

CABINET REPORT
September 16, 2014

Cabinet Member: Councillor Gareth Thomas

Subject: The Future of Education Provision in Y Gader Catchment Area

Contact Officer: Iwan T Jones – Corporate Director

The resolution sought/purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to seek the Council Cabinet's approval to commence a period of statutory consultation on the favoured option, which is the proposal to close Y Gader catchment schools and establish one catchment community all through school on the present sites of Y Gader, Dolgellau Primary, Ieuan Gwynedd, Dinas Mawddwy, Llanelltyd and Friog schools for all pupils aged 3-16.

Views of the local members

Local Members' comments will be presented in the meeting.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Council Cabinet's permission to commence a period of statutory consultation on the proposal to re-organise education provision in Y Gader catchment in Dolgellau. We ask that the Cabinet decides on:
 - i. The planned model for the preferred provision on which to hold a statutory consultation;
 - ii. The matter of category accompanying that model
- 1.2 The Council has been implementing the Strategy, '*Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd*' since it was adopted in April 2009. In its meeting on 9 October 2012, the Cabinet decided on the '*Priorities Plan Re-organisation of Education Provision*' which is based on this strategy.
- 1.3 In accordance with '*Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd*' discussions were held regarding education provision in the catchment area of Y Gader, Dolgellau since 2010.
- 1.4 A report was submitted to the Full Council on July 14, 2011 regarding the reorganisation of schools in the catchment area of Ysgol Y Gader. That report is an important context for this report and a copy is included in the background pack. Copies of other relevant papers can be viewed on the Council website www.gwynedd.gov.uk/trefniadaethysgolion and www.gwynedd.gov.uk/thecabinet.
- 1.5 A further report was submitted to the Cabinet on July 16, 2013 (available in the background pack). That report described the difficulties involved with implementing the plan in one part of the catchment area due to technical problems with developing the site at Brithdir and also the financial implications. In view of this information and the need for reconsideration, an outline vision was adopted for the catchment area.

- 1.6. The essence of the outline vision would be to aim at ensuring the following outcomes:
- The same opportunities and experiences for all the pupils in the catchment area
 - More consistency across the entire catchment area
 - Better progression across the age range
 - Opportunities for sharing staff expertise and more opportunities in terms of professional development
 - Wider opportunities to co-ordinate public services, especially support for families
 - Strengthen the education provision across the catchment area and establish the foundation for collaboration, joint planning and joint development into the future.

There is a desire to ensure strong and sustainable education provision throughout the entire catchment area across all sectors. This will involve looking at rationalising the number, nature and status of schools in some parts of the catchment area. If the vision is fully realised it will be possible to strengthen the education provision within Y Gader catchment area.

- 1.7. In December 2013 a report was presented to the Cabinet (available in the background pack) where looking at the catchment area in its entirety was approved, in accordance with the recommendations below:

- (i) *To confirm extending the work in order to create a range of models which will serve the catchment area in its entirety, with the aim of putting before the Cabinet specific recommendations for statutory consultation in accordance with Section 48 of the Schools Standards and Organisation Act 2013*
- (ii) *To give authority to undertake an assessment in order to identify and measure the need within the catchment area for education provision of a specific category and designation as part of, and to meet the requirements of, the Process of identifying recommendations in accordance with i. above.*
- (iii) *To consider the possible financial implications and the options for meeting those implications and thus guarantee that any further requirements for implementing this plan are included in the review of the asset management plan.*
- (iv) *Since the Church Voluntary Schools come within the remit of the process, delegate to the Education Cabinet Member the task of conducting a pre-consultation with the Church if necessary, in accordance with the Schools Organisation Code 2013 requirements, before submitting a further report to the Cabinet on the favoured option, requesting permission to undertake a statutory consultation period on this option.*

- 1.8. Y Gader Catchment Review Panel (CRP) was established during April 2010 and 7 meetings were held. Representatives from all schools were present – head teacher, chair of governors and parent governors. Invitations were also extended to Local Members, representation from the Church in Wales (Diocese of Bangor) and a representative from Coleg Llandrillo Menai.

- 1.9. A wide range of evidence was received and discussed by the panel, including school statistics, financial background, and information on developments at national level (including Government guidance on dealing with proposals for school reorganisation) and new regulations on establishing patterns of collaboration/federations between schools.

1.10. A long list of possible options for school re-organisation in the area was compiled, which included variations of the following:

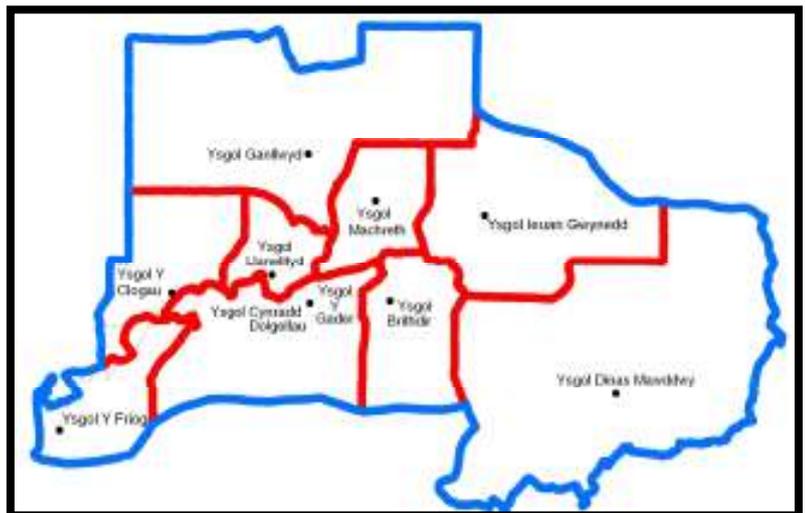
- Developing collaboration models
- Models of rural area schools (single or multi-site)
- All through school (also known as a Learning Community or a Lifelong Learning School)

1.11. The most recent CRP meeting was held on 21st May 2014 where the background work, based on the entire catchment area was presented. This included an updated long list of catchment models, the proposed way forward (the current direction) and an explanation of the statutory processes.

1.12. Another important point is the capital investment available for the catchment. Since commencing discussions in the catchment, the Welsh Government have adopted the investment programme, the 'Twenty-first Century Schools Programme'. Through this programme the Council has an investment of £3.6m approved in principle for Y Gader catchment area. Comprehensive Business Cases will have to be presented to attract the money. Careful consideration will have to be given regarding the best use of the investment and as discussed in the December 2013 Cabinet Report, as the entire catchment area is being discussed any additional budget requirement will be included as a part of a review of the asset management plan.

2. THE SITUATION IN Y GADER CATCHMENT AREA

2.1 Y Gader catchment area includes 10 schools, one secondary school (Ysgol Y Gader) and 9 primary schools (Ganllwyd, Llanelltyd, Y Clogau, Y Friog, Brithdir, Ieuan Gwynedd, Dinas Mawddwy and Dolgellau Primary schools). These schools are situated in and surrounding Dolgellau town, in Meirionnydd. The primary schools each have their own admission catchment areas and these combined make up a secondary school catchment, Ysgol Uwchradd Y Gader. These are displayed in the inserted map. Further information regarding each school is available in Appendix 1.



