

REPORT TO THE CABINET

10 April 2018

Cabinet Member: Councillor Gareth Thomas

Subject: Future of Education Provision in Berwyn Catchment Area

Contact Officer: Garem Jackson – Head of Education

The decision sought

Implement the proposal published on 26 February 2018 to close Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol y Berwyn, in Bala on 31 August 2019 and establish a 3-19 Learning Campus, Welsh Medium, community status, (“The Campus”), on the existing Ysgol y Berwyn site to open on 1 September 2019.

Local Members’ views

Any observations by the Local Member will be presented at the meeting.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 27 June 2017, Cabinet resolved to withdraw the proposal approved in September 2015, to establish a Voluntary Controlled (VC Church in Wales) 3-19 Learning Campus, requesting a further report to submit a new proposal for a statutory consultation that would address and comply with the requirements of the Business Case that has already been approved by the Welsh Government. In addition, the Education Cabinet Member was delegated the authority to hold a pre-consultation with the Church in Wales on the new proposal, in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2013.
- 1.2 The pre-consultation was held with the Church in Wales between 31 August and 28 September 2017. It was clear from their response to the pre-consultation that their priority is the pupils, and that they are willing to work with the schools, the local community and the Council to ensure that the project is moving forward.
- 1.3 Following the pre-consultation with the Church in Wales, a further report was presented to the Cabinet on 24 October 2017, and the Cabinet resolved:

“To conduct a statutory consultation in accordance with Section 48 Schools Standards Act (Wales) 2013, in the Berwyn catchment area on the favoured model, namely the proposal to close the schools of Beuno Sant, Bro Tegid and Ysgol y Berwyn in the town of Bala and establish a 3-19 Welsh Medium Learning Campus, with community status on the existing Ysgol y Berwyn site to be implemented from September 2019”
- 1.4 In accordance with the statutory requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code (006/2013), a statutory consultation period was held in the Berwyn catchment area between 22 November 2017 and 10 January 2018.
- 1.5 On 13 February 2018, a further report was presented to the Cabinet, in order to present the main comments and points received from stakeholders during the statutory consultation, as well as the Council’s response to those comments. At its meeting, the Cabinet resolved to:
 - i. Approve the proposal for the closure of Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol y Berwyn on 31 August 2019 and for the Welsh Medium 3-19 Learning Campus, community status, to be established on the existing site of Ysgol y Berwyn to open on 1 September 2019.

- ii. *Approve the issue of statutory notices on the proposal in (i) above in accordance with the requirements of Section 48 of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013*

2. Objection Period

- 2.1 In accordance with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, the School Organisation Code, and the Cabinet's decision on 13 February 2018, a statutory notice was published on 26 February 2018, and an objection period on the proposal was held between 26 February and 26 March 2018.
- 2.2 The Statutory Notice was published on 26 February 2018 and copies of the notice was placed on the gates of the 3 schools in Bala and on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation. Electronic and hard copies of the notice were distributed in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code. It was specified clearly on the notices that any person may object and how to object.
- 2.3 Below is a summary of the contents of the Statutory Notice:
- (a) **DISCONTINUE** YSGOL Y BERWYN, Y Bala, Gwynedd LL23 7RU, YSGOL BRO TEGID, Y Bala, Gwynedd, LL23 7BN, YSGOL BEUNO SANT, Y Bala, Gwynedd, LL23 7UU (Voluntary Aided, Church in Wales School), on **31 August 2019**.
- (b) **ESTABLISH** a new 3-19 SCHOOL, Welsh Medium, (Community status) on **1 September 2019**. The 3-19 SCHOOL will be on one site, that is the current site of Ysgol y Berwyn, Y Bala, Gwynedd, LL23 7RU. "
- 2.4 Following the objection period, the Cabinet is required to consider the objections received and the Council's response to these objections before deciding whether or not to implement the proposal. Section 49 of the School Standards and Organisation Act 2013 requires the Council to publish a report that includes a summary of the objections as well as the Council's response to those objections.
- 2.5 The objection period closed on 26 March 2018. **No objections were received during the objection period.** As a result, the Council is not required to publish an objections report as part of the proposal.
- 2.6 As no objections were received, it is recommended that the Cabinet confirm the proposal to close Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol y Berwyn on 31 August 2019 and establish a 3-19 learning campus, Welsh Medium, Community status, on the current site of Ysgol y Berwyn, to open on 1 September 2019.

