

# CYNGOR GWYNEDD CABINET



**Date of meeting:** 14 October 2025  
**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Dewi Jones  
**Liaison Officer:** Gwern ap Rhisiart – Head of Education  
**Item Title:** Ysgol Baladeulyn - proposal

## Report for Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet meeting

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### 1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

- 1.1 The permission of the Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet is sought to hold a period of statutory consultation, in accordance with the requirements of section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, on the proposed proposal to close Ysgol Baladeulyn on 31 December 2026 and provide a place for learners at Ysgol Talysarn from 1 January 2027 onwards.

### 2 REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

- 2.1 The reason for seeking permission to hold a statutory consultation on the proposed proposal set out in 1.1 is the need to address the vulnerable position of Ysgol Baladeulyn. The number of learners at Ysgol Baladeulyn has been low for some time. According to September 2025 numbers, only 7 full-time learners attend the school with a further 2 in the nursery, with projections indicating that numbers will remain low with estimates of only 8 full-time learners on the register by September 2028.

### 3 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 At their meeting on 11 February 2025, the Cabinet decided to support the recommendation to initiate formal discussions with the Governing Body and relevant stakeholders of Ysgol Baladeulyn to discuss possible options relating to the future of the school due to low numbers of learners and concerns about the sustainability of the school.
- 3.2 The purpose of this report is to report back on the outcome of local discussions, and to seek consent to hold a statutory consultation on the proposed closure of Ysgol Baladeulyn on 31 December 2026 and to provide places for catchment-area pupils at Ysgol Talysarn from 1 January 2027 onwards.

### 4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Ysgol Baladeulyn is a community primary school located in the village of Nantlle in the Nantlle Valley. The school provides education for learners aged 3 to 11 and is a Category 3 Welsh medium school.

Learners are admitted to the school on a part-time basis in the September following their third birthday, and as full-time learners in the September following their fourth birthday.

- 4.2 With 6 learners (Reception to Year 6) on the school register, and a capacity of 55, there are 49 surplus places in the school, which equates to 89% of the school's capacity. The school also has capacity for 7 learners in the Nursery class, with 2 nursery learners on the roll, there are also 5 surplus places in the Nursery.

### **Strategic Context**

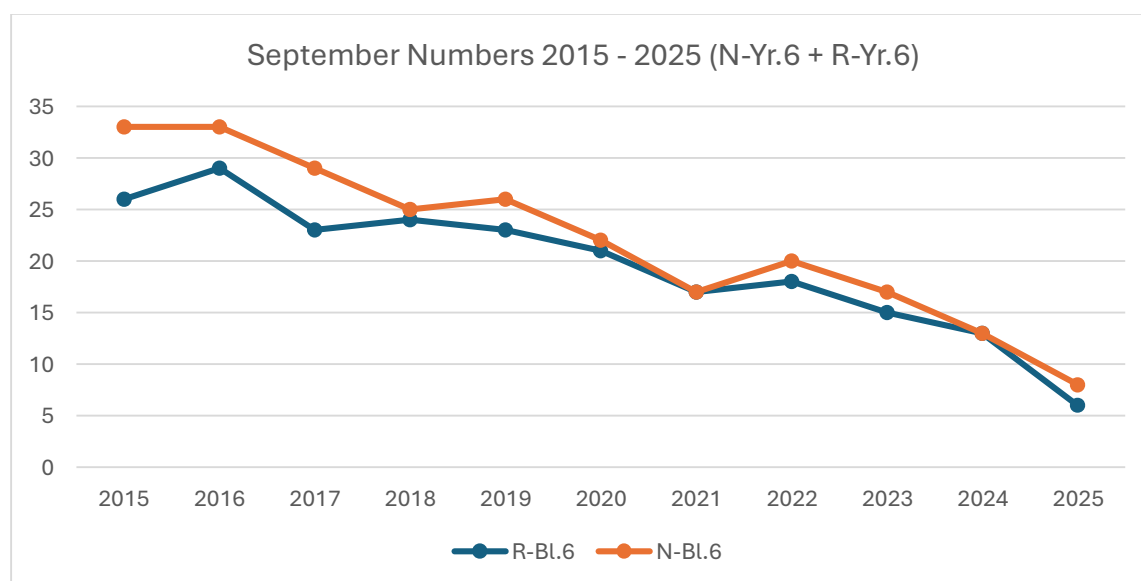
- 4.3 The Council has implemented the "Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd" Strategy since its adoption by the Full Council in April 2009.
- 4.4 At its meeting on 18 December 2018, the Cabinet endorsed the principles of "Fit for Purpose Education" which now form the basis for realising the Education Department's vision and developing the system to ensure high quality education for the children and young people of Gwynedd for the twenty first century. These principles work towards rationalising age range within primary classes and ensuring adequate non-contact time for headteachers to focus on leadership matters in primary schools.

### **Presumption against closure of rural schools**

- 4.5 The School Organisation Code (the Code) contains a special procedure in relation to rural schools, establishing a procedural presumption against closure.
- 4.6 It is noted in the Code *"This does not mean that a rural school will never close, but the case for closure must be strong, and all viable alternatives to closure must have been conscientiously considered by the proposer, including federation."*
- 4.7 Ysgol Baladeulyn is designated as a 'rural school' for the purpose of the Code. As a result, particular consideration has been given to the additional procedural requirements in relation to formulating proposals for rural schools in drawing up this proposal paper.

## **5. THE CURRENT SITUATION AT YSGOL BALADEULYN**

- 5.1 As can be seen from the graph below, there has been a substantial and sustained drop in the number of learners at Ysgol Baladeulyn. In 2017, 23 Reception to Year 6 learners and 6 Nursery learners attended school, but as of now, the numbers have dropped to 6 full time learners (Reception to Year 6) and 2 Nursery, which equates to a drop of 72% in the number of learners.



5.2 As a result of the current low numbers, the school is in a vulnerable position and facing increasing challenges, including:

- **Low numbers of learners** – In January 2025 there were 13 full-time learners and 0 nursery learners at Ysgol Baladeulyn. Numbers have dropped further since then with 7 full-time learners and 2 nursery learners on the register in September 2025.
- **High percentage of surplus places** – Based on September 2025 figures, there are around 89% of surplus places at the school (49 in number). The school also has capacity for 7 learners in the Nursery class, with 2 nursery learners on the roll, there are also 5 surplus places in the Nursery.
- **Small class sizes and a broad age range** – There are 2 classes that meet in the morning, one with two nursery children and one Year 1, and the other with the rest of the learners from reception to year 6. In the afternoon there are 2 classes for learners from reception to year 6. One class is for 2 Year 1 learners and the other for 4 learners from years 2 to 6.
- **Number projections** – September 2025 projections suggest that numbers will remain low over the next three years.
- **Learners in the catchment area** – Data from September 2025 shows that only 25% of catchment area learners at Ysgol Baladeulyn choose to attend the school. 75% of learners in the catchment area choose to attend out-of-catchment schools.
- **Ysgol Baladeulyn receives an additional amount to the core financial allocation** – Ysgol Baladeulyn receives an additional sum to the usual allocation via the minimum staffing policy (which guarantees at least a head teacher and a teacher in each school, and a head teacher and an assistant in schools with fewer than 15 full-time learners). The total additional amount during the financial year 2025-26 (based on September 2024 numbers) was £56,781.
- **Average cost per pupil** – The average cost per pupil at Ysgol Baladeulyn in 2025-26 is £14,953 compared to the county average of £5,780.

