



Complete Agenda

Democratic Services
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.30 am, THURSDAY, 21ST OCTOBER, 2021

NOTE: A BRIEFING SESSION WILL BE HELD FOR MEMBERS AT 10.15AM

Location

Virtual Meeting - Zoom

*** NOTE**

This meeting will be webcast

https://gwynedd.public-i.tv/core//en_GB/portal/home

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(DISTRIBUTED 14/10/21)

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (18)

Plaid Cymru (10)

Councillors

Aled Ll. Evans
E. Selwyn Griffiths
Gareth Tudor Morris Jones
Olaf Cai Larsen
Mair Rowlands

Steve Collings
Judith Mary Humphreys
Huw Gruffydd Wyn Jones
Rheinallt Puw
Paul John Rowlinson

Independent (5)

Councillors

Elwyn Jones
Dewi Wyn Roberts
Mike Stevens

Beth Lawton
Elfed Powell Roberts

Llais Gwynedd (1)

Councillor Alwyn Gruffydd

Gwynedd United Independents (1)

Councillor Dewi Owen

Welsh National Party (1)

[vacant seat]

Ex-officio Members

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

With a vote on education matters only

[vacant seat]	Church in Wales
Colette Owen	The Catholic Church
Ruth Roe	Meirionnydd Parent/Governors' Representative
Karen Vaughan Jones	Dwyfor Parent/Governors' Representative
Manon Williams	Arfon Parent/Governors' Representative

Without a Vote

Dilwyn Ellis Hughes	UCAC
Dylan Huw Jones	NASUWT

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declarations of personal interest.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chair for consideration.

4. MINUTES

5 - 9

The Chair shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee held on 10th June, 2021 be signed as a true record.

5. CABINET DECISION - 28-09-21 - ITEM 8 - YSGOL ABERSOCH

10 - 233

To consider the report of the Head of Democratic Services

6. THE ECONOMY AND BUSINESS SUPPORT

234 - 239

Cabinet Member – Councillor Gareth Thomas

To consider a report on the above.

7. WELL-BEING AND ACHIEVEMENT GAP

240 - 269

Cabinet Member – Councillor Cemlyn Williams

To consider a report on the above.

8. REVISED SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2021-22

270 - 271

To submit a revised scrutiny work programme for 2021/22.

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 10/06/21

Present: Councillor Beth Lawton (Chair)
Councillor Cai Larsen (Vice-chair)

Councillors: Steve Collings, Aled Evans, Alwyn Gruffydd, Selwyn Griffiths, Judith Humphreys, Elwyn Jones, Gareth Tudor Morris Jones, Huw Wyn Jones, Dewi Owen, Elfed Powell Roberts, Mair Rowlands, Paul Rowlinson and Mike Stevens.

Co-opted Members: Anest Gray Frazer (Church in Wales), Colette Owen (The Catholic Church), Ruth Roe (Meirionnydd Parent/Governors' Representative), Manon Williams (Arfon Parent/Governors' Representative) and Dilwyn Elis Hughes (UCAC).

Officers present: Vera Jones (Democracy and Language Services Manager), Bethan Adams (Scrutiny Adviser) and Eirian Roberts (Democracy Services Officer).

Present for item 7:

Councillor Cemlyn Williams (Cabinet Member for Education)
Garem Jackson (Head of Education)
Debbie Anne Jones (Education Corporate Services Manager)
Diane Jones (Arfon Area Education Officer)
Rhian Parry Jones (Gwynedd Secondary Education Officer)

Present for item 8:

Councillor Cemlyn Williams (Cabinet Member for Education)
Owen Owens (Senior Manager - Schools)
Sharon Vaughan (Core Leader - Secondary, GwE)
Geraint Evans (Core Leader – Primary, GwE)
Rhian Parry Jones (Gwynedd Secondary Education Officer)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Beth Lawton as Chair of this committee for 2021/22.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Cai Larsen as Vice-chair of this committee for 2021/22.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Rheinallt Puw and Dewi Roberts.

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

5. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

6. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous committee meeting held on 15 April 2021 as a true record.

7. EDUCATION AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE: A NEW VISION FOR THE IMMERSION EDUCATION SYSTEM TOWARDS 2032 AND BEYOND

The Cabinet Member for Education and officers from the Education Department were welcomed to the meeting.

Submitted - the report of the Cabinet Member for Education inviting the scrutinisers to give observations on the proposed vision for the immersion education system towards 2032 and beyond.

The Cabinet Member set out the context, noting that the new vision was intended to build on the good work achieved by the language centres over the last few decades, acknowledge the hard work of the staff, and update and modernise the provision.

The Head of Education noted:

- That he believed that this was an exciting vision, which laid the foundation for a celebrated service to do more good work, thus updating the service to be part of the 21st century schools programme.
- That the Department and the staff of the language centres were anxious not to lose sight of the lessons learned as a result of re-purposing the service and reaching more children in a different way during the pandemic, and that there was a desire to build further on those strengths and approaches.
- That members had already received a copy of Estyn's letter to the Chief Executive which highlighted the Authority's work in supporting schools and children during the pandemic period, and in particular commending the work of the language centres in re-purposing the service.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and make observations. During the discussion, the following observations were noted:

- The success of the language centres over the years was recognised in ensuring that learners acquire the Welsh language.
- There was agreement with the intention to strengthen accountability as part of the new vision.
- The proposal to equip schools' workforce to support learners to make further progress in building confidence and acquiring the Welsh language was supported.
- The proposal to establish an immersion education provision in Bangor was supported.
- The Education Department was asked to provide more detail on the immersion education system when it becomes available.
- Opinion was divided on the funding source for the immersion education system, with some members supportive of the intention that schools would contribute, thus increasing accountability and shared ownership of the system between the Education Department and the schools, but the wish was also expressed for the Council corporately to be funding the budgetary gap due to the fact that the Welsh language was one of the Council's main priorities.

In response to the observations and questions from members, it was noted:

- In terms of the schools' input and contribution to the revised vision and service, it was proposed to engage informally with schools' headteachers on the new vision. Also, if the new system came into force, it was likely that a management board would be established for the new system which would include representation from the school system. This meant that the schools could contribute and jointly own and shape the provision, to ensure that the system responds to the needs of the schools, while simultaneously keeping up to date with educational developments taking place in the classroom.
- In terms of lifelong learning, and the opportunities that may arise in relation to providing services to the community, there is an intention to look at opportunities beyond immersion education alone, such as childcare and opportunities for parents and adults to learn Welsh, as more detail on the new sites becomes apparent.
- In terms of measures of success, the target for every 5 year old to receive Welsh medium education was given to every authority as a measure, and this was the medium in the foundation phase in schools in Gwynedd. It was agreed that children could be lost as they progressed from one key stage to another, but the focus on continuity would receive specific attention within the new Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, as well as the informal use of Welsh and opportunities beyond the education system for children and young people to use Welsh. There were also specific measures to measure learners' progress over their 8-10 week period on the site of the immersion system, and there was a need to ensure that this progress continued once pupils had transferred back to the school system.
- In terms of accountability, schools would be central to this new system. Feedback from headteachers during the lockdown period praised the closer links between centres and schools, and as the school sector contributed towards the funding of the new immersion vision, the accountability, together with the voice of schools in the running and strategic direction of the service, would increase. It also meant that the service could be more responsive as local situations regarding the language profile of our communities changed. It was wished to establish a system whereby the children would receive the greatest benefits from the immersion system and the expertise of the staff, but that this would happen more in collaboration with the schools, and the children would have the opportunity during this period to return to school from time to time, and to assimilate and use their new language skills with their peers. It was believed that headteachers would take on these responsibilities and accountability, and moving forward, that a system of governance could be established with the head of the new immersion service, the Education Department and the schools as key partners in this.
- It was premature to come to a conclusion as to who would contribute to funding the provision. It could be argued that there would be an arrangement whereby the entire system would contribute equally across the service, but the benefit of having a closer financial link with those schools that have children attending the immersion system could also be seen as this ensured greater accountability and greater actual responsibility from those schools towards the success of the immersion system. However, the first step at this stage was to establish the vision, receive political and corporate consent on that, and obtain Cabinet approval in due course. Subsequently, it would be possible to move on to work through the detail, and it was emphasised that the Department would be more than happy to involve elected members in the discussion along the way.
- The aim was not to completely transform the system, but to build on existing strengths, aiming for excellence and reaching more children.

- Although the argument that learners attending their local school for one day each week could change the language of that school was understood, the Authority had a duty of care towards these children, and an integral and important part of the new service would be to ensure that those children could return to their original school on the fifth day, and have the opportunity to use Welsh there.
- The staffing issues could not be elaborated upon at this time due to the need to consult in the first instance on the vision, and receive political approval on that. The Cabinet had no direct role in employment matters, and the Department would have to consider and consult on the staffing issues in due course. As it was likely that the staff implementing the new vision would belong to one entity, rather than individual centres, more flexibility would be needed in the staffing system so that staff could possibly be redeployed to target the exact needs of the children.
- The comment was accepted that there was a need for teachers who are experts in language acquisition in each of the centres, and that the Department would ensure appropriate staffing.
- The pressure on the immersion service had increased during the pandemic period as more incomers moved to Gwynedd, and an immersion system had to be provided that enabled us to reach these additional children who had moved into the county, and who would move in in the future. The concern regarding the lack of continuation of the language centre at Penrhyndeudraeth was understood, but key to this was the fact that provision will still be available for children in that area, whilst other areas would receive new investment, i.e. Tywyn and Bangor, i.e. strategic locations where the Department envisaged some of the greatest needs for the future.
- In terms of the rationale for the formation of centres for years 5-9, leaving the primary ones as years 2-4 only, the service and staff expertise and approach to teaching would be targeted at specific sections. The needs of the youngest children were very different to the needs of the older children, and the methods of learning and internalising information, assimilating skills, etc. were very different as a child's neurological development progressed. The intention here was to try to reinforce the concept of development that occurs from the mid-primary age to mid-secondary age. The Department believed that targeting this middle age was an effective way to make the transition to a more formal education beyond year 9, and also a means of increasing the number of children and young people in Gwynedd who continued to study subjects through the medium of Welsh up to GCSE, A Level and beyond.

RESOLVED to accept the report and ask the Education Department and Cabinet Member for Education to consider the observations of the committee, and that the scrutiny committee receives a further report on this when more details are available.

8. COVID EDUCATION GRANTS TO SUPPORT PUPILS

Officers of the Education Department and GwE were welcomed to the meeting.

Submitted – the report of the Cabinet Member for Education detailing the Accelerated Learning Programme Grant received by schools to assist pupils as a result of Covid.

The Senior Manager for Schools detailed the background and conditions of the grant, noting that the total funding allocated to Gwynedd schools was approximately £2,220,440.

The GwE Core Leader - Primary, referred to the Regional Grant Planning Dashboard created by GwE to support schools to plan effectively for the spending of the grants, whilst

also providing an overview of the primary school schemes. Then, the GwE Core Leader - Secondary, gave an overview of the secondary school schemes.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and make observations.

It was suggested that once the schools have had the opportunity to fully utilise the grant, it would be beneficial to receive a summary of the views of headteachers, teachers and pupils who have benefited from the additional support, so that the impact of the grant can be quantified. It was also suggested that it would be useful to have a summary of the good practice highlighted by GwE Core Leaders.

In response, it was explained that the headteachers were expected to submit information to the Education Department and GwE in the autumn term about the impact of the grants, and that this could be brought before the scrutinisers at that time. It was also noted that the Welsh Government was keen to obtain examples of the good practice referred to, so that it could be shared nationally.

In conclusion, the Cabinet Member for Education emphasised the importance of ensuring consistency of provision across the county. He expressed his appreciation of the work carried out, but agreed that neither GwE nor the Department was in a position to provide a full update at this time. He further noted that he was aware of the activities that had been conducted, and that sharing good practice was a very important element of this.

RESOLVED to accept the report and to note the observations received, while also hoping to have an update on this later on in the year.

9. DRAFT SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22

A draft scrutiny work programme for 2021/22 was submitted for adoption.

It was noted that one item from this meeting had slipped.

RESOLVED to adopt the scrutiny work programme 2021/22.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 12.35 pm

CHAIRMAN

Agenda Item 5

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	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!!!		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
25	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.		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.
26	I strongly object to the proposed closure of Ysgol Abersoch. Schools are the heart and future of communities.		Consequently, it is concluded that a link already exists between the alternative school and the broader area.
27	I state that I object to the closure of Abersoch school on the grounds of the impact to the local 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.
28	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.		
29	is central to the village and linked closely to the community and its activities		
30	It's more than a school, it's a vital part of our community and it's closure will erode further Abersoch's heart.		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.
31	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.		
32	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.		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.
33	The damage to a community will be devastating and irreplaceable for locals & visitors		

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 to 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 its 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 its 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> <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>
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.		
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.		<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>
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>		
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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.		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.
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>
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>		<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>
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>

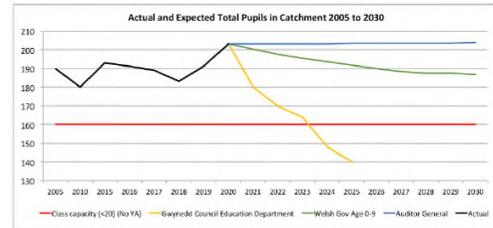
C	Educational Matters		
	Niferoedd Disgyblion		
179	there are more pupils proposed for the next school year		<p>The Authority has prioritised Ysgol Abersoch for a review of the educational provision as it faces a number of challenges. Pupil numbers at the school have fallen consistently since 2016 and the figure has been fragile for some time.</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. 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>
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	<p>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.</p> <p>I feel that it would be detrimental to the village to allow this closure to go ahead and I ask you to reconsider</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?		
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 suggest 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
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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."																																																																						
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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:																																																																						
			<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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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.		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.																																																																						

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

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>40</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>20</td><td>40</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>19</td><td>40</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>17</td><td>40</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>19</td><td>40</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>18</td><td>40</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>19</td><td>40</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>17</td><td>40</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>16</td><td>40</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>15</td><td>40</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>16</td><td>40</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Number of pupils	Capacity	2010	19	40	2011	20	40	2012	19	40	2013	17	40	2014	19	40	2015	18	40	2016	19	40	2017	17	40	2018	16	40	2019	15	40	2020	16	40
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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
	M	D	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total																																																																
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September 2025 Projection	2	2	2	2	3	-	-	-	11																																																																
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)".																																																																						
	Class Sizes																																																																								
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.		<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). • 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>Section 7.3 of the Consultation Document provided information of the current class sizes in Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach.</p> <p>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.</p>
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?		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.
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		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 privileged 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>															
242	<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>* (Note that Estyn had introduced five areas for inspection by October 2017.)</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							
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<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>44</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>
45	<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>

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>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>
250	<p>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>	<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	<p>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>	<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.
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.		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.
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.		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.
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.		<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>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>
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.		<p>The Council notes the observations and concerns regarding the impact on the Welsh language.</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>
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.		<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>
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?		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.
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.		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

			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>
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.		<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>
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.		<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>
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" 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>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	<p>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.</p>	<p>The Council notes the comments.</p>																																																																						
320	<p>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 .</p>	<p>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.</p>																																																																						
321	<p>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.</p>	<p>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>																																																																						
322	<p>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.</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>																																																																						
323	<p>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>	<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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			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
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		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 possibilites” 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. 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.

