community and serve as a leading force to strengthen and maintain the Welsh language and culture in this highly visible area of Gwynedd.		<p>The Council notes the comments.</p> <p>Despite the advantages of federalisation, the Authority is of the opinion that it is unlikely that the option would address the main challenges faced by Ysgol Abersoch, such as low numbers, small class sizes, and consequently, the school's financial challenges would continue.</p> <p>After weighing up the pros and cons of the model, it was concluded that federalisation would not be a sustainable solution for the school. There is no clear evidence that federalisation would lead to an increase in numbers. Consequently, should this option be realised, it is anticipated that the challenge of low numbers, small class sizes and the financial challenges faced by the school, would continue. Therefore, it is considered that federalisation is not the best option for the school's situation.</p>
538	Some facts are incorrect eg.1 A federation is NOT entirely dependent on the willing cooperation of schools. The changes made in 2014 to the Federations Regulations give Local Authorities powers to drive the process eg.2 - It is NOT true to say that a multi-site school model would not affect class size. Multi-site school governors could use the sites and organise classes within them as they saw fit. e.g.3- It is suggested that creating a federation could be more expensive as all schools in a federation would be to their advantage. But funding has come from central government for years specifically to support rural federations and schools, and we trust that the funding is being used for the right purposes.		<p>The Council notes the comment that Regulations on Federations give the authority the power to drive the federation process, however, having considered the strengths and weaknesses of the model, it was concluded that federalisation is not a sustainable solution for the school. There is no evidence that federalisation would lead to an increase in numbers. As a result, if this option is realised, it is anticipated that the challenge of low numbers, small class sizes, and the financial challenges facing the school will remain. Federalisation is therefore not considered to be the best option for the school situation.</p> <p>The benefit of this type of model is the ability to restructure the managerial arrangements, yet retaining the presence of education in more than one community. It is a model that can work well in very rural areas where there are long travelling distances before arriving at the alternative school. Also, it means that small school sites are not left in isolation, but rather as part of a larger education establishment. Therefore, better use can be made of resources, e.g. one headteacher for more than one site, sharing resources and staff between sites and bringing pupils from sites together to hold activities with a higher number of pupils.</p>

			However, some of the disadvantages of this model are the inability to ensure that class size and age-ranges at some education sites will change for the better. The model is not one that maximises revenue savings, but it does make better use of resources and rationalises the cost per pupil.
	Multi-site Collaboration		
539	<p>1) We are pleased that officers have included a number of our alternatives as options worth considering - namely ... * A multi-site school taking advantage of surplus capacity at one location and full capacity at another.</p> <p>* Federation with a number of neighboring schools rationalising the use of resources and expanding the educational experience</p> <p>* An innovative federation involving the Secondary School which would bridge the transition from primary to secondary education.</p>		<p>The Council notes the comments.</p> <p>During the Local School Review meetings, many possible models were proposed and discussed, in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018. In the case of the Multi-site Area School model, the school would be one school and a single legal entity that serves a broad area. However, a multi-site area school provides an educational provision on a number of sites.</p>
540	<p>Establishing such a collaboration arrangement would not only be helpful to Ysgol Abersoch. The staff and governors at Ysgol Abersoch have developed innovative approaches to teaching the youngest children to master important concepts by studying their natural habitat. In any of the above models of collaboration, the opportunity to develop these skills, and broaden the educational experience, could be available to ALL children in the area's schools.</p>		<p>The benefit of this type of model is the ability to restructure the managerial arrangements, yet retaining the presence of education in more than one community. It is a model that can work well in very rural areas where there are long travelling distances before arriving at the alternative school. Also, it means that small school sites are not left in isolation, but rather as part of a larger education establishment. Therefore, better use can be made of resources, e.g. one headteacher for more than one site, sharing resources and staff between sites and bringing pupils from sites together to hold activities with a higher number of pupils.</p> <p>However, some of the disadvantages of this model are the inability to ensure that class size and age-ranges at some education sites will change for the better. The model is not one that maximises revenue savings, but it does make better use of resources and rationalises the cost per pupil.</p>
	Cultural Centre		
541	<p>Option 1 - Develop a Welsh Cultural Center</p> <p>There is therefore a responsibility to positively evaluate all possible options. We understand the desire of the local community to maintain the School as Ysgol Abersoch, offering the first phase of statutory Welsh education, as well as nursery education and a Welsh educational and a cultural center for the local community. The consultation document has acknowledged that the addition of Welsh educational and cultural elements to statutory education is in its infancy, and that the potential for</p>		<p>The Council notes the option to develop a Welsh-language cultural centre.</p> <p>Ysgol Abersoch has been prioritised for a review of the educational provision as the school is facing a number of challenges. Pupil numbers at the school have fallen consistently since 2016 and the figure has been fragile for some time. Consequently, it is likely that the school is facing increasing challenges, including:</p> <p>Low pupil numbers: In September 2020, eight full-time pupils and two part-time nursery pupils were registered at the school.</p>

	<p>income generation through consumer and grant seeking is related to cultural activity. It is possible that additional funding could be attracted by the school taking advantage of a site in the center of the village eg School Summer Holidays are the 6 weeks of peak tourism season. Is there potential for a room in the school, in conjunction with the neighboring Village Hall, to be used to promote a much more Welsh tourist experience. The service could include personal information about the area and activities, a program of Welsh entertainment in the hall, information about the coast and the country trails (possibly linking to Option 2 below). It can be a service, on top of the standard pamphlet information currently being prepared, of offering visitors a Welsh experience, and a pilot scheme. It could also be a major source of income. We emphasize that this is one particular idea, which may or may not be viable, but what we propose is to justify the additional expenditure on a school - which otherwise succeeds educationally - by giving it an additional Welsh culture LEARNING function for the school. It can also generate a funding stream, and could be operated in partnership with a local liaison committee. Abersoch, and the school building in particular, is uniquely placed to implement such a project.</p>	<p>Projected numbers: It is anticipated that the numbers will continue to be low over the coming years (September 2021 = 10; September 2022 = 12; September 2023 = 12). High percentage of surplus places: Based on the figures for September 2020, there were approximately 76% of surplus places at the school (26 in total) (R - Yr. 3). Small class sizes: The 10 pupils are taught in one mixed-age class. Broad age ranges within classes: The pupils are taught in one class with an age range of up to five years (3-8 years). Financial Resources: Ysgol Abersoch receives an additional sum to the usual allocation via the minimum staffing protection policy. The total amount during the 2020-21 financial year is £52,582. The cost per pupil at Ysgol Abersoch in the 2020/21 financial year is £17,404 - the average cost in the county per pupil is £4,198. Pupil residence: 2020 data shows that 26 3-8-year-old children live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area with 21 (81%) of them attending schools outside the catchment area.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that this option can make better use of the school building. Nevertheless, when considering the options against the factors of the Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd Strategy, it is concluded that the option would not manage to address or resolve the main challenges faced by the school as noted above, e.g. low pupil numbers, a high percentage of surplus places, small class sizes and a broad age-range within classes.</p>
542	<p>Option 2 - Complete Education and Recognizing the Locality The second function that could be added to Ysgol Abersoch, in order to justify the additional investment in maintaining the school, is as a pilot for a complete education. Once again, Ysgol Abersoch is uniquely placed to operate a pilot scheme such as "Beach School" and "Country Trails School". Not only is the school very close to the beach and, in relation to Ysgol Sarn Bach, to the country's peninsula trails, but it is also one of the governors' ambitions to deliver many of the educational experiences by studying the beach and country trails, and linguistically in terms of coming out of the school building into village life as a Welsh power. Through partnership with governors and a local liaison committee, the pupils' educational experience could not only be enriched in a unique way, but also act as a pilot scheme that could then be replicated in other schools. This is the second part of the REGENERATION agenda - restoring a relationship between a school and its surrounding community so that the school can be a vehicle for promoting</p>	<p>The Council notes the option to implement a pilot scheme such as a "Beach School" and "Country Trails School".</p> <p>Ysgol Abersoch has been prioritised for a review of the educational provision as the school is facing a number of challenges. Pupil numbers at the school have fallen consistently since 2016 and the figure has been fragile for some time. Consequently, it is likely that the school is facing increasing challenges, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low pupil numbers: In September 2020, eight full-time pupils and two part-time nursery pupils were registered at the school. • Projected numbers: It is anticipated that the numbers will continue to be low over the coming years (September 2021 = 10; September 2022 = 12; September 2023 = 12).

	<p>environmental as well as cultural understanding, both among the pupils and in the community. This "added value" (Options 1 & 2) could be achieved either in the context of an independent school in Abersoch or as part of an inter-school collaborative arrangement.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High percentage of surplus places: Based on the figures for September 2020, there were approximately 76% of surplus places at the school (26 in total) (R - Yr. 3). • Small class sizes: The 10 pupils are taught in one mixed-age class. • Broad age ranges within classes: The pupils are taught in one class with an age range of up to five years (3-8 years). • Financial Resources: Ysgol Abersoch receives an additional sum to the usual allocation via the minimum staffing protection policy. The total amount during the 2020-21 financial year is £52,582. The cost per pupil at Ysgol Abersoch in the 2020/21 financial year is £17,404 - the average cost in the county per pupil is £4,198. • Pupil residence: 2020 data shows that 26 3-8-year-old children live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area with 21 (81%) of them attending schools outside the catchment area.
543	<p>1) We are pleased that officers have included a number of our alternatives as being worth considering - namely * Use additional capacity at school (during term time, but more specifically during summer holidays and weekends) as a Welsh Cultural Center. It could be financially self-sufficient and take advantage of the school site in the center of the village and near the hall to offer a cultural tourism experience. This could contribute to other public policy objectives such as gaining more sustainable and respectful tourism from the local community</p>		<p>When considering the option against the factors of the Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd Strategy, it is concluded that the option would not manage to address or resolve the main challenges faced by the school as noted above, e.g. low pupil numbers, a high percentage of surplus places, small class sizes and a broad age-range within classes.</p>
	Beach School		
544	<p>THE NEW CURRICULUM AND BEACH SCHOOL The discussion emphasised the need to provide a high-quality education for the wellbeing of the children. The suggestion that the decision is being made in the best interests of the children is high handed and insulting to parents, staff and governors. No discussion was had on how perfectly aligned Ysgol Abersoch is with the new curriculum and the complete lack of interest or curiosity about the innovative beach/outdoor school is astonishing. We question whether the Cabinet members are even aware of what this is and its potential impact. Given that not a single question or observation was raised in the meeting are we to assume that they have fully researched this and are thoroughly unimpressed by the information and evidence?</p>		<p>The Council notes the option to develop a Beach School.</p> <p>Ysgol Abersoch has been prioritised for a review of the educational provision as the school is facing a number of challenges. Pupil numbers at the school have fallen consistently since 2016 and the figure has been fragile for some time. Consequently, it is likely that the school is facing increasing challenges, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low pupil numbers: In September 2020, eight full-time pupils and two part-time nursery pupils were registered at the school. • Projected numbers: It is anticipated that the numbers will continue to be low over the coming years (September 2021 = 10; September 2022 = 12; September 2023 = 12). • High percentage of surplus places: Based on the figures for September 2020, there were approximately 76% of surplus places at the school (26 in total) (R - Yr. 3). • Small class sizes: The 10 pupils are taught in one mixed-age class.
545	<p>1) We are proud that the officers have included a number of our alternative options as options worth considering – namely ... * Beach and Nature School</p>		

546	The plan to create a Beach School would be sure to put Gwynedd Council on the map as an employer / agency that is not stubborn and narrow-minded. Here you can show that there are different ways of learning that promote the Welsh language, keep a community together, promote and protect the environment, make the most of the natural resources available and make a point that there is more to learning than reading and writing in one building... There would be opportunities to learn sailing, sports and yoga on the beach; learn directly about wildlife and fishing - the list is endless. The Golf Club is also close by... OPPORTUNITY TO CONTINUE AND EXTEND THE CHILDREN'S CURRICULUM AND TO CONNECT WITH THE VILLAGE RESOURCES WITHIN THE VILLAGE.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad age ranges within classes: The pupils are taught in one class with an age range of up to five years (3-8 years). • Financial Resources: Ysgol Abersoch receives an additional sum to the usual allocation via the minimum staffing protection policy. The total amount during the 2020-21 financial year is £52,582. The cost per pupil at Ysgol Abersoch in the 2020/21 financial year is £17,404 - the average cost in the county per pupil is £4,198. • Pupil residence: 2020 data shows that 26 3-8-year-old children live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area with 21 (81%) of them attending schools outside the catchment area.
547	I object the proposal to close the school on the basis that you have not considered any other alternative options, such as the beach school. This is the future surely, with the present virus circulating.		When considering the option against the factors of the Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd Strategy, it is concluded that the option would not manage to address or resolve the main challenges faced by the school as noted above, e.g. low pupil numbers, a high percentage of surplus places, small class sizes and a broad age-range within classes.
548	Supporting the Beach School would be an innovative initiative that would benefit the whole catchment area and local schools that align with the New Curriculum by extending it and linking it to available resources... Excellent education - saving money is not everything. It is an opportunity for Gwynedd Council to go beyond the status quo and support an innovative idea of a Beach School		
549	I urge you to see the value and potential of this small school and, rather than having plans to close it, why not have a modern plan that fits in and revisits the way in which children can receive their post-Covid education .		
550	it is trying to become the first "beach school" in the area		
551	I am confused as to why the proposal to make abersoch school into the first beach school in Gwynedd has not been shared as part of this consultation. Local families could have been consisted to find out levels of interest in enrolling children in a beach school. We would certainly be interested in our 2 children attending if this was the case, particularly if the school took children up to secondary. This should have been considered as part of the consultation.		
552	I am resending my e-mail objecting to the closure of Ysgol Abersoch. Since the original e-mail I have moved to Llanengan with my family and with having 2 adult daughters it is probable that in the future any potential grandchildren will need a school. The revolutionary Ysgol Abersoch, a		

	unique beach school is definitely worth saving. Please do not close this school		
553	It is also now registered as a Beach School and has a dedicated room for Cylch Ti a Fi		
554	To remove the potential of an outdoor beach school is inconceivable in a community by the sea.	2	
555	is a registered Beach School, an accolade offering many extra natural outdoor opportunities ,		
556	Why was there not much about the Beach school in your consultation? Federalisation? Extended age range? Language impact!!		
557	<p>Also registration as a beach school will make Ysgol Abersoch unique in the area and gives families in the local and wider community who want their children to grow up with the opportunity to develop holistically Holistic development combines individuals mental, physical, social emotional and spiritual growth. By giving children the opportunity to develop in an environment such as those in Beach Schools, there is an increased potential for learning. From running free along the beach, making fires, to toast marshmallows on, mark making in the sand with sticks, bird watching, tracking animals' footprints, jumping over the waves, exploring crab habitats, the beach provides a wealth of learning opportunities. Being outside and being able to access these learning opportunities at the same time as being able to take in the fresh air and observe natural occurrences, provides an even more amazing experience for children. Not only does Beach School provide these experiences, it also provides the opportunity for the magic of awe and wonder to inspire young children's thinking and ideas.</p> <p>All the above initiatives should be given the time they deserve to increase pupil numbers for a unique school in a rural coastal setting.</p>		
558	I want to ask you why you did not listen to the beach school idea? I loved my time at Ysgol Abersoch, my sister has done so many exciting things since starting back after lock down. For their school trip they went The Rabbit Farm at Criccieth, I walked to the beach and it got cut short because of the		

	rain. My sister goes to the beach all the time, they do lessons outside and I can tell you I learnt so much from doing these lessons	
559	The children will also be deprived of the outdoor schooling they enjoy on the beach in fine weather.	
560	I write to you to object to the closure of ysgol Abersoch. I am very disappointed that you are even considering closing the school in the midst of the covid pandemic. I am also interested to know why you have not given careful consideration to the proposal of the beach school	
561	I object to the closure of Ysgol Abersoch. Its a fantastic school, with a great future as an outdoor beach school. The erlsh language is so important in Abersoch so please keep this school alive. I noticed you had redacted (name deleted) letter and feel that democracy has been tampered with here The children need their voices represented not silenced.	
562	Ysgol Abersoch is striving to become a Flagship Beach School in Wales, promoting Welsh Education and would become the future blueprint for Gwynedd Council for others to follow. Why is the council not willing to support these goals and in hindsight, then reap the rewards when other schools want to follow.	
563	Ysgol Abersoch with its unique situation in this beautiful seaside village should also be put forward as one of the first 'Beach Schools'	
564	You are taking away parents right of choice for their children to attend a smaller local beach status welsh language school. All options should remain.	
565	The innovative proposal of a Beach school should be championed by Gwynedd Council, especially in a time of uncertainty such as covid pandemics, parents will welcome the idea of outdoor teaching and learning. I have seen examples of this type of school all over the world and I was lucky enough to spend 8 years in the French Alps whereby I was able to watch a Forestry school flourish and go from strength to strength. By Ysgol Abersoch adapting to its surroundings this would surely qualify as a beacon of Educational Excellence, using this school as a pioneering model would surely set Gwynedd Council apart and help the Education department plough ahead into the future.	

566	The Outdoor Beach School did not feature very highly in your report, again this is very disappointing, especially with the new Welsh curriculum coming into play. I feel that you have not explored this idea and have disregarded it from the beginning, however all the teachers, facilitators and anyone actually excited by education have said what an amazing opportunity this would be for Gwynedd Council, therefore I would like to ask why you have not explored this idea further? It is a way to encourage the Welsh Language and further develop and encourage the language to be spoken and heard more in our community.		
567	Your officers have openly encouraged forming a Cylch Ti a Fi to help increase the numbers, they promised discussions with other schools regarding federalisation - albeit informally with no record of what was discussed or decided. However none of this or any other proposed innovations such as the Beach School Proposal has even been considered.		
Catchment Area Review			
568	<p>Federation and Catchment Review</p> <p>We do not believe that federalism has been adequately explored. Alongside this Gwynedd Council's 'Best Quality Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd' sets out the conditions appropriate for a Catchment Area Review. These include '... if the catchment area schools gain or lose more than 20% of its pupils because of the impact on neighboring society and the catchment area', 'surplus places across the catchment area', and 'range of expenditure per head when it is more than 10% above or below the county average'. The current situation within the catchment area of the four local schools meets all these criteria and, therefore, we request that Catchment Area Review be implemented.</p>		<p>Gwynedd Council's Cabinet, at its meeting on 17 September 2019, permitted the Education Department to hold formal discussions with the governing body and other relevant stakeholders of Ysgol Abersoch to enable the formulation of a range of potential options relating to the school's future, as a result of concerns regarding pupil numbers at the school and concerns regarding the projections that anticipated numbers remaining low.</p> <p>As a result of the current low numbers, the school is in a fragile position and under increasing budgetary pressures, specifically:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. School numbers are concerning. In September 2020, there were eight full-time pupils and two nursery pupils. ii. The class sizes are small - with 10 pupils being taught in one mixed-age class. iii. Projections show 10 pupils in 2021, 12 pupils in 2022, and 12 pupils in 2023. iv. September 2020 data shows that 26 pupils live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area with 21 of them attending other schools. It also shows that five pupils from outside the Abersoch catchment area attend Ysgol Abersoch. v. Ysgol Abersoch receives an additional amount to the usual allocation via the minimum staffing protection policy (which ensures at least a headteacher and teacher at each school, and a headteacher and an assistant in schools with fewer than 15 pupils). The total additional funding for the 2020/21 financial year (based on the numbers in September 2019) is £52,582.
569	<p>State in what way did the proposal follow this, and in what ways does Ysgol Abersoch not meet this strategy.</p> <p>To ensure fairness, it would follow that this approach should also be followed for each of the neighbouring schools, with reference to which elements of the strategy are met and not met, in particular with regards to the mixed-age class size range of 12 - 20 pupils.</p> <p>We believe it is inappropriate to be selective about this.</p>		
570	This concern was identified as far back as 2009. What action has Gwynedd Council taken to address this concern, and why has it allowed this to		

	continue, particularly with regards to some schools being >20% over-capacity and still accepting out of catchment pupils when nearby schools have spaces? The evidence indicates that a catchment area review is appropriate.		vi. The per pupil cost for Ysgol Abersoch during the 2020/21 financial year is £17,404, compared with the county-wide average per pupil cost of £4,198 for the same period. vii. Number of surplus spaces - 76% surplus places at the school (32 in total)
571	I believe that in order to make a more balanced decision the Council must: ... Consider a catchment area review and federalisation as real options that can be pursued.		The Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd Strategy outlines the vision to: "Provide education of the best possible quality that will provide the county's children with the experiences, skills and confidence to develop into bilingual, successful and well-rounded citizens."
572	In order to come to a more balanced decision, I believe that the Council must: ... • confirm the Education Department's pupil projections with reference to more reliable population growth statistics such as its own Gwynedd Council Auditor General Once more realistic pupil estimates have been confirmed, show how the mixed class sizes of Ysgol Abersoch and surrounding schools will be in the 12-20 range for now and in the future. This is essential to providing educational excellence to all 200 pupils in the catchment area.		The factors in the Strategy were used to measure it against the options. This assessment is seen in www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/ModernisingEducation In addition, the Strategy notes: "Whilst there is a desire to review school organization strategically and at a catchment-area level, individual schools have written to the Council asking the authority to review specific situations. The Council must be willing to consider and respond positively to such requests. Relevant professional information should also be considered so as to draw attention to urgent situations within the County that directly impact quality of pupils' education and experiences (e.g. very low pupil numbers within a school, very poor condition of a school building, difficulties in headteacher recruitment). Situations of serious and immediate concern as evidenced by relevant professional specialist information and including specific requests from individual schools will be a key consideration when prioritizing catchment areas for review." It is emphasised that the review of the situation of Ysgol Abersoch is not a part of a broader strategy for education in the area, but rather, is a response to a situation at an individual school.
573	We continue to be amazed that Ysgol Abersoch is being considered in isolation in this area. This piecemeal approach fails to consider the wider context of the four schools, where one setting is oversubscribed to the detriment of others, and how the long term provision of suitable sized classes can be secured. There seems to be a real need for a catchment area review, which should include identifying provision for nursery age children.		
	Other - alternative options		
574	These alternatives have been rejected for somewhat generic and stereotypical reasons in the officer response to the consultation. AT LEAST, they deserve thorough discussion and with all stakeholders. The term of extended debate would be dedicated to the alternative options. Otherwise,		The Council notes the comments. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organization Code 11/2018, and the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, a statutory consultation period on

	it must be concluded that the Council has not fulfilled its duty to study all alternatives. This is the main basis of our opposition.		the proposed proposal took place with relevant consultees from 12 January 2021 to 23 February 2021.
575	I believe that in order to make a more balanced decision the Council must:.... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the impact on the Absersoch community as being clearly negative if Ysgol Absersoch were to close. 		Following the consultation, it was reported back to Cabinet on 15 June 2021, and Cabinet considered the consultation report, comments and alternatives received during the statutory consultation period, and decided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To approve the publication of a statutory proposal to close Ysgol Absersoch on 31 December 2021, and provide a place for pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 January 2022. ii. To approve the publication of statutory notices on the proposal in (i) above in accordance with the requirements of Section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. iii. The School Organization Code 011/2018, states that a consultee may suggest other alternatives as well as comments on the specific proposal during the consultation.
576	I believe that in order to make a more balanced decision the Council must:.... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formally consult with and share the views of neighbouring schools on the alternatives under consideration. 		
577	I note the options presented but I still worry about the Research into the options mainly the process of Federalisation with nearby Schools and having children from the age of 3 until 9 I understand that this will not have an impact on the number of children at Absersoch and that it would have no impact on Ysgol Sarn Bach – I do not believe this has been trialled. The feedback I have received locally is that there is a perception that comments are ignored and that the only acceptable option is to close the school.		5 other alternatives were proposed during the consultation. (A number of responses suggested that further consideration should be given to the option of extending the age range of the school to 3-9 years as well). Following the evaluation of the alternatives received during the consultation (copy of this options appraisal can be seen by following the link www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation). It was concluded that further consideration should be given to 3 options, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-site school (Absersoch, Llanbedrog and Sarn Bach site) Ysgol Absersoch Federation, Ysgol Llanbedrog, Ysgol Sarn Bach and joint working arrangement with Ysgol Foel Gron. Bardsey Federation (Ysgol Absersoch, Llanbedrog, Sarn Bach, Pont Y Gof, Crud Y Werin, Botwnnog Secondary and co-operation arrangement with Ysgol Foel Gron)
578	There is no evidence that the option to Federalise the school has been investigated adequately and seriously. Ysgol Llanbedrog is over its capacity, but the impact on nearby schools have been dismissed completely by the Education Department.		
579	It is hard to believe that every option presented that would make keeping Ysgol Absersoch possible has been dismissed and rejected – solid decisions such as federalisation, establishing a Beach School, educating children up to age of 9 before transferring. It would be great to see Gwynedd Council making a stand, leading the way and showing innovation. I beg you to start again with a clean slate but this		However, following the assessment and evaluation of these options against the factors of the ‘Best Quality Primary Education for Gwynedd’s Children’ Strategy (taking into account the School Organization Code 01/2018, and other relevant considerations) (section 6.22 of the consultation report www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation) concluded that the proposal to close Ysgol Absersoch and provide all Absersoch catchment area children at

	time consider the positive reasons behind keeping this school open rather than emphasising the reasons over its closure. It is incredibly important to believe and invest in the future of this priceless school in the village of Abersoch.		Ysgol Sarn Bach remained as the most appropriate option to respond to the challenges facing the school (for reasons set out in sections 4.1 and 4.7 of the consultation report www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation).
580	By statute, you only have to consider objections that are now raised in response to the Notice to close the school, and you are under an obligation (School Organisation Code) to consider all objections "with an open mind". To date, despite all the detailed collating, there is no indication of open-minded consideration. No single word (out of the tens of thousands of words of response) seems to have caused any change of opinion at all for Council officers, and there is therefore room for the public to question the validity of the consultation. We do not repeat our alternative proposals, but ask you to consider them afresh with an open mind in the light of the following three points that form the basis of our objection to the Statutory Notice		
581	Whilst the report indicates that there are alternative options to closure, the Education Department report refers to only one single option, closing Ysgol Abersoch and transferring the children to Ysgol Sarn Bach despite being aware of the loss to the community. Historically there has been no community interaction in Abersoch by Ysgol Sarn Bach and we cannot see how this will change, in particular given the poor responses to this question at the Cabinet meeting 15 June 2021. We remain of the belief that the alternative options were not duly discussed at the Cabinet meeting. No option other than closure was discussed and the lack of information on the federalisation meetings held with Ysgol Sarn Bach and Ysgol Llanbedrog challenge the validity of the discussion and decision.		

M	Wellbeing Act		
582	An acknowledgement of the Covid-19 pandemic would be appropriate, with reference to “the ability to adapt to change” The pandemic has led and is leading to changes in society. Rural life is becoming more attractive as more and more people work from home, they are less restricted as to where they must live; we might expect second homes in Abersoch to become first homes with attendant schooling requirements. The report fails to acknowledge this in its capacity numbers.		The Council notes the comment. However, there is no assurance that future demographic changes would increase the pupil numbers of Ysgol Abersoch.
583	The ability for children and parents to walk to school and access the natural resources such as the beach etc on foot during the school day will be lost. Other schools only offer one term of swimming lessons, a vital and important skill to children living in a coastal area. In the context of Covid-19 small groups have been created within schools to control infection, thus implying that small schools are safer. This is not acknowledged.		The Council notes the comments. All schools in Gwynedd have followed appropriate procedures relating to social distancing rules and ventilation due to coronavirus. All schools are encouraged to make use of the local outdoor resources.
584	By implementing the proposal there will be an opportunity to build on these links between the Abersoch community and Ysgol Sarn Bach by holding discussions that would promote the inclusion of the Abersoch community in the community activity of the school" Again we question the validity of this statement. Outside of the fact that Abersoch children attend the school, we are not aware of any links that Ysgol Sarn Bach has with the Abersoch community. The very nature of the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch is potentially divisive, driving a wedge between communities and creating discord and disagreement.		The Council completed an assessment of the community impact of the options in order to compare the likely impact they would have on the communities in question. A copy of the full report is included in the background pack on the Council's website: www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation When developing any proposals relating to education modernisation, full consideration has to be given to the potential impact on the community. The assessment noted that by closing Ysgol Abersoch, some elements of community activities would be affected. To mitigate any potential negative impact on the community should the proposal be implemented, the assessment notes the importance of ensuring that the community of Abersoch is included in the activities of the alternative school, and to encourage community collaboration between the alternative school and the Abersoch community, where appropriate.
585	Yet again this theme is apparent, yet no evidence has been put forward as to how this has been planned and would take place.		The Council notes the comment.

586	<p>Closing a Welsh medium school in a village where the Welsh language is under pressure will not “promote and protect culture, heritage and the Welsh language.” The school is the best and only advertisement for the Welsh language, heritage, and culture in the village. This impact is almost impossible to calculate in monetary terms. The existence of Welsh as a living language will be relegated as visitors to Abersoch will not hear the natural language being used. The school is in the centre of the village and the main village car park is adjacent to the school. The school is a beacon of the Welsh language, both visually and audibly through the children being outside during the school day.</p>		<p>In accordance with the School Organisation Code 011/2018, an assessment was completed on the linguistic impact of the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and educating the children at Ysgol Sarn Bach. The assessment is available on the Council website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation. It is concluded in this assessment that no negative impact on the Welsh language is anticipated, should the proposal be realised. This is mainly as the alternative school offers a Welsh-medium education, as currently offered at Ysgol Abersoch. The Language Policy is the same for all Gwynedd primary schools; therefore, the provision would be the same, regardless of which school they would choose to attend. In addition, it appears that the linguistic situation at Ysgol Sarn Bach is strong. With 57% of Ysgol Sarn Bach pupils coming from Welsh speaking homes. In comparison, 33% of Ysgol Abersoch pupils come from Welsh speaking homes.</p> <p>Ysgol Abersoch has worked hard to develop the learners' bilingual skills and promote the importance of Welsh culture. The school managed to win the gold Welsh Language Charter in 2019. Therefore, it is important that the proposal acknowledges the need to support and continue with this work.</p>
587	<p>Establishing the Cylch Meithrin and Ti a Fi are key actions towards creating sustainable growth in pupil numbers, as well as providing an important childcare service for working parents of the area. Why is this not acknowledged in the report? The Future Generations Commissioner has stated that consideration should be given to the long-term trends i.e. 25-50 years into the future.</p>		<p>The Council notes the comments and recognises that the Cylch Meithrin provides an important childcare service for parents who work in the area. However, given the current increase in pupil numbers at Ysgol Abersoch as a result of the Cylch Meithrin, namely an increase of one or two pupils only, the challenges facing Ysgol Abersoch will continue.</p>
588	<p>The school community / governors responded to the low numbers by setting up Ti a Fi and Cylch Meithrin at the school, as establishing some in other villages proved successful in naturally attracting new pupils to the local school.</p>		
589	<p>The numbers have now risen, and the situation has changed with the introduction of Cylch Meithrin Abersoch and Cylch Ti a Fi.</p>		
590	<p>Disagree with the statement that the seven aims of the Well-being Act were considered - because there are no affordable family homes in the village and it is not possible to carry out community activity because the teachers live outside the community (as in the case of a School Abersoch) and were not directly linked.</p>		<p>The Council notes the comment.</p>

N	Future use of the school site		
591	What will happen to the Building if Ysgol Abersoch is to close? Sell it for Demolition, then build luxurious homes for more immigrants?		Should the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch be implemented, the Council has a school building post-use policy and this policy would be followed when considering the future of the site.
592	It's obvious that once the cooling off period has elapsed and you may think that we have forgotten but we all know that you the council will sell off the land to an outside family to build a monstrosity of a second home. We'll done gwynedd council.		
593	No detail has been provided on what will happen to the school land and buildings if the school is closed.		We are aware that the Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi are held on the school site. Should a decision be made to close the school, options for the post-use of the school would have to be considered, taking the activities currently held at the school into account.
594	4.7 If buildings, rooms, facilities, or services are provided by the school for the community, where will they be provided if the school is closed? The Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi are held in the school building. This question is not answered in the report. What is the reason for this omission?		
595	Anxiety surrounding what will happen as the land and building was gifted to the community, and what will happen to Cylch/Ti a Fi.		In terms of the Cylch Meithrin provision, if this proposal goes ahead, the Council is eager to discuss the possibilities with relevant representatives. The possibilities for discussion could include staying at the current location, relocating to the alternative school, or moving to another site in the village of Abersoch.
596	It is so important that local people and young people have a school in the village. I hope that the decision reached is the correct one and that this village will not be turned into an outrageously expensive second home when there are local people here all year round who need a school and its history.		
597	I also want to ask if you can present all the documentation from the schools deeds, land registry and the covenants, as the school was gifted and was to be used as an educational setting, therefore we would like to see these documents as soon as possible		This is being dealt with as a freedom of information request.

O	Implementation Date		
598	The intent to close in the middle of a school year is also unfair as parents will be under pressure to decide whether or not to send their children to a different school to avoid having to move half way through a school year.		<p>Despite the consultation being held on the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 August 2021 and provide a place for pupils in Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 September 2021, after considering the comments received during the consultation expressing concerns about the outline timetable, it was decided that deferring implementation until 31 December 2021 would allow more time for the Education Department to put arrangements in place in order to ensure a smooth transition for pupils from Ysgol Abersoch to Ysgol Sarn Bach.</p> <p>It is anticipated that this would allow enough time for the Education Department to work with the two schools to put all the necessary arrangements in place prior to transferring pupils to Ysgol Sarn Bach at the beginning of January 2022.</p> <p>If the proposal was to be implemented, the Authority notes the intention to make every effort to assist the learners to settle at their new school.</p>
599	It does not take an education specialist to know that the concept of closing a school at Christmas, part way through a school year, is certainly not in the best interests of pupils.		
600	The proposal to close a school half way through an educational year is not in the best interests of the pupils, not to mention during the unusual turbulent and frightening experiences of last year. It is hard to believe that this proposal is seriously considered a satisfactory outcome of a statutory consultation that claims to gather and listen to the views of parents, children and the wider community; a process pushed through during the difficult and turbulent times of a terrible pandemic.		
601	The wellbeing and mental health of children, staff and governors are not considered by the proposal to close in the middle of the school year – this only upsets everyone during what is supposedly a happy and celebratory term.		
602	If the closure is regarding the children's wellbeing as you have touched upon in your report, you cannot allow this to happen on 31 st December, you will allow the school year to continue until summer.		
603	<p>It's strange that no one in attendance asked why a large part of one of the consultation responses was mysteriously blackened, showing a lack of curiosity and attention to detail, or perhaps by the 101st letter everyone had lost interest?</p> <p>The decision to close the school on December 31st, in the middle of the educational year, clearly shows that the welfare of the children is not at its core. Christmas should be a happy time for children, not clouded by the sense of loss, sadness and anxiety of starting a new school. This is a sentimental decision which also suggests that the Education Department hopes that parents would not want to transfer their children in the middle of the educational year and, as a result, influence their decision if they return to Ysgol Abersoch in September (Section 6.5.12) or not. Like every other school pupil across the country, the last two academic years have been chaotic and extremely transient with a mix of teaching from a distance and school attendance. We all hope for a much more stable academic year in September 2021. However, pupils at Ysgol Abersoch will experience another fragmented year if the Education Authority's plan is followed. This does not benefit them and if the Education Authority is to continue its decision therefore, the school should not close until August 31st, 2022 in order to offer stability to the learners.</p>		
604	The proposal to close the school in the middle of a school year is clearly not in the best interests of the pupils and their families.		