2.2 The area has been targeted for re-organisation as there are numerous challenges regarding the education provision;

- there are low pupil numbers in most of the schools in the catchment area
- Pupil projections forecast a further decline; in fact by September 2016 it is expected that there will be 637 primary and secondary pupils in the catchment area, a decline of 127 pupils
- 6 out of the 9 primary schools receive additional funding through the minimum staffing policy (safety net); this totalled £199,929 in 2013/14. This figure may increase further in the future as pupil numbers continue to decline
- The per pupil cost in each of the catchment's primary schools is higher than the County average of £3,910
- There is a huge range in primary cost per pupil within the catchment area; £4,003 - £10,616
- There are issues recruiting head teachers in the area

- 6 of the primary head teachers teach for over 70% of their time, which limits time for leadership and management
- Not all of the school buildings are in the best condition or suitable for teaching in the twenty-first century
- The majority of the primary classes contain age ranges of four year groups
- Projections show that 3 of the primary schools will have fewer than 15 pupils within the next 5 years – this will result in additional finance to finance a head teacher and senior classroom assistant only (whereas they currently have a head teacher and teacher) – this inevitably will affect the standard of education
- 26% of primary pupils attend schools beyond their natural catchment
- 8 out of the 9 primary schools have significant surplus places – over 30%
- Standard of education in the catchment is variable with some schools doing better than others due to some particular issues.

3. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS – CHOOSING A MODEL

3.0.1. A number of models were discussed prior to creating the long list. Those options were based on the possible way forward by considering all 10 schools in the catchment. This involved:

- Developing co-operation/federation models between some or all of the current schools without closing schools
- Developing co-operation/federation models between some of the current schools after closing some schools
- Close some primary schools by transferring pupils to nearby schools without capital investment or co-operation between the schools left over.
- Close some primary schools by transferring pupils to nearby schools without capital investments, and establish a collaboration between the schools left over
- Close some primary schools and establish area schools following capital investment
- Close some rural primary schools and establish multi-site area schools following capital investment
- Upgrade Dolgellau Primary with a capital investment to create an educational centre for primary education in the catchment area
- Establish one school for primary pupils in the entire catchment area on a single site, the current school site or a new site
- Establish one 3-16 although school on one site for the pupils of the entire catchment area
- Establish an all through school on the present sites of Y Gader and Dolgellau Primary
- Establish an all through school on more than one site
- Establish an all through school for the entire catchment on a number of sites

Many of these have a number of different variations depending on the chosen schools and sites (over a hundred different possible variations).

3.1 Developing a Co-operation Model/Federation

3.1.1. It was discussed that this model could be developed in more than one form. Informal co-operation between the schools and more formal co-operation is possible through a federation arrangement.

- 3.1.2. The advantages of this type of model would be that it would ensure that education provision would remain in every site where education is provided at present. There would be opportunities to share expertise, resources and share good practice.
- 3.1.3. On the other hand, there are disadvantages to this type of model. It wouldn't solve the problem of declining pupil numbers, the situation with high surplus places in individual schools, class sizes and age range in current classrooms, high teaching time for head teachers nor would it impact the financial situation. The teaching and learning environment would stay the same and the building maintenance costs for the same number of buildings would continue – ensuring the substantial investment necessary to upgrade every building wouldn't be possible.

3.2 Developing the Area School Model

- 3.2.1. An Area School is defined as a school that replaces other schools, creating a new school to serve in its place.
- 3.2.2. Some of the advantages of this model include revenue savings, more consistent per pupil costs in a particular area, impacting the size and age range within the classrooms, and releasing the head teacher from the classroom to enable him/her to prioritise time to lead and manage. This model also reduces surplus places.
- 3.2.3. Some of the disadvantages of this model is that pupils have to travel substantial distances to school, which makes their day long. For example, in Y Gader catchment area, if Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy site closed some pupils would have to travel nearly 45 minutes to school, which equals the Government Regulations' maximum. Furthermore, substantial traveling distances results in high transportation costs which in turn reduces revenue savings. This model also negatively impacts the community losing the presence of a school.

3.3 Developing a Multi-Site Area School Model

- 3.3.1. A multi-site area school is statutorily defined as one school; however can have more than one site. The school replaces other schools by creating a new school to serve in its place.
- 3.3.2. The main benefit of this type of model is the possibility of maintaining education provision in more than one community. It's a model that reacts well in very rural areas where there are long travelling distances to the alternative schools. It also means that sites of small schools are not isolated, rather they are part of a larger educational establishment enabling better use of resources i.e. one head teacher on both sites, sharing resources and staff between both sites and bringing pupils from both sites together to hold activities with a higher number of pupils. This model also produces revenue savings and keeps the presence of school sites in more than one community.
- 3.3.3. There are certain disadvantages to this model, firstly the fact that the size and range of the classes in some educational sites remain unchanged. Also, this model does not offer the highest possible revenue savings (often there would be more savings with an Area School). But it does make better use of resources and it does rationalise the cost per pupil. This model also has a negative impact on the communities which lose the presence of a school.

3.4 All Through School Model

- 3.4.1 In this case, an All Through school is defined as a school for pupils between 3-16 years of age which does away with the gap between primary and secondary schools. Statutorily, it is recognised as a 'middle school'. An All through school can occupy one or more sites.
- 3.4.2 Some advantages of this model are the fact that it allows flexibility to make the most effective use of funding and resources e.g. use secondary school teachers' subject expertise to teach specialist subjects to primary school pupils, or extend the use of primary literacy and numeracy teaching methods to the secondary sector. The aim would be to reduce the gap which exists between pupils' achievement during the transitional phase from the primary into the secondary. (year 6 to year 7)
- 3.4.3 One disadvantage is the fact that this type of school is not common in Wales (4 from September 2014 onwards) which means that there are concerns regarding a model which is still under development.

3.5 Catchment Area All Through School Model

- 3.5.1 In this case a Catchment Area All Through School is defined as one school for all the 3-16 year old pupils within the entire catchment area. This model could occupy one or several sites, and would involve one head teacher, one staff team, one governing body and one budget for the entire catchment area.
- 3.5.2 This model is assessed in full later on in the document as the model favoured for Y Gader catchment area.

3.6 Other options put forward

- 3.6.1 An alternative option was put forward as part of the research work carried out by local representatives. This model would involve the closure of Brithdir, Llanelltyd and Machreth schools and distribute the pupils to neighbouring rural primary schools. Following this, there would be a collaboration network between the remaining primary schools (namely Ganllwyd, Clogau, Friog, Ieuan Gwynedd, Dinas Mawddwy and Dolgellau primary schools) so that joint timetabling and joint preparation would take place. This option has been included as part of the full appraisal of options which can be seen in Appendix 2.
- 3.6.2 Also put forward by a representative of the Church in Wales was the option of a "collaboration trust". This option has also been included as part of the full appraisal of options which can be seen in Appendix 2.

3.7 Site Considered

- 3.7.1 In order to make a long list of realistically possible models, the school sites were then considered. Extensive research has been undertaken to discover a site in the Dolgellau area for centralising the education provision. Unfortunately it was not possible to locate a large enough site due to constraints such as National Park planning areas, geographical features of the land regarding vast areas that flood regularly and suitable access. This resulted in the property department concluding that the development would be restricted to the current school sites.

