

CYNGOR GWYNEDD CABINET



Date of meeting: 15 September 2026
Cabinet Member: Councillor Dewi Jones
Contact Officer: Gwern ap Rhisiart – Head of Education
Title of Item: Ysgol Nebo – Objection Report

A Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet meeting

1 DECISION SOUGHT

- 1.1 The Cabinet is asked to consider the Objection Report, the summary of statutory objections received during the objection period, and the responses given to those objections, and after doing so, confirm finally the proposal issued through a statutory notice to close Ysgol Nebo on 31 December 2026, and provide a place for learners at Ysgol Llanllyfni from 1 January 2027 onwards 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 REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to present to the Cabinet a report on the statutory objection period held following the publication of a statutory notice on the proposal to close Ysgol Nebo on 31 December 2026, and provide a place for learners at Ysgol Llanllyfni from 1 January 2027 onwards.
- 2.2 The statutory notice was issued on 3 June 2026, commencing a statutory objection period. The objection period ended on 30 June 2026. 20 objections were received during this period. A petition was also presented by the Governing Body of Ysgol Nebo, objecting to the proposal, with 358 signatures supporting the petition.
- 2.3 Following the receipt of statutory objections, an Objection Report was prepared in accordance with the School Organisation Code (011/2018). The Cabinet is requested to consider the Objection Report, the summary of the objections received, the Council's response to those objections, and all other relevant information, prior to deciding whether the proposal should be confirmed or not.

3. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A report was presented to Cabinet on 11 February 2025, and a decision was made to allow the Education Department to commence formal discussions with the Governing Body of Ysgol Nebo and other relevant stakeholders about possible options for the future of Ysgol Nebo, in the context of the low numbers of learners attending the school, and the concerns surrounding its long-term sustainability.
- 3.2 Following these discussions and the evaluation work carried out, a further report was presented to the Cabinet on 14 October 2025 where the decision to commence a period of statutory consultation was approved, in accordance with the requirements of section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, on the proposal to close Ysgol Nebo on 31 December 2026 and provide a place for learners at Ysgol Llanllyfni from 1 January 2027 onwards.

3.3 This report outlined the main challenges facing the school. These included low learner numbers over an extended period, a high percentage of surplus places, and the challenge of ensuring the educational and financial sustainability of the provision in the long term. It was also noted that the local demographic situation and the projections for future learner numbers had been considered as part of the evaluation of options for the school's future.

3.4 As previously noted, low learner numbers mean that Ysgol Nebo is in a vulnerable position and faces a number of increasing challenges, including:

- **Low learner numbers** – January 2026 data indicated that there were 11 learners from Reception – Year 6 and 1 nursery learner attending Ysgol Nebo. Since the January 2026 PLASC, those numbers have further decreased, and by now (September 2026), there are only 6 learners from Reception to Year 6 and 1 Nursery learner on the school register. It is noted that this report uses the January 2026 PLASC data as a basis for the analysis and comparisons, to ensure consistency throughout the document.
- **High percentage of surplus places** - With 11 learners from Reception to Year 6 on the school's register, and a capacity of 51, there are 40 surplus places at the school, which is the equivalent of 78% of the school's capacity. The school has capacity for 7 learners in the Nursery class also, therefore, with 1 Nursery learner on the register, there are a further 6 surplus places in the Nursery.
- **Small class sizes and a broad age range** –There are two classes in Ysgol Nebo with 5 learners (Reception – Year 3) and 1 Nursery learner in one class. There are 6 learners (Year 4 - Year 6) in the second class. Therefore, there is an age range of up to 5 years in one class and up to 3 years in the second class.
- **Number projections** - The September 2025 projections suggest that the numbers of learners will continue to be low over the next three years, with a projection of 10 Reception to Year 6 learners and 2 Nursery learners on the register by September 2028.
- **Catchment area learners** - January 2026 data shows that 9 children live in the catchment area of Ysgol Nebo. Of these, 22% (2 children) choose to attend Ysgol Nebo, whilst 78% (7 children) choose to attend schools outside the catchment area.
- **Ysgol Nebo receives an additional sum to the core financial allocation** – Ysgol Nebo receives an additional amount to the usual allocation via the minimum staffing protection policy (which ensures at least a headteacher and teacher at each school, and a headteacher and an assistant in schools with fewer than 15 full-time learners). The total additional funding for the 2026-27 financial year (based on the numbers in September 2025) is £64,046.
- **Average cost per learner** - The average cost per learner at Ysgol Nebo in the 2026-27 financial year is £16,066 compared with the county average of £5,998.

4. THE STATUTORY CONSULTATION

4.1 Following the Cabinet's decision on 14 October 2025, a statutory consultation was held on the proposal to close Ysgol Nebo on 31 December 2026 and provide places for learners at Ysgol Llanllyfni from 1 January 2027 onwards. The consultation was held between 5 December 2025 and 23 January 2026, in compliance with the requirements of the School Organisation code (011/2018).

4.2 A statutory consultation document, an impact assessment pack (including impact assessments on the Welsh language, the community, equality, various transport arrangements, quality and standards of education and the Well-being of Future Generations Act), a background pack, response forms and a consultation document and questionnaires for children and young people were published on the Council's website. The documentation was distributed to all relevant consultees via e-mail which included a link to a dedicated page on the Council's website [Statutory Consultation: Ysgol Nebo](#), and hard copies were provided upon request.