605	We are extremely disappointed that the whole process has been delayed and are dismayed at the concept of closing a school at Christmas, part-way through a school year. We do not believe this to be in the best interests and well-being of the children, their families or our staff.		
606	I strongly object to the closure of Ysgol Abersoch and find it quite disturbing, that the people involved with the wellbeing of children, think that it is in order to uproot and disrupt them at Christmas, usually a festive time, removing them from a place where they are happy and secure.		
607	It was with a very heavy heart that I witnessed the Cabinet meeting on the 15th June where the members voted to continue with the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch on the 31st December 2021. Aside from being the completely wrong decision in my strongly held opinion, it does not take an education specialist to know that the concept of closing a school at Christmas, part way through a school year, is certainly not in the best interests of pupils.		
608	We understand that the intention is to close Ysgol Abersoch at the end of the Christmas term. This is bound to create unease among the children and completely confuse them as they will be uprooted in the middle of a school year.		

P	Other		
609	<p>You have accepted my daughter and I was told by the education department of the council that my daughter will receive her education at the Ysgol Abersoch till the end of year 3. I was not told it will end in the middle of the year of year 2. This is totally unacceptable and quite frankly I believe you haven't got legal right to interrupt her schooling like that. If that is to happen I will have no other option than to take the matter further. We have showed you the facts against the closure which are being totally misinterpreted by you and I really feel this will have to be taken further.</p>		<p>Receiving an application for admission to a school reflects the circumstances of the school at the time. No promise is given regarding the future of the school. A decision regarding the future of a school cannot be foreseen when considering admission applications to the school. Decisions about the future of a school does not affect the process of granting admission to a school on the basis of parental preference.</p> <p>Additionally, the School Organisation Act (Wales) 2013 gives local authorities the power to reorganise schools by following the procedures set out in the School Organisation Code (011/2018).</p>
610	<p>I quote again one of Merched y Wawr's aims: "I hybu unrhyw achos er budd merched yng Nghymru, ac yn arbennig i rymuso addysg gyhoeddus ac i hyrwyddo diwylliant Cymreig, addysg a'r celfyddydau yng Nghymru trwy gyfrwng yr iaith Gymraeg". We therefore feel that we cannot ignore the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch, considering that Ysgol Llanaelhaearn has already closed. How many other schools are at stake? We ask you again to consider the above principles very carefully, as they are valid for any discussion about our children's education. Also consider the principles of future well-being - the more schools that close, the more our communities will decline, leaving areas of community wilderness.</p>		<p>Our expectation is that the County's primary schools support and enhance the use of the Welsh language as their pupils' social language and educational language.</p> <p>When developing any proposals relating to schools' reorganisation, full consideration must be given to the potential impact on the Welsh language. Sustaining and improving the use of the Welsh language as a social language and educational language is always a key consideration when drawing up proposals and when assessing options.</p> <p>In accordance with the School Organisation Code 011/2018, an assessment was completed of the linguistic impact of the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and educating the children at Ysgol Sarn Bach. The assessment is available on the Council website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</p> <p>It is concluded in this assessment that no negative impact on the Welsh language is anticipated, should the proposal be realised. This is specifically so as the alternative school offers a Welsh-medium education, as currently offered at Ysgol Abersoch. The Language Policy is the same for all Gwynedd primary schools; therefore, the provision would be the same, regardless of which school they would choose to attend.</p>

611	The village needs a school so that children can learn and be taught during a period where we are eager for children to be able to learn, work and live close to home, what kind of message does this convey when their school closes?		The Council notes the comment. Should the proposal be implemented, the children and young people of the catchment area would be offered a high-quality education at Ysgol Sarn Bach, which is 1.4 miles away from the village of Abersoch.
612	My family have lived on the Pen Llŷn Peninsula for over 300 years and this fine school I attended in the 1940/1950's. You owe it to the fine and generous benefactors who funded and built the school in the first instance and more over, to the community and the future of our children in general.		The Council notes the comment.
613	The school has been recognised as unique by the National Press. The school has always received the support of parents, teachers and governors.		The Council notes the comment.
614	The reason for closure is not clear. If, as I suspect, - use some of all the extra council tax to fund the school. !!!		The Council notes the comment.
615	The community of Abersoch pays more council tax than any other place in North Wales except the city of Bangor, yet the council see fit to remove a school that has educated children in this community for 98 years. Where is this money going? Why is more not been done to provide locals with affordable homes?		<p>Ysgol Abersoch has been prioritised for a review of the educational provision as the school is facing a number of challenges. Pupil numbers at the school have fallen consistently since 2016 and the figure has been fragile for some time.</p> <p>Consequently, it is likely that the school is facing increasing challenges, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low pupil numbers: In September 2020, eight full-time pupils and two part-time nursery pupils were registered at the school. • Projected numbers: It is anticipated that the numbers will continue to be low over the coming years (September 2021 = 10; September 2022 = 12; September 2023 = 12). • High percentage of surplus places: Based on the figures for September 2020, there were approximately 76% of surplus places at the school (26 in total) (R - Yr. 3). • Small class sizes: The 10 pupils are taught in one mixed-age class. • Broad age ranges within classes: The pupils are taught in one class with an age range of up to five years (3-8 years).
616	Gwynedd policies have allowed Abersoch to become the most profitable holiday resort (second homes) in the county in terms of tax, and further increments are planned. According to the council's statistics, Llanengan Parish contributes over 4% of the tax collected in Gwynedd, over £3,000,000. Taking away the Community Council precept and the Police contributions this leaves £2.3million. Surely a percentage of this tax should aid supporting the kernel of Welsh within the village and an important resource for the less fortunate residents of the ward?		
617	My belief is that the council's real initiative is to close as many small schools as possible, to manage less but larger schools. The polisi has been crawling for over a decade. The intent here is to close Ysgol Abersoch. Cost cutting is the aim. The problem with cuts is the tendency to cut too much. And the sufferers here will be the residents of Abersoch's community.		

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupil residence: 2020 data shows that 26 3-8-year-old children live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area with 21 (81%) of them attending schools outside the catchment area. <p>The school receives an additional amount to the usual allocation via the minimum staffing protection policy (which ensures at least a headteacher and teacher at each school, and a headteacher and an assistant in schools with fewer than 15 full-time pupils). The total additional funding for the 2020-21 financial year (based on the numbers in September 2019) was £52,582. The cost per pupil at Ysgol Abersoch is £17,404 (2020-21); the average cost in the county per pupil is £4,198.</p> <p>This is not sustainable in the long-term because the projected numbers remain low and consequently, the financial challenges would continue.</p> <p>The Council Tax Premium on second homes is being earmarked to fund some of the Housing Action Plan's projects. Details of the individual projects and funding sources can be found here: https://democratiaeth.gwynedd.llyw.cymru//documents/s27957/Eitem%206%20-%20Atodiad%20A%20-%20Cynllun%20Gweithredu%20Tai.pdf?LLL=1</p>
618	It is worth noting that many communities across Wales, recently, have made an effort to re-open resources and centres that have been closed as they realise how important they are to have.		The Council notes the comment.
619	Keep the Abersoch school open. I live in a small village and that old school has been turned into a house Why? Money? Keep the heart of the kids local and individual! Keep Abersoch school open.		The Council notes the comment.
620	Do not make a community of young children suffer for financial gain.		Ysgol Abersoch has been prioritised for a review of the educational provision as the school is facing a number of challenges. Pupil numbers at the school have fallen consistently since 2016 and the figure has been fragile for some time.
621	I feel it's is inherently wrong to try and limit the LOCAL education of our children. This school has done wonders for so many people and friends of mine to give them a wonderful start to many years in education. It is wrong to take this and move it elsewhere when I and many others support and WANT this school to carry on.		Consequently, it is likely that the school is facing increasing challenges, including:

622	<p>After meeting some of the children and teachers on Abersoch beach while they were doing their PE sessions I thought how lucky they were to have such a beautiful place to do sports. I spoke to one of the parents on the beach and asked about the school. She was very enthusiastic about the benefits her children had going to that particular school. Learning so many skills and continuing to speak the Welsh language. I often hear the kids speaking Welsh keeping the heritage in the town.</p> <p>I felt a sense of warmth towards the school. I love the fact that the little kids go to swimming lessons on the local bus to save on costs. So important to learn to swim while living so close to the sea.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low pupil numbers: In September 2020, eight full-time pupils and two part-time nursery pupils were registered at the school. • Projected numbers: It is anticipated that the numbers will continue to be low over the coming years (September 2021 = 10; September 2022 = 12; September 2023 = 12). • High percentage of surplus places: Based on the figures for September 2020, there were approximately 76% of surplus places at the school (26 in total) (R - Yr. 3). • Small class sizes: The 10 pupils are taught in one mixed-age class. • Broad age ranges within classes: The pupils are taught in one class with an age range of up to five years (3-8 years). • Pupil residence: 2020 data shows that 26 3-8-year-old children live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area with 21 (81%) of them attending schools outside the catchment area.
623	<p>The COVID pandemic has taught us that our world has changed, and it will be a long time before it is normalised if at all ever - closing schools and increasing numbers in other schools seems to be the antithesis to the solution? - For all the reasons that others have raised far more elegantly than I ever could</p> <p>- For the Teachers, Governors, Parents and others who are too numerous to mention who recognise that this school is truly special and worth saving and who have spent large amounts of emotional capital and their own precious time which they will never get back</p> <p>I hope that you will look again at your decision, re-read all the objections and ask yourself when the dust has cleared - did you make the right decision. I fear that if you close this school, in hindsight you will reflect and come to the conclusion that this closure was a massive error and irreversible</p>		
624	<p>Ambitious enterprises have been presented by the Council in terms of Building Houses and regenerating communities yet this decision is the opposite. Building costs have risen horribly in the past year and to re-build a similar facility would cost a fortune by now so protecting this facility would be better. To summarise I am of the opinion that the decision is unwise. I do not think that the situation regarding consulting during a pandemic has been fair.</p>		<p>The Council notes the comments; however, the Council wishes to note that it did not have control over the open housing market.</p> <p>Also, the Council notes the criticism presented in terms of the timing of the consultation, specifically in terms of the restrictions of the Covid pandemic.</p> <p>Nevertheless, we are confident that the statutory consultation process undertaken complies with the requirements and guidance of the School Organisation Code 011/2018. As part of the statutory consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A consultation document was published, as well as the relevant background documents, in the form of an electronic

			<p>copy on the Council's website (with hard copies available upon request)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic copies of the document were distributed to the relevant stakeholders (in accordance with the requirements of the Code) • Written observations/responses were received through the post and via e-mail. <p>Sympathy was expressed with the concerns of holding a consultation during the pandemic; nevertheless, it is emphasised that we, as an Authority cannot commit not to deal with the school for an unspecified time. In addition, Welsh Government published a notice on 8 January 2021 to allow proposals regarding school organisation to continue, where not all schools are open.</p>
625	<p>The current housing and employment situation had a damaging effect nowhere more than Abersoch. Gwynedd Council's recent publication of a 'Housing Action Plan' to support affordable housing highlighted the importance of a coherent framework for a sustainable future. This proves, in conjunction with the announcement of development plans to create 150 jobs in the village, that Abersoch is well placed to lead the way. We believe this can start as Gwynedd Council deals with innovative education.</p>		<p>The Council notes the comments.</p> <p>The school receives an additional amount to the usual allocation via the minimum staffing protection policy (which ensures at least a headteacher and teacher at each school, and a headteacher and an assistant in schools with fewer than 15 full-time pupils). The total additional funding for the 2020-21 financial year (based on the numbers in September 2019) was £52,582. The cost per pupil at Ysgol Abersoch is £17,404 (2020-21); the average cost in the county per pupil is £4,198.</p> <p>This is not sustainable in the long-term because the projected numbers remain low and consequently, the financial challenges would continue.</p> <p>The Council Tax Premium on second homes is being earmarked to fund some of the Housing Action Plan's projects. Details of the individual projects and funding sources can be found here: https://democratiaeth.gwynedd.llyw.cymru//documents/s27957/Eitem%206%20-%20Atodiad%20A%20-%20Cynllun%20Gweithredu%20Tai.pdf?LLL=1</p>
626	<p>Gwynedd Council now receives 100% more Council Tax from second homes. As most of these holiday homes are located in Abersoch, and given the widespread community support for the school, why is it not possible to give something back in accordance with the community's hopes and wishes by transferring a portion of this tax, a small percentage of the tax you receive, for the benefit of the Welsh language and community in Abersoch.</p> <p>There is nothing solid in the report about the future of the community here in Abersoch or out-of-the-box leadership. During this year alone, a single estate agent in Abersoch has transferred over £4 million to the Welsh Revenue Authority in Cardiff under the Land Transaction Tax that require second home buyers to pay higher taxes, with this money earmarked to regenerate local communities and to support the local Affordable Housing</p>		

	<p>scheme. In the context of the second home crisis, and the subsequent damage to local communities, it is vital that remaining services such as village schools are supported.</p>		
627	<p>The ongoing and severe housing crisis in Abersoch is being faced with affordable housing plans and the new Council Plan to buy properties for rent at affordable rates. Gwynedd Council's Housing Action Plan is aimed at rectifying the problems of the affordable housing stock, a problem that is particularly endemic in Abersoch. This scheme is partly funded by an increase in Council Tax on holiday and vacant homes and Abersoch is well placed to benefit from this. Economically, Abersoch is going from strength to strength with employment opportunities such as the new hotel scheme which is forecasting 150 new jobs. We can also reasonably expect to see a potential increase in pupils as a result of the possibility of second home owners moving permanently into the area as a result of Covid. According to the Future Generations Commissioner, we should look 25 to 50 years ahead and the current indicators show that Abersoch should thrive in the coming years. The new jobs and housing plans are key indicators of changing local demographics; they emphasize the need to maintain educational provision in the village and the decision to close the school would undermine these initiatives.</p> <p><i>A broader and integrated vision beyond the financial savings of closing the school would recognize Abersoch's importance to the Llŷn Peninsula economy; for this is the importance of maintaining basic services of housing, employment and education.</i></p>		<p>In December 2020, Gwynedd Council adopted an Action Plan that will invest £77m in over 30 specific plans to tackle the increasing challenge of a lack of suitable housing for the County's residents, including increasing the number of affordable housing available for local people. The Plan will be implemented over the next six years, including projects such as increasing the number of social housing in Gwynedd; purchasing former social housing and private houses to let at an affordable rent to the residents of Gwynedd; developing our own houses to increase the opportunities for Gwynedd residents to compete; refusing applications to remove a local person condition on former "Council houses"; Homebuy Scheme and First Time Buyers' Grants to renovate empty houses. The exact locations of some of these schemes are to be confirmed following an exercise of consulting with communities in order to establish their housing needs.</p> <p>The Council is aware that a set of measures will be required, a number of them currently beyond the direct control of the Council, if we are to be able to achieve genuine fairness for local residents in the field of housing. This Housing Action Plan is one of these measures and allows us to aim to directly act to the best of our abilities in order to attempt to reconcile the current situation. We also acknowledge that we will continue to campaign for further national changes in order to strengthen our ability to operate within Gwynedd and the Council will continue to do so at every possible opportunity in the field of housing, taxation, licensing and planning.</p>
628	<p>It seems entirely fair and appropriate that a small portion of the funds generated by these second homes could be allocated to support the village school as a vital part of the community that has been severely affected. I am hoping that Cyngor Gwynedd will be making every effort to address the impact of second homes on our village, and they can make a great start right now by listening to local opinion and investing in the young people who wish to continue to learn and grow up in a sustainable Abersoch.</p>		
629	<p>There is no mention in your report of the 150 jobs which will be provided when a hotel will be built and opened in Abersoch, thus encouraging local families to stay in the area and creating an opportunity for new families to come to the area. Penrhos has also been earmarked for development thus creating houses for families, where will these children go to school? It has also been mentioned that some families are</p>		<p>There is no assurance that demographic changes in the future and an increase in local jobs would increase pupil numbers at Ysgol Abersoch. The children and young people of the catchment area would be offered a high-quality education at Ysgol Sarn Bach, which is 1.4 miles away from the village of Abersoch.</p>

	opting to move to the Village on a permanent basis as they have realised during the Covid pandemic they can successfully work from home. We need amenities to remain in place to accommodate the needs of the community, as we see too often villages losing chapels, banks, doctor's surgeries and other facilities that communities hold dear ensuring places thrive throughout the year not just as a Holiday destination.		
630	We chose Ysgol Abersoch because we felt it had a familial feel it had a lovely sense of belonging. My children were very anxious leaving friends and family to relocate to Wales. We felt it was very important to get this right.... The Teachers nurtured her and gave her the confidence to become an independent thinker and learner. This is more than any ordinary school. This is somewhere that parents and children are able to approach the teachers and the door is always open, I have not found this at any other school.		The Council notes the comment.
631	Do not be the council to show that progress could not be made, show that you can work with our school, our community, our future, be pioneering and encourage the outdoor beach school, show that you are forward thinking, looking to the future, protecting the Welsh Language in our community for future generations to come		The Council notes the comment.
632	<p>I question, in the case of Ysgol Abersoch, whether a fair hearing will be held given the disappointing level of discussion seen at earlier Cabinet meetings, and following the request of the Scrutiny Committee to revisit the decision to proceed with the consultation. A sense of 'fait accompli' sits very uneasily alongside the subjective and prejudiced comments presented in the consultation documents, framed to fulfill the Education Department's aim of closing Ysgol Abersoch.</p> <p>It would not be unreasonable, given the serious implications at stake here, to expect elected members - and to challenge the integrity of these documents rather than to unanimously endorse the proposals put forward by Council officers, without taking any personal responsibility for the Council to account.</p>		<p>A decision taken by the Cabinet on 15 September 2020 was called in for scrutiny by the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee. In its meeting on 8 October 2020, the committee considered the Council Cabinet's decision to hold a statutory consultation to a proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 August 2021, and provide a place for pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach on 1 September 2021.</p> <p>After careful consideration, the Committee decided that it remained concerned about the situation and that the matter should be referred back to the Cabinet for reconsideration.</p> <p>Following careful consideration and a detailed discussion of the Scrutiny Committee's views at its meeting held on 3 November 2020, the Council's Cabinet decided that its original decision taken on 15 September 2020 to conduct a statutory consultation on the proposal, should not be amended, and to adopt this as its final decision.</p>
633	It is ironic that the next item on the Cabinet Program was the report commissioned by Gwynedd Council on second homes last year. There was no mention of either a		The Council notes the comments.

	holiday home or a second home in the discussion about the closure of the school given that the main cause of falling numbers of children is the lack of affordable housing for young families to live in their community.		<p>In December 2020, Gwynedd Council adopted an Action Plan that will invest £77m in over 30 specific plans to tackle the increasing challenge of a lack of suitable housing for the County's residents, including increasing the number of affordable housing available for local people. The Plan will be implemented over the next six years, including projects such as increasing the number of social housing in Gwynedd; purchasing former social housing and private houses to let at an affordable rent to the residents of Gwynedd; developing our own houses to increase the opportunities for Gwynedd residents to compete; refusing applications to remove a local person condition on former "Council houses"; Homebuy Scheme and First Time Buyers' Grants to renovate empty houses. The exact locations of some of these schemes are to be confirmed following an exercise of consulting with communities in order to establish their housing needs.</p> <p>The Council is aware that a set of measures will be required, a number of them currently beyond the direct control of the Council, if we are to be able to achieve genuine fairness for local residents in the field of housing. This Housing Action Plan is one of these measures and allows us to aim to directly act to the best of our abilities in order to attempt to reconcile the current situation. We also acknowledge that we will continue to campaign for further national changes in order to strengthen our ability to operate within Gwynedd and the Council will continue to do so at every possible opportunity in the field of housing, taxation, licensing and planning.</p>
634	School numbers have decreased due to the lack of affordable housing in the village - those who earn good wages such as headteachers of large schools and doctors cannot even afford to buy a house in Abersoch.		
635	One of the possible reasons that numbers of pupils has not risen over the past few years is the lack of affordable housing for people working in the village on low basic wages this has forced young families to move out to cheaper housing in surrounding area.		
636	In addition, the ability of local families with children to live in Abersoch has been constrained by a lack of open market control in housing which has forced many to leave the area.		
637	Why do young Welsh people have such difficulty in making a building application while strangers are allowed to break down and rebuild houses as if it were a competition for the grandest ultimately ruining the character of a village. These holiday homes add nothing to the number of children in the schools. In this connection, we must thank our former councilor R. Wyn Williams for fighting for affordable housing on Lôn Garmon. Why, oh why a village lady's application was rejected, who did so much contribute to Abersoch culture (and still does) to have one extra window in her house. It is a great injustice and it is a disgrace.		
638	<p>Closing any primary school is a bilateral disease. Especially Abersoch School. It has to close due to pupil shortages.</p> <p>This is partly due to the lack of affordable housing.</p> <p>But when you have your own children who need a school, having to choose somewhere to live is influenced by the schools available.</p> <p>So closing a school is likely to drive local people to live somewhere else, where there are schools. So if you're the council and authority that claims to want to support and encourage local people to live in Abersoch, closing a local school does nothing to support this assertion.</p>		
639	I would like to know what "Modernising" education means.		<p>The 'Excellent Primary Education for the Children of Gwynedd Strategy' was adopted unanimously by the Council in April 2009. The strategy's vision is to "Provide education of the best possible quality that will provide the county's children with the experiences, skills and confidence to develop into bilingual, successful and well-rounded citizens" and the strategy's objectives are:</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To offer the best possible experiences and opportunities to the children of the County by ensuring suitably-sized classes and high-quality leadership; • Aim to promote and strengthen the Welsh language - as an educational and social medium - by putting new proposals in place for the County's primary education; • Respond to the needs and opportunities in the existing primary education system by being pro-active and creative, and jointly working with others towards a long-term plan that will be sustainable and practical; • Make the best possible use of the resources available - human, technical, financial - so that the children get the greatest benefit from the county's expenditure on education; • Create a first-class learning environment for children and teachers of the County by improving facilities and buildings; • Develop our schools to be establishments that are the focus for community activities.
640	<p>This location is so convenient, on a neat plot in the center of the village. It is safe with its surrounding stone wall and a yard and grass field are a great asset. It is a pleasure to go past it and to see the colorful little buildings, to notice the children playing and it is wonderful to hear their excitement on a summer's day, even from the river bank. It was encouraging to see a few years ago the idioms and proverbs of Welsh in the windows. One of the highlights of Christmas is the children's Service and Concert at the Hall in Abersoch.</p>		The Council notes the comment.
641	<p>Ysgol Abersoch has a very close and happy community, and has been in the small village for nearly 100 years. At school there is plenty of room for everyone and I have had individual attention from excellent teachers, who support you all the time. I made many life-long friends there, who I would not have met without the school. There's a friendly atmosphere, and plenty of space to play. There is a playground and field where I developed football skills. Ysgol Abersoch often gave me many opportunities; with weekly swimming lessons, sports and tests that prepared me for the years to come. I had a special education from the teachers and helpers, with the basics being taught excellently. At Christmas, the pupils join in an effort to tell the Christmas story on the new Abersoch stage. The teachers will write a script which we would recite in front of the village residents and collect money for an important cause.</p>		The Council notes the comment.
	Praise and support for the school		

642	<p>The children will also be deprived of the outdoor schooling they enjoy on the beach in fine weather.</p> <p>The school is very successful, Welsh-speaking and much loved and I have seen no information from the Council which would suggest any good reason to shut it down. It is a great asset to the village and to the working parents of the children who attend it.</p>		<p>The Council notes the comment.</p> <p>Ysgol Abersoch has been prioritised for a review of the educational provision as the school is facing a number of challenges. Pupil numbers at the school have fallen consistently since 2016 and the figure has been fragile for some time.</p> <p>Consequently, it is likely that the school is facing increasing challenges, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low pupil numbers: In September 2020, eight full-time pupils and two part-time nursery pupils were registered at the school. • Projected numbers: It is anticipated that the numbers will continue to be low over the coming years (September 2021 = 10; September 2022 = 12; September 2023 = 12). • High percentage of surplus places: Based on the figures for September 2020, there were approximately 76% of surplus places at the school (26 in total) (R - Yr. 3). • Small class sizes: The 10 pupils are taught in one mixed-age class. • Broad age ranges within classes: The pupils are taught in one class with an age range of up to five years (3-8 years). • Pupil residence: 2020 data shows that 26 3-8-year-old children live in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area with 21 (81%) of them attending schools outside the catchment area.
643	Ysgol Abersoch provides an excellent start to all children regardless of their background or language.		The Council notes the comment.
644	You will have heard ALL the entirely reasonable arguments in favour, as well as the not-so reasonable arguments against its continuance and I appeal to your sense of proportion, as well as to the essence of your humanity, to ensure that our wonderful little school, with its magical history of the finest qualities of primary education be allowed to serve our little ones for many years into the future, giving them a unique and loving start in Life which will serve them immensely well, and which they will always remember with enormous affection.		The Council notes the comment.

645	is proud of excellent pupil achievements- professional, top universities/colleges business and personal		The Council notes the comment.
646	Children progressing from Ysgol Abersoch onto Sarn Bach/ Llanbedrog are often above average in reading, writing and physical development skills due to the hard work of teachers, parents and pupils in this close-knit environment.		The Council notes the comment.
647	I have three children who all went to Abersoch school and had a very pleasurable memorable school experience. The thought that other local children may not be able to experience the same would be a great shame to the whole community. I sincerely hope that the episode school will not be closed and will continue to teach children from the village		The Council notes the comment.
648	I have had many dealings with this school over the years, its teaching, its intimacy, its location all go hand in hand to make it unique, something that former pupils look back at, not with negativity as you seem to feel, but with enormous pride and great fondness, it is their inspiration, the very foundation of their education that has spurred them on to greater things. It has been graded as Good, it encourages all pupils to speak Welsh and has won awards for this. Due to its proximity to the sea, it is the only school that has full time swimming lessons, the work that goes into running this school is phenomenal, everyone from the Head Teacher to the board of Governors the parents and the wider community as a whole are 100% committed to keeping this school open.		The Council notes the comment.
649	The school does such wonderful work in giving its young students the best start in life with encouragement and support. The closure of the school will have a very detrimental effect on these young people. Please reconsider.		The Council notes the comment.
650	ysgol Abersoch is the best school in the world. I remember my school with lots of love and it was a place that made me and my friends so happy, I think it made me work harder and want to learn more because the classes were so exciting and encouraging, I was never afraid to put my hand up and ask a question. Mrs Jones is the kindest teacher in the world and If you lose her then you have lost the world!! If you take our school away from the village then you lose our future		The Council notes the comment.
651	The school is very successful, welsh-speaking and much loved and I have seen no information from the Council which would suggest any good reason to shut it down.		The Council notes the comment.
652	I object to the closure of Abersoch School. I am a former pupil and Ysgol Abersoch gave me the best start in my education. I had great experiences at school and I'm very		The Council notes the comment.

	proud to have been a pupil there. There will be a huge loss to the children of the village if it were to close.		
653	I write to you again to strongly disagree with the proposal to close this lovely little school. Two of my grandchildren have received their early years education there and I think it is thanks to the small classes that they have achieved so well. The teachers know the children so well and are tuned to each child's individual needs.		The Council notes the comment.
654	The school provides an excellent education to the children of Ysgol Abersoch and its closure would have an immeasurable effect on our community, language and culture. It is a well known fact that the most important impact on the future success and career of a child, is that of having thirst for knowledge and this starts with an excellent primary education. This is what has been delivered by Ysgol Abersoch.		The Council notes the comment.
655	I question whether or not the Cabinet is capable of making the decision to close the school or not if they base their decision on the quality of education. You only need to set foot into the school to see what an excellent example of education provision is here for the children attending.		The Council notes the comment.
656	My grandchildren have had the very best educational experience at the school as did their father		The Council notes the comment.
657	As a child I was very shy, therefore smaller class sizes were perfect, and I received lots of attention from the teachers. I am so thankful for all the opportunities as part of Ysgol Abersoch such as the experience to perform on stage, looking back now I am attending a performing college. The school is a very special place for so many children and adults and is a hub for the village and the local community.		The Council notes the comment.
658	Ysgol Abersoch is an excellent educational facility - Children love this school - its more than a school - re-read the childrens own accounts if you need reminding of how much they love this school		The Council notes the comment.
659	The school is a safe and happy environment which offers unique and memorable learning experiences which are not available at other neighbouring schools. If parents were not happy with the quality of education delivered, the standard of their child's progress or felt that their child was missing out in some way, they would already have moved their children to another school. Our marvellous headteacher is back at the helm, after an almost inconceivable year of personal tragedy, once more inspiring staff and pupils, leading them in a magical and memorable educational adventure with her special touch. The fact that, even under the dark shadow cast by the outrageous threat of closure at Christmas, all eligible pupils will be returning in		The Council notes the comment.

	September, shows the strength of feeling and value placed by parents upon the opportunities available at this school.		
660	A true testament to the school is that the 6 pupils who have moved up to Ysgol Sarn Bach in the last two years would give anything back to Ysgol Abersoch. They don't say that they don't like Ysgol Sarn Bach, but what they are really saying is that, for them, Ysgol Abersoch is the best school in the world. How many other children can say that about school and also love the education, the trips, the teachers, the building itself, the place it has in the community, the experience of building relationships with the older generation The list is endless and I have no negative word to say about this school and the education it has provided for my children and others.		The Council notes the comment.
661	Why keep to the status quo? It would be an opportunity for Gwynedd Council to be different and innovative in stating, "The age range would not be consistent with most of the county's primary schools. The option would also harmonize the age range with the rest of the county's primary schools and make the school offer complete KS2 provision"		The proposal given by statutory notice was changing the status quo, by closing Ysgol Abersoch and offering the pupils a place at Ysgol Sarn Bach.
662	May I ask if this school was a gift and the car park make so much profit why should the school close.....? It should be self-sufficient as a last resort.		Should the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch be implemented the Council has a policy for the after-use of school sites and this policy would be followed when considering the future of this site. Before doing this, ownership of the site and any covenant on it would have to be considered. If the School closes then anyone will be able to set up an independent school in Abersoch if they so wish. Doing this would mean registering with the Welsh Government and the School would be independent of the Local Authority.
663	I feel very disappointed that you have disregarded the voices of the children attending the school, parents, teachers, Governors and the community. The children recently took part in a demonstration to voice their views, to prevent them being silenced. The children also represent the voices of the school and the community in the past as this is gifted and as part of their history, the ancestors' voices can be heard echoing through the ten children. The kids got great attention and several spreadsheets have asked for photos so they can follow this story.		A series of local meetings were held to discuss the challenges facing Ysgol Abersoch and possible options that would respond to them before agreeing on the option that would most likely respond to the challenges. A consultation was held on the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and offer pupils a place at Ysgol Sarn Bach, from 12 January to 23 February 2021 and, in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, there was an opportunity for anyone to respond to the proposal. This included consulting with pupils from both schools. Following the statutory consultation, a report on the

			<p>consultation was presented to Cabinet summarising the issues raised by the consultees and noting the Council's response to those issues. Following consideration of this comprehensive report Cabinet approved the release of a statutory notice on the proposal and held an objection period for anyone to object to the proposal.</p> <p>The objection period on the proposal was held from 25 June to 23 July 2021, during which there was an opportunity for anyone to object to the proposal. This report sets out the objections received and proposes the Council's response to them for Cabinet to consider and decide on the future of Ysgol Abersoch.</p> <p>It is therefore considered that we considered stakeholder comments before reaching a final decision.</p>
664	The Education Campaign Group expresses its opposition to the Statutory Notice issued by Gwynedd Council to close Ysgol Abersoch.		The Council notes the comment.
665	Therefore, I guess I have answered my own question, there is a point to this and all other objections - where there is light (Ysgol Abersoch), there is always hope, and in life you have to stand up and shout loudly to be heard, regardless of how little those around you are willing to listen. Hopefully one objection will be loud enough to penetrate the ignorance that seem to shroud this whole process.		The Council notes the comment.
q)	Petitions		
666	The Ysgol Abersoch opened in January 1924. Unfortunately, the school is under pressure to close. The staff of the school are incredibly passionate to keep the school open and to celebrate 100 years in 2024! The school is at the very heart of the village of Abersoch, North Wales, and also in the hearts of all students, former, current or future, parents and all the locals. Please, sign this petition to show support for this school and stop the closure. Sign to support the local community, please!	1,884 signatures	The Council notes the petition and number of signatures.
667	Gwynedd Council is consulting on a proposal to close the school from 31 August 2021. Please sign this petition in support of Ysgol Abersoch, which provides an excellent education and is crucial to the safeguarding of the Welsh language and culture in the heart of our community.	1,115 signatures	The Council notes the petition and number of signatures.

Any personal information on the objections have been removed to comply with the Data Protection Act 2008 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

GWYNEDD COUNCIL

SECTION 48 SCHOOL STANDARDS AND ORGANISATION ACT (WALES) 2013

NOTICE OF PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE YSGOL ABERSOCH

GWYNEDD COUNCIL, COUNCIL OFFICES, CAERNARFON, GWYNEDD, LL55 1SH

Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 43 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code that Gwynedd Council, having consulted such persons as required, propose to discontinue YSGOL ABERSOCH, Lon Gwydryn, Abersoch, Gwynedd, LL53 7EA. The school is currently maintained by Gwynedd Council.

Gwynedd Council undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal. A consultation report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the proposer's responses and Estyn's full response is available on www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation.

It is proposed to implement the proposals on **31 December 2021**.

Subject to parental choice, current Ysgol Abersoch pupils will transfer to Ysgol Sarn Bach, Sarn Bach, Gwynedd, LL53 7LF on 1 January 2022. The school is a Welsh Medium Community School for girls and boys aged 3-11 and is located in the village of Sarn Bach.

The catchment area of Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 January 2022 will include the catchment area of the present school as it is today, and Ysgol Abersoch's present catchment area. The admission authority for Ysgol Sarn Bach is Gwynedd Council and pupils will be admitted in accordance with the Authorities Admissions Policy. The admissions arrangements for the school will not make provision for selection by aptitude or ability (pupil banding).

Transport will be provided to the school in accordance with Gwynedd Council's School Transport Policy.

Gwynedd Council is the maintaining authority and will implement the proposal.

This proposal has been formulated as a result of the need to address the low numbers of pupils attending Ysgol Abersoch and consequently the small class sizes, as well as low projections for future numbers. None of the other options identified for the school, including federalisation, addressed these issues. As a result, closing the school is considered the most appropriate solution.

Within a period of 28 days of the date on which the proposal was published, that is to say by **23 July 2021**, any persons may object to the proposal.

