

CABINET REPORT **16 July 2013**

Cabinet member: Councillor Sian Gwenllian

Subject: Reorganisation of schools in the town of Dolgellau

Contact officer: Iwan Trefor Jones – Corporate Director

The resolution sought / purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to present to the Cabinet an update and explanation on the discussions regarding the reorganisation of schools in the Dolgellau catchment area. A resolution by the Cabinet is required on the following:

- i. Support for the outlined vision for the catchment area.
- ii. A decision by the Cabinet on holding a statutory consultation on the best method of providing education in the town of Dolgellau into the future; and considerations regarding the technical matter of the legal category for the model put forward.
- iii. A resolution on the nature of the investment to coincide with the development in the town of Dolgellau.

Views of the local members

Any comments will be presented in the meeting.

I. BACKGROUND

1.1. In accordance with the Strategy *Primary Education of the Best Quality for the Children of Gwynedd* discussions have been ongoing since 2010 on the provision of education in Y Gader catchment area, Dolgellau.

1.2. In this report, the following is presented:

- Background of the discussions and work thus far in the Gader area and Dolgellau specifically, and the case for change (Parts 1 and 2)
- The outline vision for the education provision in the area (Part 3)
- The Cabinet are asked to consider 3 issues relating to future education provision in the town of Dolgellau:
 - i. Consider the options for town of Dolgellau. Proposed favoured option for statutory consultation (Parts 4 and 5),
 - ii. Technical and legal options and considerations on how to realise the favoured option (Parts 6, 7 and 8)
 - iii. Possible investment options (Part 9)

1.3. A report was submitted to the Full Council on July 14, 2011 regarding the Reorganisation of Schools within Y Gader catchment area. The report is important in the context of this presentation and a copy can be found at Appendix I (and copies of other relevant reports are available on the Council website). At that meeting, the Council resolved as follows:

- i. Subject to a decision on the proposed location of the school, to undertake a statutory consultation process in accordance with Section 28 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 during the Autumn term 2011 on the proposal to establish a multi site Area Community School for 3-11 year olds with one site on the existing site of Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy and the other on the existing site of either Ysgol Brithdir or Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd, Rhydymain, to open on 1 September 2013.
 - ii. In order to establish the proposed Area School, to undertake a process of statutory consultation in accordance with the requirements of Section 28 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 during the Autumn term 2011 on the closure of Ysgol Llanfachreth, Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy, Ysgol Brithdir and Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd on 31 August 2013.
 - iii. Deputise to the Council Board, following consultation with local member(s), the decision regarding the location of the proposed Area School for consultation on either the existing site at Ysgol Brithdir or the existing site at Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd.
 - iv. Support the proposal for consultation based on the principle of establishing a multi site All Through Community (School) for 3 – 16 year olds in the town of Dolgellau to open on 1 September 2013.
 - v. Delegate the decision on the legal category of the proposed multi site All Through Community (School) for 3 – 16 year olds to the Council Board in order to allow further work to be carried out, including discussions on the options of closing and reopening the schools or the establishment of a Federal School as well as establishing the appropriate statutory consultation process for moving the proposal forward.
- 1.4. Statutory consultation took place on the proposal to implement the plan in the Brithdir and Dinas Mawddwy area and a report was submitted to the Full Council in December 2011. Because objections had been received the matter was transferred to the Minister for Education at the Welsh Government for a final decision. In November 2012 a decision in favour of the proposal was announced.
- 1.5. In the meantime, detailed work was carried out on the site at Ysgol Brithdir and substantial problems and obstacles were encountered in terms of developing the Brithdir site - these involved matters appertaining to planning and funding. Since the consultation period and as the designs were being developed, it became obvious that planning permission would be almost impossible to obtain. It was noted that the land level would have to be substantially lowered before construction could commence and since the area was very rocky it involve considerable cost. During the same period it became apparent that the technical requirements imposed by the Government had changed and that the extension would have to provide more space. As a result, what is now being considered is different to what was discussed during the consultation, the cost would be higher and also there would be a strong risk that planning permission would not be obtained. The concern is that the additional money would be spent to overcome the mechanical problems on the site rather than on educational resources for the pupils of the area.
- 1.6. As a result the conclusion reached was that the original proposal will not be implemented and that another plan will have to be developed.

- 1.7. Despite the fact that there has been a consensus from the start regarding the principle of consultation on establishing an All Through School in the town – considerable delay has occurred in moving the plan forward due to the technical problem regarding the legal category of the establishment. On account of this delay, therefore, the matter is put before the Cabinet to be resolved.
- 1.8. A review of the plans for the catchment area has been held, and a meeting of local representatives – Local Members, Head Teachers, Chairpersons, Governors and Church representatives – took place on 9th May 2013, to explain the reasons for the delay and to discuss the best way forward. Two obvious steps are being taken to move the matter forward in the area:
 - i. This report is being submitted in order to explain the vision and to ask permission from the Cabinet to move towards consultation in the town of Dolgellau
 - ii. Substantial background work is being undertaken on the situation in the rural areas within Y Gader catchment area – aimed at holding further discussions with local representatives early in the new term following the break for the summer holidays.
- 1.9. Another important context, of course, is the size of the capital funding envelope available for this catchment area. Since the start of discussions in this catchment area, a programme of capital investment from the Welsh Government was adopted under the banner of the Twenty First Century Schools Programme. Through that programme, the Council has an envelope of £3.6 million for the entire catchment area. Careful consideration will have to be given regarding the best use of that money for this catchment area and to assess any additional requirements to be funded.

2. THE SITUATION IN THE TOWN OF DOLGELLAU AND THE WIDER CATCHMENT AREA

- 2.1. Detailed information on the schools of the area can be seen in Appendix 2 – Information on the Catchment Area.
- 2.2. The case for any change within the catchment area has already been made at a number of forums. In view of the fact that considerable discussions have already been held locally and that this matter has been discussed at democratic forums, over time a consensus has been developed that change is needed. The case for change is within the wider context of the catchment area.
- 2.3. Therefore, after considering specific factors, the case for change within the town of Dolgellau where Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau and Ysgol Uwchradd y Gader are located can be summarised as follows:
- 2.4. Numbers and projections
 - 2.4.1. There has been a reduction of 42% in the number of primary school pupils in the town of Dolgellau during the last 40 years.