4.3 Consultees were invited to submit comments by completing an on-line response form, a paper or electronic copy (PDF) or by e-mail/letter.

4.4 A drop-in session was held during the consultation period for the staff, parents and governors of Ysgol Nebo. The purpose of the session was to share information about the proposal and the consultation process, and to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to ask questions about the proposal or the process. Twelve people attended the drop-in session.

4.5 Separate consultation sessions were held for representatives of learners from Ysgol Nebo and Ysgol Llanllyfni, with an independent facilitator holding the sessions. The purpose of these sessions was to gather the views of the learners about the proposal. A child and young people-friendly version of the consultation document was available on the Council's website to ensure that all learners had the opportunity to contribute, even if they had not attended the session at their school. The main points raised during the consultation with children and young people are summarised in section 3 of the Consultation Report, published on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation.

4.6 Responses to the Consultation

4.7 A total of 70 written responses were received to the statutory consultation, including a response from Estyn. The responses received raised the following matters:

- Objections to the proposal to close Ysgol Nebo.
- Comments about Ysgol Nebo
- Educational value of a small rural school
- Comments in favour of the proposal
- Impact on learners' well-being and educational experience
- Impact on the community
- Impact on the Welsh language
- Transport and travel
- The statutory process
- Comments about Ysgol Llanllyfni
- Impact on staff
- Home Education
- Additional Learning Needs
- Cross-subject comments
- Alternative options

4.8 Consultation Report

4.9 Following the end of the consultation period, a Consultation Report was prepared summarising the responses received and the Council's response to them.

4.10 The Consultation Report was presented to Cabinet on 19 May 2026, and the Cabinet considered the comments and alternative options received during the statutory consultation period. The Consultation Report is available on the Council's website: www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation

4.11 Following consideration of the relevant information, the Cabinet decided to approve the publication of a statutory notice on the proposal to close Ysgol Nebo on 31 December 2026 and provide places for learners at Ysgol Llanllyfni from 1 January 2027 onwards, in accordance with the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, commencing a statutory objection period where any individual can object to the proposal within 28 days of the issue date of the notice.

4.12 Other alternative options suggested during the statutory consultation

4.13 The School Organisation Code 011/2018 notes that consultees can suggest other alternative options as well as comments on the proposal in question during the statutory consultation.

4.14 A number of alternative options were proposed during the consultation. A number of the responses suggested adopting the proposal of the Governing Body to develop Ysgol Nebo as a provision to support and nurture children

with social and emotional needs, for whom mainstream education is challenging, including learners with an Individual Development Plan for social, emotional and behavioural needs and other young people with mental health needs including anxiety and neurodiversity.

- 4.15 The Governing Body's proposal was considered, along with the other alternative options put forward during the consultation, as part of the options appraisal undertaken by the Council. However, after evaluating these options, it was concluded that neither this option nor the other alternative options, including federation, responded to the challenges faced by the school, as noted in paragraph 3.4 above. As a result, these options were not considered to provide a sustainable solution to the educational provision in the long term.
- 4.16 It was therefore concluded that the proposal to close Ysgol Nebo on 31 December 2026 and provide places for the learners at Ysgol Llanllyfni from 1 January 2027 onwards was still the most appropriate option to respond to the challenges noted. Further details regarding the options considered and the reasons for these conclusions can be found in Section 6 and Section 7 of the Consultation Report, along with the options appraisal published as part of the statutory process. The Consultation Report is available on the Council's website: www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation

5. STATUTORY OBJECTION PERIOD

- 5.1 In accordance with Cyngor Gwynedd's Cabinet decision on 19 May 2026, a statutory notice was published in accordance with the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 011/2018, commencing 28-day objection period in respect of the proposal to close Ysgol Nebo on 31 December 2026 and provide a place for learners at Ysgol Llanllyfni from 1 January 2027 onwards.
- 5.2 The statutory notice was issued on 3 June 2026 and posted by the main entrance of Ysgol Nebo and Ysgol Llanllyfni, in accordance with the School Organisation Code 011/2018. The notice was also issued on the Council's website, and electronic copies were distributed to the consultees and relevant stakeholders, as required under the Code. The relevant parties received notice of the objection period and procedure, and the notice made clear that anybody could object to the proposal and explained how to do so. A copy of the statutory notice and the associated documents are available on the Council's website: www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation
- 5.3 The objection period ended on 30 June 2026. 20 objections were received during the statutory objection period.
- 5.4 A petition was also received from the Governing Body of Ysgol Nebo, objecting to the proposal, with 358 signatures. The petition called on the Council to reconsider the proposal to close the school and to give full consideration to the Governing Body's alternative proposal, to keep the school open as a mainstream school and develop a provision to support and nurture children with social and emotional needs and learners who find mainstream education challenging. Reference was also made to the role of the school as an important part of the local community, its contribution towards supporting the Welsh language, and concerns about the impact of closing the school on the community and its future.
- 5.5 In accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, the Cabinet must consider an Objection Report summarising the objections received and the Council's response to those objections, prior to reaching a final decision on the proposal. This Objection Report, attached as Appendix 1, summarises the objections received and sets out the Council's response to the issues raised.
- 5.6 **Overview of the Objections Received**
- 5.7 A high-level overview is provided below of the main themes raised by the objectors.
- 5.8 The objections received raised several matters in relation to the proposal. Among the main themes raised were the current provision of Ysgol Nebo and its role in meeting the needs of learners in need of additional support; calls for full consideration of Ysgol Nebo Governing Body's alternative proposal; the impact of the proposal on

learner well-being and experience; the impact of the proposal on the Welsh language and the community; the impact of the proposal on the local community; challenges to the statutory and decision-making process; financial and strategic planning matters; wider strategic and policy considerations; the post use of Ysgol Nebo's building and site; and objections to the proposal and calls to reconsider the decision.

