

MEETING	Gwynedd Council Cabinet
DATE	18 February 2020
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Cemlyn Rees Williams
OFFICER	Gwern ap Rhisiart
TITLE OF ITEM	Ysgol Llanaelhaearn

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

The Cabinet is asked to consider the comments received during the statutory consultation period and the response to those comments, and determine whether to:

- i. Approve the proposal to close Ysgol Llanaelhaearn on 31 August 2020, and provide a place for pupils at Ysgol Bro Plenydd, Y Ffôr from 1 September 2020.
- ii. 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. Approve the transport arrangements for the transition period only, when free transport will be available for those pupils enrolled at Ysgol Llanaelhaearn currently, to Ysgol Bro Plenydd, Y Ffôr or Ysgol Chwilog specifically, if they live over two miles from the chosen school, or that they receive free transport because of the nature of the roads in accordance with Gwynedd Council's current transport policy.

2. THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

- 2.1. The purpose of this report is to report to the Cabinet following a statutory consultation period on the proposal to close Ysgol Llanaelhaearn on 31 August 2020, and provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Bro Plenydd, Y Ffôr from 1 September 2020.

3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1. A report was submitted to the Cabinet meeting on 4 June 2019, where it was resolved to, *'grant permission to the Education Department to hold formal meetings with the governing body and other relevant stakeholders to discuss a range of potential options for the school's future'*.
- 3.2. Three meetings were held between June and October 2019. During the initial meeting, the Governing Body and other relevant stakeholders contributed possible options to resolve the key challenges facing the school. Following a detailed assessment of the options, a second local meeting was held, in which the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats relating to these options were outlined, with input provided by the Governing Body and stakeholders. This information was used to weigh up whether the options would be able to address the challenges facing the school. A third local meeting was held to present these options.
- 3.3. During the meetings, a number of options were considered for primary education in the Ysgol Llanaelhaearn catchment area in order to ensure a sustainable provision for the future, and to respond specifically to the key challenges facing the school.
- 3.4. A report was submitted to a Cabinet meeting on 5 November 2019 where the decision was approved to *'begin a period of statutory consultation, in accordance with Section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation*

(Wales) Act 2013, on the proposed proposal to close Ysgol Llanaelhaearn on 31 August 2020 and to provide places for pupils at Ysgol Bro Plenydd, Y Ffôr, on 1 September 2020.'

4. BACKGROUND

4.1. The Key Challenges facing the school

4.1.1. Recently there has been a substantial drop in numbers which has led to a critical situation with eight pupils on the register in the September 2019 census, and projections indicating that there will be a further drop over the next five years. These eight pupils are taught in two classrooms which are small in terms of numbers.

4.1.2. As a result of the current low numbers, the school is in a vulnerable position and under increasing budgetary pressures, specifically:

- i. School numbers are of concern. In September 2019, eight pupils were registered at the school.
- ii. The classroom sizes are small - with one class of three pupils and one class of five.
- iii. Projections indicate seven pupils in 2020, five pupils in 2021, and five pupils in 2022.
- iv. 2019 data shows that 36 children live in the Llanaelhaearn catchment area, 28 of whom attend other schools.
- v. Ysgol Llanaelhaearn receives an additional sum to the usual allocation via the minimum staffing protection policy. During the 2019/20 financial year this additional sum amounted to £43,774. This will only enable the employment of a Headteacher and assistant in the future. Currently, the School shares a Headteacher with two other schools, and employs a full-time teacher and assistant.
- vi. The per pupil cost for Ysgol Llanaelhaearn during the 2019/20 financial year is £12,671 (based on September 2018 numbers of 11 pupils, the basis of their financial allocation), compared with the county-wide average per pupil cost of £3,884 for the same period.
- vii. Number of surplus places - 83% surplus places (39 Reception to Year 6, and six surplus places in Nursery).

4.2. The Strategic Context

4.2.1. At its meeting on 18 December 2018, the Cabinet approved the principles of a '*Fit for Purpose Education System*' as the foundation for delivering the Education Department's vision and developing a system to ensure high quality education for the children and young people of Gwynedd for the twenty first century. This would be achieved specifically through rationalising the range of ages in classes and providing headteachers with the opportunity to focus on leadership issues at primary schools.