## 6. LOCAL DISCUSSIONS

- 6.1 During the Autumn term 2024, officers from the Education Department met with the Governing Body of Ysgol Baladeulyn in order to discuss the school's vulnerable position. During the meeting, it was noted that the intention was to seek Cabinet approval to move the discussion forward by holding formal meetings with the Governing Body and the relevant stakeholders to discuss the challenges and options for the future.
- 6.2 In accordance with the Cabinet's decision of 11 February 2025, the Baladeulyn School Review Panel (SRP) was established. All members of the Governing Body, parents and staff of the school as well as the Local Member were invited to join the panel and participate in the discussion.
- 6.3 On 17 March 2025, the first of three SRP meetings took place when the challenges facing the school were outlined and an initial discussion held to identify options which would respond to these challenges (as detailed in paragraph 5.2 above). Examples of options were suggested at the meeting, and following the meeting some school stakeholders suggested other alternatives for consideration. These are set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 6.4 The second SRP meeting took place on 19 May 2025. During the meeting a SWOT evaluation was submitted to identify the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats of all the options. Comments on the evaluation were received during the meeting and the evaluation was amended to include them.
- 6.5 Following input from SRP members, a third meeting was held on 7 July 2025 to note the challenges facing the school, the long list of options it had been agreed to evaluate and to explain the factors that would be taken into consideration when undertaking an evaluation of the options on the long list. The intention was noted to carry out impact assessments on the options before reporting back to the Cabinet in October.

## 7. IDENTIFYING OPTIONS

7.1 With input from SRP members during the local meetings, a long list of options was drawn up for consideration regarding the future of the school. These included options submitted by the stakeholders of Ysgol Baladeulyn. These options were:

- No change – continue with the current situation
- Federation with a nearby school (Ysgol Talysarn)
- To close Ysgol Baladeulyn and offer learners a place at a nearby school (Ysgol Talysarn)
- To change the status of Ysgol Baladeulyn to be a Christian school
- Merging local schools in order to support and maintain Ysgol Baladeulyn
- To add a specialist area for children with additional learning needs at Ysgol Baladeulyn
- Federation with another school and to add a specialist area for children with additional learning needs in Ysgol Baladeulyn
- To include a language unit at the Ysgol Baladeulyn site

Section 40(5) of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 provides:

*“No change may be made to a maintained school which alters the religious character of the school or causes a school to acquire or lose its religious character.”*

As a result, one option proposed by the school’s stakeholders, namely the option to change the status of Ysgol Baladeulyn to be a Christian school, was disregarded.

### Other Options

7.2 A wide range of options were identified during the local meetings and we have also considered what the School Organisation Code 011/2018 notes as examples of possible options that could be worth considering when formulating the proposal for a rural school, and the following examples were considered in addition to the options in section 7 of this report. Those options are shown below with comments added to them:

- Clustering, collaborating with other schools - the option of federation with a nearby school was included in the options appraisal.
- Using the school as a community centre to hold and support a range of community services – following consideration of the option to use the school as a community centre, it was concluded that this option would not offer a sustainable solution for the school, as it would not address the challenges facing the school (as noted in section 5.2) If this option were realised, it is anticipated that the challenges noted in section 5.2 of the report, e.g. low numbers of pupils, small class sizes and as a result the financial challenges facing the school would continue.
- Co-locating local services within the school to offset maintenance costs - the option of *adding a specialist area for children with additional learning needs at Ysgol Baladeulyn* and the option *to include a language unit at the Ysgol Baladeulyn site* were suggested during the local discussions and are considered in the options appraisal.
- To consider establishing schools on more than one site in order to retain buildings – this option was suggested during the local discussions (*merging local schools in order to support and maintain Ysgol Baladeulyn*) and was considered in the options appraisal.

## 8. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

8.1 In accordance with the “Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd” strategy a number of factors were considered when appraising the options for the situation, namely:

- The number of learners and surplus places
- Class sizes and age range
- Leadership and staffing

- Quality of education
- The Community
- Financial resources
- The Welsh language
- Geographical and travel factors
- Condition and suitability of buildings

8.2 A further comparison of all options against the strategy factors can be found in **Appendix 1** (Options Appraisal Table) and the conclusion of the evaluation of individual options can be seen below.

### 8.3 No change - continue with the current situation

This option would mean that there would be no change to the existing provision in the catchment area of Ysgol Baladeulyn.

Having weighed up the school's latest position against the relevant factors, it is concluded that this option does not address the current challenges listed below:

- Learner numbers and surplus places – Learner numbers are low (6 R-Yr.6 and 2 Nursery) and there are substantial surplus places (89% R-Yr 6 and 87% N-Yr6)) at Ysgol Baladeulyn and number projections suggest that this will continue.
- Class sizes and age range – 2 classes meet in the morning; one with two nursery children and one year 1, and the other with the rest of the reception – year 6 learners. In the afternoon there are 2 classes for reception – year 6 learners. There is one class for 2 year 1 learners and the other for 4 year 2 – 6 learners.
- Financial resources – In 2025-26 Ysgol Baladeulyn receives a substantial additional protection allocation (£56,781) and the average cost per learner per head (£14,953) is significantly higher than the county average (£5,780)
- Condition and suitability of buildings - £125,000 worth of necessary repair and maintenance work has been identified for Ysgol Baladeulyn building. This option would not adequately respond to this challenge.

### 8.4 Federation with a nearby school (Ysgol Talysarn)

The Code notes that federation brings particular benefits to rural schools and states that a proposer must therefore demonstrate how federation has been considered as an option. It has been demonstrated that federation can offer advantages to rural schools in some situations, particularly in terms of strengthening leadership and opportunities for collaboration.

This option would mean establishing a formal collaboration arrangement, between 3 schools, as Ysgol Talysarn has already federated with Ysgol Brynaerau.

This model would ensure continuity as regards the presence of the school in the village of Nantlle by means of a collaboration arrangement with nearby schools, led by a head teacher or head teachers and one governing body. The governing bodies of the individual schools would be dissolved and a (new) federal governing body would be formed. The identity of the school in question (including name, ethos, and school uniform) would continue, and it would enable the possibility of sharing staff, resources, buildings, and expertise.

In considering this model, it must be assessed what any impact would be on the operation of the schools forming part of the federation. Noting the challenges facing Ysgol Baladeulyn, it would have to be ensured that such an arrangement could offer benefits to all the children and young people of the federating schools by improving educational provision.

As Ysgol Baladeulyn's numbers have reached a critical situation with 6 learners (Reception - Year 6) and 2 Nursery learner on the register, it was predicted that there were no clear benefits for other schools from federating with Ysgol Baladeulyn.