- 5.9 A number of the objections expressed concern about the potential impact of the proposal on learners' well-being and experience, provision for children needing additional support, the Welsh language as a living community language, and the role of Ysgol Nebo in the social and community life of the area. Matters were also raised relating to the future of rural schools, admission arrangements, strategic planning, financial issues and the future of the school building and site.
- 5.10 A number of objectors also called on the Council to reconsider the proposal and to give further consideration to the alternative proposal put forward by the Governing Body of Ysgol Nebo, namely *"Ysgol Nebo to offer a site as provision to support and nurture children with social and emotional needs, who find mainstream education challenging, including learners with IDP for social, emotional and behavioural needs and other young people with mental health needs including anxiety and neurodiversity."*
- 5.11 In order to present the objections in a structured manner, the matters raised have been grouped in the Objection Report under ten themes and a range of sub-themes. These themes have been listed below. The Objection Report includes a summary of the statutory objections received together with the Council's response to those objections.
- 5.12 The Objection Report organises the matters raised under the following themes and sub-themes:

Theme 1: Ysgol Nebo's current provision and its role in meeting the needs of learners who require additional support

- 1.1 The role of Ysgol Nebo in supporting children who find larger mainstream schools challenging
- 1.2 The potential for Ysgol Nebo to provide a personalised and nurturing learning environment for learners who require additional support
- 1.3 Concerns about making a decision before obtaining a full picture of learners' needs, pressures on ALN provision and the contents of the ALN Report due to be published in September 2026
- 1.4 The benefits of smaller classes and individual support for learners with ALN or those who require additional assistance
- 1.5 Strategic planning and the long-term capacity of ALN provision in Gwynedd

Theme 2: Calls for full consideration of the alternative option presented by the Governing Body of Ysgol Nebo

- 2.1 A call to reconsider the alternative option presented by the Governing Body of Ysgol Nebo in an open and comprehensive manner: *"Ysgol Nebo to offer its site as provision to support and nurture children with social and emotional needs who find mainstream education challenging, including learners with an IDP for social, emotional and behavioural needs, and other young people with mental health needs, including anxiety and neurodivergence."*
- 2.2 Support for the option of developing Ysgol Nebo as nurturing and specialist provision to support learners with additional learning needs
- 2.3 Ysgol Nebo as an innovative pilot project to support learners and facilitate a return to Welsh-medium mainstream education
- 2.4 Potential benefits of the alternative option in attracting learners and supporting the Welsh language within the community
- 2.5 Concerns regarding the consideration of alternative options and a call to defer the decision until the ALN report is published

Theme 3: Impact on learners' wellbeing, educational experience and travel arrangements

- 3.1 The impact of closing the school on learners' wellbeing and experience
- 3.2 The benefits of a small school and individual support
- 3.3 The impact of travel and transition to an alternative school on learners' wellbeing and support
- 3.4 Concerns regarding the capacity of neighbouring schools and the potential impact on learners' wellbeing and development

Theme 4: Impact of the proposal on the Welsh language and its sustainability within the community

- 4.1 The role of Ysgol Nebo in sustaining Welsh as a living language within the community
- 4.2 Concerns regarding the impact of closing the school on Welsh as a living language within the community
- 4.3 Concerns that the proposal conflicts with the objectives of Cymraeg 2050 and the Council's commitments to protect the Welsh language
- 4.4 The potential impact of closing the school on young families and the Welsh language

Theme 5: Impact of the proposal on the local community

- 5.1 Concerns regarding the loss of Ysgol Nebo as the heart of the community and the social, cultural and linguistic impact of its closure
- 5.2 Concerns regarding the loss of the school as a space for activities, volunteering and community services
- 5.3 Concerns regarding the impact of closing the school on the village's long-term viability and the future of the rural community
- 5.4 Concerns regarding the impact of closing the school on wellbeing, social inclusion and community sustainability
- 5.5 Concerns regarding reliance on facilities in Llanllyfni as a mitigation measure and the impact on local residents
- 5.6 Concerns regarding the impact of closing Ysgol Nebo on the Welsh language and the sustainability of the rural community

Theme 6: Concerns regarding the consultation process, consideration of evidence and decision-making

- 6.1 Concerns regarding the impartiality of the process, consideration of the community's comments and the quality of the Consultation Report
- 6.2 Concerns that children's voices were not given sufficient consideration during the process
- 6.3 Concerns regarding the consideration of the Governing Body's alternative option and information about ALN provision in the decision-making process
- 6.4 Concerns regarding compliance with the presumption against the closure of rural schools and the consideration of alternative options
- 6.5 Concerns regarding the impartiality of the process and the allegation that a decision to close the school had been made in advance
- 6.6 Concerns regarding the impact of the timetable and discussions about closure on learner numbers and parental choice
- 6.7 Concerns regarding the impact of closing the school on current learners, parents and continuity in formal education