4.2.2. The Council has implemented the '*Excellent Primary Education for the Children of Gwynedd Strategy*' since its adoption in April 2009. The strategy notes factors which support the process of reviewing catchment areas or specific situations. The details relating to these factors appear later in the report (Section 4.3.2).

4.3 Choosing the preferred option

4.3.1. During the local meetings, many possible options were proposed and discussed, specifically:

- i. Do nothing (maintain the 'Status quo')
- ii. Change the staffing structure
- iii. Establish an Early Years Observation unit at the school
- iv. Formally federate with another school or other schools
- v. The Authority to guarantee that the school remains open for five years to give it the opportunity to increase numbers.
- vi. Establish a childcare club at the School site
- vii. A community café at the school

- viii. Close the school, with the pupils educated at an alternative school.

Appendix A contains an appraisal of these options. The appraisal was reviewed after the consultation period.

- 4.3.2. In accordance with the '*Excellent Primary Education for the Children of Gwynedd*' strategy, many factors were considered in appraising the options to address the situation, specifically:
 - i. Classroom sizes
 - ii. Pupil numbers
 - iii. Leadership and Staffing
 - iv. The Community
 - v. Financial Resources
 - vi. The Welsh Language
 - vii. Geographical Factors
- 4.3.3. During the Options Appraisal, the Governing Body and other relevant stakeholders provided input and comments. Following the appraisal, two options emerged as the ones to be considered for the school's situation, namely:
 - i. Formally federate with a nearby school or schools
 - ii. Close Ysgol Llanaelhaearn, with pupils being educated at an alternative school.
- 4.3.4. A report submitted to the Cabinet on 5 November elaborated upon the challenges facing the school and the need to take further steps to address this position. Whilst the option of maintaining the current situation had been considered, the Authority was not of the opinion that it would address the issues needing attention.
- 4.3.5. Several other options made better use of the building, such as establishing an Early Years Observation Unit, Opening a Café or a Child Care Club. Nevertheless, these options were not considered to be ones that would resolve the key challenges facing the school.
- 4.3.6. Impact Assessments were undertaken for the options in accordance with the School Organisation Code 011/2018 guidelines, which gave particular attention to relevant considerations for the 'Presumption against the closure of rural schools' (amended versions following the consultation period have been included in Appendix D).

4.4. REASONABLE OPTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR THE SCHOOL

Formally federalise with a nearby school or schools.

- 4.4.1. It has been demonstrated that federating can offer advantages to rural schools in some situations, specifically strengthening leadership and opportunities for collaboration.
- 4.4.2. Under a formal federal model, Ysgol Llanaelhaearn would collaborate with another school or other schools in the locality under one headteacher (or more) and one governing body. The governing bodies of the individual schools would be dissolved and one new governing body would be established for the federation. The identity of the schools would be retained. The federated model allows for the possibility of sharing staff, resources, IT, buildings and expertise.
- 4.4.3. However, this option did not address the key challenges facing the school. Numbers at the school would remain low, and classroom sizes would also remain small (details have been included in Appendix A).
- 4.4.4. The possibility of federating with a range of nearby schools, specifically Yr Eifl, Bro Plenydd, Llangybi, Pentreuchaf and Chwilog was considered. Since numbers at Ysgol Llanaelhaearn had reached a critical point with eight pupils on the register, the assessment of federisation demonstrated that there would be no clear

advantages to other schools from federating with Ysgol Llanaelhaearn. It was therefore considered that this would not resolve the school's situation.

Close Ysgol Llanaelhaearn, with the pupils to be educated at an alternative school.

4.4.5. This option means closing Ysgol Llanaelhaearn and moving the pupils to be educated at Ysgol Bro Plenydd, Y Ffôr which would be named as the 'alternative school' for specific reasons, including:

- The closest school, geographically, to the school and centre of Llanaelhaearn village is Ysgol yr Eifl, Trefor, which is full. This school would not be able to accept eight additional pupils.
- Ysgol Bro Plenydd, Y Ffôr, is the next closest school geographically.
- The road to Ysgol Bro Plenydd from Llanaelhaearn village is convenient and has public transport links. The journey to other nearby primary schools would not be as easy from the village of Llanaelhaearn. Ysgol Bro Plenydd, Y Ffôr, is 3.6 miles from Ysgol Llanaelhaearn and is more than two miles from all the houses in the Llanaelhaearn catchment.
- Ysgol Bro Plenydd, Y Ffôr could accept additional pupils. It currently has 30 surplus places, including nursery (*September 2019 census*).

