

## CABINET REPORT

January 13, 2015

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Gareth Thomas

**Subject:** Future of the Provision of Education in Y Gader Catchment Area

**Contact Officer:** Iwan T Jones – Corporate Director

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### The resolution required / purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to inform the Cabinet in the wake of the statutory consultation period on the proposal for the closure of the schools in Y Gader catchment area and establish one Welsh medium all-through community school on the existing sites of Y Gader, Dolgellau Primary, Ieuan Gwynedd, Dinas Mawddwy, Llanelltyd and Friog schools. The school will serve all 3-16 year old pupils within the catchment area. The Cabinet will need to discuss the observations received and decide whether to continue with the proposal or not, i.e. whether or not to publish statutory notices.

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### Views of the local members

Any observations from the Local Members will be submitted at the meeting.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Council Cabinet's decision to proceed with the proposal to re-organise education provision in Y Gader catchment in Dolgellau or not. We ask that the Cabinet:
  - i. Considers the comments received during the statutory consultation period and the responses to those comments
  - ii. Decides to continue with the proposal in its current form or not
  - iii. Approve publishing Statutory Notices should the decision be to proceed
- 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](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/trefniadaethysgolion) and [www.gwynedd.gov.uk/thecabinet](http://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. In September 2014 a report was presented to Cabinet where approval was given to the proposal to:

- i. *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.*
- ii. *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.*

1.9. 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.

1.10. 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.

1.11. 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)

1.12. The most recent CRP meeting was held on 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

1.13. Another important point is the capital investment available for the catchment. Since commencing discussions in the catchment, the Welsh Government has 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. BACKGROUND – CHOOSING A FAVOURED MODEL**

2.1 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.

2.2 Background research work was undertaken and it was discovered that the sites under consideration when creating the long list were the present sites of Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy, Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd in Rhydymain, Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau, Ysgol Y Gader, Ysgol Llanelltyd and Ysgol Friog.

2.3 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:

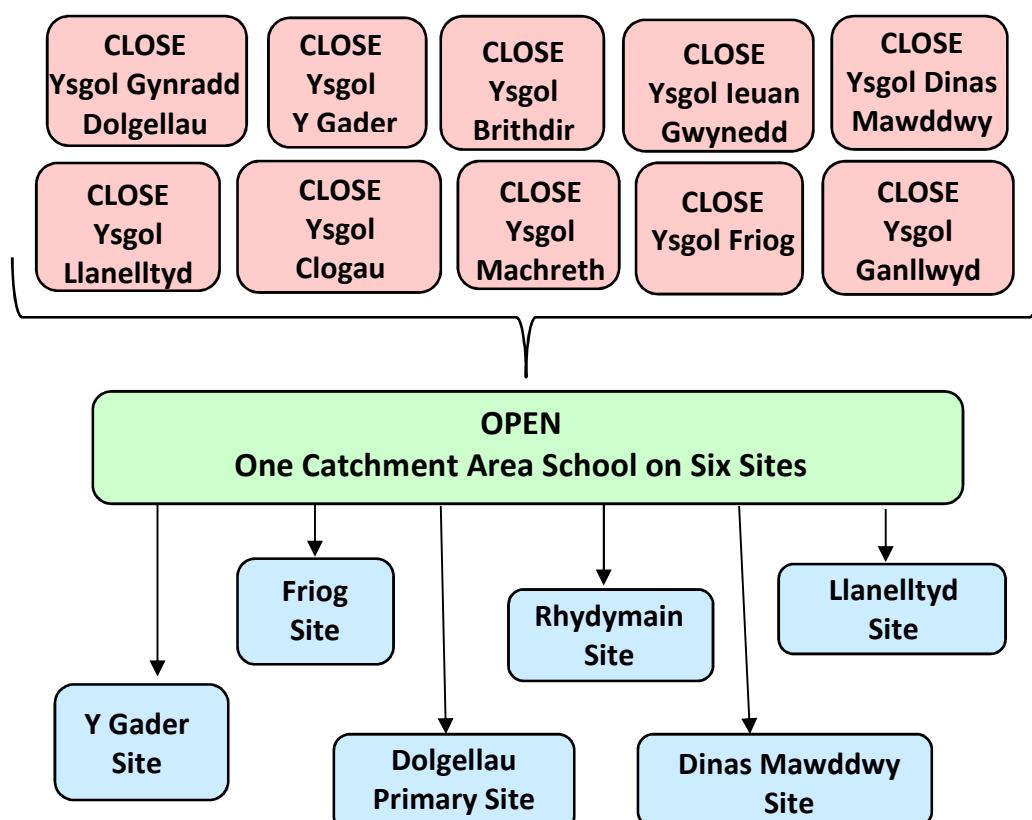
- **Model 1:** Do nothing - Continue with the '*status quo*' namely one Secondary School (Y Gader) and 9 Primary Schools. No change to the structure, location, designation, management or catchment areas of the present schools.
- **Model 2:** "*Collaboration trust*" between Ysgol Y Gader, Ysgol Gynradd 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

- 2.4 The long list of models was appraised whilst summarising the main advantages and disadvantages against specific factors. Factors in the ‘Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd’ strategy, the School Organisation Code, and the vision for Y Gader catchment along with other relevant factors were used.
- 2.5 This was reported to Cabinet in September 2014 where it was approved to undertake a period of statutory consultation on Model 8, namely to close every school in the catchment and establish a community, Welsh medium 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 the 1 September 2017.