Theme 7: Financial matters and strategic planning

- 7.1 Concerns regarding the emphasis placed on cost per learner when assessing the educational and community value of Ysgol Nebo
- 7.2 A call to review school funding arrangements and consider long-term community benefits
- 7.3 Concerns regarding the consistency of financial decisions and the long-term strategy for education provision
- 7.4 Concerns regarding the absence of detailed analysis and a professional survey to substantiate the school's maintenance costs
- 7.5 Concerns regarding the lack of consideration given to the long-term financial benefits of an ALN pilot scheme at Ysgol Nebo

Theme 8: Wider strategic, political and policy considerations

- 8.1 A call to consider the impact of catchment area, admissions, housing and demographic policies on the sustainability of rural schools and communities
- 8.2 References to Plaid Cymru policy and the commitment to protect small rural schools and community services
- 8.3 A call to review catchment area and admission arrangements to increase numbers in local schools and support the Welsh language
- 8.4 Concerns regarding the impact of empty homes, second homes and planning policies on rural communities and learner numbers
- 8.5 Concerns regarding spending priorities, modernising education and the continuing value of small rural schools
- 8.6 Comments regarding political responsibility for previous decisions

Theme 9: The future of the Ysgol Nebo building, its community use and the war memorial

- 9.1 Concerns regarding the building's future use and its importance as a community asset
- 9.2 Concerns regarding the future of the building and the loss of a community resource
- 9.3 Concerns regarding the future, stewardship and protection of the war memorial

Theme 10: Opposition to the proposal and calls for reconsideration

- 10.1 Formal objections to the proposal to close Ysgol Nebo
- 10.2 A request to reconsider or halt the process in order to assess the impacts and consider the future of rural schools
- 10.3 A call to consider alternative solutions to safeguard and strengthen the future of Ysgol Nebo and the local community
- 10.4 A request to defer the decision, undertake full impact assessments and give appropriate consideration to stakeholders' views
- 10.5 A request to defer the decision until further work on ALN provision is completed and Ysgol Nebo's potential role is considered

6. THE RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDING THE 'DECISION SOUGHT'

- 6.1 In accordance with the 'Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd' strategy, a number of factors were considered when evaluating the options for the future of Ysgol Nebo.
- 6.2 These factors were considered in detail in the report presented to Cabinet on 14 October 2025, and in the statutory consultation document thereafter. A summary of the impact of the proposal on these factors has been included in Appendix 2, using the latest official data available.
- 6.3 During the statutory objection period, objections were received to the proposal which were analysed and considered in full by the Council. The summary of the objections received together with the Council's response to the matters raised have been included in the Objection Report (Appendix 1).
- 6.4 Having considered the 20 objections received during the statutory objection period, together with the petition including 358 signatures presented by the Governing Body of Ysgol Nebo, and all the relevant information, evidence and assessments, the Authority is still of the opinion that implementing the proposal is the most appropriate response to the reasons for developing the proposal, namely the challenges outlined in section 3.4 of this report. It is considered that the other alternative options considered during the process, including federation, would not adequately address the main challenges facing the school. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, the following factors were considered when reaching this conclusion:

6.4.1 Quality and Standards of Education

According to the most recent Estyn reports, the alternative school, Ysgol Llanllyfni, would offer education of a minimally equivalent quality and standard to that currently provided at Ysgol Nebo.

The alternative school offers education of at least equal quality, and provides learners with more opportunities for collaborating and socialising with their peers and enables the learners to gain a range of curricular and extracurricular experiences.

Although learners at Ysgol Nebo make good progress in small classroom environments, the Council is of the opinion that realising this proposal would give learners an opportunity to be taught in peer groups with much less of an age range and an opportunity to improve the educational and social experience of the learners, on a daily basis.

The needs of any vulnerable groups, including children with additional learning needs, would be assessed and implemented in line with the Authority's policy and procedures.

6.4.2 The need for places and the impact on school accessibility

Learners would be taught in classrooms of a more suitable size 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.

With 45 surplus places (and 1 surplus nursery place), Ysgol Llanllyfni has sufficient capacity to accommodate the current number of learners from Ysgol Nebo, as well as the projected numbers for the next three years.

Ysgol Llanllyfni is a Welsh-medium Category 3 school, like Ysgol Nebo.

6.4.3 Education Resources and other financial implications

Implementing the proposal would rationalise the cost per learner and reduce the variation in costs per learner across Gwynedd primary schools. Based on the 2026-27 budget, it is estimated that implementing the proposal would result in a cost per learner of £6,121 at Ysgol Llanllyfni, compared to the current cost of £16,066 per learner at Ysgol Nebo. The county average for the same period is £5,998 per learner.

It is estimated that implementing the proposal would generate annual revenue savings of approximately £112,000, after taking account of additional transport costs of up to £30,000 per annum. The estimated transport costs are based on the assumption that all children residing within the Ysgol Nebo catchment area who would be eligible for transport under the Authority's current transport policy would attend Ysgol Llanllyfni.

The proposal would also remove the need for the additional £64,046 currently allocated to Ysgol Nebo through the Minimum Staffing Protection Policy. Learners would be educated in a school where learner numbers and projections are more robust and sustainable for the future, enabling more effective use of the Authority's educational and financial resources.

6.4.4 Specific factors when considering school closures

During the engagement process and local discussions with the school's relevant stakeholders, a number of possible options for the future of Ysgol Nebo were considered, including federation. These options were assessed and weighed up against the factors in the "Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd" Strategy. During the statutory consultation period, additional options were put forward by stakeholders, which were considered as part of the process of producing the Consultation Report. Consequently, the options appraisal was updated to reflect the additional options presented. This options appraisal was included in the Consultation Report and the supporting documentation (see Appendix 5).