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. 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>
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>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> <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.		<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> <p>It is confirmed that 81% of children (3-8 years) from the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area, attend out-of-catchment school in September 2020. For clarity, the pupils in years 4, 5 and 6 who live in the area have not been included in this figure as the Abersoch catchment area is considered as part of the Ysgol Sarn Bach catchment area for children in years 4, 5 and 6.</p> <p>In response to the comment regarding the number of pupils in the Ysgol Sarn Bach catchment area who attend out-of-catchment schools, it is noted that 13 (32%) of the catchment area's pupils attend out-of-catchment schools, and only 6 (15%) of those pupils attend Ysgol Llanbedrog.</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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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.																																																											
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.		<p>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</p>																																																									

			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?		<div> <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> <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. <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> </div>			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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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.																																																											
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?																																																											
487	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? 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.																																																											

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.		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.
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.		<p>The School Admissions Code notes:</p> <p>"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>
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>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>

			<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	<p>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>	<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> <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>
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>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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	Extending age range (3-9 years old)																																																																								
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>
525	<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> <i>The justification for saying no is insufficient.</i> <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> <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>

530	<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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531	<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).

	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.		<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	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		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.
	Beach School		
544	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?		The Council notes the option to develop a Beach School. 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: <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	1) We are proud that the officers have included a number of our alternative options as options worth considering – namely ... * Beach and Nature School		

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.		
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.		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.
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.		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. 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.
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.		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.
603	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? 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.		
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 havent 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?		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.
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?		Consequently, it is likely that the school is facing increasing challenges, including: <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).
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>
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>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>

	<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.		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.
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	Closing any primary school is a bilateral disease. Especially Abersoch School. It has to close due to pupil shortages. This is partly due to the lack of affordable housing. But when you have your own children who need a school, having to choose somewhere to live is influenced by the schools available. 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.		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.
639	I would like to know what "Modernising" education means.		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:

			<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.		<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</p>

			<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 in 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**

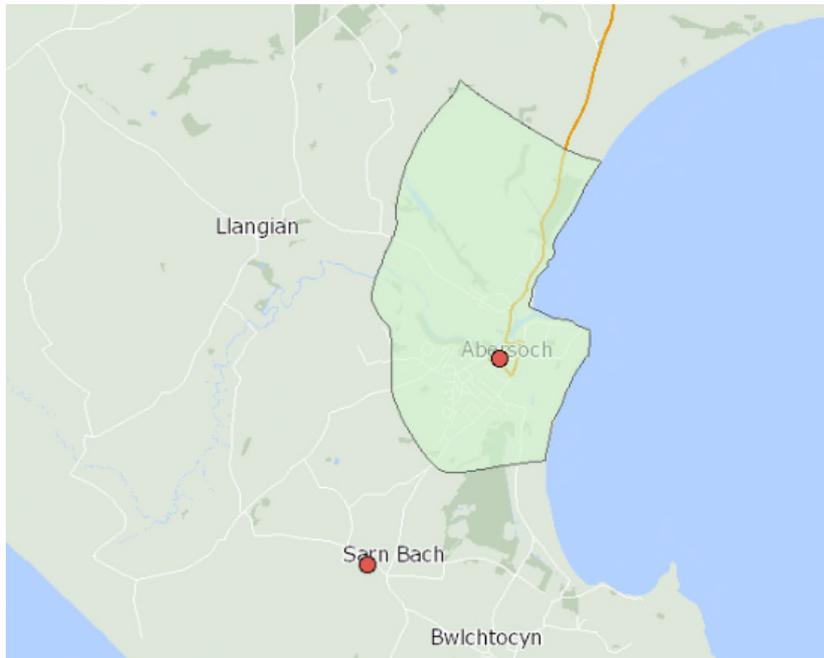
EXPLANATORY NOTE

(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.



Well-being Assessment Report Ysgol Abersoch

- September 2021

Contents

- 1. INTRODUCTION**
- 2. HOW DOES THE PROPOSAL MEET GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES?**
- 3. DOES THE PROPOSAL MEET THE GOALS OF THE WELL-BEING ACT?**
- 4. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES**
- 5. CONCLUSION**

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".

At its meeting on 17 September 2019, Gwynedd Council's Cabinet approved the Education Department *“to initiate formal discussions with the governing body and other relevant stakeholders of Ysgol Abersoch due to concerns over the school numbers, thus enabling a range of possible options to be drawn up relating to the future of the school.”*

Between October 2019 and January 2020, 3 local meetings were held with stakeholders at Ysgol Abersoch where a number of options were proposed and discussed. Following the evaluation of those options, the list was refined to 3 options for further consideration, in addition to the Do Nothing model. Those options are detailed below:

- *Do nothing - continue with the current structure of the school.*

Although the case for change has been established, the Do nothing model has been included for comparison purposes.

- *Federation with a neighbouring school*

This option would involve establishing a formal collaboration arrangement, between a neighbouring school/schools. These schools would share a single governing body, but at the same time retain their legal status as separate entities, their financial allocation, name and school uniform, and continue to have their own Estyn inspection.

The formation of a formal federation with a school or other schools would strengthen the leadership position of the school, and increase pupils' opportunities to socialise and collaborate with peers.

In this case, for geographical reasons, Ysgol Sarn Bach, and Ysgol Llanbedrog were considered as reasonable options for the collaborative arrangement. Ysgol Foel Gron was not considered as it is not possible to federate schools with charitable status, with those with Community status.

- *Extend the age range of Ysgol Abersoch from 3-8 years to 3-11 years*

At present, the age range of Ysgol Abersoch means that the school's education provision ceases at the end of year 3. Extending the age range to 3-11 would mean that the school could continue to educate pupils until the end of Key Stage 2, which is the end of year 6. This would be consistent with the age range of the majority of the county's primary schools.

- *Close Ysgol Abersoch and pupils to be educated at an alternative school*

This option would mean that Ysgol Abersoch would close, and that current pupils would be offered a place at Ysgol Sarn Bach (the alternative school).

At its meeting on 15 September 2020, Gwynedd Council Cabinet resolved to hold a statutory consultation, 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 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 9 October 2020.

A statutory consultation was held between 12 January and 23 February 2021 and 154 responses to the consultation were received.

Further options considered following the statutory consultation:

- *Multi-Site School*

A Multi-Site School means that one school will be established but on two or three sites. Statutorily, the school will have one legal entity, and the school will have one Headteacher, with manager/s on different sites. The school will have one budget and one governing body, and all sites will receive Estyn inspections at the same time - as one school.

If this option would to be implemented, then existing school catchment areas would be modified. The Authority's Transport Policy and Access Policy would be implemented as usual. Therefore, any application for admission to the Multi-Site School would be considered as an application to the whole school. Control of admission to the different sites would become part of the schools policy.

- *Federation with Ysgol Sarn Bach and Llanbedrog, and a joint working arrangement with Ysgol Foel Gron.*

This option would involve establishing a formal collaboration arrangement between neighbouring schools. These schools would share a single governing body, but at the same time retain their legal status as separate entities, their financial allocation, name and school uniform, and continue to have their own Estyn inspection.

Forming a formal federation with another school or schools would strengthen the leadership position of the school, and offer more opportunities for pupils to socialise and work with peers.

- *Enlli Federation - (Ysgol Abersoch, Llanbedrog, Sarn Bach, Pont Y Gof, Crud y Werin, Botwnnog Secondary and collaboration arrangement with Ysgol Foel Gron).*

This option would involve establishing a formal collaboration arrangement between neighbouring schools. These schools would share a single governing body, but at the same time retain their legal status as separate entities, their financial allocation, name and school uniform, and continue to have their own Estyn inspection.

Forming a formal federation with another school or schools would strengthen the leadership position of the school, and offer more opportunities for pupils to socialise and work with peers.

Following a more detailed assessment of the above options, it was concluded that the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and offer the pupils a place at Ysgol Sarn Bach would best respond to the main challenges facing the school, namely low pupil numbers and small classes.

Gwynedd Council's Cabinet considered the consultation report at its meeting on 15 June 2021 and resolved to issue a statutory notice on the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 December 2021, and provide a place for pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 January 2022. The statutory notice was issued on 25 June 2021 with a 28 day objection period. The objection period came to an end on 23 July 2021 and 211 objections and 2 petitions were received.

2. HOW DOES THE PROPOSAL MEET GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES?

Gwynedd Council's well-being objectives were considered when evaluating the options.

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

Extend the age range of Ysgol Abersoch from 3-8 years to 3-11 years	
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	It is not anticipated that the option would affect this aim. There would be a statutory process involved in extending the age range. No impact is anticipated on the current governance arrangements.
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

Federation with a nearby School	
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. There would be a statutory process involved in establishing a formal federation and establishing a federal governing body. The option would offer opportunities for sharing staff and sharing expertise across the schools. It would also offer opportunities to collaborate on curricular issues and develop joint plans.
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

Close Ysgol Abersoch and pupils to be educated at an alternative school

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	It is envisaged that implementing this option would result in staff redundancies. A detailed staffing policy has been developed by Gwynedd Council in conjunction with Trade Unions and head teachers. The policy will form the basis of any change to the employment of staff resulting from any proposal. Clear and open communication will be central to the successful implementation of any proposals.
Receive education of the highest quality that will allow them to do what they want to do	Ensuring that the pupils receive a first class education will be central to the proposal, ensuring that they receive at least the same quality and standard of education at the alternative school.
To live with dignity and independently for as long as possible	It is not anticipated that the proposal would be likely to have an impact on this aim.
Live in a naturally Welsh society	A language impact assessment was undertaken. Pupils at Ysgol Abersoch live in a community where Welsh and English exist side by side, and are educated in a Welsh medium school, such as Ysgol Sarn Bach. The language impact assessment notes that the position of the alternative school is strong, with 57% of pupils coming from homes that can speak Welsh. By comparison, 33% of pupils at Ysgol Abersoch come from homes that can speak Welsh.
Take advantage beauty of the County's natural environment	No effect

Multi-Site School

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. There would be a statutory process involved in establishing a Multi-site School and establishing a governing body for the new school. The option would offer opportunities to share staff and share expertise across school sites. It would also offer opportunities to collaborate on curricular issues and develop joint plans.
To live with dignity and independently for as long as possible	No effect

Federation with Ysgol Sarn Bach and Llanbedrog, and a joint working arrangement with Ysgol Foel Gron.

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. There would be a statutory process involved in establishing a formal federation and establishing a federal governing body. The option would offer opportunities for sharing staff and sharing expertise across the schools. It would

	also offer opportunities to collaborate on curricular issues and develop joint plans.
To live with dignity and independently for as long as possible	No effect

Enlli Federation - (Ysgol Abersoch, Llanbedrog, Sarn Bach, Pont Y Gof, Crud y Werin, Botwnnog Secondary and collaboration arrangement with Ysgol Foel Gron).

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. There would be a statutory process involved in establishing a formal federation and establishing a federal governing body. The option would offer opportunities for sharing staff and sharing expertise across the schools. It would also offer opportunities to collaborate on curricular issues and develop joint plans.
To live with dignity and independently for as long as possible	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 allow pupils to be educated in larger classes and with more children of the same age group. It is therefore envisaged that it would enrich pupils' learning and social experiences.</p> <p>In addition, the proposal contributes to the goal by making more prudent use of resources.</p> <p>Implementing this option could result in staff losing their jobs.</p>	<p>Staff and Union representatives were consulted specifically as part of the statutory consultation period.</p> <p>Gwynedd Council has developed a detailed staffing policy, in conjunction with Trade Unions and head teachers. Any redundancies as a result of this proposal will have to conform to that policy. Clear and open communication will play a central role in implementing any proposals.</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>The proposal has been developed within the context of the Excellent Primary Education For children in Gwynedd The strategy outlines the vision: <i>"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"</i></p>	<p>The equality assessment noted that the proposal was not anticipated to have a negative impact on equality. In addition, it was noted that robust policies and procedures were in place to ensure that the proposal considered complied with equal rights. It is noted that measures are already in place to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination and harassment.</p>
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Attractive, viable and safe communities with good connections</p>	<p>Following a community impact assessment, it was concluded that there would be some negative impact on the community should the school close.</p>	<p>Whilst acknowledging the negative impact the closure of the school could have on the Abersoch community, it is noted that 35% of the 26 pupils (3-8) living in the Abersoch catchment area already attend Ysgol Sarn Bach. It is therefore believed that a link already exists between the alternative school and the community in Abersoch. 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</p>

		that would promote the inclusion of the Abersoch community in the community activity of the school.
<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>	No impact is anticipated on this aim as the proposal would mean that pupils would continue to be educated in a Welsh medium school	-
<p>Wales is globally responsible. A nation that, in doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, is considering whether doing such a thing could contribute positively to global well-being.</p>	It is not anticipated that the proposal is likely to have an impact on this aim.	No effect.

4. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

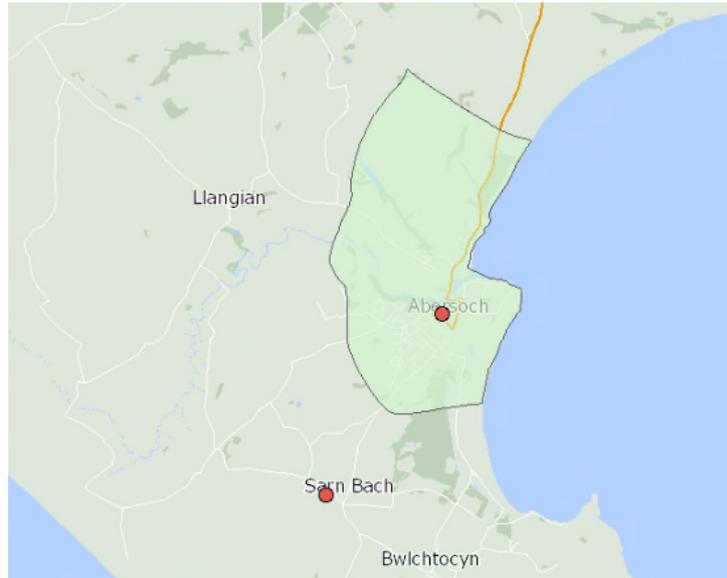
Sustainable Development Principles	Does the proposal consider the principle?
<p>Long term The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to meet long-term needs is also important.</p>	There has been a pattern of low numbers at Ysgol Abersoch for some years, and the situation is now unsustainable. With projections showing numbers to remain low, it is concluded that the challenges facing the school are long-term, and therefore the case for change is clear.
<p>Suspension How action to prevent problems from occurring or escalating can help public bodies achieve their objectives.</p>	Should Cabinet decide to take further action, the needs of the children will be a priority when undertaking any reorganisation process.
<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>	The authority began the process of reviewing the school situation in the wake of a critical situation facing the school.
<p>Collaboration Collaboration with any other person (or different departments within the organisation itself) could help the organization meet its well-being goals.</p>	As part of the options appraisal process the Education Department received input from a number of other departments within the Council. In addition, a series of local meetings were held to obtain initial input from the stakeholders.
<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 proposal has been the subject of a public consultation, and a consultation with children and young people, as well as a statutory objection period.</p> <p>The process to date has included local review meetings to engage with the relevant stakeholders of the school. These meetings have included the Governing Body, staff, and parents of Ysgol Abersoch.</p>

5. CONCLUSION

Following consideration and assessment in accordance with the requirements of the well-being act, the 7 well-being goals of the Council and the Council's well-being objectives were considered and it is concluded that the proposal meets the requirements. This proposal will allow us to respond to and meet the needs of the children today, and also strengthen their future well-being.

It is acknowledged that should the Cabinet decide to confirm the proposal, it would result in the closure of a school in the Abersoch community, 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 Abersoch community. 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 activities at Ysgol Sarn Bach includes the Abersoch community, where appropriate.

The proposed proposal will ensure that children in the area are educated in a suitable site and in a naturally Welsh speaking society, increasing opportunities for socialising and working with others and giving them a fair chance to flourish among their peers.



Equality Assessment Report Ysgol Abersoch

- September 2021

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- 1. INTRODUCTION**
- 2. OPTIONS**
- 3. IMPACT OF ANY CHANGE**
- 4. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**
- 5. CONCLUSION**

1. INTRODUCTION

Ysgol Abersoch is located in the center of the village of Abersoch near Pwllheli, and provides education for 3-8 year olds. The school has a capacity of 42 (Nursery to Year 3), and in January 2020, it had 7 full-time pupils (aged 4-8), and 2 nursery pupils. To date (September 2020) the school has 8 full time pupils (aged 4-8), and 2 nursery pupils.

At its meeting on 17 September 2019, Gwynedd Council's Cabinet approved the Education Department *“to initiate formal discussions with the governing body and other relevant stakeholders of Ysgol Abersoch due to concerns over the school numbers, thus enabling a range of possible options to be drawn up relating to the future of the school.”*

In accordance with the Cabinet's decision (17 September 2019), an Ysgol Abersoch Review Panel (SRP) was established and the Governing Body, parents, staff and the Local Elected Member were invited to join the panel and participate in the discussion. Three SRP meetings were held between October 2019 and January 2020 to discuss a range of options to seek to resolve the main challenges faced by the school.

At its meeting on 15 September 2020, Gwynedd Council Cabinet resolved to hold a statutory consultation, 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 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 9 October 2020.

As part of the process of developing a proposal (s) for school / school reorganisation, the Council is required (in accordance with the Equality Act 2010) to consider the impact of a change in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a policy or new procedure), on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has additional general duties to ensure fairness and foster good relations. An Equality Impact Assessment must therefore be carried out before a decision is made on any material change (i.e. that affects people with a protected characteristic).

A statutory consultation was held between 12 January and 23 February 2021 and 154 responses to the consultation were received.

Gwynedd Council's Cabinet considered the consultation report at its meeting on 15 June 2021 and resolved to issue a statutory notice on the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 December 2021, and provide a place for pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 January 2022. The statutory notice was issued on 25 June 2021 with a 28 day objection period. The objection period came to an end on 23 July 2021 and 211 objections and 2 petitions were received.

2. OPTIONS

A number of options were proposed and discussed at the local meetings. Following an evaluation of these options against the Strategy factors, the list was refined to 3 options for further consideration, in addition to the Do Nothing option.

- *Do nothing - continue with the current structure of the school.*

Although the case for change has been established, the Do nothing model is included for comparison purposes.

- *Federation with a neighbouring school*

This option would involve establishing a formal collaboration arrangement, between a neighbouring school/schools. These schools would share a single governing body, but at the same time retain their legal status as separate entities, their financial allocation, name and school uniforms, and continue to have their own Estyn inspection.

The formation of a formal federation with a school or other schools would strengthen the leadership position of the school, and increase pupils' opportunities to socialise and collaborate with peers.

In this case, for geographical reasons, Ysgol Sarn Bach, and Ysgol Llanbedrog were considered as reasonable options for the collaborative arrangement. Ysgol Foel Gron was not considered as it is not possible to federate schools with charitable status, with those with Community status.

- *Extend the age range of Ysgol Abersoch from 3-8 years to 3-11 years*

At present, the age range of Ysgol Abersoch means that the school's education provision ceases at the end of year 3. Extending the age range to 3-11 would mean that the school could continue to educate pupils until the end of Key Stage 2, which is the end of year 6. This would be consistent with the age range of the majority of the county's primary schools.

- *Close Ysgol Abersoch and pupils to be educated at an alternative school*

This option would mean that Ysgol Abersoch would close, and that current pupils would be offered a place at Ysgol Sarn Bach (the alternative school).

Further options considered following the statutory consultation:

- *Multi-Site School*

A Multi-Site School means that one school will be established but on two or three sites. Statutorily, the school will have one legal entity, and the school will have one Headteacher, with manager/s on different sites. The school will have one budget and one governing body, and all sites will receive Estyn inspections at the same time - as one school.

If this option would to be implemented, then existing school catchment areas would be modified. The Authority's Transport Policy and Access Policy would be implemented as usual. Therefore, any application for admission to the Multi-Site School would be considered as an application to the whole school. Control of admission to the different sites would become part of the schools policy.

- *Federation with Ysgol Sarn Bach and Llanbedrog, and a joint working arrangement with Ysgol Foel Gron.*

This option would involve establishing a formal collaboration arrangement between neighbouring schools. These schools would share a single governing body, but at the same time retain their legal status as separate entities, their financial allocation, name and school uniform, and continue to have their own Estyn inspection.

Forming a formal federation with another school or schools would strengthen the leadership position of the school, and offer more opportunities for pupils to socialise and work with peers.

- *Enlli Federation - (Ysgol Abersoch, Llanbedrog, Sarn Bach, Pont Y Gof, Crud y Werin, Botwnnog Secondary and co-operation arrangement with Ysgol Foel Gron).*

This option would involve establishing a formal collaboration arrangement between neighbouring schools. These schools would share a single governing body, but at the same time retain their legal status as separate entities, their financial allocation, name and school uniform, and continue to have their own Estyn inspection.

Forming a formal federation with another school or schools would strengthen the leadership position of the school, and offer more opportunities for pupils to socialise and work with peers.

Following a more detailed assessment of the above options, it was concluded that the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and offer the pupils a place at Ysgol Sarn Bach would best respond to the main challenges facing the school, namely low pupil numbers and small classes.

3. IMPACT OF ANY CHANGE

The Council must have due regard to the impact any changes will have on people with equality characteristics below. What impact will the new policy / service or proposed changes have on these features?

Features	What kind of impact? *	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including nationality)	None	Gwynedd schools have relevant policies in place to protect individuals from any racial discrimination, such as Equality, Inclusion and Anti-Bullying Policies. The Anti-bullying Policy provided by Gwynedd Council sets out anti-bullying guidelines and procedures based on factors such as race at school. In addition, the Equality Policy implemented by Gwynedd primary schools states that the schools <i>"...opposes to all types of prejudice and discrimination and acknowledges that pupils have different needs, requirements and objectives."</i> It is therefore not envisaged that the proposal would have an impact on this feature.
The Welsh language	None	The Council's Welsh Education Scheme will impose the same requirements on all schools, and therefore in terms of implementing the policy, it is not anticipated that there would be an impact if the proposal were to be implemented. A language impact assessment was carried out on the proposal.
Disability	None	Under the requirements of the Council Policy, schools are required to provide an Anti-Bullying Policy, therefore the alternative school will be expected to protect against disability-related bullying, and indeed any other ground. Gwynedd schools also have a Transport Code of Practice. Staff at the alternative school will need to provide the same level of care and be aware of all the needs of the pupils.
Gender	None	It is not anticipated that implementing the proposal will have an impact in terms of gender, as all affected schools implement an equality policy which states that the school: <i>"...opposes to all types of prejudice and discrimination and acknowledges that pupils have different needs, requirements and objectives."</i>
Age	Any effect would be minimal (positive or negative)	Ysgol Abersoch provides education for pupils aged 3-8 years. If the proposal were implemented, it would mean that the pupils would transfer to a school with an age range of 3 to 11 on one site. However, it is not anticipated that this would have a negative impact – all affected schools implement an equality policy which states that the school: <i>"...opposes to all types of prejudice and discrimination and acknowledges that pupils have different needs, requirements and objectives."</i>
Sexual orientation	None	It is noted in the Equality Policy implemented by Gwynedd's primary schools that schools

		<i>"...opposes to all types of prejudice and discrimination and acknowledges that pupils have different needs, requirements and objectives."</i>
Religion or belief (or lack of belief)	None	Ysgol Abersoch and the alternative school, Ysgol Sarn Bach are community schools - the proposal does not suggest changing this. Each school has an Inclusion Policy that would deal with any discriminatory incident that might occur in the school, related to religion or belief.
Gender Reassignment	None	It is noted in the Equality Policy implemented by Gwynedd's primary schools that schools: <i>"...opposes to all types of prejudice and discrimination and acknowledges that pupils have different needs, requirements and objectives."</i>
Pregnancy and maternity	None	-
Marriage and civil partnership	None	-

The Council has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make a positive contribution to a fairer society by promoting equality and good relations in its activities in the areas of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, transgender, disability and pregnancy and maternity.

General Duties of the Equality Act	Does it make an impact? *	In what way? What is the evidence?
Remove illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation	No	Implementing the proposal would not alter the statutory duty of affected schools 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 and appropriate given any factors that affect them. They will continue to use the School Council, personal and social education lessons, anti-bullying policies and other means to ensure that the school prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
Promote equal opportunities	No	It is anticipated that the alternative school will continue to promote equal opportunities.
Encouraging good relationships	No	As some of the pupils in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area already attend Ysgol Sarn Bach it is fair to note that a connection between Ysgol Sarn Bach and the Abersoch community already exists. However, opportunities to build further on the relationship with the community in Abersoch could arise from implementing the proposal.

4.1 Is the proposal therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty? What is the reason for this?

As Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach operate the same policies in relation to equality and anti-bullying, it is not envisaged that the proposal would have significant impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty referred to in this document.

4.2 Is the proposal therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty? What is the reason for this?

As Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Sarn Bach operate the same policies in relation to equality and anti-bullying, it is not envisaged that the proposal would have significant impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty referred to in this document.

4.3 What should be done?

Choose one of the following:

Continue with policy / service as it is sound	✓
Adjust the policy to remove any barriers	
Prevent and remove the policy as the adverse effects are too great	
Continue with policy as any adverse impact can be justified	

4.4 If continuing with the plan, what steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?

In order to mitigate the impact on the community, opportunities are identified to ensure that the community of Abersoch is aware of the activity of the alternative school, and community collaboration between the alternative school and the community of Abersoch is encouraged, where appropriate.

4.5 Monitoring – what action will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?

The school (and their Governing Body) is responsible for implementing its equality policy and the Authority, through its usual support and monitoring procedures, will ensure compliance.

5. CONCLUSION

Gwynedd's primary schools already operate an Equalities policy which states that the schools "...opposes to all types of prejudice and discrimination and acknowledges that pupils have different needs, requirements and objectives". As a result, it is concluded that it is not envisaged that the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch and provide a place for pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach would have negative impacts in terms of equality. Should the Cabinet decide to confirm the proposal, and if some are highlighted in the future, then the Council will consider the necessary actions.

