

CABINET REPORT
16 July 2013

Cabinet Member: Cllr. Sian Gwenllian

Subject: Confirm the proposal to close Ysgol Llidiardau

Links Officer: Corporate Director - Iwan T. Jones

Recommendation/ report remit

As a matter of formal procedure – the Cabinet is requested to confirm the final proposal submitted through statutory notice, to close Ysgol Llidiardau on 31 August, 2013.

It is proposed that the Cabinet ;

- i. Confirm the proposal announced through statutory notice, to close Ysgol Llidiardau, Rhoshirwaun on August 31, 2013, and provide a place for pupils at Ysgol Crud y Werin, Aberdaron as from 1 September 2013 and also
- ii. Confirm transport arrangements for the transitional phase only, when will there be free transport for those pupils who are currently registered at Ysgol Llidiardau, to Ysgol Crud y Werin, Aberdaron or Ysgol Pont y Gof, Botwnnog specifically, if residing over 2 miles from the selected school, or receive free transport due to the nature of the road in accordance with current transport policy. This will be a temporary arrangement for pupils who are on the school register on 31 August 2013 only and for the duration of their time spent at the school.

View of the local member

The local member will present comments at the meeting.

I. Introduction

- I.1. Following a period of discussion – a local consensus was developed to support the decision of the Governors of Ysgol Llidiardau in recognising that the school was unsustainable and to seek the Authority’s support for a long-term solution, for the benefit of the pupils. It was noted that there was a need to proceed with the discussion due to the school’s vulnerable situation;
 - School numbers give cause for concern. In September 2012 – 14 pupils registered at the school

- Projected numbers - Projections indicate 14 pupils in 2013, 15 pupils in 2014 and 16 pupils in 2015 and 2016
- Number of empty places - 75% of empty places (43 in number) at Ysgol Llidiardau.
- Ysgol Llidiardau receives an additional amount to the usual allocation through the minimum staffing protection policy. This total additional amount during the financial year 2012/2013 was £17,534. There is inadequate funding to employ a Headteacher and an assistant.
- Cost per pupil at Ysgol Llidiardau is £8,544 (2012/2013), compared to average County cost per pupil for the same period standing at £3,838.

1.2. During the meeting held on 27 February 2013, the Gwynedd Council Cabinet decided to undertake a statutory consultation process in compliance with requirements of Section 29 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 on closure of Ysgol Llidiardau 31 August 2013 and provide a place for pupils at Ysgol Crud y Werin, Aberdaron from 1 September 2013.

1.3. In compliance with the statutory requirements and guidelines from the Welsh Government, a period of statutory consultation was undertaken with relevant consultees, from 18 March until 13.00 on 26 April 2013 on the proposal to close Ysgol Llidiardau. The Cabinet were reported back to on 21 May 2013 to obtain permission to issue a Statutory Notice.

1.4. The Statutory Notices were issued on 6th June 2013 and the period terminated on the 8th of July 2013. During this phase, there was no objection to the proposal – and consequently, the Cabinet now has an opportunity to consider the situation before deciding to finally confirm the proposal.

2. Reasons for recommending the decision

2.1. In compliance with the strategy ‘Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd’, several factors were considered when developing options, that include:

- Class size
- Population and pupil numbers
- Quality of Education
- Leadership
- Financial Resources and Buildings
- Language, Community and Equality Impacts
- School Transport and catchment-areas

2.2. With regard to the overall response during the consultation, it can be noted that there is a general voluntary agreement to the notion of closing the school due to lack of numbers. The responses and comments received during statutory meetings focussed on the following matters that are outlined below:

- Transport arrangements and the proposal as regards school admission catchment-areas
 - Educational matters
 - Staff matters during the transitional phase
 - Matters regarding after use of school building
 - Resource matters – finance and buildings
 - The Welsh Language
 - Community Matters and the impact on the village hall resource
- 2.3. Detailed focus has been given to these matters in the report presented to the Cabinet on May 21, 2013. A copy of the report is appended in Appendix 1.
- 2.4. One of the discussions highlighted during the consultation were transport arrangements following the closure of Ysgol Llidiardau. Due to the historical background of the school catchment-areas which overlap in this area, it became apparent that special transport arrangements would need to be considered for specific schools during the transition stage. The following proposal equates to this principle of trying to limit travel times within a historically local context.
- 2.5. At the meeting held on May 21, 2013, it was recommended, in regard to transport arrangements solely, that there would be free transport for those pupils who are currently registered at Ysgol Llidiardau to Ysgol Crud y Werin, Aberdaron or Ysgol Pont y Gof, Botwnnog specifically, if residing more than 2 miles to the chosen school, or would receive free transport due to the nature of the road in compliance with current transport policy. This would be a temporary arrangement for pupils who are on the school register on 31 August 2013 only and for the duration of their time at the school.

3. Summary and next steps

- 3.1. Therefore, following a period of discussion and of statutory consultation – in accordance with the Cabinet’s decision, statutory notices were issued to close Ysgol Llidiardau and provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Crud y Werin Aberdaron. The above mentioned interim transport arrangements form part of the recommendation. This notice is for a period of a month. Copies of the notice are displayed in prominent locations in the area, a copy is provided for parents and governors, staff, the press and the Council website. During this period, no objections were received.
- 3.2. Following the statutory process, if the Cabinet confirms the statutory notice to close the school – the Welsh Assembly Government, as a formal measure, will be notified of that.

4. Recommendation

4.1. It is proposed that the Cabinet ;

- i. Confirm the proposal announced through statutory notice, to close Ysgol Llidiardau, Rhoshirwaun on August 31, 2013, and provide a place for pupils at Ysgol Crud y Werin, Aberdaron as from 1 September 2013, and also;
- ii. Confirm transport arrangements for the transitional phase only, when will there be free transport for those pupils who are currently registered at Ysgol Llidiardau, to Ysgol Crud y Werin, Aberdaron or Ysgol Pont y Gof, Botwnnog specifically, if residing over 2 miles from the selected school, or receive free transport due to the nature of the road in accordance with current transport policy. This will be a temporary arrangement for pupils who are on the school register on 31 August 2013 only and for the duration of their time spent at the school.

View of the statutory officers

The Chief Executive:

“I support this recommendation, which is completely logical in the circumstances”

Monitoring Officer:

‘I am satisfied that the report addresses all the necessary legal issues and that no further issues of propriety arise.’

Head of Finance:

“There are clear reasons (including financial) to support this proposal to close Ysgol Llidiardau and I support the recommendations, which will mean a net annual revenue saving of approximately £56,000.”

Appendix (available on the internet via the link below)

[Cabinet Report May 21, 2013](#)