Objections should be sent to the Head of Education, Gwynedd Council, Council Offices, Caernarfon, LL55 1SH or by sending an e-mail for the attention of the Head of Education to modernisingeducation@gwynedd.llyw.cymru.

Signed:



Garem Jackson

Head of Education, on behalf of Gwynedd Council

Publication Date: **25 June 2021**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(The following is not part of the notice but is intended to explain its general purpose)

Following a consultation Process Gwynedd Council propose to close Ysgol Abersoch and offer a place for pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach from the 1 January 2022.

In accordance with the Authorities admissions policy, parents are entitled to apply for admission (or transfer request) to any school.

Free school transport provision will be offered to pupils in accordance with Gwynedd Council's School Transport Policy.

THE CABINET 28/09/21

Present-

Councillors: Dyfrig L. Siencyn, Dafydd Meurig, Craig ab Iago, Gareth Wyn Griffith, Nia Wyn Jeffreys, Dilwyn Morgan, Gareth Thomas, Ioan Thomas and Cemlyn Rees Williams

Also in attendance-

Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Morwena Edwards (Corporate Director), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department) and Annes Sion (Democracy Team Leader).

Item 6: Geraint Owen (Head of Corporate Support Department) and Catrin Love (Health, Safety and Well-being Advisory Services Manager).

Item 7: Geraint Owen (Head of Corporate Support Department) and Eurig Williams (Human Resources Advisory Services Manager).

Item 8: Garem Jackson (Head of Education Department) and Gwern ap Rhisiart (Dwyfor Area Education Officer).

Item 9: Garem Jackson (Head of Education Department) and Debbie Anne Jones (Education Corporate Services Manager).

1. APOLOGIES

The Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting. Apologies were received from Cllr Catrin Wager.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

There were no matters arising from overview and scrutiny.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 SEPTEMBER

The Chair signed the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 7 September 2021, a true record.

6. HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING ANNUAL REPORT

The item was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys

RESOLVED

The Annual Report was accepted.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting that 2021 had been very challenging in terms of Health, Safety and Well-being. The pandemic had highlighted, overnight, that every decision was made to ensure the safety of residents and staff in response to the pandemic. Attention was drawn to the work that had been done during the period, such as risk assessments, guidance and training for staff, along with health assessments. It was noted that a few Covid cases at work had occurred during 2020/21, but it was explained that this could not be confirmed definitively but that there was a requirement to report when there were reasonable grounds that they may have caught it at work.

It was explained that accidents continued, despite the pandemic over the past year. It was expressed that the department had been looking at the increase in injuries in the Waste Collection Service over the past years, and it was highlighted that stress was one of the main reasons for absences within the Council. It was explained that counselling had been available for staff as per usual.

It was noted that despite the difficult year, good work had been achieved to look after staff's health and well-being, and it was highlighted that the Council had retained the gold standard in the National Health Quality Framework.

Observations arising from the discussion

- The staff of the Department were thanked for their work and for their full commitment over the past year.
- It was highlighted that a great deal of work had been done to deal with staff well-being over the past year and staff were thanked for their work. However, with a high number of staff continuing to work from home, it was asked how they would continue to deal with staff well-being. It was noted that plans were in place to build on the good work that had been done.
- Pride was expressed as the department was continuing to look at the accidents that were happening specifically in the waste field.

7. ANNUAL REPORT - EMPLOYMENT

The item was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys.

RESOLVED

To note and accept the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted for the first time since 2019. It was noted that the pandemic had interrupted the last report but that it was now timely for the Cabinet to receive an employment report. It was expressed that the report looked at the profile of the workforce and highlighted the main challenges facing the Council in the medium and long term.

It was highlighted that the Council's situation had changed since the beginning of the pandemic, with adapted working practices and the implications of these. It was added that as a consequence of home working, that the recruitment market had adapted and that it was now possible to recruit from broader locations. It was explained that statistics showed that the Council's age profile had increased and that this highlighted the need to prioritise the workforce plan to maintain services in the future.

Attention was drawn to the carers recruitment problems that were present in the Adults Department, noting that this was a national problem. It was explained that the Human Resources service was working with the department to see how the situation could be improved.

It was expressed that staff well-being remained a priority and was all important and the scheme had continued throughout the pandemic. When looking to the future, it was noted that the home working arrangements were here to stay in some guise or another, and there was a need to think how to adapt long-term working arrangements. It was expressed that there were advantages from home working, but that there was a need to continue to ensure that the needs of residents were the priority.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- The Head of Department added that the past year had been considerably different. It was highlighted that sickness levels had reduced and that staff turnover levels had also reduced. Despite this, it was explained that the level was increasing gradually and the Council needed to continue to plan the workforce to retain and recruit staff.
- It was emphasised that there were substantial pressures on the workforce and there were national concerns about service continuity. In response to a question about the Council's position, it was noted that an increase in work pressure and the impact of staff turnover could be seen in some fields in particular, and that there was a risk of losing more staff.
- Attention was drawn to carer recruitment and that it was a concerning situation as individuals were being forced to stay in Hospital for a long period of time before they could come home, due to the lack of carers. It was noted that the workforce was key to the county and that there was a need to highlight to the public that these jobs were as important as jobs in the health field.

8. YSGOL ABERSOCH

The report was submitted by Cllr Cemlyn Williams.

RESOLVED

To finally confirm the proposal issued through statutory notice to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 December 2021, and to provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 January 2022 in accordance with Section 53 of the School Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013 and the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and it was expressed that this report was the peak of a process that had taken some years. It was highlighted that two years had passed since the Cabinet had agreed to enter into discussions with the governing body. It was explained that low, consistent and vulnerable numbers at the school were the grounds of the concerns that had led to this report. It was explained today that the purpose of the report was for the Cabinet to consider the objections that had been received before deciding whether the school would need to be closed and for a place to be provided for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach.

It was emphasised that the decision being discussed was not an easy one and it was highlighted that it had been a difficult time for everyone associated with the school and gratitude was expressed to everyone who had contributed to the discussion. It was explained that the Cabinet Member had received a request to visit the school but that he had attended the school previously as a part of the initial discussions, however, it was not the building that was behind the recommendation, but rather the challenges facing the school. Reference was made to some objections that questioned the Council's decision and whether a fair hearing had been offered. It was emphasised that there were no grounds to these concerns and that matters had been weighed up objectively before any decision had been made.

The Head of Department provided some background to the item. It was expressed that a decision had been made on the Statutory Notice to close the school in June 2021, but that the discussions had commenced after September 2019. It was explained that three meetings had been held with the governing body between October and January 2020, discussing the potential options for the school. In September 2020, the Cabinet resolved to undertake a statutory consultation process on the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch. The decision was confirmed on 3 November after the original decision was called in and referred back to the Cabinet by the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee.

The main challenges facing the school, which led to the review, were highlighted. It was explained that pupil numbers had reduced consistently since 2016 and was now in a vulnerable position. It was expressed that the school, as a result,

faced increasing budgetary pressures. It was highlighted that all of the children were taught in one classroom, and that 21 children from within the catchment area attended other schools, with 5 pupils attending the school from outside the catchment area. It was noted that the cost per pupil at Ysgol Abersoch was £17,404, which was much higher than the little over £4000 level that was seen across the county. It was emphasised throughout the period that the Principles for an Education System that is Fit for Purpose and the Excellent Primary Education for the Children of Gwynedd Strategy had been at the core of any decision.

The Education Officer guided members through the objections and 2 petitions received during the statutory objection period. Everyone was thanked for all their observations, not only throughout the objection period, but throughout the whole two-year period. It was noted that 211 objections had been received, along with 2 petitions. It was expressed that a number of the observations submitted had been submitted previously and therefore the themes were similar to what had been previously discussed. However, it was emphasised that each response had been given due attention.

Attention was drawn to the main themes.

- Impact on the community - It was noted that the school was seen as the heart of the village and that closing it would have a negative impact on the sense of community. It was explained that the department had carried out a further impact assessment and it was noted that a number of children went to Ysgol Sarn Bach and therefore there was a link between the alternative school and the community. It was added that if the decision would be made, Abersoch would be a part of the Ysgol Sarn Bach catchment area and there would be a requirement for the school to include Abersoch as a part of the school's life.
- Educational - a number of observations were received, highlighting the potential increase in numbers at the school. It was explained that numbers had been reducing since 2016 and had been fragile for some time. It was noted that the projections anticipated that numbers would remain low over the next five years and there would not be a major impact on the numbers. Attention was drawn to the fact that this uncertain time had obviously impacted numbers.
- Class Sizes at Ysgol Sarn Bach - attention was drawn to class sizes at Ysgol Sarn Bach and the department noted that if the decision was made, then the Headteacher and Governing Body would need to adapt and look at options for class sizes and staffing.
- Quality of Education - observations were received noting that the quality of education at Ysgol Abersoch was particularly good but it was emphasised that the level of quality at Ysgol Sarn Bach was the same and this had been highlighted in Estyn's response to the consultation.
- Language - Attention was drawn to the responses that highlighted that there would be a negative impact on culture and language from closing the school. The good work being done by the School to develop the language at the school and within the community was acknowledged. It was explained that there was an expectation for each school to do work to develop the Welsh language and that the alternative school would need to continue with the good work that was being done.

- Cylch Meithrin Ti a Fi - it was noted that the number of responses noted that the school was more sustainable as a result of opening the Cylch. It was explained that this was positive, but considering the size of the increase, the challenges would continue. The desire to discuss the possibility of using the current location in the future with the Cylch, was expressed.
- Statutory Process - discontent was expressed regarding the statutory process specifically throughout the pandemic period, virtual meetings and the lack of public meetings. The department noted that the Code did not note the requirement to hold public meetings and that the procedure was completely acceptable.
- Route to school - it was highlighted that the route to the alternative school was unsuitable for pedestrians, but that the department was prepared to offer free transport to Ysgol Sarn Bach and there would be room on the bus for the other pupils. Discontent was expressed as no bus would be available for nursery children but attention was drawn to the county's Transportation Policy which noted that it was the parents' responsibility to transport nursery age children.
- Impact on Pupils - it was noted that this period of uncertainty for Ysgol Abersoch pupils could lead to stress. It was explained that the department would offer every possible support to the pupils.
- Impact on Staff - it was explained that if a decision was made to close, the staff would lose their jobs, but measures would be put in place by the Human Resources Department.
- Building - It was explained that the department would follow the county's post-use policy if a decision was made to close, and this would give full consideration to the post-use of the building.
- Closure Date - it was noted that discontent had been expressed regarding closure in the middle of a school year. It was explained that the department believed that this gave the department sufficient time to work with both schools and provided effective time to prepare the pupils for starting at the alternative school in January.

The Local Member noted that there would be a serious impact on the village as a result of losing the school, in terms of culture and language. Pride was expressed in the fact that officers had acknowledged the good work done by the Governing Body in opening a Cylch Meithrin and Ti a Fi. Attention was drawn to the numbers at the school, which had remained the same throughout the period, and this highlighted the parents' confidence in the School.

Attention was drawn to Abersoch's contribution to Wales and the county, with a large amount of tax paid via the Land Transaction Tax and Council Tax Premium - and a question was asked about what they got in return. It was noted that the premium money was available to obtain housing for Gwynedd residents and that Abersoch was in dire need of houses. It was explained that the member was collaborating with the Housing and Property Department and that houses would be built in the area, as well as the possibility of additional houses on land in the ownership of a Social Housing Provider. It was emphasised that if houses were built, there was a need to ensure that education facilities were available in the same area, and with one school in the catchment area over capacity, the members were urged to act with caution before making the decision.

It was noted that a hotel would be built in Abersoch, which was a £15m investment, and would create jobs for over 40 people. It was emphasised that if jobs were available to local people, and new houses, that this was a new development, and these developments had not been mentioned in the report.

Discontent was expressed about the process by the Local Member as he had been required to respond to reports often at short notice. In addition, it was expressed that this had been a challenge during Covid, and it had been impossible to hold public meetings and this had been unfair on the community. It was expressed that there had been no changes since the first meeting and the Local Member believed that the decision may have been possibly made some time ago, and therefore, the discussion had been unfair.

It was highlighted, with plans for housing and jobs in the pipeline for the area, a request was made to defer the decision to consider this new information to ensure that the facilities were good enough, or to push the closure date forward to the end of the educational year, in fairness to the pupils.

In response to the Local Member, the member's observations were acknowledged, along with the respect that had been highlighted during the collaboration over this time. It was emphasised that the department had followed the Standards Act and the Code in full. The Education Officer added that the size of the reports showed the detail in which the department had gone into to ensure that a fair discussion took place.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was expressed that the journey had been long and that no decision had been made beforehand. It was noted that no additional aspect had been highlighted today to change the decision to close the school. It was expressed that closing the school would cause an impact but that everything possible needed to be done to ensure that the Cylch Meithrin and Ti a Fi remained on the site.
- Attention was drawn to the Linguistic aspect, highlighting the work that Ysgol Abersoch had done to develop the pupils' bilingual skills, as well as gaining the Language Charter's gold award; a question was asked about the support available to ensure that this work continued. It was expressed that particularly good work had been done and that it was unusual with such young children, but that the scheme had worked. It was noted that there was an expectation for the alternative school to continue with the good work.
- It was noted in terms of the impact on the community that the school was a prominent feature and that the community would expand and there would be a need to mitigate these adaptations. It was emphasised that the role of the Local Member would be critical to secure the community in the future.
- It was stated that the report was the peak of the process, and no decision had been made previously. It was highlighted that all Abersoch pupils were educated in one classroom, with 10 pupils, and that this caused concern. It was explained that there was a need to ask why parents sent their children to other schools outside the catchment area. It was asked

whether there would be an impact from moving the children in the middle of a school year. The Head of Education noted that there was no evidence that there was a detrimental impact on pupils if they moved in the middle of an educational year.

- He stated that the Cabinet Member had listened to the discussion and had read all the information and was of the opinion that nothing had changed in this matter since June, and therefore, he asked for confirmation to close the school.

9. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION

The report was submitted by Cllr Cemlyn Williams.

DECISION

To note and accept the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting that it was a pleasure to present the department's performance report. Attention was drawn to the Estyn thematic report on the Authority's work throughout the report, emphasising that it provided an independent view of the department's work. It was emphasised that the report was very positive.

It was explained that the department had confirmed savings for 2021/22, however, the department had underspent £100k at the end of the 2020/21 financial year. It was noted that an initial review anticipated an underspend by the Department by the end of the year, which was a combination of underspending on a number of headings, reduced by an overspend on headings such as Transport.

The department was thanked for its hard work and the Cabinet Member noted that he was completely happy with the work done by the department over a difficult time.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Gratitude was expressed for the cameos throughout the Estyn report, noting that this gave a taste of the plans and that it was being seen through the eyes of the citizen.
- Pride was expressed that new schools had been built or that better facilities were being obtained in Bangor and Cricieth, and this highlighted the Council's investment in its schools.
- Staff were thanked for the regular communication and support of the department, as well as in the schools.

10. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE

The report was submitted by Cllr Ioan Thomas

DECISION

To note and accept the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, and staff were thanked for working so hard over this difficult period. The Scrutiny Members were thanked for their input into the performance challenging discussion. Attention was drawn to projects in the Council Plan, noting that a consultation was currently underway by the Government for the transfer of holiday units from Council Tax to Business Rates. It was explained that the Department coordinated the Council's response.

In terms of achieving savings, it was noted in general that the schemes were doing well, but concerns were expressed about the future in relation to savings. It was emphasised that a further report would come to the Cabinet at the beginning of October.

It was expressed that Covid continued to affect the Department's arrangements, with non-domestic rate collection rates being lower than previous years, but that the situation was improving. It was noted that although the value of various arrears had dropped, the levels continued to be high. It was emphasised that senior officers were attempting to resolve the arrears and there was a need to consider an alternative way to move forward.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- The department was thanked for its work over this difficult time in ensuring that grants were awarded promptly to individuals and businesses.

11. 2022/23 BUDGET STRATEGY

The report was submitted by Cllr Ioan Thomas

DECISION

- i. The procedure and timetable to draw up the 2022/2023 Budget was approved.
- ii. If there was a funding gap in balancing the 2022/23 budget, it was noted that the Council would use contingency budgets and reserves to mitigate resource losses in the short-term, and carefully identify any additional savings required during the summer of 2022.
- iii. The contents of the report were accepted as the Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan, whilst noting that, in the current context, financial planning was extremely challenging.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and it was highlighted that the Council had been prudent over the years and this had placed it in a better position than many other authorities. It was explained that the report gave an outline of the annual report to draw up a budget, as well as a Medium-Term Financial Plan.

It was expressed that there would be many bids for additional resources this year as a result of different pressures on departments and the bids process would be submitted to the Cabinet members. Members were reminded that the Council's main financial source was the Welsh Government Grant and that they would present their draft settlement in December, before presenting the settlement at the beginning of March. It was explained that the timetable was very challenging and that there was financial uncertainty as a result of the pandemic.

The Head of Department guided members through the report, noting that the accountants had started to prepare the estimate expenditure of the departments for 2022/23. It was emphasised that bids would be submitted to the Cabinet over the coming months in order to address the additional pressures on departments.

It was noted that the timetable was very challenging in a period when Covid continued, but that the Council's robust financial situation and healthy reserves meant that more risk could be taken. Attention was drawn to the challenges facing the Council, which included Covid recovery, an increase in salaries, as well as an increase in inflation. It was explained that the settlement had included inflation last year, but this had not been guaranteed yet for this year.

Attention was drawn to the projections that had been created which highlighted three potential scenarios. It was emphasised that it was difficult to foresee the future, but that it may be possible that there would be a need to plan for savings in the future. It was stated that if there was a financial gap next year, the Council could bridge the gap in 2022/23.

The meeting commenced at 1pm and concluded at 3:20pm

CHAIRMAN

THE CABINET, TUESDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2021

Present -

Councillors: Dyfrig L Siencyn, Dafydd Meurig, Craig ab Iago, Gareth Griffith, Nia Jeffreys, Dilwyn Morgan, Ioan Thomas, Gareth Thomas, Catrin Wager and Cemlyn Williams.

Also in attendance -

Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Morwena Edwards (Corporate Director), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department) and Annes Siôn (Democracy Team Leader).

Item 5: Geraint Owen (Head of Corporate Support Department), Carey Cartwright (Learning and Organisational Development Manager) and Meinir Griffiths (Service Improvement Officer).

Item 6: Gareth Jones (Assistant Head of Environment Department), and Rebeca Jones (Joint Planning Policy Unit Manager).

Item 7 - 9 - Ffion Madog Evans (Senior Finance Manager).

Item 10 - Sioned Williams (Head of Economy and Community Department).

Item 11 - Geraint Owen (Head of Corporate Support Department).

1. APOLOGIES

The Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting.
No apologies were received.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

There were no matters arising from overview and scrutiny.

5. SIX MONTHLY REPORT - COMPLAINTS AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

The item was presented by Cllr Nia Jeffreys.

DECISION

The report was accepted.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, noting that it reported on the complaints procedure within the Council. It was explained that the Council had a specific procedure that was updated in April 2021. It was noted that when the procedure was revised, amendments had been made and the procedure was now under the Corporate Support Department.

It was stated that the reported noted the formal complaints the Council had received together with the complaints submitted to the Ombudsman. It was emphasised that the Council used complaints to improve services and to see the trends across the departments. It was highlighted that the number of complaints had increased, and this was seen across Local Government. Although the numbers had risen, it was noted that the number of complaints to the Ombudsman had remained consistent.

It was explained that the Ombudsman had noted that the complaints figures submitted by the Council appeared to be realistic, that the procedure was working and the Council was obviously willing to learn lessons from the complaints. It was emphasised that there was room for improvement and a need to ensure the mindset that complaints were positive and a means to improve a service and central to the service's work. It was explained that training was currently being formulated on customer care jointly with the Ombudsman and will be held in October.

Attention was also drawn to the Successes Wall (Wal Llwyddiannau) that highlighted the public's appreciation and displayed services at their best.

Observations arising from the discussion

- The Head of Department added that the report highlighted the progress made, however, there was a need to continue to build upon this progress.
- It was noted that the Ombudsman's statistics included official and unofficial complaints and the number of complaints were considered to be realistic. It was stated that by presenting the figures in full that the Council was being completely open.
- It was expressed that the department had noted 41 complaints during the first five months of this year, and the number appeared to be low and it was asked if the Council caught every complaint. It was explained that the Council was eager to receive complaints and sought to be open by receiving complaints through various ways, and therefore reached a high number of individuals.
- Concerns were highlighted that the Council did not catch every complaint and it was asked if Councillors' complaints were included in these numbers. It was noted that there was a need for Cabinet Members to be drawn into complaints so that they were aware of them earlier in the process.
- It was emphasised that the Ombudsman's letter noted that this year had been a totally different one and therefore there was a need to take this into consideration when discussing this item.

6. DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE: THE SLATE LANDSCAPE OF NORTH WEST WALES WORLD HERITAGE SITE

The item was presented by Cllr Gareth Griffith.

RESOLVED

The draft Supplementary Planning Guidance: The Slate Landscape of North West Wales was approved for public consultation, and the Assistant Head of the Environment Department was delegated the right to make any non-material revisions that may be required to the draft SPG.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, and the resolution was noted.

It was noted that the report stated that this year the Council had successfully managed to receive the UNESCO World Heritage designation for the Slate Landscape of North West Wales in the county. It was stated that the specific area had been split into six component parts and the six were unique and this was highlighted in the Supplementary Planning Guidance. It was explained that the Guidance had been prepared jointly with Snowdonia National Park, as some planning applications were determined either by the Council or the Park. It was noted that the Guidance gave detailed information about the areas and further guidance on how to ensure that features of the site are protected and improved.

It was explained that the guidance contained 4 sections and these were highlighted. It was stressed that the department had worked closely with the National Park and there had been discussions with key stakeholders. It was noted as it was a joint Guidance between the National Park and the Council that there was a need to conduct a public consultation prior to any determination. It was highlighted that any observations made during the consultation period would be reported to the Cabinet and the amendments would be made to them.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that a great deal of work had been undertaken to develop the Supplementary Planning Guidance and it had been developed in accordance with the evidence. Support was highlighted to go into consultation, however, there was an enquiry regarding non-material revisions that may arise and be amended as noted in the recommendation. It was noted that these were non-material revisions such as spelling and it was stressed that if a material revision was highlighted then it would come back to the Cabinet.
- It was stated that the guidance noted the role to protect the heritage of the areas together with specific features and it was asked if it was possible to go a step further. It was explained that this Guidance was part of the Management Plan and included specific policies that can be seen within the Local Development Plan, however, it was explained that the Economy Department was busy producing guidances highlighting good practice and the special features that can be seen in the areas that will be used when individuals adapt houses and gardens within the Slate Landscape area.
- It was noted that the guidance highlighted what can be seen in the Joint Planning

Policy and therefore it was an outline in the supplementary plan and consequently did not add any barriers for developers but highlighted what was important. A need to strike a balance was noted between facilitating developments and protecting special features within the areas.

7. REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22 - END OF AUGUST 2021 REVIEW

The item was presented by Cllr Ioan Thomas.

RESOLVED

To accept the report on the end of August 2021 review of the Revenue Budget, and consider the latest financial situation regarding the budgets of each department/service.

It was noted that the financial impact of Covid-19 continued in 2021/22, which was a combination of additional costs, income losses and a slippage in the savings programme, as the Council had given priority to safeguarding the health and lives of the people of Gwynedd in response to the crisis.

It was noted that the Welsh Government's Covid support system via the hardship fund was continuing, however, it did not address overspend due to a slippage in the savings programme.

It was noted that there was significant overspend in the Adults, Health and Well-being Department and the Highways and Municipal Department this year, whilst there was a significant improvement in the projections of the Children and Families Department.

The following recommendations and financial virements (as outlined in Appendix 2) were approved.

- On Corporate budgets, that:
 - An underspend of (£285k) relating to capital costs was earmarked to a fund to finance the capital programme.
 - A net underspend of (£1,957k) on Corporate budgets to go to the Financial Strategy Support Fund to assist with the financial challenges facing the Council, particularly due to the Covid crisis.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting that it detailed the latest review of the Council's revenue budget, along with the projections for the end of the financial year. It was highlighted that there had been a significant financial impact on the Council as a result of Covid-19, with a combination of additional costs together with income losses. It was explained that the Council made monthly applications to reclaim costs from the Welsh Government's Hardship Fund.

Back in January it was stated that measures had been taken to draft an amended programme of savings for 2021/22, however, it was explained that a delay in realising savings continued in some areas, with a delay as a result of the crisis an evident factor.

Attention was drawn to the principal matters and it was noted that the department anticipated an overspend of £1.4 million in the Adults Department, with a failure to realise savings worth £855k being an obvious factor of the overspend. It was stated that Covid had had a substantial impact on the department and £1.3 million had already been claimed from the Welsh Government towards the additional costs for the period.

It was explained following the Council's decision to allocate £1.8 million in additional funding to the Children's Department in the 2021/22 funding cycle as well as abolish savings schemes to the value of £1.1 million it was highlighted that the current financial projections for the department were very promising. It was stated that overspending problems in the waste collection and disposal field continued in the Highways and Municipal Department. It was noted that there had been difficulties to realise savings in a number of areas to the value of £673k and the department had also faced additional costs responding to Covid, however, the Welsh Government had already provided compensation and it was expected that they would continue to provide compensation for the rest of the year.

It was noted that corporately there were prudent projections when setting the 2021/22 budget that were responsible for additional tax outputs and contributed to the underspend on Council Tax Reductions. The decision was noted.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- The Head of the Finance Department explained that Government grant funding had not been predicted last year, however, this had been done this year, and as a result on the whole the situation was generally satisfactory.
- The Head of the Finance Department added that savings needed to be delivered, however the situation of two departments were difficult this year.
- It was stated that in terms of the Adults Department the department had been under pressure as a result of intensive care cases together with working under the conditions of Covid. It was noted that work had been undertaken last year to claim costs, together with the receipt of late grants.
- It was stated that in the Highways and Municipal field there had been an increase in the waste collected together with adaptations to the service as a result of Covid regulations. Concern was highlighted about staff sickness, together with loss of income for the department, and it was noted that work was being undertaken to find a substantial sum of money.
- Gratitude was expressed on behalf of the Children and Families Department that the End to End savings scheme had been abolished, and as a result the department's financial position was satisfactory this year.
- It was highlighted that there was concern regarding the Education Department's transport costs, and the post-16 provision needed to be looked at.

8. CAPITAL PROGRAMME - END OF AUGUST 2021 REVIEW

The report was presented by Cllr Ioan Thomas

RESOLVED

The report on the end of August review (position as at 31 August 2021) of the

capital programme was accepted.

The revised financing as presented in part 4 of the report was approved, as follows:

- use of various sources totalling £25,837,000 to fund actual slippages from 2020/21,
- an increase of £61,000 in the use of borrowing,
- an increase of £9,959,000 in the use of grants and contributions,
- a increase of £69,000 in the use of capital receipts,
- an increase of £1,482,000 in the use of revenue contributions,
- an increase of £21,000 in the use of the capital reserve, and
- an increase of £807,000 in the use of renewal and other reserves.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that it presented the revised capital programme and sought approval for the relevant financing sources. It was explained that there was an analysis in the report of the capital programme of £124.0 million for the next three years.

It was explained that the Council had firm schemes in place to invest approximately £71.6 million this year, with £26.1 million financed by attracting specific grants. It was stated that the impact of the Covid crisis can still be seen on the capital programme, with only 16% of the budget having been spent by the end of August, compared to 13% for the same period last year and 19% two years ago.

It was noted that £9.1m of proposed expenditure had been re-profiled from 2021/22 to 2022/23 and 2023/24 and the main schemes were highlighted which included 21st Century Schools, Schemes to Stimulate the Economy and Industrial Units and the Council's Carbon Management Schemes. Attention was drawn to the list of additional grants the Council had managed to attract since the previous review, which included grants from the Local Transport Fund, Targeted Regeneration Investment for the 'Nyth' Scheme in Bangor and Welsh Government Grants for Child Care.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that the report highlighted exciting schemes such as the Circular Economy that had several grants. Pride was expressed in the Nyth scheme that had received grants and would offer exciting and creative opportunities in Bangor.
- Finance for the industrial units was welcomed as there was a great deal of demand for the units.
- Concern was highlighted regarding the costs of building materials together with skills in the construction field. It was asked if there was any concern regarding spending the investments as a result of these concerns. It was noted that tenders received were much higher, however, it was explained that the forecasts indicated that these were temporary and some fields were holding back on schemes and prioritised as required.
- It was stated that the Council should be congratulated for the capital expenditure to establish assets for the Council. It was emphasised that

the schemes in the Housing Action Plans would be a huge expenditure over the next three years.

9. SAVINGS OVERVIEW: PROGRESS REPORT ON REALISING SAVINGS SCHEMES

The report was presented by Cllr Ioan Thomas.

RESOLVED

To accept the information in the report and to note the progress towards realising the savings schemes for 2020/21, 2019/20 and previous years.

It was agreed to carry out reviews on the unrealised savings schemes together with next year's schemes to ensure that they are achievable or whether we need to look for alternative schemes.

It was noted that the impact of Covid-19 had contributed to a slippage in the savings programme, as the Council had given the utmost priority to safeguarding the health and lives of the people of Gwynedd in response to the crisis, which had meant that it was not possible to continue with the performance challenging and savings arrangements during the crisis period.

DISCUSSION

The report, which summarised the situation with the Council's savings was submitted. It was explained that since 2015/16 £35m in savings had been approved to be realised between 2015/16 - 2021/22. It was noted that by now over £32.7 million had been realised, this was 94% of the required sum over the period.

It was stated that in January this year the savings schemes were reviewed to assess which historic schemes were now unachievable, and an amended programme of savings was drawn up for 2021/22 after steps were taken to write off, for slippage and the re-profiling of the savings schemes.

It was explained that departments had focused on responding to the covid crisis since April 2020, and the impact had contributed to the slippage in the savings programme. It was stated that from the 2021/22 savings schemes 42% had already been realised and 22% were now on track to deliver on time by the end of the financial year.

It was emphasised that it was inevitable that realising savings to the value of £32.7m since April 2015 had been challenging. It was stated that there had been a delay with some of the savings schemes to the value of £1m, however, they were proceeding but there was a need to discuss risks to deliver schemes to the value of £0.9m.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was stated that covid had affected the Highways and Municipal Department and work was being undertaken to look at future schemes. It was added that the department was continuing to pay for close circuit equipment but there would be savings once the cost had been paid. In addition, it was explained

that an external study was being undertaken with the closure of the Cilgwyn Recycling Centre and there were many possible plans for the site.

- The need was noted to carry out reviews on the unrealised savings schemes together with next year's schemes to ensure that they are achievable or whether we need to look for alternative schemes.

10. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMY AND COMMUNITY

The report was presented by Cllr. Gareth Thomas

RESOLVED

To note and accept the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that the department had been forced to adapt their way of working over the last year and staff were thanked for their flexibility over the covid period. Attention was drawn to some specific fields such as Creating High Value Jobs and that Cwmni Eginio had now established in Trawsfynydd to facilitate ensuring further developments on the site in the future. It was explained that the Government's decision to review road schemes had caused uncertainty in terms of the Llanbedr site, however, the continuation of investment from the owners was heartening.

In terms of Implementing Gwynedd Slate Heritage scheme it was explained that the department had been successful to secure the World Heritage Designation for the Slate Landscapes of North West Wales. It was explained that there was a need now to implement the plans.

Attention was drawn to Forming a Regeneration Plan for our Areas project and it was noted that engagement and consultation work with communities was central to the programme and detailed engagement would be conducted during November.

In terms of the Department's performance, it was expressed that the Maritime Service had been extremely busy as a result of the high number of visitors during the summer. The staff were thanked for their hard work. It was explained that it had been a highly challenging year for the events department, however, the department had continued to offer support to organisers. It was clarified that the service had adopted arrangements to consult with Local Members and Community Councils before supporting any events on Council lands.

It was highlighted that the department anticipated an underspend of £203k by the end of the financial year. It was explained that the Department had exceeded its income levels for this year, specifically with beaches and Hafan moorings. It was stated that there was a need to discuss the 2022/23 budget in light of the increase in income and the demand for a higher budget to meet the demand as a result of COVID, once the Government grants end.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was noted that the Business Support service had been working diligently throughout the period and many staff had been transferred to undertake this work. It was explained that significant work had been undertaken to ensure regular communication between the Council and businesses. The need to consider how the Council supports business was noted to ensure high quality jobs.
- The department was thanked for its work and congratulations were expressed for securing the UNESCO World Heritage Site designation that will assist to transform areas.

11. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR THE CORPORATE SUPPORT DEPARTMENT

The report was presented by Cllr. Nia Jeffreys

RESOLVED

The information noted in the report was accepted, and the alternative savings scheme was supported.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that the Cabinet Member wanted to draw attention to some specific plans. It was noted that work was being undertaken on the Keeping the Benefit Local project and the department had been trialling a new methodology to assess tenders based on social value and local impact. It was stated that undertaking the pilot had enabled the department to understand how arrangements work on a practical level and the opportunities and associated risks.

It was explained that the Women in Leadership scheme continued to attract more women to apply for and attain higher positions within the Council by reviewing work conditions and the work environment. It was highlighted that there had been progress in the Ensuring Fairness for Everyone project. It was noted that there was a great deal to be achieved, however, it was noted that awareness and passion made a difference.

In terms of planning the future workforce it was highlighted that an investment had been made to continue with the programme's work to attract and develop talent via the Apprenticeships Scheme and the Cynllun Yfory Scheme for Managers and Experts. It was explained that there was a need to undertake additional work to try and retain staff within the Council and to ensure service continuation.

Attention was drawn to the department's day-to-day work, and it was highlighted that the Corporate Support Department had managed to retain the Corporate Health Standard's Gold Level. It was highlighted that adaptations would be made to the Galw Gwynedd Centre at Penrhyndeudraeth in order to provide a new comprehensive face-to-face customer contact service in the area. The important work undertaken by the Registration Service was highlighted and they had coped extremely well under genuinely difficult circumstances.

It was stated that in terms of savings that since 2015 the department had identified £2.5 million of savings, this was equivalent to a quarter of the department's budget to maintain and extend the service. In terms of savings to be realised by the department that alternative schemes had been identified.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Pride was noted that a Project Officer had been appointed for the Native Welsh Place Names Scheme and the need to work with other organisations such as the Post Office was noted to have a more Welsh aspect in day-to-day activities.
- It was stated that Keeping the Benefit Local was an exciting and far-reaching scheme.
- In terms of workforce recruitment and retainment, there was a need to highlight the issues seen to appoint staff in the care field together with retaining professional staff in other fields. The schemes seen within the Council were highlighted including the Developing Potential scheme that develops officers and expertise in order to retain individuals within the Council.

