

APPENDIX 4

Ysgol Arbennig Meirion Dwyfor

Impact assessments of relocating Ysgol Hafod Lon and Uned Tŷ Aran to a new site in Penrhyndeudraeth

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Introduction

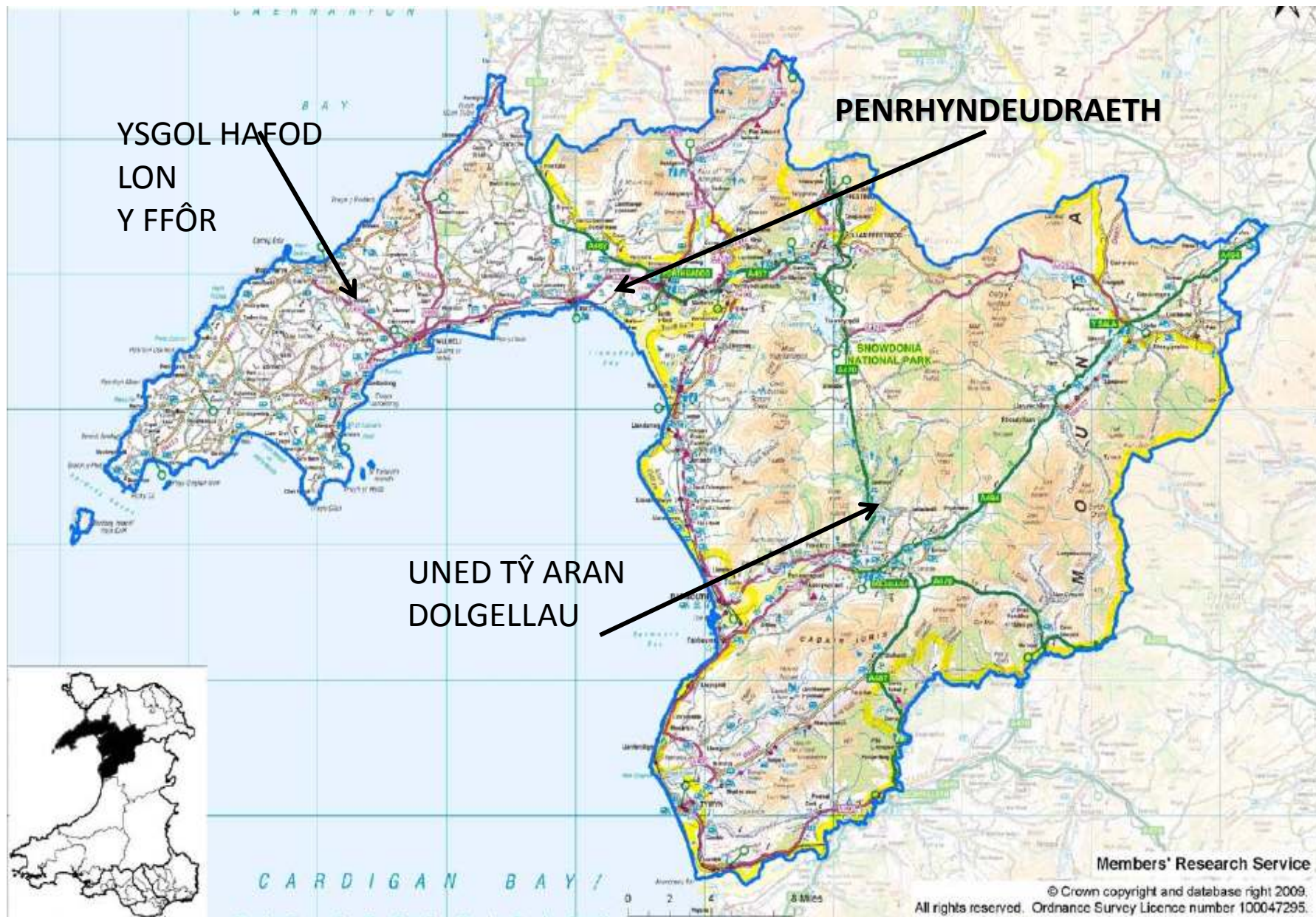
As part of the 21st Century Schools Programme, Gwynedd Council has been working on a project to improve the provision for special educational needs for the areas of Meirionnydd and Dwyfor in the county. To achieve this, we have secured a capital investment, in principle, of £6.2m from the Welsh Government in order to develop a new school for up to 100 children with a six bedroom residential / respite unit central to both areas. The total investment will be £12.4m.