4.4.6. On this basis, it is proposed that the Ysgol Bro Plenydd catchment area be extended to include the catchment of Ysgol Llanaelhaearn in the future.

4.5. The Proposal

4.5.1. This proposal will result in Ysgol Llanaelhaearn closing with the current pupils transferring to Ysgol Bro Plenydd, Y Ffôr.

4.5.2. The aim is that the proposal would lead to more consistent opportunities for children in the catchment area, by aiming to achieve the strategic aspirations of Gwynedd Council 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'*, this would include:

- Classroom Sizes - pupils to be educated in more appropriately-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 a reduction in the rate of surplus places in the area's schools.
- Leadership - robust leadership and management in a school with numbers which will enable the Headteacher to have an equal opportunity to lead and manage the school professionally.
- The Community - pupils to be educated at a school that is a focal point for community activities which will enrich experiences and opportunities for pupils, as is the current situation.
- 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 £3,975 at Ysgol Bro Plenydd compared to the current £12,671 per pupil cost at Ysgol Llanaelhaearn. The county-wide average for the same period is £3,884 per pupil.
- Financial Resources - It is estimated that realising the proposal would lead to revenue savings of £100,518 per annum. It is estimated that additional transport costs would be £11,400 for the current pupils of Ysgol Llanaelhaearn, or £25,000 should all children in the catchment area attend Ysgol Bro Plenydd in the future. Consequently, proposed net savings would be between £75,518 and £89,118, subject to the numbers who would receive free transport.

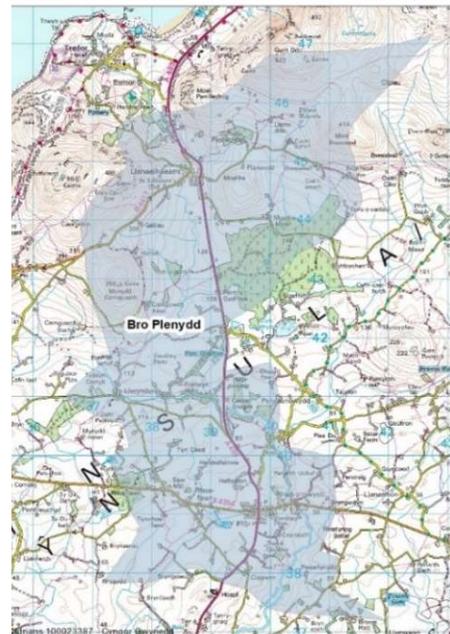
- The Welsh Language - pupils to be educated at a Welsh-medium school, as the current situation, and at a school where social use of the Welsh language is strong.
- Geographical Factors - pupils would continue to receive their education at a school within reasonable distance of their homes and receive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

4.5.3. As part of this proposal, a place would be guaranteed for the current pupils of Ysgol Llanaelhaearn at Ysgol Bro Plenydd, Y Ffôr. In accordance with the Authority's Admissions policy, parents have the right to choose and apply for a place in any school for the child, and that school will not necessarily be the catchment area school. Should this Proposal be realised, parents would have the right to make an application to any school they choose. A place for a child in their chosen school is not guaranteed.

4.5.4. In light of this proposal, the Ysgol Bro Plenydd catchment area will be adapted to include the School's current catchment area and also the catchment area of Ysgol Llanaelhaearn. Consequently, pupils living in the Ysgol Llanaelhaearn catchment area will be provided with transport in line with Gwynedd Council Transport Policy.

Map 1: Current situation of the area's catchments

Map 2: Ysgol Bro Plenydd catchment area if changes take place



5. The statutory consultation

5.1. In accordance with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the statutory requirements of the School Organisation Code (011/2018), a period of statutory consultation on the proposal was held with relevant consultees between 16 December 2019 and 1pm on 29 January 2020.

5.2. A statutory consultation document was drawn up in accordance with the guidance of the School Organisation Code (011/2018) and a copy was distributed to all relevant consultees, either in hard copy or via an e-mail which included a link to a particular page on the Council's website.
<https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation>.