The meeting commenced at 1pm and concluded at 3:10pm

CHAIR

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



A Report to a meeting of the Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Date of meeting:	9th November 2021
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Gareth Wyn Griffith Councillor Gareth Thomas
Contact Officer:	Dafydd Wyn Williams – Head of Environment Department Sioned Williams – Head of Economy and Community Department
Contact Number:	32371
Subject:	Research into the motor homes situation in Gwynedd

THE DECISION SOUGHT

In light of the need to have better control of motor homes, the Cabinet is requested to accept the research in Appendix 1 and approve the following:

- i. Authorise the Head of Environment Department in consultation with the Head of Economy and Community Department, to undertake a pilot project for the use of up to six of the Council's parking sites (or part of the sites) within the Gwynedd Local Planning Authority Area, to provide facilities for motor homes to stay overnight and to include allocation of sites, but subject to securing capital funds and the necessary consents.
- ii. That a further report on the results of the pilot is presented to the Cabinet within three years.
- iii. Give consideration to and undertake enforcement measures to accompany the above.
- iv. Present the research to the Welsh Government and ask them to review the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960.

THE REASONS WHY A DECISION IS NEEDED

Taking account of the vast numbers of motor home users who have been visiting the County recently and over the past few years, and the concerns raised by the area's communities, it was agreed that it would be useful to carry out some research into the situation in Gwynedd.

The research work has been completed and is included in Appendix 1 of the report, and contains an evidence base that offers a better understanding of the situation locally and further afield. The research also highlights the need for measures to better manage the motor homes sector in the County, and we believe that the decision sought can contribute towards this.

INTRODUCTION AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The research in Appendix 1 looks at:

- The local situation and provision in Gwynedd
- The planning context, and parking and traffic issues
- The current situation and provision in the UK
- The international situation and provision in other countries
- The needs and tendencies of motor home users
- The views of Gwynedd residents and communities about the motor homes sector
- The situation in Gwynedd 2021
- Findings and ideas in terms of improving the management of motor homes in Gwynedd

Growth in motor home use

1.2 During recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of motor homes registered in Britain by the DVLA. The National Caravan Council recorded a 71% increase in motorhome sales between 2019 and 2020, with reasons relating to Covid and the ability to be self-contained driving this increase.

1.3 We also need to consider the large increase and popularity of converting vans into motor homes. Although many of the vans are self-contained and are insured as a motor home, vans like this are not accounted for as motor homes by the DVLA because their outside appearance is more similar to an ordinary van.

1.4 We note that research conducted in 2019 on motor home visits in the Scottish highlands (the North Coast 500) evidences that visitors travelling in motor homes spend 33% of their holiday expenditure on accommodation, with the remaining 67% on things like food and drink, attractions and local shops.

The current situation in Gwynedd

1.5 In Gwynedd, concerns have been raised in several communities across the county, as an increasing number of motorhome owners decide to stay in 'public' places and on 'public' land, where there is no lawful right to stay in a vehicle overnight.

1.6 STEAM 2019 figures for Gwynedd show that 7.8 million visitors visit the county annually and contribute £1.35 billion to the local economy. The Gwynedd accommodation survey 2018/19 calculated that there are 366 caravan and camping sites in Gwynedd that could provide a service to motor homes. There was an average of 59 pitches for each campsite.

1.7 On the one hand it appears that there is an abundant provision to meet camping needs in Gwynedd. However, we must note that a large number of caravan and camping sites now operate on the sale of seasonal pitches to caravan owners, which means a substantial reduction in the number of touring pitches that are available.

The current planning context

1.8 In terms of the local planning policy context, the most relevant policies to motor homes are the policies relating to touring caravan sites, as they come within the legal definition of what constitutes a caravan. The policy in the Gwynedd Planning Authority area

permits proposals involving touring sites, subject to specific criteria. In the National Park planning authority area, the policies prevent the development of new touring sites, but permit the extension of existing sites subject to specific criteria.

- 1.9 After obtaining legal opinion, and emphasising that each case will need to be assessed on its own merits in terms of fact and degree, there is a strong basis for concluding that the use of land (e.g. public car parks, other lands etc.) for motor homes to stay overnight will generally require planning permission. It also follows that the use would require a site licence under the provisions of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960.

Parking and Traffic Issues

- 1.10 The current situation:
- Motor homes are welcome to park in our car parks where we have not installed height restrictions.
 - Motor homes are required to keep to the parking restrictions
 - No overnight stays are allowed in any vehicle.
- 1.11 Current powers:
- At present, the Council has powers to issue a Penalty Charge Notice to any motorists parking unlawfully under the Traffic Management Act 2004.
 - A 'no overnight camping' clause is part of a legal order in some locations.
 - The Council does not currently have powers to fine motorists who park vehicles overnight in roadside locations.
 - The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 allows us to introduce restrictions through a Traffic Regulation Order (Permanent), or a Temporary or Experimental Traffic Regulation Order to restrict / prohibit parking.
 - The Legal Department is looking into the possibilities of re-establishing bye-laws that existed in relation to roadside lay-bys to enable them to use enforcement against those staying in them overnight in a motorhome to move on.
 - The Environment Department and Economy Department have already installed 'No overnight camping' signs in many locations where complaints have been received.

Questioning the owners of Caravan and Camping Sites in Gwynedd (April 2021)

- 1.12 As part of the research, an on-line survey was conducted with the owners of caravan and camping sites in Gwynedd. The purpose of the research was to find out more about the county's camping provision, and find out local opinions about the situation.
- 1.13 A total of 153 surveys were returned. 41 surveys had been filled in fully. The following analysis is based on the 41 fully completed surveys, and the main findings are noted below:

Main findings:

- A mainly seasonal provision between April and October is available
- The average number of touring pitches available is 14. This is a much lower figure than the average of 59 pitches calculated through the visitor accommodation research, which suggests that a large number of pitches are used based on seasonal agreements.
- A high occupancy level during the main season, May – September.
- 38 out of the 41 respondents had experienced an increase in the number of motorhome visits over the past five years.

- Around 60% had experienced an increase in the number of motorhome visits in 2020.

Questioning motorhome owners

- 1.14 As part of the research on-line surveys were conducted to target the owners of motorhomes. The purpose of this research was to find out more about owners' travelling tendencies. Owners were targeted through social media networks.
- 1.15 A total of 12,500 surveys were returned, with 8,833 having been completed fully. For the purpose of this research only the fully-completed surveys were used, and the main findings included:

Main findings:

- Regular travellers. 80% travelled between 5 and 10 times a year.
- 95% were self-contained vehicles.
- 52% stayed in one place for 1 or 2 nights only.
- 65% used their vehicles throughout the year.
- 92.2% stated that they would use a provision similar to 'Aire' if it was available.
- The three main needs when travelling on holiday in a motor home were fresh water, being able to dispose of toilet waste, and refuse disposal. Electricity provision was last on the list.
- When on holiday, 68.9% use a mixture of stays in campsites and wild camping.

The needs of visitors travelling in motor homes

- 1.16 Recent research by CAMPRA ("Campaign for Real Aires") summarises the main differences between visitors who travel with a tent / caravan and visitors who travel with motor homes. The main differences in terms of the customs and needs of visitors travelling in motor homes include:
- They prefer locations that are within towns or villages or within walking distance to services such as shops, restaurants etc.
 - They travel all year-round but the stays in one place tend to be for 24 to 48 hours.
 - The motor home is the only vehicle - and they rely on a bicycle, walking and / or public transport.
 - The services they usually need are water, and waste and refuse disposal facilities.
 - Interests include using local restaurants, and visiting town centres and local attractions.
 - They bring some food for the journey and then use local eateries.

Provision for motor homes in the UK and further afield

- 1.17 There are examples of areas in the UK that have adapted or provided parking sites for motor homes, and others have developed full "aires" facilities as can be seen in Europe. Very simply, an "Aire" is a designated overnight parking area to be used by fully self-contained motor homes.
- 1.18 The research highlights that there is no consistency from area to area, and although some local authorities have developed specific plans for motor homes, most authorities continue to deal with motor homes according to the requirements of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960.

- 1.19 In the rest of Europe, sleeping overnight in a motor home is classed as 'parking' and not 'camping', and countries such as France and Germany distinguish between motor home and caravan/tent activity.
- 1.20 In Europe (outside the UK) there is a wide provision of facilities for motor homes. In France, Germany and Italy, "Aire" (France), "Stellplatz" (Germany) or "Sostas" (Italy) facilities can be found in almost all major towns and villages in the country.
- 1.21 The aim is to encourage visitors who are travelling in motor homes to stay in a town or village in order to offer some economic benefit to the local community and gain better control of the sector.

Finding the views of Gwynedd residents and communities

- 1.22 As part of the research, during summer 2021 an on-line consultation was carried out for a six-week period with a survey to find out the opinions of Gwynedd residents. The survey enquired whether or not motor homes were a problem, whether better management of motor homes was needed and how that could be achieved, and whether residents supported the trialling of a facility such as "aires". 4,868 responses were returned with 2,169 completed fully, and the main findings from the fully completed surveys included:
- A high percentage of local residents noted that there were problems in their area because of motor homes. 46.1% noted that they are a problem at certain times e.g. the summer, weekends, and 17.9% noted that they are a problem all year round.
 - The majority of local residents stated that the most suitable solution would be to trial new ideas e.g. a series of 'aires' in more urban sites, using the Council's existing car parks of private businesses (1,599 or 73.7% supported this)
 - 69.2% stated that they would be happy to see the use of car parks in more urban locations being trialled, and overnight parking being permitted for specified periods e.g. 48 hours.

The Situation in Gwynedd 2021

- 1.23 The Council jointly with partners has put measures in place on the ground to try and gain better control of motor homes over the past two years. Section 6 of the research work provides an overview of this.

Main findings of the research

- The motor homes sector has grown more and more in recent years, with trends predicting further growth over the coming years.
- The customs and needs of motor home owners in terms of the way they spend their holiday are different to 'more traditional camping'.
- It appears that the provision available on caravan and camping sites in Gwynedd does not always meet the needs and travelling patterns of motor home owners.
- The majority of caravan and camping sites are open from April to October, and at particular times of the year especially during 2020 it is suggested that there are capacity issues.
- There are examples in Scotland and England of measures that have been put in place to try to meet the needs of motor home users, which often include overnight use of car parks, with relevant restrictions.
- 92.2% of motor homes users stated that they would use a provision similar to 'Aire' if it was available.

- A provision of "Aire" facilities (or similar) has been established in several other European countries, and the aim is to encourage visitors travelling in motor homes to stay in a town or village in order to offer some economic benefit to the local community and gain better control of the sector.
- According to the public consultation, a high percentage recognise problems in their areas because of motor homes, with the majority (73.7%) supporting the idea of trialling facilities similar to "aires".

1.24 The evidence emerging from the research highlights the need to look at possible measures to obtain better control over motor homes in Gwynedd, and includes possible recommendations for trying to achieve this. The evidence shows that, following consultations with the public and the motor homes sector, there is support for trialling a facility similar to "aires", and we believe that this needs to accompany measures relating to management and raising awareness as is noted in the recommendations. It also highlights the need to review the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960, and consider how this sector has subsequently changed.

2. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

2.1 If the Cabinet agrees with the decision sought, capital investment will be required for trialling the use of up to six of the Council's parking sites (or part of the sites) to provide facilities for motor homes to stay overnight. The investment will be necessary in order to satisfy the requirements in terms of planning, licensing and any other relevant requirements. It is very difficult to put a definite amount on the capital investment that will be required for a maximum of six sites, as it will probably vary from site to site based on what infrastructure and services there are currently on the parking sites, and what is needed as extra to meet planning, licensing and parking requirements etc. As such, we have identified an indicative amount of £90,000 (based on £15,000 per site) and up to £10,000 for professional fees (for applying for planning permission, a site licence etc), which gives an indicative capital investment of £100,000. We may possibly be able to attract grants to help with the capital costs, but we cannot guarantee this at present. The aim therefore is to submit a bid for £100,000 of capital funding to the Council's transformation fund, and should we be successful, these are the next steps, emphasising that the timetable is only indicative:

Stage 1: Work prior to submitting applications (Planning and Licensing) to include meetings and input from the relevant Services – before the end of December 2021

Commission a piece of research on potential sites to assess them for planning, licensing, parking needs and any other needs. The matrix prepared as part of the research work will assist with this in respect of planning, with standard conditions being a consideration for licensing requirements. This will also assist with identifying more accurate costs for the capital investment, which will also be a consideration when identifying up to six sites for the trial and in preparing plans for them.

Stage 2: Submit applications (Planning and Licensing to follow) before the end of February 2022

The applications to be submitted will be based on the work from Stage 1

We note also that work will proceed (as far as possible) with the process of amending / creating the order, subject to securing planning permission, as well as consideration of the additional enforcement measures that may be put in place to accompany the provision of the facilities.

Stage 3: Subject to Stage 2, commission work on the ground for developing the facilities before the end of June 2022

Stage 4: Facility/ies operational – the first to be operational before the end of March 2023

- 2.2 The trialling will not only be an opportunity to assess how the facilities are operating, but it will also help us to identify what the requirements will be in terms of management, maintenance and enforcement, the income generated from the use, and whether or not additional resources are required for the effective operation of the facilities.

VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

The Monitoring Officer:

I can confirm that Legal Services have supported the preparation of this report. Undertaking a pilot appears to be a sensible way of finding a response to the increase in popularity of Motor Homes. I note that comparisons are being drawn with the provision of "Aires" on the continent. Although it can be seen that such arrangement presents an image of possible provision it needs to be borne in mind that the regulatory arrangements in Europe are entirely different to Wales. It is also important to note that we are local planning and caravan site licencing authority. Therefore, there are high expectations in relation to the propriety of our arrangements. However, in general the recommendations are appropriate and in particular I support the call to amend the caravan sites legislation as this also feeds directly into permitted development rights.

Head of Finance Department:

I support the decision being sought, in particular the intention to pilot the use of up to 6 Council parking sites to provide facilities for motor homes to stay overnight. Paragraph 2.1 provides an outline of the capital costs of the pilot, stating that a bid from the Transformation Fund will be required if sources of grant are not available. If bid from the Transformation Fund is submitted, a detailed analysis of the costs will need to be developed and approved."

Appendices

Appendix 1 The Research [DRAFT] that includes 3 appendices.



SEPTEMBER 2021

Research on the situation regarding motorhomes in Gwynedd

Alun Fôn Williams, Tourism, Marketing and Events Service

Rebeca Angharad Jones, Joint Planning Policy Unit, Gwynedd and Anglesey



Research on the situation regarding motorhomes in Gwynedd

September 2021

The latest growth in the ownership of motorhomes in the UK has not proceeded without comment or impact here in Gwynedd as motorhome visits become more and more evident in our towns, villages and rural areas. The COVID-19 pandemic has also contributed to the situation as the British population face travel restrictions and stay-cations.

With this, better control of motorhome visits has been the subject of discussion in our communities in Gwynedd. The purpose of this report and research is to gather and provide information to contribute and create a better understanding of the current situation, both locally and nationally. The report looks at:

- The local situation and provision in Gwynedd
- The current situation and provision in the UK
- The international situation and provision in other countries
- Looks at the requirements and the trends of motorhome users in order to ascertain views, frequency and how users utilise their vehicles and the type of places where they stay.
- The views of Gwynedd residents and communities
- Findings and ideas in terms of improving the control of motorhomes in Gwynedd

Introduction

During the last few years there has been a significant increase in the number of motorhomes registered in Britain by the DVLA. The growth commenced in approximately 2010, and the number registered doubled between 2012 and 2017. By June 2020, there were 357,000 registered motor vehicles in the UK, with 68,000 stated as SORN - possibly due to COVID19. Approximately 14,000 - 15,000 new vehicles are registered annually. The National Caravan Council noted an increase of 71% in the sale of motor vehicles between 2019 and 2020 with COVID-19 and the ability to be self-contained driving this increase.

There is also a need to consider the significant increase and popularity in converting vans into motorhomes. Over recent years thousands of general 'panel' vans have been converted into self-contained motor vehicles. Currently, the DVLA recognises the majority of the converted vehicles as a 'van with windows'. Although many of the vans are self-contained and are insured as campervans vans of this type are not considered by the DVLA as motorhome vehicles as their external appearance is similar to a general van.

The trends in growth are not unique to the UK only with countries such as Germany, France, Italy and the Netherlands having seen similar growth. In 2017, there were over 1.5 million motor vehicles used throughout Europe.

There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed significantly in driving the increase in the sales and hiring of motorhomes. The regulations and overseas holiday travel restrictions have increased the demand for the British 'Staycation'. In these times, many motorhome owners see this as a safer mode of travel and to have a holiday. Due to the current situation, tourism surveys forecast an increase of approximately 21% in visits to destinations in the UK in 2021 (Visit Britain).

Generally, there is a perception in the UK that visits from motorhome users do not bring a great deal of economic benefit to a destination as they fill up with food from supermarkets etc. prior to travelling to the area. Although this may be true about some, evidence of recent research by the national group CAMPRA (CAMPAIGN FOR REAL AIRES UK) and in areas where travelling in motorhomes is popular, report tendencies that are a little different. Research in 2019 on motorhome visits to the highlands of Scotland (North Coast 500) shows that visitors in motor homes spent 33% of their holiday expenditure on accommodation with the remaining 67% on items such as food and drink, attractions and local shopping. Reports from local companies hiring motor homes also indicate that their vehicles were often returned without the oven and cooking equipment having been used and this suggests that these visitors often eat out in cafés, public houses or local restaurants.

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 - 1.2 Joint Local Development Plan Policies (JLDP) - Anglesey & Gwynedd
 - 1.3 Snowdonia National Park Authority's (SNPA) Local Development Plan (LDP)
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 - 1.5 The use of public land, car parks and other land for motorhomes
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 8. Recommendations
 - 8.1. Trial and facilitate the use
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 9. Acknowledgement

Appendix 1 Tourism Policy - Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan.

Appendix 2 Tourism Policy of Snowdonia National Park Authority's (SNPA) Local Development Plan (LDP)

Appendix 3 Location Assessment Matrix

1. Current situation in Gwynedd

The increase in visits by motorhome owners has not gone without comment here in Gwynedd and concerns have arisen in a number of communities across the county as an increasing number of motorhome owners decide to stay in 'public' locations and on land where there is no legal right to sleep in a vehicle overnight.

Gwynedd STEAM 2019 figures indicate that 7.8 million visitors visit the county annually and contribute £1.35 billion to the local economy. In the Gwynedd accommodation survey - Gwynedd Council 2018/19, it was calculated that there are 366 caravan and camping sites in Gwynedd that could provide a service for motorhomes. In 2011, there were 340 caravan and camping sites. On average, there were 59 pitches for each camping site.

The following table shows the split in the types of sites and holiday parks that were calculated in the caravan and camping category.

1.1 Gwynedd accommodation survey - Gwynedd Council 2018/19

Type	Number	% of total accommodation	% of the caravan and camping category
Camping Park	47	1.2	12.8
Holiday Park	107	2.7	29.2
Holiday and Touring Park	9	0.2	2.5
Holiday and Camping Park	26	0.7	7.1
Camping and Touring Park	95	2.4	26.0
Holiday, Touring and Camping Park	25	0.6	6.8
Total Caravan and Camping	366	9.2	100.0

On one hand it appears that there is quite a substantial provision to satisfy camping needs in Gwynedd. However, it has to be noted that a large number of caravan and camping sites now operate by selling seasonal pitches to caravan owners and this means a substantial reduction in the number of touring/daily or overnight pitches that are available.

1.2 Joint Local Development Plan Policies (JLDP) - Anglesey & Gwynedd

The Anglesey and Gwynedd JLDP (2011-26) is the main consideration when determining planning applications in Gwynedd (this does not include the Snowdonia National Park Authority area) and the JLDP includes planning policies for developments by the tourism sector. As a motorhome falls within the legal definition of a caravan, the policies for the development of touring caravan sites are the ones that are relevant to motorhomes. See below the definition of a caravan in The Caravan Sites and Development Control Act 1960: *“any structure designed or adapted for human habitation which is capable of being moved from one place to another (whether by being towed, or by being transported on a motor vehicle or trailer) and any motor vehicle so designed or*

adapted but does not include any railway rolling stock or any tent”

Noting the above, there are no separate policies for motorhomes, however, there is probably also a need to ask if the Act (1960) is now fit for purpose in terms of the needs of the tourism sector and the control thereof.

Policy TWR5 (appendix 1) states that proposals for new touring caravan, camping or temporary alternative camping sites, extensions to existing sites or additional pitches will be granted provided they conform to specific criteria. The principles of the criteria are set out below:

- Development is of a high quality and is sited in an unobtrusive location
- Avoids excessive areas of hard standing
- Have limited physical connection to the ground
- Facilities be located within an existing building or the need for additional facilities needs to be clearly demonstrated and commensurate with the scale of the development.
- That the site is close to the main highway network
- That the site is used for touring purposes only

1.3 Snowdonia National Park Authority's (SNPA) Local Development Plan (LDP) Policies

For the same reason as explained above, developments dealing with motorhomes are considered against the relevant policies for touring caravans.

Policies 22 and 23 (appendix 2) of the Snowdonia National Park LDP do not permit the development of new caravan sites within the national park's boundaries. Policy 23 permits the extension or upgrading of existing touring caravan and camping sites providing all specific criteria are satisfied. The principles of the criteria are set out below

- The site is already well screened from public vantage points
- The scale and layout of the extension is appropriate within the landscape
- The proposal will significantly improve the internal landscaping of a site and increase the quality of the existing facilities
- The proposal is in keeping with the size of the existing site.

1.4 Permitted development rights

New regulations have come into force from 30 April 2021. The Welsh Government has relaxed the planning control for temporary specific development by making amendments to the Town and Country Planning Order (Permitted General Development) 1995 (TCPO). The aim of the relaxation was to assist businesses to re-open and support efforts to create safe circumstances. Currently, the temporary use of additional land is limited to 28 days, the new rules will give an additional 28 days, however, this is specifically for camping with tents. Development is not permitted if the land use is as a caravan site.

1.5 The use of public land, car parks and other land for motorhomes

The need or otherwise for planning permission to use the land (e.g. public car parks, other lands etc.) for motorhomes to stay overnight is a consideration of fact and degree, in order to come to a conclusion if there has been a material change of use to the land / property. As a result of receiving legal counsel opinion on this matter, and emphasising the need to assess each case individually in terms of fact and degree, there are strong grounds to come to the conclusion that land use (e.g. public car parks, other lands etc.) for motorhomes to stay overnight generally means a material change of use requiring planning permission. It also follows that the use would require a site licence under the provision of The Caravan Sites and Development Control Act 1960. In addition, if the use involves a public car park where an order is in operation, there would also be a need to revise the order requirements. Again, each case will need to be assessed individually and on its own merits.

There will be a need to deal with any planning application for the change of use of land for motorhomes use to stay overnight, in accordance with the Local Development Plans noted above, as well as any relevant planning considerations. As part of the research a matrix has been developed (See Appendix 3) to assist and consider if a site (e.g. car park) can be acceptable in planning terms for overnight use by motorhomes.

1.6 Review of Parking/Traffic Legislation

Current situation:

- The Council has a wide range of car parks throughout the County that offer safe and affordable parking. Motorhomes are welcome to park in our car parks where we have no height restrictions installed.
- Motorhomes are required to adhere to the parking restrictions by ensuring that they park in a location that is suitable for the vehicle's size, to avoid dangers to pedestrians or to prevent the flow of traffic.
- Overnight stays are not permitted in any vehicle.

Existing powers:

- The Council has powers to issue a Penalty Charge Notice to motorists who park illegally under the Traffic Management Act 2004, usually where there are restrictions e.g. yellow lines, signage exists or within pay and display car parks. Parking restrictions are based on legal orders.
- A clause 'no overnight camping' is part of the legal order in some locations, however, to ensure the validity of the Penalty Charge Notices if we went to appeal, we would require firm evidence that the owners had slept in the vehicle. We have lost appeals in the past as motorists claimed that they had only parked their vehicles in a car park overnight and they had slept in a relation or friend's house.
- The Council does not currently have powers to penalise motorists who park vehicles overnight in roadside locations.
- The Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 permits Local Authorities to present restrictions via a Traffic Regulation Order (Permanent), or a Temporary or Experimental Traffic Regulation Order. It is possible to set a variety of restrictions such as yellow lines or restrictions to prevent parking (between specific times) in areas that prove popular with motorhomes, nonetheless, local residents who use these locations themselves can oppose the proposals.

- The Legal Department is looking into the possibilities of re-establishing bye-laws that existed on lay-bys adjacent to a road, to enable them to take enforcement steps against those who use them to park their motorhomes overnight, to move on. However, firm evidence is required that the owners had slept in the vehicle in order to ensure the validity of the Penalty Charge Notice.
- The Environment Department and the Economy Department have already erected 'No overnight camping' signs in many locations where complaints have been received, and on the whole this has proved successful.

The Departments will continue to monitor this.

2. Gwynedd Caravan and Camping Sites Research, April 2021

As part of this report Gwynedd Council's Tourism, Marketing and Events Service, conducted on-line research with caravan and camping site owners in Gwynedd. The purpose of the research was to find out more about the county's camping provision and local views on the situation.

153 questionnaires were received. 41 questionnaires had been fully completed. The following analysis is based on the 41 fully completed questionnaires. Responses were received from a cross-section of businesses across Gwynedd including Arfon, Dwyfor and Meirionnydd.

Results:

Is your camping site associated with a club?

Type of licence	Number
No (Local Government Licence)	27
Yes. The Camping and Caravanning Club	5
Yes. Caravan and Motorhome Club	4
Yes. Other clubs	5

In a normal year, during which months are you open?

Month	Number of camping sites open
January	2
February	4
March	17
April	41
May	41
June	41
July	41
August	41
September	25

October	24
November	9
December	8

How many available touring pitches do you have?

An average of 14 touring pitches are available

Note the touring pitch price per night (Use 2020 or 2021 prices) To be consistent, you should base the price on 1 pitch, 2 adults and 2 children during the main season.

Pitch	Average price
Pitch price, including electricity	£24.25
Pitch price without electricity	£20.05

During a normal year estimate the percentage of touring pitches that are used every month? (Number of touring pitches used by a tent, caravan or motorhomes.

Month	Average pitches used
January	10%
February	20%
March	37%
April	45%
May	74%
June	76%
July	89%
August	94%
September	57%
October	45%
November	10%
December	5%

Over the past five years have you experienced an increase in the number of motorhome visits?

Increase?	Number
No	3
Yes	38

Do you implement a minimum stay policy of 2 nights or more?

Booking?	Number
No. We take a 1 night stay	28
Yes. Sometimes e.g. during the season	13
Yes All the time	0

From your experience, did you welcome more motorhomes to your camping site in 2020?

Increase in 2020	Percentage
No. We welcomed fewer.	30.4%
The situation was like any other year	4.3%
Yes. There was a small increase	30.4%
Yes. There was a large increase	34.8%

A number of observations were received from caravan and camping owners:

“Camper vans that park in layby or beach carparks should be clamped or pay a fee to the council for they are the people who have to clear up after them”

"There should be legislation against such a thing and a fine. There is no need for this to happen in an area that has too many caravan and camping sites. There are no toilet facilities in these places but this does not stop them from going to the toilet in public places and to endanger public health!"

“It's not often that we have to turn campervans away (only during bank Holidays usually) as a campervan owner myself I can see the need for some aire type facilities especially when arriving late into an area but it should probably be limited to single night stays, wild camping on the other hand should be legislated against due to the increasing number of campervaners who care little about the area or the local population by littering and fouling lay byes and beaches.”

“Aire type facilities”

“The beach at Dinas Dinlle is quite often flooded with camper vans and campers during the summer months predominantly at the weekends and yet signs are there prohibiting overnight camping. Some are tidy and leave no mess whilst others use it as a local dustbin. Possible measures would be to monitor this and move on the parties. I understand this probably has it's issues. Possibly limit height to vehicles using it but again I feel you would cause issues for locals using it to exercise their horses, surfers visiting etc. Maybe a specific area can be created for this. I believe the same problem exists along the foryd foreshore and parking areas. Aire type facilities would be a consideration but would only work if the legislation was but in place to stop overnight parking and did not put existing parks into competition.”

2.1 Main findings:

- Seasonal provision is mainly available between April and October
- The average touring pitches available are 14. The figure is much lower than the average 59 pitches calculated via visitor accommodation research and this suggests that a large number of pitches are used on the basis of seasonal agreements and are not available for daily and overnight use.
- The occupancy level is high during the main season May - September.
- Increase in the number of motorhome visits experienced with 38 out of 41 over the last 5 years.
- Approximately 60% had experienced an increase in the number of visits from motorhomes in 2020.

3. Research into motorhome owners

There is no doubt that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the popularity of motorhomes. Staycations and the ability to be self-contained and self-sufficient have driven the appeal. However, like any other industry, it is developments and technology that have contributed most towards the increase in their popularity over the last 10 years.

The concept of motorhomes was developed in the 1960s as companies such as Volkswagen launched their iconic campervan motorhomes. At the time, such vehicles enabled their owners to sleep and cook within the vehicle.

By now, the provision available in motorhomes is very different and since the end of the 1990s the vehicles have been developed to be totally self-contained. This type of motorhome (sleeping a family) can be self-contained for approximately 4 days and this means that during this period they would not need a power supply, a facility to empty any waste or a water supply. In such a vehicle there are standard cooking equipment, beds, bathroom and a shower, on board electric power supply, gas and heating equipment.



As part of this report, Gwynedd Council's Tourism, Marketing and Events Service, conducted on-line research to target the owners of motorhomes. The purpose of the research was to find out more about the travel trends of owners. Owners were targeted via social media networks.

Research statistics of motorhome owners, April 2021

12,500 questionnaires, with 8,833 fully completed were received. For the purpose of this research, only the fully completed questionnaires were used.

In which country do you live?

Country	Percentage %
Wales	19.7
England	73.6
Scotland	4.4
Ireland	1.0
Rest of Europe	1.3

What type of vehicle do you own?

Type of vehicle	Percentage %
Motorhome	62.7
Campervan	34.9
Other	2.4

Is the vehicle?

Type of construction	Percentage %
Coach Built	57.9
Campervan Professional	27.1
Self-Build	15.0

Do you belong to a club?

Club	Percentage %
Caravan and Camping Club	33.7
Caravan and Motorhome Club	33.5
Other	11.3
No	21.5

How often do you holiday in the UK using your vehicle?

Number of times	Percentage %
1 to 4	19.9
5 to 9	37.4
10 +	42.7

Have you ever travelled to Gwynedd (Eryri/Snowdonia and Pen Llŷn) with your vehicle?

Have you travelled to Gwynedd?	Percentage %
Yes	62.1
No	36.8

Unsure	1.1
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When you go on holiday in your vehicle, on average how many nights do you stay away from home?

Average nights away	Percentage %
1 to 3 nights	33.1
4 to 6 nights	33.9
7 +	33.0

What time of year do you go on holiday in your vehicle?

Time of year	Percentage %
Throughout the year. 12 months.	64.3
Part of the year	35.7

Normally, how many nights do you stay in the same place?

Number of nights	Percentage %
1 night	23.3
2 nights	39.0
3 nights	23.5
4+ nights	14.2

Where do you stay? Which of the following best describes your stay pattern?

Description	Percentage %
We always stay in a recognised camping site	18.3
We stay in a recognised camping site and do wild camping	68.9
Wild camping only	7.4
Other	5.5

If you do 'wild camping' what are your reasons for this?

Reason	Percentage %
It's free / saves costs	12.2
Location. We want to stay as close as possible to where we want to visit e.g. town or attraction	27.7
Our vehicle is self-contained and suitable for wild camping - we do not need services e.g. electricity supply etc.	30.4
We usually do 'wild camping' as a 'stopover'.	18.5

Camping sites are often full and therefore we have to do 'wild camping'	7.4
Other	3.8

In Europe 'aires' or specific places are provided to sleep overnight in motorhomes. If there was an 'aire' available in Gwynedd would you consider using it?

Would you stay in an aire?	Percentage %
No. We would stay in a recognised camping site.	3.2
No. We would do 'wild camping'	4.6
Yes. We would stay in an 'aire'.	92.2

If an 'aire' facility was available to you What type of services would you like to see provided?

Type of service	List according to popularity (Multi choice)
Fresh water	7,909
Toilet waste disposal site	7,650
Litter bins	7,243
Hard standing	3,485
With lighting	1,933
Electricity. 240v battery charging facility	1,925
Other	965

**Other – information point, wifi

How much would you be willing to pay to stay in an 'aire' facility? (For consistency base your price on - No 240v electricity but include fresh water supply, toilet waste disposal site, hard standing, litter bins) Note the price to the nearest £. **Average £10.**

Comments - As well as the 12,500 responses to the on-line questionnaire approximately 300 emails were received from owners stating their ideas and experiences of travelling in motorhomes.

“just completed your aires questionnaire and want to thank you for considering the problem that motorhome owners have. Motorhomes are not caravans and are designed to remain mobile. In most cases we only need an overnight stop off.”

“We are regular visitors to Powys, where overnight stays are allowed and welcomed on several of their car parks. Back in September we spend a week touring this way in Powys, visiting the towns, markets and spending in local shops.”

"I think the motorhome owner is misunderstood in our requirements. Being self-contained with toilet, shower, cooking, solar power etc. we need very little. Just a safe parking spot, somewhere to empty a toilet cassette and that can be as simple as an open sewer drain or dedicated toilet bowl plus Fresh water if available. Mains electric is never a real requirement for most, in fact this is the issue that incurs the largest cost in supply and maintenance."

"I must say how refreshing it is to see a council that is 'forward thinking', rather than just legislating against wild camping it really is welcoming to see Gwynedd embracing this as an opportunity to benefit local communities."

"May I take this opportunity to Thank you for taking the time and trouble to looking into the wild camping situation in the uk."

"Thank you for giving us this opportunity to share our views. Since retiring three years ago we purchased a motorhome, hoping to explore the continent and more of the UK. In that time (before coronavirus) we have been to the North of Scotland, and to the South of France twice. The contrast between facilities here and on the continent are grim - at many motorway service areas in France, there are free stopover facilities for motorhomes, and Aires at most towns and villages. In the UK, all we find are restriction notices and height barriers. Our motorhome is self-contained, we carry all our waste with us until we find disposal facilities. Although we have cooking facilities, it is a compact van with not a huge amount of storage space, so we do tend to eat out a lot. We also carry bikes to explore the locality wherever we stop. We therefore spend money in the local economy when we travel, and although we are pensioners, this still adds up to a reasonable sum. If we could find overnight facilities with water and waste disposal, we would happily pay say £10 per night, eat at the local pub, and move on in the morning."

"I've just filled the questionnaire regarding the possibility of having 'aires' in Gwynedd. A great idea in my opinion. We are a family of 5 with a motorhome and we enjoy a family holiday as often as possible. Summer holidays in France and we only use 'aires' when we are travelling to campsites. We also often drive to Germany for skiing holidays and stay in 'aires' on the way."