In order to realise this development, Gwynedd Council has considered a number of options to agree on what provision will be required following the development. Following substantial work and extensive discussions over the past year, we are of the opinion that the best model will be to open a new school and residential / respite unit and relocating Ysgol Hafod Lon and Uned Tŷ Aran and continuing with Tŷ Meirion. The reasoning behind this decision can be seen in the consultation document.

When planning to realise opening or closing any school, the Welsh Government has developed the Schools Organisation Code 2013 which provides guidance on the procedure that needs to be followed. This code notes that local authorities must undertake assessments of the impact of any changes in schools provision would have on the community, on equality and on the Welsh language, therefore, the purpose of this document is to assess the impact of this option on these factors and to note any actions to deal with any negative impacts identified.

This work was developed with the assistance of the relevant head teachers and Gwynedd Council's Equality and Language Officer.

Locations of the Tŷ Aran and Tŷ Meirion Units, Ysgol Hafod Lon y Ffôr and the potential location of the new school (Penrhyndeudraeth)



2.

Community impact assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to consider the potential impact of the proposal on local families and communities, and ensuring that no members of the communities are treated or affected less favourably.

Methodology

In order to assess the potential impact, in accordance with the Schools Organisation Code 2013, the following factors have been considered:

- information about the proportion of pupils from the catchment area who attend the school;
- information about the proportion of pupils outside the catchment area who attend the school;
- information about any other facilities provided at the school e.g. youth club/playgroup;
- information about any other facilities or services provided by the school e.g. after school clubs, community library;
- if buildings, rooms, facilities or services are provided by a school, where would they be provided if the school was closed or relocated;
- whether the other facilities available in the local community or wider community can or could be improved should the school be closed or relocated (e.g. improve village halls, playing fields, the play schemes provided during school holidays);
- information about the facilities and services provided in any alternative school;
- information about the distance and travel time to an alternative school in the same language category;
- how could parents and pupils be supported to take advantage of the alternative school and any facilities it can provide (e.g. how pupils are assisted (particularly those who are disadvantaged) to take part in after-school activities);
- information about the wider implications of the changes on public transport provisions;
- information about wider community safety matters.

The current situation

a) Information about pupils who attend Ysgol Hafod Lon and Uned Tŷ Aran

There is no specific catchment area to the school or units as children can attend from every part of Meirion and Dwyfor and beyond these two areas in some cases.

Where the children live and travel distance 2012-13

		Dolgel lau	Blaenau Ffestiniog	Tywyn	Barmout h	Bala	Dinas Mawddwy	Porthmadog	Trawsfynydd	Caernarfon	Pwllheli	Harlech
Tŷ Aran	Number	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Travel distance	Miles	0	22	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	0	0
Hafod Lon	Number	1	8	0	2	0	0	11	2	4	20	3
Travel distance	Miles	37	24	0	42	0	0	15	24	18	3	22

b) Resources and community use

Dolgellau

- Community Centre
- Leisure Centre
- Sports Facilities
- Private Nursery
- Children's Playing Field
- Chapel-Vestry-Church
- Meeting Rooms in hotels and Tŷ Siamas
- Library
- Shops and Post Office
- Cafés

Ty Aran pupils make some use of the Leisure Centre.

It's possible that they make use of other facilities outside school hours.

Y Ffôr, Pwllheli

- Shop and post office
- Gardening centre and café
- Village centre
- Chapel and vestry

No regular use is made of the local facilities during school hours.

It's possible that they make use of other facilities outside school hours.

c) Assessment

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	
Criteria for the community impact	Ysgol Hafod Lon	Uned Tŷ Aran	New school	Mitigation measures for negative impacts
Information about any other facilities or services provided by the school e.g. after school clubs, community library, youth club/playgroup.	No community provision is provided at the school.	No community provision is provided at the school.	There would be more opportunities for community use as there would be purpose-built facilities such as a hydrotherapy pool, sensory rooms, large hall, training rooms and play areas at the new school.	Not required
If buildings, rooms, facilities or services are provided by a school, where would they be provided if the school was closed or relocated?	The community makes no use of the School.	The community makes no use of the unit.		Not required