5.3. Hard copies of the consultation document were sent to the two schools that are part of the consultation, and headteachers were requested to distribute them to parents/guardians, pupils, staff members and members of the schools' governing bodies.

5.4. In addition, a background pack was published which included impact assessments of the proposal on the Welsh language, the community and equality along with assessments on the probable impact on travel arrangements, the quality and standards of education and an assessment against the aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015). Hard copies of the background packs and the consultation document were distributed to schools involved with the Proposal, the local library and Siop Gwynedd Pwllheli to make them available for examination by any member of the public. The document was also available for download on the Council's website.

5.5. During the consultation period, Gwynedd Council officers held "drop-in sessions" on 15 January 2020 at Canolfan y Babell, Llanaelhaearn, in order to discuss the proposal with Governors, teaching and ancillary staff and the parents/guardians of Ysgol Llanaelhaearn. Officers from relevant departments were available to explain and respond to enquiries during the sessions. There was also an opportunity for those who attended to receive hard copies of any relevant documentation on the proposal and to submit written observations. 15 people attended the drop-in sessions.

5.6. Also, a consultation document was created for primary school children with accompanying questionnaires. A specialist facilitator was arranged to visit all schools that were part of the consultation and sessions held with the pupils to seek their opinions by consulting with all children at Ysgol Llanaelhaearn and the School Council at Ysgol Bro Plenydd. An analysis of the responses received during the sessions have been included in Appendix C.

5.7. Eight responses to the statutory consultation were received including responses from staff, governors, parents and Estyn as well as pupil responses.

6. Observations received during the statutory consultation

6.1. This section notes the observations received during the statutory consultation period. A copy of a table that includes all observations, along with the Council's response, is available in Appendix B. Copies of the responses can be viewed on www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation - personal information on some of the responses has been redacted in order to comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2008 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The responses received elaborated on the following issues:

- A wish to transfer current pupils to Ysgol Chwilog
- Observations by Estyn

6.2. A wish to transfer current pupils to Ysgol Chwilog

6.2.1. Since 2017, Ysgol Llanaelhaearn has been sharing its headteacher with Ysgol Garndolbenmaen. In September 2018, the headteacher also agreed to be the headteacher for Ysgol Chwilog. The headteacher spends one day a week leading Ysgol Llanaelhaearn. Since September 2018, the headteacher has implemented a close collaboration arrangement between Ysgol Llanaelhaearn and Ysgol Chwilog, where the pupils of both schools come together for two afternoons every week. Therefore, Llanaelhaearn pupils already know the other teachers and pupils.

6.2.2. Seven responses were received to the consultation during the drop-in session. The responses received at the drop-in session noted a wish for children currently attending the school to transfer to Ysgol Chwilog, rather than the alternative school noted in this proposal, namely Ysgol Bro Plenydd. It is noted in many responses that the reason for this is that children already attend Ysgol Chwilog twice a week as a result of a collaboration

arrangement between the schools, and have got to know the teachers and made friends at the school. Their wish to receive free transport to Ysgol Chwilog was also expressed in some of the responses.

- 6.2.3. As noted in section 4.4.7 of the report, there is a clear rationale for naming Ysgol Bro Plenydd as the alternative school. However, the Authority is of the opinion that Ysgol Llanaelhaearn pupils have gained positive experiences as a result of collaboration arrangements with Ysgol Chwilog, and as the relationship already exists, any opportunity to reduce disruption for current pupils must be considered.
- 6.2.4. The Gwynedd Council Transport Policy notes that it is possible to make an application for free transport if the child attends the closest school or school site, or the school or school site in their catchment area, and that the journey to school or school site is more than two miles from their homes - the journey from home to school or school site is measured as the shortest route along a safe path.
- 6.2.5. As noted in 6.2.3., as transferring to Ysgol Chwilog would be likely to reduce disruption for current Ysgol Llanaelhaearn pupils, the Education Department supports the application for transport to Ysgol Chwilog for pupils who would be on the Ysgol Llanaelhaearn register on 31 August 2020.