- 3.7.2 Regarding the rural schools sites, the schools in the Eastern part were assessed fully as part of a previous scheme to create a multi-site area school in Brithdir and Dinas Mawddwy.
- 3.7.3 As part of this research, Machreth school site was ruled out as a possible site for a single-site or multi-site area school, due to its location compared to the pupil population, and difficulties getting to the site considering the access roads and the requirement to transport much higher pupil numbers.
- 3.7.4 The Dinas Mawddwy school site is a good school site but is geographically far for a large number of pupils to travel daily. The site was retained as part of the original proposal – multi-site area school in Brithdir and Dinas Mawddwy.
- 3.7.5 The Ieuan Gwynedd school site was on the short list as a main site for the area school but wasn't chosen as the Brithdir school site was considered more favourable due to its established popularity. Regarding technical matters, there were no issues with the Ieuan Gwynedd school site in Rhydymain.
- 3.7.6 Unfortunately after extensive technical assessments on the site adjacent to the Brithdir School, it became apparent that any development on it would be extremely expensive due to technical problems relating to planning restrictions. To continue with the development would require extensive excavation which would cause unforeseen costs. This resulted in the proposal being withdrawn (as was previously reported to Cabinet).
- 3.7.7 Based on this research, as the situation regarding sites has not altered, it is not possible to develop the Machreth and Brithdir school sites. It is possible to develop the Ieuan Gwynedd school site and Dinas Mawddwy school site can be kept.
- 3.7.8 Research during Summer 2013 on the Western rural school sites revealed which sites in the area were suitable for possible development. The Clogau school site is not possible as it is too small, has a rock face at its back and a main road at its front – there is no room for suitable expansion.
- 3.7.9 Ganllwyd school site is considered too small to develop without the purchase of additional land. There are significant issues regarding the land adjacent to the school as it is on a sharp incline and owned by The National Trust. The school and the Authority have had discussions in the past, trying to buy a small parcel of land so that the school would have a playing field, these discussions were unsuccessful. The property department are of the opinion that there are insurmountable issues regarding development of this site and do not recommend it.
- 3.7.10 The Friog site could be developed but due to its distant location from the majority of the pupil population it is not recommended as pupil travelling time would be high and the distance could threaten the long term viability of any development. It is however considered a site to retain due to the travelling distances pupils in the Friog / Fairbourne area would have to complete should it close. The standard of the road from Dolgellau through Arthog to Friog was also a consideration in this decision, as it is narrow, and windy.
- 3.7.11 It would be possible to develop the Llanelltyd site. With the purchase of a small strip of land to the West of the school, it would be possible to extend it to receive approximately 70 pupils. This site could therefore be used.

3.7.12 Dolgellau primary is the main primary school in Dolgellau and currently a split site school with the infants on one side of a road and the juniors on the opposite side. The junior building is a listed building and the infants is owned by the Church in Wales. A development to bring the school together on one site (the present juniors) was considered but at £4.2m was considered too costly. Moving Dolgellau Primary to the Gader school site was a considered option but not feasible due to lack of suitable space (an alternative proposal to locate all key stage 2 pupils in Y Gader school was also considered). Therefore improvement and substantial upgrading to both Dolgellau Primary sites seemed favourable as a primary school in Dolgellau must be retained due to the pupil numbers (and lack of room for pupils elsewhere).

3.7.13 Y Gader secondary school is a reasonably large site but is on a steep incline with buildings at different levels. Locating primary pupils on the site has been considered. There is no new site in the area suitable for a single site all-through school of any combination of schools, therefore continuing with the Ysgol Y Gader site is the only feasible option.

3.7.14 Therefore, the sites under consideration when creating the long list were:

- Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy
- Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd in Rhydymain
- Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau
- Ysgol Y Gader
- Ysgol Llanelltyd
- Ysgol Friog

3.8 Long List Possible Models

3.8.1 A long list of options was created based on these sites. Even though the case for change has been established, the 'Do Nothing' model is included for comparison purposes:

- **Model 1:** Do nothing - Continue with the '*status quo*' namely one Secondary School (Y Gader) and 9 Primary Schools. No change to the structure, location, designation, management or catchment areas of the present schools.
- **Model 2:** "*Collaboration trust*" between Ysgol Y Gader, Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau, Multi-Site School in Friog and Llanelltyd and a Multi-Site School in Rhydymain and Dinas Mawddwy
- **Model 3:** Collaboration Network between the following schools: Clogau, Friog, Ganllwyd, Ieuan Gwynedd, Dinas Mawddwy, Dolgellau Primary and Y Gader
- **Model 4:** All-through school in Dolgellau town, Multi-site school in Friog and Llanelltyd, Multi-site school in Rhydymain and Dinas Mawddwy
- **Model 5:** Federation of the 3 schools in model 4 (All-through School in Dolgellau town, Multi-site School in Friog and Llanelltyd, Multi-site School in Rhydymain and Dinas Mawddwy)
- **Model 6:** All-through School in Dolgellau town and one rural Multi-site School on sites in Friog, Llanelltyd, Rhydymain and Dinas Mawddwy – Federate the 2 schools
- **Model 7:** Retain Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau, and create a 3 – 16 year All-through catchment area School (on the existing sites of Y Gader, Friog, Llanelltyd, Rhydymain and Dinas Mawddwy schools with a choice for Llanfachreth pupils to attend Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau or the All-through School) .
- **Model 8:** Catchment Area All-through School on the existing sites of Y Gader, Dolgellau Primary, Friog, Llanelltyd, Rhydymain and Dinas Mawddwy schools

Further explanation of the long list of possible models can be found in Appendix 2.

3.9 Options Appraisal

3.9.1 During the discussions a document summarising the discussed models' advantages and disadvantages was developed. The different options were appraised and further comparison of the models can be seen against the factors in the '*Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd*' strategy, the School Organisation Code, the vision for Y Gader catchment along with other relevant factors. The full options appraisal can be found in Appendix 2.

4. THE FAVOURED OPTION

4.0.1. The favoured option on which to hold a statutory consultation is the option to close all school in the catchment area and establish an all through catchment school on six sites. This is the favoured option following consideration of a number of factors, which includes, but is not limited to;

- Education Standard
- Classroom Sizes and age ranges within classrooms
- Pupil Numbers and Surplus Places
- Learning Environment – Conditions and Suitability of Buildings
- School Category/Status
- Leadership and Staffing
- The Community
- The Welsh Language
- Equality Impact
- Financial Resources
- Geographical Factors

4.0.2. Appendix 3 contains detailed information regarding these considerations. These particular considerations have come from the School Organisation Code, the County's school organisation strategy, the catchment area's vision and other relevant factors.

4.1 Education Standard

4.1.1. Education provision varies in the area, with the majority of the primary schools receiving grades 1 and 2, and two schools receiving some grade 3's.

4.1.2. Maintaining all the current school sites would create challenges when trying to maintain the standard of education and the same opportunities for all the area's pupils. Especially as some of the schools have extremely low pupil projections, in fact three of the nine schools are projected to have fewer than 15 pupils by September 2016. This would mean that in accordance with the minimum staffing protection policy, there will only be sufficient funds for a head teacher and senior classroom assistant, rather than a head teacher and teacher. This would be very challenging for the head teachers trying to maintain educational standards and manage successfully in such a situation.

4.1.3. The authority must be awake to the collaboration opportunities between post 16 Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor provision and the All through school. Careful consideration will have to be given regarding the best use of the Colleges' resources, skills and workforce expertise within the new catchment model and benefit from the closeness of the College's resources on the Dolgellau site.

