

CYNGOR GWYNEDD CABINET



Meeting Date: 15 September 2026
Cabinet Member: Cllr. Dewi Jones
Relevant Officer: Gwern ap Rhisiart – Pennaeth Addysg
Item Title: Ysgol Baladeulyn – Objection Report

Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet Meeting

1 THE DECISION SOUGHT

- 1.1 The Cabinet is asked to consider the Objection Report, the summary of the statutory objections received during the objection period, and the responses provided to those objections, and after doing so, confirm finally the proposal issued through a statutory notice to close Ysgol Baladeulyn on 31 December 2026, and provide a place for learners at Ysgol Talysarn from 1 January 2027 onwards, in accordance with Section 53 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the requirements of the Welsh Government 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 Baladeulyn on 31 December 2026 and provide a place for learners at Ysgol Talysarn 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. 25 objections were received during this period. A petition was also presented by the Governing Body of Ysgol Baladeulyn, objecting to the proposal, with 500 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 the 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 Baladeulyn and other relevant stakeholders regarding possible options for the future of the school, in the context of the low numbers of learners attending the school and the concerns regarding its long-term sustainability.

- 3.2 Following these discussions and the evaluation work undertaken, a further report was presented to the Cabinet on 14 October 2025, where the decision to commence a statutory consultation period was approved, in accordance with Section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, on the proposal to close Ysgol Baladeulyn on 31 December 2026 and provide a place for learners at Ysgol Talysarn 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 longer term. It was also noted that the local demographic situation and projections for future learner numbers had been considered as part of the process of appraising options for the school's future.
- 3.4 As previously noted, low learner numbers mean that Ysgol Baladeulyn is in a vulnerable position and faces a number of increasing challenges, including:
- **Low number of learners** – January 2026 PLASC data showed that there were 6 full-time learners and 2 Nursery learners attending Ysgol Baladeulyn. Since the January 2026 PLASC, those numbers have fallen further, and currently (September 2026) there are only 7 Reception to Year 6 learners and 0 Nursery learners on the school register. Note that this report uses January 2026 census data as the basis for analysis and comparisons, to ensure consistency throughout the document.
 - **High percentage of surplus places** – With 6 learners (Reception to Year 6) on the school's register, and a capacity for 55, there are 49 surplus places at the school, which is equivalent of 89% of the school's capacity. The school also has capacity for 7 learners in the Nursery class, therefore, with 2 Nursery class learners on the register, there are also a further 5 surplus places in the Nursery class. As a result, when including Nursery - Year 6 capacity and numbers together, Ysgol Baladeulyn has 54 (87%) surplus places.
 - **Small class sizes and a broad age range** – In Ysgol Baladeulyn (September 2025), there is one single class that includes every learner at the school – namely 6 learners from Reception to Year 6 (Reception, Yr.1 and 2, and Yr. 4 and 5) together with 2 Nursery class learners. Within this class, different groups are formed at various times of the day, with teaching assistants leading activities for the youngest learners. Therefore, this means there is an age range of up to 8 years within the whole class.
 - **Projected numbers** – The September 2025 projections suggest that the number of learners will remain low over the next three years, with a projection of 7 learners from Reception to Year 6 and 1 Nursery learner on the register by September 2028.
 - **Catchment area learners** – January 2026 data shows that 8 children live in the Baladeulyn catchment area. Of these, 25% (2 children) choose to attend Ysgol Baladeulyn, while 75% (6 children) choose to attend schools outside the catchment area.
 - **Ysgol Baladeulyn receives an additional sum to the core financial allocation** – Ysgol Baladeulyn receives an additional amount to the usual allocation via the minimum staffing protection policy (which ensures at least a headteacher and a 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 £74,446.
 - **Average cost per learner** – The average cost per learner at Ysgol Baladeulyn in 2026–27 financial year is £25,123 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 Baladeulyn on 31 December 2026 and provide a place for learners at Ysgol Talysarn from 1 January 2027