There is no clear evidence that forming a federation would lead to an increase in numbers.

After weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of federation, it was concluded that this option did not respond to the main challenges faced by the school; as noted in section 5.2 above, including:

- Learner numbers and surplus places – There is no clear evidence that forming a federation would lead to an increase in numbers. As a result, it is anticipated that federating would mean that the challenge of low learner numbers (6 R-Yr.6 and 2 Nursery) and significant surplus places (89% R-Yr6 and 87% N-Yr 6) at Ysgol Baladeulyn would continue.

- Small class sizes and broad age range – 2 classes meet in the morning; one with two nursery children and one year 1, and the other with the rest of the reception – year 6 learners. In the afternoon there are 2 classes for reception – year 6 learners. There is one class for 2 year 1 learners and the other for 4 year 2 – 6 learners. As it is not anticipated that forming a federation would lead to an increase in numbers, it is anticipated that federating would not respond to the challenge of small classes and a broad age range.
- Financial resources – In 2025-26 Ysgol Baladeulyn receives a substantial additional protection allocation (£56,781) and the average cost per learner per head (£14,953) is significantly higher than the county average (£5,780). As it is not anticipated that federating would lead to an increase in the numbers of learners, it is not anticipated that the option would affect the financial allocation of Ysgol Baladeulyn.
- Condition and suitability of buildings – The maintenance costs of Ysgol Baladeulyn would continue (£125,000 already identified). As the Ysgol Baladeulyn building would continue, federating would not respond to this challenge.

#### 8.5 To close Ysgol Baladeulyn and offer learners a place at a nearby school (Ysgol Talysarn)

This model would mean closing Ysgol Baladeulyn and offering catchment-area learners a place at Ysgol Talysarn.

Ysgol Talysarn is considered the 'nearby school' as it is the nearest geographical school to Ysgol Baladeulyn. The school is located approximately 2.5 miles from the site of Ysgol Baladeulyn.

Ysgol Talysarn also offers itself as the obvious alternative as 63% of primary age children in the catchment area of Ysgol Baladeulyn already attend Ysgol Talysarn and there is sufficient capacity there to accommodate learners from the Ysgol Baladeulyn catchment area.

Following this, it is proposed to extend the catchment area of Ysgol Talysarn to include the catchment area of Ysgol Baladeulyn for the future.

The rationale behind recommending this proposal is further detailed as the preferred option for consultation in Section 10. The preferred option.

#### 8.6 Merging local schools in order to support and maintain Ysgol Baladeulyn

This option would involve merging a number of local schools by closing the schools and establishing a single multi-site school that would include the Ysgol Baladeulyn site.

The option would enable the possibility of sharing resources, buildings and expertise.

This model would ensure continuity in the presence of a school site in the village of Nantlle by establishing a multi-site school, led by a headteacher and one governing body. The governing bodies of the individual schools would be dissolved and a (new) governing body would be formed for the multi-site school.

Under this model, there would be staffing implications that can lead to uncertainty and redundancies. The positions of all members of staff in each of the schools that would form part of the multi-site school would come to an end. The new appointments would be made by the shadow governing body of the new multi-site school.

Ysgol Baladeulyn's numbers have reached a critical situation with 6 learners (Reception - Year 6) and 2 part-time learner (nursery) on the roll. It is not anticipated that this option would lead to an increase in the numbers of learners on Ysgol Baladeulyn site.

After weighing up the advantages and disadvantages, it is concluded that this option does not address the challenges the school is facing, as stated in section 5.2 above, including:

- Learner numbers and surplus places – It is anticipated that the numbers of learners on Ysgol Baladeulyn site would remain low (8 Reception - Year 6 and 2 Nursery) together with significant surplus places (89% D-Yr 6 and 87% N-Yr 6).
- Small class sizes and broad age range – 2 classes meet in the morning; one with two nursery children and one year 1, and the other with the rest of the reception – year 6 learners. In the afternoon there are 2 classes for reception – year 6 learners. There is one class for 2 year 1 learners and the other for 4 year 2 – 6 learners. As it is not anticipated that the

option would lead to an increase in the numbers of learners at Ysgol Baladeulyn site, it is likely that small classes would continue at the Baladeulyn site with a broad age range within the classes.

- Financial resources – Establishing a multi-site school would mean establishing one multi-site school, with one allocation for all the sites. It is anticipated that Ysgol Baladeulyn site would continue to receive an additional amount to the core allocation through the minimum staffing protection policy as the numbers of learners at Ysgol Baladeulyn site would remain low.
- Condition and suitability of buildings - £125,000 worth of necessary repair and maintenance work has been identified for Ysgol Baladeulyn building. This option would not respond to this challenge.

#### 8.7 To add a specialist area for children with additional learning needs at Ysgol Baladeulyn

This option would mean that Ysgol Baladeulyn would continue, but it would also mean adding an area for an ALN unit on the school site in order to offer special education to the children who would need additional support.

As the school building would need to be modified to provide a location for the specialist unit, the school's capacity would likely be reduced and therefore it is anticipated that the option would lead to a reduction in surplus places

However, Ysgol Baladeulyn's numbers have reached a critical situation with 6 (Reception - Year 6) learners and 2 part-time learner (Nursery) on the register. As the learners of the ALN unit would continue to register as learners in their original school, it is not anticipated that the inclusion of an ALN unit on a school site would affect the numbers. As a result, it is anticipated that Ysgol Baladeulyn's numbers would remain low, and it is not anticipated that it would respond to the challenges the school is facing, as stated in section 5.2 (above).

After weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of this option for Ysgol Baladeulyn, it is concluded that this option does not adequately respond to the main challenges the school faces, as stated in section 5.2 above, including:

- Learner numbers and surplus places – Although there would be a reduction in the school's capacity and surplus places as a result of locating the ALN unit within the Ysgol Baladeulyn's building, as the learners of the ALN unit would continue to register as learners at their original school, it is not anticipated that the inclusion of an ALN unit on the school site would affect Ysgol Baladeulyn's numbers. As a result, it is predicted that the numbers would remain low.
- Small class sizes and broad age range – 2 classes meet in the morning; one with two nursery children and one year 1, and the other with the rest of the reception – year 6 learners. In the afternoon there are 2 classes for reception – year 6 learners. There is one class for 2 year 1 learners and the other for 4 year 2 – 6 learners. Locating an ALN Unit on the site of Ysgol Baladeulyn would mean that there would be more children on the site, but the Unit would operate separately from the rest of Ysgol Baladeulyn and therefore there would be no effect on the size of classes and the age range at Ysgol Baladeulyn..
- Financial resources – In 2025-26 Ysgol Baladeulyn receives a substantial additional protection allocation (£56,781) and the average cost per learner per head (£14,953) is significantly higher than the county average (£5,780). As it is not anticipated that the option would affect the numbers of learners at the school, it is anticipated that this financial challenge would continue.
- Condition and suitability of buildings - £125,000 worth of necessary repair and maintenance work has been identified for Ysgol Baladeulyn building – this would continue.