4.1.4. This type of proposal could provide an opportunity to improve educational standards across the catchment. Establishing one 3-16 years school will enable the flexibility across all the ages so that sharing resources, staff and facilities, will become standard practice. There are reasons why this is not currently happening to such an extent, for example head teachers and multiple governing bodies having to agree before any sharing can occur. These are just some of the possibilities:

- Specialist secondary teachers can travel to the primary sites to teach their subjects e.g. music
- Primary pupils of certain ages can be taught in specialist teaching rooms in the Gader site e.g. year 5 and 6 pupils can be taught science together in the laboratories
- The primary curriculum and timetable can be arranged across all the sites so all pupils of the same age are learning the same things at the same time – this will ensure they are all at the same level when entering year 7 at the secondary site
- Primary staff from all sites can meet to discuss and share best practice and also support, encourage and learn from each other
- There will be improved continuation in all aspects of the curriculum as it is programmed across the catchment ensuring the same experiences and opportunities to all pupils

4.2 Class sizes and age range within classes

4.2.1 The option of a Catchment Area All though School would rationalise the size of the majority of classes in the catchment area and would reduce the age range within classes, thus allowing pupils to be taught in groups of rational numbers.

4.2.2 The extremes of the age range within classes would also be reduced, which would be a way of meeting the challenges and problems of effective teaching and learning in a class where there is a wide age range.

4.2.3 This option would:

- Abolish all classes with fewer than 10 pupils
- Reduce by 75% the number of classes which include 4 school years
- Ensure that there are no more than 30 pupils in any class
- Provide more flexibility in view of the fact that there are more sites and staff within the same managerial system.

4.3 Pupil Numbers and surplus places

4.3.1. Pupil numbers in schools have varied since 1975; however in general there has been a steady decline in primary pupil numbers, with an overall 24% decrease. This has led to a number of surplus places in the schools – nearly 250 primary surplus places and 86 secondary surplus places in September 2013.

4.3.2. In the Gader catchment area, there are a significant number of pupils attending a school outside their catchment – in fact 26% of pupils – this means it is extremely hard to create accurate pupil projections.

4.3.3. The Authority received a letter from the Education and Skills Minister in May 2012 requesting that Authorities with more than 20% of surplus places in their schools to outline which plans they had in place to attempt to reduce the level of surplus places. In response Gwynedd

Council notes the aim of trying to reduce surplus places across the County to 18.5%-21.6% by January 2015.

- 4.3.4. In the Gader catchment there were 31% surplus places in September 2013; 41% in the primary and 18% in the secondary. In fact, there are 5 of the primary schools with over 50% surplus places.
- 4.3.5. It must be reiterated here that predictions show a reduction in pupil numbers within the catchment area and that this would lead to the level of surplus places in the catchment area rising to 44% if the current structure were to continue: 46% in the primary and 42% in the secondary.
- 4.3.6. If the proposal was implemented a Catchment Area School would be established with the appropriate capacity for current and future pupil numbers.
- 4.3.7. Based on current predictions, implementing the Catchment Area School model in September 2017 would mean a reduction in surplus places within the catchment area to approximately 26% - this is 18% less than the percentage should there be no change at all.

4.4 Teaching environment – condition and suitability of buildings

- 4.4.1. The strategy notes that teaching and learning conditions are an important factor in providing education of the best quality.
- 4.4.2. Many of the school buildings in Y Gader catchment area are not in the best condition nor suitable for teaching pupils in the twenty first century. Three of the schools do not have a purpose built hall, which means that pupils have to eat their dinner in the classrooms. Also, 4 of the primary schools do not have a green playing field for their pupils – some make do with the hard playground only. One element which is insufficient in most primary schools is purpose built storage rooms – in some cases school work and teaching materials are stored on high shelves in classrooms.
- 4.4.3. If the catchment area proposal is implemented, the buildings on three of the current school sites will receive an investment to upgrade their condition to category A. This will create a teaching environment fit for the twenty first century and will be an innovative educational resource for the catchment area in the future. A substantial investment of £4.34 million would be made in order to ensure excellent educational provision for the pupils of the entire catchment area.
- 4.4.4. The remaining three sites (Y Gader, Friog and Dinas Mawddwy) would receive backlog maintenance investment from the asset management plan, during the next three years.

4.5 School Status / Category

- 4.5.1. Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau and Ysgol Machreth are Voluntary Controlled Schools with religious designation (Church in Wales), whilst the remaining schools in the catchment are community schools. This factor is given full consideration in part 5 of this report.

4.6 Leadership and staffing

- 4.6.1. The teaching staff structure varies from school to school, with the number of teachers in the primary schools varying from 2.3 to 4.6 (*fte*) in number. The head teachers' teaching time also varies but it is expected for most primary head teachers in the catchment area to teach for a substantial part of their time. Indeed, six primary head teachers teach for more than 70% of their time. The non-contact time allowed does not ensure sufficient time to ensure effective leadership and management.
- 4.6.2. Research has revealed that it is possible for special requirements of small primary schools can have a negative impact on the ability of the head teachers to provide leadership and to effectively manage matters relating to the school. Also, teaching plus an additional workload can affect their ability to offer staff training, career development opportunities and to allow the completion of work such as curriculum planning.
- 4.6.3. A Catchment Area All through School could offer a number of new opportunities in terms of management and leadership structure. Combining all the resources within the area under one school and one staffing structure could offer many new possibilities.
- 4.6.4. The exact staffing structure of the school will need further consideration and will be a decision for the Shadow Governing Body of the Catchment Area School. The school will be a new entity and therefore it will be necessary to establish a new Shadow Governing Body together with an instrument of governance, in keeping with current guidelines and regulation. The new Shadow Governing Body will need to appoint the Head Teacher and then the remaining school staff.
- 4.6.5. Establishing a Catchment Area School will offer career opportunities for teaching staff and other staff. At the moment, the head teachers are expected to teach a class for a high proportion of their time, which reduces the time available for them to lead and to manage the school. In a larger school, there will be more opportunity to release school leaders (senior management team) from their teaching and learning time in order to focus more on the leadership and managerial side, to ensure the continual development of the school.
- 4.6.6. Also, there will be opportunities for teaching staff to share their expertise with a higher number of pupils and to see the advantages of teaching a smaller age range within classes. There will also be exciting opportunities for staff to develop their career within the establishment with help and guidance from the head teacher.

4.7 The Community

- 4.7.1. Welsh Government guidelines (School Organisation Code 006/2013) note that it is necessary to hold a community impact assessment as part of any proposal to re-organise schools. A community impact assessment on the long list of possible options was undertaken as part of the process of developing the proposal.
- 4.7.2. The full report is on the Council's website (www.gwynedd.gov.uk/schoolorganisation) and is part of the background pack for this report.
- 4.7.3. The report conveys that every model which includes closing a school site will have a negative effect on the community losing the presence of a school site. The assessment also suggests, for those communities where a school would close, some alleviating measures that the Council could adopt to lessen the negative effect.