6.3. Responses to the consultation with children and young people

- 6.3.1. As noted in paragraph 5.6 above, consultation sessions were held with a representation of primary school pupils who are the subject of this statutory consultation. A children and young people facilitator was arranged to visit the schools to hold sessions with the pupils to seek their opinions. These were the main points raised during the consultation with children and young people:

Ysgol Llanaelhaearn	Ysgol Bro Plenydd
Everyone against the change.	Everyone who responded were in favour of the change.
Should the children get to choose, each one would choose to attend Ysgol Chwilog.	Pupils very keen to welcome Ysgol Llanaelhaearn pupils and looked forward to making new friends.
Every pupil concerned about losing the friendship between friends from Ysgol Chwilog whilst attending Ysgol Bro Plenydd.	Pupils saw the benefits in terms of increasing the school's numbers and were eager to receive the resources of Ysgol Llanaelhaearn (e.g. mini bus, Technology and books etc.) as well as its pupils.
Having to travel by car/bus to school instead of walking concerned all pupils and one said that it was unfair to his/her mother.	Pupils were keen to understand that the pupils of Ysgol Llanaelhaearn shared the same values as they did in relation to good behaviour and respect for others and the school's equipment.

- 6.3.2. In the Children and Young People consultation report, the Facilitator concludes:

“What emerged from the consultation process was that pupils at Ysgol Llanaelhaearn saw Ysgol Chwilog as their preferred school were their school to close and explained that they already knew the children well at that school after visiting them every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon for some years. The comments of pupils at Ysgol Llanaelhaearn tended towards rejecting the choice of school next September rather than opposing the proposed closure of their current school although this clearly concerned and saddened them.

"It was clear that the pupils of Bro Plenydd were very keen to give a warm welcome to the new pupils showing empathy and a mature understanding of the difficult circumstances of Ysgol Llanaelhaearn."

- 6.3.3. As a result of the existing arrangement that enables the current Llanaelhaearn children to visit Ysgol Chwilog quite regularly, the Education Department has no objection to realise the wish of current Ysgol Llanaelhaearn pupils to receive transport to Ysgol Chwilog. This would be a temporary arrangement only and for pupils on the Ysgol Llanaelhaearn register and for their period at the school.

6.4. Estyn

- 6.4.1. The School Organisation Code 011/2018 requires the proposer to send the consultation document to Estyn. As a consultee, Estyn gives its views on the consultation.

- 6.4.2. Estyn stated in response to the description and benefits of the proposal, and in considering that the proposed school closure was designated a rural school:

"As the proposer is proposing to close a rural school, it has identified clearly the reasons for the proposal and the careful considerations behind it. It also identifies other benefits, such as the positive effect in terms of cost-effectiveness to the education authority and reducing the number of surplus places. It identifies the key challenges that the school faces and how it will address them through the proposal to close the school."

"The proposer identifies clearly the expected advantages and disadvantages in comparison with the status quo. It considers other possible options and has given appropriate reasons why these have been disregarded."

- 6.4.3. In their response to the consultation, Estyn noted:

"The proposer notes that Ysgol Bro Plenydd has similar facilities to Ysgol Llanaelhaearn to provide specialist provision that is suitable for pupils with additional learning needs. However, it does not identify clearly enough the effect on SEN pupils and the proposal does not consider accessibility arrangements for disabled pupils."

"On the whole, the proposer has given sufficient consideration to the effect and cost of the proposals on pupils' travel arrangements, but not to the accessibility of transport provision for pupils with special needs."

In response to the observation that there is lack of consideration for disabled pupils, the Authority notes that as is currently the case, Ysgol Bro Plenydd would need to review the Plans of pupils with ALN and then map the needs on the school provision. The Moderation Panel would consider provision for pupils with a Statement or Individual Development Plan (IDP) to ensure suitable provision in the new school. The forum would discuss the IDPs of children who receive the input of the ALN and Inclusion Integrated Team, ensuring continuity of service.

Both sites have been assessed in the same category. Should a person with disabilities make an application for admission or transfer to Ysgol Bro Plenydd in the future, the Authority would deal with the application in the same way as any other school in Gwynedd.

In response to the observation concerning accessibility of transport provision for pupils with special needs, the Authority notes that any additional transport would be discussed by the Moderation Panel on a case by case basis.

- 6.4.4. In considering the equality impact of the proposal, Estyn notes:

"The proposer has conducted an equality impact assessment and asserts reasonably that the proposal should not have a detrimental effect on any particular group. However, the proposer has not given appropriate consideration to the possible disruption for existing pupils."