Having held the objection period, the Authority is still of the opinion that implementing the proposal to close Ysgol Nebo is the most appropriate response to the reasons noted for the proposal, namely the challenges outlined in Section 5 of the Statutory Consultation Document (Appendix 6). The evaluation concluded that none of the other options considered during the process, including federation, would provide a sustainable answer to those challenges. In producing and evaluating the options, consideration was given to the specific factors when considering a school closure, as noted in the School Organisation Code. The consideration given to these factors is summarised below:

a. Whether the establishment of multi-site schools might be considered as a means of retaining buildings, or the reasons for not pursuing this option.

Specific consideration was given to the possibility of establishing a multi-site school as part of the evaluation of options process. The evaluation concluded that the multi-site school would not sufficiently respond to the fundamental challenges facing Ysgol Nebo. There is no evidence that the arrangement would lead to a meaningful increase in the number of learners nor to a change in the current pattern of high surplus places at the Ysgol Nebo site. As a result, the organisation of small classes, the low projected numbers and the associated financial challenges would continue, without ensuring the long-term sustainability of the provision. Based on the evaluation, it was concluded that this option would not address the challenges facing the school, as noted in section 3.4 above.

b. Whether alternatives to closure, such as clustering, collaboration or federation with other schools, might be considered or the reasons for not pursuing these as an alternative.

A wide range of alternative options were considered as part of the process, including federalisation with a nearby school, federalisation along with establishing a specialist unit, establishing an additional learning needs unit, establishing a language centre, and developing other specialist educational provisions on the site. The evaluation concluded that there was no clear evidence that these options would increase the numbers of learners or address the challenges associated with small classrooms, a broad age range, substantial surplus places and the financial sustainability of the school. Based on the evaluation, it was concluded that this option would not address the challenges facing the school, as noted in section 3.4 above.

c. Whether the possibility of making fuller use of the existing buildings as a community or educational resource could be explored.

Consideration was given to using the school as a community centre and for opportunities to co-locate other services, such as a language centre or unit on the site. The evaluation concluded that none of these options would provide a sustainable solution as there was no evidence that they would lead to an increase in the number of learners or address the challenges associated with substantial surplus places, small classrooms, a broad age range and the financial sustainability of the school. Options that would

include providing specialist services or provision at the site were also considered, however it was not concluded that these would address the main challenges noted.

d. The overall effect of closing the school on the local community (including the loss of school-based facilities which are used by the local community).

A Community Impact Assessment was carried out on the proposal, in accordance with the School Organisation Code. The assessment was updated following the end of the statutory consultation period and was reviewed and further updated following the statutory objection period to consider the information and additional comments received during the process. The full assessment can be found in Appendix 3.

Respondents noted during the consultation and the objection period that the school building and community room were regularly used for a range of community activities, including a knitting club, social evenings, a gardening club, Welsh lessons, social meet-ups over a cuppa, the monthly meetings of the Area Committee and use as a polling station. Concerns were also expressed about the potential impact of losing the school as a community focal point for community cohesion, vitality and sustainability.

The impact assessment shows that there will be some negative impact on the community if the proposal to close Ysgol Nebo is implemented, as this would lead to losing a school within the community of Nebo as a community focal point. The concerns raised during the consultation and the objection period are acknowledged regarding the implications of this on the vitality of the community; however, a considerable percentage of children in the catchment area (78%) already attend other schools, including Ysgol Llanllyfni (44%), suggesting that community and educational links already exist with nearby communities, including the community of Llanllyfni. Should the Cabinet decide to press ahead with the closure of Ysgol Nebo, the Council would seek to mitigate the impact on the community by encouraging and supporting continued links between the communities of Nebo and the alternative school, promote community collaboration where appropriate, and ensure that residents and families are aware of the opportunities, facilities and activities of the alternative school. In addition, it is noted that if a decision to close the school were to be made, the Authority's Post use Policy would act as a framework to undertake further discussions about appropriate options for the post use of the school building, including community use where appropriate, in order to seek to mitigate any negative impact on the local community.

e. How parents' and learners' engagement with the alternative school and any facilities it may offer could be supported.

If the proposal were to be implemented, the Council would work with parents, carers and Ysgol Llanllyfni to ensure appropriate transition arrangements for the learners. The options appraisal identified that Ysgol Llanllyfni offered classes of a more suitable size and a wider range of social and educational opportunities for the learners. If the proposal were implemented, appropriate support would be provided to ensure that the transition takes place as smoothly as possible and that learners can take full advantage of the opportunities available at the alternative school.