Agenda Item 6

Meeting:	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
Date:	21 October 2021
Teitl:	THE ECONOMY AND BUSINESS SUPPORT
Author:	Dylan Griffiths Economic Development Manager, Economy and Community Department
Cabinet Member:	Gareth Thomas Cabinet Member, Economy and Community
Purpose:	Report requested by the Scrutiny Committee outlining the Support being given to businesses by the Council, particularly as a result of the UK leaving the European Union, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Background.

- 1.1. Local businesses are an integral and fundamental part of our communities. They are critical in offering a living to the people of Gwynedd and maintaining the vibrancy and sense of place of our towns and villages.
- 1.2. In Gwynedd there are:
 - 16,010 enterprises (including the self-employed), the largest number in North Wales¹
 - 590 active ventures to every 10,000 residents (Wales average: 539)²
 - 43,800 (68%) of the workforce is employed by a business³
- 1.3. As a result of the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, and the effects of leaving the European Union, this last 18 months has seen the most challenging period experienced by local businesses in 40 years.
- 1.4. The Economy and Community Department, along with Departments across the Council, adapted their priorities and work methods to provide support for the county's businesses. The need to support our businesses continues, and the Council is looking to ensure that its efforts are appropriate to the task.

¹ 'Enterprises by Size Band, area and year' in 2019 ([source: StatsCymru website](#))

² 'Active Business Enterprises per 10,000 people by area and year' in 2019 ([source: StatsCymru website](#))

³ 'Employment in the workplace by local areas in Wales and broad industry' in 2019 ([source: StatsCymru website](#))

2. The Council's Business Support Resources and Priorities before the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 2.1. Gwynedd Council funds two jobs to directly support businesses, by dealing with enquiries, engagement activities, providing support and administering financial packages.
- 2.2. These roles are located within the Economic Development Service of the Economy and Community Department. In March 2020, there were 18 officers within the Department, 15 of which were funded by grants from different sources (12 regarding the areas of skills development and supporting people into work).
- 2.3. The efforts of the Economic Development Service form part of the wider work of the Department to support the economy; with the Tourism, Marketing and Events Service, and Strategic Regeneration Service also contributing significantly to the cause.
- 2.4. Beyond providing core services, the Department's priorities (as noted in [the Council Plan – 2020/21 Review](#)) were:
 - *The North Wales Growth Vision*
 - *Creating High Value Jobs*
 - *Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig*
 - *Promoting Town Centres*
 - *Putting Gwynedd's Slate Heritage to Work*
 - *Benefitting from Tourism*
 - *Supporting Businesses to Thrive*
 - *More of Gwynedd's Residents playing a Full Role in the World of Work.*
- 2.5. The main characteristics of the business support field before the pandemic were:
 - A reduction in local authority resources and investment in provision.
 - A reduction in the financial support available to businesses, especially small businesses, administered by local authorities.
 - A Wales-wide approach to business support provision.
 - An increasing emphasis on cooperation and regional coordination, based on an assumption that this would form the lowest level of support in the future.

3. **Activity to support businesses during the pandemic lockdowns.**

- 3.1. It was clear with the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic, and the start of the first lockdown that local businesses would be facing challenges not seen in decades.
- 3.2. The Council reacted immediately to the associated dangers, designating Business Support as a priority 1 category in its emergency response. As such, efforts and resources within the Economy and Community Department, and other Departments – including the Finance and Environment Departments particularly – were diverted to the cause.
- 3.3. Within the Economy and Community Department alone, by December 2020, the equivalent of 12.5 officers had been tasked with undertaking Business Support work (a combination of 16 additional officers, and the existing Business Support team).
- 3.4. In short, the effort focussed on three priorities. Here is an outline of the main activity within each area:

Ensuring access to appropriate business support and information

- 3.5. A temporary team was established within the Economy and Community Department to respond to phone and e-mail enquiries from businesses. At its peak, at the end of April 2020, 426 individual enquiries were responded to within a week. In the period from 01 April 2020 to 30 June 2020, 3,800 business enquiries were dealt with.
- 3.6. The content of the Council's website was reviewed and revised (www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/BusinessCOVID19) with a dedicated page for businesses being created and maintained containing all the information and advice regarding how to respond to the pandemic. In the first weeks of lockdown, the website received 19,000 visits.
- 3.7. The resources and efforts of the Tourism, Marketing and Events Service were diverted to increase the Council's capacity to communicate with businesses. Along with supporting the maintenance of the website, and increasing the volume and quality of the Council's social media presence for businesses, a new system was established for releasing regular bulletins to the county's businesses, highlighting opportunities for funding, updates to guidelines and regulations, and the Business Support provision of the Council and its partners. The bulletins are now received by over 4,400 businesses, and over 200 bulletins have been released since the system was established.

Provision of financial support to allow businesses to endure and survive

- 3.8. The main new requirement of the Council was to provide emergency funding on behalf of Welsh Government to help businesses to endure and survive the effects of the pandemic.
- 3.9. Achieving this became the focus of significant efforts from the Finance Department, along with the Economy and Community Department, bringing with it the need to establish new systems and structures in limited time several times over the period. The support provided included:
- Grants for businesses registered to pay business rates.
 - Grants for businesses not registered to pay business rates.
 - Grants for new businesses
 - Grants for freelancers in the creative industries
- 3.10. Over 22,000 payments were made directly to Gwynedd's businesses through these schemes, with a total value of £112.1 million.
- 3.11. As a comparison, in 2019/20, the Economy and Community Department provided support to 250 businesses; in 2020/21 1,550 were supported – and increase of 620%.
- 3.12. Beyond that outlined above, the Council provided further support to businesses, in the form of:
- business rates relief through the Finance Department (worth around £38.9m)
 - specific support for the childcare sector through the Children's Department;
 - the distribution of £82,000 of grants to hospitality businesses, mainly to to adapt their sites in order to reopen
 - a hiatus in the collection of rents from businesses based in Council business units, through the Housing and Property Department; and,
 - a campaign to encourage and promote the supporting of local businesses.

Cooperating and coordinating efforts for the benefit of Gwynedd's Businesses

- 3.13. Finally, significant efforts were focussed on cooperating and coordinating workstreams to support businesses on a county and regional basis.
- 3.14. Soon after the start of the pandemic, a structure was established within the Council to facilitate this task. An inter-departmental taskforce was established, including representation from the Economy and

Community, Finance, Environment, Housing and Property and Corporate Support Departments. The Head of Economy and Community was appointed as the Senior Responsible Officer for the workstream, and a clear work programme was drawn up, along with a risk assessment to identify requirements and report the response to each.

- 3.15. The Business Support taskforce reports in turn to the Regeneration Board which coordinated wider efforts, in order to ensure that Business Support efforts tied in with the wider work of the Council, including supporting town centres to adapt, and more recently, managing the pressures resulting from increased visitor numbers. The Regeneration Board includes relevant Heads of Department and the Chief Executive, along with a number of Cabinet Members, including the Leader.
- 3.16. Throughout the initial phase of the pandemic, the Council also held regular meetings with representatives from the business community, including; Gwynedd Business Network, The Federation of Small Businesses, North and Mid Wales Tourism Associations and the Agricultural Unions. The meetings were a means of receiving information about the needs and concerns of our businesses along with disseminating information about Council activity.
- 3.17. Regionally, in response to the initial phase of the economic response to the pandemic through the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, a system of weekly meetings was established to bring senior officers together to share information and coordinate efforts.

4. Activities to support businesses to adapt following the UK's withdrawal from the European Union.

- 4.1. As the UK had officially left the European Union on 31 January 2020, activity by the Council to help businesses in Gwynedd prepare for the impact were already underway before the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic.
- 4.2. However, as a result of the uncertainty about the true impact of the change throughout the transition period until December 2020 – and the effects of the pandemic – our efforts were severely hampered.
- 4.3. Despite this, an ongoing effort by the Council to distribute information and promote any support has been undertaken. This was achieved by:
 - Establishing a dedicated page on the Council's website (www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/Brexit) to facilitate local businesses' access to relevant information.
 - Directing businesses to information, guidance and support via our regular bulletins and social media.

- Establishing Siop Gwynedd Caernarfon as a registered centre where workers from the European Union could upload documents to support their applications to remain in the UK.
- Promote and influence on behalf of the interests of businesses in Gwynedd as new regimes are developed in areas such as agricultural support and future funding to support economic development.

5. The Council's priorities to support businesses to recover and develop.

- 5.1. It continues to be a highly uncertain period for businesses and the economy. The effort to support our businesses to date has been substantial, but the statistical evidence regarding the relative performance of the local economy in 2020 and 2021 is yet to be released to enable an analysis of our efforts.
- 5.2. The busy summer months provided some relief to a large number of businesses in the county especially within the retail, hospitality and tourism sectors; but there is uncertainty if it will be sufficient to sustain enterprises throughout the winter and the summer period also highlighted a number of further challenges.
- 5.3. The primary challenges reported by businesses are:
 - Poor availability of workers
 - Challenges in obtaining goods
 - Increasing cost of supplies and overheads
 - Cash flow over the winter months
 - Access to funding to support development and expansion
- 5.4. The period has increased awareness of the importance of local delivery to support businesses stimulating an appreciation of the need to maintain and develop local authorities capacity to operate in this field.
- 5.5. In response the Economy & Community Department is seeking to reprioritise and maintain the Council's business support provision by:
 - Mainstream our efforts to communicate and share information with businesses and increase our capacity for ongoing engagement with the business community. To this end an application has been submitted via the corporate bidding process to maintain one post and create one additional post to increase our capacity.
 - Adapt our efforts in relation to the Higher Value Jobs and Rural Innovation strategic projects to ensure support provided to maintain businesses alongside supporting businesses to establish and grow. Again, a bid has been submitted to maintain two posts to ensure our ability to deliver within these fields.

- Build on the good practice established of collaborating across Departments to support businesses.
- Work with the Welsh Government and other local authorities to secure additional funds to support businesses to adapt and develop.
- Continue to collaborate with North Wales authorities to realise the North Wales Economic Ambition Board's projects and provide collaborative support to businesses where appropriate.

Agenda Item 7

NAME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
DATE OF MEETING	21 October 2021
ITEM TITLE	Well-being and achievement gap, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the impact of covid on the education of all our pupils • what plans schools have for the well-being of all our pupils
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr. Cemlyn Williams

1. RENEW AND REFORM STRATEGY: SUPPORTING LEARNERS' WELLBEING AND PROGRESSION (GwE)

1.1. Purpose of Report

To submit a report for members to scrutinise the following:

- Renew and Reform Strategy: Supporting Learners' Wellbeing and Progression
- Autumn term baseline visits to capture progress and impact;
- The implementation and impact of the accelerated learning programme.

1.2. Background

As we tackle national reform, it becomes clear that we are in a different place to what was imagined when the Curriculum for Wales guidance was published eighteen months ago. We recognise that some of the preparatory work for the curriculum will be devoted to managing the impact of the pandemic over the past year. On the other hand, with an even stronger emphasis on wellbeing and significant investment in learning and teaching, the values underpinning the curriculum have been at the heart of how schools have worked. GwE is fully committed to supporting schools and PRUs to maintain this momentum to ensure that all learners in North Wales receive the highest standard of provision. The Covid-19 pandemic has shown us that a change, for the better, is possible even in the most challenging circumstances. In North Wales, GwE, the Local Authorities, Schools and PRUs took the opportunity to look at more innovative ways of working.

1.3. Considerations

See attached 'Renew and Reform Strategy: Supporting Learners' Wellbeing and Progression' (Appendix 1), which sets out the strategic direction of our work for the next period. By working with and listening to key partners and stakeholders, we have identified the following themes to support our aim of ensuring that all learners in North Wales receive the highest standard of provision. These themes are set out in our Business Plans and will be implemented through partnership programmes and an offer of generic and unique support to our schools and our PRUs.

- Education Reform / Realisation of the Curriculum
- Resume learning (Recruit, Recover and Raise Standards)
- A strategy to support parents / carers to help their children learn
- Learners' wellbeing and whole school wellbeing
- Workforce wellbeing (GwE and schools)
- Additional Learning Needs
- The Welsh Language
- Leadership Development

- Digital
- Professional Learning

1.4. Also, it outlines how we will evolve the regional model, developments in the school partnership scheme, peer review and school-to-school support, together with the structures and processes in place to identify and support schools of concern.

In North Wales, GwE and the six Local Authorities are committed to working in partnership with schools to develop a robust accountability system in which key stakeholders have confidence and which holds all partners fully accountable for their role in developing our learners. The system's expectations in North Wales are clearly outlined and we aim to achieve them by September 2024.

A summary highlighting the intentions of the Autumn term to hold baseline visits to capture progress and impact is outlined in Appendix 2. The visit recording template is included in Appendix 3.

A summary highlighting the action and impact of the accelerated learning programme can be found in Appendix 4.

1.5. Consultation that has taken place

A meeting was held to share the strategy with all of the headteachers within the region. The regional Headteacher Strategic Forums, representatives from Local Authorities, the Full Team, the Management Board and GwE Joint Committee were further consulted.

1.6. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Renew and Reform Strategy: Supporting Learners' Wellbeing and Progression

Appendix 2 - A summary highlighting the intentions of the Autumn term to hold baseline visits to capture progress and impact

Appendix 3 - Visit recording template

Appendix 4 - A summary highlighting the action and impact of the accelerated learning programme

2. DIGITAL EDUCATION STRATEGY

2.1. What we hope to achieve through the digital education strategy is highly ambitious and a sign of how we are prioritising our children's education here in Gwynedd. Simply put, this strategy, when fully implemented, is about putting a suitable device to enable digital learning in the hands of every child from year 3 to year 11. Gwynedd will be one of the first authorities to do so in Wales and that is something we take pride in.

2.2. During the period where a significant number of learners were at home, we re-purposed over 2500 Chromebook devices for home use. We also shared 175 MiFi devices that ensured access to the internet. No devices were bought exclusively to meet the needs of home learning, as this could have divert us from our strategy. Learners from the primary and secondary sectors benefitted from the equipment and stock of devices that were already in our schools.