onwards. The consultation was held between 10 December 2025 and 28 January 2026, ensuring 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 travel 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 email which included a link to a dedicated page on the Council's website [Statutory Consultation: Ysgol Baladeulyn](#), and hard copies were provided upon request.
- 4.3 Consultees were invited to submit comments by completing an online response form, a paper or electronic copy (PDF), or by email/letter.
- 4.4 A drop-in session was held during the consultation period for staff, parents and governors of Ysgol Baladeulyn. 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. 12 people attended the drop-in session.
- 4.5 Separate consultation sessions were arranged for representatives of learners from Ysgol Baladeulyn and Ysgol Talysarn, with an independent facilitator hosting the sessions. The purpose of these sessions was to gather learners' views on the proposal. A child and young people-friendly version of the consultation document was available on the Council's website to ensure that every learner had an opportunity to contribute, even if they had not attended the session at their school. A summary of the matters raised during the consultation with children and young people is included in Section 3 of the Consultation Report, which was published on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation

4.6 Responses to the Consultation

- 4.7 A total of 30 written responses were received to the statutory consultation, including a response from Estyn. The comments received referred to the following matters

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Comments about the school | • Capacity, local demography and catchment arrangement |
| • Comments on the proposal | • Financial implications |
| • Impact on learners | • Comments on the consultation documentation and the statutory process |
| • The Welsh language | • Alternative options |
| • Additional Learning Needs | |
| • Transport, travel and safety implications | |
| • The local community and families | |

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 the Cabinet on 19 May 2026, and the Cabinet considered the comments and alternative options received during the 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 Baladeulyn on 31 December 2026 and provide a place for learners at Ysgol

Talysarn from 1 January 2027 onwards, in accordance with the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, thereby commencing the statutory objection period during which any individual could object to the proposal within 28 days of the publication date of the notice.

4.12 Other alternative options suggested during the statutory consultation

4.13 The School Organisation Code 011/2018 states that consultees may suggest other alternative options as well as comments on the specific proposal during the statutory consultation process.

4.14 A number of alternative options were suggested during the consultation. Some of the respondents suggested re-categorising Ysgol Baladeulyn as a mainstream and ALN “hybrid” primary school to provide a hybrid education model whereby primary learners in the local area could attend Ysgol Baladeulyn as a mainstream school and/or access to specialist ALN education provision.

4.15 This proposal, together with the other alternative options presented during the consultation, was considered as part of the options appraisal undertaken by the Council. However, following the appraisal of these options, it was concluded that neither this option, nor the other alternatives, would address the challenges facing the school identified in paragraph 3.4 above. As a result, these options were not considered to provide a sustainable long-term solution for educational provision.

4.16 It was therefore concluded that the proposal to close Ysgol Baladeulyn on 31 December 2026 and provide places for learners at Ysgol Talysarn from 1 January 2027 onwards remained the most appropriate option to address the challenges noted. Further details regarding the options considered and the reasons for these conclusions can be found in Sections 6 and 7 of the Consultation Report, together 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 School Organisation Code 011/2018, commencing a statutory 28-day objection period on the proposal to close Ysgol Baladeulyn on 31 December 2026 and provide a place for learners at Ysgol Talysarn from 1 January 2027 onwards.

5.2 The statutory notice was published on 3 June 2026 and posted by the main entrance of Ysgol Baladeulyn and Ysgol Talysarn, 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 by 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 related documents are available on the Council’s website: www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation

5.3 The objection period ended on 30 June 2026. 25 objections were received during the statutory objection period.

5.4 A petition was also received from the Governing Body of Ysgol Baladeulyn, objecting to the proposal, with 500 signatures. The petition called on the Council to reconsider the proposal to close Ysgol Baladeulyn, giving full consideration to the long-term impacts of the proposal on learner wellbeing, the sustainability of the local

community and the Welsh language. It questioned whether all other realistic options, such as federation or collaboration with other schools, had been fully explored before a final decision is made.