#### 8.8 Federation with another school and to add a specialist area for children with special needs at Ysgol Baladeulyn

The Code states that federalisation brings special advantages to rural schools and states that a proponent must therefore show how federalisation has been considered as an option. It has been shown that federalisation can offer advantages to rural schools in certain situations, specifically from the point of view of strengthening leadership and collaboration opportunities.

This model would ensure continuity in the school's presence in the village of Nantlle through a collaborative arrangement with a nearby school or schools, led by a head or heads and one governing body. The governing bodies of the individual schools would be dissolved and a (new) federal governing body would be formed. The identity of the school in question (including name, ethos, and school uniform) would continue, and it would enable the possibility of sharing staff, resources, buildings, and expertise.

The possibility of federalising with a nearby school was considered, specifically Ysgol Talysarn. As a result, this option would mean establishing a formal collaboration arrangement, between 3 schools, as Ysgol Talysarn has already federated with Ysgol Brynaerau.

When considering this model, it must be assessed what any impact would be on how the schools that became part of the federation would operate. Noting the challenges facing Ysgol Baladeulyn, it would have to be ensured that such an arrangement would be able to offer benefits to all the children and young people of the federating schools by improving the educational provision.

As Ysgol Baladeulyn's numbers have reached a critical situation with 6 learners (Reception - Year 6) and 2 part-time learners (Nursery) on the register, it is anticipated that there would be no clear advantages for other schools from federalising with Ysgol Baladeulyn and adding a specialist area on the site of Ysgol Baladeulyn.

There is no clear evidence that federalisation would lead to an increase in numbers.

In addition to federalisation, this option would also mean adding a location for a specialist area for learners with additional learning needs. Note that the addition of a specialist area would not affect Ysgol Baladeulyn's numbers, as learners in the ALN area would continue to register as learners in their original school. As the ALN area would be located within the Ysgol Baladeulyn building, it is anticipated that the option would lead to a reduction in the school's capacity, and as a result, a reduction in the number of surplus places at Ysgol Baladeulyn.

Following weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of federating and locating a ALN specialist area on Ysgol Baladeulyn site, it was concluded that this option would not adequately respond to the main challenges the school is facing, as stated in section 5.2 above, including:

- Numbers of learners and surplus places - Although there would be a reduction in the school's capacity and empty places as a result of locating the ALN unit within the Ysgol Baladeulyn building, as there is no clear evidence that federalisation would lead to an increase in numbers, it is anticipated that the challenge of low numbers of learners at Ysgol Baladeulyn would continue if this option were to be implemented. As the learners of the ALN unit would continue to register as learners in their original school, it is not anticipated that the inclusion of an ALN unit on a school site would affect the numbers. As a result, it is predicted that numbers would remain low.
- Small class sizes and broad age range – 2 classes meet in the morning; one with two nursery children and one year 1, and the other with the rest of the Reception - Year 6 learners. In the afternoon there are 2 classes for Reception - Year 6 learners. One class is for 2 year 1 learners and the other for 4 years 2 - 6 learners. It is not anticipated that federalisation would change this. As it is not anticipated that the option would lead to an increase in numbers, it is anticipated that this option would not respond to the challenge of small classes and a broad age range.
- Financial resources - In 2025-26 Ysgol Baladeulyn receives a significant additional care allocation (£56,781) and the average cost per learner (£14,953) is significantly higher than the county average (£5,780). As it is not anticipated that the option would affect the numbers of the School's learners, it is anticipated that this financial challenge would continue.
- Condition and suitability of buildings - £125,000 worth of necessary repair and maintenance work has been identified for Ysgol Baladeulyn building. This option would not respond to this challenge.

#### **8.9 To include a language unit at the Ysgol Baladeulyn site**

This option would mean that Ysgol Baladeulyn would continue, but it would also mean adding a language immersion unit on the school site to offer an immersion service in Welsh to new speakers.

As the school building would need to be modified to provide a location for the language unit/centre, the school's capacity would likely be reduced and therefore it is anticipated that the option would lead to a reduction in surplus places.

However, Ysgol Baladeulyn's numbers have reached a critical situation with 8 learners (Reception - Year 6) and 2 part-time learner (Nursery) on the register. As the learners of the language unit/centre would continue to register as learners in their original school, it is not anticipated that the inclusion of a language centre on the school site would affect the Ysgol Baladeulyn numbers. As a result, it is anticipated that Ysgol Baladeulyn numbers would remain low, and it is not anticipated that it would respond to the challenges the school is facing, as stated in section 5.2 (above).



Following weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of this option for Ysgol Baladeulyn, it is concluded that this option does not adequately respond to the main challenges the school faces, as stated in section 5.2 above, including:

- Learner numbers and surplus places – Although there would be a reduction in the school's capacity and surplus places as a result of locating the language unit/centre within the Ysgol Baladeulyn building, as the learners of the language unit would continue to register as learners in their original school, it is not anticipated that the inclusion of a language unit on the school site would affect the numbers. As a result, it is predicted that numbers would remain low.
- Class sizes and age range – 2 classes meet in the morning; one with two nursery children and one year 1, and the other with the rest of the reception – year 6 learners. In the afternoon there are 2 classes for reception – year 6 learners. There is one class for 2 year 1 learners and the other for 4 year 2 – 6 learners. As it is not anticipated that the option would lead to an increase in numbers, class sizes would remain small with a broad age range.
- Financial resources – In 2025-26 Ysgol Baladeulyn received a substantial additional protection allocation (£56,781) and the average cost per learner per head (£14,953) is significantly higher than the county average (£5,780). As it is not anticipated that the option would affect the numbers of learners at the school, it is anticipated that this financial challenge would continue.
- Condition and suitability of buildings - £125,000 worth of necessary repair and maintenance work has been identified for Ysgol Baladeulyn building. This option would not respond to this challenge.

#### 4. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS – PRESUMPTION AGAINST CLOSURE OF RURAL SCHOOLS

As well as the factors relevant to the development of any proposal, specific assessments are also required in relation to a proposal of this kind. A number of assessments of the options under consideration were carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Code. The full assessments can be found in **Appendix 2**, and a summary of these assessments can be seen in the table below:

| Option   | Assessment of likely impact on quality and standards of education   | Assessment of likely impact on various travel arrangements   | Assessment of likely impact on the community   |
|--|---|--|--|
| <b>No change – continue with the current situation</b>   | Neutral – No change   | Neutral – No change<br><br>No learner in the Baladeulyn catchment area will need to travel an unreasonable distance to school.   | Neutral – No change<br><br>Keeping a school and its potential to be a community resource in the village of Nantlle.  |
| <b>Federation with a nearby school (Ysgol Talysarn)</b>  | Neutral/Partially positive<br>No impact on the provision at Ysgol Baladeulyn<br><br>An opportunity to share good practices between the two schools and possibilities of making better use of resources. | Neutral<br><br>The learners would continue to be taught at Ysgol Baladeulyn and the learners' travel arrangements would continue in the same way.<br><br>No learner in the Baladeulyn catchment area will need to travel an unreasonable distance to school. | Neutral<br><br>Possibility of community collaboration between the 2 schools.<br><br>Keeping a school and its potential to be a community resource in the village of Nantlle. |
| <b>Federation with another school and to add a specialist area for children with additional learning needs in Ysgol Baladeulyn</b> | Neutral/Partially positive – No impact on the provision at Ysgol Baladeulyn<br><br>An opportunity to share good practices between the two schools and   | Neutral<br><br>The learners would continue to be taught at Ysgol Baladeulyn and the learners' travel arrangements would continue in the same way.<br><br>No learner in the Baladeulyn catchment area will need to  | Neutral<br><br>Possibility of community collaboration between the 2 schools.<br><br>Keeping a school and its potential to be a community                                     |