4.7.4. It will be possible to consider these alleviating measures whilst the Council decides upon any recommendations for the catchment. Some alleviating measures mentioned in the report are:

- *In order to create an inclusive spirit and a feeling of ownership, it should be ensured at the start of - and throughout - the transferral process, that the Governors of every school are an integral part of the developments and decisions and that regular updates are circulated to parents.*
- *Appropriate consultations should be held with the local villages and communities regarding agreement on suitable use for school buildings for the future.*
- *It should be arranged that some social events held by the new schools (concerts, coffee evenings etc.) are held in the villages where the schools close as well as in the villages where a school site will remain.*
- *The Council should ensure that school transport arrangements are suitable.*

4.7.5. Also, by implementing the proposal to create a Catchment School there would be a significant investment to try and guarantee the presence of sustainable education provision across the whole catchment – in the town and rurally. There will be an opportunity for pupils and the wider community to gain from this new provision.

4.8 The Welsh Language

4.8.1. Welsh Government guidelines (School Organisation Code 006/2013) note that it is necessary to assess the effect on the Welsh Language as part of any proposal to re-organise schools. A Welsh Language impact assessment on the long list of possible options was undertaken as part of the process of developing the proposal.

4.8.2. The full report is on the Council's website (www.gwynedd.gov.uk/schoolorganisation) and is part of the background pack for this report.

4.8.3. The report notes that a Catchment School has *“a positive impact which offers an opportunity to ensure consistency across the entire catchment area. Whilst it is not possible to place every model in order according to linguistic impact, we gather that this model offers special advantages in terms of planning and provision statutory education which is consistent and stems from one holistic vision rather than from the direction of various establishments which will inevitably have different standpoints in terms of the desire to successfully achieve the county language policy and create bilingual, proficient young citizens. In a catchment area where Welsh is facing a number of basic challenges, it might be that planning the provision on the basis of one organisational vision is the best way to try and fulfil the requirements of the language policy making best use of the larger staffing and teaching resources that a single establishment would possess across the various sites within the catchment area”*

4.9 Equality Assessment

4.9.1. An equality assessment was carried out on the long list of possible models. The assessment pays specific attention to different equality elements such as race, gender, disability, language, religion or belief and age. The assessment notes the current situation and the policies and arrangements already in place to ensure that the proposal considers and abides by equal rights.

4.9.2. Because a number of models note the possibility of impact on Church primary school provision, the Council commissioned a further equality assessment from an independent consultant. This

assessment measured the need for different types of schools within the catchment area, so that local wishes could be considered when deciding on the favoured option. The legal category of the favoured option would have an impact on the choice of educational provision in the catchment area - that is, either community or Church education. This factor is given full consideration in part 5 of this report, with the equality assessment and the assessment of need for various types of schools reports available in the background pack.

4.9.3. With the exception of the status/category of the school, having weighed and measured the relevant factors, the conclusion reached is that equal opportunities are positively promoted in the proposal and that there will be no illegal discrimination and harassment. Arrangements are in place to monitor and review the situation.

4.10 Financial Resources

4.10.1. Based on the financial year 2013/2014 there is considerable range in the cost per primary pupil within the catchment area: £4,003 - £10,616. Every primary school has a higher cost per pupil than the County average of £3,910.

4.10.2. This means that there is a difference of £6,613 in the cost per pupil within the primary schools of the catchment area.

4.10.3. Ysgol Y Gader has a higher cost per pupil than the County secondary average of £4,632, with a cost per pupil of £5,131.

4.10.4. Six of the primary school receive an additional sum to the usual allocation through the minimum staffing protection policy (which guarantees at least a head teacher and teacher in every school and a head teacher and senior classroom assistant in schools with fewer than 15 pupils). This additional sum totalled £199,929 in 2013/14 in the Gader catchment area.

4.10.5. By establishing the multi-site all through catchment area school it is foreseen that there will be £255,625 revenue savings. The £255,625 was calculated after considering the multi-site factor and its merits, and also after consideration of additional transport costs.

4.10.6. There are planned investments of £2.7 million to modify and upgrade the Dolgellau Primary site, £1.02 million to extend and upgrade the Llanelltyd site, and £620,000 to extend the Rhydymain site. This means a significant investment of £4.34 to ensure exceptional education provision for the catchment area. An investment of £3.6 million has been approved in principle by the Welsh Government as part of the Twenty First Century Schools Programme, and in December 2013 the Council's Cabinet committed to the additional finance as part of assets management plan review.

4.11 Geographical Factors

4.11.1. By establishing a Catchment Area All through School on the sites in question, it is foreseen that no pupil would have to travel an unreasonable distance to reach an educational site, in accordance with the strategy.

4.11.2. Transport would be provided in accordance with the County's Schools Transport Policy.

4.12 To Summarise

4.12.1. The recommendation is to undertake a statutory consultation on the proposal to establish a Catchment Area model on account of the opportunities it would bring. There will be several opportunities to develop on the present foundation of teaching and learning quality. Implementing the proposal to establish a catchment area school for 3-16 year olds will solve many of the problems now experienced in Y Gader catchment area.

4.12.2. The proposal will:

- Improve education standards across the catchment area by enabling flexibility across all the age groups so that sharing resources, staff and equipment will become a standard practice.
- Impact the size and age range within classes
- Improve the condition and standard of schools in the catchment area by investing £4.34million on upgrading and extending three sites, by spending maintenance accrual funds from three other sites.
- Enable a new and modern senior management system which will release the head teacher from the class, offer flexibility within the staffing structure across the sectors and provide new career opportunities.
- Ensure that there is an education site within reasonable distance for all the pupils in the catchment area.
- Reduce the number of surplus places
- Create around £255,625 of revenue savings, and rationalise the range of cost per pupil within the catchment area.
- Allow the best opportunity to try and accomplish the language policy, by using the additional teaching resources that one establishment will have to best advantage across all the sites within the catchment area.

5. RELEVANT CONSIDERATION – CHOICE OF LEGAL CATEGORY

5.1 Legal Category

5.1.1. In developing this proposal, the legal category of any new model will have to be discussed. At the moment there is a choice of primary education under the following legal categories:

- Community
- Voluntary Controlled with religious designation (Church in Wales)

5.1.2. In accordance with what is defined in the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, schools are defined as Community, Voluntary Assisted or Voluntary Controlled. Also, Voluntary Assisted or Voluntary Controlled Schools can be designated with a religious character i.e. a Church School.

5.1.3. Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau and Ysgol Machreth are Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools with a religious character (Church in Wales). Ysgol Y Gader, Ysgol Brithdir, Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd, Ysgol Ganllwyd, Ysgol Clogau, Ysgol Friog and Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy are 'Community' schools without a religious character. The religious character of a Voluntary Controlled school is important in terms of:

- The character of the school
- Governing Body membership
- Site ownership

5.1.4. The table below shows the school categories in the Gader catchment area, and the number of pupils in the categories:

CATEGORY	PRIMARY		SECONDARY	
	Number of Schools	Number of Pupils	Number of Schools	Number of Pupils
Community	7	199	1	402
Voluntary Controlled School (VC)	2	163	0	0
Total	9	362	1	402

5.1.5. Throughout the discussions the Council has maintained a close working relationship with representatives of the Church in Wales. Some models on the long list would entail either voluntary controlled primary education or community education to being removed from the catchment area.