Niferoedd [Meithrin – Bl.6 3-11 Oed] Number [Nursery - Yr.6 Age 3-11]											
Ysgol School	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2012	1975-2012 twf / growth	1975-2012 % twf / growth
Cynradd Dolgellau	259	230	230	197	221	180	165	149	150	-109	-42%

2.5. Projected numbers for Ysgol Uwchradd Y Gader show a reduction in numbers to around 304 pupils by September 2015.

Rhagamcan Medi 2013 September Projection						
Blwyddyn Ysgol / School Year						
YSGOL / SCHOOL	7	8	9	10	11	Cyfanswm / Total
Y Gader	59	68	76	97	69	369

Rhagamcan Medi 2014 September Projection						
Blwyddyn Ysgol / School Year						
YSGOL / SCHOOL	7	8	9	10	11	Cyfanswm / Total
Y Gader	43	59	68	76	97	343

Rhagamcan Medi 2015 September Projection						
Blwyddyn Ysgol / School Year						
YSGOL / SCHOOL	7	8	9	10	11	Cyfanswm / Total
Y Gader	58	43	59	68	76	304

2.6. Standards of education

2.6.1. According to recent Estyn reports – the standard of education at presence is as follows;

Ysgol Y Gader	
Key question	December 2010 Result *
1. How good are outcomes?	Good
2. How good is provision?	Good
3. How good are leadership and management?	Good
* Grades are from Excellent to Unsatisfactory	

Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau	
Key question	June 2009
1. How well do learners achieve?	Grade 2
2. How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	Grade 2
3. How well do the leadership experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	Grade 2
4. How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	Grade 3
5. How effective are leadership and strategic management?	Grade 3
6. How well do learners and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	Grade 2
7. How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	Grade 3
Grade 1 – Outstanding features / Grade 5 – Many shortcomings	

2.6.2. The decrease in pupil numbers in the catchment is a cause of concern – with regards some of the primary schools of the area, and also the possible effects on the secondary sector. With fewer pupils it becomes more and more difficult to provide the curriculum and standards.

2.6.3. Within such scenarios, methods of strengthening elements of collaboration and ensuring an effective future system for educational provision requires consideration. Best methods are considered of ensuring carefully planned use of staff skills to shoulder cross-sector responsibility for specific curricular fields as a means to raise standards, and reduce use of staff who work outside their principal area of expertise.

2.7. Pupil movements

2.7.1. 30% of the pupils living in Dolgellau move out of the town for their primary education. Over 200 primary pupils live in the town of Dolgellau. 140 of those pupils attend Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau.

2.8. Surplus places

2.8.1. There are over 60 surplus places in Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau (22%)

2.8.2. There are over 100 surplus places in Ysgol Uwchradd y Gader (30%)

2.9. Property Matters

2.9.1. Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau is on two sites – with severe traffic and parking problems. There is around £260,000 maintenance backlog cost on the entire site buildings.

2.10. The situation within the town cannot be understood without looking at the wider context within the catchment area. In the remainder of the catchment area, there are 8 primary schools. Here is the picture for the remainder of the catchment area – in brief it is as follows:

2.10.1. Surplus places – there are over 41% of surplus places in the rural schools – this is equivalent to more than 160 surplus places. It has to be noted also that some schools have exceeded their capacity.

2.10.2. Financial allocation and safety net – The average cost per pupil at the rural schools in the catchment area is £6942 which is much higher than the County average of £3838 throughout Gwynedd. The rural schools receive £160,000 of additional funding each year in the form of a safety net.

2.10.3. Leadership within the schools – Head Teachers and staff at the individual schools make a huge effort to maintain standards. It is very difficult in some cases where Head Teachers are responsible for more than one school and other schools are under temporary arrangements.

2.10.4. Pupil movements – This is an obvious feature of this catchment area. There is a large movement of pupils between the schools' catchment areas. It was noted earlier that pupils move from the town of Dolgellau to the rural schools for their education, but there is also movement between rural schools. One example is the fact that 32 pupils attend Ysgol Y Clogau – but only 8 of those pupils live in Clogau. 12 come from Dolgellau and a number from Barmouth and other places.

2.11. When discussing the case for change, consideration has to be given also to opportunities for developing and establishing a new model for this type of situation:

- Opportunities for strengthening the education provision in view of the reduction in pupil numbers
- Opportunities for stabilising the pupil movement which is taking place within the catchment area
- Opportunities for improving collaboration between the schools and ensuring that there is co-ordinated planning so that work is not duplicated and pupil transition from one phase to another is smooth
- Opportunities for ensuring that good practice and expertise is shared
- Opportunities for considering more effective ways of running an establishment.

3. THE VISION

3.1. As stated above, it has to be remembered that the development of this discussion on a review for reorganisation within Y Gader catchment area has to take place in the context of a number of discussions which have already taken place. During these discussions, what could be summarised as an outline vision for the catchment area has been developed. This vision does not presume any specific plans which could develop as a result of the consultations which will have to be undertaken.

3.2. The essence of the outline vision would be to aim towards attaining the following results:

- Fair experiences for children, maintaining educational standards and equal opportunity
- Wider sharing of expertise between schools and sectors
- More stability within the area
- More opportunities in terms of professional development and an opportunity to improve leadership
- Co-ordinated public services

3.3. Therefore, there is a vision to develop a central education establishment in the town of Dolgellau, in the context of other developments in the town by the College (the Llandrillo Menai Group), which is a move towards developing Dolgellau as an Education Centre.

- 3.4. There is a wish to ensure a strong and sustainable education provision, across all the sectors throughout the whole catchment area. This will entail discussions on rationalising the number, nature and category of the schools in some parts of the catchment area. If the vision is fully implemented it would be possible to strengthen the education provision in Y Gader catchment area by setting the foundations for co-operation, joint planning and joint development in the future.
- 3.5. No decision has as yet been reached regarding the details or the shape of the provision in each part of the catchment area since this will be the subject of statutory consultation processes and those processes cannot be presumed.

4. MODEL OPTIONS

4.1. During the initial discussions held approximately eighteen months ago in the catchment area, a full list of possible options for the reorganisation of schools in the catchment area was prepared and the list included:

- Taking no action
- Developing models of collaboration
- Models of rural area schools
- Learning Community or All Through School.