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|--|--|--|--|
|  | <p>possibilities of making better use of resources.</p> <p>An opportunity to develop an additional resource to support learners with ALN. It is anticipated that it would have a positive impact on the criteria of 'Vulnerable groups, including children with Additional Learning Needs'</p>   | <p>travel an unreasonable distance to school.</p> <p>The authority would need to provide transport for the ALN unit learners.</p>  | <p>resource in the village of Baladeulyn.</p>  |
| <p><b>To close Ysgol Baladeulyn and offer learners a place at a nearby school (Ysgol Talysarn)</b></p> | <p>Partially Positive</p> <p>The assessment notes that the standard of education provided at Ysgol Talysarn corresponds to the standard of education provided at Ysgol Baladeulyn.</p> <p>As there are more learners at Ysgol Talysarn, it is anticipated that there will be opportunities to teach children in larger groups, with age-appropriate peers to broaden their experiences. Based on this, it is concluded that there would be a positive impact on teaching and learning experiences from teaching Baladeulyn catchment area learners at Ysgol Talysarn</p> | <p>Negative</p> <p>It would be necessary to provide transport for learners from the catchment area of Ysgol Baladeulyn to Ysgol Talysarn, in accordance with Cyngor Gwynedd's transport policy.</p> <p>Additional transport costs are anticipated - estimated cost, approximately £17,000-£30,000 per year.</p> <p>Some learners would travel further to school than they do at the moment.</p> <p>No learner in the Baladeulyn catchment area will need to travel an unreasonable distance to school.</p> | <p>Neutral/Partially Negative</p> <p>Lead to the loss of a school and community resource in the village of Nantlle.</p> <p>To mitigate the impact on the community, opportunities are identified to ensure that the Baladeulyn community is aware of the alternative school's activity, and community collaboration between Ysgol Talysarn and the Nantlle community is encouraged, where appropriate.</p> <p>It is noted that a large proportion of the children who live within the school's catchment area already attend other schools, including Ysgol Talysarn, and therefore it is concluded that a link between Ysgol Talysarn and the Ysgol Baladeulyn community already exists</p> |
| <p><b>To add a specialist area for children with additional learning needs at Ysgol Baladeulyn</b></p> | <p>Neutral/Partially positive</p> <p>No impact on the provision at Ysgol Baladeulyn</p> <p>An opportunity to develop an additional resource to support learners with ALN. It is anticipated that it would have a positive impact on the criteria of 'Vulnerable groups, including children with Additional Learning Needs'.</p>  | <p>Neutral</p> <p>The learners would continue to be taught at Ysgol Baladeulyn and the learners' travel arrangements would continue in the same way.</p> <p>The authority would need to provide transport for the learners of the ALN unit.</p> <p>No learner in the Baladeulyn catchment area will need to travel an unreasonable distance to school.</p>   | <p>Neutral – No change to the provision at Ysgol Baladeulyn</p> <p>Keeping a school and its potential to be a community resource in the village of Nantlle.</p>  |

|  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| <b>To include a language unit at the Ysgol Baladeulyn site</b>                 | <p>Neutral - No impact on the provision at Ysgol Baladeulyn</p> <p>An opportunity to develop an additional resource to provide a specific service for latecomers in a Language Centre on the school site.</p>    | <p>Neutral</p> <p>The learners would continue to be taught at Ysgol Baladeulyn and the learners' travel arrangements would continue in the same way.</p> <p>No learner in the Baladeulyn catchment area will need to travel an unreasonable distance to school.</p> <p>The authority would need to provide transport for the learners of the language unit.</p>  | <p>Neutral –</p> <p>Keeping a school and its potential to be a community resource in the village of Nantlle.</p>  |
| <b>Merging local schools in order to support and maintain Ysgol Baladeulyn</b> | <p>Neutral / Partially positive – No impact on the provision at Ysgol Baladeulyn</p> <p>An opportunity to share good practices between the school sites and possibilities of making better use of resources.</p> | <p>Neutral</p> <p>The learners would continue to be taught at Ysgol Baladeulyn and the learners' travel arrangements would continue in the same way.</p> <p>No learner in the Baladeulyn catchment area will need to travel an unreasonable distance to school.</p> <p>Depending on the structure of the new school, there is a possibility that it will be necessary to organise transport between schools.</p> | <p>Neutral – No change to the provision at Ysgol Baladeulyn</p> <p>Keeping a school and its potential to be a community resource in the village of Nantlle.</p> |

## 10. THE PREFERRED OPTION

10.1 Of the options considered, the preferred option for further consultation is the option to close Ysgol Baladeulyn and offer learners a place at a nearby school (Ysgol Talysarn)

10.2 This option is preferred for the following reasons:

### 10.3 Number of learners and surplus places

10.3.1 In September 2025 there were 6 Reception – Year 6 learners and 2 Nursery learners attending Ysgol Baladeulyn. As a result, Ysgol Baladeulyn has 49 (89%) surplus places in the school (Reception – Year 6). The school also has capacity for 7 learners in the Nursery class, with 2 nursery learners on the roll, there are also 5 surplus places in the Nursery.

10.3.2 Learner numbers at the school have dropped significantly in recent years from 23 Reception to Year 6 learners in 2017 to 6 in September 2025, a decrease of over 74%.

10.3.3 According to the projections created in September 2025, it is anticipated that numbers will remain low over the next three years. Seen below are the numbers for September 2025 and Ysgol Baladeulyn's number projections for 2026-28.

|                                   | N | R | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Total R-Yr.6 |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| <b>September 2025 numbers</b>     | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 6            |
| <b>Projections September 2026</b> | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 8            |
| <b>Projections September 2027</b> | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 8            |
| <b>Projections September 2028</b> | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 7            |

10.3.3 In September 2025 there were 84 learners (Reception – Year 6) and 17 Nursery learners attending Ysgol Talysarn. According to the September 2025 projections, it is anticipated that there will be 85 Reception to Year 6 learners and 11 Nursery learners at Ysgol Talysarn in September 2025.

10.3.4 Ysgol Talysarn has a capacity of 91 (Reception – Yr. 6), which means that Ysgol Talysarn has 8% surplus places. Including the school's Nursery capacity and numbers, there are 7 surplus places at Ysgol Talysarn.