5.2 Other Church in Wales schools

5.2.1. It is important for the Council to consider the wider context of the provision as well as ensuring that the provision meets the level of demand. Below are given the details of all the other Church in Wales schools across the County. Ysgol Beuno Sant is a VA (voluntary aided) school whilst all the others are VC (voluntary controlled):

School	Distance from Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau (Miles)	Age Range	Pupil Numbers September 2013	Capacity	Surplus Places	Projections					
						2014		2015		2016	
						Pupil Numbers	Surplus Places	Pupil Numbers	Surplus Places	Pupil Numbers	Surplus Places
Pont y Gôf	46.8	3 - 11	117	122	5 (4%)	113	9 (8%)	106	16 (14%)	96	26 (22%)
Maesincla	43.8	3 - 11	309	360	51 (14%)	324	36 (10%)	336	24 (7%)	340	20 (6%)
Y Faenol	50	3 - 11	261	232	0	262	0	264	0	245	0
Foelgron	43.6	3 - 11	30	60	30 (50%)	35	25 (42%)	36	24 (42%)	38	22 (37%)
Llandygai	54	3 - 11	158	176	18 (10%)	163	13 (7%)	160	16 (9%)	155	21 (12%)
Llandwrog	40	3 - 11	68	86	18 (21%)	55	31 (36%)	53	33 (38%)	52	34 (40%)
Llanystumdwy	31.1	3 - 11	40	53	13 (35%)	36	17 (32%)	34	19 (36%)	36	17 (32%)
Tregarth	49.4	3 - 11	140	181	41 (23%)	136	45 (25%)	134	47 (26%)	134	47 (26%)
Cae Top	51.5	3 - 11	240	254	14 (6%)	240	14 (6%)	240	14 (6%)	240	14 (6%)
Machreth	3.8	3 - 11	16	46	30 (65%)	12	34 (74%)	9	37 (80%)	8	38 (83%)
Beuno Sant	17.8	3-11	53	89	36 (40%)	53	36 (40%)	59	30 (34%)	57	32 (36%)

5.3 The need for different types of schools

5.3.1. To help the Council reach a decision regarding local demand for education under different categories, an independent consultant was commissioned to undertake an assessment. This was carried out by distributing a questionnaire to parents of children attending all 10 schools in Y Gader catchment area. Discussions were held with Church representatives while the questionnaire was being prepared and a meeting was held with every party to discuss the nature of the questions and how they would be worded. Then the independent consultant produced a report providing the results and interpreting the data. A draft copy of this report was shared with the Council and the Church in Wales in order to obtain comments and suggestions.

5.3.2. The number of responses was heartening with 326 questionnaires being completed and returned. The full report, which includes all the core data, is included as a separate document in the background pack (for information). Some key points to note are the fact that the quality

of the education was the most important factor for parents as they chose a school for their child – this is explicit with 79% of the respondents stating that this was the most important factor.

5.3.3. One question in the questionnaire specifically asked for the views of parents regarding the choice of a different category of school within the catchment area. Four choices were given and they were asked to choose the one that best conveyed their wishes. The results were as follows:

Statement	Number of Responses	Percentage Response
It is important to me that my child attends a school that is maintained by Cyngor Gwynedd only	27	8%
It is important to me that my child attends a school that is maintained by Cyngor Gwynedd in partnership with the Church in Wales	14	4%
It is important that schools maintained by Cyngor Gwynedd in partnership with the Church in Wales are available in my area in order to provide choice for parents	26	8%
The only thing that matters to me is that my child has a good education	253	79%
No response	6	

5.3.4. Another question asked parents what factors relating to their school are important to them, and then in a subsequent question they were asked to list the different factors in relation to each other. By combining the responses, the report sets the factors in the following order of importance:

Scale	Factor
1 st	The quality of education
2 nd	That there is a good relationship between parents and teachers
3 rd	That the school buildings and resources are of a high standard
4 th	The importance of the school supporting pupils' moral and spiritual development
5 th	The travelling distance to the school
6 th	The importance of additional provision
7 th	The importance of the formal expectation that Christian values are integral in the schools life

5.3.5. This assessment is available in its entirety on the Council website (www.gwynedd.gov.uk/trefniadaethysgolion) or in the background pack for this report.

5.3.6. As part of the long list of possible models for Y Gader catchment area there are options to continue with Church and community primary education and to abolish either Primary Church education or primary and secondary Community education.

5.4 Land Ownership

5.4.1. Whilst they continue to be used for the provision of education, the sites at Y Gader, Friog, Dinas Mawddwy, Llanelltyd and Rhydymain are the property of Gwynedd Council.

5.4.2. Ownership of the land at Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau is shared between Gwynedd Council and the Church in Wales. The Council owns the junior buildings and the play areas whilst the Church in

Wales owns the Infants building. The playing field on the Infants site is leased to the Council by the Church in Wales.

- 5.4.3. If the catchment area school was designated a Church school it would be necessary to transfer the ownership of Y Gader, Friog, Dinas Mawddwy, Llanelltyd, Rhydymain sites and the Junior building at Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau to the Church in Wales. The Council would continue to pay maintenance costs for the sites. This means that discussions would have to be undertaken with the Church in Wales, as the owners, when discussing any options to develop alternative use for the site e.g. if the site at Y Gader needed to be developed as a community centre and social or community elements were to be located there.
- 5.4.4. If the catchment area school was designated a Community school, the Council would need to gain ownership of the Infants building. The Council understands the importance of continued discussions with Church in Wales representatives on legal matters regarding restrictions or reversion clauses which could be relevant to the direction of the plans, and to this end, discussions are still being held.

5.5 Pre-consultation period with the Church in Wales

- 5.5.1. The Council has held regular discussions with Church in Wales representatives since the start of school reorganisation in the catchment area.
- 5.5.2. In accordance with the School Organisation Code (006/2013) the Authority is required to hold a pre-consultation period with the Church in Wales. This consultation period was held between 19 June 2014 and 1 August 2014. At the beginning of the period the following documents were presented - an example of a statutory consultation document, a draft copy of the assessments (need for different types of schools, language, community and equality) and a copy of the presentation given at the CRP meeting on 21-05-14, so that the direction could be conveyed clearly to the Diocese. The example consultation document explained the proposal which is the subject of this Cabinet report.
- 5.5.3. The Authority received a letter from the Diocese of Bangor and an e-mail from the Diocese of St. Asaph supporting their comments; these may be found in their entirety in Appendix 4. The Diocese of Bangor made four main points:
- 1) *The Diocese of Bangor is proud of its role and provision in the Gader Catchment Area (Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau and Ysgol Machreth, Llanfachreth). The Diocese believes that there is evidence to continue church school provision in the Gader Catchment Area which is clear as any evidences against it. The Diocese also appreciates that this is a time of change in the educational provision of our country.*
 - 2) *The Diocese will accede to the proposal as outlined in the pre-consultation document, ONLY on the grounds that there is a proposal to enhance the Church school provision in the adjoining Berwyn catchment area in Bala (which is in the Diocese of St. Asaph).*
 - 3) *The Diocese of Bangor asks Cyngor Gwynedd to arrange the timetable for the consultation in the Gader and Berwyn Catchment areas in such a way that the Diocese is not expected to forego its Church school provision in the Gader catchment area before the make-up of the enhanced church school provision in the Berwyn Catchment Area is known.*

4) *If it becomes clear that there will not be an enhancement of Church school provision in the Berwyn Catchment Area, then the Diocese of Bangor reserves the right to challenge and respond in a negative manner to any Statutory Consultation in the Gader catchment area, which proposes the abolition of Church school provision in this catchment area.”*

5.5.4. With regard to these comments, one of the main messages is the importance of jointly programming the projects at Y Gader and Berwyn catchment areas. Here is an outline timetable for the projects, subject to Cabinet decisions on the main steps in the process:

Stages of the Journey	The Projects' Outline Timetable	
	Y Gader	Y Berwyn
Pre-consultation with the Church in Wales	19 June - 1 August 2014	September/October 2014
Cabinet Report – Permission to hold a Consultation on the Favoured Option	September 2014	December 2014
Statutory Consultation Period	October/November 2014	January/February 2015
Cabinet Report following a statutory consultation	January 2015	March 2015
Publish a Statutory Notice and an opportunity for consultees to object	February – April 2015	April – May 2015
Final Decision by the Council's Cabinet (it's possible that the proposal be referred to the Welsh Governments' Minister for Education and Skills)	May 2015	June 2015

5.5.5. The timetable shows that Y Gader project has developed a step further than the Berwyn project. The Council is aware of the concerns expressed by the Diocese, and has considered the timetable in former discussions. An agreement has been reached to ensure that the timetables of the processes allow the Diocese of Bangor and St. Asaph to be clear on the direction in Y Gader and Y Berwyn catchment area.