- 5.5 Reference was also made to the school's role as an important part of the local community, its contribution to sustaining the Welsh language, and concerns about the impact that closing the school would have on the community and its future.
- 5.6 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 making a final decision on the proposal. The Objection Report, attached as Appendix 1, summarises the objections received and sets out the Council's response to the matters raised.
- 5.7 Overview of the Objections Received**
- 5.8 A high-level overview is provided below of the main themes raised by the objectors.
- 5.9 The objections received raised several matters in relation to the proposal. Among the main themes raised were the quality of education and learners' experiences currently provided at Ysgol Baladeulyn and the potential impact of the proposal on this; the emotional impact of the proposal on learners, staff and local families; the impact of the proposal on the Welsh language; the impact of the proposal on transport and travel arrangements; the impact on the local community and its future; objections to the proposal and calls for it to be reconsidered; alternative options; and challenges to the statutory process and the basis of the proposal.
- 5.10 Many of the objections expressed concern about the potential impact of the proposal on the welfare, education and experiences of learners in a larger school, the future of the Welsh language as a living language in the Nantlle area, the sustainability of the local community and travel arrangements to the alternative school. Concerns were also noted regarding implications of the proposal on families alongside the risk of losing families in the community, and the value of the school as an educational and community centre. Matters relating to admission arrangements, the future of rural communities and schools, and comments regarding the statutory process were also raised.
- 5.11 A significant number of objectors also called on the Council to reconsider the proposal, stop or postpone the process in order to allow more time to find a solution or a sustainable plan for the school's future, questioning if all options have been fully considered before making a final decision.
- 5.12 In order to present the objections in a structured manner, the matters raised have been grouped in the Objection Report under eight 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.
- 5.13 The Objection Report organises the matters raised under the following themes and sub-themes:

Theme 1: Education and Learner Experiences at Ysgol Baladeulyn, and the Impact of the Proposal on the Current Provision

- 1.1 The high quality of the education provided
- 1.2 An inclusive and supportive environment that fosters a sense of belonging
- 1.3 Educational experiences and personal development beyond the classroom
- 1.4 Moving to an education provision in a larger school (Ysgol Talysarn), and how that compares with the existing provision

Theme 2: The Emotional Impact of the Proposal on Learners, Staff and Local Families

- 2.1 The emotional impact of the proposal on learners
- 2.2 The emotional impact of the proposal on school staff and families

Theme 3: The Impact of the Proposal on the Welsh Language

- 3.1 The school's role in maintaining and promoting the Welsh language in the Nantlle area
- 3.2 The impact of the proposal on progress towards county and national aims
- 3.3 The impact of the proposal on the future of the Welsh language in the community

Theme 4: The Impact of the Proposal on Transport and Travel Arrangements

- 4.1 Eligibility for free transport to the alternative school
- 4.2 The impact of new travel arrangements on the well-being of Ysgol Baladeulyn learners

Theme 5: The Local Community and the Impact of the Proposal on its Future

- 5.1 The school as a community focal point
- 5.2 The school's contribution to the identity and well-being of the community
- 5.3 The role of the school when supporting families in a rural area with limited services
- 5.4 The impact of the proposal on the future and sustainability of the community
- 5.5 The demography of the local area
- 5.6 The impact of the proposal on families and attractiveness of the local area

Theme 6: Objections to the Proposal and Calls to Reconsider

- 6.1 Objections to the proposal
- 6.2 A call to keep the school open, prevent or reconsider the proposal

Theme 7: Alternative Options

- 7.1 To ask to give full consideration to alternative options
- 7.2 A restoration plan for small schools
- 7.3 The sustainability and the funding policy of small schools

Theme 8: Challenges to the Statutory Process and the Basis of the Proposal

- 8.1 Criticism on the basis of the proposal
- 8.2 The impact of the proposal on the alternative school and nearby schools
- 8.3 The Council's implementation of the statutory process
- 8.4 Challenging the lawfulness of the proposal and the post use of the site
- 8.5 The adequacy of the consultation documents
- 8.6 The adequacy of the impact assessments
- 8.7 Direction of wider education policies and direction of Modernising Education in Gwynedd
- 8.8 Challenge the admission policy that allows parents to choose their child's school

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

- 6.1 In accordance with the 'Primary Education of the Best Quality for the Children of Gwynedd' strategy, a number of factors were considered when evaluating the options for the future of Ysgol Baladeulyn.
- 6.2 These factors were considered in detail in the report presented to the 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 Objections were received during the statutory objection period, and they 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 25 objections received during the statutory objection period, together with the petition including 500 signatures presented by the Governing Body of Ysgol Baladeulyn, and all the relevant information, evidence and relevant 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 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 Talysarn, offers an education of a minimally equivalent quality and standard to that currently provided at Ysgol Baladeulyn.