10.3.5 The Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2018) states that "excessive numbers of unused places that could be removed mean that resources are tied up unproductively....A significant level of surplus provision is defined as 25% or more of a school's capacity". As a result of the low numbers, there are 89% surplus places (49 in a number) (R-Yr 6) at Ysgol Baladeulyn.

10.3.6 When considering the capacity of Ysgol Baladeulyn and Ysgol Talysarn jointly (namely capacity of 146 R-Yr-6 and 166 N-Yr.6), it is anticipated that implementing the proposed proposal to close of Ysgol Baladeulyn and transferring learners in the catchment area to Ysgol Talysarn would reduce the total number of surplus places in the Ysgol Baladeulyn catchment-area and Ysgol Talysarn catchment area from 56 (38%) i 1 (1%) (Reception – Yr.6) and from 52 (31%) to 0 (Nursery – Yr.6)

#### 10.4 Class sizes and age range

As can be seen from the table below 2 classes meet in the morning; one with two nursery children and one year 1, and the other with the rest of the reception – year 6 learners. In the afternoon there are 2 classes for reception – year 6 learners. There is one class for 2 year 1 learners and the other for 4 year 2 – 6 learners. Average class sizes (reception – year 6) in Ysgol Baladeulyn is 3 learners.

The table shows that there are 5 classes (reception – year 6) in Ysgol Talysarn (September 2025). The average class sizes for Ysgol Talysarn are 21 learners.

|            | Year      |            |           |            |            |    |            |    |                     |
|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|----|------------|----|---------------------|
| School     | Nursery   | 0          | 1         | 2          | 3          | 4  | 5          | 6  | Average class sizes |
| Baladeulyn | 2         | 0          | 2         | 1          | 0          | 2  | 1          | 0  | 3                   |
| a.m.       | Class - 3 |            |           | Class - 5  |            |    |            |    |                     |
| p.m.       |           |            | Class - 2 | Class - 4  |            |    |            |    |                     |
| Talysarn   | 17        | 11         | 10        | 11         | 15         | 15 | 11         | 11 | 21                  |
|            | 17        | Class - 16 |           | Class - 16 | Class - 30 |    | Class - 22 |    |                     |

As a result, it is foreseen that transferring learners to Ysgol Talysarn would mean the children being educated in classes of a more viable size, and with more children from the same age group.

#### 10.5 Geographical and travel factors

10.5.1 It is noted in the Strategy "Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd" that efforts should be made to try to limit travel to a maximum of 30 minutes travel one-way between home and school. In implementing the proposal,

it is foreseen that all the school's existing learners would be within reasonable reach (less than 30 minutes travel) of the alternative school, Ysgol Talysarn.

10.5.2 Following assessment of the distance between Ysgol Talysarn and Ysgol Baladeulyn and the safety of walking and cycling routes to the alternative school, it is concluded that, as the distance is over 2 miles and the routes are unsuitable for primary age children to walk or cycle, transport would be offered to learners from the Baladeulyn catchment area to Ysgol Talysarn, in accordance with the County's School Transport Policy. It is foreseen that the cost of transport would be around £17,000-£30,000 per annum.

## 10.6 Financial Resources

10.6.1 Due to low numbers of learners at Ysgol Baladeulyn, the learner-based allocation is not sufficient to support the school. As a result, Ysgol Baladeulyn receives an additional sum to the normal allocation through the minimum staffing protection policy (which guarantees at least a head teacher and a teacher in each school, and a head teacher and an assistant in schools with fewer than 15 learners). Additional funding of £56,781 was allocated to Ysgol Baladeulyn this year (2025-26) through the Minimum Staffing Protection Policy.

10.6.2 The allocations for Ysgol Baladeulyn and Ysgol Talysarn for the year 2025-26, are based on the September 2024 numbers and the amounts received by the 2 schools can be seen below:

| School     | Basis of allocation<br>(Numbers Sept 2024) |    |     | Core allocation | Additional funding<br>allocation<br>(protection) | Total    | £ per learner |
|------------|--|----|-----|-----------------|--|----------|---------------|
|            | N  | FP | KS2 |                 |  |          |               |
| Baladeulyn | 0  | 3  | 10  | £37,610         | £56,781  | £194,391 | £14,953       |
| Talysarn   | 10   | 36 | 50  | £521,659        | £0   | £521,659 | £5,771        |
| Total      | 10   | 39 | 60  | £659,269        | £56,781  | £716,050 |               |

10.6.3 The average cost per learner at Ysgol Baladeulyn is £14,953 and it is £5,771 at Ysgol Talysarn. The County average cost per learner 2025-26 is £5,780. This means that the cost per learner at Ysgol Baladeulyn is £9,182 higher than the county average for the same period.

10.6.4. A total of £716,050 is allocated to both schools in the financial year 2025-26. Ysgol Talysarn does not receive an additional sum through the minimum staffing protection policy. Existing learner numbers at the school attract an adequate budget to maintain appropriate staffing levels.

10.6.5 In terms of revenue costs, if the proposal is implemented, and if all the learners at Ysgol Baladeulyn transferred to Ysgol Talysarn, based on the 2025-26 budget (which is based on September 2024 learner numbers):

- it is anticipated that the proposal would create an annual saving of £129,191, less the estimated costs of additional transport needs (up to £30,000) - a total of approximately £99,191 per year.
- it is predicted that Ysgol Talysarn's core allocation budget would increase to £604,522, and the cost per learner would be £5,846.

10.6.6 If the proposal is implemented, and if all the learners of Ysgol Baladeulyn transferred to Ysgol Talysarn, based on an estimate of the 2026-27 budget, which is the year of implementation of the proposal (which is based on the projections of learner numbers provided by the head teachers of the schools in September 2024):

- it is anticipated that the proposed proposal would create an annual saving of £144,338, less the costs of additional transport needs (up to £30,000) - a total of approximately £114,338 per year.
- it is predicted that Ysgol Talysarn's core allocation budget would increase to £576,294 and the cost per learner would be £5,966.

10.6.7 Any savings in revenue costs will be retained in the Gwynedd Schools area.

10.6.8 Note that there are no capital costs associated with the proposal.

## **10.7 Leadership and Staffing**

- 10.7.1 The current staffing structure at Ysgol Baladeulyn includes a Head in full-time charge who spends 80% of his time teaching, plus 2 learning assistants.
- 10.7.2 At Ysgol Talysarn there is a Head Teacher who spends 100% of her time leading the federation of Ysgol Talysarn (3 days) and Ysgol Brynaerau (2 days). There is also a full-time deputy, two full time teachers and one 0.8 teacher (4 days), 7 assistants, plus a clerical officer.

