

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report for a meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Date of meeting:	12 March 2019
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Gareth Thomas
Contact Officer:	Diane Jones
Contact Telephone Number:	01286 679861
Title of Item:	Reorganisation of Primary Education Provision in the Bangor Catchment Area

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

- 1.1. To confirm the Council's contribution towards the total financial package of £12.7 million for the reorganisation of Primary Education provision in the Bangor Catchment Area.

2. THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

- 2.1. To ensure that the project for the reorganisation of education provision in Bangor is delivered, in light of the specific situation at Ysgol y Faenol where the Governing Body is the proposer.

3. INTRODUCTION AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The Bangor Catchment Review Panel (CRP) was established in June 2017. During its meetings, several options were considered regarding the educational vision for Bangor. Following a full consideration of the possible options, the agreed favoured option is:

"Extend Ysgol y Faenol to increase the capacity from 186 to 315. A new school for Ysgol y Garnedd, and increase the capacity from 210 to 420. Close Ysgol Coed Mawr and Glanadda. A new building for Ysgol Ein Harglwyddes. Increase the capacity of Ysgol Glancegin to admit additional foundation phase pupils. Improvements to parts of the Ysgol Hiracl building. Consider the Secondary provision, including the condition of the existing buildings."

- 3.1.2 The above option was submitted to Cabinet on 13 March 2018 in order to obtain a decision to hold a consultation on part of this Model, namely:

"To extend Ysgol y Faenol to increase the capacity from 186 to 315. A new school for Ysgol y Garnedd, and increase the capacity from 210 to 420."

and it was agreed to commence a statutory process in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2013, and report to the Cabinet on the results.

3.1.3 As Ysgol y Faenol is a Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled (VC) school, the School Organisation Code notes that the Governing Body has the authority to make a decision on increasing the School's capacity, with the Local Authority being able to facilitate the process. Therefore, the proposer in this case was Ysgol y Faenol's Governing Body, not the Cabinet.

3.1.4 A public consultation was held on 18 September 2018 for a period of six weeks.

Gwynedd Council's response to the consultation, through the Cabinet Member for Education, was:

"On behalf of Gwynedd Council, I would like to note the observations below as a response to the statutory proposal by Ysgol y Faenol's Governing Body to increase the existing school's capacity to 315 learners, by modifying the existing building.

As part of the engagement work to consider the future of primary education in Bangor, a series of meetings of the Catchment Review Panel (CRP) were held between June and November, with the final meeting held on 29 November 2017. During the meetings, many options were considered for primary education in Bangor in order to ensure sustainable future provision while responding specifically to the increase in demand for places in the Penrhosgarnedd area, as well as improving the provision for learners in the city. As a result of these discussions, the need to increase Ysgol y Faenol's capacity was identified as one of the main considerations for the Council's vision. The proposed substantial investment associated with the proposal means that the pupils will be taught in a modern resource that is in-keeping with the modern curriculum; it is also an exciting opportunity for us to develop a first class resource for this area in Bangor.

We are therefore confident that the option to increase Ysgol y Faenol's capacity to 315 by the Governing Body is in-keeping with Gwynedd Council's general vision to strengthen the primary provision in the area, and are very supportive of this specific proposal."

3.1.5 In a meeting held on 24 January 2019, Ysgol y Faenol's Governing Body decided to increase the school's capacity to 315.

3.2 Gwynedd Council's Financial Commitment to Ysgol y Garnedd

3.2.1 At the Cabinet meeting on 6 November 2018, the following was agreed:

"Implement the proposal issued on 4 May 2018 to close Ysgol Glanadda and Ysgol Babanod Coedmawr on 31 August 2020, and offer places for the pupils at Ysgol y Garnedd (subject to parental choice); and increase the capacity of Ysgol y Garnedd to 420 effective 1 September 2020."

As part of this decision, the Council committed to fund a proportion of the cost of building the new school as match funding toward 50% of the grant funding already confirmed by the Welsh Government.

3.2.2 The decision to extend Ysgol y Faenol was made by the Governing Body on 24 January 2019, however there is a need to confirm the Cabinet's agreement to release the match funding required in the same way as for the new building at Ysgol y Garnedd.

3.3 The required budget

3.3.1 A total of £12.7 million has been identified as the cost of completing the Faenol and Garnedd elements of the plan for the reorganisation of Primary Education provision in the Bangor Catchment Area. The total package is to be funded as follows:

- Welsh Government grant £6.35 million
- Gwynedd Council's contribution of £6.35 million, which is made up of a £1,115,387 contribution by a housing development company (the Goetre Uchaf development), £4,500,000 from Gwynedd Council's capital funding, and any revenue obtained from selling sites up to £749,613.

4. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

4.1.1 Following of confirmation of the match funding, the intention will be to agree the building contract for the construction of Ysgol y Faenol in July this year.

4.1.2 Work will commence on the Ysgol y Faenol site shortly after the contract is in place.

5.1 Views of the Statutory Officers:

i. Monitoring Officer:

The approval of a statutory proposal under Part 3 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 creates a statutory duty on the proposer to implement the proposal. The recommendation to confirm the match funding accords with the decisions taken by the Council and the Governing Body of Ysgol y Faenol.

ii. Head of Finance Department:

I confirm that the financial figures that appear in section 3.3 of the above report, including Gwynedd Council's contribution funding of £6.35m, are fair estimates of the Bangor Catchment-area Primary Education provision reorganisation plan. Also, I note that appropriate resources have already been prioritised for this in the Asset Plan.

5.2 Opinion of the local member

Not a local matter.