5.5.6. The Council is fully aware that the Diocese, in accordance with the School Organisation Code (006/2013), is one consultee which can refer the proposal for the attention of the Education and Skills Minister if it chooses to object to the statutory notice.

5.6 The Favoured Legal Category

5.6.1. The favoured legal category needs to be chosen so that a statutory consultation can take place on the favoured option.

5.6.2. It is no longer possible to federate schools of different categories, according to the Federation of Maintained Schools Regulations (2014). Therefore creating a catchment area federation that would continue with community and Church primary education is not an option.

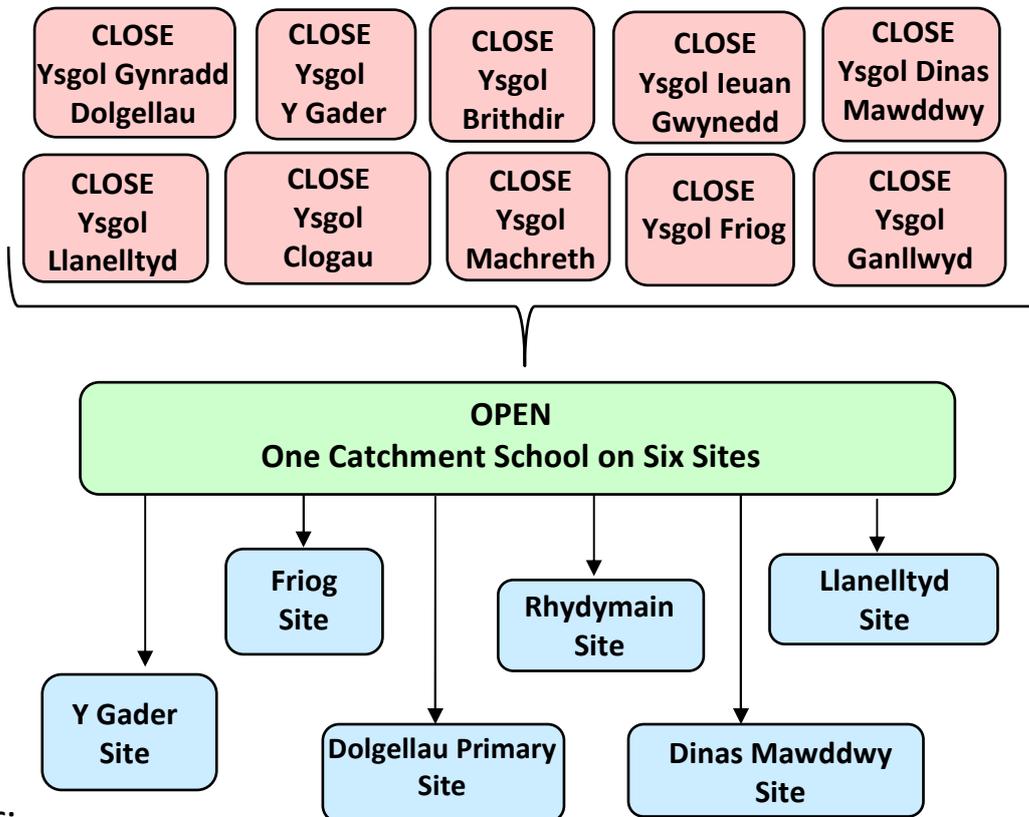
5.6.3. In terms of land ownership, we have to be aware that if a Catchment Area All through School was designated a:

- Community school – the Council would need to be the owners of the infants building on the site of Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau
- Church school – the Council would need to transfer the ownership of the junior building at Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau and the other 5 sites to the ownership of the Church in Wales

- 5.6.4. In choosing a category for the Catchment Area All through School we have to be aware of and to consider the matter in detail since there could be implications regarding the choice of educational provision in the future. By designating the status of the school to be:
- Community – Church primary provision will be removed from the catchment area
 - Church – primary and secondary community provision will be removed and new Church secondary education will be established in the catchment area
- 5.6.5. In terms of legal category, the favoured option on which to hold a statutory consultation is community, considering that:
- The majority of the schools at present (8 out of the 10) are community schools
 - There is no strong demand for Church primary education provision (based on the assessment of need for various types of schools and on local discussions)
 - Changing the status of educational provision for the entire catchment area to Church would have implications in terms of resources, management and ownership of a considerable number of sites
 - The favoured option is one Catchment Area All through School which offers advantages at catchment area level since there is no way of establishing a catchment area federation to include a community school and a Church school, according to the Federation of Maintained Schools Regulations (2014)
- 5.6.6. There will be an opportunity for everyone to present any specific views on the status of the school if the Cabinet gives approval to conduct a period of statutory consultation.

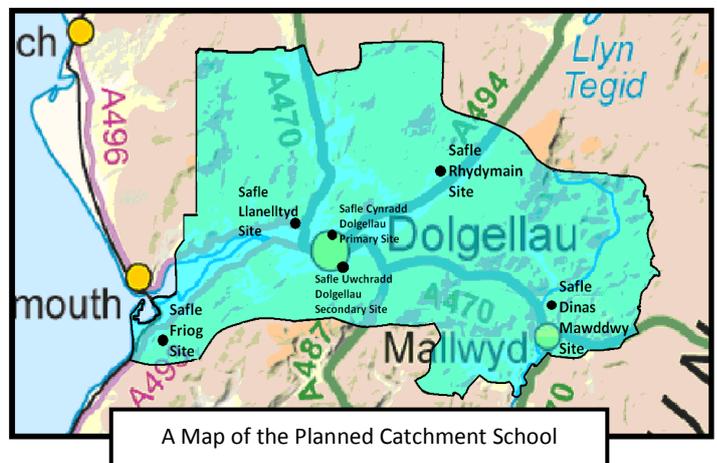
6. THE PORPOSAL'S IMPLICATIONS

6.0.1. This proposal means that 10 schools will close and one new school for the catchment will be opened.



This entails:

- **Closing 10 Schools:**
 - Ysgol Y Gader
 - Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau
 - Ysgol Clogau
 - Ysgol Brithdir
 - Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy
 - Ysgol Ganllwyd
 - Ysgol Llanelltyd
 - Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd
 - Ysgol Friog
 - Ysgol Machreth



- **Establish** one Catchment All through School, for ages 3-16, community Welsh medium, on a number of sites
- Llanelltyd, Friog, Ieuan Gwynedd (Rhydymain), Dinas Mawddwy, Gader and Dolgellau Primary sites would remain open as sites for the new school.
- Ganllwyd, Clogau (Bontddu), Machreth and Brithdir school sites would close, these sites would not re-open.