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

Although learners at Ysgol Baladeulyn make good progress in small classroom environments, the Council is of the opinion that implementing 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.

Based on the January 2026 PLASC figures, it is predicted that in September 2026 there will be 4 surplus places (and 3 surplus places for the Nursery) at Ysgol Talysarn. Based on this information, it is anticipated that Ysgol Talysarn will have sufficient capacity for the current learners of Ysgol Baladeulyn who live in the Baladeulyn catchment area. It is acknowledged that, if all Ysgol Baladeulyn learners were to decide to transfer to Ysgol

Talysarn, it is possible that the number of learners would exceed the capacity. Should this happen, the Local Authority would deal with admission applications in accordance with its School Admissions Policy and would comply with the Welsh Government's School Admissions Code.

Ysgol Talysarn is a Welsh-medium Category 3 school, like Ysgol Baladeulyn.

6.4.3 Education Resources and other financial implications

Implementing the proposal would rationalise the cost per learner in schools and reduce the range in cost per learner across Gwynedd's primary schools. It is estimated, based on the 2026-27 budget, that realising the proposal would result in a cost per learner of £5,883 at Ysgol Talysarn compared to the £25,123 per learner present at Ysgol Baladeulyn. The county average for the same period is £5,998 per learner.

It is estimated that the implementation of the proposal would lead to an annual saving of approximately £120,000 in revenue costs, having considered additional transport costs of up to £30,000 per year. The estimate of the transport costs is based on the assumption that all the children in Ysgol Baladeulyn's catchment area who would be eligible for transport under the Authority's current transport policy would attend Ysgol Talysarn.

The proposal would also remove the need for additional funding of £74,446 which is currently allocated to Ysgol Baladeulyn through the Minimum Staffing Protection Policy. Learners would be taught in a school where the number of learners and the projections are more robust and sustainable for the future, making 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 holding local discussions with the school's relevant stakeholders, several possible options for the future of Ysgol Baladeulyn, including federation, were considered. 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. As a result, this options appraisal was updated from 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 Baladeulyn 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, provide a sustainable answer to those challenges. In producing and appraising 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 options appraisal process. The evaluation concluded that the multi-site school would not sufficiently respond to the fundamental challenges facing Ysgol Baladeulyn. 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 Baladeulyn 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 appraisal, it was concluded that this option would not address the challenges facing the school 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 broad range of alternative options were considered as part of the process, including federating with a nearby school, federating along with establishing a specialist unit, establishing an additional learning needs unit, establishing a language centre, and developing other specialist educational materials on the site. The appraisal 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, significant 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. It was 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 nor address the challenges associated with significant surplus places, small classes, 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.

During the statutory consultation and objection period, it was noted that the school invites the community to the school for activities within and outside of school hours such as coffee evenings, presentations by the children and assemblies. Concerns were expressed in regard to the potential impact of losing the school as a community focal point on community cohesion, vitality and sustainability.

The assessment shows that there would be some likely negative impact on the community if the proposal to close Ysgol Baladeulyn is implemented, as this would lead to losing a school within the community of Nantlle as a community focal point. The concerns raised during the consultation and statutory objection period regarding the implications of this on the vitality of the community are acknowledged, such as the activities that are held at the school, and the opportunities for families and local residents to interact. The comments received regarding Ysgol Baladeulyn as the focal point of the community and the emotional impact of the proposal on the wider community, as well as concerns about the long-term negative impact on the sustainability of the community if the school were to close were also noted. However, it is noted that a significant percentage of children in the catchment area (75%) already attend other schools, including Ysgol Talysarn (50%), suggesting that community and educational links with neighbouring communities, including the Talysarn community, already exist. Should the Cabinet decide to move forward with the closure of Ysgol Baladeulyn, the Council would try