4.2. The information considered is included in the background papers for this report.

4.3. The purpose of this report is to try and develop the process for Dolgellau town. In terms of possible options, the following could be considered for the provision of education in the town of Dolgellau;

- 1) Take no action
- 2) Centralise the education provision for the catchment area on one campus in the town of Dolgellau
- 3) Establish an All Through School in the town of Dolgellau.

4.4. No change

4.4.1. It has already been noted that there are matters which require attention across the catchment area and in the town of Dolgellau. There is instability in terms of primary pupil movement out of the town of Dolgellau. Also, there are over 100 surplus places in the secondary school. It is obvious that ensuring a firm foundation for a strong education provision in the catchment area is essential and that taking no action is not the best option for ensuring positive development for education provision in the catchment area.

4.5. Centralise the education provision for the catchment area on one campus in the town of Dolgellau

4.5.1. Some features of this kind of model would be to develop and centralise the education provision in the town of Dolgellau. A substantial capital

investment would be needed in order to implement such a plan. Opportunities which the model would provide were also noted:

- Alleviate the effect of any decline in standards during the transition period between the primary and secondary sectors,
- Opportunity to utilise expertise in different areas across the sectors,
- Opportunity to share good practice across the establishment,
- Opportunity to centralise administrative and service support for the school e.g. refectory.

4.5.2. During the course of the initial discussions, considerable research work was carried out into the choice of sites for developing one lifelong campus in Dolgellau. Having assessed a number of sites, the conclusion was reached that it would not be possible to develop one All Through campus. This was due to reasons relating to the size of the campus, location in terms of flood danger, access problems and so forth. There has been no change in this situation.

4.5.3. When this model was discussed at local level at Catchment Area Panel meetings, there wasn't much support to the model because it would centralise much of the education provision – if not all of it – in the town of Dolgellau. As part of the vision – there is aspiration to sustain rural education in parts of the area. Further, opinions were voiced regarding the implications of travelling in such a rural area and also implications for the language and the local communities. The absence of a site for such a development means that we cannot proceed with this any further.

4.6. Establish an All Through School in the town of Dolgellau.

4.6.1. Another option considered was the development of a All Through School in the town of Dolgellau. As part of a wider plan, other options will have to be developed in order to stabilise the provision in the rural areas. In terms of a model – this is the model which has developed most successfully from the discussions over a period of time and this is the favoured model for providing education in the town of Dolgellau into the future.

5. THE OPTION FAVOURED FOR CONSULTATION – WHY RECOMMEND AN ALL THROUGH SCHOOL IN THE TOWN OF DOLGELLAU?

5.1. During reorganisation discussions in the County, the All Through model has developed as a possible option in some situations. By now, it is seen as appropriate to include the senior sector of the catchment area in the discussions when considering proposals for primary education. This is seconded by the

strategic document “Towards 2025”, which states clearly that the present system will have to change:

“It is of key importance that every effort be made to utilise resources in the best possible way within the education and training system – human, technical, constructive or financial – for the benefit of children and young people” .

- 5.2. Issues in the Government circular and a new proposed code were considered when scrutinizing the options that would be conducive to the best circumstances to ensure a firm future to maintain and improve quality of education in the town of Dolgellau, and also how best in such a situation, to improve the effectiveness of the educational provision.
- 5.3. During the initial discussions of the Catchment Area Review Panel, a general wish was expressed for looking at this model as an option for consultation.
- 5.4. The Review Panel acknowledged that establishing a All Through School would strengthen the viability of the secondary sector in the catchment area and would also offer practical and strategic opportunities for the primary sector in the town and the wider catchment area. It was noted that changes in the numbers at Ysgol Y Gader were a cause for concern and that projections noted a reduction of around 20% in the next few years (from 380 in 2013 to 304 in 2015). As stated above, the option was assessed in several forms including developing a provision for all the 3 - 16 year old children of the catchment area on one campus and also establishing the model on a multi site campus. But as already stated, the absence of a suitable site means that we cannot move ahead with this option.

5.5. Features of the All Through School

- 5.5.1. There is evidence in some areas of Britain that establishing an All Through system is **a means of maintaining sustainable focus for rural communities**. It is a **means of protecting rural education provision** in the face of higher maintenance costs where there are fewer pupils through co-ordinated schools organisation.
- 5.5.2. An All Through School can offer **curricular advantages** by creating a common ethos and similar expectations for pupils, staff and parents by maintaining flexibility in planning and implementing the curriculum. Research shows that the transitional phase from the primary to the secondary school is challenging for children and that attainment in general suffers during that period. By creating a closer relationship between the primary and secondary sectors, the uncertainty for the children during this period could be reduced.
- 5.5.3. **An All Through School will allow the establishment of a new and co-ordinated managerial structure** with definite responsibilities throughout the school for specific curricular aspects such as literacy, numeracy and ICT development. The size of the staff team as one unit will be considerably bigger and this in turn will mean a wider range of expertise and more efficient use of the strengths offered by individuals within the team. Careful planned use will be made of staff skills to shoulder cross-sector responsibilities for specific curricular fields and this

will be a means of raising standards and reducing the level of use made of staff working outside their main responsibility area.

- 5.5.4. A **catchment area curricular partnership plan** between the primary and secondary sectors in the town of Dolgellau and all the other primary schools within the catchment area would ensure equal opportunity for primary age pupils within the catchment area. Through careful collaboration it can be ensured that every key Stage 2 pupil within the catchment area has access to the resources and experiences offered at the All Through school, including aspects such as modern language teaching, use of modern science, technology and sport resources. There will be more formal managerial collaboration at catchment area level and this will allow curricular aspects such as literacy and assessment as well as managerial aspects such as maintenance, health and safety, appraisal and performance management plans to be included within one co-ordinated catchment area system. Background work on developing the concept of an All Through establishment is being carried out by a group of Primary and Secondary Head Teachers within a catchment area context.
- 5.5.5. **The welfare of pupils** can be supported by reducing the stress of moving from the familiar system of the primary sector and into the secondary sector. A support system suitable for the age and needs of the pupils and a long term relationship between parents and staff will be established.
- 5.5.6. Evidence also shows that there is a closer relationship between the school and the parents, and that a closer community is established. Research work in Scotland revealed that "...the strong relationship with parents often has its roots in connections established during the early years of the children's education" (Learning Together HMle (Scotland), 2010). Such a relationship can be nothing but healthy for the pupils – and indeed for the community as a whole.
- 5.5.7. Experiences in other areas show that there is an **opportunity to support families** by providing integrated services to include health services, child care, adult training and a range of other services.
- 5.5.8. A comprehensive language policy could be developed through the primary and secondary sectors and could include community activities and adult education. This is especially true of Dolgellau considering the results of the language assessment carried out on this model.
- 5.5.9. With regard to school management, opportunities will emerge for amalgamating governing bodies and budgets. This could be carried out formally, and it would offer scope for making managerial savings and diversifying resources according to need.
- 5.5.10. As regards the school's management, opportunities are provided to merge governing bodies and opportunities as regards **financial matters**. Scope would be provided to make management savings and divert resources. Such a model would provide limited opportunities to make revenue savings through the allocation formula. Opportunities would be provided