6.1 Considering the effect on the community

- 6.1.1. The findings of the community impact assessment report notes some matters to be considered with regard to the effect that closing schools will have on the communities which will lose the presence of a school site in their community. Consideration will be given to the measures recommended for alleviating the effect on the community.

6.2 Staffing Considerations

- 6.2.1. If the proposal were approved there would be staffing implications and these could lead to uncertainty and redundancies for a number of staff in the catchment. Staff and Union representatives will be included as part of the statutory consultation. Gwynedd Council has developed a detailed staffing policy jointly with the Trade Unions and Head Teachers. Clear and open communication will play a key part in implementing any proposals.
- 6.2.2. Should the proposal reach a point where the school is being established, it will be the responsibility of the Shadow Governing Body to appoint staff for the new school. The Council's Education and Personnel services will be at hand to give assistance and advice to the Governing Body and staff regarding the process.

6.3 Creating One Catchment Area All through School

- 6.3.1. In order to establish the Catchment Area All through School, the best method of doing this legally and constitutionally was discussed. It is recommended that the schools in question will have to close: (Gader, Cynradd Dolgellau, Llanelltyd, Friog, Clogau, Ganllwyd, Brithdir, Ieuan Gwynedd, Machreth and Dinas Mawddwy), and that sites at Y Gader, Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau, Llanelltyd, Friog, Rhydymain and Dinas Mawddwy will reopen in order to establish the Catchment Area School.
- 6.3.2. The implications of establishing a one school entity has already been explained in terms of:
- Leadership (one Head Teacher)
 - Managerial government (one governing body)
 - Budgetary (one budget)
- 6.3.3. If a new Catchment Area School was established, it would be necessary to establish a Governing Body, a constitution for the school and to appoint staff. The staffing structure will be a matter for the Governing Body of the Catchment Area School.
- 6.3.4. By implementing this proposal the catchment areas of the current schools will be adapted. Catchment areas are used in order to identify the nearest school for parents/children, depending on where they live. This makes it possible to implement the Authority's Transport and Admissions Policy.
- 6.3.5. The technical matter of the method of allocating the budget will be through an all through school formula, which is already being developed, in accordance with Section 52 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

7. NEXT STEPS

- 7.1 Please note that the steps taken thus far were part of the process of gathering information and forming initial proposals.
- 7.2 The Schools Organisation Code (006/2013) was established and these proposals were formed with regard to this guidance. Now a decision has to be taken on a model which will be the subject of a further consultation, in accordance with the Schools Standards and Organisation Act 2013.
- 7.3 If the Cabinet decides to go ahead with the recommendations in this report, a period of statutory consultation will have to be undertaken in accordance with the Schools Standards and Organisation Act 2013 and the guidance given in the Schools Organisation Code (006/2013).
- 7.4 Following this, a further report on the results of the consultation will be submitted to the Cabinet. The Cabinet will then have to discuss the consultation and - subject to the views of the Cabinet - decide whether or not to issue a Statutory Notice to implement the proposal. If a Statutory Notice is issued, there will be a period of 28 days for any objections to be submitted. Following the objection period a report will be submitted to the Cabinet and a final decision taken. It has to be remembered that in some circumstances the final decision of the Council could be referred to the Education and Skills Minister at the Welsh Government, in accordance with the Schools Organisation Code (006/2013).
- 7.5 Subject to the decision of the Cabinet, the next steps in the process and the outline timetable are as follows:

Stages of the Journey	Outline Timetable
Cabinet Report – Permission to hold a Consultation on the Favoured Option	September 2014
Statutory Consultation Period	October/November 2014
Cabinet Report following a statutory consultation	January 2015
Publish a Statutory Notice and an opportunity for consultees to object.	February – April 2015
Final Decision by the Council’s Cabinet (it’s possible that the proposal will be referred to the Welsh Governments’ Minister for Education and Skills)	May 2015
The mater may be referred to the Welsh Government	7 months with the Government

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Therefore the recommendations are as follows:
- To undertake a process of statutory consultation in accordance with the requirements of Section 48 of the Schools Standards and Organisation Act 2013 for the closure of Ysgol Y Gader, Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau, Ysgol Brithdir, Ysgol Machreth (Llanfachreth), Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd (Rhydymain), Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy, Ysgol Llanelltyd, Ysgol Friog, Ysgol Clogau (Bontddu) and Ysgol Ganllwyd on 31 August 2017.
 - To undertake a process of statutory consultation in accordance with the requirements of Section 48 of the Schools Standards and Organisation Act 2013 on the favoured option, namely to establish a community Catchment Area All Through School for 3-16 year olds on the existing sites of Ysgol Y Gader, Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau, Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd (Rhydymain), Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy, Ysgol Llanelltyd and Ysgol Friog, on 1 September 2017.

VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Chief Executive:

“The submitted proposals are clearly the subject of very detailed work and discussions and the proposals seek to meet extremely important objectives, including the provision of quality education within a challenging financial context.”

Monitoring Officer:

“Reported is a recommendation to conduct a consultation in accordance with Section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. A number of considerations are evaluated in the report which is based on School Organisation Code 2013 guidance. The recommendation to consult recognises a favoured option as part of the process. Once the consultation has been held a report will need to come back to consider the responses received and other relevant factors in order to reach a conclusion in regards to moving forward with a specific proposal.”

Chief Finance Officer:

“The recommendations presented are based on thorough work and evidence while trying to appropriately move forward with reviewing school organisation in Y Gader catchment area, Dolgellau.

I confirm that the financial figures in the report are either true accurate costs, or a fair estimate, where appropriate. That is, reducing the number of sites by establishing a multi-site all through school would lead to annual revenue savings of at least £255,625. I note that this net saving is calculated after allocating prudent amounts of the budget to finance the multi-site factor and also transport costs (as specified in part 4.10.5 of the report).

I support the recommendations presented and congratulate the relevant members and officers for remaining resilient with this innovative project to review school organisation in a relatively sparsely populated territory. In the current unprecedented financial climate, with a possibility that the school budget will not be protected in the years to come, ensuring savings from this project will help minimise any financial cuts to Gwynedd schools.

The balance of the cost of the development is a funding priority in the asset management plan, given that school organisation in this catchment area will generate revenue savings. There is still an element of risk of missing the relevant grants schedule, therefore any unnecessary delay in moving forward should be avoided.”

Appendices

Appendix 1	Summary of Gader Schools' Data
Appendix 2	Explanation of Long List Possible Models and the Options Appraisal
Appendix 3	Factors Considered
Appendix 4	Church in Wales' Response during the Pre-consultation

Background Pack

Copies of the background pack will be sent to the Cabinet Members and will be available on the Council's website www.gwynedd.gov.uk/schoolorganisation or by contacting school.organisation@gwynedd.gov.uk.

The background pack will include:

- Full Council Report July 2011
- Cabinet Report July 2013
- Cabinet Report December 2013
- Language Impact Assessment Report
- Community Impact Assessment Report
- Equality Impact Assessment Report
- Assessment of the Need for Different Types of Schools Report
- Statistics Pack
- Agenda and Minutes of CRP 21-05-14