

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report for a meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Date of meeting:	12 June 2018
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Gareth Thomas
Contact Officer:	Debbie Anne Williams Jones
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Title of Item:	'Survey of the Procedure of Developing Ysgol Bro Idris, Dolgellau'

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

- 1.1. The Cabinet is asked to adopt the recommendations noted in the report to enable the Education Department to incorporate them as a core part of the reorganisation processes it implements jointly with other stakeholders in other catchment areas in the future.

2. THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

- 2.1 An independent consultant was commissioned to carry out a '*Survey of the Procedure of Developing Ysgol Bro Idris, Dolgellau*' in order to learn lessons following the reorganisation in the catchment area, and particularly due to the fact that the length and breadth of this scheme is unique.
- 2.2 The commission was also an opportunity to address some concerns expressed by former members of staff in Y Gader catchment area regarding some aspects of the process of establishing Ysgol Bro Idris.
- 2.3 The Education Department accepts all the recommendations stated in the report '*Survey of the Procedure of Developing Ysgol Bro Idris, Dolgellau*'.

3. PRESENTATION AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Establishing a new school is a partnership between the Authority and the Shadow Governing Body, which is a full statutory governing body.
- 3.2 Fundamentally, the Authority is responsible for making the decision to open a school and deliver a prefabricated building, and the Authority is under a statutory duty to achieve that by the date published.

- 3.3 The governing body is responsible for the steps to ensure that the school is in order and that a headteacher has been appointed and that a staffing structure is operational on the first day.
- 3.4 The Authority is not in a position to make promises or propose robust plans regarding the form and management of a new school, as the Shadow Governing Body or the Governors alongside the Headteacher, can present and adopt an alternative model.
- 3.5 It is acknowledged that a multi-site all-through school leads to more challenges because of the impact of arrangements on the physical location of pupils.
- 3.6 For the purposes of commissioning the survey, an initial meeting was held between the consultant and the Head of Education Department, during which:
- i. Documents of relevance to the survey were shared;
 - ii. Agreement was reached on initial actions with:
 - a) The Headteacher of Ysgol Bro Idris
 - b) Representatives from Gwynedd Council
 - c) The Chair of the Shadow Governing Body, Ysgol Bro Idris
 - d) The leaders of the group that lodged complaints against the Authority.

It was agreed that the survey would run its own course so that the information obtained would be as thorough as possible.

- 3.7 Below, the Education Department wishes to draw attention to some specific paragraphs within the report '*Survey of the Procedure of Developing Ysgol Bro Idris, Dolgellau*' in order to correct and/or provide further clarity on the issues quoted:

PAGE	PARAGRAPH	SURVEY OF THE PROCEDURE OF DEVELOPING YSGOL BRO IDRIS, DOLGELLAU	CORRECTION / FURTHER CLARITY BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
4	3.2	<i>“...there was a feeling that the new Ysgol Bro Idris would be very attractive for teachers to come to the Dolgellau area. This problem was not anticipated, and the first step of advertising every post externally with a promise of an interview to the present staff was done without properly considering the psychological impact of this on the area's existing workforce, although the decision was not implemented in the end.”</i>	It was the decision of the Shadow Governing Body of Ysgol Bro Idris to advertise every post externally in the first place.