to make better use of the allocation received through obtaining a cross sector budget overview, and be able to direct resources in accordance with the demand. There may be further opportunities for minor savings as part of any capital scheme that would ultimately form part of the scheme – but these amounts would probably be small.

5.6. Centrepiece of education within the catchment area

5.6.1. Below are noted the main recommendations for the lifelong model. Please note that these are recommendations and that some managerial matters would in the long run be in the hands of the school and governors.

- The establishment will include primary and secondary provision and possibly nursery provision as well.
- One governing body,
- One leader for the entire establishment, with assistant sector heads to take responsibility for the primary and secondary sectors and any other services provided.
- Developing a catchment-area coherent curricular partnership scheme between the primary and secondary establishment in the town of Dolgellau and all the other primary schools in the catchment-area would provide an equal opportunity for primary school age pupils in the catchment-area.
- More formal management collaboration at a catchment-area level would allow curricular aspects such as literacy and assessment as well as management aspects to be included in a coherent catchment-area system.
- In the second management rank a system of co-ordinators could be established with responsibilities for aspects such as Pastoral Care, Assessment or Community Activities across the establishment.
- The school would be funded in such a way that resources could be diverted according to local need and priority.

5.6.2. The All Through School would be expected to cover the whole catchment area by working closely with all the primary schools within the catchment area so that they could benefit from any developments in the town and from the expertise offered by all staff members. Therefore, with regard to the vision it is noted that it is a vision to develop a central education centre in the town of Dolgellau in the context of other developments.

5.7. Assessments of Linguistic, Community and Equality Effects

5.7.1. In accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Assembly Government, assessments were commissioned on the linguistic, community and equality effects of the models considered as part of the initial discussions.

5.7.2. The Linguistic Assessment Report notes the background and that the favoured model in truth retains the status quo and offers possible opportunities for developing the situation of the Welsh language.

5.7.3. The assessment notes that the percentage of pupils coming from non-Welsh homes is higher than the percentage coming from Welsh homes, in

the primary and secondary school at present. It also notes that social and academic use is made of the English language. Widespread use of English as a social medium at Primary level and to various degrees at Secondary level is also noted. The findings of the assessment show that the bilingual skills of primary pupils is good although pupils' linguistic proficiency varies – it notes insufficient use of the Welsh language. With regard to the situation of the Welsh language in the ward/community, the assessment notes the situation as 'fair' only.

5.7.4. Since the impact assessment notes that the model would continue with the present situation with very little impact, we recommend measures to strengthen the Welsh language by establishing the model, and possibly offering opportunities to challenge the situation which exists at present and improve it by establishing the All Through School model.

- Thorough pastoral care and management in order to maintain and strengthen the current situation.
- Encourage a provision to immerse pre school age children in the Welsh language.
- Adopt a school policy whereby teaching and auxiliary staff start and conduct conversations with pupils in Welsh in order to establish and maintain a Welsh atmosphere and encourage everyday use of the language among the pupils.
- School Development Plan and work plans to allow teachers to set positive language models for the pupils in the classroom.
- Playtime and dinnertime assistants to receive training on ways to encourage social use of the Welsh language in a friendly and positive manner.
- Adopt playground games played through the medium of Welsh..
- Hold sports and leisure opportunities through the medium of Welsh

5.7.5. The conclusion of the community impact assessment on the lifelong model is that there will be no impact since the model – in terms of the presence of education provision on two sites in Dolgellau - would continue with the existing situation. A preliminary equality impact assessment has been conducted. The equality assessment identifies the current situation and shows that policies and procedures are in place that would ensure that the proposal considered is compatible with and equal rights. Having considered the relevant factors, its concluded that guarantee equal opportunities are promoted positively as a result of the proposal and that measures are in place to ensure that no unlawful discrimination or harassment. Arrangements are in place to monitor and review the situation. The equality assessment will be completed once the category and faith element of the new establishment is decided.

6. METHODS OF ESTABLISHING THE ALL THROUGH SCHOOL AND ITS LEGAL CATEGORY

6.1. In this part of the report, the Cabinet is reminded of the possible options in terms of moving ahead and establishing the All Through School in Dolgellau and the possible implications of some of those options for the category of the establishments in the long term. Also, we report on the results of the discussions held and further developments made and outline definite steps regarding the best way forward.

6.2. The technical matter of the 'legal' category and possible religious designation of any new establishment for the provision of education in Dolgellau will need to be considered as part of any consultation. The Primary school at Dolgellau is a Voluntary Controlled School category - a Church in Wales school, and has a designated religious character. The legal category of Ysgol Y Gader is 'Community School' which does not have a designated religious character. The designated religious character of a Voluntary Controlled school is important in terms of

- The character of the school
- Membership of the governing body
- Site ownership

6.3. As defined by the Maintained Schools Wales Regulations 2005, schools in Gwynedd are categorised as Community, Voluntary Aided or Voluntary Controlled. Voluntary Aided or Voluntary Controlled schools may also be designated as having a religious character i.e. a church school. The following table shows the number of Gwynedd's primary schools in each category, and the number of pupils in those schools.

CATEGORY	PRIMARY		SECONDARY	
	Number of Schools	Number of Pupils	Number of Schools	Number of Pupils
Community	88	7,984	14	7,396
Voluntary Controlled (VC)	11	1,493	0	0
Voluntary Aided (VA)	3	243	0	0
Total	102	9,720	14	7,396

6.4. With regard to the situation in Dolgellau, possible options need to be considered regarding the means of establishing the All Through School and the implications of that mechanism for the 'legal' category and religious designation options of the proposed establishment in the town:

- i. Establish a federal body between the Primary and Secondary sectors which would retain the existing legal category (the category of Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau is 'Church in Wales' School (Voluntary Controlled School), and the category of Ysgol Y Gader is 'Community School').

