

Name of Scrutiny Committee	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting	8 February, 2022
Item Title	Schools' Accessibility
Cabinet Member	Councillor Cemlyn Rees Williams

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- i) The purpose of this report is to set out the current position regarding schools' accessibility, outlining how this situation has been reached, and then looking at the way forward.

2 BACKGROUND

- i) 'Our Plan – Gwynedd's Children and Young People Plan (2008 – 2011) noted an action point as follows:

"Implement a strategy for ensuring that one Secondary School in each area and one Primary School in each catchment area is designated for ensuring access to a full curriculum for disabled children and young people."
- ii) Specific capital funding had been identified for the School Disability Strategy. By 2017 the strategy was completed by making adaptations to the last school in the scheme, Ysgol Llanllechid (Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen catchment area).
- iii) In addition to adapting the designated schools identified under the School Disability Strategy, other schools were assisted in making adaptations as pupils with disabilities chose admission to those schools.
- iv) A full list of schools identified as designated schools under the School Disability Strategy as well as other schools where disability adaptation work was undertaken can be found in **APPENDIX 1 - Disability Strategy Schools up to 2017**.

3 ADAPTATIONS TO SCHOOLS THROUGH SCHOOL MODERNISATION WORKS

- i) The list of schools in **APPENDIX 1 - Disability Strategy Schools up to 2017** includes reference to schools that were to receive new buildings or adaptations to buildings through the School Modernisation Program (e.g. Llanelltyd, Rhydymain, OM Edwards).
- ii) When building new schools or making major alterations to school buildings the new buildings are made accessible.

4 INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL CASES

- i) Occasionally there are unforeseeable situations, e.g. a pupil with disabilities moving into a new area and wishes to attend the local school which has not been adapted for pupils with disabilities. In these cases, every effort will be made to meet the wishes of the pupil / parents by co-operating with the pupil / parents and the school concerned.
- ii) Schools are required to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities, but often the total cost of all adjustments that are desirable is beyond the budget of the individual school.
- iii) Although the Education Department does not have a specific budget for financing capital works to assist schools in responding to such situations, each situation is looked at individually and weighing up occurs on whether or not a contribution could be made from other Departmental budgets.
- iv) In the past, the Department has been successful in supporting individual schools by balancing the costs of undertaking physical work at the local school against the additional transport costs that would be incurred in transporting a pupil to a designated school which would provide suitable accessibility for the pupil concerned.

5 PRESENT SITUATION

- i) The Department has undertaken an audit of secondary school stock to ensure that we have clear information on accessibility for pupils.

6 NEXT STEPS

- i) Work is underway to identify secondary schools where we know that they currently have pupils with disabilities in their primary catchment area schools. For those secondary schools that are not accessible, we are trying to identify funding sources to enable the accessibility work needed in the schools.

7 RECOMENDATIONS

- i) Members are asked to comment on the situation regarding schools' accessibility.