In response to the above comment, and as noted in 6.2.5, the Education Department supports a request for transport to transfer to Ysgol Chwilog, which would reduce the potential disruption to current pupils at Ysgol Llanaelhaearn.

6.5. A presumption against the closure of rural schools

6.5.1. The Schools Organisation Code 011/2018 has introduced new, special arrangements in relation to rural schools, establishing a procedural presumption against closure. This does not mean that a rural school will never close but that the case for closure must be strong, and that all other viable options have been conscientiously considered. Ysgol Llanaelhaearn is designated a 'rural school' for the purpose of the Code. This means that a more detailed set of procedures and requirements must be followed when formulating a closure proposal.

As reported to the Cabinet on 5 November 2019, additional specific assessments were undertaken, in accordance with the Code's requirements, on the option to close a rural school and the other reasonably identified options, namely in this case to federate with another school.

The Code also imposes special requirements in relation to preparing the report following the statutory consultation period. Further assessments are therefore required on:

- *The likely impact on the quality and standards of education*
- *The likely impact on the community*
- *The likely impact on different transport arrangements.*

The purpose of this further assessment is to consider any further information that was received as a result of the consultation or otherwise. Following the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal and other reasonable options was undertaken, taking into account any further information received that related to the responses during the consultation (Appendix D). No specific information was received that would affect the conclusions of the assessment of the proposal and reasonable options against the key challenges facing the School (low numbers, small classrooms and the projections of future numbers). Therefore, the Authority is of the opinion that implementing the proposal is the most appropriate response to the reasons noted for the proposal. More details on this are included in the report (Section 9).

6.5.2. During the consultation process, it was highlighted that it was likely that the parents of children currently attending Ysgol Llanaelhaearn would make an application to transfer to Ysgol Chwilog, rather than the alternative school. As noted in 6.2.5., the Authority supports the offer of transitional arrangements for the current pupils of Ysgol Llanaelhaearn to receive transport to Ysgol Chwilog, although Ysgol Bro Plenydd will remain as the "Alternative School".

7. The Well-being of Future Generations Act.

7.1. A Well-being assessment was undertaken on the options which gave consideration to Gwynedd Council's well-being aims, and the assessment was updated after the consultation period came to an end.

7.2. The Education Department has a role in promoting the well-being objectives of the Act amongst pupils in the county through its activities and projects. The Act sets 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 the way it will improve well-being in the "2018-2023 Gwynedd Plan".

7.3. Following consideration and an assessment in line with the requirements of the Well-being Act, it is concluded that the proposal meets the seven well-being objectives within the Act, together with the Council's well-being objectives. This proposal will allow us to respond to and address the children's needs today, and strengthen

their future well-being. The proposal will ensure that the children of the area are educated on a site that is suitable and in a naturally Welsh-speaking community, thus increasing the opportunities to socialise and collaborate with others, and to give them an equal opportunity to thrive among their peers (a copy of the assessment is included in Appendix D).

8. Equality

- 8.1. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure that the proposal considers and complies with equal rights.
- 8.2. An equality assessment was held on the options, which focuses on different elements of equality such as race, gender, disability, language, religion or belief, and age. An amended version of the assessment is included in Appendix D.
- 8.3. 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 unlawful discrimination and harassment does not occur. Arrangements are also in place to monitor and review the situation.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1. It is recommended to issue a statutory notice on the proposal to close Ysgol Llanaelhaearn on 31 August 2020, and offer a place for the pupils at Ysgol Bro Plenydd, Y Ffôr from 1 September 2020.
- 9.2. It is concluded that this proposal is the most appropriate response to the main challenges faced by the school and for the reasons noted in Sections 4.4 and 4.5 of this report.
- 9.3. Furthermore, it is recommended to confirm transitional arrangements for the current pupils of Ysgol Llanaelhaearn to receive transport to Ysgol Chwilog, should parents make an application for their children to transfer here from 1 September 2020 (and that they remain on the Ysgol Llanaelhaearn register on 31 August 2020). The reasons for this are:
 - i. The current pupils of Ysgol Llanaelhaearn have been attending Ysgol Chwilog for two afternoons a week for over a year.
 - ii. As a result of the above arrangement, they already know the teachers and pupils of Ysgol Chwilog and transferring to Ysgol Chwilog would reduce disruption for the pupils.
 - iii. During a consultation session with the children of Ysgol Llanaelhaearn, they noted their wish to transfer to Ysgol Chwilog.
 - iv. Ysgol Bro Plenydd is located on the road from the village of Llanaelhaearn to the village of Chwilog. Therefore, it is estimated that the cost of transporting Ysgol Llanaelhaearn pupils to Ysgol Chwilog would not vary from what was noted to transport them to Ysgol Bro Plenydd, which is approximately £11,400 per year for the school's current pupils.
- 9.4. Having considered a range of options that were fully evaluated by comparing the main advantages and disadvantages against specific factors, it is recommended to approve the proposal. The ambition of the '*Excellent Primary Education for the Children of Gwynedd*' strategy, factors in the Organisation Code, and other relevant factors were used.