"First find a site which is large enough, suits the local council and residents. Ensure that it is close enough to shops, pubs etc for local businesses to benefit from the substantial money that these affluent people will spend. Put a limit of 2 or 3 days on their stay to avoid long term stays. Install ticket machines and charge £10 - £12 a night depending on location. Many vans will also use the Aire for daytime visiting, so the benefit to local businesses is substantial. Then most importantly put height bars on any other car parks in the locality and strictly enforce a no camper van parking rule in the area. In this way you can control where these vehicles can stop."

3.1 Main research findings into motorhome owners:

- Regular travellers. 80% travel between 5 and 10 times a year.
- 95% are self-contained vehicles.
- 52% stay in one place for 1 or 2 nights only.
- 65% use their vehicles throughout the year.
- 92.2% note that they would use a provision similar to an 'Aire' if they were available.
- Fresh water, able to dispose of toilet waste and litter waste - these were the three main needs when travelling on holiday in motorhomes. Electricity provision was last on the list.
- When on holiday 68.9% used a mix of stays in camping sites and wild camping.

Following recent research by CAMBRA, the table below summarises the main differences between visitors who travel with a tent/caravan and visitors who travel in motorhomes.

	Tent / Caravan	Motorhomes
Where	Usually a caravan or camping site that is some miles outside a town/village.	In towns or villages - ideally within a walking distance to local services such as a shop, restaurants etc.
When	April - October Main season and weekends	Throughout the year
How	Use a car to get to the caravan and camping site. Use a car to travel around the destination.	The motorhome is the only vehicle. Depend on a bicycle, walking and public transport.
Stay	Long weekends, 5, 7 or 14 day holidays.	24 – 48 hours
Services needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toilets • Shower • Electricity • Large pitches • Number of services at the site e.g. shop and bar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh water • Toilet waste • Refuse waste
Interests	“Setting up a ‘pitch’ and enjoying the facilities the site has to offer with occasional trips into the local area.”	“Dining out at local restaurants and cafes; exploring town centres and local attractions on foot or by cycle”
Food tendencies	“Take food to cook, buy from campsite shop, occasional takeaways or visits to cafes or restaurants, BBQs”	“Take a small amount of basic food for trip then buy from local businesses or eat out at cafes/restaurants/pubs or buy takeaways to eat in motorcaravan.”

4. Provision for motorhomes

Hand in hand with the growth in the popularity of motorhome travel, several local authorities across the UK have now developed and provide purposeful places to allow motorhomes to park, stay and to sleep overnight. Several have adapted or provided car parks and others have developed full 'aire' facilities. (There is further reference and explanation in this report about 'Aires').

There is no consistency from area to area and although there are some local authorities who have developed specific plans for motorhomes the majority continue to treat motorhomes in accordance with the policies of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960.

It appears that there have been arguments and challenges recently from groups such as CAMBRA as there is some confusion regarding local policies and the law regarding sleeping in a self-contained vehicle and that this will prevent the market from developing in the UK. To this end the UK is unique. In the rest of Europe, sleeping in motorhomes is seen as 'parking' and not 'camping', countries such as France and Germany differentiate between the activities of motorhomes and caravans/tents. In the UK, 'camping' in legislation is legal under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960. This Act was issued in 1960. A number of national groups are lobbying to revise this to reflect what is happening on the continent and to include the development of provisions for the 'roaming' and self-contained nature of motorhomes.

Some local authorities have developed by-laws and provisions such as 'aires' that can be found in France. Locations such as Donaghadee (GI), Canterbury Park and Ride, Helmsley, Skipton, Hawick, Craven Council, Lochore Country Park (Fife), Forestry Commission Scotland, Ardglass Harbour, to name but a few, have developed facilities in response to local needs.

As part of this research we know when we examined motorhome forums and Facebook groups that these facilities are used and welcomed by motorhome owners.

4.1 Wales

The situation in Wales is mixed. Powys County Council allows overnight parking in many of their car parks for one night in seven, and it is understood that the system that has been in place since the 1990s as part of the order is in operation for the relevant car parks. Carmarthenshire and Monmouthshire are looking into and investigating options. During 2020, temporary traffic restriction notices were used at Newgale by Pembrokeshire County Council to prevent caravans and motor caravans from parking in lay-bys. This was in response to safety concerns regarding caravans and motorhomes parking overnight. During summer last year there was an effort to stop camping in car parks by undertaking early morning enforcement patrols.

Visit Wales is in the process of implementing a 10 year plan to develop 3 national touring routes under the banner of The Wales Way - The North Wales Way, The Coastal Way and The Cambrian Way - the three include parts of Gwynedd.

4.2 Scotland

According to a number of motorhome groups, such as CAMBRA, Scotland is recognised as the best country in the UK in terms of infrastructure and provision for motorhomes. Although there have been negative reports recently in the press regarding the number of visitors who visit the NC500, local communities along the way recognise the need to get to grips with these problems and have developed locations to serve motorhomes. The Highlands County Council has been working jointly with landowners such as farmers with land to develop and provide simple facilities for short breaks, to bring economic benefits to local businesses.

Other popular areas such as the Isle of Tiree and the Trossachs Forest Park have also commenced looking at trialling the use of local car parks to satisfy motorhome requirements. A number of touring routes have been developed in Scotland specifically to target motorhome tourists. The NC500 touring route is recognised as one of the best in the world, while other routes such as the North East 250 encompasses the area to the East of Inverness. Heart 200 includes the central belt and the South West Coastal 300 includes the Dumfries and Galloway area. These touring routes attract motorhomes throughout the year.

The public and private sector have facilities that have been developed. The community in Caerlaverlock have developed overnight 'stay' assets for motorhomes. These have been provided by local landowners and community groups, with encouragement from the local authority and the Scottish national government. Fife Council has provided sites at Lochore Country Park near Lochgelly, and the Loch Lomond area have also commenced trialling an 'aires' scheme to satisfy the area's needs.

Scottish law permits wild camping with a tent in rural areas as long as the person who is camping does not leave anything behind. However, this law is not relevant to motorhomes, despite this, sleeping in motorhomes is generally tolerated.

4.3 England

England does not have a national strategy for motorhomes, however, a number of local authorities and public and private organisations do provide facilities. One of the best examples can be found in Canterbury. Recently, Exmouth Town Council has developed an 'aire' site on the outskirts of the town with a park and ride service. Craven Council allows motorhomes to park overnight in three of their car parks - Skipton, Settle and Ingleton. In Skipton and Settle there is a maximum stay permission of three nights, in Ingleton, up to seven nights are allowed. There are no facilities and the cost for overnight parking is £5 a night, together with the usual day payments. Car parks are also used for the purpose of 'overnight parking' at Helmsley. The Yorkshire Moors National Park is currently conducting trials, and allow overnight parking at Sutton Bank, Chop Gate and Thornton Le Dale. Northumbrian Water allows overnight parking in three of its sites at the Visitor Centres of Kielder Forest - Tower Knowe and Kielder and Elf Kirk View. In addition, they allow overnight parking at their other water reservoir sites such as Derwent and Fontburn.

In response to similar challenges to those experienced in Gwynedd, the Lake District is preparing a number of new activities in 2021 to improve the control of motorhomes in the area. These activities include:

- Developing the Guide 'How to visit Cumbria in a motorhome' including rules to disperse clusters of vans.

- Erect standard signs regarding overnight stays.
- Tighten rules in car parks with no overnight parking / or staying in vehicles signs.
- Create a list and promote locations where it is acceptable for motorhomes to park overnight.
- Contact motorhome websites e.g. Park4night to amend information and to encourage compliance with national and local regulations.

As well as the above, the Lake District has been using Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders in areas where illegal parking has become a significant issue.

The www.britstops.com <<http://www.britstops.com>> website is a network of locations that provide and are suitable for motorhomes across Britain. The locations allow free parking for one night. It is not possible to book in advance and there are no facilities, however, it is possible to park for one night. A motorhome without facilities cannot stay overnight. The following map displays the types of businesses that welcome motorcaravans and their locations. A sample of the information can be seen below.

Each entry is easy to understand

Colour corresponds to the region on the map

Name/address of venue, telephone number, contact and website

Pub? Farm shop? Vineyard?

Number of the dot on the regional map

Number of places available

Phone ahead? No

Large motorhomes? No

Dogs allowed? Yes

Litter disposal? Yes

Fresh water? Yes

Grey waste? Yes

Electricity? No

Free wifi? Yes

Black waste? No

Dates closed for stopovers

Information on the host, produce and the local area

Clear written directions to the host

Important or useful information

Key to symbols:

- Litter
- Fresh water
- Grey water
- Hook up
- Free WiFi
- Black water
- Greyed out = not available



4.4 The Situation in Europe

The situation in Europe appears to be quite different, where there is a wide provision of facilities for motorhomes. In France, Germany and Italy facilities called Aire (France), Stellplatz (Germany) or Sostas (Italy) can be found in nearly all the main towns and villages.

What are Aire / Stellplatz or Sosta?

The concept of 'Aire' was developed for the first time in France when the country's government introduced them in communities on the grounds of economic development opportunities.

Put simply, an 'Aire' is a designated overnight parking area to be used by self-contained motorhomes. Across Europe they are provided by the local authority, the Mayor in France, communities or private landowners. 'Aires' can be found in a variety of locations, but in keeping with the French government's original vision, they are usually located in villages or towns or very close to community facilities. The intention is to encourage visitors who are travelling in motorhomes to stay in a town or village and to offer an element of economic benefit to the local community and have better control over the sector. Often camping sites offer two types of service on the same site, one for camping activities and one for overnight parking and sleeping in motorhomes.

There are obvious differences in policy. The governments of European countries differentiate between 'camping' and sleeping in motorhomes. The main reason for this is that they interpret motorhomes as self-contained units, namely that the vehicles include water tanks, power, gas, heating, toilet etc. as well as the fact that the nature of travel / holiday in such vehicles entails moving from place to place more regularly, often daily. 'Camping' activities, namely, things such as a barbecue, tables and chairs outside etc. are not permitted in an 'aire'.

Different facilities can be found in an Aire / Stellplatz or Sosta. Some only offer a parking space. In the majority there are essential facilities such as drinking water tap, toilet waste point and grey waste water point and litter bins. Some also offer electricity facilities to enable vehicles to charge their batteries.



A great number of motorhome owners from Britain choose to travel to Europe because of the wide network of facilities that are available.

This video by Nigel and Sonia Wignall from Conwy is a summary of how the 'aires' and 'stellplatz' systems work in France and Germany. <https://youtu.be/kuLbiMk1lvo>

Over the Irish sea the Irish Republic has developed a formal strategy for motorhome tourism. In 2014, Fáilte Ireland launched the 'Wild Atlantic Way' a 2,500km route along the country's western coast. Since its launch it has developed to be one of the main travel destinations for motorhome visitors and has received international recognition. A number of local authorities saw this as an opportunity and several areas have developed motorhome facilities. Waterford Council, County Cork Council and Donegal Council have provided several 'aire' facilities for motorhomes. The Portumna marina 'aire' site (in the photograph) has won several prizes of excellence for its facilities. You can stay there for 10 euros a night and it is in the centre of the village.



4.5 New Zealand

Operational policies and parking network systems for motorhomes in New Zealand are recognised by many as the best in the world. 'Freedom Camp' is a network of designated sites where motorhomes can stay overnight, these are usually provided free of charge by Local Authorities. In order to be able to stay overnight in a Freedom Camp site it is essential for the motorhomes to be certified as a self-contained vehicle with the capacity to hold a sufficient amount of water (12L of water per person a day), provides a toilet (when the bed has been made up - not a toilet that is kept under the bed or in a cupboard) and litter for a minimum of 3 days. It is essential for motorhomes to have a self-contained test and this will then last for 4 years. There is more information about the self-contained criteria to be found here:

<https://www.freedomcamping.org/plan-your-trip/self-containment-certification/>

5. Gwynedd residents and communities research

As part of the consultation research was undertaken to seek the views of Gwynedd residents and communities regarding the situation with motorhomes locally. On-line research was undertaken for a period of 6 weeks between 20/07 and 31/08 2021.

4,868 questionnaires were completed, 2,169 full questionnaires. The following analysis is based on the 2,169 of full responses. Responses were received from a cross-section of residents across Gwynedd including Arfon, Dwyfor and Meirionnydd.

Results:

Number of full responses	2,169	
<i>Are motorhomes a problem in your area?</i>		
	No.	%
Not answered	66	3.0%
No, not a problem in my community	715	33.0%
Yes at times e.g. the summer, weekends	999	46.1%
Yes, it is a consistent problem in my community	389	17.9%
	2,169	100.0%
<i>Some other local authorities in popular tourist destinations in the UK have started to develop plans to improve the control of motorhomes. One of the most common interventions is the development of 'aires' which are very common in European countries. In your opinion what type of intervention should be considered to improve control and the experiences of motorhome visitors? (Tick if relevant)</i>		
	No.	% (out of 2,169)
Do nothing. There is no need to do more to improve the control of motorhomes in Gwynedd	50	2.3%
More camping sites. Increasing capacity	559	25.8%
Open camping sites throughout the year	663	30.6%
Stricter legislation and enforcement	838	38.6%
Trial new ideas e.g. a series of 'aires' in more urban sites using the Council's existing car parks or private businesses.	1,599	73.7%
Other	162	7.5%
<i>From the research with motorhome owners it appears that the vast majority are keen to stay overnight in more urban locations to be close to services such as shops, restaurants etc. On average, they also tend to stay for 2 nights before moving on. Would you be happy to see a trial conducted of the use made of car parks in more urban locations and to permit overnight parking for a specific period e.g. 48 hours?</i>		
	No.	%
Yes, this seems to be a good idea to trial	1,500	69.2%
I'm not sure	136	6.3%
No, I don't think that this is a suitable idea	512	23.6%
Not answered	21	1.0%
	2,169	100.0%

Location of some who answered	No.	%
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Gwynedd	1,735	80.0%
Outside Gwynedd	243	11.2%
Not answered	191	8.8%
	2,169	100.0%

Of the 2,169 responses received, 1,432 observations were made. For the purpose of the research we have categorised the comments into specific headings. The following table summarises the comments received to the question 'additional comments'. It is worth noting that 20 comments were received specifically regarding the difficulties at Tonfannau near Tywyn.

Comments of all (Gwynedd, Outside Gwynedd and not answered)	No.	% who agree with the comment
Purposeful 'aires' with facilities are a good idea (2 nights maximum)	453	31.6%
Local council/ businesses to charge a fee for overnight parking in their car parks/use of toilets, bins and water.	449	31.4%
Need to penalise those who park illegally / more wardens / laws and signs	336	23.5%
They create an obstruction in the car parks / at the roadside / narrow lanes - no space for residents and day visitors to park	293	20.5%
Mess /Litter /human waste left - negative impact on the environment	257	17.9%
Everything should be done to promote the use of motorhomes as any other tourist type to promote the local economy.	119	8.3%
Motorhome owners should be able to afford paying for parking in legal places	117	8.2%
A need to provide parking places/'aires' in rural locations as well, not only in towns.	73	5.1%
Illegal parking - no contribution to the local economy	70	4.9%
Motor vehicles parking illegally causing ill-feeling between Gwynedd residents and visitors	59	4.1%
Specific parking/camping places have to be provided before proceeding to penalise	58	4.1%
Something needs to be done to sort out this problem.	56	3.9%
Not possible to turn up at camping sites now either because they are full / will not accept you for one night	45	3.1%
The solution is not to increase the caravan/camping sites as the motor vehicles do not require the facilities	38	2.7%
Their use should not be encouraged in Gwynedd	31	2.2%
Motor vehicles are less of a problem than second /holiday homes in the area	26	1.8%
Motor vehicles should not be treated in the same manner as vehicles that have been transformed into a motorhome	25	1.7%
The height restriction barriers in car parks should be removed	22	1.5%
Gwynedd is busily turning into a visitors play area	21	1.5%
There should be signs to show how to go to the toilet in the wild /disposal of	19	1.3%

waste		
They should be allowed to park at roadsides /car parks	18	1.3%
There should be a system where owners have to register to get a permit if they are self-sufficient.	17	1.2%
A 'visitors' tax' should be charged	14	1.0%

For the purpose of this research we also present the observations of 1,167 out of 1,735 who commented and also noted in the questionnaire that they were residents living in Gwynedd. There are a few differences in the percentages, as noted in the table.

Living in Gwynedd (1,167 out of 1,735 commented)

Comments of those who noted that they resided in Gwynedd	No.	% who agree with the comment
Local council/ businesses to charge a fee for overnight parking in their car parks/use of toilets, bins and water	367	31.4%
Purposeful 'aires' with facilities are a good idea (2 nights maximum)	328	28.1%
Need to penalise those who park illegally / more wardens / laws and signs	300	25.7%
They create an obstruction in the car parks / at the roadside / narrow lanes - no space for residents and day visitors to park	264	22.6%
Mess /Litter /human waste left - negative impact on the environment	225	19.3%
Motorhome owners should be able to afford paying for parking in legal places	105	9.0%
Everything should be done to promote the use of motorhomes as any other type of tourist to promote the local economy.	86	7.4%
Illegal parking - no contribution to the local economy	62	5.3%
A need to provide parking places/'aires' in rural locations as well, not only in towns.	58	5.0%
Purposeful parking/camping places have to be provided before proceeding to penalise	54	4.6%
Motor vehicles parking illegally causing ill-feeling between Gwynedd residents and visitors	53	4.5%
There is a need to do something to sort out this problem.	51	4.4%
Not possible to turn up at camping sites now either because they are full / will not accept you for one night	29	2.5%
The solution is not to increase the caravan/camping sites as the motor vehicles do not require the facilities	26	2.2%
Their use should not be encouraged in Gwynedd	24	2.1%
Motor vehicles are less of a problem than second /holiday homes in the area	24	2.1%
Motor vehicles should not be treated in the same manner as vehicles that have been transformed into a motorhome	23	2.0%
Gwynedd is busily turning into a visitors play area	18	1.5%
The height restriction barriers in car parks should be removed	18	1.5%
A 'visitors' tax' should be charged	14	1.2%
There should be a system whereby owners have to register to get a permit if they are self-contained.	14	1.2%
There should be signs to show how to go to the toilet in the wild /disposal of waste	13	1.1%
They should be allowed to park at roadsides /car parks	12	1.0%

5.1 Main findings of Gwynedd residents and communities

- A high percentage of local residents note that there are problems in their area due to motorhomes.

46.1% noted at times e.g. the summer, weekends and 17.9% noted that it was a problem throughout the year.

- The majority of local residents state that trialling new ideas e.g. a series of 'aires' in more urban sites using the Council's existing car parks or private businesses would be the most suitable solution (1,599 in support 73.7%)
- 69.2% state that they would be happy to see the trialling of the use made of car parks in more urban locations and to permit overnight parking for a specific period e.g. 48 hours.

6. The Situation in Gwynedd 2021

The level of visitors across all accommodation sectors in 2021 have been totally unprecedented here in Gwynedd. A situation that is being driven by restrictions on overseas travel and general popularity of the area amongst visitors in Britain. Visits by these motorhomes to Gwynedd have also seen incredible levels that have had a huge impact on the services of local authorities and communities across the county. Gwynedd Council and the SNP Authority have maximised services and activities to get to grips with problems locally. The additional activities include:

- Maximise the level of wardens
- Increase the level and frequency of services e.g. refuse collection
- Additional signage in problematic locations
- Multi-purpose marketing and communication campaigns (encouraging the use of recognised sites and not to wild camp)
- Complaints system



<https://www.facebook.com/visitingsnowdonia/videos/1440705772955454>



<https://www.facebook.com/visitingsnowdonia/photos/10159487745689374>



Despite efforts 'wild camping' continues to happen and a large number of complaints have been received by Gwynedd Council and the SNP Authority. The main problematic locations include:

- Y Foryd
- Porth Neigwl
- Llanberis
- Dinas Dinlle
- Trefor
- Porth Ysgaden
- Dôl Idris
- Between Dolgellau and Bontddu
- Llyn Dinas
- Bala, particularly around Llyn Tegid and Bron Feuno
- Dyffryn Ardudwy
- Capel Curig / Llynau Mymbyr
- Cromlech and Nant Peris
- Dyffryn Ogwen
- Tywyn / Tonfannau
- Cricieth
- Pwllheli





(Photographs by SNPA)

7. Main findings and recommendations of the research into the situation regarding motorhomes in Gwynedd

Main findings:

- It appears that the motorhomes sector is a fairly new type of market that has developed more and more over the last few years, as the needs of the population change as well as the ability of the vehicles to be more self-contained and comfortable.
Growth since 2010.
- The pattern or the nature of how motorhome owners spend their holidays is different to the 'more traditional camping' with tendencies to travel from one place to the next and to stay for a day or two only at a site, before moving on. 52% noted that they stayed in one place for 1 or 2 nights only.
- It is not anticipated that there will be a reduction in the growth of the popularity and number of motorhomes on our roads. The trend is increasing and it is anticipated that there will be further growth as a result of COVID-19.
- It appears that the current provision available at caravan and camping sites in Gwynedd does not always satisfy the requirements and the travel patterns of motorhome owners. It seems that visitors in motorhomes want to stay in locations that are close to facilities e.g. restaurants, shops etc. They arrive at a location later after 18:00hrs and leave early.
- Motorhome owners tend to travel throughout the year. The majority of caravan and camping sites are open from April to October and at specific times and there is a suggestion especially during 2020 that there are capacity issues.
- A high number of motorhome visitors use a combination of caravan and parking sites / wild camping when on holiday. 92.2% noted that they would use a provision similar to an 'Aire' if they were available.
- There are obvious differences in policies in the UK and Europe.
- Some areas, particularly in Scotland, are developing a network of facilities to respond to the requirements.
- A high percentage of local residents note that there are problems in their area due to motorhomes.
- 46.1% noted at times e.g. the summer, weekends and 17.9% noted that it was a problem throughout the year.
- The majority of local residents support trialling new ideas e.g. a series of 'aires' in more urban sites using the Council's existing car parks or private businesses as the most suitable solution to the issues.
- 2021 has been a totally unprecedented year in terms of motorhome visits to Gwynedd.

8. Recommendations

On the grounds of the evidence that has derived from this work, it is considered that better control of the motorhome sector is needed in Gwynedd and the following recommendations should be considered:

8.1 Trial and facilitate the use

- Use public assets such as public car parks in appropriate destinations to trial 'overnight' parking provision for the purposes of motorhomes (this will of course be subject to the need for planning permission, site permit)
- Trial to look at the possibility of using existing car parks where simple adaptations can be made to provide basic services such as fresh water, emptying of toilets, grey water and litter. Recommend looking at approximately 6 across Gwynedd. These to operate as a Gwynedd 'Aires' network.
- Implement specific regulations e.g.:
 - Self-contained vehicles only and draft county guidance such as the example in New Zealand. Develop Gwynedd self-contained guidance with CAMPRA.
 - Vehicles that are not self-contained to use caravan and camping sites.
 - Set a clear guidance regarding the length of stay - recommend a maximum of 2 nights.
 - No 'camping' activities to be permitted e.g. bbq, awnings etc. County guidance to be developed.
 - Consider a fees structure for overnight stays between the hours of 18.00 and 8.00.
- Use the locations matrix such as the one in Appendix 3 to assist with identifying suitable sites and to assist to meet with the requirements of relevant planning policies. This is relevant to public and private lands.
- Trial for a period of 2 years
- Develop a digital method to show availability, payment and advance booking of parking sites.

8.2 Control and raising awareness

- Develop a 'Staying responsible' guidance for motorhome visitors. Such as the example in the Lake District.
- Promote and market suitable 'staying in camping sites' messages.
- Raise awareness and communicate messages encouraging use of traditional caravan and camping sites.
- policing / parking enforcement where the Council has power and evidence
- Consideration to use additional overnight parking restrictions in the areas identified as 'hot spots', however, this will have to be considered jointly with the recommendation to trial. There will also be a need to consider how practical it will be to enforce in terms of evidence and resources.
- Call upon the Welsh Government to review the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960, to ensure that it better meets with the requirements of the tourism sector today.

9. Acknowledgements - A number of messages thanking Gwynedd Council for taking steps to investigate this issue.

I would like to congratulate your Council for being forward thinking enough to consider the benefits of European style 'Aires' in Snowdonia. Mark / Jo Skerritt

I have just filled in your questionaire re provision of European style motorhome aires in Gwynedd. I must say how refreshing it is to see a council that is 'forward thinking' in welcoming all tourists who arrive in motorhomes. Mrs j t marshall

I congratulate you on your desire to embrace motorhomers..and let's face it...most motorhomers are retired and want to spend their kids inheritance...so hopefully we can spend it in Gwynedd.!! Mrs j t marshall

Just completed the questionnaire about aires. Very pleased to see that this idea is being seriously considered. It works well in Europe, and would be very welcome in the UK. Richard Hubard

I have just completed your survey on motorhome and campervan use, and want to thank you for taking the time to find out what van owners would like to see in the area. Jo Morris

It was a pleasure to see this type of attitude and research into the use of motorhomes and campervans in Gwynedd. Richard Evans

*** Many thanks to Nia Wyn Vaughan and Lowri Wyn Morton, Research and Information Unit, Gwynedd Council for their assistance in analysing the data collected.**

In cases involving extending the holiday season of existing static caravan and chalet sites, the following criteria must be satisfied:

1. The accommodation and site is suitable for occupation during the winter months;
2. The extended season would not increase the consequences of an extreme flooding event;
3. The extended season will not have a detrimental effect on the local environment.

Explanation:

- 6.3.76 As standards of the holiday units and facilities on sites improve, and demands within the holiday industry change there is pressure for the holiday occupancy period to be extended. The location of many static caravan and chalet sites occur in areas where the provision of permanent housing would be contrary to national and local planning policies which seek to manage development, for example in order to safeguard the open countryside. Some sites in the plan area may not be suitable for year round occupation because of the quality of their facilities, or due to the close proximity of an important habitat which requires protection at certain times of the year. Placing conditions on these developments can ensure that holiday accommodation is used for its intended purpose and does not become a permanent place of residence.
- 6.3.77 An up to date register of the names of all owner/occupiers of the units and their main home address in order to ensure that the holiday units do not become the owner/occupier's main place of residence must be kept by all site operators.

POLICY TWR 5: TOURING CARAVAN, CAMPING AND TEMPORARY ALTERNATIVE CAMPING ACCOMMODATION

Proposals for new touring caravan, camping or temporary alternative camping sites, extensions to existing sites or additional pitches will be granted provided they conform to the following criteria:

1. That the proposed development is of a high quality in terms of design, layout and appearance, and is sited in an unobtrusive location which is well screened by existing landscape features and/or where the units can be readily assimilated into the landscape in a way which does not significantly harm the visual quality of the landscape;
2. Avoids excessive areas of hard standing;
3. Have limited physical connection to the ground and is capable of being removed off the site out of season;
4. Any ancillary facilities should, if possible, be located within an existing building or as an extension to existing facilities. If no suitable buildings are available, the need for additional facilities needs to be clearly demonstrated and commensurate with the scale of the development.
5. That the site is close to the main highway network and that adequate access can be provided without significantly harming landscape characteristics and features;
6. Occupation is limited to holiday use.
7. That the site is used for touring purposes only and any units are removed from the site during periods when not in use.

Explanation:

- 6.3.78 For the purpose of this policy 'touring units' includes touring caravans, tents, trailer tents and motor-caravans.

- 6.3.79 The aim of this policy is to facilitate the establishment of high quality touring and camping sites in appropriate locations and recognises the contribution made by high quality touring and camping sites to the range of holiday accommodation available for visitors.
- 6.3.80 Alternative forms of camping accommodation such pods, yurts, wigwams and tepees, have become more popular in recent years with visitors seeking a different camping experience. Permitting alternative camping proposals will lead to a wider range of tourist offer in the plan area that can benefit the local tourism economy.
- 6.3.81 Although often in use for only part of the year, touring caravan and camping sites are often situated in prominent and open locations and can be very intrusive in the open countryside, particularly on the coast. Particularly heavily pressurised areas exist in many communities located on or near to the coast, including extensive parts of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Council will require strong evidence that proposals for further units of accommodation in such areas will not add to servicing problems or harm the character or natural resources of these areas.
- 6.3.82 Landscape setting, site layout, and screening will therefore be important considerations in assessing proposals. In all cases, the applicant will need to submit a landscaping scheme, as well as an improvement plan for extensions, with the application.
- 6.3.83 When not in use and during the winter months all units should be removed from the site. Touring caravan and camping sites are considered acceptable in land use planning terms as having less impact on the landscape than static caravans sites because, by their very nature, they have transient features which do not impose permanent, year round effects on the local environment.
- 6.3.84 In order to ensure minimum impact upon the landscape with proposals for alternative camping accommodation, all structures should be temporary, be capable of being dismantled and moved and should have limited physical connection to the ground. The use of concrete bases is not considered acceptable. Timber platforms or decking, which can be removed from the site if required, should be used. Where possible measures should be taken to restore the site to its original state when not in use.
- 6.3.85 In order to ensure that these temporary structures are being used exclusively for holiday purposes and do not become full time, permanent dwellings the structures should provide basic holiday accommodation. They should only provide basic facilities for sleeping, seating and eating without installation of water services or provision of drainage facilities for WC, showers and washing. This ensures that such structures do not generate a level of permanence that could increase the level of landscape impact and site restoration should removal of the structures be required. Additional facilities (if not already present) should be provided separately from the accommodation through the conversion or extension of an existing building(s). If no suitable buildings are available, the need for additional facilities needs to be clearly demonstrated by the applicant and commensurate with the scale of the development.
- 6.3.86 Any proposals that include structures with mains water and drainage will be dealt with under Policy TWR3.
- 6.3.87 Since the countryside looks very different during the winter months, a condition will be attached to planning permissions for all new sites approved, limiting the operational period of the site to between 1st March and 31st October of the same year.

- 6.3.88 An unobtrusive location is defined as one which is well screened by existing landscape features and/or where touring units can be readily assimilated into the landscape without the need for excessive man made features such as hard-standing and fencing.
- 6.3.89 B & B facilities that operate within a residential dwelling (C3 use) will not be permitted to diversify in this way to avoid the proliferation of such structures within residential curtilages.

TOWN CENTRES AND RETAIL DEVELOPMENTS

6.3.90 Context

- One of the Welsh Government's objectives for town centres and retailing is to promote established town, district, local and village centres as the most appropriate locations for retailing, leisure and other complementary functions
- In deciding whether to identify sites for retail development local planning authorities should in the first instance consider whether there is a need for additional provision for these uses.
- Development Plans should establish the existing hierarchy of centres and identify those which fulfil specialist functions and be clear about their future roles.
- The national and local economy and their retail markets have experienced significant change over the last decade or so. Whilst the recent economic recession has had a great impact, a long term structural change in the way people shop has been occurring as a result of change in consumer behaviour, technological advances and the emergence and growth of new out of centre retail developments and other shopping formats
- The Isle of Anglesey County Council and Gwynedd Council each operate programmes that aim to improve some poor and underused buildings as well as enhancing the streetscape in an attempt to attract more shoppers and increase footfall into a number of town centres

Introduction

- 6.3.91 The Plan's Settlement Strategy recognises the unique character and role of various centres in the Plan area. City and town centres are vital elements of the local economy and they continue to provide a focal point for communities. It is therefore important to ensure that there is a planning framework which safeguard and enhance the position of town centres as locations for retail and commercial services. Vibrant and active centres provide a mixture of uses including residential units, business activity, service provision, retail units, leisure and cultural facilities. The Plan has a role to play in supporting development that will protect and promote the vitality and viability of existing centres.
- 6.3.92 The Retail Study (2013) undertaken to inform the Plan identified the centres within the settlement hierarchy that have significant retail function. The main categories in the retail hierarchy are as follows: Sub-regional, Urban, and Local. The Settlement Hierarchy in the Plan is not the same as the Retail Hierarchy because it is based on a wider range of factors including housing numbers and the number, type and scale of existing facilities and services within each community. Appendix 4 of the Plan and Topic Paper 5: Developing the Settlement Hierarchy explain the rationale for the Plan's Settlement Hierarchy.
- 6.3.93 The study also recognised that the area is serviced by a retail hierarchy which includes centres outside the Plan area, e.g. Llandudno and Chester. The study considered that there was limited quantitative need for some 372 sq. m. net convenience floor space to be provided and distributed as set out below:

Tourism and Recreation

- 6.32 Tourism has been a traditional industry in Snowdonia and the surrounding seaside resorts for at least two centuries. People have been coming to the area to enjoy the unspoilt character of the landscape and scenery and the distinctiveness of the area's Welsh identity. Whilst Snowdonia's mountains have long been popular for climbing and hill walking a variety of other activities have also increased in popularity. The forests, coasts and inland waters of Snowdonia also attract significant numbers of people to take part in recreational activities including paddle sports, canoeing, white water rafting, sailing, golf, cycling, angling and other recreational events. Adventure tourism is a growing market which is leading to an increased number of visitors to the area by providing a different product to the more traditional activities carried out within National Parks. Whilst the Authority recognises the potential for increased use of the natural resources of the area for recreational purposes it does not believe that the integrity of these resources and the 'Special Qualities' of the National Park should be compromised by the development of recreational facilities, which are of an inappropriate nature or scale. The biodiversity of the National Park also attracts local visitors resulting in economic benefits.
- 6.33 Through tourism it is possible to achieve one of the statutory purposes of the National Park; that is to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the 'Special Qualities' of the National Park. The Authority aims to encourage sustainable tourism and ecotourism, maximising economic and employment benefits while safeguarding the environment as well as the interest of the local communities. Sustainable tourism is any form of development, management or tourist activity which ensures the long-term protection and preservation of natural, cultural and social resources and contributes in a positive and equitable manner to the economic development and well-being of individuals living, working or staying in protected areas⁴³. Ecotourism is defined as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education"⁴⁴. Both ecotourism and sustainable tourism support the aims and objectives of the Local Development Plan.
- 6.34 Tourism within Snowdonia National Park relies heavily on the natural environment; its landscapes and coast are the foundation of tourism. The natural environment must be protected to ensure that it can be used to draw tourists for years to come. Tourism development should therefore not damage the integrity of the natural environment or have a negative impact on the quiet enjoyment of the National Park. This also includes development that would have an adverse effect on any statutory designated nature conservation sites. Because proposals for tourism and recreation developments are often located in the open countryside, outside settlements, the ability of the landscape to accommodate a particular type of development needs to be carefully examined. The appropriateness of the development and its potential landscape and visual effects on a particular Landscape Character Area will therefore be considered in relation to the development guidelines in the Supplementary Planning Guidance documents on the Landscapes of Eryri and Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment

⁴³ Sustainable Tourism definition from the European Charter of Sustainable Tourism

⁴⁴ The International Ecotourism Society



Canolfan Tryweryn ©Visit Wales

Strategic Policy: I Tourism (I)

In order to create and retain sustainable or eco-tourism within the National Park and extend the visitor period while protecting and enhancing the landscape of the National Park and its special qualities the Authority will:

- i. Support tourism and recreation development that is based on the principles of sustainable tourism.
- ii. Identify and promote areas of the National Park that attract visitors while ensuring that the 'Special Qualities' of the National Park are not affected.
- iii. Promote sustainable modes of transport for visitors to and from the National Park.
- iv. Support the accommodation industry by encouraging the improvement of the sustainability and quality of existing visitor accommodation.
- v. Encourage proposals which will promote the opportunity for the public understanding and enjoyment of the 'Special Qualities' of the National Park including proposals that will assist disabled people.