to mitigate the impact on the community by encouraging and supporting ongoing links between the Nantlle community and the alternative school, promoting community collaboration where appropriate, and ensuring that residents and families are aware of the opportunities, facilities and activities of the alternative school. In addition, it is noted that should a decision to close the school be made, the Authority's Post-use Policy would act as a framework to undertake further discussions regarding appropriate options for the post-use of the school building, including community use where appropriate, in order to try to mitigate any negative impact on the local community. It is noted that Canolfan Llys Llywelyn is available for community activities in the area as well as Plas Trigonos Baladeulyn.

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 Talysarn to ensure appropriate transition arrangements for the learners. The options appraisal noted that Ysgol Talysarn offers classes of a more suitable size and a broader 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 closing rural schools. This does not mean that a rural school cannot be closed, but that the case to close it must be strong and that all other viable alternatives have been considered conscientiously, including federation. Ysgol Baladeulyn has been designated as a rural school for the purpose of the Code and therefore these additional requirements apply to the proposal.

7.2 In addition to the factors that are relevant when developing any proposal, the Code makes it mandatory that the Authority must undertake specific assessments in relation to proposals to close rural schools. Several 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, further impact assessments were conducted of the proposal, the other 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. When carrying out those assessments, consideration was given to any relevant additional information received during the consultation, and the assessments were updated where appropriate in order to reflect this information. This additional information did not lead to a change to the conclusions of the impact assessments. A summary of the main findings is provided below.

7.4 The conclusion of the assessment of the likely impact on the quality and standards of education indicate that the educational provision offered at Ysgol Talysarn is of a minimally equivalent standard to that currently provided at Ysgol Baladeulyn. 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 Baladeulyn learners, as they would need to travel further to school. Ysgol Talysarn is located 2.5 miles from Ysgol Baladeulyn. However, the assessment does not envisage that any learner from the Baladeulyn 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 Nantlle community, as it would lead to the loss of the school as a local community resource and focal point. The concerns raised during the consultation and the statutory objection period regarding the implications of this on the vitality of the community, such as the activities that will be held at the school and the opportunities for families and local residents to interact, are acknowledged. The comments received regarding Ysgol Baladeulyn as the centre of the community and the emotional impact of the proposal on the wider community, as well as concerns about the long-term negative impact on the sustainability of the community if the school were to close, were also noted. However, the assessment notes that a significant percentage of children in the catchment area (75%) already attend other schools, including Ysgol Talysarn (50%), and therefore that educational and community links with the surrounding area have already been established. If the proposal were to be implemented, the Council would try to mitigate the impact on the community by supporting ongoing links between the Nantlle community and the community of the alternative school, and consider appropriate post-use options for the school site in accordance with the Authority's policies. It is also noted that Canolfan Llys Llywelyn is available for community activities in the area as well as Trigonos Plas Baladeulyn.
- 7.7 The Education Department is still of the opinion, that after holding the objection period and considering all the relevant information presented during the statutory period, that none of the alternative options considered, including federation and the other options presented by stakeholders, would adequately address the main challenges facing Ysgol Baladeulyn. These challenges include low learner numbers over an extended period, a high percentage of surplus places, a high cost per learner compared to the county's average, and projections that show that learner numbers will remain low in future. In addition, 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 statutory consultation, it was noted that the school provides excellent Welsh-medium education and creates an environment where children speak Welsh confidently and naturally, strengthening the language as the main social as well as educational medium. It was expressed that the school plays an important role in integrating new families, including some from English-speaking backgrounds, into the Welsh-speaking life of the village. It was emphasised that the school contributes significantly to the use of the Welsh language in informal contexts, through social meetings, play after school and interaction between parents and local residents.
- 8.5 The Council acknowledges that these concerns have been reiterated and strengthened during the statutory objection period, particularly in relation to Ysgol Baladeulyn's role in sustaining and promoting the Welsh language as a living language within the local community of Nantlle. It was also noted the concern raised by some objectors that closing the school could reduce opportunities to use the Welsh language on a daily basis and weaken the process of inter-generational transmission, and this would pose a significant potential risk to the sustainability of the Welsh language in the Nantlle area, which goes against the objectives of Cymraeg 2050.
- 8.6 The Council acknowledges the concerns raised regarding the role of Ysgol Baladeulyn in supporting the community use of the Welsh language within the village, and accepts that the comments highlight a possible detrimental impact on local linguistic vitality outside the formal educational provision.
- 8.7 However, based on the information available, the Council's view is that the proposed option is not likely to have a negative impact on Welsh-medium education provision or on learners' language opportunities, for the following reasons:
- The January 2026 PLASC data show that 29% of learners at Ysgol Baladeulyn speak Welsh fluently at home, compared with 37% of learners at Ysgol Talysarn.
 - The proposal to close Ysgol Baladeulyn and offer places for learners in a nearby school (Ysgol Talysarn) means that learners in the Nantlle catchment area would continue to be educated in a Welsh-medium school.
 - It is anticipated that learners would be taught in larger classes and with more children from the same age group, and that the proposal would strengthen opportunities for learners to socialise in Welsh with a wider group of their peers.
- 8.8 In the educational context, based on the above, if the proposed option were to be implemented, it is anticipated that there would be increased opportunities for learners from the Ysgol Baladeulyn catchment area to use Welsh informally with their peers both inside and outside the classroom, and that the vitality of the Welsh language and the level of informal language use would be stronger.
- 8.9 At the same time, taking into account the comments of the consultation and the statutory objection period, the Council recognises that the proposal to close Ysgol Baladeulyn could lead to a possible negative impact on the use of the Welsh language within the local community, especially from the point of view of its use as a community language outside the educational context. It is anticipated that there may be some negative impact arising from the implementation of the proposal, as parents/guardians/families and local residents would not meet daily in the Nantlle community when dropping off/collecting children from school or during school activities. The school invites the community to the school for activities within school hours and outside school hours such as concerts, presentations and assemblies. However, it is noted that mitigating measures could be considered by promoting

