

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)