Whether the other facilities available in the local community or wider community can or could be improved should the school be closed or relocated (e.g. improve village halls, playing fields, the play schemes provided during school holidays).	There is a primary school in the village. Should Ysgol Hafod Lon close, the other facilities would remain for community use.	There is a primary and secondary school in the town of Dolgellau and community use is made of the Leisure Centre, Tŷ Siamas etc. Should the unit close, the other facilities would remain for community use.		Not required
Information about the facilities and services provided in any alternative school.			There would be more opportunities for community use as there would be purpose-built facilities such as a hydrotherapy pool, sensory rooms, large hall, training rooms and play areas at the new school.	Not required
Information about the distance and travel time to an alternative school in the same language category.	It is possible that some would have to travel further to the new provision. Based on the current pupils, 47% would travel further.	It is possible that some would have to travel further to the new provision. Based on the current pupils, 0% would travel further.	It is anticipated that travel distance to the new provision would be fairer for children of both areas that would be served, namely Meirion and Dwyfor. Based on the current pupils, 49% would travel further.	
How parents and pupils could be supported to take advantage of the alternative school and any facilities it can provide e.g. how pupils are assisted (particularly those who are disadvantaged) to take part in after school activities.			Should activities be held outside school hours then school staff would ensure support for parents and children to take part e.g. travel arrangements.	Offer support as and when needed

Information about the wider implications of the changes on public transport provisions.	Suitable transport would be arranged for pupils; therefore, there would be no use of public transport.	Suitable transport would be arranged for pupils; therefore, there would be no use of public transport.	Although there would be suitable transport for the majority of children, the new school would be on one of the main bus routes between Meirionnydd and Dwyfor and there would be a train station nearby, therefore using public transport is an option for children, parents and other users.	
Information about wider community safety matters.	None identified.	None identified.	None anticipated.	

Score	Positive 5	Neutral 3	Negative 0
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Conclusion

Following an analysis of the community use of Ysgol Hafod Lon and Uned Tŷ Aran, their contribution to their communities and an assessment of the impact the new system would have on this, it was concluded that there would be no negative impact on the areas where the current provision was and on the pupils who attended and that the new provision would create positive opportunities for the future.

As no negative impact was identified by relocating Ysgol Hafod Lon and Uned Ty Aran, it is not envisaged that any mitigating actions will be needed.

When implementing the proposal of establishing the new school, in order to make full use of the new provision it is intended to promote community use for the community on a wider level, especially those with special needs.

3. Welsh Language Impact Assessment

Methodology

In order to assess the potential impact, in accordance with the Schools Organisation Code 2013, the following factors have been considered:

- information about the language category of the school;
- information about the language category of any alternative school;
- information about the standards of Welsh at the school and in any alternative school;
- information about after-school activities that provide additional opportunities to use the Welsh language in the school and in any alternative school (e.g. Urdd Clubs);
- information about whether or not the school provides facilities for members of the community to learn Welsh, or facilities for them to undertake activities through the medium of Welsh, and where any alternative facilities could be provided;
- could it be appropriate to provide additional after-school facilities in any alternative school to reinforce the standards of the Welsh language;
- how could parents and pupils be supported to take advantage of any alternative school and any specific improvement in terms of the linguistic provision that the particular school offers (e.g. how pupils are assisted to take part in the Urdd clubs);
- information regarding how the proposal corresponds with the authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and any actions that would need to be taken in future resulting from the change to continue complying with the plan or reaching the targets of the plan.

Welsh Language Education Scheme Objectives

The aim of the Language Policy is to ensure that all of the county's pupils have well-balanced bilingual skills to enable them to be full members of the bilingual society of which they are part.

Although the general aim of the policy is bilingualism, emphasis is placed on the Welsh language in the early years (until the end of KS1) in order to set firm foundations for further development. On a practical level, this means that the majority of schools would formally start introducing English at the end of KS1. In the other key stages, schools are expected to plan in order to develop pupils' grasp of the Welsh language.

This means that the Welsh language is taught as first language in the county's primary schools.

Special Educational Needs Language Policy

The Welsh Education Plan ensures that children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) receive a linguistic equal opportunity in terms of bilingual education. A Welsh medium and bilingual provision is available for all of the SEN range and varieties. Pupils and their parents have access to a service that is totally bilingual.

Welsh Education Plan

Gwynedd Council has prepared a new Welsh Education Plan explaining how we intend to provide education services through the medium of Welsh and bilingually. To see a copy of the Draft Plan, please visit the [Welsh Education Plan](#) page.

Introduction

Each one of the county's educational establishments has been designated as a bilingual school.

The table below shows each pupil's first language at home.