2.3. Significant work has already been accomplished on our strategy, including upgrading the school network in accordance with the digital education standards, as well as transforming the web filtering method. Just over £1.3m has been invested in the network over the last two years. Additionally, a

significant number of devices have been shared in accordance with the strategy. Enough iPads have been shared to ensure one is given to every four Foundation Phase learners, with enough Chromebooks shared that every learner from year 3 to 6 has a device each. Windows 10 devices have also been prepared for every pupil in years 7, 10 and 11. Every teacher in Gwynedd will receive a device of quality through this strategy over the coming months in the hope that this will spark imagination and further stimulate the innovation and effectiveness of the digital learning aspects across the sectors.

2.4. Estyn's thematic report on the Authority's work in digital learning says:

Cameo: Digital learning as a legacy of the pandemic

The authority has accelerated its strategic plan to provide a laptop for all pupils in years 5-11, with the first allocation being distributed in spring for key stage 4 learners. Additionally, this strategy also includes the provision of working laptops for all teachers to facilitate digital learning. As a result, the schools are able to plan for a future where learners have greater access to ICT, therefore ensuring that new digital skills acquired during the lockdown periods are embedded into teaching and learning in the future.

2.5. The devices we re-purposed and lent have now been returned to the schools. The device to child ratio in the primary sector is close to the strategy's ambition, and if there was a need to move to blended learning the resource would be available to them. Although we have started the work on preparing the secondary devices they have not yet been shared with the pupils.

The lessons following the pandemic have been learned and good practice continues.

3. ALN&I SERVICE

3.1. *Lockdown periods since March 2020 have created significant challenges for children and young people, and for the whole education workforce. Our consideration of children and young people with needs has been a priority during this period.*

The ALN&I Service has reviewed the delivery model in a very short time to respond to this over the past year and a half. Hand in hand with this period, the statutory duty to provide in accordance with the SEN Act (2002) has continued, and the transition work for the new Legislation has also continued. There has also been consistent collaboration between the ALN Service, Children's Services and Health Agencies to gain coherence with this work. The website received a high number of hits during lockdown - As many as 130,700 hits in April 2020 compared to about 10,000 before the period.

The model below summarises the provision that has been maintained through the lockdown periods during 2020/2021:

Autumn and Spring Term Provision 2020/21:



A range of training has been delivered by the Educational Psychology Service before (already in place before the pandemic), during, and after, to develop interventions that support learners with well-being and positive mental health development (e.g. ELSA, Seasons for Growth, Mindfulness). This is part of the development of whole-school strategies for Well-being and Positive Mental Health. This has involved working closely with the Healthy Schools Scheme and the CAMHS service to ensure strategic co-ordination. Use of grants to extend the availability of School Counselling has been made. This work responds to Estyn's recommendation within the June 2021 Thematic Report of establishing strategies to monitor and address the long-term impact of the pandemic on pupils' physical and mental health.

Referrals from schools for input to target Communication and Interaction skills has increased, and we are targeting grants towards this area. We have also developed a new method of access criteria which also provides guidance to Schools on skills development in this area. Working closely with the Speech and Language Therapy Service within Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board has been essential.

The statutory provision dispute resolution work with parents during lockdown has ensured that no SEN Tribunal appeal has proceeded during the period despite risks around this.

4. CASE STUDIES

To try and bring to life the experience of how schools have and continue to respond to the pandemic while continuing to provide education and ensuring the wellbeing of learners, here are three case studies from three schools in Gwynedd, namely:

- Ysgol Cefn Coch and Talsarnau
- Ysgol Botwnnog
- Ysgol Pendalar

We will elaborate further on the experiences and efforts of these schools in the committee itself.

4.1 Ysgol Cefn Coch and Talsarnau

Ysgol Cefn Coch and Talsarnau have been working together for over four years. Talsarnau is a small school with less than 50 children approximately three miles from Ysgol Cefn Coch in Penrhyndeudraeth with 170 pupils on roll. Both schools share one Strategic Head and both have an Assistant Headteacher who are members of the Senior Management Team. Leaders meet regularly to steer the strategic direction of the schools and the staff of both schools meet on a weekly basis to discuss curricular plans among other managerial aspects. By the start of the lockdown period the foundations for the collaboration had been established firmly and to the advantage of the stakeholders of both schools alike. The Senior Team was stronger with two Assistant Heads to take on the responsibilities of the Strategic Head when making difficult decisions. In the same way the staff of both schools were able to support each other in teaching as well as wellbeing aspects.

This was an unprecedented time when staff had to familiarise themselves with new methods and techniques of teaching on digital platforms, literally overnight. Fortunately, we had specialists in the field of Information Technology who were able to guide staff in both schools to meet the demand. This meant that no one felt isolated. They also shared the preparation work of digital resources which reduced workload. We also made use of the digital resources available between the two schools to distribute to the children who needed them. This was a professional development for all staff. The situation could have been very different and far more challenging for the smaller school if it had less support.

Another benefit of collaborating was re-establishing and providing a care club for key workers children and vulnerable children. One centre was available for both schools. Again, this reduced the workload and increased the capacity of staff available for supervision. Another element of collaboration that was strengthened during the lockdown was cluster collaboration led by GwE Improvement Support Advisor. Weekly meetings have been arranged to ensure that we as leaders are all confident in our decisions. Similarly, regular meetings were arranged by the Education Authority to discuss challenges and solutions. Risk Assessment templates were provided which were regularly modified and updated as the situation changed and this was a major blunder. The sense of unity across the Authority and the support and guidance was strong. It is pleasing to note that the support from the Authority and GwE remains so today and that certainly puts us in a strong position to face the challenges of the current period.

Rhys Glyn, Headteacher at Ysgol Cefn Coch

4.2 Ysgol Botwnnog

There is no doubt that the impact of the pandemic is far-reaching on society as a whole, and certainly on young people and schools. Closing the schools at short notice during the first lockdown has been an unprecedented challenge for schools by turning to 'new' approaches, but it was responded to quickly and effectively. Not only education has been affected but also the wider well-being of pupils as they lost the daily face-to-face contact with their peers and school staff. Schools had to ensure continuity of education for pupils as well as offering further support to those who needed it. Returning to school and into 'normal' learning we continue to face many challenges and work more than ever with other agencies to support our pupils to pursue as 'normal' an education as possible. The next period is extremely important for all parts of our society. We want to get as many pupils as possible into school to get the best out of them academically and emotionally. To this end, it is vital that support for schools and other services that work with us to respond to the needs of our young people will continue to be developed for years to come.

Dylan Minnice, Pennaeth Ysgol Botwnnog

4.3 Ysgol Pendalar

Background

Ysgol Pendalar, Caernarfon is a special day school, for pupils aged 3 to 19 years old. They have a wide spectrum of additional learning needs including severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, physical and medical difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders.

Pandemic Barriers

In March 2020, Estyn had arranged to inspect the school but due to the pandemic and the lockdown the visit was delayed at the last minute. When Estyn visited the school in May 2013, there were 87 pupils on the roll, but today there are 117 pupils and the school is filled to capacity.

Being able to look after the well-being of children and young people is very difficult when pupils have to wait their turn for personal care because there are not enough toilet areas or hoists available. The lack of facilities also affects staff morale with many spending lunch time in their cars.

Less support is available for pupils and their families outside school because 'health & social care' services follow different operating guidelines to the special school.

There has been an increase in the intensity levels of pupils' needs, which may have been compounded by the impact of the pandemic.

The impact of stress on staff and the functioning of the school

Maintaining appropriate staffing levels is a daily challenge and is exacerbated within special schools following updating the guidance which came into effect on 11th October 2021.

The shortfall in staffing levels makes it very difficult to release staff for the purpose of planning and implementing changes to the ALN and Curriculum for Wales transition.

The processing time of DBS checks is also a problem as it creates a delay before new staff start and this contributes to additional pressure on the staffing structure.

Successes

Assistance from senior officers within the Education Department to make sense of ongoing updates regarding the guidelines.

The education officer in regular contact with the school, and assisting the headteacher with difficult decisions that need to be justified.

GwE has continued to support the school by providing resources e.g. SDP and assistance with curriculum provision. GwE also recognises that planning to implement these changes is very difficult for schools at the moment.

Wellbeing activity has been a priority since the start of the pandemic, with the school receiving the 'Special Schools Wellbeing Award' national accreditation in July.

Using an app to communicate with parents has been key to progress the conversation about continuing to learn.

Several schemes with external partners have increased wellbeing and learning opportunities to do with nature, and Ysgol Pendalar contributes to the Welsh Government's environmental targets.

Bethan Morris-Jones, Pennaeth Ysgol Pendalar

5. THE GAP IN WELLBEING AND ATTAINMENT

The Wellbeing and Achievement Gap has been identified as one of the key priorities in the Council Plan for 2021-22, with a focus on two areas in particular:

- Early Years
- Post-16 Education

5.1. Early Years

The pandemic has certainly highlighted the vulnerability of the early years sector, with inconsistency across the county in the range and availability of services. The range of partners involved in the provision and the strategic direction of the field nationally makes it difficult to structure our services here in Gwynedd. As a result, we intend to present a strategy for the field that will have the needs of Gwynedd at its centre, consulting on its content with all key stakeholders over the upcoming months.

The 'Early Years' field bridges Education, Health and Care, Childcare and Play and Health provisions. As a result, there are many partners in the field and there is more than one agency offering different procedures and schemes here in Gwynedd.

The Council has some statutory duties in the field e.g. Education Act (Statutory Foundation Phase Provision Guidance), Childcare Act, Children and Families Measure; and other elements sitting with the Health Board (Healthy Child Wales Programme) and other partners (Building a Brighter Future, Childcare, Play and Early Years Workforce Plan etc). A large number of services and provisions in the field are supported and co-ordinated by national bodies commissioned by the Welsh Government and this, at times, means that not everyone is heading in the same direction and putting Gwynedd's families and needs first and foremost.

The impact of the pandemic adds to the complexities facing families who want easy access to services, and simple answers to their questions and queries, and this presents complexity and challenges at a strategic level.

We are going to look at carrying out an assessment of the adequacy of our provision across Gwynedd and highlight areas currently without access. We will also look in detail at sustainable funding models, convenient locations and alternative options to provide services to rural areas.

5.2. Post-16 Education

During the pandemic concerns have arisen that the 16-24 age group were disproportionately affected by the crisis more than any other age group. To understand the situation better we are in the process of collating all the evidence to try and get a true picture of the situation. The intention then is that a cross-departmental group that sits within the Council, who have been part of discussions regarding this topic in the past, will take care of the work program that may emerge from the findings of the research.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Members are asked to:

- make any comments on what has been achieved in response to the gap in wellbeing and attainment

RENEW AND REFORM STRATEGY: SUPPORTING LEARNERS' WELLBEING AND PROGRESSION

CONTEXT

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that even in the most challenging of circumstances positive change is possible. In North Wales, GwE, the Local Authorities, Schools and PRUs have seized opportunities to explore innovative ways of working. Schools have delivered meaningful teaching and learning experiences through a creative blended learning approach. These experiences need to be built upon to avoid a 'snap back,' keeping the positive learning that has been developed during this time and preparing for the future. The four transversal themes of the learning organisation of time, trust, thinking together and technology have developed as strong foundations of a collaborative way of working as we move forward with the reform agenda.

As we undertake national reform, it's clear that we are in a different place to the one that we imagined when the guidance for the Curriculum for Wales was published 18 months ago. We recognise that some of the preparation time for the curriculum will have been devoted to managing the impact of the pandemic over the past year. On the other hand, with an even stronger focus on well-being and significant investment in teaching and learning, the values under-pinning the curriculum have been at the heart of how schools have been working. GwE is fully committed to supporting schools and PRUs to maintain this momentum to ensure that every learner in North Wales is offered provision of the highest quality.

We will ensure that all learners in North Wales are able to learn effectively. Their mental health and emotional wellbeing, their relationships and their physical health are all critical enablers of good learning. We will support schools to focus on these areas and also to develop the key enabling skills which include oracy, literacy, numeracy, planning, organising and critical thinking.

We will support schools to ensure that learners are making meaningful progression in their learning. Focusing on progression is forward-looking, emphasising what learners need to make the next steps in their education. This avoids a deficit based model focused on 'catching up' on everything that has been missed. Appropriate assessment arrangements support this progression, helping to identify, capture and reflect on individual learners' progress over time. We will support schools to develop both formative and summative assessment as they plan to implement the new curriculum.

The Minister for Education, has confirmed that the Curriculum for Wales will continue to be implemented in primary schools, maintained nursery schools and non-maintained nursery PRUs from September 2022. The Minister has also confirmed that some additional flexibility will be given to secondary schools. In 2022, schools that are ready to roll out the curriculum to year 7 will be able to press ahead with that. However, formal implementation of the new curriculum will not be mandatory until 2023, with roll-out in that year to years 7 and 8 together. This will also be the case in special schools and all-through schools for 3 to 16-year-olds.

GwE will encourage secondary and special schools who are able to proceed with their current plans to implement the new curriculum with Year 7 from September 2022. We also realise that some secondary schools will continue their path towards curriculum reform from September 2022, and will implement the new curriculum from September 2023 when it will become mandatory for years 7 and 8. However, it is important that the work of reforming the curriculum, and particularly direct engagement between secondary and primary schools, continues in order to support learner transition irrespective of the timeline for implementation adopted by the secondary school.

Beyond 2023, the Curriculum for Wales will be rolled out on a year-by-year basis, and the first qualifications designed specifically for the Curriculum for Wales will be awarded in the 2026-27 academic year, as planned. The reform of qualifications will play a fundamental role in the success of the curriculum and GwE will support the work of Qualifications Wales over the coming year to help shape a set of qualifications of the highest quality that are aligned with the philosophy of the new curriculum.