## **10.8 The Community**

- 10.8.1 Welsh Government guidance (School Organisation Code 011/2018) states that a community impact assessment is required as part of any proposal to reorganise schools. A community impact assessment has been completed on the list of options set out in paragraph 6.3. See the full report at Appendix 2.
- 10.8.2 The assessment shows that some negative impact on the community is anticipated if the option to close Ysgol Baladeulyn is implemented. It is recognised that the closure of Ysgol Baladeulyn would lead to the loss of a school in the Nantlle community, however the assessment stated that a large proportion of the children who live within the school's catchment area already attend other schools (75%), including Ysgol Talysarn (63%), and therefore it is concluded that a link between Ysgol Talysarn and the Ysgol Baladeulyn community already exists.
- 10.8.3 Although there is no community use of the Ysgol Baladeulyn building, the school is involved with its community and uses community facilities on an occasional basis.
- 10.8.4 Should the proposed proposal to close Ysgol Baladeulyn be realised, every effort will be made to mitigate the impact on the community by encouraging links between the communities and Ysgol Talysarn. To mitigate the impact on the community, opportunities are identified to ensure that the Baladeulyn community is aware of the alternative school's activity, and community collaboration between Ysgol Talysarn and the Baladeulyn community is encouraged, where appropriate.
- 10.8.5 Should the proposed proposal to close Ysgol Baladeulyn be realised, it will be essential as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative school and the parents of learners from Ysgol Baladeulyn so that parents and learners can take advantage of their facilities and after school activities.

## **10.9 The Welsh Language**

- 10.9.1 Welsh Government guidance (School Organisation Code 011/2018) states that a Welsh language impact assessment is required as part of any proposal to reorganise schools. See the full report at **Appendix 2**.
- 10.9.2 The impact assessment on the Welsh language stated that it is anticipated that the proposed proposal would have a partial impact on certain elements in the context of the Welsh language, mainly:
- the proposal to close Ysgol Baladeulyn and offer the learners a place in a nearby school (Ysgol Talysarn) would mean that learners in the Baladeulyn catchment area would continue to be educated in a Welsh-medium school.
  - the proposal would mean that learners would have access to a higher supply in terms of staffing and they would be part of a larger group of peers of the same age, the proposal could strengthen the opportunities for learners within the class.
  - that the proposal would mean that Baladeulyn learners would be less likely to use the Welsh language in informal Welsh contexts informally with their peers outside of school hours.
  - That the proposal would mean that fewer parents would likely meet daily in the community of Baladeulyn when delivering and dropping off children.

On the basis of the above, if the proposal is implemented, it is anticipated that there would be no impact on the use of Welsh by learners in the Baladeulyn catchment area in a formal context at school. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that there would be less use of the Welsh language in informal contexts outside of school hours.

## 10.10 Quality and standards of education

- 10.10.1 An assessment was conducted of the likely impact on quality and standards of education on all the options. See the full report at Appendix 2.
- 10.10.2 According to Estyn's latest reports, Ysgol Talysarn offers education of a quality and standard that is equivalent, at least, to Ysgol Baladeulyn.
- 10.10.3 Ysgol Baladeulyn was last inspected by Estyn in 2017, where it was concluded that the school's current performance was Good. Ysgol Talysarn was last inspected by Estyn in 2017, where it was concluded that the school's current performance against the outcome questions and the provision is Good, and the leadership and management is Excellent.
- 10.10.4 As there are more learners at Ysgol Talysarn, it is anticipated that there will be an opportunity to teach children in larger groups, with age-related peers to broaden their experiences if the proposal is implemented. Based on this, it is concluded that there would be a positive impact on teaching and learning experiences from teaching learners in the Baladeulyn catchment area at Ysgol Talysarn.
- 10.10.5 As a result, it is anticipated that the likely impact in terms of the quality and standards of education for learners would be partially positive resulting from the proposal to close Ysgol Baladeulyn and offer the learners a place at Ysgol Talysarn.

## 10.11 Condition and suitability of buildings

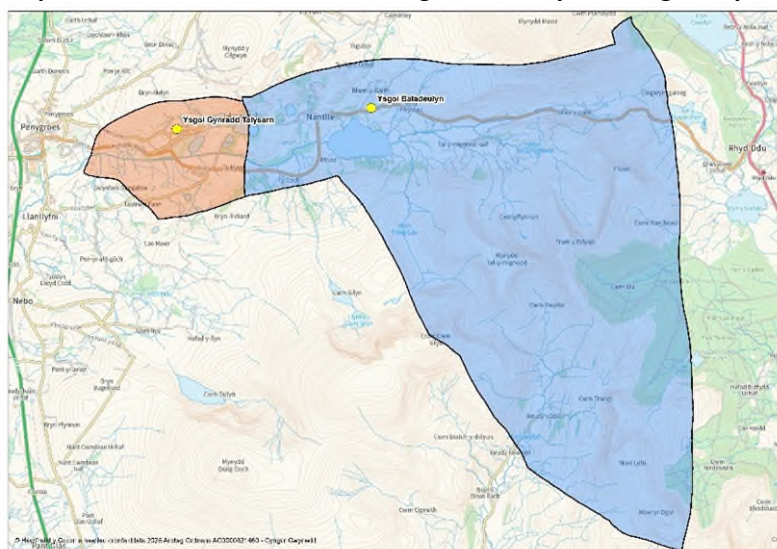
- 10.11.1 The Authority's latest condition assessment notes that the condition of the buildings at Ysgol Baladeulyn and Ysgol Talysarn is B.
- 10.11.2 £125,000 worth of work has been identified to improve the condition and suitability of Ysgol Baladeulyn.

## 11. IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSAL

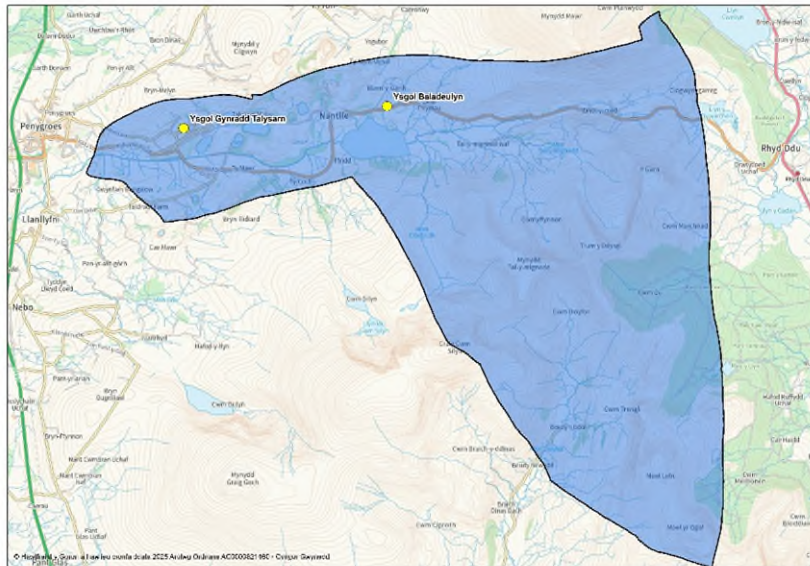
### 11.1 School admission catchment areas

- 11.1.1 Should the proposed proposal be implemented, the catchment area of Ysgol Talysarn would be adjusted to include the present catchment area of Ysgol Baladeulyn.