7. THE PRESUMPTION AGAINST THE CLOSURE OF RURAL SCHOOLS

- 7.1 The School Organisation Code 011/2018 establishes a procedural presumption against the closure of rural schools. This does not mean that a rural school cannot be closed, but that the case for the closure must be strong and that all other viable alternatives to closure must have been conscientiously considered, including federation. Ysgol Nebo has been designated as a rural school for the purpose of the Code therefore these additional requirements apply to the proposal.
- 7.2 In addition to the factors that are relevant when developing any proposal, under the Code, the Authority must undertake specific assessments in relation to proposals to close rural schools. A number of impact assessments have been undertaken and reviewed in relation to this proposal, including an:

- Assessment of the Likely Impact on Travelling Arrangements
- Assessment of the Likely Impact on the Community
- Assessment of the Likely Impact on the Quality and Standards of Education

- 7.3 In accordance with the requirements of the Code, a further impact assessment was conducted of the proposal, the other alternative reasonable options noted in the Consultation Document, along with the additional options presented during the statutory consultation period and considered as part of the Consultation Report. In carrying out these assessments, consideration was given to any additional relevant information received during the consultation, and the assessments were updated where appropriate to reflect this information. The additional information received did not lead to a change in the conclusions of the impact assessments. A summary of the main findings is provided below.
- 7.4 The conclusions of the assessment of the likely impact on the quality and standards of education indicate that the educational provision offered at Ysgol Llanllyfni is of at least an equivalent standard to that currently provided at Ysgol Nebo. The assessment states that implementing the proposal would provide more opportunities for learners to be taught in relevant age groups with their peers and to benefit from a wider range of educational and social experiences. As a result, the assessment concludes that the likely impact of the proposal on the quality and standards of education would be neutral or partially positive.
- 7.5 The assessment of the likely impact on travel arrangements concluded that the proposal would have a negative impact on the existing travel arrangements of some Ysgol Nebo learners, as they would need to travel further to school. Ysgol Llanllyfni is located 1.6 miles from Ysgol Nebo. However, the assessment does not envisage that any learner from the Nebo catchment area would have to travel an unreasonable distance to school or use routes deemed dangerous, and school transport would be provided in accordance with Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Transport Policy where applicable. The assessment also notes that the proposal would result in additional transport costs for the Authority of up to £17,000 per annum based on the current numbers, and up to £30,000 per annum if there were an increase in the number of learners eligible for school transport.
- 7.6 The assessment of the likely impact on the community concluded that implementing the proposal would have a negative impact on the community of Nebo, as it would lead to losing the school as a local community resource and focal point. The concerns expressed during the consultation and the objection period regarding the potential impact on the future vitality and sustainability of the community are acknowledged. However, the assessment also notes that a substantial percentage of children in the catchment area already attend other schools, including Ysgol Llanllyfni, and therefore educational and community links with the nearby area have already been established. Should the proposal be implemented, the Council would seek to mitigate the impact on the community by supporting continued links between the community of Nebo and the alternative school and consider appropriate post use options for the school site in line with the Authority's policies.
- 7.7 The Education Department remains of the view, after holding the objection period and considering all the relevant information presented during the statutory period, that none of the alternative options considered, including federalisation and the other options presented by stakeholders, would adequately address the main challenges facing Ysgol Nebo. These challenges include low learner numbers over an extended period, a high percentage of surplus places, the high cost per learner compared to the county's average, and projections that show that learner numbers will remain low in future. Also, the alternative options considered would neither increase the number of learners nor provide a sustainable answer to the demographic and operational challenges facing the school in the medium and long term.

8. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 In addition to the assessments undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code in relation to the presumption against the closure of a rural school, a number of other impact assessments were carried out as part of the statutory process. The Community Impact Assessment, Welsh Language Impact Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment and Well-being of Future Generations Act Impact Assessment were updated following the statutory consultation and reviewed further following the statutory objection period in

order to consider any additional information and issues raised during the process. Where appropriate, these assessments were updated to reflect the additional information received. The findings of these assessments are considered to remain current and relevant, as no additional information received during the objection period altered the conclusions reached. These assessments are included in Appendix 3 (Impact Assessments), and a summary of their key findings is provided below.

8.2 The Welsh Language Impact Assessment

- 8.3 An impact assessment was held on the Welsh Language and was reviewed following the statutory consultation. The full assessment can be found in Appendix 3.
- 8.4 During the consultation concerns were expressed about the possible impact of the closure of Ysgol Nebo on the community use of the Welsh language within the village. Numerous respondents emphasised the role of the school as a social and cultural focal point that supports the natural, daily use of the Welsh language, not only among learners but also among families and wider residents, including new speakers and people who are not fluent speakers. The opinion was expressed that the loss of the school could lead to fewer informal opportunities to use the Welsh language in the community, weakening the inter-generational transmission of the language, and reducing the appeal of the village for Welsh-speaking families in the future.
- 8.5 The Council acknowledges that these concerns were reiterated and reinforced during the statutory objection period, particularly in relation to the role of Ysgol Nebo in maintaining Welsh as a living community language, and the view expressed by some objectors that the proposal could run counter to the aims of Cymraeg 2050 to increase the daily and community use of the Welsh language.
- 8.6 The Council acknowledges the concerns raised regarding the role of Ysgol Nebo in supporting the community use of the Welsh language within the village and accepts that the comments highlight the possible detrimental impact on local linguistic vitality outside the formal educational provision.
- 8.7 However, based on the available information, the Council's view is that the proposal is not likely to have a negative impact on the provision of Welsh-medium education or on learners' linguistic opportunities, for the following reasons:
- The January 2026 PLASC data show that 56% of learners at Ysgol Nebo, and 68% of learners at Ysgol Llanllyfni, speak Welsh fluently at home.
 - The proposal to close Ysgol Nebo and offer learners a place in a nearby school (Ysgol Llanllyfni) means that learners in the Nebo catchment area would continue to be educated in a Welsh-medium school.
 - It is anticipated that the learners would be taught in larger classes and with more children from the same age group, and that the proposal would strengthen the opportunities for the learners to socialise in Welsh with more of their peers.
- 8.8 Within the education context, based on the above, if the proposal were to be implemented, it is anticipated that there would be more opportunities for learners in the Nebo catchment area to use Welsh informally with their peers both inside and outside the classroom, and that the level of vitality of the Welsh language and informal use of the language would be stronger.
- 8.9 At the same time, given the comments from the consultation and the objection period, the Council recognises that the option to close Ysgol Nebo could have a potential negative impact on the use of Welsh within the local community, particularly in terms of its use as a community language outside the educational context; however, it is noted that consideration could be given to mitigation measures, by promoting the use of Welsh by involving the community of Nebo in the alternative school's community activities, as well as considering appropriate options for the post use of the school building, taking into consideration the community activities that are currently held there.
- 8.10 In reaching this conclusion, the Council has considered the comments received during the statutory consultation and the statutory objection period. While it is acknowledged that the proposal could have a potential negative impact on certain aspects of the community use of the Welsh language within Nebo, the Council's view is that the available evidence does not demonstrate that the proposal would have a negative impact on Welsh-medium educational provision or on learners' opportunities to use and develop their Welsh language skills within the educational setting.