- ii. Close both the Primary School and the Secondary School, reopen and amalgamate them and give the establishment the legal category of 'Community School'.
- iii. Close both the Primary School and the Secondary School, reopen and amalgamate them and give the establishment the legal category of Voluntary Assisted Controlled School (Church in Wales)

6.5. The different features of the each legal category are given in the table below:

	<u>Community Category</u>	<u>Church Category</u> (Voluntary Controlled School with religious designation)
Ownership of land and school buildings	Local Authority The Local Authority is the owner/tenant of the school site and buildings	The Local Authority is the tenant of the religious body (usually a Diocese)
Funding responsibility	Local Authority	Local Authority
Staff employment and staff appointment	Local Authority No priority can be given on the basis of religion.	Local Authority When appointing the Headteacher, candidates can be asked if they will support and develop the Christian character of the school
Responsibility for auxiliary services	Local Authority	Local Authority
Admissions policy	Local Authority	Local Authority
Governing Body constitution	In accordance with Schools Organisation Regulations (Wales) 2005 Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, parent representation, Education authority, Teachers, Staff, Community and Community Council.	In accordance with Maintained Schools Wales Regulations 2005 parent representation, Education authority, Teachers, Staff, Community and Community Council and Governors appointed by the Church.
Joint worship	Meet legal requirements for daily worship. The act of worship to be of Christian nature either totally or mainly.	Meet legal requirements for daily worship. The act of worship to be of Christian nature either totally or mainly, and may include elements of the religious body's worship
Curriculum and Religious Education	Religious Education to be part of the school curriculum. Religious education syllabus agreed upon locally through SACRE	Religious Education to be at the Part of the school curriculum. Christian Values will also be a valuable part of the school's curriculum, and an essential part of school life Religious education syllabus agreed upon locally through SACRE Following a consultation and democratic vote, parents/carers can ask that the school uses the religious body's RE curriculum instead.
Inspections	Estyn inspections only.	Estyn inspections . The governors and religious body are responsible under Section 50 of the 2005 Education Act for an inspection of the school's worship and Christian character

7. OPTION OF CREATING A FEDERAL ESTABLISHMENT

- 7.1. There is an option of creating a federal establishment between the primary and the secondary schools.
- 7.2. This method is dependent on voluntary agreement between the governing bodies of the two existing schools, amalgamating the two institutions and creating one federal governing body. This would have to be undertaken in accordance with the legal requirements of the Schools Federation Regulations. In establishing a federal model, the current legal category of both establishments could be retained.
- 7.3. Some features of a federal model are that:
- It is possible to make better strategic use of resources across the federal establishment.
 - It would be possible to provide more opportunities for pupils by sharing resources between schools.
 - It would be possible for staff to work in more than one school in order to encourage new skills and experiences.
 - The policies and systems would be consistent and based on good practice.
 - Governors' understanding of the wider context would be increased and there would be an opportunity for sharing the expertise and skills of a wider range of governors.
 - It would be possible to share resources, avoid duplication and ensure savings.
- 7.4. A federation of schools means that the schools can retain their unique identity and remain within their communities. Also, federal schools can retain their delegated budgets, their own name, character, school uniform and ethos, but they can also consider the advantages of sharing resources such as equipment, IT, staff and other assets. The new single governing body created by the federation would supervise and have equal responsibility for every school within the federation.
- 7.5. According to the existing Schools Federation Regulations, federation is dependent on voluntary agreement between the governing bodies of the two schools, their amalgamation, the creation of one federal governing body and a strict procedure which must be followed in order to establish the federation.
- 7.6. The first part of the process of creating a federal establishment would be for the governing bodies to discuss a report on the proposal. The two bodies could publish joint proposals for creating the federation. If there is agreement to move ahead, then a consultation process must be followed.
- 7.7. The proposal would have to offer specific information involving: the names of the schools in question and confirmation that the governing bodies have decided to federate; the proposed size and constitution of the governing body for the federate; arrangements for staffing the schools within the federation; the "federation date" and the consultation period (not less than six weeks). The regulations stipulate the consultation requirements but the process also involves

the school stakeholders including the Education Authority, governors, staff and parents.

- 7.8. The governing bodies which propose federation would have to jointly discuss any objections to the consultation when they are in the process of reaching a formal decision. Then the Council would have to complete the legal procedure of dismissing the governing bodies of the schools joining the federation and forming a new governing instrument to incorporate the federation governing body which would come into force on the federation date. In creating a federation the federal Governing Body would have corporate category the same as a single governing body. All the land, property, rights and obligations of the schools would be transferred to the federal governing body.
- 7.9. The Cabinet should be aware that it is possible to abolish the federation, or for a single school to exempt itself from the arrangement at any time. This would be subject to instigation by a threshold number of governors, parents or staff, or the authority, or trustees of any relevant established body connected with the school. e.g. the Church. Consultation would have to be undertaken with the customary range of bodies with interest in the proposal: relevant authorities, head teachers, staff, trusts or established bodies connected with the federation, and every parent and pupil. Following the consultation the federal governing body would have to consider the application and decide to either accept it, refuse it or dissolve the entire federation.
- 7.10. Although a federation can be dissolved it is not likely to be straightforward and in reality it is a major step to take. In establishing a federation of this type detailed work would have been undertaken and an agreement reached between the schools on a number of aspects which could strengthen the arrangements.
- 7.11. During the past few months much discussion has been held on obtaining a full agreement between the governing bodies of Ysgol Uwchradd Y Gader and Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau. But in this instance the two bodies did not reach an agreement in accordance with the regulations operational at the present time.
- 7.12. Up to the present time, under the regulations in force, the governing bodies needed to volunteer and lead the process of establishing a federation. A series of discussions was held during the past year but to date it has not been possible to move the process forward.
- 7.13. The Education Act of 2010 provides a method of forming Regulations which will allow an Education Authority to lead and create a federal relationship between schools. At the moment, the Government have not brought this provision into effect. In the absence of this, and further information about relevant Regulations that would be needed, no further guidance can be given.
- 7.14. **Considering the Federal Option:**
 - 7.14.1. Under the existing regulations, obtaining the agreement of the governing bodies is essential to the creation of a federal establishment. At present, as a result of initial discussions with representatives from the bodies, it is uncertain whether there would be support for the principle of agreeing to

this arrangement due to concerns over the nature and strength of the federal body. Much would depend on the goodwill of the federal body to work towards a strong All Through establishment, but there are also concerns over the fact that a federal body would not fully combine the entities of the establishments, as compared to what would happen by closing and reopening the schools as a new entity. Also, due to the nature of the federal model, there is some uncertainty over the ability to separate and dissolve the federation at any point in time according to the regulations as they stand at present.