**Map 1: Present catchment areas of Ysgol Baladeulyn and Ysgol Talysarn**



**Map 2: Catchment area of Ysgol Talysarn should the proposal be implemented**



## Transport

- 11.1.2 Should the proposal be implemented pupils living within the existing catchment area of Ysgol Baladeulyn would be offered a place at Ysgol Talysarn and receive transport in accordance with the County's School Transport Policy. The annual cost of transport is anticipated to be around £17,000- £30,000.

## 11.2 Staffing Considerations

- 11.2.1 Should the proposal be implemented, it is foreseen that there would be staffing implications which could lead to redundancies. Staff and Union representatives will be specifically consulted as part of the statutory consultation period. Cyngor Gwynedd has developed a detailed staffing policy, in conjunction with Trade Unions and head teachers. Any redundancies resulting from this proposal will have to be in line with that policy. Clear and open communication will play a central role in implementing any proposals.

## 12. **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

### 12.1.1 School Organisation Code 011/2018

- 12.1.2 Any statutory process will be conducted in accordance with Welsh Government guidance (School Organisation Code 011/2018).

### 12.1.3 Equality impact assessment

- 12.1.4 An equality impact assessment was carried out on the proposed proposal. The full report can be seen at Appendix 2.
- 12.1.5 The assessment pays particular attention to different equality strands such as race, gender, disability, language, religion or belief and age. The assessment sets out the current position and demonstrates that policies and procedures are in place that would ensure the proposal takes account of equal rights and accords with them.
- 12.1.6 Having weighed up the relevant factors, it is concluded that the proposal is not likely to have a negative impact on equality features. It is noted that measures are already in place to ensure that there will be no illegal discrimination or harassment.
- 12.1.7 It is anticipated that the implementation of the proposed proposal would reduce the inequality in the case of socio-economic disadvantage by ensuring that the learners have more experiences and access to more services and activities in the alternative school. Learners would receive more equal opportunities as the learners would receive learning experiences based on national learning principles, with a variety of styles including working in mass groups, smaller



groups, partner work and individually within their specific age range together with lessons that are appropriately differentiated for the age range in question.

- 12.1.8 By implementing the proposed proposal, the learners of Ysgol Baladeulyn 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.
- 12.1.9 The Council would follow normal processes by supporting and monitoring, in order to ensure compliance of each school with the equality features.

12.1.10 **Well-being and Future Generations Act**

12.1.11 Following consideration and assessment in accordance with the requirements of the well-being act, consideration was given to the 7 aims of the well-being act and the well-being objectives of the Council and it is concluded that the proposal meets the requirements.

12.1.12 It is acknowledged that should the Cabinet decide to proceed with this proposal, it may result in the loss of a school in the community of Nantlle, however a significant number of the children living within the school's catchment area already attend other schools, including Ysgol Talysarn, and therefore there is already a link between the schools and the community of that school. Every effort will be made to mitigate any negative impact on the community by encouraging links between the communities and Ysgol Talysarn. Should the proposal be approved, discussions will take place to discuss the possibility of Talysarn's community activity involving the community where appropriate.

### **13. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE**

- 13.1 Should Cabinet decide to support the recommendation presented in this report a period of statutory consultation will need to take place in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code guidance 011/2018. It is foreseen that the consultation period would take place before the end of the Autumn term.
- 13.2 Subsequently, a further report will be submitted to Cabinet in order to report back on the outcomes of the consultation. The Cabinet will then be required to consider the results of the consultation, and decide whether or not to issue a Statutory Notice on the proposal. Should a Statutory Notice be issued, a period of 28 days will be granted for anyone to submit an objection to the proposal, known as the 'Objection Period'. Following this, a further report will be submitted to Cabinet for a final decision. That report will include a summary of any objections received together with the Council's responses to them.

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## **14 Appendices**

**Appendix 1:** Options Appraisal Table

**Appendix 2:** Impact Assessments:

- Assessment of likely Impact on Quality and Standards of Education
- Assessment of likely Impact on travel arrangements
- Assessment of likely impact on the community
- Welsh Language Impact Assessment
- Wellbeing Assessment
- Equality Assessment

**Appendix 3:** Background pack including submissions and minutes of local meetings.

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## **16 Views Statutory officers**

**Monitoring Officer:**

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

## Head of Finance:

*"From a financial point of view, it is clear that Ysgol Baladeulyn's current situation is not sustainable, given that 89% of places in the school are empty. The report shows that an assessment has been carried out of the options available, and I am satisfied with the robustness of the financial estimates contained therein. I therefore support the decision sought."*

## 17 Local Member's Comments

*"It is a great disappointment to read the decision of the education department on the proposed proposal to close Ysgol Baladeulyn on 31 December 2026."*

*The Nantlle community will be very sad to hear this recommendation. In my opinion, there will be a negative impact on the community, and closing Ysgol Baladeulyn would be a heavy blow to the village of Nantlle. The school is at the heart of the village and is involved with its community and occasionally uses the village's facilities. If this proposed proposal were to be realised, Welsh medium families would not want to come and live in the village to raise their children, and I assume immigrants will buy the houses and make the village a foreign place."*

*25 schools have closed in Gwynedd since 2009 which is very damaging to our communities. That it has an impact on the children, parents, the community and the Welsh language. This will have a negative impact on the residents of Nantlle especially for those who have lived in the village all their lives and remember the great education they received at Ysgol Baladeulyn with many going on to have great careers."*

*Officials from the Education Department met with the Governing Body of Ysgol Baladeulyn to discuss the fragile situation of the school over the past year and I would like to thank them for taking the time to come and see us at the school. Also, thanks to Dewi Jones, a member of the Cabinet for Education for being there to answer questions and also that there is another side to the phone why there is demand. What was clear in the discussions with the parents of the children who attend the school was that they were grateful to have their children sent to a small school because of the excellent one-on-one education the children were receiving. And also, that the teachers had more time with the individuals who had additional learning needs."*

*I am clear in my mind that it is possible to keep Ysgol Baladeulyn open through the option of Federating with the Ysgol Talysarn adding a specialist area for children with special learning needs ALN at Ysgol Baladeulyn. The School Organisation Code states that federating brings special benefits to rural schools by working together and strengthening leadership and collaboration opportunities. This model would ensure continuity in the school's presence in the village of Nantlle through a collaborative arrangement with the Ysgol Talysarn under the leadership of a headteacher and one body of governors."*

*There will be a possibility of community collaboration between Ysgol Talysarn and Ysgol Baladeulyn and keeping the school open as a community resource in Nantlle. An opportunity to share good practices between the two schools and possibilities of making better use of resources and costing less to the Council. Also, an opportunity to develop an additional resource to support ALN learners here in Dyffryn Nantlle. It is anticipated that it would have a positive effect on the children who need support with ALN and on the parents who may have to travel to Caernarfon to get this service."*

*By choosing this option, another rural school will not have to be closed here in Gwynedd and reassures the parents and children who attend Baladeulyn school and the school's doors will remain open through a new format and keep Nantlle a village where families can raise their children in a Welsh society with confidence about the future of the school and the language."*