In North Wales, GwE and the six Local Authorities firmly believe that it is of the utmost importance, that leaders and staff in every establishment are encouraged and supported in the work of forging strong and effective partnerships within and across the education system. Our regional approach has already adopted a cluster/alliance working model to implement key transformational reform areas such as curriculum development, ALN and Welsh Language. It has also been used effectively to share resources and effective practice during the COVID-19 pandemic. GwE is fully committed to continue this work and also to develop and embed structured and planned partnership programmes that will be evidence informed. GwE and the six Local Authorities, will continue to support schools and PRUs to ensure that peer engagement and collaboration becomes a mainstay of our approach in developing a robust, sustainable and effective self-improving system.

We fully support the Minister's vision, as outlined in the '*Cymraeg 2050: our plan for 2021 to 2026*' strategy, to create bilingual citizens who are confident to use Welsh in all aspects of everyday life. GwE will work in partnership with the six Local Authorities to ensure that schools and PRUs are fully supported to develop the Welsh language skills of the workforce and the learners.

The Welsh Government have updated the document '*Curriculum for Wales: the journey to 2022*' which sets out the expectations on schools to reform the curriculum. GwE will support both regional and national networks for curriculum implementation from the autumn onwards. Regional schools will work in partnership with Professor Graham Donaldson, GwE and the six Local Authorities in developing effective practice to unpack the potential of the six Areas of Learning and Experiences (AOLEs) and to develop whole school curriculum design and assessment.

Structures and processes for identifying and supporting schools causing concern will ensure that intervention is timely and appropriate to the context of the school. All schools identified as a school causing concern will have a holistic 360 support plan clearly articulating the nature and intensity of the support provided by either GwE or the Local Authority service that is

responsible for the delivery. This process is outlined in the Partnership Agreement between each Local Authority and its schools. All schools causing concern will be involved in cluster/alliance working that will also contribute to their improvement journey.

GwE and the six Local Authorities, will work closely with key partners such as Welsh Government, Estyn and Qualifications Wales to influence policy, the new Estyn Framework and the reform of qualifications to ensure that we contribute to implementing the Minister's priorities.

THEMES

Through working and listening to partners and key stakeholders, we have identified the following themes to support our aim of ensuring that every learner in North Wales is offered provision of the highest quality. These themes will be actioned by our Business Plans and will be implemented through partnership programmes and an offer of differentiated generic and bespoke support for our schools and PRUs.

The Reform Journey / Curriculum Realisation

- Ensure support for schools in responding to the education reform journey, with strong emphasis on pedagogy, effective teaching and action research.
- Ensure good or better use of formative assessment strategies in all schools.
- Ensure support for all schools in responding to the education reform journey, with strong emphasis on the 12 pedagogical principles and action research.
- Ensure consistency in schools' understanding of the key principles of the new assessment guidance.
- Ensure support for schools in relation to whole-school Curriculum Design and within AOLES.

Re-ignite learning (RRRS)

- Implement programmes which aims to mitigate the effects of school closures on pupils' reading and writing attainment in both English and Welsh.
- Evidence-based teaching strategy designed to help pupils improve their fluency and progress in mathematics.
- Develop online resources suitable for both school staff and parents to enable use of these interventions to assist the reading development of children.
- Continue to develop and produce a suite of universal support materials for secondary numeracy and literacy.

Strategy to support parents / carers to help their children to learn

- Develop a holistic package that supports and helps parents and carers to transform their understanding of learning and what they can do to help their child.
- Develop a comprehensive course for parents and carers, giving them all the tools, knowledge and confidence they need to help their children to learn while they are at home.
- Provide written guidance containing strategies and techniques that parents/carers can use to support their child's learning.

- Provide practical strategies, activities and techniques that can be used by parents and carers to help their children to learn.
- Develop and adapt resources appropriately to meet the needs of specific groups of parents and carers.
- Review the provision that is offered across the region in order to ensure that current resources fully and effectively support and meet local and regional needs.

Learners and whole school wellbeing

- Continue to work closely in partnership with Local Authorities to provide wellbeing support for learners in schools and settings.
- Continue to provide support to school leaders on the identification, engagement and support for specific groups of disadvantaged and vulnerable learners including those who have been disproportionately affected by school closures.
- To further develop & implement the national PDG strategy across the region.
- Develop a Whole School Approach to wellbeing, promoting 'Ethically Informed Citizens of Wales'.
- Co-create Whole School Wellbeing resources with schools from across the region.

Workforce wellbeing (GwE and schools)

- Continue to work closely in partnership with Local Authorities to provide wellbeing support for practitioners in schools and settings.
- Support the emotional well-being of the individual in the context of their professional role.
- Placing health and wellbeing at the heart of everything we do.
- Use a coaching framework in conversations, meetings and everyday leadership to unlock potential and encourage individual growth.

Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

In collaboration with the Local Authorities:

- Support the process of reviewing the quality of ALN provision.
- Develop a professional learning offer that meets the needs of the workforce.
- Continue to support clusters to develop innovative plans to achieve ALN transformation goals.
- Continue to support the delivery of the schools support and training programme.

Y Gymraeg

In collaboration with the Local Authorities we will work to implement the Welsh Government '*Cymraeg 2050: our plan for 2021 to 2026*':

- Develop the informal use of Welsh through 'Siarter iaith' and 'Cymraeg Campus'.
- Provide a professional offer for the Welsh language which is part of the region's Accelerated Learning Strategy.
- Offer professional learning to develop the Welsh language skills of the workforce.
- Promote the profile of the Welsh language amongst leaders in preparation for the Curriculum for Wales and the Welsh Government target of achieving a million Welsh Speakers by 2050.

- Provide support for schools and settings who teach through the medium of Welsh as their first language to improve the Welsh First Language skills of their learners, and especially those from non-Welsh speaking homes.
- Work in partnership to support each Local Authorities with their WESP priorities.

Developing leadership

- Ensure that all learning organisations have the leadership capacity at all levels to inspire, coach, support, share practice and collaborate at all levels to ensure all learners' achieve their potential.
- Ensure that the principles of distributive leaderships are embedded in all learning organisations across the region.
- Continue to offer a wide range of Professional Learning opportunities in relation to leadership developmental programmes in order to develop present and future leaders:
 - Middle Leaders
 - Senior Leaders
 - National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH)
 - New and Acting Headteachers
 - Experienced Headteachers:

Digital

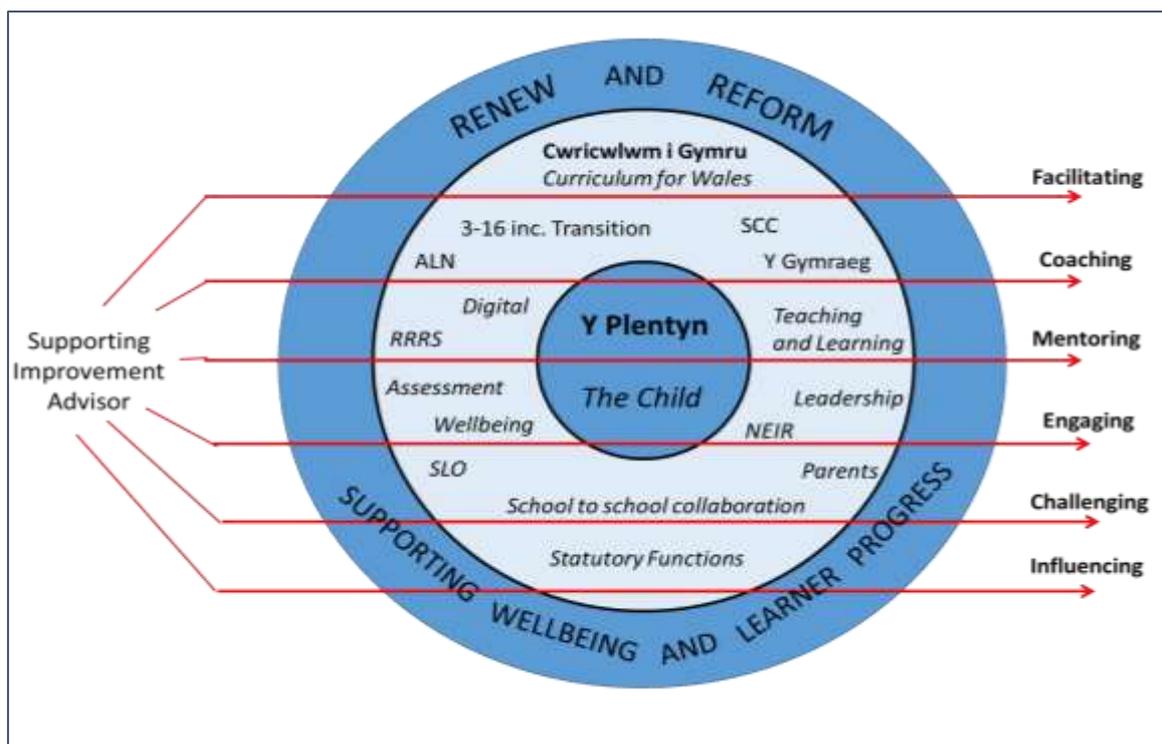
- Ensure that the region's schools' understanding of digital resilience is current and that the teaching and learning of digital security issues is purposeful and effective.
- Develop effective digital leadership within the region's schools to strengthen strategic approaches to improvement planning, change management and impact monitoring.
- Ensure professional learning opportunities are available to all school staff to train them how to use the tools available through *Hwb* and how to make effective use of the tools to improve the quality of learning.

Professional Learning

- Provide professional learning and bespoke support and guidance to schools and settings to help them realise the Reform Journey and prepare for the new curriculum.
- Provide access to a range of regional and national professional learning, including access to coaching and mentoring, for all educational practitioners in schools and settings that is appropriate to their role and responsibility in line with professional standards.

EVOLVING THE REGIONAL MODEL

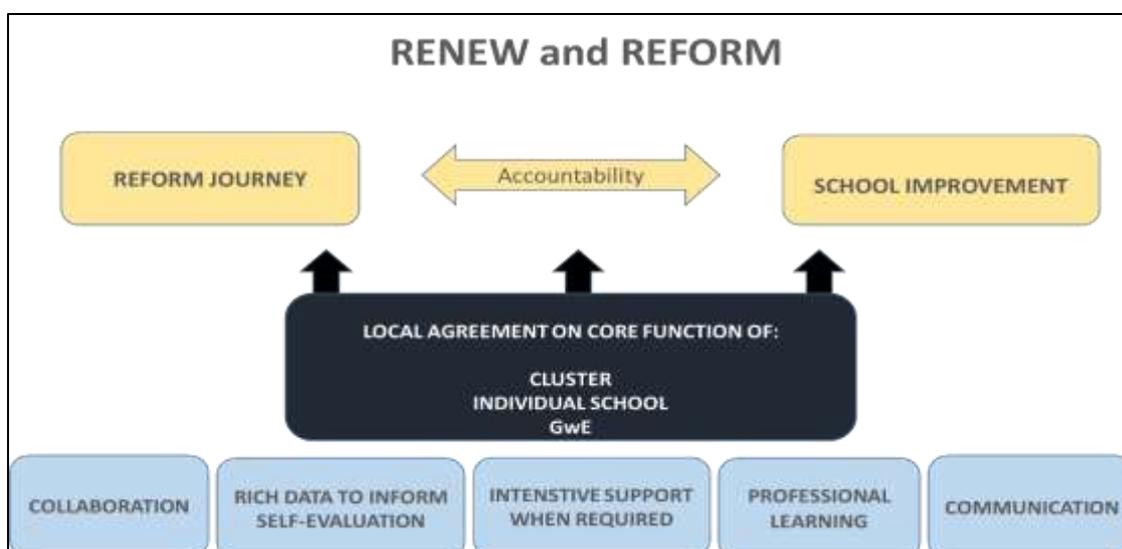
The role of the Supporting Improvement Advisor (SIA) is continuing to evolve as we continue to meet the needs and expectations of all our stakeholders. Our approach will be to support wellbeing and learner progress through working in partnership across the system to enable renewal and reform. With the learner at the centre of everything we do, advisors will use a variety of approaches to support Welsh Government in renewing education post pandemic and ensuring the reform journey remains on track.



The two core aspects of our work moving forward; the reform journey and school improvement will be underpinned by five areas of work:

- Collaboration
- Rich Data to inform Self-evaluation
- Intensive Support when required
- Professional Learning
- Communication

The Core Function of the work will involve a regional partnership approach with collaborations of schools and individual schools. This will give local flexibility regarding the model of delivery.



To ensure that we continue to meet the requirements and expectations of stakeholders, our schools partnership model will need to further evolve. With schools, clusters and alliances at differing points on the self-improving continuum, a nuanced approach will need to be adopted.

Primary focus is on enabling schools to improve by developing a high quality self-improving system which ensures the best for every child.

Arrangements at all levels will be rigorous, robust and coherent and underpinned by the principle of encouraging and supporting schools, clusters and alliances to take increasing ownership and accountability for their improvement journey.

We will ensure that the regional approach for schools partnership is:

- Fair: where we promote equity and inclusion and never lose sight of the learner.
- Coherent: where schools and GwE work together with locally determined core functions, roles and expectations.
- Proportionate: where we ensure that we have a manageable model which makes a difference to all schools. Our approach will support greater autonomy for those schools, clusters and alliances who have the capacity for self-improvement, whilst also allowing for a more comprehensive and intensive support package to be agreed with schools who face specific challenges at a certain point in time and for a specific period of time.
- Collegiate: where no school sees itself as an island. By working together in a structured way, schools can improve faster and more sustainably. Peer collaboration and engagement will be a central feature of our model. All key partners will engage in developing collective efficacy based on high trust, transparency, openness and honesty. It is about partners working together to build capacity into the system through quality enhancement processes and activities.
- Transparent: where we recognise the breadth of learning experience across the region and the value added by schools, leaders, teachers, support staff and advisers working together to an agreed common purpose.