Tourist Facilities

- 6.35 New developments will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse effects on the character of Snowdonia's 'Special Qualities'; developments must also be located near a main road and therefore place no extra pressures on minor rural roads which may be unsuitable and should not cause a significant increase in car borne traffic. The public right of way network, recreational routes, leisure networks and open country are regarded as important tourism facilities as well as serving the needs of local communities.
- 6.36 Facilities should, where practicable, service residents and visitors' needs in tandem, for example leisure centres, which are used throughout the year by residents and by tourists alike – this improves the facilities' economic viability and acceptability. New visitor-orientated services should not be introduced at the expense of year round services which cater for local needs. Some large tourism proposals could be classified as major development therefore such a proposal would need to be considered in the context of Strategic Policy B and all proposals should take account of Development Policy 1.



Lôn Gwyrfai

Development Policy 21 : Tourism and Recreation (21)

Within the National Park existing tourist attractions will be protected and enhanced through adopting the principles of sustainable or eco-tourism. New tourist attractions and the enhancement of current attractions will be supported where:

- i. It can be accessed by various modes of transport, specifically sustainable modes of transport such as, walking, cycling and public transport.
- ii. It is located close to the main road network and does not cause an unacceptable increase in traffic in the vicinity.
- iii. The development would not have an adverse impact on the 'Special Qualities' of the National Park.
- iv. It promotes opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the 'Special Qualities' of the National Park, while not detracting from the quiet enjoyment, experience of visitors and the quality of life of the local residents.
- v. The facility is designed or modified to improve accessibility for all, in particular disabled people.
- vi. It does not have an adverse impact on the views to and from the National Park and does not generate a significant increase in noise or light pollution which could adversely affect the integrity of the Snowdonia Dark Skies Reserve.
- vii. Current facilities will be improved or conversion of a vacant or underused building is proposed.

Tourist Accommodation

- 6.37 The Authority will prioritise proposals to improve the quality of existing serviced accommodation, in preference to new build tourist accommodation. This approach would not only avoid the limited amount of land available within settlements being developed for tourism purposes, but would also enable the character of traditional buildings to be conserved. New build serviced accommodation will be permitted within and adjacent to the main built up areas of settlements, however within housing development boundaries, if there is an identified need for affordable housing, priority will be given to housing. The Authority will encourage the provision of accommodation and facilities for disabled visitors.
- 6.38 The National Park needs to maintain a good range of quality accommodation for visitors. In some settlements, especially in the coastal areas, the local economies are heavily dependent on the availability of the serviced accommodation sector. The conversion of serviced accommodation to self-catering or non-tourist uses which precludes it from being re-used in future as serviced accommodation will be resisted. Change of use will be considered more favourable however to meet a recognised local need for affordable housing.

Development Policy 28 : New Build Serviced Accommodation (28)

New build serviced accommodation will be permitted within or adjacent to the main built up area of local service centres, service settlements, and secondary settlements providing the following criteria are met:

- i. The proposal is not on a site which is required for local affordable housing need
- ii. The scale and design of the development is compatible with its setting.

The change of use of serviced accommodation to the non-serviced sector, or its conversion to other non- tourist uses which would prevent its subsequent re conversion back to serviced tourist accommodation, will not be permitted within the National Park unless to meet a recognised need for affordable housing.

Static Caravans and Chalets

- 6.39 It is recognised that caravan and chalet sites provide an important addition to the range of accommodation that is on offer to meet the varying needs of the visitors to the Park. A high number of large static caravan sites are located within the National Park, most of which are along the western coastal plain. Many of these sites would be considered unsuitable today due to their scale, openness and lack of screening. Given the existing numbers of static caravans and chalets in the National Park, the Authority does not consider that there is sufficient justification for any further static caravan and chalet sites due to their effect on the landscape and on the 'Special Qualities' of the National Park. Such proposals will therefore not be permitted. The National Park Authority has issued two Supplementary Planning Documents, The Landscapes and Seascapes of Eryri, which identifies 25 discrete Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) and The Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment. This document builds on the former and looks at the potential impacts of wind turbine development, telecommunications masts and static caravan and chalet sites on the LCAs. Both these documents will be material planning considerations and will be used to aid decision-making on planning applications.
- 6.40 Applications to upgrade facilities on a site such as improving toilet blocks, internal landscaping and layout will be generally supported if they improve the overall environment and appearance of the site and its overall visual impact on the landscape. In some cases, the Authority will consider an enlargement of a site, but without an increase in caravan or chalet numbers, if it can again be demonstrated that there would be clear benefits in reducing the impact on the surrounding landscape. This might be achieved by reducing overall density, moving pitches to less prominent locations and more and better landscaping on site boundaries. The National Park Authority will not look favourably on extending site boundaries if this is as a result of replacing units with larger caravans or chalets resulting in loss of amenity space. The extent of any physical site enlargement should be kept to a minimum and clearly related to the overall environmental improvements proposed. The Authority will support the replacement of static caravans with appropriately designed chalets if there is an overall improvement to the site and there is no unacceptable impact on the landscape. The Authority also has a visitor accommodation SPG which provides additional supporting information for these policies.

Development Policy 22: Chalet and Static Caravan Sites (22)

Within the National Park new static caravan or chalet sites, or extensions to existing sites, which involve an increase in the number of static units will not be permitted.

The redevelopment of sites which may include improving or extending facilities within existing site boundaries, reducing densities or other beneficial environmental improvements will be supported, if there is an overall improvement to the site and its setting in the landscape.

Exceptionally, static and chalet site areas may be enlarged, but without increasing pitches, where this would achieve clear overall environmental improvement, both to the site and its setting in the surrounding landscape.

The replacement of static units with chalets or alternative accommodation units will be permitted where there is an overall improvement to the site and there is no unacceptable environmental or landscape impact.

Proposals for the change of use of a static caravan or chalet from tourist use to residential use will not be permitted.

Touring Caravans and Camping Sites

- 6.41 Given the existing numbers of touring caravan and camping sites in the Park, the Authority does not consider there is sufficient justification for any further sites within the Park due to their effect on the landscape and ‘Special Qualities’ of the National Park. Such a proposal will therefore not be permitted. The Authority may support the extension or upgrading of existing touring caravan and camping sites including an increase in the number of pitches but only where they are well screened and where there is an overall landscape improvement. They will need to be of a scale and form that is compatible with the setting and capacity of the area in which they are proposed.
- 6.42 The replacement of camping pitches with touring pitches or static pitches will not be permitted, in order to maintain a range of accommodation provision within the National Park and to reduce environmental impact.

Development Policy 23: Touring and Camping Sites (23)

Within the National Park no new touring or camping sites will be permitted.

The extension or upgrading of existing touring caravan and camping sites, will be permitted providing all of the following criteria are satisfied:

- i. The site is already well screened from public vantage points, and / or there would be a reduction of its impact on the surrounding landscape.
- ii. The scale and layout of the extension or upgrading is appropriate within the landscape.
- iii. The proposal protects and where appropriate enhances natural heritage interests.
- iv. The proposal will significantly improve the internal landscaping of a site and increase the quality of the existing facilities, or develop new high quality facilities.
- v. The proposal is in keeping with the size of the existing site.

The replacement of camping pitches with other non-camping pitches will not be permitted.

Alternative Low Impact Holiday Accommodation

- 6.43 In recent years there has been an increase in the range of self-catering temporary / mobile accommodation on the market. These include, pods, yurts, tepees, shepherd’s huts and wooden tents. They have become increasingly popular and ‘glamping’ is now another type of holiday experience. The Authority recognises the contribution these new forms of self-catering accommodation can make in providing a wider range of accommodation on offer within the National Park and also provide wider benefits to the local economy. These types of low impact accommodation are generally less intrusive in the landscape than the more traditional static and touring caravan.

- 6.44 Due to the sensitivity of the landscape of the National Park and to avoid the proliferation of sites only proposals that are part of an agricultural diversification scheme or are ancillary to a new or existing tourist attraction will be acceptable. The types of tourist attraction will be outlined in the Visitor Accommodation SPG.
- 6.45 Primary Consideration will need to be given to the landscape and therefore any new sites will need to be small scale and in an unobtrusive location. An unobtrusive location is one which is well screened by existing landscape features and/or where the units can be readily assimilated into the landscape without the need for unnecessary man-made features such as hardstanding and fencing. Views of the site from public vantage points will be critical in assessing the suitability of any given site.
- 6.46 In addition to this the accommodation structures will need to be temporary and capable of being moved when no longer in use. In order to ensure minimum impact on the landscape the use of hardstandings should only be where they are necessary. Further guidance on the size of site deemed acceptable will be provided in the Authority's Visitor Accommodation SPG.
- 6.47 In order to ensure that these temporary structures are being used exclusively for holiday purposes and do not become full time, permanent dwellings the structures should provide basic holiday accommodation. They should only provide basic facilities for sleeping, seating and eating without installation of water services or provision of drainage facilities for WC, showers and washing. This ensures that such structures do not generate a level of permanence that could increase the level of landscape impact and site restoration should removal of the structures be required, for example should the use cease. The Authority will require a detailed strategy outlining how the land will be returned to its original condition and use if the proposed use ceases, further information will be contained in the Visitor Accommodation SPG about what is required.
- 6.48 Additional facilities, such as showers or WC (if not already present) should be provided separately from the accommodation through the conversion or extension of an existing building(s). If no suitable buildings are available, the need for additional facilities needs to be clearly demonstrated by the applicant and commensurate with the scale of the development.
- 6.49 The Authority will require that evidence provided to support any proposal which is part of an agricultural diversification scheme, conforms to the requirements set out in Technical Advice Note 6 and Development Policy 20. Further information is also outlined in the Authority's Farm Diversification SPG.
- 6.50 If the proposal is to support an existing visitor attraction, then a business plan will need to be provided for the enterprise to show that the visitor attraction will not solely be reliant on the alternative accommodation and the tourist attraction is still viable and will still continue to function ensuring that the site does not become solely an alternative accommodation site.
- 6.51 A condition will be attached to the permission which will state that should the existing visitor attraction cease then the alternative accommodation units will have to be removed.
- 6.52 Proposals will only be permitted for short-term self-catering holiday accommodation and this will be secured by a condition. The condition will limit the occupant to no more than 28 days in one calendar year and require a list of occupants to be kept and presented by the Authority on request. Permitted development rights will be removed as part of any planning permission to ensure that additional paraphernalia is not added which may not be in line with the aims of the policy.

1) MANYLION Y SAFLE / SITE DETAILS

Cyfeirnod Safle / Site Reference:			
Enw'r Safle / Site Name:			
Capasiti'r Maes Parcio / Car Park Capacity:		Arhosiad Hir/Byr/Cymysg Long/Short Stay/Mix	
Map:	[INSERT MAP]		
Parc Cenedlaethol/AHNE	d/b		

2) FFILTRO CYCHWYNNOL / INITIAL FILTERING

		Cyfiawnhad a Rhesymeg / Reasoning and Justification
<p>A yw'r safle wedi'i leoli mewn neu o fewn pellter cerdded o 2000m Anheddle?</p> <p>Is the site located in or within 2000m of a Settlement?</p>	<p>Ydy / Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Nac ydy / No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Mae angen i'r safleoedd bod mewn lleoliadau cynaliadwy. Mae'r pellter cerdded wedi ei selio ar y ddogfen "Providing Journeys on Foot", gan y Institute of Public Rights of Way.</p> <p>The sites need to be in sustainable locations. Walking distance is based on "Providing Journeys on Foot" by the Institute of Public Rights of Way.</p>
<p>A yw'r safle wedi'i leoli mewn ardal preswyl yn bennaf?</p> <p>Is the site located within a primarily residential area?</p>	<p>Ydy / Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Nac ydy / No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Defnydd tir ddim yn addas mewn ardaloedd preswyl yn bennaf oherwydd y effaith ar preswylwyr cyfagos.</p> <p>Land use not suitable in primarily residential areas because of the effect on nearby residences.</p>
<p>A oes neu oes modd cael cyflenwad dŵr a gwaredu gwastraff ar y safle?</p>	<p>Ydy / Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Nac ydy / No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Mae hyn yn angenrheidiol ar gyfer parcio dros nos. This is necessary for over night parking.</p>

Is there or is it possible to provide water and waste disposal facilities on site?		
A fyddai datblygiadau ar y safle yn agored yn gyfan gwbl neu'n rhannol i lifogydd afonol / llanw? Would development of the site be in whole or part vulnerable to fluvial/ tidal flooding?	Bydd / Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Na fydd / No <input type="checkbox"/> Rhannol / Part <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Gan fod y cynnig yn un am ddatblygiad hynod fregus, fel y diffinnir yn NCT 15, ni fyddai datblygiadau ar y safle yn cydymffurfio â pholisi cynllunio cenedlaethol ac felly ni fyddai'r safle'n cael ei ddwyn ymlaen i'r asesiad manwl.</p> <p>As the proposal is for highly vulnerable development, as defined in TAN15, development the site would not comply with national planning policy and would therefore not be taken forward to the detailed assessment.</p>
A yw'r safle o fewn neu yng nghyffiniau unrhyw un o'r canlynol? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safleoedd o Ddiddordeb Gwyddonol Arbennig (SoDdGA) • Ardaloedd Cadwraeth Arbennig (ACA) • Ardaloedd Gwarchodaeth Arbennig (AGA) • Safleoedd RAMSAR Is the site within or adjacent to the following? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) • Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) • Special Protection Areas (SPA) • RAMSAR Sites 	Ydy / Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Nac ydy / No <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Os bydd, ni fydd y safleoedd yn cael eu symud ymlaen i'r cam nesaf gan fod y rhain yn gyfyngiadau llwyr i ddatblygiad.</p> <p>If yes, the sites will not be taken forward to the next stage as these are absolute constraints to development.</p>

3) ASESIAID MANWL (DADANSODDIAD RAG) / DETAILED ASSESSMENT (RAG ANALYSIS)

Mater / Issue		Canllaw Sgorio / Scoring Guidance	Addasrwydd y Safle / Suitability of Site		
			2	1	0
Lleoliad / Location					
1	Beth yw pellter y safle o chanol y Anheddle? What is the distance of the site from the Settlement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <1000m Gwyrdd • 1000m-2000 Amber • >2000m Coch 			

Mater / Issue		Canllaw Sgorio / Scoring Guidance	Addasrwydd y Safle / Suitability of Site		
			2	1	0
2	A fydd y safle'n diwallu'r angen presennol am barcio dros nos Will the site meet an existing need for overnight parking?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bydd / Yes – Gwyrdd • Na fydd / - Coch 			
x3	A yw'r safle o fewn pellter cerdded i hwb/cyfleuster twristiaeth presennol? Is the site within walking distance to an existing tourist hub/facility?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <1000m Gwyrdd • 1000m-2000 Amber • >2000m Coch 			
	Ydi yr adnodd gerllaw darpariaeth llwybrau cyhoeddus/ Llwybr yr arfordir / llwybr beics ? Is the site near an existing recreational walking or cycling route?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ydy / Yes – Gwyrdd • Nac ydy / No - Coch 			
4	A yw'r system briffyrdd gyfagos (gan gynnwys cyffyrdd) o ansawdd digonol i ddelio â defnydd posibl o'r safle? Is the nearby highway system (including junctions) of sufficient quality to deal with potential use of the site?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ydy / Yes – Gwyrdd • Nac ydy / No - Coch 			
5	A oes rhwystr uchder yn y maes parcio? A ellir dileu'r rhwystr hwn? Is there a height barrier in the car park? Can this barrier be removed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Na / No – Gwyrdd • Oes, ond gellir ei dynnu / Yes, but can be removed – Amber • Oes, ond ni ellir ei dynnu / Yes, and cannot be removed - Coch 			
6	Oes gan y maes parcio y cyfleusterau ddilynol: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Binau sbwriel/Ailgylchu • Toiledau • Dŵr Yfed • Goleuadau Stryd Does the car park have the following facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubbish bins/Recycling • Toilets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 neu / or 4 – Gwyrdd • 2 – Amber • None - Coch 			

Mater / Issue		Canllaw Sgorio / Scoring Guidance	Addasrwydd y Safle / Suitability of Site		
			2	1	0
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking water • Street lighting 				
7	<p>A oes gan y safle ddigon o gapasiti ar gyfer cartrefi modur?</p> <p>Does the site have sufficient capacity for motorhome usage?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oes / Yes – Gwyrdd • Nac oes / No - Coch 			
Cyd-destun a Chymeriad y Safle / Site Context and Character					
8	<p>A yw nodweddion topograffi'r safle yn creu rhwystr i'r defnydd arfaethedig?</p> <p>Do the topographical characteristics of the site present an obstacle to the proposed use?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ydy / Yes – Coch • Nac ydy / No - Gwyrdd 			
9	<p>A fyddai'r defnydd o'r safle gan gartrefi modur yn cael effaith andwyol ar olygfeydd / golygfeydd pwysig?</p> <p>Would the use the site by motorhomes have an adverse impact upon important views/vistas?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Na fydd / No – Gwyrdd • Bydd / Yes - Coch 			
10	<p>A fyddai unrhyw effaith andwyol yn codi yn sgil defnyddiau tir a allai wrthdaro?</p> <p>Would there be any adverse impact arising from potentially conflicting land uses?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Na fydd / No – Gwyrdd • Bydd / Yes - Coch 			
Perchnogaeth / Ownership					
11	<p>A yw'r maes parcio ym mherchnogaeth y cyngor?</p> <p>Is the car park in council ownership?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ydy / Yes – Gwyrdd • Na, ond yn barod i ganiatáu parcio dros nos / No, but willing to allow overnight parking – Amber • Na, ac ddim yn barod i ganitau parcio dros nos / No, and not willing to allow overnight parking - Coch 			

Mater / Issue		Canllaw Sgorio / Scoring Guidance	Addasrwydd y Safle / Suitability of Site		
			2	1	0
Casgliad / Conclusion					
12	Sylwadau Ychwanegol ac Argymhelliad Additional Comments and Recommendations				

Agenda Item 7

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report to a meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Date of meeting:	9 NOVEMBER 2021
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Nia Jeffreys
Contact Officer:	Geraint Owen, Head of Corporate Support Department in consultation with Iwan Evans, Monitoring Officer.
Contact Number:	32325
Subject:	To approve arrangements to hold Cabinet meetings in order to address the new requirements in Part 3 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

THE DECISION SOUGHT

That the Cabinet adopt the arrangements for holding Cabinet meetings in the future, with the start date to be decided by the Leader in consultation with the Head of Democracy Services and the Monitoring Officer, after the current restrictions are lifted.

REASONS FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

1. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requirements allow for multi-location or virtual meetings. The Council is required to adopt and publish arrangements to achieve this. The Cabinet has the right to determine arrangements for its meetings within the relevant legal requirements.

INTRODUCTION AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

BACKGROUND

Access to the Public

2. Part 3 of the Local Governments and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 allows an Authority to hold meetings virtually whilst ensuring that access for the public and press is provided virtually. This could be via web-casting of the meeting, but it could be via other electronic methods which would allow them to see and hear the meeting. If a meeting is held in a specific location, the press and public could access the room/chamber where the meeting is held (excluding exempt matters). In order to ensure access, a meeting location must be stated, or it must be stated clearly how access can be gained to the meeting on the front of the agenda.

Date of meeting

3. According to Section 47 of the Act, the Council must adopt and publish arrangements which mean that meetings can be held via equipment which allow participants to attend a meeting from different places. Such meetings could be held virtually only or a combination of meetings held at a venue but with some members attending remotely. Although it is possible to hold a meeting in a meeting room or chamber, it must be ensured that it is possible for those taking part to attend remotely if they wish to do so. The term "hybrid" is used to describe meetings that are held in this way.
4. This provision has been in place since 1 May this year. As a part of the work, the Authority is required to adopt and publish its arrangements for delivering these requirements, and re-publishing them if changes arise.
5. At its meeting on 6 July, the Cabinet stated that its meeting would continue to be held virtually only until a further review would be carried out.

Preparing for the future

6. A report was presented to the full Council on 7 October 2021 regarding the developments to date and the steps afoot to allow 'hybrid' meetings in future. It was reported that the Council would be required to establish a policy regarding determining which meetings, and what type of meetings, could be held virtually and which ones could be held in a specific location (or via a 'hybrid' arrangement).

7. As previously reported, it is a matter for the Full Council to establish the meeting arrangements for other Committees and sub-committees and the Democratic Services Committee will consider the draft meetings Framework at its meeting on 16 November 2021, prior to its submission to the Full Council on 2 December, 2021. To provide context, a copy of the draft report to be submitted to the Committee is included in Appendix (i) for information.
8. However, it is a matter for the Cabinet to establish its own arrangements. It is recommended that the Cabinet meetings are held at a location in the future, as a 'hybrid' meeting. Deciding on the arrangements to be established is a matter of discretion. The statutory guidance outlines the considerations to be evaluated in order to draw a conclusion (Interim Statutory guidance on multi-location meetings 2021). Attention needs to be given to the guidance. Local democracy and the requirements of the public are fundamental and leading considerations in deciding on arrangements. The basis is in accordance to that included in the draft report to be submitted to the Democratic Services Committee being that Cabinet meetings, (along with meetings of the full Council and some of our other main committees), are of specific public interest. Holding the meetings at locations, along with webcasting provides the fullest range of opportunities to gain access to discussions. It will also be noted that the draft report to the Democracy Services Committee includes a recommendation for a range of committees to be held through virtual meetings only. Therefore, as a Meetings Framework it reflects the aims of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.
9. The term 'hybrid' is noted for meetings that are held at a location with provision for remote access for participants.

Equality Act 2010

10. The Council is subject to a duty under the 2010 Equality Act to give due attention to the need to remove illegal discrimination, harassment and oppression, along with any other behaviours prohibited under the provisions of the Act. In addition, there is a need to increase equal opportunities and foster good relationships between those with protected characteristics and those who do not have protected characteristics (the General Equality Duty). In accordance with the requirement in Wales, and in order to address this duty, an Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared and updated for hybrid meetings. It is appended in Appendix (ii) and did not find impacts which would lead to changing the recommendation.

Timetable

11. As reported to the full Council meeting on 7 October 2021, the above is one element of the work of preparing for future meetings. As well as developing a local Meetings Framework (which will be recommended to the full Council on 2 December 2021) it is necessary to continue with the technological and practical developments, all of which are subject to the Government's guidelines in relation to coronavirus.
12. A robust technical infrastructure is needed in order to ensure the success of the hybrid arrangements. The chambers have been upgraded since the end of September this year, but we have come across a few minor obstacles during testing. We are currently working with the company to try to overcome these obstacles as soon as possible. In addition, we must ensure that participants are able to take part fully in proceedings whichever way they attend the meeting. We must also ensure that the Cabinet's arrangements for making decisions are robust in order to ensure the public's confidence in our democracy arrangements.
13. In addition, there is currently no change to Welsh Government's guidelines that everyone should continue to work from home wherever possible; therefore, the recommendation does not propose implementing the arrangements until those guidelines allow this.
14. As a result of the above, it is impossible to give a start date for the new arrangements. If the recommendation is approved, we will report further in order to state formally when it is possible for the new arrangements to come into force.

ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

The Monitoring Officer:

I have had input into the preparation of this report.

Head of Finance:

"I am satisfied that suitable support would be in place to realise hybrid working by the Cabinet if it so wishes. I have no further comments from the perspective of financial propriety".

Appendices

APPENDIX i Draft report to the Democratic Services Committee (16/11/2021)
APPENDIX ii Equality Impact Assessment

MEETING	Democratic Services Committee
DATE	16 November 2021
SUBJECT	Operating framework for future committees
PURPOSE	Submit a draft Committee Operating Framework in order for it to be recommended for the Full Council to adopt
AUTHOR	Geraint Owen, Head of Democratic Services in consultation with Iwan Evans, Monitoring Officer

Background.

1. Part 3 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
 - Allows for remote access for participants to formal democratic meetings.
 - Permits formal democratic meetings to be held at a location or virtually with public access to committees via electronic arrangements
 - Places expectations to publish our arrangements for holding formal democratic meetings
 - Places expectations to Web-cast democratic meetings (regulations are expected which will establish the range of requirement).
2. Several reports have been submitted on various elements already, and the Full Council has adopted the interim arrangements at its meeting on 8 July 2021. An update was submitted to the Full Council meeting on 7 October outlining the practical arrangements (upgrading the chambers in order to hold hybrid meetings) and the other steps that need to be achieved in order to proceed with the work.
3. The report on 7 October noted the need to establish a Committees Framework which would outline which meetings will continue to be held virtually and which meetings will be held at a location with as hybrid.

Meetings and Committees Operating Framework

4. We are reminded in the document 'Interim Statutory Guidance on Multi-location Meetings' published by Welsh Government in May 2021 that the general purpose of amending the act to allow remote access was "... to achieve greater accessibility and improved public participation in local government." It also states that "The convenience of participants and the efficient operation of relevant authorities themselves is important but the needs of the public will come first when these decisions are being made." Any

arrangements established will have to meet the requirements contained in the statutory guidance.

5. The purpose of the paper is to submit a draft Committees Operating Framework in order to seek the comments of the Democratic Services Committee members prior to submitting the Framework to the full Council for adoption.
6. The framework is based on the basic principles established by this committee. Some additions are suggested to the principles (underlined below). Deciding on the arrangements to be established is a matter of discretion. The statutory guidance outlines the considerations to be evaluated in order to draw a conclusion. Local democracy and the requirements of the public are fundamental and leading considerations in deciding on arrangements. The basis for the allocation is in accordance to that noted, being the discussions and decisions in the meetings identified being of high public interest. Holding the meetings at locations, along with webcasting provides the fullest range of opportunities to gain access to discussions. It will also be noted that the draft report recommends for a range of committees to be held through virtual meetings only. Therefore, as a Meetings Framework it reflects the aims of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015

Meetings and Committees Operating Framework Principles

- ✓ We need to build on the success of the virtual meetings which have been held over the past eighteen months.
- ✓ We need to continue to ensure that our Democracy arrangements are transparent for the people of Gwynedd and open for all.
- ✓ We should strive to hold most meetings virtually in order to:
 - Contribute to the carbon reduction agenda by reducing travelling for Councillors and Officers, particularly as the Council has declared a climate emergency.
 - Promote diversity in Democracy by encouraging the flexibility of remote access to virtual meetings and thereby attracting more people who work and young parents
 - Use Councillors' and Officers' time more sensibly by reducing travelling requirements
 - Reduce travelling costs

- Promote positive behaviour and participation

7. It is also important to remember our success over the past eighteen months. We have managed to hold every committee effectively, virtually, in both languages, and are now web-casting many of them. In addition, attendance at meetings has generally been higher since they have been held virtually.
8. We have listened to the observations which have been offered by you as Councillors in various meetings and in response to the recent questionnaire. It is fair to conclude that there are 75 different responses from you as Councillors for the ideal situation in the future when discussing individual committees, with everyone considering their own personal situation.
9. We have also received observations from the people of Gwynedd. At the Planning Committee, observations were received stating that the current arrangements allowing people to attend virtually or record a video clip to be played at the committee are an improvement on the previous arrangements as they are more convenient for the people of Gwynedd. On the contrary, others have expressed their frustration in watching meetings via web-cast only as it does not offer the same experience as attending the public gallery in a chamber as Members are not as aware of the presence of the public when reaching decisions.
10. Whilst the framework seeks to respond to the main messages which have been voiced in recent months, the emphasis is on ensuring a sustainable framework for the future, whoever will be elected as Councillors after May 2022, based on the above principles and the statutory guidance.

What is being proposed?

11. A Framework for the Council's formal meetings is submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Act. It is probably sensible to develop an internal framework noting expectations for other meetings of which Councillors are a part, such as internal meetings, regional and national meetings and training. This will be reported upon in the future.
12. As already noted, the requirements of the Act mean that meetings may be held entirely virtually or by providing remote access where a specific location such as the Chamber has been identified (namely a hybrid meeting).

13. It is important that we do not slip back to the old arrangements because of custom and lose sight of the principles noted above. This is our opportunity as a Council to innovate and set sustainable operating expectations for the future.
14. In order to develop the framework on robust foundations, the simple principle to follow is:
 - a) to hold formal committee meetings virtually wherever possible.
 - b) to hold hybrid meetings when there is a high level of public interest.
15. Committee members will remember the detailed work undertaken to identify the committees to be web-cast originally, with the focus on matters of public interest. The Full Council, Cabinet and Planning Committee meetings were identified originally, with web-casting arrangements later extended to Scrutiny Committee also. It is recommended that the same procedure could be followed to identify the committees that are to be held as hybrid, as noted above.
16. Where meetings are held as hybrid, it is recommended that Councillors seriously consider whether they have to travel to the location, bearing in mind that the circumstances in the chambers and offices will not be the same as they were previously. Note that the majority of officers will be attending meetings remotely and that it will not be possible to pop to see officers in the offices before or after a meeting.
17. There are resource implications to holding hybrid meetings, and it is anticipated that a cohort of officers from the Democracy and Language Service who support the committees with technical aspects and simultaneous translation will have to attend the location when hybrid meetings are held.
18. A table outlining the impact of the above recommendation on a committee by committee basis can be seen in **Appendix A**. It is recognised that there would be exceptions to the arrangements, such as the first meetings following elections. Also, it will be necessary to review our arrangements within a reasonable time-frame.
19. Furthermore, we presume that participating in a hybrid meeting, and particularly chairing a hybrid meeting, will be a very different experience and will require different and new skills. It will be necessary to identify good practice for chairing such meetings and offer training for Councillors.

Access to the Public

20. Alongside the above arrangements, it is necessary to ensure and state how we intend to ensure access to the public to our committees. For virtual committees, public access will be provided by watching the web-cast or by contacting to gain alternative access. Details will be provided on the front of the agenda as currently happens.
21. For hybrid meetings, where a specific location is noted, the public will be able to gain access to the back of the chamber. If the meeting is also web-cast, public access will also be provided via the web-cast.
22. This all raises a question regarding the previous arrangements where the Planning Committee held its meetings in several locations.

Equality Act 2010

23. The Council is subject to a duty under the 2010 Equality Act to give due attention to the need to remove illegal discrimination, harassment and oppression, along with any other behaviours prohibited under the provisions of the Act. In addition, there is a need to increase equal opportunities and foster good relationships between those with protected characteristics and those who do not have protected characteristics (the General Equality Duty). In accordance with the requirement in Wales, and in order to address this duty, an Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared and updated for hybrid meetings. It is appended in Appendix (ii) and did not find impacts which would lead to changing the recommendation.

APPENDIX A

Type of meeting	Committees in question
Hybrid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Council • Cabinet • Planning • Scrutiny
Virtually only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic Services Committee • Audit and Governance Committee • Standards Committee • Language Committee • SACRE • Local Joint Consultative Committee • Pensions Committee • Chief Officers Appointment Committee * • Central/General Licensing Committee (and the Central and General Licensing Sub-committees) • Joint Planning Policy Committee • Any sub-committee
Possible exceptions	<p>Employment Appeals Committee (dependent on the individual's request).</p> <p>Chief Officers Appointment Committee - consideration when interviews are held - virtual otherwise</p> <p>Committees and Sub-Committees where quasi-judicial hearings are held</p>

Porthmadog/Pwllheli/Aberdyfi/Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committees will be considered at a later date.

Equality Impact Assessment

For help to complete this form see the *How to Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment* leaflet. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Gadlys Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on ext. 32708 or DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru for further assistance.

The Council's is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the effect any change in policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), has on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has a general duty to ensure fairness and foster good relations. A timely Equality Impact Assessment must be undertaken before making any decision on any relevant change (i.e. which has an effect on people with protected characteristics).

I Details

I.1 What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Remote attendance and Access to the Public Project.

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires the Council to provide remote attendance for elected members and Access to the public to see and hear proceedings at public meetings.

I.2 What is the purpose of the policy/ Service that is being created or amended? What chances are being considered?

Originally, the project aimed to ensure that we were able to
a) hold virtual meetings (without any physical presence in a meeting room)
b) ensure that elected members could take part in committee meetings by remote attendance should they wish to do so.

By September 2020 the project moved towards ensuring that the public were able to Access virtual meetings by seeing and/or hearing proceedings in our main committee meetings as it was a Council priority.

Presently, as it is a requirement of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 we are working towards

- Ensuring that elected members are able to take part remotely when a meeting is held in a specific location (subject to covid-19 restrictions).
- Access to the public to see and hear proceedings at public meetings

1.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Vera Jones, Democracy Services and Language Manager - on behalf of the Remote Attendance Project Board

1.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?

- The first assessment was started in June 2020 in preparation for our first virtual meetings due to the covid pandemic.
- The assessment was reviewed in June 2021 to reflect further developments within the project, namely developments with regards to hybrid meetings. (Version 2)
- The assessment was reviewed again in October 2021. The need to update the assessment over the coming months whilst testing the hybrid arrangements was identified. (Version 3)

2) Action

2.1 Who are the partners you need to work with to undertake this assessment?

Councillors
IT Service
Property Department
Staff

2.2 What measures have you taken to engage with people with equality characteristics?

1. Informal discussions were undertaken with Gwynedd Councillors prior to the commencement of our first virtual meetings using Teams and prior to using Zoom – in particular non Welsh speakers.
2. Arrangements for committee meetings (and others) in the future were discussed with the Democracy Services Committee on 18/02/2021 and in addition all members were asked for comments as part of the satisfaction survey in June 2021.
3. Interim arrangements, being to continue with virtual meetings only, were adopted in July 2021 (Cabinet – 07/07/21, Full Council – 09/07/21)

2.3 What was the result of the engagement?

1. The original provision was adapted from Teams to Zoom following comments by elected members that the translation provision offered via zoom offered a fairer and simpler Service for Welsh speakers and non-Welsh speakers, with all involved attending the same meeting and directions much simpler to follow. The changes were made following assurance of the Security issues regarding the technology.
2. A number of members have noted the benefits of virtual meetings, especially with regards to
 - Contributing to the carbon reduction agenda by reducing travelling
 - Promoting diversity in Democracy by encouraging the flexibility of remote access to virtual meetings and thereby attracting more people who work and young parents
 - Using Councillors' time more sensibly by reducing travelling requirements
 - And reducing travelling costs
3. In addition, numerous comments have been made by Councillors in various meetings about meeting arrangements in the future, with most noting the need for a combination of virtual meetings and hybrid meetings.

2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you operating?

The project was started primarily in response to the covid-19 pandemic and the requirement to continue with democratic arrangements whilst adhering to restrictions to stay at home and not attend the Office (including the Council chamber).

The restrictions with regards to “work from home where possible” remain in place. In addition, we must respond to the requirements of the Local government and Elections (Wales) 2021 Act to

- Ensure that elected members are able to take part remotely when a meeting is held in a specific location (subject to covid-19 restrictions).
- Access to the public to see and hear proceedings at public meetings

2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be collected?