the use of the Welsh language by including the Baladeulyn community in the community activities of the alternative school, as well as considering appropriate options for the subsequent use of the school building, taking into account the community activities that are currently being held there.

8.10 In reaching this conclusion, the Council has considered the comments received during the statutory consultation and objection period. Although it is acknowledged that the proposal could have a possible negative effect on some aspects of community use of the Welsh language within the Nantlle area, the Council is of the opinion that the evidence available does not demonstrate that the proposal would have a negative impact on Welsh-medium education provision, or on the opportunities for learners to use and develop their Welsh within the educational provision.

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 stated in the latest assessment, during the statutory consultation and the statutory objection period, some specific concerns were identified from an equality perspective; especially regarding vulnerable children, learners with Additional Learning Needs; families who experience a socio-economic disadvantage or the impact of the proposal on the Welsh language. Concern was expressed that moving some learners to a larger school could reduce the level of personal support currently available to them and reference was made to a possible negative impact on learners' well-being when transferring to the alternative school, also referring concern to the effect of longer journeys on learners' well-being. Comments referred to other possible effects such as additional fuel costs or lack of access to private transport and some families experiencing socio-economic disadvantage may be disproportionately affected. Concern was raised that the loss of the school could undermine the opportunities for people to use the Welsh language naturally in the community, posing a significant risk to the sustainability of the Welsh language in the Nantlle area.