8.11 Equality Impact Assessment

- 8.12 An equality impact assessment was held on the proposal, and the assessment was reviewed following the statutory consultation, and again following the statutory objection period. The full assessment can be found in Appendix 3.
- 8.13 The assessment focuses on different equality elements such as race, gender, disability, language, religion or belief and age. The assessment notes the current situation and shows that policies and procedures are in place which will ensure that the proposal considers and is in accordance with equal rights.
- 8.14 As noted in the latest assessment, during the statutory consultation and the objection period, some specific equality concerns were identified, particularly in relation to vulnerable children, learners with additional learning needs, and families experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. Concern was expressed that moving some learners to a larger school could reduce the level of individual support available to them, and that some families could be disproportionately affected by travel distance, transport costs or lack of access to private transport. A potential impact on older people and community cohesion was also raised, noting that the school provides an accessible setting for socialising and supporting well-being.
- 8.15 The assessment notes that the Council acknowledges the issues raised and emphasises that equality and inclusion policies are in place in the existing provision and at Ysgol Llanllyfni. Furthermore, it is noted that the Council is committed to prioritising individual needs, including for vulnerable children and learners with additional learning needs if the school were to close. In relation to the concerns about community use of the Welsh language, it is noted that mitigation measures would be considered, including promoting continued links between the community of Nebo and the alternative school through community activities, and by considering appropriate options for the post use of the school building in order to support continued use of the Welsh language in the local community, should the proposal be implemented.
- 8.16 Having weighed up the relevant factors, including the responses to the statutory consultation, and the objection period, the Council acknowledges that some respondents have noted the potential negative impact on some protected groups, including vulnerable learners, learners with additional learning needs, families experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, and community cohesion. Specific concerns were also noted regarding the potential impact on the use of Welsh within the local community, particularly in terms of its informal use outside the educational context. However, based on the overall equality assessment, the evidence set out in the related impact assessments and the mitigation measures described, the Council remains of the view that the proposal is unlikely to have a negative impact on equality characteristics. It is noted that there are already policies and procedures in place to ensure that there will be no unlawful discrimination or harassment, and that individual needs are given appropriate consideration.
- 8.17 While it is acknowledged that the proposal could have a potential negative impact in terms of socio-economic disadvantage if implemented, the Council remains of the view that implementation of the proposal would reduce inequality associated with socio-economic disadvantage by ensuring that learners have access to a broader range of experiences, services and activities at the receiving school, a wider educational provision, additional social and educational opportunities, and access to extended expertise and support.
- 8.18 By implementing the proposal, Ysgol Nebo learners would have a better learning environment, and learners would benefit from having more age-related peers at a school with more learners, leading to suitable educational and extra-curricular experiences for them, as well as access to additional extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, it is noted that Ysgol Nebo learners would continue to receive Welsh-medium education at an alternative school where Welsh is strong, with more opportunities to use the language informally with peers, strengthening the vitality and natural use of Welsh among learners.
- 8.19 The Council would follow the usual procedures by supporting and monitoring, to ensure the compliance of every school with the equality characteristics, should the proposal be implemented.

8.20 The Well-being of Future Generations Act

8.21 An assessment was undertaken on the proposal against the Well-being Act, and the assessment was updated following the end of the consultation period. It was reviewed again following the statutory objection period. The 7 goals of the Well-being Act and the Council's well-being objectives were considered, and it was concluded that the proposal met the requirements. The full assessment can be found in Appendix 3.

8.22 The latest assessment notes that the responses to the consultation and the objection period expressed specific concerns in relation to the impact of the proposal on vulnerable children and learners with additional learning needs, on the well-being of families experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, and on the linguistic and community vitality of the village.

8.23 It is acknowledged that should the Cabinet decide to proceed with this proposal, it would result in losing a school in the community of Nebo. However, a vast proportion of the children who live in the school's catchment area (78%) already attend other schools, including Ysgol Llanllyfni (44%), therefore, it is concluded that a link already exists with nearby communities, including the community of Llanllyfni. Every effort will be made to mitigate the impact on the community by encouraging links between the communities and Ysgol Llanllyfni, if the proposal were to be implemented. Should the proposal be approved, discussions will take place to discuss the possibility that Ysgol Llanllyfni's community activity involves the community of Nebo where appropriate.