As we move forward with the planning and delivery of the reform journey, our school partnership approach will allow flexibility for schools, clusters and alliances to agree core functions for:

- collaborative developmental work
- approaches to supporting improvements in individual schools within their cluster/alliance
- reporting and accountability processes

Clusters and alliances will also be given the flexibility to agree what the core function and contribution of GwE should be to the three aspects identified above. Where a cluster/alliance determines it has the capacity to undertake many of the core functions, it will be given resources to support with the work and the contribution of GwE will be proportionate. Where a cluster/alliance determines that they require GwE to undertake a greater percentage of the

core functions, the level of resources allocated will be proportionate. GwE contribution could include:

- Leading on or participating in quality assurance or quality enhancing opportunities
- Leading or contributing to developmental work
- Coaching or mentoring groups or individuals
- Facilitating cluster/alliance collaborative activities
- Leading on whole school or cluster/alliance professional development
- Delivering a more intensive support package to individual schools within a cluster/alliance
- Specialist role contributions
- Supporting the professional development of the workforce
- Signposting and sharing best practice

Roles and contributions will be defined within a cluster/alliance '*partnership agreement*' which will be reviewed and evaluated at the end of the year (see Infographic below).

SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME						
CORE FUNCTIONS	CO-DEVELOPING		SUPPORTING IMPROVEMENTS		REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY	
	<i>What?</i>	<i>How?</i>	<i>What?</i>	<i>How?</i>	<i>What?</i>	<i>How?</i>
Cluster						
Individual Schools						
GwE						
IDENTIFIED EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME						
AGREED ALLOCATED RESOURCE BY GwE FOR CLUSTER						
EXXXXX						

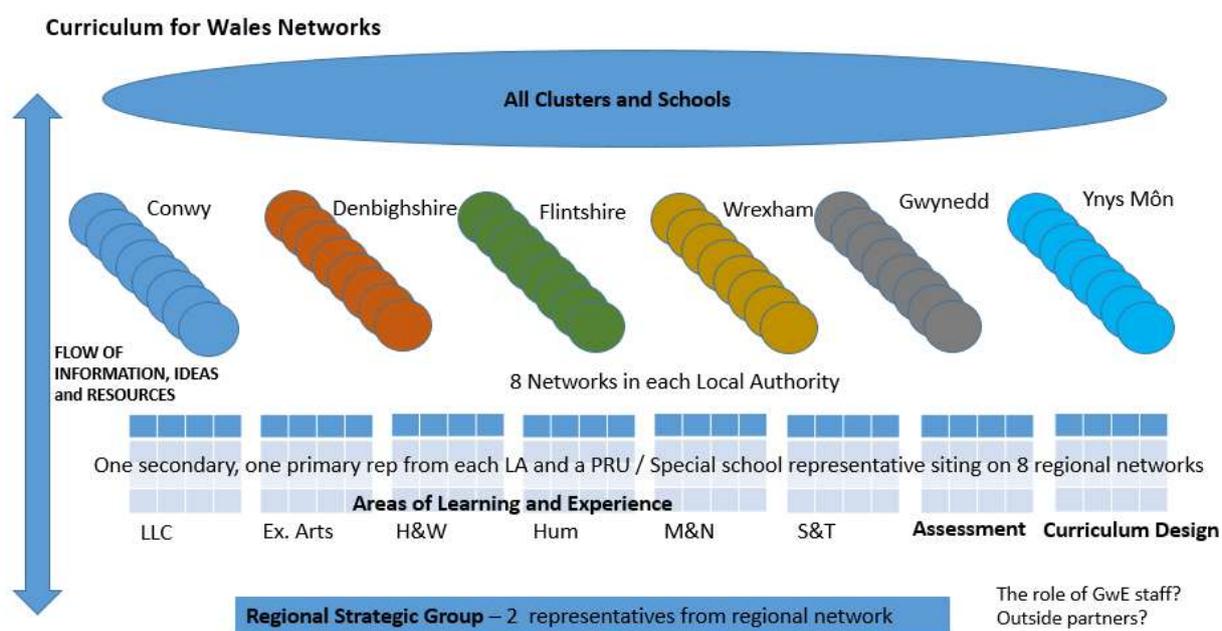
To strengthen the development of the new curriculum, AOLE development networks will be established at regional and a local level. School leaders and practitioners will collaborate to unpack the potential of each AOLE through modelling, designing and sharing curriculum practice.

Collaborative networks will work on the following areas:

1. Unpacking the potential of one of the AOLES
 - Language, Literacy and Communication (both Welsh and English)
 - Mathematics and Numeracy
 - Science & Technology
 - Humanities
 - Health and Wellbeing
 - Expressive Arts

2. Assessment
3. Whole school Curriculum Design

School based practitioners and wider partners from across the region will have the opportunity to work collaboratively with a network of peers supporting curriculum design and AOLE development on a local and regional level. Practitioners will communicate and cascade learning and successful practice across the schools within each local authority and contribute to developing planning and design models to support schools in trialling, evaluating and preparing the workforce for first teaching. The principle of subsidiarity will ensure a local context to this work.



Eight local AOLE networks will be established in each Local Authority, one for each of the areas noted above. Individuals from these local groups will represent the LA in eight regional AOLE networks, ensuring consistency of approach across the region. A regional strategic group, made up of cross-sector representatives from the eight LA groups will provide direction and an overview of the work.

Networks will have access to Professional Learning and work in partnership with Professor Graham Donaldson, GwE and the six North Wales LAs in developing effective AOLE practice which will support all schools on their Reform Journey.

Peer review and school to school support

In North Wales, we firmly believe that peer review and school to school support should be a key driver for continuous improvement in schools as they plan to deliver the new curriculum and national reform. We will work with schools and PRUs to embed a programme of peer review that is based on the following processes:

- **Self-review:** effective peer review should start with how well the school knows itself and be led by the school being reviewed. Self-evaluation should focus on the learner, their achievements, progress and experiences in school and focus on learning and teaching, leadership, the development of a learning organisation culture, well-being of pupils and staff, equity and inclusion. In moving forward, the self-evaluation should also focus on the four purposes of the new curriculum and evaluate the progress the school is making towards realising the new curriculum. The self-evaluation processes should allow the school to identify areas of strengths and priorities for improvement. It should also identify aspects of their improvement journey that require peer support to aid improvement.
- **Peer-review:** the most effective peer reviews have an agreed focus. The purpose of the collaboration must be to improve outcomes and any agreed focus should be based on strong evidence of what's needed to improve and what outcomes would be most benefit to the school. Peer reviewers working as a team or trio work best where they can triangulate evidence and jointly analyse their findings. They are not there to pass judgement but to seek evidence and agree findings to be shared with the school. The partnership must be founded on a clearly articulated shared moral purpose with transparency, trust and honesty crucial and integral to the process. The peer review should also provide professional development opportunities and include leaders at all levels.
- **School-to-school support:** if peer review is going to be a vehicle for ongoing improvement in school systems, then it must go further than the review itself and involve school to school or cluster support. Where the outcomes are owned by the staff, the long-term and sustainable impact will be greater. This helps to further build capacity and increased resilience within a self-improving system. The partnerships built should therefore go beyond school leaders and engage with students, teachers, families and communities.

Schools Causing Concern

Structures and processes for identifying and supporting schools causing concern will ensure that intervention is timely and appropriate to the context of the school.

A **Multi-agency Group** will meet on a regular basis (monthly or as appropriate) to:

- Identify those schools at risk of causing concern
- Agree with the school the bespoke 360 support plan. Plans will clearly identify which service will provide support and resources against identified actions
- Agree the monitoring arrangements of the 360 support plans
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the 360 support plans and work with schools to monitor progress and impact
- Share any effective practice within and across regional local authorities
- Where concerns escalate, the Multi-agency Group will report to the Quality Board so that Directors/Heads of Service can make informed and timely decision regarding the use of statutory powers of intervention

The **LA Quality Board** will meet on a half termly basis and will be chaired by the Chief Education Officer. Decisions for action by the Board should be recorded and shared with the Multi-agency group or supporting service as appropriate.

The Board's main focus will be on:

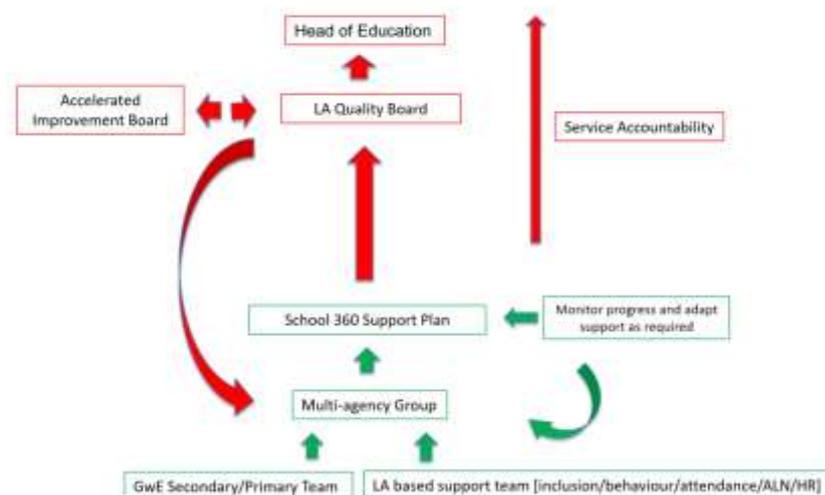
- assessing the progress of those schools causing concern that have been identified by Estyn or by local processes
- assessing the quality of the support planning for schools causing concern undertaken by the Multi-agency Group
- ensuring the Multi-agency Group undertakes its monitoring functions effectively
- taking required actions when escalation of concerns are shared by the Multi-agency Group and specifically around ability of school leadership and governance to improve at sufficient pace
- considering use of statutory powers of intervention when there are concerns around progress or pace of progress
- identifying best practice to share within and across local authorities

Where required, the local authority could also establish an **Accelerated Improvement Board** to support individual schools on their improvement journey. Membership will include representatives from the local authority, GwE, the head teacher and the governing body of the school. The purpose of the AIB will be to:

- Provide support for school improvement
- Provide an internal and external challenge forum
- To identify any concerns
- To identify any actions to be prioritised
- To further inform the Head of Education as to whether it is necessary for the LA to use its powers of intervention

The regional structures and processes for supporting and challenging schools causing concerns are summarised below:

Regional structures and process for supporting and challenging SCC.



Statutory Functions and Accountability

The GwE Core Lead and the Supporting Improvement Advisers will work in partnership with Local Authority officers to implement the *Local Authority-School Partnership Agreement*. Monitoring and evaluation of overall standards, quality of teaching, learning and leadership will be undertaken by GwE's Core Lead and Supporting Improvement Advisers working in partnership with schools and clusters. However, GwE and the six Local Authorities will work with schools to evolve the current accountability system to allow schools and clusters to become more autonomous. Peer review will be a key element in supporting schools to evaluate their strengths areas for improvement and in helping them focus on specific improvement areas as they plan and deliver the new curriculum.

In moving towards a self-improving system, there will be a greater emphasis on moral and professional accountabilities. Accountability relationships for school will include those with pupils, parents, colleagues and the local community. The challenge for us over the next few years will be to create a culture where schools feel greater ownership of accountability and shift the perception that accountability is based just on data and inspection and imposed from above.

In North Wales, GwE and the six Local Authorities are committed to work in partnership with schools to develop a robust accountability system that has the confidence of all key stakeholders and holds each partner fully accountable for their role in developing our learners to become:

- Ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives;
- Enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work;
- Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world; and
- Healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

System expectations in North Wales

By September 2024:

- All schools will meet the statutory requirements of the *Curriculum for Wales* and each school will have a strong relationship with their community and are developing a broad range of learner skills that will make them ready for further education, training and employment.
- Planning around the four purposes of the new curriculum will provide a balanced offer to meet the needs of all learners.
- A basic skills strategy comprising literacy, numeracy and digital competency will underpin the curriculum in every school.

- A strategy for children who are vulnerable to learning, concentrating on their inclusion, emotional wellbeing, attendance and any additional learning needs will be operational and impacting positively on their progress and wellbeing.
- We will have worked with schools and local authorities to adopt a new accountability model, which will include robust quality assurance processes, to ensure that there are clear and appropriate lines of accountability at all levels for regional school improvement and developments.
- An effective school causing concern strategy will be in place with the right capacity to identify and address need.
- Improving teaching will be at the heart of all improvements.
- Mature school collaborations through clusters and alliances will be in place across the region and a more collegiate approach to school improvement will be firmly established in order to secure better outcomes for learners.
- A robust regional Welsh in Education Strategic Plan will be operational to fully support both local and national priorities for improving the Welsh Language skills of both learners and the workforce.
- There will be a robust professional learning offer in place that meet the needs of all leaders and teaching staff to help each school implement all aspects of the reform journey and enable their learners to develop towards the four purposes of the new curriculum.
- GwE will effectively operate as a learning organisation in line with the seven 'action-orientated' dimensions identified by the OECD, and will have strong mature partnerships with its key stakeholders that will include a clear communication strategy.

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

CAPTURING PROGRESS AND IMPACT - BASELINE VISIT AUTUMN 2021

In order to support the defining and planning of a support programme that will allow us to meet the system expectations set for 2024, together with the determined milestones along the way, we will work closely with schools over the first half term to capture progress and impact of implementation thus far and to ensure that all institutions have an appropriate improvement plan in place...

The visits will further build on the support provided prior to the summer as schools identified their achievements and aspects requiring further attention.

Our involvement with leaders across schools will see us focusing discussions on the priorities of both the school and cluster in their preparations for delivering the Curriculum for Wales. This will allow opportunity to discuss and verify initial curriculum design plans, intentions in terms of continuing to improve pedagogy, ALN transformation priorities and how joint accountability can be developed within a cluster collaboration model.

This will also serve as an opportunity to observe how schools have been further engaging with the guidance and support materials shared by GwE via the training workshops, and to see how they are engaging in the work of the established regional and local networks across the AoLEs and in the areas of curriculum design and assessment.

This will put us in a stronger position to ensure suitable and appropriate support at a school, cluster and authority level, via professional learning programmes, various forums and networks or specific support plans. The visits will also be used to collate information about developing good practice that should be celebrated and rolled out.