5	4.3	<i>“Consequently, the Authority did not know the exact numbers of pupils at each site. This caused difficulties to put protection money in place, and a difficulty, therefore, to set a draft budget for each site.”</i>	The number of sites did not affect the financial situation of the school as a whole, and it did not affect those sites where protection was required (Friog and Dinas Mawddwy). The uncertainty regarding pupil numbers at each site affected the staff numbers required on the other three sites. This was what made it difficult to establish the staffing structure and the staff's locations within the budget available.
5	4.5	<i>“One weakness was the Council’s lack of vision of what is meant by All-through School so as to ensure a model for consideration by the Governing Body and the school.”</i>	<p>The consultation document for the Dolgellau catchment area notes:</p> <p><i>An all-through school could provide additional opportunities to maintain a common ethos and values across the school and these should provide a more effective context for improving the quality of the teaching and learning</i></p> <p><i>An all-age school could facilitate the change, as there would be no need to move establishment between the primary and secondary stages when the pupils reach 11 years of age.</i></p> <p>Nevertheless, making a decision on how to implement and establish arrangements for the model chosen for Ysgol Bro Idris was a matter for the Governing Body and the school.</p>
9	7.5	<i>“In general, the unions believed that the Authority should have followed TUPE</i>	TUPE regulations were not relevant, as the Local Authority was the legal employer in

		<p><i>rules to appoint, rather than the procedure actually used. When challenging the unions on this, they were asked whether or not every teacher was competent to move to an equivalent post. Their views were made explicitly clear - these teachers were not under the capability procedure - and so there was no reason not to offer them an equivalent post."</i></p>	<p>every case; there was no change in the identity of the employer therefore there was no relevant transfer to the purposes of the regulations.</p>
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4. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

4.1. When considering the implementation of the following recommendations, there is a need to acknowledge that the Authority takes a lead role, but it also has an advisory role regarding other aspects. This partnership reflects the parallel statutory duties that need to be implemented to open the establishment.

4.2. Here are the recommendations:

- A vision should be set at the beginning of the process of establishing and All-through School, particularly in terms of developing the 'middle school' in order to achieve the real value of an All-through School.
- A Strategic Headteacher should be appointed very early in the process, to enable the Headteacher, the Authority and the Governing Body to collaborate on the Authority's vision.
- A Project Leader should be appointed to be responsible for the entire project (from start to finish), who is accountable to the Authority's Programme Board, to the Governing Body and to all stakeholders.
- Close collaboration should be ensured between the Professional Unions, the Strategic Headteacher, the Governing Body and the Authority, to set a clear Staffing Strategy early in the process.
- Clear and completely open criteria should be established at the start of the appointment process so that no further ambiguity arises later on in the process.
- A better communication procedure should be established so that all stakeholders know what is happening (or what is not happening, which is as important).

- It should be realised that the threat of staff losing their jobs is a serious and traumatic matter, and this should be acknowledged and responded to.
- An apology should be conveyed to the former headteachers of the Dolgellau catchment area for what was noted.
- Ysgol Bro Idris should further develop the link between Y5/6 and Y7/8 over the coming years in order to develop the principle of the Donaldson Report/Bright Future more robustly, and better relate to the principles of an All-through School.

The Education Department accepts all the recommendations stated in the report '*Survey of the Procedure of Developing Ysgol Bro Idris, Dolgellau*'. In adopting the recommendations, the Education Department, alongside other stakeholders, will incorporate them as a core part of the reorganisation processes it implements in parallel and in partnership in other catchment areas in the future.

5. ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

N/A

5.1. Views of the Statutory Officers:

i. Monitoring Officer:

“The report acknowledges that the process for establishing a school such as Bro Idris is multi-faceted and complex. It involves the co-ordination of a number of significant elements and statutory and non-statutory processes leading to the opening of the new establishment. It is appropriate to reflect on the project to ensure that lessons to be learnt are identified and feed into the improvement of future arrangements.”

ii. Head of Finance Department:

“Whilst accepting the bulk of recommendations as lessons to be learnt, the practicability of some may be unclear. For example, the second recommendation is not specific about the meaning of “very early in the process”, and to some extent the Authority needs to crystallise its “vision” for the school before advertising for the head. Generally, apart from appointing a head more than 4 terms before the school opens, I take it that the rest of the recommendations are possible within the current resources of the Education Department and the relevant catchment area.”

APPENDIX 1

Report: '*Survey of the Procedure of Developing Ysgol Bro Idris, Dolgellau*'.