	2012-2013 Figures	
	Hafod Lon	Tŷ Aran
Number of pupils	51	2
Welsh as the home's first language	33	1
English as the home's first language	9	1
None stated	9	0

Positive	Neutral	Negative
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Criteria for the impact on the Welsh language.	Hafod Lon	Tŷ Aran	New school	Mitigation measures for negative impacts

The children's language	65% of current pupils speak Welsh at home as their 1 st language.	50% of current pupils speak Welsh at home as their 1 st language.	59% of current pupils would be speaking Welsh at home as their 1 st language.	
The children's use of language at school outside lessons e.g. during playtime, during lunchtime.	Welsh is the main language used during play and lunch time.	Welsh is the main language used during play and lunch time.	No change to the present situation is envisaged.	
Information about after-school activities that provide additional opportunities to use the Welsh language in the school and in any alternative school (e.g. Urdd Clubs).	No after-school activities take place.	No after-school activities take place.	There is a possibility that the new school could offer an opportunity to develop after-school activities for children which would mean additional opportunities for them to use the Welsh language.	
Information about whether or not the school provides facilities for members of the community to learn Welsh, or facilities for them to undertake activities through the medium of Welsh, and where any alternative facilities could be provided.	No after-school activities take place.	No after-school activities take place.	There is a possibility that the new school could offer an opportunity to develop after-school activities for adults and children which would mean additional opportunities for them to use the Welsh language.	
Could it be appropriate to provide additional after-school facilities in any alternative school to reinforce the standards of the Welsh language?			There is a possibility that the new school could offer an opportunity to develop after-school activities for children and adults to receive learning opportunities and opportunities to use the Welsh language.	

How parents and pupils could be supported to take advantage of any alternative school and any specific improvement in terms of the linguistic provision that the particular school offers (e.g. how pupils are assisted to take part in the Urdd clubs).			Should activities be held outside school hours then school staff would ensure support for parents and children to take part e.g. travel arrangements.	
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Score	Positive 6	Neutral 0	Negative 0
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Conclusion

Our expectations are that all of the county's pupils have ability-relevant and well-balanced bilingual skills to enable them to be full members of the bilingual society of which they are part.

Any proposals to change organisation on a local level would have to take full consideration of potential linguistic impacts. Therefore, supporting and improving the use of the Welsh language as an educational and social language among children will be a key consideration when drawing up proposals within areas.

In brief, it was noted in the assessment that relocating Uned Tŷ Aran or Ysgol Hafod Lon would not have a negative impact on the use of the Welsh language in the schools where they are located or on the local community as the majority of children travel from a number of dispersed locations to receive their education at the 2 locations.

It is felt that establishing the new school would create more opportunities to reinforce the use of the Welsh language, especially for those who would have attended the units as there would be an opportunity for them to mix with more children through the medium of Welsh. Attending the new school would also be an opportunity for those children who would have to go out-of-county (to a non-Welsh provision) under the existing system to receive Welsh education and an opportunity to mix with children through the medium of Welsh.

It should be noted that it is difficult to measure the potential impact of schools re-organisation on the Welsh language. The main positive points that derive from the impact assessment are the advantages to the provision in terms of education. Although the current category of the school in terms of

language would not change, the proposal is an opportunity to improve education and strengthen the Welsh medium education of children with SEN in Meirionnydd and Dwyfor.

4. Equality Impact Assessment

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) combines the previous anti-discrimination acts and creates one Act as their replacement. It simplifies and strengthens the law, eliminates inconsistencies and makes it easier for people to understand and comply with the law. Most of the Act came into force on 1 October 2010.

The Act includes a new duty (the 'general duty') for the public sector regarding equality which replaces the separate duties regarding equality in relation to race, disability and sexuality. This duty came into force on 5 April 2011.

What is the general duty?

The aim of the general duty is to ensure that public authorities and those who fulfil a public function consider how they can positively contribute towards a fairer society by improving equality and good links in their day-to-day activities. The duty ensures that considerations regarding equality are incorporated in the way policies are planned and the way services are provided, and it ensures that policies and services are continually reviewed. This will ensure better outcomes for everyone i.e. abolishing illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation; promoting equal opportunities; encouraging good relationships.

The duties are legal obligations. Authorities that fail to meet the duties could be legally challenged.