8.15 It is stated in the assessment that the Council recognises the issues raised and emphasises that equality and inclusion policies are active in the current provision and at Ysgol Talysarn. Furthermore, it is noted that the Council undertakes to give priority to individual needs, including vulnerable children and learners with Additional Learning Needs, should the school close. With regard to the concerns regarding community use of the Welsh language, it is noted that mitigation measures would be considered, including promoting ongoing links between the Nantlle community and the alternative school through community activities, and by considering appropriate options for the subsequent use of the school building in order to support continued use of the Welsh language in the local community, if the proposal were to 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 identified a possible negative impact on certain protected groups, including vulnerable learners, learners with Additional Learning Needs, and families experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. Specific concerns were also noted regarding a possible impact on the use of the Welsh language within the local community, especially from the point of view of its informal use outside the educational context. However, based on the general equality assessment, the evidence set out in the related

impact assessments, and the mitigation measures described, the Council remains of the opinion that the proposal is not likely to lead to a significant negative impact on equality features. It is noted that policies and procedures are already in place to ensure that there will be no illegal discrimination or harassment, and that individual needs are properly considered.

8.17 While it is acknowledged that there could be a potential negative impact in relation to socio-economic disadvantage should the proposal be implemented, the Council remains of the view that implementing the proposal would reduce inequality associated with socio-economic disadvantage by ensuring that learners have access to a broader range of experiences and to more services and activities in the alternative school, broader educational provision, additional social and educational opportunities, and access to extended expertise and support.

8.18 By implementing the proposal, Ysgol Baladeulyn's learners would have a better learning environment and the learners would benefit from having more age-related peers in a school with more learners, which will ensure suitable educational and extracurricular experiences for them together with access to more extracurricular activities. In addition, it is noted that Ysgol Baladeulyn learners would continue to receive education in an alternative Welsh-medium Category 3 school, with more opportunities to use the language informally with peers, strengthening the vitality and natural use of the Welsh language 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 after the consultation period ended and reviewed once 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 In the latest assessment, it is noted that the responses to the consultation and the objection period express specific concerns regarding the impact of the proposal on the well-being of learners, especially vulnerable learners and learners with Additional Learning Needs, as well as the well-being of families facing 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, the proposal would lead to the loss of a school in the Nantlle community. However, it is noted that a significant percentage of children who live within the school's catchment area (75%) already attend other schools, including Ysgol Talysarn (50%), which suggests that links with neighbouring communities, including the Talysarn community, already exist. Every effort will be made to mitigate the impact on the community by encouraging links between the communities and Ysgol Talysarn, should the proposal be implemented. Should the proposal be approved, discussions will be held in order to discuss the possibility that Ysgol Talysarn's community activity includes the Nantlle community where appropriate.

8.24 It is also noted in the assessment, should Ysgol Baladeulyn close, the authority and the alternative school would work closely with the closing school, with the learners and their families, to ensure a smooth transition and to support the learners as they settle into their new schools. 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 Baladeulyn 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 25 objections, the petition containing 500 signatures, and all comments received during the statutory objection period, the Council remains of the view that the proposal to close Ysgol Baladeulyn 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 Baladeulyn 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 assumption against closing rural schools, the alternative options considered, together with the findings of the relevant impact assessments.

9.4 The proposal to close Ysgol Baladeulyn addresses these challenges by:

- Responding to the challenge of low numbers of learners in Ysgol Baladeulyn, 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 On the basis of all the relevant information considered, including the comments received during the statutory consultation, and the objections received during the statutory objection period, the evaluation of the proposal and the alternative options, together with the Council's strategic direction, the Council confirms that it continues to be of the opinion that the proposal to close Ysgol Baladeulyn is the most appropriate response to the challenges facing the school (as stated in section 3.4), and therefore continues to be recommended as the most suitable way of tackling the challenges facing the school. Consequently, it is recommended that the Cabinet confirms the proposal.

10. RECOMMENDATION

10.1 Following consideration of the 25 objections and the petition with 500 signatures, it is recommended for the Cabinet to finally confirm the proposal issued through a statutory notice, which is to close Ysgol Baladeulyn on 31 December 2026 and provide a place for the learners at Ysgol Talysarn from 1 January 2027, in accordance with Section 53 of the School Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 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 Baladeulyn 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 proposals affect the bodies and whether they need to consider the proposals.

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 \(Item 7\)](#)

Appendix 6: [Statutory Consultation Document](#)

Appendix 7: Comments from the Local Member

13. Views of the statutory officers

The Monitoring Office:

“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 Baladeulyn 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.”