The factors included:

- Class sizes
- Population and Pupil Numbers
- Leadership
- The probable impact on the Community
- Financial Resources

- The Welsh Language
- Geographical Factors and the probable impact on different transport arrangements
- Quality and Standards of Education
- Equality Impact
- Impact on the Well-being of Future Generations
- The critical situation facing the school.
- Responses to the Statutory Consultation

9.5. The full options appraisal has already been submitted to the Cabinet for consideration on 5 November 2019 and can be viewed in Appendix A.

9.6. The impact assessments in Appendix D and all background documentation on the proposal are available on the Council website: www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation

9.7. Following consideration of all the comments received during the statutory consultation period, it is considered that the proposal which was consulted upon remains the best option for the future of education in the Llanaelhaearn catchment area, with transitional arrangements for the school's current pupils who choose to transfer to Ysgol Chwilog, depending on parental choice. Analysis of the comments received is examined in Section 6 and Appendix B, and full responses are available in full in Appendix Ch and on the Council's website: www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation

10. Next Steps

10.1. Should the Cabinet decide to proceed with the recommendations - a statutory notice will need to be issued in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the guidance given in the School Organisation Code (011/2018).

10.2. Statutory notices would be issued on a school day and there will be a 28 day objection period from the date of issuing the notices. Any one may object to the proposal.

10.3. Following the objection period, a report will be submitted to the Cabinet for a final decision. It has to be remembered that in some circumstances the final decision of the Council could be referred to the Welsh Government's Minister for Education in accordance with the School Organisation Code (011/2018).

10.4. Subject to the decisions of the Cabinet, these are the next steps of the process with an outline timetable:

March 2020	Issue Statutory Notice: if the Council decides to proceed with the proposal, a statutory notice will be issued and an objection period will be held. Any objection must be submitted within the 28 day objection period.
May 2020	The Cabinet: Following the objection period, the Cabinet will discuss the objections report and decide whether or not to confirm the proposal.
June 2020	Decision referred to Welsh Ministers: 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Another Local Authority affected by the proposals; ii. The appropriate religious body for any school affected; iii. The governing body of a voluntary or established school subject to proposals; iv. A trust holding property on behalf of a voluntary or established school subject to proposals; v. A further education establishment affected by the proposals.

31 August 2020	Implementation of the proposal: Ysgol Llanaelhaearn officially closes, subject to the Cabinet's decisions.
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11. VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

The Monitoring Officer:

The contents of this report has been the subject of legal advice by the Legal Service. No further comments regarding propriety.

Head of Finance:

There are obvious reasons (including financial ones) that support the proposal to close Ysgol Llanaelhaearn. I can confirm that the financial figures in parts 4.1.2, 4.5.2 and 9.3 of the report – together with those in Appendix A – are either accurate actual costs, or are fair estimates (where appropriate).

Local Member:

I am pleased to see that the Authority recognises that transferring to Ysgol Chwilog would be less disruptive for pupils, and that they recommend supporting parents' wish to provide transport for current pupils of Ysgol Llanaelhaearn to Ysgol Chwilog in addition.

Appendices:

Appendix A: Comparison of the characteristics of the options against the strategy's factors.

Appendix B: Analysis of Consultation responses

Appendix C: Consultation with children and young people

Appendix Ch: Responses

Appendix D: Impact Assessments:

- Assessment of the Probable Impact on the Quality and Standards of Education
- Assessment of the Probable Impact on travel arrangements
- Assessment of the Probable Impact on the Community
- Language Impact Assessment
- Well-being Assessment
- Equality Assessment