The Equality Act 2010 protects people on the basis of a series of protected characteristics: Race, Gender, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Gender Reassignment, Religion and Belief and Age. When relevant, it also protects on the basis of Marriage and Civil Partnership and Pregnancy and Maternity. It is also noted that the Act protects on the basis of an 'association' with the protected characteristics, therefore it would protect parents or carers of disabled children on the basis of an association with the child. The Act stipulates that the duty of having 'due regard' should be made apparent during the decision making process. It is also important to note that public authorities that are subject to the duties regarding equality are also likely to be subject to the obligations that are relevant to the Human Rights Act. Therefore, it would also be wise to consider the potential impact the decisions could have on human rights, as part of the same process.

Current situation

Census 2011							2012-2013 Figures	
	Location	Abererch (Hafod Lon Ward)	Dwyfor	Dolgellau	Meirionnydd	Gwynedd	Hafod Lon	Tŷ Aran
	Population	1,354	27,725	2,688	33,576	121,874	51	2
Gender	Male						36	2
	Female						15	0
Language	Welsh						33	1
	English						9	1
	Not stated						9	0
Ethnicity	White British/Irish	1,321	26,830	2,615	32,761	115,642	49	2
	White - other	6	511	24	315	1,931		
	Mixed ethnic groups	11	170	16	197	964		
	Other ethnic groups	16	214	33	303	3,337	2	
Religion	Christianity	931	17,903	2,654	20,906	72,503		
	Other	16	345	30	444	2,773		
	No religion	331	7,152	740	9,333	36,136		
	Religion not noted	76	2,325	222	2,893	10,435	51	2

Positive

Neutral

Negative

Duties	Impact (positive, neutral or negative)	Action
Abolishing illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation	No change. Continue to comply with statutory policies that already exist.	
Promoting equal opportunities	<p>A new provision with modern facilities would ensure equal opportunities for the children of Meirion Dwyfor to what the children of Arfon and other counties already receive.</p> <p>Locating the school in a central position for Meirion and Dwyfor would ensure a comparative travel distance for children of both areas.</p> <p>The new provision would provide parents with an opportunity to choose sending their children to a SEN or mainstream school.</p> <p>The new provision would allow children who currently have to go out-of-county for their education to remain within the county.</p>	There would be transport available for them and the better provision would outweigh the additional travel time.
Encouraging good relationships	Opportunity remains in Uned Tŷ Meirion for children to integrate with children from the mainstream school and vice versa.	<p>Opportunity to encourage integration with schools in the areas of Penrhyndeudraeth and Porthmadog.</p> <p>Opportunity to collaborate with nearby businesses and businesses on the estate.</p>

Equality Act 2010 Duties

CHARACTERISTICS

Race	No substantial change to the current situation is anticipated.	Continue to comply with relevant policies.
Disability	Better provision for the children of Meirionnydd and Dwyfor.	As the new school would be a SEN school, ensuring a response to children's disabilities would naturally be addressed.
Gender	It is difficult to predict the gender split at the new school but no problems are envisaged whatever the split may be.	Respond to any matters if and when they arise in future.
Gender Reassignment	Not currently an issue.	Continue to comply with relevant policies.
Sexual Orientation	Not currently an issue.	Continue to comply with relevant policies.
Religion or belief	No substantial change to the current situation is anticipated.	Continue to comply with relevant policies.
The Welsh Language	No substantial change in the language distribution of the new school is anticipated. 64% of the current pupils would be speaking Welsh at home as their 1 st language. The new provision would allow children who currently have to go out-of-county to non-Welsh schools to receive their Welsh education closer to home.	Continue to comply with relevant policies.
Age	The school would serve children from 3-19 years old.	Continue to comply with relevant policies.



Conclusion

A full equality assessment of the impacts of different models was undertaken. The assessment notes the equality characteristics that need to be considered, the impact of the change on them and the actions required to address any negative impact. The outcome of this is that a fair consideration has been given to equality needs and that we are confident that arrangements would be in place to ensure that the proposal complies with relevant policies to positively promote equal opportunities and that measures are in place to ensure that no illegal discrimination takes place. There is a need to repeatedly emphasise that a SEN school is under consideration here, therefore disability equality is a crucial key part of all the considerations and that the ultimate aim is to improve the provision for SEN pupils.

Information sources:

The following information sources were used for the purpose of creating this document:

- Question the Head teachers of the schools under consideration
- PLASC Data January 2013
- Statistical data kept by Gwynedd Council's Learning Services
- Information from the Census
- Data from the Office for National Statistics