7.14.2. Establishing a federal body would be a means of ensuring the existing legal category of the two schools. But, without the full support of the governing bodies, there is no way that the Authority can force this arrangement under the current regulations. It has been noted that new regulations are to be issued but the details have not as yet been published and they will not come into force for some months yet. Subject to the details of those regulations, the Council, with support from the Church, could recommend federation of the two governing bodies. At the moment this is not an option. However this is not an option at present. It was assessed whether this is the best mode of establishing a structure for efficient management in order to strengthen provision in the town of Dolgellau, in comparison to other options.

8. OPTION OF CLOSING AND REOPENING

8.1. If an All Through School was established by closing the two existing schools and reopening them as one school, the process of closing and reopening would be subject to a statutory consultation in accordance with the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 which comes into effect in October.

8.2. By establishing the school through closure of the existing establishments and reopening them, a legal category and possible religious designation for the new establishment needs to be chosen:

- Community category, or
 - Church category
 - Voluntary Controlled (with a designated religious character)
- Voluntary Aided (with a designated religious character)

8.3. At present the category held by Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau is Church in Wales School (Controlled Voluntary School with a designated religious character.) and the category held by Ysgol Y Gader is Community School which does not have a designated religious character. The Voluntary Aided School category was not discussed in detail as they are not categorizing either schools in the catchment at present. Setting this category involves some further changes, for example; access control to school and transferring land ownership to the Church.

8.4. Considerations

8.4.1. Therefore there are new options and forces that could possibly be considered in order to move ahead and establish the All Through School

in Dolgellau. But there are also other important factors which should be fully considered before a final decision is taken on the matter.

8.5. Legal Requirements

- 8.5.1. When discussing the technical details of the matter, full consideration should be given to the guidelines issued by the Welsh Government. The Cabinet should be aware that there is a new draft Code, School Organisation Code which comes into effect in October and gives specific guidance on the reorganisation of schools processes is reviewed. This means that any statutory consultation would have to be implemented under the new Code.
- 8.5.2. In the case of schools with a specific character or category, the need for such a provision in the area has to be assessed and evidence provided as support. The situation must be dealt with appropriately and consideration must be given to the local needs and wishes for education of a specific nature. The Code also notes, because of the Voluntary Controlled Category of the Dolgellau Primary, a requirement to hold a consultation with the Church before finally deciding to move ahead with the statutory consultation process. This requirement is reflected in the recommendations.

8.6. Church Provision

- 8.6.1. As already noted, with the option of closing and reopening the existing establishments in order to create the new establishment, a decision has to be reached on the legal category for the new establishment. The features of each category – Church or Community – are given above (see Table in section 6.5).
- 8.6.2. An assessment would have to be made of the effect that the choice of provision available under the various options would have.
- 8.6.3. Discussions with representatives from the Church in Wales in the Bangor diocese have revealed concern if there was no Church provision in the area. Cabinet members should be aware that the Church is a core consultee in this situation.
- 8.6.4. If the All Through School in Dolgellau were to be a Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled school, this would mean that Y Gader Secondary sector would be the first in Gwynedd with this category. There are other Church secondary schools in other Counties, for example in Wrexham, and there are three Church in Wales secondary schools in South Wales.
- 8.6.5. There are examples of Church All Through Schools in England. There is currently a consultation underway at St. Bridget's Roman Catholic 3-16 School in Denbighshire, where there are proposals are being consulted upon which would see the school become a joint Church in Wales-Roman Catholic 3-16 school.

8.6.6. The features and virtues of Education in schools with a religious character designation are summarised in a document issued lately by the Government – ‘Faith in Education’ (www.cymru.gov.uk). The document outlines the features of schools with religious nature and notes the ethos and character of these schools.

8.7. Context of other proposals in this catchment area and others.

8.7.1. Of course, this matter must be considered in the context of other discussions held on the subject of schools reorganisation. A proposal for part of this catchment area is now under review. But, in view of the vulnerability of some rural schools in the area, we must remember the outline vision for the catchment area, namely to ensure sustainability and a future for education in the rural areas and to strengthen the urban provision as the core education provider within the area.

8.7.2. We must also bear in mind the fact that a decision regarding the future of the only other Church School within the catchment area, Ysgol Machreth in Llanfachreth, has been taken (but at present is part of a review), and that the situation at that school is very vulnerable in terms of numbers. Therefore, we must combine that with other considerations for a choice of provision – if there is a need for a choice in the area.

8.7.3. It must also be remembered that Ysgol Beuno Sant, which has a designated religious character, in the Berwyn catchment area has been part of the reorganisation discussion in Bala. Attached to the initial discussions in the area – the possibility of the “Church” category being dissolved as part of the development of the Lifelong Learning Campus. The Dioceses of Bangor and St. Asaph (who cover Bala) are working together, and see no reason why Church in Wales provision cannot be maintained in the Bala/Dolgellau part of Meirionnydd. This situation must also be remembered as part of the context.

8.7.4. Going forward with these issues along the way, the broader context of the provision of education and the Church category in the area must be considered.

8.7.5. In the Gader catchment, the majority of the schools have a “community” category of a non designated religious character. The largest primary school in the catchment (with 40% of primary pupils) has a “Church in Wales” voluntary controlled category and a designated religious character. Therefore, consideration must be given on the what the views of the parents and children of Y Gader will be in regard to the option of possibly attending the secondary sector with a designated religious character. Indeed, it is assumed that wider stakeholders teaching work will take place in the catchment concerning what this could mean, and seek their views on the matter.

8.8. Context of wider discussions on the future of education provision in Meirionnydd

8.8.1. Cabinet members will be aware of the wider discussion which looks more broadly at the future of education provision in Meirionnydd – including the secondary sector in the face of a substantial reduction in pupil numbers etc. The implications of this specific matter in Dolgellau for the wider transitional discussion will have to be considered.