Consultations with people with additional needs eg sight and hearing impairments to ensure that the provision is suitable for their needs.

Further consultation will be required following the establishment of hybrid arrangements.

3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 The Council has to give due regard to the effect any changes will have on people with the equality characteristics noted below. What impact will the new policy/service or the proposed changes in the policy or service have on people with these characteristics? You are welcome to any other characteristics if you wish

Characteristics	What type of impact?*	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including nationality)	Positive / negative / none	No impact has been identified
The Welsh language	Positive	<p>a) Virtual meetings Positive effect on the Welsh and English language by using zoom as the provision for virtual meetings as meetings continue to be held through the medium of Welsh with the simultaneous translation Service easily available to those who require it.</p> <p>b) Remote Attendance We will need to ensure that simultaneous translation service is available to anyone who attends a meeting (be it in the location or remote attendance). We are currently working on a hybrid solution.</p> <p>c) Public Access Public access is available to the public through webcasting, which is available in Welsh and English.</p>
Disability	Positive / negative / none	<p>Autism – Some may experience a positive effect due to lessening anxiety compared with being in a Chamber. On the other hand, it can be a negative experience if the time on screen is too long, however individuals are able to choose to leave.</p> <p>Mental Health conditions – it can be a positive experience for some who experience conditions such as anxiety by making it easier to take part in meetings without the camera on and not feeling additional pressure. It may effect negatively without the human contact leading to raised</p>

		<p>anxiety.</p> <p>Visual impairment – too much screen time could lead to a negative effect.</p> <p>Hearing impairment – a positive impact as remote attendance allows for the individual to adjust sound levels or use earphones to eliminate background noise. .</p> <p>Physical impairment – positive effect as the need for a specific location and the need to travel are eliminated.</p>
Sex	Positive / negative / none	No impact has been identified
Age	Positive / negative / none	It is probable that some may feel a positive effect of remote attendance without having to leave their homes.
Sexual orientation	Positive / negative / none	No impact has been identified
Religion or belief (or non-belief)	Positive / negative / none	No impact has been identified
Gender reassignment	Positive / negative / none	No impact has been identified
Pregnancy and maternity	Positive / negative / none	<p>Positive effect for pregnant women and breast feeding mothers with remote attendance should they wish, without having to travel to a specific location.</p> <p>Positive effect on parents by reducing the time taken to travel to meetings by ensuring parents are able to access remotely.</p>
Marriage and civil partnership	Positive / negative / none	No impact has been identified

3.2 The Council has a duty under the 2010 Equality Act to contribute positively to a fairer society by promoting equality and good relations in its activities regarding the following characteristics – age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, gender reassignment, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must give due attention to the way any change affects these duties.

General Duties of the Equality Act	Does it have an impact?*	In what way? What is the evidence?
Abolishing illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation	No	
Promoting equal opportunities	Yes	<p>Virtual Meetings. Positive effect as there is more discipline in virtual meetings with equal opportunity for all to speak. Individuals can also choose to take part with their cameras off.</p> <p>Remote attendance. Yes, positive effect as above. However, until hybrid solution is in place we will not know if there are equal opportunities for all or will those attending remotely feel ignored.</p> <p>Access to the public – the new arrangements will lead to improved and simpler access to the public to hear and view committee meetings ensuring transparency in our democratic arrangements. Individuals will not be required to travel to specific locations at a specific time.</p> <p>On the other hand, there may be a negative effect as the provision available is dependent on access to a computer and the web. Individuals without the provisions are able to use the computers at their local library (subject to covid restrictions).</p>
Encouraging good relationships	Yes and no	<p>Virtual meetings and remote attendance could be positive in encouraging good relationships as it enables some to participate in meetings who would not be able to do so otherwise.</p> <p>On the other hand, there is a conception that forming good and new relations through virtual means could be more challenging due to the lack of informal networking.</p>

4) **Analysing the results**

4.1 **Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty and what is the reason for this?**

As noted above, the changes outlined above have enabled the Council's democratic arrangements, including holding committees who make key decisions, to continue during the pandemic.

The changes to enable meetings to be held virtually or hybrid, ensuring elected members are able to Access remotely is likely to have a positive impact on a number of the equality characteristics as noted in 3.1 – mainly for pregnant females, breastfeeding mothers and individuals with a physical impairment or mental health condition.

In addition, arrangements for ensuring Access to the public through webcasting or other means enable more of Gwynedd residence to Access democratic proceedings leading to improved transparency.

4.2 **Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty and what is the reason for this?**

We acknowledge that there are two sides to every story, with the possible negative effects outlined in 3.1 above.

However, the Equality Impact Assessment has not identified impacts which would lead to a change in the recommendation.

4.3 **What should be done?**

Choose one of the following:

Continue with the policy / service as it is robust	✓
Adapt the policy to delete any barriers	
Suspend and delete the policy as the detrimental impacts are too big	

Continue with the policy as any detrimental impact can be justified	
---	--

4.4 What steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?

Possible negative effects have been outlined in 3.1 above and will receive due consideration as the developments proceed.

The work will be reviewed often with updates reported to the Full Council.

4.5 If you are not taking any further action to delete or reduce the negative impacts, explain why here.

5) Monitoring

5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) 2021 Act clearly states the requirement for the Council to publish our arrangements for committee meetings and access to the public. Interim arrangements were presented to the Full Council in July 2021, with a review of the arrangements to be presented in December 2021.

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report to the Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Meeting Date:	9 November 2021
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Craig ab Iago
Contact Officer:	Carys Fôn Williams
Contact Number:	01341 424368
Item Title:	PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND PROPERTY

DECISION SOUGHT

To accept and note the information in the report.

THE REASON WHY A DECISION IS NEEDED

In order to ensure effective performance management.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update my fellow members on what has happened in the areas for which I am responsible as the Cabinet Member for Housing and Property. This includes outlining the latest developments to date in 2021-22 against the pledges within the 2018-2023 Gwynedd Council Plan; issues and the progress of performance measures; and the latest on the savings and cuts schemes.
- 1.2 I remind you that all the issues have already been the subject of discussion and scrutiny by me at a meeting of the Housing and Property Management Team, which also included representatives from the Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.3 I am generally happy with the progress of the Departments projects within the Council Plan and the performance measures for which I am responsible.

2. GWYNEDD COUNCIL PLAN PROJECTS 2018-2023

- 2.1 **A shortage of suitable homes for the people of Gwynedd: Secure approval for the Housing Plan and begin implementation.**

The Housing Action Plan was approved by Cabinet on 15 December 2020. Since then, the Department has recruited and appointed experienced officers to deliver the 33 projects in the Action Plan, and project arrangements have been put in place.



The Department has already initiated several projects such as:

- Grants for first time buyers to renovate empty homes. Launched in June and nearly 50 applicants are in the application process.
- £1 million has been allocated to the Homebuy Scheme (equity loan) and we are looking to expand this scheme.
- Homelessness plans - construction work currently underway to develop 30 Units including 4 'pods' in Caernarfon for vulnerable individuals and development of the former Natwest site in Caernarfon which will include supported apartments for homeless youth.
- Grants for adaptations to make houses suitable for people with disabilities - 227 completed to date.
- We are currently looking at land and having discussions about buying land to develop our own homes.
- We are also looking at a number of houses on the market to purchase and let to local people at affordable rent.

Although we hope to buy our first homes soon, I think it is important to note that the current housing crisis has affected the Department's ability to implement the scheme to purchase houses to let to local people. The rise in house prices means that our original business case is no longer viable. The Department is currently revisiting the business case and looking at options for additional funding for this scheme.

One of the Housing Action Plan's projects is to 'Consult with communities to establish their housing needs' which is now part of a wider consultation exercise led by the Economy and Community Department. The outcome of this consultation will enable the department to identify the areas of need for different projects to enable them to prioritise these areas.

2.2 **Easy and clear access to an advice and enquiries service on housing matters: Establishing a single front door and helpdesk for the public in order to help them with their housing problems:**

The Department is in the process of setting up our single front door and helpdesk for housing services. A report was presented to the Scrutiny Committee on the 30th September which was approved by the Committee with a request for the Department to consider the points raised during the meeting.

The Department will be taking this work forward and scoping and consulting with stakeholders such as other Departments within the Council, Housing Associations and 3rd Sector organisations in Gwynedd. The importance of getting this right first time was noted by the Scrutiny Committee and therefore the preparatory work that the Department will be doing is fundamental in order to maximise the opportunities to streamline the process for users when making inquiries or seeking access housing services. Inclusion and digital systems will be vital to the project.

2.3 **Allocating social housing to local people: Creating a new allocations policy for the county which will give greater priority to local people.**

The Common Housing Allocation Policy was introduced in October 2020, following a period of consultation and scrutiny both internally and with external partners.



It was intended from the outset to review the implementation of the policy following its adoption, and to implement it for a period of 12 months to ensure that it operated in accordance with the original objectives. The Common Housing Allocation Policy will be discussed by the Scrutiny Committee in early 2022.

One of the Department's performance measures is the percentage of all social housing let to a person with a local connection. During September, 100% of installations were let to people with a local connection. The figure has been steady over 95% in recent months with the exception of June where the figure was 92%.

2.4 Other risks

There are some risks to the Department at the moment which I need to highlight.

- 2.4.1 Demand for the services of our Homelessness Teams has increased significantly in recent months. At the outset of the pandemic, the Welsh Government abolished the 'priority need' condition when considering homelessness referrals, requiring Local Authorities to house all who presented as homeless and to ensure that no-one was sleeping rough. We have succeeded in doing so. The increase in homeless numbers has been alarming and has been a significant strain on staff. The Department has now been able to increase the capacity of the team which provides support to individuals to establish tenancies in order to move forward to cope with the increase. In addition, they are in the process of trying to increase the capacity of the preventative team to reduce the number of submissions that reach the Department in the first place. The number of homeless presentations over recent years is set out in the table below:

Year	Number of Homeless Presentations
2018/2019	576
2019/2020	593
2020/2021	812
2021/2022	452 (6 months)

We are currently in receipt of a grant from the Welsh Government to meet the accommodation costs. The requirement to house all those presenting as homeless may well continue into the future and the Government has not yet stated whether the Hardship Grant will be available to Authorities beyond March 2022. There is therefore a risk that the Council will have to meet these additional accommodation costs from next financial year. Over the last 6 months, our temporary accommodation costs has been close to £1 million. The Department's Officers are in regular discussions with the Welsh Government requesting an update on the future of this grant and emphasising the risk to the Authority should the grant not continue. Confirmation of the Welsh Government's intention has not yet been received.

There are a number of projects in the pipeline that will increase supported accommodation options but with the latest increase in presentations, this is likely to be insufficient. The table below summarises the projects underway to add to the capacity of our existing hostels, which will reduce reliance on temporary accommodation:



Project	Number of Units	Timescales
35 College Road, Bangor	3	On site, completion November 2021
Pods, Segontium, Caernarfon	4	On site, completion October 2021
137 High Street, Bangor	12	Building work begins in October 2021, aiming to complete October 2022.
Specialist accommodation with support for women	5	Completed and opening October 2021
Accommodation for a family and individual in Pwllheli	2	On site, completion February 2022
Glanwnion, Dolgellau	4	Planning permission refused by Snowdonia National Park. Awaiting appeal result.
Total:	30	

2.4.2 The Department has also seen the impact of Covid and Brexit on construction and planned maintenance projects. Over the past few months the Department has struggled to attract contractors to tender for work, and when tenders are received, they are often much higher than estimated. This mainly poses 3 risks:

- Failure to deliver on time
- Failure to deliver on budget
- Unable to spend grant funding - risk of withdrawal if not spent within agreed timescale

Due to the current instability in the market, the Department has decided to prioritise and delay some projects as the prices received are significantly higher than anticipated (some over 200% of budget). There are some projects where we cannot delay, e.g. urgent maintenance, and so these will continue. By doing this we will receive less for our money and the budget will be affected. The Department's intention is to test the market on a phased basis over the coming months to see if the market is stabilising. This is currently being done by tendering projects that have in-house work only, as we are coming to the winter season.

Should there be no sign of the market stabilising, consideration will need to be given to what action to take - whether applying for additional funding or delivering fewer projects.

If there is still a lack of interest from Contractors then alternative arrangements for tendering and procuring the services will also need to be considered.

The increase in costs and availability of contractors has been raised in a number of conversations with the Welsh Government, whether for housing capital projects or 21st Century Schools projects. I am also aware that this is having an impact on a number of other Council departments and other Local Authorities.

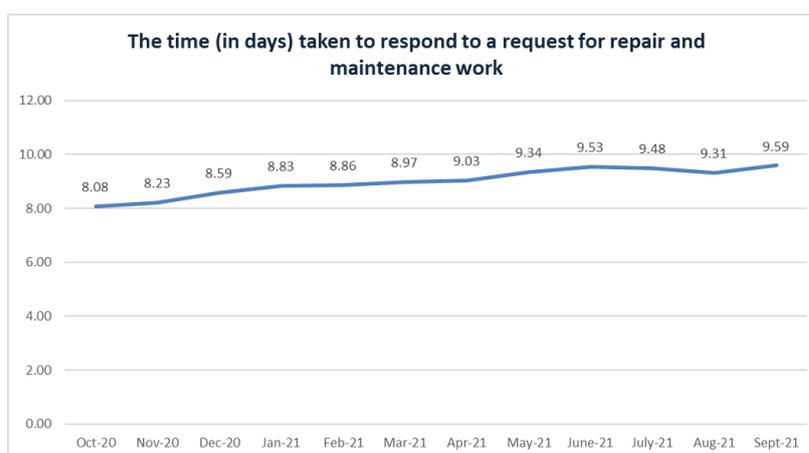
2.4.3 One of the other risks I am keen to highlight is the knock on effects of climate change. The Department is undertaking some good work in the climate change field specifically in reducing carbon emissions from Council activities. Since the introduction of the first Carbon Management Plan in 2010, the Department has been successful in ensuring that our carbon emissions have reduced by 46.6% (2019). 2020 data shows that carbon emissions reduced by 58.5%, but it is not possible to quantify the effect of the lockdown and working from home on the data for this year. The Energy Conservation Unit has recently been working with the Welsh

Government Energy Service on a report on decarbonisation of the Council's estate and Carbon Management Plan 3.

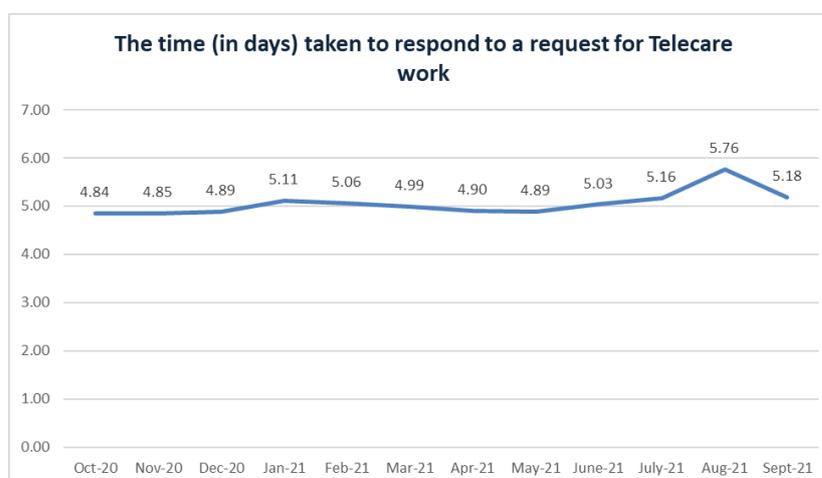
3. PERFORMANCE

The main issues arising from the Department's performance measures are summarised below. This does not refer to all the Departments Units and services, only those that I feel need to be highlighted at this time. All the measures are challenged by me once a month and I'm generally happy with the performance.

- 3.1 The time taken to respond to a **repair and maintenance** request has increased in recent months, and since the beginning of the pandemic. While it had stabilised at around 7 days pre-Covid, it is now over **9 days**. Although this is quite a significant increase (25%) there are worthy reasons for it and therefore I am not concerned. A number of the Unit's staff have been on loan to other Departments in response to the pandemic, and also, access to sites and for contractors and the internal workforce is more challenging with restrictions in place. The Unit has also seen the impact of the pandemic and Brexit on the availability of goods which has resulted in longer periods before Contractors can sometimes complete their work.



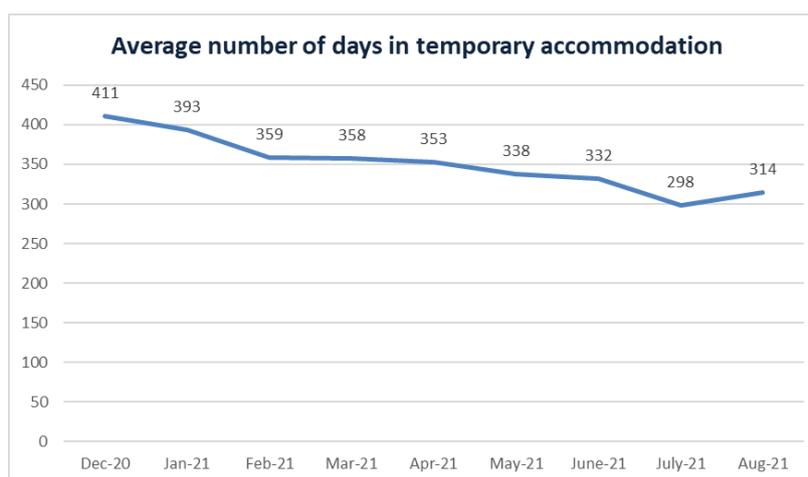
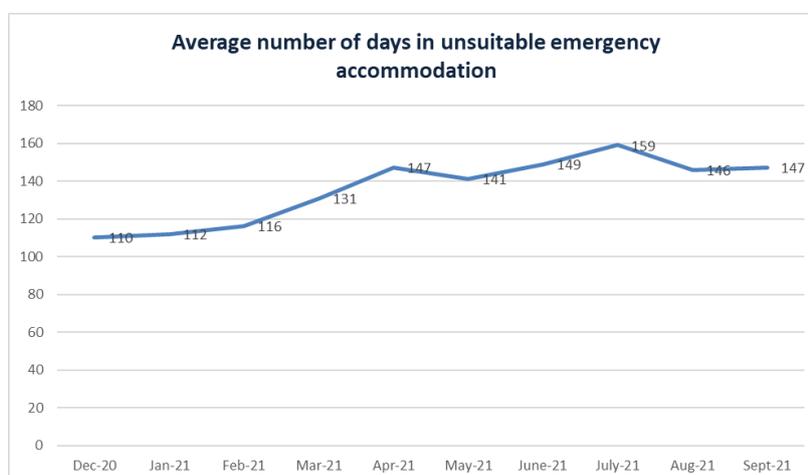
The number of days it takes to respond to a request for **Telecare** work is affected in the same way, with the average number of days now being **5 days**, compared to an average of 4 days before Covid.



- 3.2 It is good to see positive customer feedback for various Units within the Department. The Department regularly conducts a **customer satisfaction** exercise for the service offered by a number of Units such as Pest Control, Maintenance, Offices, Cleaning, Estates and

Enforcement and licensing of houses in multiple occupation. When Units receive constructive feedback, I am confident that they take action to improve the service to their customers.

- 3.3 The percentage of **Property Development Unit** projects progressing on schedule after the full brief has been agreed has reduced recently, due to the reasons highlighted as high risk to the Department, namely the lack of interest from Contractors in construction projects as well as the high prices we receive when Contractors submit prices. Just six months ago the Unit was delivering 96% of its projects on schedule but that has now reduced to 87%. However, I accept that the reasons for the delays are beyond the control of the Unit.
- 3.4 The increase in homelessness is also reflected in the Department's performance measures, with the average number of days in unsuitable emergency accommodation (eg bed and breakfast) being **147 days**, and the average number of days in temporary house (private houses leased by us) at **314 days**. It is hoped that the increased capacity of the team to support individuals to maintain their own tenancy will lead to more individuals moving forward more quickly, and reduce reliance on unsuitable emergency accommodation and temporary accommodation.



- 3.5 **The average number of days on a social housing waiting list** is currently high - **679 days**. Demand for social housing is high, but also contributes to this high figure is that examples of applicants who have been on the register for a long time under the old points system are now given greater priority in the new banding system.

4. OFFICES

The Facilities Unit, which is responsible for our offices, is working with other departments to look at the council's future working arrangements. As part of this work, we will include looking at options to reduce the estate from a change in working arrangements. This work is ongoing and we do not know at this stage how our future working arrangements will affect the demand for office space.

5. FINANCIAL SITUATION / SAVINGS

- 5.1 The Housing and Property Department's underspend was £75,000 at the end of the 2020/21 financial year. A detailed review of the Department's financial situation in 2021/22 was held recently as part of a revenue review at the end of August for the entire Council. It is anticipated that the Department will underspend by £175,000 by the end of the 2021/22 financial year. Despite an overspend that is forecast for Homelessness, the main reason for the underspend on a departmental level is staff turnover and vacant posts. The Review of the Revenue Budget was reported to the Cabinet at its meeting on 12 October.
- 5.2 The Department has two Savings plans during 2021/22.
- 5.3 Inspection and licensing fees for houses in multiple occupation have increased from £140 to £180 per room and the department is on track to achieve these savings.
- 5.4 The Department is also on track to achieve the savings of reducing reliance on temporary accommodation by investing in purpose built accommodation. As a result of Covid 19, the program was delayed, but the pods in Caernarfon are now ready and other units in Bangor will be ready by November. Further plans are then being made to convert flats and create additional units which will hopefully be sufficient to meet the target. Welsh Government policy during the Covid pandemic has had an impact on this area, and there is some uncertainty going forward regarding the level of assistance Gwynedd Council will need to provide to the homeless after April 2022, as highlighted earlier in the report.

IEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

The Monitoring Officer :

No observations to add in relation to propriety

Head of Finance:

I confirm that £1m has been earmarked for the Help to Buy Scheme in this year's Capital Programme. The review of the Capital Programme, which was presented to the Cabinet at its meeting on 12 October, also highlights the slippages, in the programmed plans that are likely to take place this year, as set out in paragraph 2.4.2.

As the report notes, expenditure on accommodation has increased significantly since the start of the pandemic, but these additional costs have been greeted through the Welsh Government's Hardship Grant to date. There is a real risk that the Hardship Grant will not continue after April 2022, although local authorities will still be required by the Welsh Government to "house everyone", and so to this end the Department has submitted a bid as part of the bidding procedure to assist with this.

I confirm that the Department's savings plans are on track to be delivered this year.

Agenda Item 9

MEETING	Gwynedd Council Cabinet
DATE	November 9, 2021
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Cemlyn Rees Williams
OFFICER	Gwern ap Rhisiart
TITLE OF ITEM	Education Digital Strategy

Decision sought

The Cabinet is requested to:

- a) Approve the Education Digital Strategy in its entirety
- b) Agree to joint-fund up to 50% of the costs of renewing devices, with the schools expected to pay the other 50%.
- c) Agree to Gwynedd schools receiving technical support from the Authority's Information Technology service from April 2022 onwards
- d) Agree to fund technical support until April 2022 in order to speed up the timescale for introducing devices to the schools.

Background

1. In light of revising the curriculum, digital competence is a statutory responsibility across all learning areas and needs to be considered in all aspects when designing and introducing the curriculum. Digital learning is not just a vision for the future, it is the present, and unless we plan positive measures to introduce a digital provision of the highest quality consistently throughout the education system, we will live with a provision that is only suitable for the past.
2. The Welsh Government has announced financial support to improve the use of digital technology for learning and education in schools. The first cycle of investment was announced on 19th July 2019, with £50 million to be split between the 22 Local Authorities in 2019/20, and up to a further £55 million available during the next three years.
3. Digital Standards for Education were published by the Government in April 2019. The standards are a series of recommendations and guidelines around planning, managing and using a school's information technology network. The standards assist schools to understand, manage and operate their digital environment. They indicate how schools should ensure that their digital environment is one that satisfies the requirements of the school curriculum and gives more attention to future digital skills. The Government expects local authorities to offer advice and direction to schools on how to fulfil these Standards.
4. The work of developing the strategy began before the pandemic. During the extended periods where schools were closed to face-to-face learning, we saw a significant increase in schools' use of technology. Those times highlighted the need for a digital education strategy, with inconsistent experiences stemming from a lack of investment in suitable devices for children and teachers, along with inconsistency in the skills and confidence of our education workforce.

Education Digital Strategy

5. The aim of the education digital strategy is to give the best digital provision to support our learners and teachers to foster a range of skills to use technology confidently, creatively and critically, with consistency in the provision across all schools in the County.

6. The strategy outlines our ambition of using technology to improve education for learners in Gwynedd schools, and outlines our future vision of enhancing our ability to support all parts of the curriculum.
7. We will know that the strategy is successful when:
 - *There are no technical barriers that would inhibit our teachers' imagination as they plan lessons for our learners.*
 - *There are suitable devices available to support digital learning.*
 - *The experiences of pupils, teachers, assistants and the whole school community are consistently good.*
 - *There is suitable digital training available to all.*
 - *There is a measurable increase in digital skills in Gwynedd.*
 - *Schools achieve the Digital Education Standards.*
 - *The Welsh Language and our communities are supported by preparing our learners for jobs in the digital sector.*
 - *All schools are making full use of the Hwb national learning platform.*
 - *There is consistency in digital learning experiences throughout Gwynedd.*
 - *There is value for money in the digital field for Gwynedd schools.*
 - *The network supports and enables digital learning today and in the future.*
 - *There is a sustainable funding model in place.*
8. The strategy is for all schools, pupils, staff and members of the Gwynedd schools community. Through the strategy, we will provide one device per four pupils in the Foundation Phase, and one device each for all learners in year 3 to year 11, and to every teacher.
9. The strategy sets out the ambition for the experiences of pupils, teachers, assistants and the school community to be consistently good across the sectors.

All teachers in Gwynedd will have:

- a portable personal device that will allow quick access to the cloud via the school's Wi-Fi network or any other Wi-Fi network
- the ability to prepare and work from home
- access to the school's systems and pupils' information systems at the school and at their home
- access to fit-for-purpose training and professional development
- a Hwb account that will grant them access to a wide range of learning resources
- access to a fast photocopier
- an official e-mail
- access to Gwynedd Council's self-service account

Pupils' experience of technology is changing and developing, and their requirements in terms of hardware and software is evolving as technology matures and the requirements of the curriculum change. However, some factors will remain constant. Every pupil will have:

- experience of using different technology, such as Windows, Google Chromebook and Apple devices
- access to a device that will allow quick and secure access to the cloud via the school's Wi-Fi network
- the ability to study and learn from home
- a Hwb account that will allow them access to a wide range of learning resources
- an e-mail account allowing them to communicate within a limited circle and beyond, in accordance with the guidelines of individual schools
- remote access to learning resources

10. It is recommended that we adopt the strategy in its entirety, thus supporting the Council's ambition of a high-quality digital education and cross-county consistency in this key area.

Costs of renewing devices

11. The Strategy is based on a substantial supply of devices for pupils and teachers in the schools of Gwynedd, using the grant resources that are available from the Government to pay for the supply in the first place.
12. The Welsh Government grant is conditional on securing a budget for replacing the equipment when it reaches the end of its life. With the life of all devices being approximately 5 years, we estimate that the requirement to renew devices will follow this profile;

2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
£489,837	£1,452,937	£1,091,693	£422,415	£427,630

13. This means that by the next renewal cycle which will begin in 2024/25, and based on current prices, we will need a fund of £3.9m to renew the equipment.
14. A number of options have been considered to address the renewal costs, including;
 - Asking schools to pay for renewal as part of the terms of the scheme
 - Making a cut to schools' budgets to pay for renewal
 - The Council to fund the cost as part of the annual bids process

15. The Education Department gathered the views of schools on their ability to contribute towards the scheme's renewal costs. Although the schools were unanimous in their support for the strategy, several of the schools stated that they could not contribute towards the costs of sustaining the scheme without support.

16. It is recommended that schools should be expected to pay half the cost by opening a renewal fund, noting that they can ensure adequate finance in that Fund by whichever means they wish (through a contribution from the schools' end-of-year balances, by allocating a permanent budget in their budgets, or through other sources).

17. The Cabinet is requested to agree to joint-fund the other half of the cost through an annual revenue contribution.

Maintenance

18. It is essential that there is effective support to the new digital provision to be installed, continuing to support the historical provision that is already in the schools for some time.

No pupil in Gwynedd should miss any education because of technical problems. Devices that are not working should be repaired within an acceptable time, with a temporary replacement device being provided as soon as possible if the situation cannot be rectified immediately.

19. It is difficult to predict the demand for the service as what is offered through the strategy is markedly different to what is already supported, in terms of the range of devices and the infrastructure that are in place in the schools. Research shows that there is no one model or technician-to-child ratio that could be used as a predictor of the demand for service. There is an increase in the number of devices supported under the new model, but on the other hand, our wish to formalise and reconcile the experience between schools is likely to reduce the demand.

20. We can presume that there will be less demand for service from the primary sector than the secondary sector, because teachers and pupils move from one classroom to the other in the secondary sector, which could lead to more challenges.

21. All primary schools are fully dependent on the services of Cynnal, whilst just over half of our secondary schools employ a local technician in addition to the core agreement with Cynnal. One secondary school has chosen not to sign up to the core agreement by Cynnal, but is receiving SIMS support.
22. Recently the concerns and complaints about the Cynnal service have been increasing across all sectors. The matters have been raised at the advisory groups and Cynnal are receiving regular e-mails from our schools highlighting the challenges.
23. The schools are generally sympathetic to the technicians' situation, and commend their commitment to the work. The support model has not evolved over time and consequently the service is dealing with a significant number of calls, the majority of which are calls about failure. Up to 25% of technicians' time goes on travelling from school to school.
24. The Council's Information Technology Service already supports school networks, and an increasing number are now receiving a telephony service too.
25. It is recommended that Gwynedd schools should receive support from the Authority's Information Technology Service. The service has produced a plan that would evolve over the next four years. The model includes employing technicians who already work within the secondary sector in-house in the Authority.

Year 1	Years 2 and 3	Year 4
<p>A central structure that will install new procedures and configuration for pupils and teachers' laptops, projects for migration from local arrangements, and a service that continuously engages with the schools. The schools' local arrangements (technicians) remain unchanged during the first year. Year 1 cost is £1,013,059.</p>	<p>With new arrangements established, we anticipate that the advantages of a uniform provision and a move from local arrangements will become evident. This means that the support pattern can be changed by forming support hubs across the County, based in our secondary schools. We can cut down the number who are in this role, by removing the technicians' current posts and creating 7 new posts. We will also cut down the number on the front line, and share this provision between the technicians and the Service Desk.</p> <p>The other change is to reduce the number of digital enablement officers from 3 to 2, since the extra demand and pressures of the early days will reduce after establishing the provision. Years 2 and 3 cost £846,704</p>	<p>Rationalise further by reducing the number of technical officers in the central team from 11 to 9, taking advantage of matured support arrangements, but introducing a new post to meet cyber-security requirements. Year 4 cost £808,223</p>

26. The current costs of the service by Cynnal and technicians within the secondary schools is £830,635 per annum. We anticipate that additional support of £182,944 would be required in the first year, £16,069 in the second and third year, and by the fourth year the support will be £22,412 a year cheaper. By the end of year 5 the new model will have cost £170,258 more, but by the end of year 10 it will have saved a total of £58,200.
27. Directing Gwynedd schools to obtain support from the Authority's Information Technology service would have far-reaching implications for Cynnal. The decision would affect the company's viability to serve schools in other Authorities.

Short Term Technical Support

28. A little over 6,000 devices have been distributed to primary schools over the past year. These devices are supported by one technician within the corporate service, with the cooperation of the Information Technology Service and Cynnal.

29. We intend to introduce just over 1,000 laptops to the teachers and 4,000 for pupils in the secondary sector as part of implementing the digital strategy, using the grant investment received from the Welsh Government.
30. There are support implications to any additional device introduced, and we cannot absorb this extra demand within our current support structures. We ask for additional financial support to put together a support team in preparation for supporting the schools fully on 1st April, 2022.
31. Financial support of £230,000 would be required to deliver a support structure from December until the end of March, but since Cynnal will continue to support the historical provision in the school, it will be possible to deliver a reduced structure for the transitional period. The support we request in order to deliver the temporary structure would be a one-off sum of £148,000 which will give a firm foundation for delivering the digital strategy.

Equality Assessment

32. The equality assessment highlights that the implementation of the digital strategy will not have an impact on equality, whether it be features of or a general duty.
33. It is envisaged that the digital education strategy will strengthen equality attitudes because it will ensure universal access to digital education, especially those from less advantaged backgrounds.
34. Robust equality policies are implemented across Gwynedd schools and these will continue to be implemented.

Well-being Assessment

35. Following consideration and assessment in accordance with the requirements of the well-being act, the 7 well-being goals and the Council's well-being objectives were considered and it is concluded that the strategy meets the requirements. This strategy will allow us to respond to and meet the needs of the children today, while strengthening their future well-being.
36. The proposed proposal will ensure a fair opportunity for all Gwynedd children to acquire excellent digital skills, essential skills for the future.

Views of the statutory officers

The Monitoring Officer: The adoption of the Strategy represents a fundamental change in the digital provision and the inter relationship between the Councils and the schools in this area. The recommendations are consistent with the conditions of the financing for this change which has been provided by the Welsh Government. There is also a recognition that there are re-structuring implications around the current provision which goes hand in hand with the increase in internal capacity to provide the Service. This is the subject to further connected report.

Head of Finance: The Cabinet adopted the strategy in principle in September 2020, delaying a decision to adopt it in full until there was clarity of the financial commitment. Now, as the report states, we are aware of these commitments and it would be appropriate for Cabinet to adopt the Gwynedd Schools Digital Strategy as long as there is agreement on bearing the additional costs.

Once we received the significant grant from the Welsh Government to invest in the original equipment for our pupils, it is inevitable that permanent resources must be found from the Council for the cost of refurbishing the equipment (we were aware of that when Cabinet adopted the strategy in principle last year and decided to accept the grant). In order for all pupils in Gwynedd to have access to digital learning this year, due consideration must be given to the request for adequate funding.

In these unusual circumstances, subject to the schools signing up to meet half the cost of refurbishing the computers, the Cabinet would be able move £2m between funds to establish a renewal fund to start planning the work as outlined in the table in paragraph 12. If Cabinet confirms the priority by resolution on this now, we will plan appropriately for it.

Further, I appreciate the need to increase the Council's internal IT capacity to provide support to schools, and it makes sense that this team is established as soon as possible. Cabinet could fund the requirement for £148,000 of one-off funding from the Transformation Fund, and with this investment the in-house Service would be able to start the work of presenting laptops for teachers and secondary pupils.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Gwynedd Schools Digital Strategy

Appendix 2 Equality Assessment

Appendix 3 Well-being Assessment

1. INTRODUCTION

As a Council we are committed to the principles within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) in order to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Gwynedd's communities. The Council's vision is:

Our vision as a Council is to support all the people of Gwynedd to thrive and live full lives in their community, in a county which is one of the best counties to live in.