8.24 In addition, as noted in the assessment, should Ysgol Nebo close, the local authority and the receiving school would work closely with the closing school, pupils and their families to ensure a smooth transition and to support learners in settling into their new school. The Council is committed to ensuring that any transition arrangements prioritise individual needs, including those of vulnerable children and learners with Additional Learning Needs, should the school close.

8.25 It is anticipated that the proposal will ensure that the children of the area are educated on a site that is suitable and in a naturally Welsh-speaking society, thus increasing opportunities to socialise and work with others, and giving them a fair opportunity to thrive among their peers.

8.26 Compliance with Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011)

8.27 Building on the findings of the Impact Assessment on the Welsh Language and the Equality Impact Assessment outlined above, the Council confirms that the entire statutory process in relation to reviewing the future of Ysgol Nebo has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards 88-93 under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. In accordance with Standards 88, 89 and 90, conscientious consideration was given to the potential effects that the policy decision could have on opportunities to use the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English, including consideration of the potential positive and adverse effects, how the proposal could be formulated or modified to ensure more positive effects, and how any potential adverse effects could be minimised. In addition, in accordance with Standards 91, 92, and 93, views were sought and considered throughout the statutory consultation process regarding these linguistic effects, including views on how the proposal could be formulated or modified in order to increase positive effects or reduce adverse effects on the Welsh language. These requirements have been supported by undertaking an Impact Assessment on the Welsh language, along with related impact assessments, including the Equality Impact Assessment, and it is noted that these assessments have been reviewed and updated following consideration of the responses received during the statutory consultation and were further reviewed in light of the objections submitted during the statutory objection period. These objections did not result in any change to the conclusions reached.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 Having carefully considered the 20 objections, the petition containing 358 signatures, and all comments received during the statutory objection period, the Council remains of the view that the proposal to close Ysgol Nebo represents the most appropriate response to the challenges facing the school.

9.2 The Council acknowledges the concerns expressed by objectors, particularly in relation to the school's role within the local community, the community use of the Welsh language, and the potential impact on the future sustainability of the community. However, the evidence gathered through the statutory process demonstrates

that Ysgol Nebo faces significant challenges that are unlikely to be resolved without fundamental change to the provision.

9.3 In reaching this conclusion, consideration has been given to the information gathered during the consultation process and the statutory objection period, the 'Excellent Primary Education for the Children of Gwynedd' Strategy, the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018, the procedural presumption against the closure of rural schools, the alternative options considered, together with the findings of the relevant impact assessments.

9.4 The proposal to close Ysgol Nebo is considered to address these challenges by:

- Responding to the challenge of low numbers of learners in Ysgol Nebo, as well as projections that remain low, and the high percentage of surplus places;
- Offering classes of a more suitable size and age range;
- Improving opportunities for learners to socialise and work daily with peers, in an educational environment with more learners of the same age;
- Reducing the cost per learner for all learners in the County.

9.5 Based on all relevant information considered, including the comments received during the statutory consultation period, the objections received during the statutory objection period, the evaluation of the proposal and alternative options, together with the Council's strategic direction, the Council confirms that it remains of the view that the proposal to close Ysgol Nebo is the most appropriate response to the challenges facing the school (as set out in section 3.4) and therefore continues to recommend it as the most suitable means of addressing those challenges. Consequently, it is recommended that the Cabinet confirm the proposal.

10. RECOMMENDATION

10.1 Following consideration of the statutory objections received during the statutory objection period, together with all other relevant information, it is recommended that the Cabinet formally approve the proposal published through the statutory notice, namely to close Ysgol Nebo on 31 December 2026 and provide places for learners at Ysgol Llanllyfni from 1 January 2027 onwards, in accordance with Section 53 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018.

11. NEXT STEPS AND TIMESCALE

11.1 Should the Cabinet decide to confirm the proposal, and if the proposal is not referred, the next steps and timescale are outlined below:

November - December 2026	The Council will work with the schools, the learners, the parents/carers and staff to plan and implement the necessary transitional arrangements. These arrangements would include supporting learners through the transition period to the alternative school, as well as addressing employment issues that may arise as a result of implementing the proposal, in line with the Council's relevant policies and procedures.
31 December 2026	Implement the proposal: Ysgol Nebo officially closes, subject to the Cabinet's decision.

11.2 Subject to the Cabinet's decision, 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:

- 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 foundation 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.

11.3 The body making the referral will have to note why they believe that the decision made by the local authority is wrong. Welsh Ministers will decide whether the proposal affect the bodies and whether they need to consider the proposal.

12.APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Objection Report

Appendix 2: Comparison of the impact of the proposal on the factors of the Strategy

Appendix 3: Impact Assessments

Appendix 4: [Statutory Notice](#)

Appendix 5: Consultation Report - [Agenda for The Cabinet 19/5/26 \(Item 6\)](#)

Appendix 6: [Statutory Consultation Document](#)

Appendix 7: Comments from the Local Member

13. Views of the statutory officers

The Monitoring Officer:

“This report has been the subject of advice from Legal Services. No observations to add in relation to propriety.”

Head of Finance Department:

“It has been noted in previous reports that the situation at Ysgol Nebo is not financially sustainable, given the empty places in the school. While respecting the views of the respondents, the situation has not changed from a fundamental long-term sustainability perspective. I support the decision sought.”