8.9. Summary of the technical matters

8.9.1. Matters relevant to the options of establishing the All Through Community in Dolgellau can be summarised as follows:

Option	Who decides?	Implications	Notes
1 a) Close and reopen with COMMUNITY CATEGORY	Council, - or Welsh Government Statutory Consultation	The Church has suggested that it would oppose this option There would be no Church in Wales provision at all in Dolgellau Catchment and potentially in the Meirionnydd Area. There is no guarantee that the Diocese would make the infants site of Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau (which it owns) available for the use of the new school	The option would involve abolition of all Church provision in the area. The Church has suggested that it would oppose this option.
1 b) Close and reopen with VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED (CHURCH) CATEGORY	Council or Welsh Government Statutory Consultation	Church supports and favours this option. Governing Body would have up to 3 Foundation Governors appointed by the Church Diocese . The Church has a specific status within the decision Process. Ownership of the sites would transfer to the Diocese, though not the public value (financial value). In years to come, if a site were sold, the financial value would come back to the Authority.	It would involve undertaking a statutory consultation process There is no information regarding what the opinion of staff, parents and pupils of Y Gader catchment area would be on attending a secondary school with Church category. This would be the first or second example in Wales of an establishment of this structure.
2 a) Federate EXISTING REGULATIONS	Governing Bodies Consultation with specific stake holders in accordance with Regulations on Federating Maintained Schools (Wales) 2010	Then two governing bodies must agree to federate. It would be a means of securing the existing legal category of the primary and secondary schools. In simple terms it means dissolution of two governing bodies and establishing one body to cover both establishments. The Church is supportive. Both governing bodies must agree to do this.	The schools will retain their present category (Primary – Church and Secondary - Community). No voluntary agreement between the two governing bodies was reached so the matter could be moved forward under these regulations.
2 b) Federate PROPOSED REGULATIONS – SUMMER 2013 (Education Act 2011)	Council (and then possibly the Welsh Government)	The Church is supportive. Instead of the governing bodies deciding whether to carry on or not, the authority can enforce federation. However, as the measure stands the diocese would have to give permission to federate a Church school.	The Council could put forward a proposal for federation. The schools will retain their present category (Primary – Church and Secondary - Community). The statute has not currently been implemented.

- 8.9.2. By closing the existing schools and reopening them as an All Through School, a statutory consultation process would have to be followed and one legal category chosen for the establishment. Above are explained the implications of giving the establishment either a Community or Church category. In order to do this, the local opinion would have to be assessed, but also consideration would have to be given to the implications of a decision taken by the Council in other parts of this catchment area and others.
- 8.9.3. We also have to consider that the Church has strongly voiced its opinion on this matter and has expressed a clear wish to ensure Church provision in the area.
- 8.9.4. If the All Through School in Dolgellau were to be a Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled school, this would break new ground in Gwynedd by giving a religious character designation to the Secondary element of the establishment. It has to be noted also that the opinion of parents and pupils in the remainder of Ysgol Uwchradd Y Gader catchment area regarding attending a secondary sector with Church category a religious character designation is not known. Discerning opinions will be possible during the Statutory Consultation process using a dual-option consultation. The options will have to be fully assessed and considered.
- 8.9.5. The implications need to be considered in full following the discussions on the secondary sector in Meirionnydd. Thus far, the discussions have been directed towards implementing arrangements for close collaboration between some specific sectors – and the direction of these wider discussions on the matter will have to be considered.

8.10. Conclusions on the technical matter

- 8.10.1. Under discussion here is the technical matter of how to establish the All Through School. Consideration must be given to the effects and implications of possibly changing the legal category as a result of this.
- 8.10.2. The option of establishing the school has been discussed over a period of time – but no consensus has been reached on this. The Council is aware of the proposed new powers it will have for forming a federation – but there is no certainty regarding a timetable for implementing those powers. It is believed that creating the establishment by closing and reopening would be a straightforward method and a clear and transparent way of implementing the favoured model, thus creating a strong establishment.
- 8.10.3. While the Sequential School model is a model recommended as part of this proposal, the option remains in regard to either a Community Sequential School or Church Sequential School. The Council notes guidance of the prospective consultation Code, which notes;
“Under certain circumstances, the proponents may be of the opinion that it is appropriate to consult on a range of options rather than one specific proposal.”

8.10.4. It was deemed that this situation was one where it is appropriate to consult on two options, both as a means of ensuring that stakeholders are informed about the options in full and to express opinion and comments on that. This will also be a means to gather information and views before reaching a final conclusion after the consultation.

9. INVESTMENT OPTIONS

9.1. Another matter for consideration is the investment options. As part of the Council's application for funding through the Twenty First Century Schools Programme, the Council has an envelope for the catchment area. An application would have to be made for any increase, or otherwise diverting resources from other schemes, or making an application for additional funding.

9.2. These are the possible options discussed for investment plans as part of the development:

- i. Establish a multi site All Through Community with no capital investment at all.
- ii. Invest in improvements to the existing site of the Primary School.
- iii. Redirect resources or submit a new application for developing a provision on the site of Ysgol y Gader for Key Stage 2.

9.3. These options are assessed below:

9.4. Establish a Multi Site School with no capital investment

9.4.1. This option means that an All Through School would be developed, but that no capital improvements would be made other than those made within the maintenance programme. Even with this option, steps could be taken to change the category of the school and change the form of the leadership, governance, budgetary and educational aspects. Of course, by not investing – the current deficiencies would prevail.

9.4.2. The local view is that investment needs to be ensured for education in the town of Dolgellau in order to improve the provision for the future. The Reorganisation Strategy notes the need to ensure sustainable provision of acceptable standard following the reorganisation process.

9.5. Develop the existing site of Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau.

9.5.1. During the catchment area discussions concern was voiced regarding the site at Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau. The following problems were noted;

- Traffic and parking problems
- Sub standard hall and refectory
- Sub standard amenities
- Lack of flexible and adaptable space for learning
- Lack of space for staff resources
- School on two sites

- 9.5.2. As part of this option it would be possible to develop and invest in the site to improve the existing situation, if possible, in terms of:
- Improve the learning environment
 - Improve the traffic and parking system outside the school
 - Hall and refectory
 - New toilets
 - Space for learning equipment
 - Space for staff resources
 - Improve link between the sites
- 9.5.3. This option would mean that some of the provisions which are duplicated at present could be rationalised and also the teaching environment would be improved, thus leading to positive effects. By completing the improvements it would also be possible to juggle with existing expenditure required such as maintenance, fire precautions etc.
- 9.5.4. Further work would have to be undertaken on some possible options and discussions would have to be held regarding land ownership on the site since the Diocese owns part of the site.