The Council has adopted well-being objectives that complement the national well-being goals and ensure that Gwynedd residents:

- Enjoy a happy, healthy and safe life
- Have access to quality homes within their communities
- Earn enough wages to support themselves and their families
- Receive a first class education that will allow them to do what they want to do
- To live with dignity and independence for as long as possible
- Being able to live in a naturally Welsh speaking Society
- Enjoy the beauty of the County's natural environment.

The table below outlines the link between our well-being objectives and the national well-being goals.

We will ensure that the residents of Gwynedd can:	Prosperous	Resilient	Healthier	Equal	Cohesive Communities	A vibrant culture where the Welsh language is thriving	Globally responsible
Enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives							
Live in quality homes within their communities							
Earn a sufficient salary to be able to support themselves and their families							
Receive education of the highest quality which will enable them to do what they want to do							
Live with dignity and independently for as long as possible							
Live in a natural Welsh society							
Take advantage of the beauty of the County's natural environment.							

The Education Department has a role to promote the Act's well-being goals to the county's pupils through its activities and projects. The Act places a duty on public bodies in Wales to improve economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being. As part of the duty the Council has published well-being objectives that outline how it will improve well-being in the "Gwynedd Council Plan 2018-2023".

As a result of amending the curriculum, digital competence is a statutory responsibility across all learning fields and it needs to be considered in all aspects when designing and introducing the curriculum. The aim of the strategy is to give the best digital provision to support our learners and teachers to foster a range of skills to use technology confidently, creatively and critically.

2. HOW DOES THE PROPOSAL MEET GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES?

Gwynedd Council's well-being objectives were considered when forming the strategy.

Do nothing - continue with the status quo.	
Objectives	Details:
Enjoy a happy, healthy and safe life	No effect
Live in quality homes within their communities	No effect
Earn a sufficient wage to support themselves and their families	No effect
Receive education of the highest quality that will allow them to do what they want to do	No effect
To live with dignity and independently for as long as possible	No effect
Live in a naturally Welsh society	No effect
Take advantage beauty of the County's natural environment	No effect

Introduce the Strategy	
Objectives	Details:
Enjoy a happy, healthy and safe life	No effect
Live in quality homes within their communities	No effect
Earn a sufficient wage to support themselves and their families	No effect
Receive education of the highest quality that will allow them to do what they want to do	Positive impact. The strategy will ensure a strong foundation for digital learning that a key part of the new curriculum.
To live with dignity and independently for as long as possible	No effect
Live in a naturally Welsh society	No effect
Take advantage beauty of the County's natural environment	No effect

3. DOES THE PROPOSAL MEET THE GOALS OF THE WELL-BEING ACT?

Aim	Does the proposal contribute to this aim?	Measures to mitigate negative impacts on this aim:
<p>A prosperous Wales An innovative society using resources efficiently and proportionately, educated people, creating wealth and work.</p>	<p>The proposal would mean that pupils are educated with the latest digital equipment.</p> <p>This means that they will be able to acquire digital skills that will position it well to meet the skills requirements of future jobs.</p> <p>In addition, the proposal contributes to the goal by making prudent use of resources.</p>	<p>No effect.</p>
<p>A resilient Wales A nation that maintains and enhances biodiversity and healthy ecosystems that support resilience and the ability to adapt to change (for example climate change).</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that the proposal is likely to have an impact on this aim.</p>	<p>No effect.</p>
<p>A healthier Wales A society where people's physical and mental well-being is as good as possible and people understand what affects their health.</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that the proposal is likely to have an impact on this aim.</p>	<p>No effect.</p>
<p>A more equal Wales A society that enables people to fulfil their potential irrespective of background or circumstances (including their socio-economic background and circumstances).</p>	<p>Giving every learner a device means that every pupil has an equal opportunity to acquire digital skills that will be key to them realizing their potential.</p>	<p>No effect. .</p>
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Attractive, viable and safe communities with good connections</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that the proposal is likely to have an impact on this aim.</p>	<p>No effect. .</p>
<p>A vibrant Wales and culture where the Welsh language thrives A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language and encourages people to participate in the arts, sports and leisure activities.</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that the proposal is likely to have an impact on this aim.</p>	<p>No effect. .</p>
<p>Wales is globally responsible. A nation that, in doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that the proposal is likely to have an impact on this aim.</p>	<p>No effect.</p>

of Wales, is considering whether doing such a thing could contribute positively to global well-being.

4. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Sustainable Development Principles	Does the proposal consider the principle?
<p>Long term The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to meet long-term needs is also important.</p>	<p>Yes. The strategy sets out a long-term vision that will invest in digital education in Gwynedd.</p>
<p>Suspension How action to prevent problems from occurring or escalating can help public bodies achieve their objectives.</p>	<p>The strategy, when fully implemented, ensures that the challenges currently facing Gwynedd schools are resolved and prevents us from reaching similar situations in the future.</p>
<p>Integration Consider how the public body's well-being objectives may affect each of the well-being goals, all of its other objectives, or the objectives of other public bodies.</p>	<p>The authority began the process of creating the strategy in the wake of a critical situation facing many schools.</p>
<p>Collaboration Collaboration with any other person (or different departments within the organisation itself) could help the organization meet its well-being goals.</p>	<p>The strategy has been formulated following the input of the Welsh Government and key departments within the Council including, information technology, finance and economy.</p>
<p>Contents The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area they serve.</p>	<p>The strategy is based on the views and needs of pupils, parents, schools and employers.</p>

5. CONCLUSION

Following consideration and assessment in accordance with the requirements of the well-being act, the 7 well-being goals and the Council's well-being objectives were considered and it is concluded that the strategy meets the requirements. This strategy will allow us to respond to and meet the needs of the children today, while strengthening their future well-being.

The proposed proposal will ensure a fair opportunity for all Gwynedd children to acquire excellent digital skills, essential skills for the future.

Assessing the Impact on Protected Characteristics, the Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Disadvantage

For help to complete this form see the *How to Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment* leaflet. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Gadlys Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on ext. 32708 or DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru for further assistance.

The Council's is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the effect any change in policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), has on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has a general duty to ensure fairness and foster good relations. A timely Equality Impact Assessment must be undertaken before making any decision on any relevant change (i.e. which has an effect on people with protected characteristics).

The Council is also required, under the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011) to consider the effect of a change in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), in its opportunities for people to use Welsh and to ensure that Welsh is not treated less favourably than English. This document therefore ensures that these decisions protect and promote the use of the Welsh language.

From April 1st 2021 the Council has a duty to have due regard to tackling socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decisions.

1) Details

1.1. What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Digital Education Strategy

1.2 What is the purpose of the policy / service that is being created or amended? What changes are being considered?

As a result of curriculum reform, digital competence is a statutory responsibility across all areas of learning and needs to be considered in all aspects when designing and delivering the curriculum.

The strategy aims to provide the best digital provision to support our learners and teachers to develop a range of skills to use technology confidently, creatively and critically.

1.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Gwern ap Rhisiart, Area Education Officer

1.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?

October 2021, Version 1

2) Action

2.1 Who are the stakeholders or partners you need to work with to undertake this assessment?

2.2 What measures have you taken to engage with people with equality characteristics, regarding the Welsh language or with communities (either of place or of need) that live with socio-economic disadvantage?

2.3 What was the result of the engagement?

2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you operating?

2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be collected?

3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 The Council must give due regard to the effect any changes will have on people with the equality characteristics noted below. What impact will the new policy/service or the proposed changes in the policy or service have on people with these characteristics?

Characteristics	What type of impact? *	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including nationality)	none	Not applicable
Disability	none	<p>Policies in place by schools.</p> <p>The latest tools will be distributed throughout the strategy. This means that the needs of learners with physical or learning disabilities can be addressed.</p> <p>The system to support learners with additional learning needs is aligned with the strategy and if necessary more specialized devices could be sourced.</p>
Sex	none	Not applicable
Age	none	The strategy is for all pupils up to the end of year 11. However, there is reference in the strategy on how we will meet the needs of sixth form pupils as well.
Sexual orientation	none	Not applicable
Religion or belief (or non-belief)	none	Not applicable
Gender reassignment	none	Not applicable
Pregnancy and maternity	none	Not applicable
Marriage and civil partnership	none	Not applicable
The Welsh language	none	<p>Policies in place by schools.</p> <p>No negative impact on the Welsh language is foreseen.</p> <p>The devices being distributed will always be set to operate first through the Welsh language.</p>

Socio-Economic Disadvantage	Positive	It will give all learners equal access to digital devices and learning opportunities.
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* Delete as appropriate

3.2 The Council has a duty under the 2010 Equality Act to contribute positively to a fairer society by promoting equality and good relations in its activities regarding the following characteristics – age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, gender reassignment, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must give due attention to the way any change affects these duties.

General Duties of the Equality Act	Does it have an impact?*	In what way? What is the evidence?
Abolishing illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation	No	The proposal will not alter the school's statutory duty to protect pupils from discrimination, harassment or victimisation. The aim is to give pupils the opportunity to express their views in a way that is appropriate when considering any factors that affect them. They will continue to use the School Council, PSE lessons, anti-bullying policies and other means to ensure that the school prohibits unlawful discrimination of harassment and victimisation.
Promoting equal opportunities	Yes	Having a digital device for every child ensures that every pupil has an equal opportunity to develop digital skills at school and to continue their digital learning at home. PSE lessons take place in the school that promote equal opportunities.
Encouraging good relationships	No	PSE lessons take place in the school that promote equal opportunities.

* to be deleted as appropriate

3.3 How does your proposal ensure that you work in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English and that you seize every opportunity to promote the Welsh language (beyond providing services bilingually) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

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3.4 What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice in order to have a positive impact on people's opportunities to use the Welsh language, and to reduce or prevent any adverse effects that the policy / practice may have on the Welsh language?

3.5 How does the proposal show that you have had due regard to the need to address inequality caused by socio-economic disadvantage? (Note that this is about closing inequality gaps rather than just improving outcomes for everyone)?

3.6 What other measures or changes might you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice to show that you have had due regard to the need to reduce disproportionate outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage, in accordance with the Socio-Economic Act?

4) Analysing the Results

4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the above and what is the reason for this?

The impact will be positive as all pupils throughout Gwynedd will have equal opportunity to access digital education through modern resources fit for the 21st century. It will facilitate equal opportunities and improve digital skills development.

4.2 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the above and what is the reason for this?

No

4.3 What should be done?

Choose one of the following:

Continue with the policy / service as it is robust	✓
Adapt the policy to delete any barriers	
Suspend and delete the policy as the detrimental impacts are too big	
Continue with the policy as any detrimental impact can be justified	
No further action at this time because it is too soon to decide, or there is insufficient evidence	

4.4 If continuing with the project, what steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?

Although we do not see any negative impact, we would monitor and act as required

4.5 If you are not taking any further action to delete or reduce the negative impacts, explain why here.

5) Monitoring

5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?

We would monitor the impact of any change to ensure that the outcomes are positive and have no negative impact.

Gwynedd Schools' Digital Strategy

Supporting learning through Technology



Summer 2021

Gwynedd Schools' Digital Strategy

Purpose

Supporting digital learning to ensure the best opportunity for Gwynedd pupils.

How will we know if we have succeeded?

- *No technical barriers that would impede our teachers' imagination as they plan lessons for our learners.*
- *Suitable devices available to support digital learning.*
- *The experiences of pupils, teachers, assistants and the whole school community are consistently good.*
- *Suitable training in the digital learning field available to all.*
- *Measurable increase in digital skills in Gwynedd.*
- *Schools delivering Digital Education Standards.*
- *Supporting the Welsh Language and our communities by preparing our learners for jobs in the digital sector.*
- *All schools making full use of the Hwb national learning platform.*
- *Consistency in digital learning experiences throughout Gwynedd.*
- *Value for money in the digital field for Gwynedd schools.*
- *Network supporting and enabling digital learning today and in the future.*
- *Sustainable funding model in place.*

What is driving the change?

As a result of amending the curriculum, digital competence is a statutory responsibility across all learning fields and it needs to be considered in all aspects when designing and introducing the curriculum.

The aim of the strategy is to give the best digital provision to support our learners and teachers to foster a range of skills to use technology confidently, creatively and critically.

Digital learning is not a vision for the future, this is the present and if we do not plan positive measures to present a digital provision of the highest standard and consistently throughout the education system, we will live with a provision that is only suitable for the past.

Support from the Welsh Government

Welsh Government has announced financial support to improve the use of digital technology for learning and education in schools. The first cycle of investment was announced on 19th July 2019, with £50 million to be shared between the 22 Local Authorities in 2019/20, and up to a further £55 million available during the next three years.

"This funding provides us with the opportunity to deliver a more sustainable EdTech model for schools, with local authorities working collaboratively to ensure consistency across Wales.

The money will also guarantee that schools are better equipped to embrace the changes brought about by the new Curriculum for Wales. It further demonstrates our commitment to digital learning, highlighting the importance technology plays within education.

This is about more than just buying new bits of kit. The programme will transform how our local authorities and schools approach digital delivery, ensuring our children are digitally provisioned well into the future."

Kirsty Williams, Education Minister

(19.07.2019)



Support from Gwynedd Council



"This strategy is a commitment of our ambition to use technology to improve education for learners in Gwynedd schools.

The strategy outlines our future vision escalating our ability to support all sections of the curriculum. We will use this strategy as a path to improve, not only the learners' experiences but also to support teachers, administrators, governors and parents. The technology and digital learning provision in our schools will raise the standard of every school to what is expected in the twenty-first century.

It is a pleasure to support the Education Department and the Information Technology Service to present this innovative strategy that will improve our learning and teaching provision throughout."

COUNCILLOR CEMLYN REES WILLIAMS - CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION



"Technology now plays a prominent part in our daily lives. *Learners who are going through our existing education system are unfamiliar with the world before technology.*

Our purpose is to prepare the adults of the future, we cannot ignore the importance of technology, not only to support the provision to teach the curriculum, but also in terms of core skills expected of any prospective employee and employers.

I am proud to support this vision and confident that it will play a leading role to modernise and improve education for children, young people, and the economy here in Gwynedd."

COUNCILLOR IOAN THOMAS - CABINET MEMBER, FINANCE AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Curriculum for Wales

From September 2022 onwards, Gwynedd schools like every other school in Wales will implement the Curriculum for Wales. Literacy, numeracy and digital competence are mandatory skills across every area of learning and experience that need to be considered in all aspects of curriculum planning.

It is the responsibility of teachers, across all areas of the curriculum, to develop and ensure progress in these skills.

It is essential to enable our educators to possess the skills needed to give learning experiences that will stimulate our children and young people.

In order to ensure that learners develop high competence levels in these skills, and have sufficient opportunities to develop, extend and apply them across all fields, the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework and the Digital Competence Framework are available as supporting guidance.

Digital Competence, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Computing should not be confused. Digital competence is one of three cross-curricular responsibilities, alongside literacy and numeracy. It focuses on digital skills which can be applied to a wide range of subjects and scenarios that can be transferred to the world of work.



Through this strategy we will support our teachers by ensuring there are no technical barriers that would limit their imagination as they plan lessons for our learners.

The need for digital skills for the North Wales economy.

Approximately 7000 people are employed across north Wales in higher-level digital skills jobs. It is estimated that 2,000 higher-level employees will need to be replaced by 2024.

There are approximately 62,000 businesses in north Wales. By 2030, it is estimated that an increase of 4% will be required in level 4 qualifications or higher to fill the available posts. With digital skills being cross subject in all sectors there is a need to ensure that the next generation of learners acquire high-quality digital skills and this is key to the region's success.

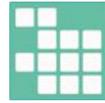
The counties of Gwynedd and Flintshire have the highest number of employees in the computer programming and consultation sector, with 1,750 employees. An increase of 300 and 250 since 2015.

The vision of the North Wales Growth Bid has noted the need to develop digital skills in north Wales and the programme will invest £240m in the region's economy in digital fields and STEM over the next decade. The aim of the investment is to trigger the economy by creating high-value jobs to support our communities, therefore, it is essentially important that we work with a view on this programme in order to understand the requirements of future skills.

The regional skills partnership has been commissioned to develop and deliver the following:

- Develop a clear delivery plan to improve the current and future digital skills of the north Wales workforce.
- Form a partnership between Bangor University, Glyndŵr University, Llandrillo Menai Group, Coleg Cambria, GwE (education consortia), local authorities and industry.
- Ensure that the workforce possesses the necessary skills provision and that it is in hand to keep up with the speed of digital and technological change.
- To increase the supply of digital skills across our economy.

- Ensure that the computing curriculum for pupils aged 5-16, includes coding and programming basics and is ambitious and complete.
- Ensure there is a comprehensive programme to improve teaching in the field to promote participation and good results in computing.
- Ensure that the existing and future workforce in north Wales is digitally competent and can benefit from digital opportunities.



Partneriaeth Sgiliau Rhanbarthol Gogledd Cymru
North Wales Regional Skills Partnership

Through this strategy we will support the vision and will be a key part of developing digital skills in Gwynedd.

Education Digital Standards

Digital Standards for the Education field were published by the Government in April 2019. The standards are a series of recommendations and guidelines about planning, management and using school information technology network.

The standards will assist schools to understand, manage and operate their digital environment. They show how schools should ensure that their digital environment is one that can satisfy the requirements of the school curriculum and give more attention to future digital skills.

It is proposed that these standards answer the purpose by operating best practices to satisfy digital requirements. However, it is accepted that schools operate with scarce resources and they have to plan to deliver the standards over time.

It is expected that a local authority will offer advice and guidance to schools on how to deliver these Standards.

All the infrastructure work being completed to satisfy the Standards, should be considered and planned carefully, procured in accordance with the national procurement regulations and implemented by professional organisations.

These are the main headings of the Digital Education Standards, and there are several criteria for each of these.

- Planning and Managing
- Connectivity (Broadband)
- Safety of Networks and Data
- Routers and Switches
- Cables
- WiFi Network
- Device management
- Telephony and VoIP



Through this strategy we will ensure that Gwynedd schools deliver the Digital Education Standards.

Viable Communities and the Welsh language

Recent statistics by Bangor University's Science Park, M-SParc, indicate that excellent jobs and careers are available in the digital sector, however, there is a significant lack of Welsh speakers and women within the sector.

On average, the salary of jobs in the Science Park within the digital sector was £32,632, compared with £27,820 on average in Gwynedd.

However, only 35% of those who work at M-SParc have the Welsh Language, compared to 57% in Anglesey and 66% in Gwynedd. It appears that there are particularly good jobs in the sector, but a lack of Welsh speakers.

The statistics are just as frightening in the context of women in the sector.



This strategy underlines the fact that good jobs are available for our pupils that will in turn support the language and our communities. However, it is essential to stimulate Welsh-speaking pupils and girls to take an interest in this field and it is essential to undertake this to have the technical infrastructure together with teaching skills of the highest standard.

All aspects of the strategy are developed bilingually in accordance with Gwynedd's language policies to try and ensure that Gwynedd school pupils develop to be digitally competent in both languages.

Through this strategy we will support the Welsh Language and our communities by preparing our learners for jobs in the digital sector.

DRAFT



Hwb First

In the field of information technology there are several complex technical standards. However, for this strategy we will set one specific principle namely Hwb first and through this we will make full use of the Hwb national learning platform. Every other standard will enable this principle.

What is Hwb?

Hwb is the digital platform for learning and teaching in Wales. Hwb enables its users to benefit from a range of digital equipment and bilingual resources that are centrally funded. This is the Welsh Government's strategic digital channel to support the work of providing the curriculum in Wales. Hwb provides access to:

- Curriculum for Wales 2022
- Curriculum for Wales 2008
- professional learning information
- thousands of bilingual resources
- information on on-line safety

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Hwb website. It includes the Welsh Government logo, the 'ADDYSG CYMRU EDUCATION WALES' logo, a language selector set to 'English', and a search bar. Below the navigation bar is the Hwb logo and three buttons: 'Dewislen', 'Mewngofnodi', and 'Cofrestru'. The main banner features the text 'Dysgu ac addysgu i Gymru' (Learning and teaching in Welsh) and a sub-header 'Y Cwricwlwm ar gyfer Cymru ac offer a deunyddiau addysgol am ddim.' (The curriculum for Wales and free educational resources and materials). A yellow call-to-action bar contains the text '» Cymorth dysgu o bell i rieni ac athrawon. Cadw'n Ddiogel. Dal ati i Ddysgu.' (» Remote learning support for parents and teachers. Stay safe. Stick to learning).



Cwricwlwm i
Gymru



Cwricwlwm Cymru
2008



Datblygiad
proffesiynol

Access is available to learning and teaching resources for all.

In addition, Hwb users (platform account users) have free access to:

- a variety of methods centrally funded to assist education practitioners to create and share their resources and their own assignments
- professional networking environment
- Google for Education
- Microsoft Office 365

Some schools in Gwynedd have been paying for some of the resources that are available free of charge via Hwb.

All learners and teachers in maintained schools in Wales have a Hwb account. All maintained school have access to log in details.

Through this strategy we will make full use of the Hwb national learning platform

A strategy for whom?

The strategy is for all schools, pupils, staff and members of the Gwynedd schools community. We will ensure consistency in the range of digital learning experiences across the county.

	Number	No. of Pupils
Primary	83	9,286
All-through	2	1108 (P-529 S-579)
Secondary	12	6571
Special	2	216
		No. of Pupils
Foundation Phase		4665
Key Stage 2		5150
Key Stage 3		4048
Key Stage 4		2407
Post-16		695
Special		216
Total		17,181

	Number
Teachers	1062

We will support approximately 17,180 pupils and 1100 staff in 99 education establishments. ¹

Through this strategy we will ensure consistency in digital learning experiences across Gwynedd.

Equality and Well-being

As a Council we are committed to the principles within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) in order to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Gwynedd's communities.

Our vision as a Council is to support all the people of Gwynedd to thrive and live full lives in their community, in a county which is one of the best counties to live in.

The Council has adopted well-being objectives that complement the national well-being goals and ensure that Gwynedd residents:

- Enjoy a happy, healthy and safe life
- Have access to quality homes within their communities
- Earn enough wages to support themselves and their families
- Receive a first class education that will allow them to do what they want to do
- To live with dignity and independence for as long as possible
- Being able to live in a naturally Welsh speaking Society
- Enjoy the beauty of the County's natural environment.

This strategy will allow us to respond to and meet the needs of the children today, while strengthening their future well-being.

The proposed proposal will ensure a fair opportunity for all Gwynedd children to acquire excellent digital skills, essential skills for the future.

¹ numbers based on 2019/20 data



What will be the experiences of our users?

The experiences of pupils, teachers, assistants and the whole school community will be consistent across the sectors.

Teachers' Experiences

All teachers in Gwynedd will have;

- a portable personal device to allow quick access to the cloud via the school's wifi network or any other wifi network
- the ability to prepare and work from home
- access to school systems and pupils' information systems at the school and at their home
- access to suitable professional training and development that are fit for purpose
- Hwb account that will allow access to a wide range of learning resources
- access to a fast photocopier
- official e-mail
- access to Gwynedd Council's self-service account



Experience of Teaching Assistants

There are different tiers within this cohort of the workforce, however, generally all assistants will have;

- access to a device to allow quick access to the cloud via the school's wifi network or any other wifi network
- access to suitable professional training and development that are fit for purpose
- Hwb account that will allow access to a wide range of learning resources
- official e-mail
- access to Gwynedd Council's self-service account

Pupils' Experience

Pupils' experience of technology is changing and developing, in terms of what they require as hardware and software evolving as what they learn gets more complex. However, some factors will remain constant. Every pupil will receive;

- experience of using different technology, such as Windows, Google Chromebook and Apple (iPad and/or Mac) devices
- access to a device to allow quick access to the cloud via the school's wifi network
- the ability to study and learn from home
- a Hwb account that will allow access to a wide range of learning resources

- e-mail account to allow them to communicate within a limited circle and beyond, in accordance with the guidelines of individual schools
- remote access to learning resources



Governors' Experiences

The experience of Gwynedd Governors will be consistent across the sectors. All Governors will have;

- access to key documentation on the cloud
- Hwb account that will allow access to training and key documentation
- the right to bring their own device to Governing Body meetings

Experience of School Administrators

The experience of administrative officers will be consistent across the sectors. Every administrative officer will have access to;

- a device to allow quick access to pupils' information management systems
- effective e-procurement systems to order resources for the school
- on-line payment systems that are consistent and effective
- filing and storage systems on the cloud
- school finance management systems

Through this strategy we will ensure that the experiences of pupils, teachers, assistants and the whole school community are consistently good.



Training

To ensure the success of this strategy we will provide a programme of training to develop all digital skills and stakeholders.

In cooperation with GwE, we will agree on a suitable training programme that will target the needs of staff across the sectors. We will identify good practice and where appropriate we will ensure a suitable platform to be shared with our schools.

We will make full use of technology to train in the field using Hwb, multi-media materials, live learning, or any other appropriate medium.

The training will be available to all.

Through this strategy we will ensure suitable training in the digital learning field.

DRAFT

Procurement

We will purchase every device through an agreed national system and through this we will secure the most competitive prices.

We will consult with schools on the choice of standard devices and ensure that these will improve the quality of experiences for our pupils and school staff.

We will experiment and pilot any new technology prior to presenting it to all. We will ensure value for money through negotiation and purchasing as one.

If a school is anxious to purchase additional devices to what is offered to all, they will be expected to order via an agreed central procedure to ensure consistency and value for money.



Through this strategy we will ensure the best value for money for Gwynedd schools.

Devices

Through this strategy we will secure standard devices to facilitate a simple and speedy system to support them. We will offer a range of devices to a pupil over his/her educational career and this will ensure a suitable range of experiences.

Teachers

Every teacher will receive a device to enable him/her to work from school and from home via the Hwb platform. This will facilitate security arrangements and ensure a consistent standard across the county. We will ensure that the device we give will be fit for purpose.

Foundation Phase Pupils

Foundation phase pupils will have access to a device in the classroom at a ratio of one device to four children. This corresponds with the foundation phase principles.

The device will be one that secures full access to Hwb and to multi-media learning software.



Key Stage 2 Pupils

Key stage 2 pupils will have access to a device in the classroom at a ratio of one device to one child.

The device will have a keypad and will secure access to Hwb and to multi-media learning software.



Key Stage 3 & 4 Pupils

Key Stage 3 & 4 pupils will get a device at the start of their period in secondary education (year 7) and will retain the device until the end of their secondary education.

Pupils will be able to take the device home every day and this would be seen as part of the learning resources they are expected to bring with them to school.

It will be possible to charge the devices at school, if required, by using charging towers.

The device will have a keypad and will secure access to Hwb and to multi-media learning software.

Post-16 Pupils

This strategy targets support for statutory age pupils.

No equipment will be provided to year 12/13 pupils as a matter of order, however, full provision will be in place for them to bring their own equipment to school.

Where required it will be possible for a learner to retain their device at the end of year 11 to be used in the continuation of their education.

Through this strategy we will ensure that suitable devices are available to support digital learning.

Technology

New technology

We will collaborate with our schools, local and national companies, together with organisations to develop and improve infrastructure and the technology to support learning and teaching at the schools. Annually, we will undertake a review of the strategy with a clear focus to improving quality experiences for children and school staff, but also perhaps recognising that an earlier review will be required if there is a change in circumstances where urgent change needs to be incorporated. We will investigate and experiment to develop new solutions to ensure that Gwynedd school pupils receive the best possible experiences.

Where there is an opportunity to improve experiences for our pupils we will invest in innovative developments. One example of this is the way technology within the wifi network points enable our learners to experiment with Internet of Things technology. In addition, it will be possible for the Council in future to use this technology to manage buildings more effectively which may bring financial savings to the schools.

We will consistently review new developments within the field.

Through this strategy we will ensure that our provision remains current and fit for purpose.

E-mails

Every pupil will make use of the Hwb e-mail address that's provided by Hwb. This e-mail will replace existing e-mails in our schools.

Every member of staff will receive a new e-mail address that will end @ysgoliongwynedd.cymru. This e-mail will replace existing e-mails in our schools.

This is the e-mail our users will use when they log into Hwb.

By presenting consistent standardised e-mails to Gwynedd schools it will be possible for pupils to retain one account throughout their educational career.

It will be possible for all to get access to their e-mails via Hwb, and it will be possible to set up convenient access to these e-mails on teaching staff mobile phones, if desired.

It will not be necessary to retain a specific server for the e-mail system at every school.

An appropriate filtering system will be available to reduce the number of spam e-mails staff receive.

Cloud Technology

Where it is not possible to use Hwb as a platform to some digital resources, we will consider other cloud options as the first solution every time. We will undertake a full review of current provisions and only when there is no alternative option will we consider options where they need to continue with local provision.

Corporate Systems

Where possible we will integrate the Council's digital corporate platform (iGwynedd) with Hwb. This will ensure access to corporate information and products.

It will be possible for staff to gain suitable access to the Council's self-service systems for salary slips, absences, appointment, timetable and administration.



Network

Network and broadband fibre connection is provided to every school in Gwynedd. In accordance with the Government's expectations, there will be a minimum speed for every pupil and teacher. It will be possible to speed up the connection, if required, in the future. The network is based on public services network Wales (PSBA) and is a consistent and dependable access.

All network equipment will be upgraded ensuring that wifi contact is stronger with fewer areas without connection. The equipment will be standardised.

The network will be secure and will make full use of technology such as firewalls to reduce the risk of cyber attacks or viruses.

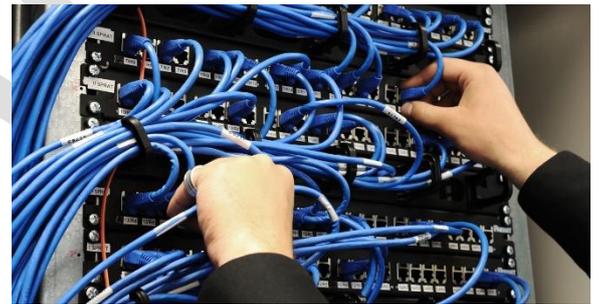
The network will be planned to allow further developments in the future such as;

- Telephony - triggers the need to get additional telephone lines for schools and present a dependable and cost-effective service
- Internet of Things
- Visitors' Wifi - secure connectivity for visitors to the school, reaching corporate safety standards and GDPR
- Digital community use of schools outside normal school hours.

The design of the network will be consistent with the design of the corporate network. This will enable devices from the school to work in libraries or other Council buildings.

There will be a commitment to undertake continuous improvements to the network. For example, we will facilitate access for visitors to the network and establish a system of advising our users on safe methods of working.

Through this strategy we will ensure that our network supports and enables digital learning today and in the future.



Support

It will be necessary to support effectively the infrastructure that will be inserted via this strategy. With a significant increase in devices we anticipate there will be an increase in demand for support services.

Generally, school staff will not be expected to undertake the work of correcting technical network problems or devices.



Reduce the demand

Any demand for a service is a barrier to learning, by reducing the demand for a service we will reduce the learning barriers.

Initially, we will plan the system to reduce the demand for support in the first place. One of the ways we will undertake this will be by standardising the network, devices and how users will use the system. In addition, we will make full use of Hwb.

By standardising the network and devices it is possible to ensure a thorough understanding of specific devices and any components can be ordered in higher numbers. It is also possible to implement an improvement across the network or devices.

Every school will receive a specific number of spare devices, if it is not possible to support the equipment remotely then it would be possible to use these devices temporarily.

It will be possible for an engineer to log into the system of any remote user to make changes to the settings of individual machines.

Although there is an increase in devices, standardising the provision will lighten the impact of the increase, however, there will be a regular demand for support.

What can schools expect as a service?

Schools will be able to contact a central help desk to ask for assistance. Where it is not possible for the user to correct the problem it will be possible for a technician to contact the user's device remotely.

If the fault is on the device, then a new device will need to be supplied as a replacement while the faulty device is returned to the manufacturer. Spare devices can be provided from secondary schools, larger primary schools or via the Education Business Centre.

Support to the network will be in accordance with the support for devices with an expectation that the schools will initially contact the help desk. A technician will seek to solve the problem remotely before travelling to individual schools.

The duration of calls will be measured, with the target that the device works for the user in less than 24 hours.

It will not be possible to service devices that are outside this scheme.

Support Models

A specific team will be required to support and provide a service for devices and the network.

Service hubs will need to be established that will serve the catchment areas and these hubs can be secondary schools or larger primary schools.



There will be a wide range of skills within the team to ensure that we respond to the various challenges that may arise when supporting the increasing number of devices.

Service Packages

Every school will receive the basic service that will ensure that core devices and the network are supported. This will be part of the core service level agreement. It is the schools that will fund this agreement.

Supplementary packages to the core service will be available for services that would be beneficial for the school but in addition, and beyond the Welsh Government's digital standards. It will be possible for schools to choose the additional service, while the core service will be common to every school.

Service	Core	Supplementary
Pupils' Laptops	X	
Teachers' Laptops	X	
Corporate telephone system	X	
Telephone system of the School's choice		X
Mobile phones	X	
Wide Area Network	X	
Local Area Network	X	
Interactive screens		X
Television screens		X
Website (platforming)	X	
Sign-in system		X
Door security		X
Closed-circuit television		X

Whatever the final support model is, there will be a clear focus on ensuring that the system works consistently well for every user and allows continuous access to digital learning.

Sustainable Model

Up to £5 million will be invested by Gwynedd Council and the Welsh Government to improve the infrastructure for digital learning in our schools. To gain access to the grant from the Welsh Government, evidence needs to be submitted of how the investment will be undertaken.

In the past, a lack of commitment to a sustainable model has meant that the equipment has dated and is unreliable, a risk to security or cannot be a platform to standard software.

Gwynedd Council is committed to renew network and wifi equipment in schools by investing £2.25 million over a period of ten years.

The sustainable model for devices means that an annual investment is required that will be set aside and invested by buying new devices when a device has reached the end of its life.

It is a substantial challenge to secure this investment, although a number of schools do invest in the sustainability of the infrastructure, it appears to be an impulsive investment.

In response to the challenge the Council will contribute up to half of the cost to replace all devices after 5 years of use.

Schools are expected to cover half the cost by opening a renewal fund. They can secure appropriate funds in whatever way they wish through a contribution from schools' balances at the end of the year, by setting a permanent budget in their budgets, or through other sources.

Through this strategy we will ensure the best value sustainable model.

Devices

The lifespan of devices has a significant impact on the sum that will need to be invested annually to maintain them. The usable life of devices is controlled by the operating systems developments and software developments that would be used.

The physical condition of the devices will also deteriorate over time. It is suggested that the device should be used for the following periods

Device	Lifespan (years)
FP	5
3 & 4	5
5 & 6	5
Secondary	5
Teacher	5

iPad

We will provide iPads for pupils in FP at a ratio of 1:4

Chromebook

We will provide Chromebooks to pupils in years 3 & 4 at a ratio of 1:1.

Windows 10 Laptop

We will provide Windows 10 laptop to pupils in years 5-11 at a ratio of 1:1

We will provide Windows 10 laptops to all teachers.