The school's evaluation and knowledge of what has worked well, together with the aspects identified for further attention, will be the starting point of all discussions. Engagement and discussions will take place over a series of visits and will be regarded as a process rather than a single butterfly touch visit. This will not be a process of 'doing something' to the school either but rather a joint diagnostic evaluation, identification and planning exercise with leaders. It will involve 'quality enrichment' rather than 'quality assurance'. This approach to the work is very much welcomed by school heads.

In the primary, we will also see this engagement to check how schools are capturing and measuring progress in areas such as literacy, numeracy, basic skills, wellbeing, and support for learners vulnerable to learning.

In our involvement at secondary, there will be an additional focus on insights from the school's evaluation of centre assessments 2021. In a written statement (dated 21 June 2021), the Education Minister confirmed:

'the suspension of Key Stage 4 and legacy sixth form performance measures will be extended to the 2021/22 academic year. Qualification awards data will not be used to report on attainment outcomes at a school, local authority or regional consortium level and must not be used to hold schools to account for their learners.'

However, he also highlighted that all schools would be required to use the range of information available from this year's processes to conduct a self-evaluation and to identify improvement priorities.

We will therefore use the information held by the school at a pupil level to initiate discussions about this year's GCSE and A Level results. Those discussions can be based on enquiries such as:

- what evidence from last year's teaching and learning validates your centre grades?
- what lessons have been learned about the resilience of the school's standardisation and moderation procedures? To what extent will processes be further refined?
- how confident is the school that all departments have identified robust and focused action priorities for 2021-22? What plans have been adopted to support subject leaders with this work if any concerns have been raised?
- what areas have been identified as key strengths? What plans have been adopted to roll these out across the school?
- are there any areas/subjects where the accuracy of tracking and assessment needs to be tweaked? What plans have been adopted to support subject leaders/teachers with the work so that the school's variance levels can be effectively addressed?
- What plans are in place to further support vulnerable groups of pupils, including FSM learners?
- what plans are in place to work with other regional schools to support and assist with further improvements? To what extent will collaboration involve middle leaders and teaching staff?

2021 AUTUMN TERM NOTE OF VISIT

School		LA	
Headteacher		SIA	
Report by		Date of visit	

2021 CENTRE DETERMINED GRADES FOR GCSE AND A LEVEL

In his written statement (dated 21 June 2021) the Education Minister confirmed ‘that the suspension of Key Stage 4 and legacy sixth form performance measures will be extended to the 2021/22 academic year. Qualification awards data will not be used to report on attainment outcomes at a school, local authority or regional consortium level and must not be used to hold schools to account for their learners’ outcomes.’ He also confirmed that ‘all schools and post-16 providers will continue to be required to undertake effective self-evaluation to support continuous improvement. Our evaluation, improvement and accountability arrangements require consideration of a broad range of information, relevant to a school’s own context, when undertaking self-evaluation and identifying improvement priorities. This will involve schools, with support from local authorities and regional consortia, using the learner level information they have to reflect on and improve their existing arrangements.’

CURRICULUM FOR WALES

‘For primary schools, rollout will commence in September 2022. Secondary schools who are ready to roll out the curriculum to Year 7 will be free to do so, but this will not be mandatory until 2023, with roll out to Years 7 and 8 together. Secondary schools should begin conversations internally and with regional consortia about their plans for 2022 and a process for those schools wishing to rollout in that year will be made available in due course. In the 2021/22 academic year, all secondary schools should be undertaking work in all three phases. Secondary schools who plan to rollout in 2023 should continue, expand and conclude this work in 2022/23. During this time, they should work very closely with their cluster primary schools to understand their experiences and the nature of learners’ progression’.

Expectation by end of October 2021:

All schools have a clear plan identifying actions for 2021-22 to be in position to meet new statutory requirements for September 2022 [or 2023 secondary]. This plan identifies aspects including:

- Professional learning to support all staff
- Use of grants
- Trialling and evaluating approaches within curriculum design across all 6 AOLES
- Wider engagement with stakeholders

All schools have a plan identifying clear priorities across their 3-16 cluster where clear areas for collaboration and developing a shared approach are identified.

What are your priorities for Curriculum for Wales as a school for the Autumn term?

What are your priorities for Curriculum for Wales as a cluster for the Autumn term?

How are you engaging further with the resources from the CfW professional learning offer?

- Leading change
- Developing shared vision
- Curriculum change sessions 1, 2, 3

What will be the role and contribution of your SIA and extended GwE team members in supporting this work?

What are your initial approaches to developing curriculum design

- within your school?
- across your cluster?

How will the regional and local networks support your school/cluster?
ALN
What are your priorities for ALN Wales Transformation as a school /cluster for the Autumn term ?
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
Are there any other further areas/aspects for professional learning that you have identified?
ACCOUNTABILITY
What should accountability look like? How will you measure progress and impact of your work? What will reporting look like?

Actions		
Required Action	Responsibility	By when
Signed	Date	

REPORT FOR GWYNEDD'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21 OCTOBER

ACCELERATED LEARNING PROGRAMME

Background:

As a result of the Covid pandemic, the Accelerated Learning Programme Grant has been available to support schools as they strengthen the support available to pupils. As reported to the committee in June, all schools have produced suitable plans for the use of this money in order to respond to the needs of the learners in their care. These plans were held and approved in a regional dashboard. Where the Dashboard wasn't used, the schools planned using their own templates which have been sent to the associate consultants. Access to the schemes is provided by GwE consultants and Officers of the Authority. The Plans were validated by the associate consultants and where there were concerns about the quality and robustness of some plans, this was shared with relevant officers of the Authority and with the schools so that they could respond to concerns. Responsibility for monitoring expenditure rests with the Authority.

The plans complement the grant's conditions (*see further details of the Conditions in the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee report, 10 June 2021*) and identify a need to recruit additional staff or increase existing staff's time in order to run intervention programmes to restore and raise standards – whether on the basis of a teacher or an assistant. At the peak of the pandemic, it was difficult for some schools to find appropriate staff locally and other restrictions made it difficult to introduce new workers. The same challenge continues to face some schools.

GwE secured support for the accelerated learning programme by sharing the evidence and research into the most effective interventions for pupils or groups to catch-up with their learning. A large number of virtual presentations were held to share and explain the thinking behind some of these interventions. Many resources were shared to accompany the plans through the GwE Support Centre and it is clear that many schools have made extensive use of these. At individual school level, the Supporting Improvement Advisors (SIAs) have been on hand to offer further guidance and share good practice. In addition, in secondary schools, under leadership of the core subjects' SIA, network meetings for each Head of Core Subject have addressed literacy and numeracy interventions including the sharing of strategies and resources that departments can use or adapt to their purposes. Examples of the type of resources that have been produced for schools by the GwE SIA on subjects can be found at the following link: <https://www.herio.cymru/items/accelerate-english-tier1.html>. Follow up visits or additional support have been made available to those schools that have requested it through their individual support plans.

Schools have generally coped very well in a very difficult and tiring year for them. The headteachers and staff have all demonstrated remarkable resilience and have worked together, maintained and supported each other excellently. The pupils' wellbeing has been a priority for everyone and interventions to accelerate learning have been able to take place.

Since starting back in September, challenges still exist in many areas with so many pupils and staff absent or isolating. Interventions as part of this programme have restarted in most schools but monitoring the impact of the Accelerated Learning Programme spending in the classroom continues to present challenges. In a number of schools, it was possible to measure impact directly through

joint-scrutiny or joint-observation. However, in many schools the exercise has largely taken place through discussions with headteachers and their ability to share specific data or examples of the impact of the programmes with us.

Regular meetings are held between the Authority's officers and GwE Supporting Improvement Advisors to share information about individual schools in order to target additional support when there are concerns or to identify good practice for sharing.

Almost all primary schools, through discussions, questionnaires and internal assessments, were able to find a baseline for their pupils when they returned in September 2020. The programme's spending plans in their dashboard therefore targeted those individuals or groups 'most affected by lockdown, whether in terms of wellbeing or attainment'. Intervention groups were created in almost every school to provide recovery support for these pupils with the main focus on improving wellbeing and coping, literacy including improving oracy, reading and writing and to maintain and improve numeracy skills. Many schools also made good use of the guidance by GwE to consider research into the most effective interventions, thereby using many Accelerated Learning resources on the GwE website.

Examples of use and impact of the funding could include:

- Schools successfully helping pupils back into school life, helping them to cope with difficult situations from home and to be more resilient in their work.
- The money was used to remove specialist assistants from their usual classes to run more ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support) and Talkabout (discussing self-esteem and social skills) sessions with vulnerable individuals or groups of children across the school. This led to more pupils being able to re-adjust back into school life and re-form friendships as well as being more willing to learn.
- One school took advantage of local masters students who were home from university a few days a week to come into the school to work with groups of pupils to re-develop spoken and conversational skills in Welsh. With the background of the students' psychology and language degree, the school soon saw a difference in the standard of language and attitude of all members of these groups.
- Another school took advantage of LEGO Therapy training in order to hold regular sessions for groups of pupils who had become withdrawn and quiet after returning. According to the school's assessments, the sessions have raised almost all of these pupils' self-confidence, self-esteem and co-working and conversational skills.
- All Reception, Year 1 and 2 pupils have lost a large percentage of their time at school over the last eighteen months. Many schools note a delay in the fine motor skills of many of the children of this age which has an impact on their ability to hold a pencil, use scissors etc. These schools have therefore been targeting these skills through activities that are developmentally suitable to strengthen the hand muscles such as playing with clay, dough and building blocks. This is beginning to have a positive impact on the children's skills to use pencils, create marks and write independently.
- In terms of the skills, almost every school used funding from the programme to target groups of pupils identified as having slipped in literacy and numeracy, pupils who were often not in intervention groups prior to the pandemic. Every school that established a baseline when the children returned shows that a very high percentage of these pupils have made

progress following interventions. In one school that targeted the reading skills of B2 pupils, 85% had made progress towards their chronological reading age within a term.

- The long-term impact of this programme and action is that many assistants and teachers have been upskilled and have gained confidence and experience to undertake further effective interventions with new groups of pupils.

All schools have evaluated their provision in some way throughout the year and thus begin to capture the impact of the programme. They have used a range of methods such as pupil discussions and questionnaires, more formal assessments and extensive discussions among staff. All schools have considered the impact of their provision and measured pupils' progress through conversations or wellbeing questionnaires, wellbeing assessments such as PASS or Boxhall and by undertaking national literacy and numeracy assessments as well as internal standardised tests. Late in the summer term and into this year many schools have succeeded in re-introducing and holding more formal evaluation sessions of their provision such as work scrutiny and a learning walk, and some have observed lessons. Almost all schools have analysed their evaluations' findings and monitor pupils' progress closely. They have then modified the interventions as necessary, drawing up appropriate interventions or adjusting the provision for pupils who have slipped, pupils who made no progress or pupils that needed further support. Most schools have reported on provision and progress to their governors.

Therefore, in terms of this programme specifically, the schools' schemes are having a positive short-term effect with almost every school noting that the interventions have contributed to improving or restoring standards. However, many of these schemes are going to take longer to fully demonstrate the impact on some of the most vulnerable pupils and those with additional learning needs. It is still too early to see the full long term effect of this programme's spending on attainment.

This year will leave a long-term impact on many children and their families and many schools will therefore invest in support beyond this programme to respond to the long-term need.

In line with the grant's conditions, secondary schools have targeted intervention for specific cohorts of pupils, such as pupils preparing for exams, vulnerable and disadvantaged children, year 7 and any specific groups or individuals identified as needing additional support in literacy, numeracy, digital competence, promoting independent learning skills and securing additional support through training.

In most cases, initiatives include appointing or increasing the hours of assistants or learning coaches for catch-up sessions. There are various examples of how the schools have used the money to support learning. These include:

- holding literacy and numeracy lessons for pupils, adjusting timetables to ensure additional intervention is targeted
- holding lessons after school to support children to catch up with their work in general
- targeting specific interventions for pupils in the examination years who had been identified to receive additional support.
- supporting wellbeing by holding additional counselling sessions by charities such as 'Joshua Tree' for vulnerable pupils who have been adversely affected during the pandemic.
- overcome practical barriers to learning for individual learners by providing resources such as books, laptops, one-to-one support.

Since the start of the new educational year in September, the intention was to move to a system of monitoring which included joint-scrutiny and lesson observation with senior management teams in the schools, evaluating the quality of joint action and validating opinions. It is fair to note that the situation has been challenging for schools due to the incidence of Covid affecting staffing and the feasibility of conducting scrutiny exercises. However, many secondary schools have now resumed this work. In a few schools receiving more intensive support, the Associate SIA has been able to co-operate with senior management teams whilst validating opinions. Among the successes that schools have identified as early effects of the interventions are:

- improved motivation by pupils
- learners making good educational progress as they receive specific and positive feedback in catch-up lessons
- increase in pupils' confidence
- a greater awareness of linguistic accuracy by pupils
- vulnerable pupils are more willing to attend school because support is tailored to their needs
- pupils being supported and spending time in a supportive ethos, helping to improve learners' emotional health
- a school with a better understanding of learners' concerns and in a position to respond to those concerns. As a result, provision is constantly adjusted to be more effective.
- schools developing firmly in the direction of the Curriculum for Wales essentials.

Agenda Item 8

Scrutiny Draft work programme 2021/22

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10/06/2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Welsh Language within Education, including the Language Centres• Educational grants to assist pupils• School Meals
21/10/2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cabinet decision call in – Ysgol Abersoch• Support for businesses (forward from 08/02/2022)• Well-being gap, including<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ The effect of covid on <u>the education</u> of all pupils➢ Which steps do schools have in place to ensure the well-being of all pupils
09/12/2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unemployment levels and support for people to return to work• Education Annual Report• School Meals
08/02/2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regeneration Framework (moved from 21/10/21)• New Curriculum for Wales, along with outdoor education
31/03/2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• North Wales Economic Ambition Board• Sustainable Tourism

Reviewed October 2021