9.6. Develop the existing site of Ysgol y Gader to accommodate Key Stage 2 pupils from Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau and leave Foundation Phase pupils on the present site of Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau.

- 9.6.1. Another suggestion made during the discussions was to find out if the existing site at Ysgol y Gader could be developed to accommodate key Stage 2 pupils who are at the moment on Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau site, the other side of town (with the option of developing the site for this Key Stage across the catchment area)
- 9.6.2. The aim of this option would be to alleviate concerns over the transitional period between the primary school and the secondary school which can be challenging for children whose achievement in general deteriorates during this period. Of course, it could be argued that this movement would create a new transitional period between key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- 9.6.3. This development would mean the construction of a new building for Key Stage 2 pupils on the existing site of Ysgol y Gader. Improvements to parking and access would have to be a major part of the scheme.
- 9.6.4. A large part of the investment would go towards improving traffic arrangements rather than on improving education provision. From the figures referred to around 18 months ago (approx. £4.5m), a bid would have to be made for more capital funding or consideration given to diverting resources from other schemes.

- 9.6.5. This option causes some concerns, namely:
- Concerns over separating the learning phases in the primary age group which would cause a new transitional period for much younger pupils.
 - Practical concerns over the development of the Gader site.
 - Uncertainty and also problems if the option included or did not include pupils from the rural areas.
 - The major part of the expenditure would be on improving traffic problems rather than on improving the education provision.
 - Concerns regarding the timetable for any bid for additional funding.

9.7. Assessing the investment options

- 9.7.1. The investment options have been assessed. Details of the assessment are to be found in Appendix 3 and the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities are also listed.
- 9.7.2. Since it has to be assured that any investment adds value – it is believed that the option which would contribute the most to the educational welfare of pupils would be the option of improving the provision on the site of Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau. A large part of the money invested would contribute towards improving the education provision and would be a means of strengthening the education provision in the town of Dolgellau.
- 9.7.3. It is recommended to ask the Cabinet to approve the development of a plan which will ensure improvements to the existing site at Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau as noted above.

10. IN SUMMARY

- 10.1. Therefore, the recommendation for the schools in the town of Dolgellau is to delegate the right to the Education Cabinet Member, subject to the requirements of the Schools Organisation Code, to commence and undertake a consultation process on the closure of Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau and Ysgol Uwchradd Y Gader in order to establish an All Through School for 3 – 16 year old pupils . This would mean that the school would have one Head Teacher, one governing body and one budget. The advantages of this proposal would be to create an educational centrepiece for pupils between 3 and 16 years old in the catchment area and to create opportunities for collaboration and sharing expertise and skills across the whole catchment area. It would be vital for every school within the catchment area – in the town of Dolgellau and in the surrounding rural area – to take advantage of the benefits of this model and the opportunity to strengthen the education provision for the future within the entire catchment area.
- 10.2. Whilst the All Through School is a proposed model for consultation, the question regarding the category of the proposed model, that is, a Community All Through School or a Church All Through School will be incorporated in the consultation.

- 10.3. It was deemed that this situation was one where it is appropriate to statutorily consult on two options, both as a means of ensuring that stakeholders are informed about the options in full and to express opinion and comments on that. This will also be a means to gather information and views before reaching a final conclusion on publishing Statutory Notices after the consultation.
- 10.4. Also as part of the proposal, we recommend that the Cabinet be asked to approve the development of a plan to ensure improvements to the existing site at Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau as noted above.

11. NEXT STEPS

- 11.1. If the Cabinet supports this recommendation, it is possible to conduct a consultation after the new consultation regulations come into force in the Autumn. Of course, after the period of consultation, there will be a further report to Cabinet. The new Code on School Organisation will set the framework for the timetable for the remainder of the process. One of the next steps in this process will have to be followed as set out in the new code is;
*“In the case of proposals to reorganise schools in the land and/or buildings are held in trust, or designated schools with a religious character, the proposed **must** consult with the trustees and / or the appropriate religious body before the consultation document is published. The proposed **must** allow 28 days for comment and shall give due consideration to these comments before making any decisions to hold a general consultation.”*
- 11.2. In the meantime, the aim is to move ahead with discussions with Local Members relating to the remainder of the catchment area and to hold a meeting of the Catchment Area Panel early in the new school year.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1. Approve the vision as explained in section 3.
- 12.2. To delegate to the Education Cabinet Member the right to decide on conducting a statutory consultation process on establishing an All Through School in Dolgellau on the basis of this report and including consulting on the possible legal category of the All-Through as; ‘Community’ or ‘Voluntary Controlled’ with a religious (Church in Wales) character designation, and subject to the requirements of the proposed School Organisation Code, including conducting a pre-consultation with the Church of Wales and responding to the pre-consultation.
- 12.3. Develop options and a strong business case for developing the site of Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau as part of the Council’s bids for funding from the Welsh Government’s Twenty First Century Schools Programme.

Views of the Statutory Officers:

1. Chief Executive:

“There are a number of considerations which needs attention with regards to the direction of educational development to the future and improvements to the education provision for the children in the area, the structure of this, individual school’s designation and property matters, not only in Dolgellau but throughout the area. The recommendations here provides a way forward. Important factors within this context is the financial resources for any developments/ improvements in the area, which are dependant upon 21st Century Schools Programme resources, and the increase pressure on the Council revenue budget and the Education budget.”

2. Monitoring Officer:

"I can confirm that this report received legal input and there are no matters arising regarding propriety."

3. Chief Finance Officer:

“The majority of this report deals with educational and technical matters of schools organisation in Dolgellau. In itself, establishing the ‘all-through school’ would not result in major revenue savings, but any inward capital investment would benefit the county (a boost to the economy and confirming a useful asset). In this unprecedented financial climate, with the possibility of no further safeguard to the education budget in the next few years, it would be beneficial to accelerate the considerations in the wider catchment area where this project could possibly secure efficiency savings and would limit any financial cuts.”