3 Impact of the proposed model on the Community, the Welsh Language, and Equality

- 3.1.1 Welsh Government guidelines (School Organisation Code 006/2013) indicate that a community, linguistic and an equality assessment are required to be undertaken as part of any school reorganisation proposal. These assessments were completed on the long list of possible models and were originally carried out as part of the consultation process in 2015, and these assessments were updated as part of the recent statutory consultation. Here is a summary of the findings of the assessments:
- 3.2 **The Community**
- 3.2.1 Since no rural school is to be closed, and as schools in the town of Bala move to one location namely the Learning Campus, there are no significant community impacts or implications involved in implementing the proposed model.
- 3.2.2 Further consideration has been given to the Community regarding the proposal, following the objection period. It is considered that the findings of the assessment remains current and relevant to the recommendation. Cabinet is referred to the full assessment available on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation as part of the background documents.

3.3 The Welsh Language

- 3.3.1 Since no rural school is to be closed, there is no impact on the Welsh language. The pupils of Ysgol Bro Tegid and Ysgol Beuno Sant will transfer to the Learning Campus, and the 11-19 year old pupils will continue to receive their education in an establishment with the same cross section of pupils as the existing Ysgol y Berwyn. The language category of every school in the catchment will remain the same, namely Welsh Medium category. There will also be an opportunity to further strengthen the implementation of Gwynedd's language policy by ensuring continuation in the use of the Welsh language both in education and within the community.
- 3.3.2 Further consideration has been given to the Welsh language regarding the proposal, following the objection period. It is considered that the findings of the assessment remains current and relevant to the recommendation. Cabinet is referred to the full assessment available on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation as part of the background documents.

3.4 Equality

- 3.4.1 This assessment gave particular attention to different equality elements such as race, gender, disability, language, religion or beliefs and age. The assessment sets out the current situation and the policies and arrangements that are in place to ensure that the proposal considered aligns with equal rights.
- 3.4.2 Having considered the relevant factors in detail, the conclusion reached is that equal opportunities will be promoted positively as a result of the proposal and that measures are in place to ensure that there will be no illegal discrimination or harassment. Arrangements are in place to monitor and review the situation.
- 3.4.3 Further consideration has been given to equality regarding the proposal, following the objection period. It is considered that the findings of the assessment remains current and relevant to the recommendation. Cabinet is referred to the full assessment available on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation as part of the background documents.

4 To summarise

- 4.1 Should the Cabinet decide to support the recommendation in this report, the process of establishing the Campus could proceed with the intention to open officially in September 2019. As is noted in previous reports, there will be a transitional period between the completion date of the construction work on the existing site of Ysgol y Berwyn and the implementation date of the proposal, namely 1 September 2019. During this period, Education department officers will work closely with Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol y Berwyn and their governing bodies to establish a 'bridging' plan for the Bala primary schools to ensure regular use by those schools of the new resources at the Ysgol y Berwyn site during the year before the Campus officially opens in September 2019.

5 Next steps

- 5.1 If the final decision by the Cabinet is to proceed with the proposal, the timetable will be as follows:

Next Steps	Outline timetable
Create a Communication Plan to share timely and relevant information with the stakeholders	April 2018
Start the process of establishing the shadow governing body	April 2018
Appoint a Headteacher	Summer term 2018
Close Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol Y Berwyn	31 August 2019
Open the 3-19 Learning Campus	1 September 2019

6 Recommendation

- 6.1 It is therefore recommended to implement the proposal to close Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol y Berwyn, in Y Bala on 31 August 2019 and establish a 3-19 Learning Campus, Welsh Medium, community status, ("The Campus"), on the current site of Ysgol y Berwyn to open on 1 September 2019.

OPINION OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

The Monitoring Officer:

“This report has received input from the Legal Department therefore there are no comments to add regarding propriety.”

Finance Officer:

“My previous comments to the Cabinet meetings on 27 June 2017 and 24 October 2017 – where the business plan was considered in detail – remain valid, and I support the decision sought.”

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

All background documents relevant to the proposal can be viewed on the Council’s website by following this link www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation.

The background documents include:

- Schools Organisation Code 006/2013
- Priorities Plan – Reorganisation of Education Provision
- Welsh Government Faith in Education document
- Statistics Pack (2017-18)
- Language Impact Assessment Report
- Community Impact Assessment Report
- Equality Impact Assessment Report
- Assessment of the Need for Different Types of Schools in the Berwyn catchment area, Y Bala (2014)
- Cabinet Report and Decision Notice – 27 June 2017
- Cabinet Report and Decision Notice – 24 October 2017
- Statutory Consultation Document 22 November 2017 – 10 January 2018
- Consultation Documents with the Primary and Secondary Pupils in the Catchment Area
- Statutory Notice published on 26 February 2018