### 3 THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This proposal would mean that ten schools will close and one catchment area school would be developed.



- 3.2 This would mean **closing 10 schools:**

- Ysgol Y Gader
- Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau
- Ysgol Clogau
- Ysgol Llanelltyd
- Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd
- Ysgol Brithdir
- Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy
- Ysgol Ganllwyd

- Ysgol Friog
  - Ysgol Machreth
- 3.3 This would mean establishing one Welsh medium, community 3-16 all-through catchment area school on multiple sites
- 3.4 The Llanelltyd, Friog, Ieuan Gwynedd (Rhydymain), Dinas Mawddwy, Gader and Dolgellau Primary school sites would remain open as sites of the new school
- 3.5 The Ganllwyd, Clogau (Bontddu), Machreth and Brithdir schools would close and their sites not re-opened
- 3.6 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.

#### **4. STATUTORY CONSULTATION PERIOD**

- 4.1 In accordance with the statutory requirements of the Schools Organisation Code (006/2013) and the Schools Standards and Organisation Act 2013, a period of statutory consultation was held on the proposal with the relevant consultees between 10 October and 13:00 pm on 24 November 2014.
- 4.2
- 4.3 A statutory consultation document (appendix 1), was prepared in accordance with the requirements and the guidance of the Schools Organisation Code (006/2013). At the start of the consultation period the document was distributed to the relevant consultees and it was ensured that hard copies were sent to the schools for the attention of the parents, governors and staff. The document and all the background package documentation are available on the Council website [www.gwynedd.gov.uk/trefniadaethysgolion](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/trefniadaethysgolion).
- 4.4 82 responses to the statutory consultation were received, including responses from pupils, staff, governors and individual parents, as well as from the following organisations:
- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brithdir Parents Group</li> <li>• Salem Church Dolgellau</li> <li>• Seren Fach Nursery</li> <li>• UCAC</li> <li>• Estyn</li> <li>• Llandrillo Menai Group</li> <li>• Staff of Ysgol Brithdir</li> <li>• Primary head Teachers of Y Gader catchment area</li> <li>• West Gwynedd Church Committee and Presbyterian Society</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff of Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd</li> <li>• Ysgol y Gader Governing Body</li> <li>• Ysgol Brithdir Governing Body</li> <li>• Ysgol Glynadd Dol gellau Governing Body</li> <li>• Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd Governing Body</li> <li>• Ysgol Friog Governing Body</li> <li>• Ysgol y Clogau Governing Body</li> </ul> |
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All the responses, having deleted personal details and responses that could not be published, in keeping with the wishes of the respondents, can be viewed in full on the Council website at [www.gwynedd.gov.uk/trefniadaethysgolion](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/trefniadaethysgolion). Further details are available in connection with the following responses:

Number of responses						
Correspondence			Children & Young People Questionnaire		Other	Total
Welsh	English	Bi-lingual	Welsh	English		
52	12	4	13	1	-	82

\*one responder noted an association with 9 schools. \*\*one responder noted an association with 7 schools. \*\*\*three responders note an association with 2 schools.

Number of Responses from Children & Young People which noted an association with a school										
Brithdir	Clogau	Cynradd Dolgellau	Dinas Mawddwy	Friog	Ganllwyd	Ieuan Gwynedd	Llanelli Tyd	Machreth	Y Gader	Un-noted
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	4

- 4.5 On 5 and 6 November 2014 an open day was held at Glan Wnion Leisure Centre. Here, all the information in the consultation document was exhibited and officers from the various relevant departments (e.g. education, property, personnel etc.) were at hand to explain and to respond to enquiries. There was also an opportunity to obtain a copy of any documentation and to present written views. Over 100 people attended the open days.



- 4.6 A consultation document which included a questionnaire was compiled for primary and secondary school pupils. It was arranged that a specialist facilitator visited all the schools to hold sessions with the pupils and to obtain their views. An analysis by the facilitator of the results of these sessions is available in Appendix 3 of this report. The report concluded:

*“What became evident from the consultation process was that children adapt to new circumstances even though they might worry about bullying, losing friends and teachers, but generally the response was positive from most of the schools”.*

<b>What do you think?</b>
<b>ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:</b>
1. Why do you think the author wrote this book? _____
2. Why do you think the author wrote this book? _____
3. Why do you think the author wrote this book? _____
<b>ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:</b>
1. Who is the main character in the story? _____
2. Who is the main character in the story? _____
3. Who is the main character in the story? _____
<b>ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:</b>
1. Who is the main character in the story? _____
2. Who is the main character in the story? _____
3. Who is the main character in the story? _____

## **5. COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE STATUTORY CONSULTATION**

5.1 The purpose of this part of the report is to present some of the main points which were manifested during the statutory consultation period. It is not possible to deal with every comment in detail in the course of this report but all comments received were analysed and responded to. All this information can be found in appendix 2 of this report.

5.1.1. In terms of **the general response during the consultation, it can be noted that there was general support for changing the education provision**, and apart from some concern regarding the fact that the all-through model has not yet been proved, there was support **in general for the model as well**.

5.1.2. In general, the responses received concentrated on the following:

- Education
- Linguistic Status/Linguistic Matters
- Staffing matters
- Legal Status Matters (Community/Church)
- Proposed development of the Rhydymain site
- Brithdir site
- Matters relating to other sites
- Consultation with children and young people
- Transport
- Governing Matters
- The Statutory Consultation Process – Current Process and the Process in 2011
- Alternative Options

### **5.2 Education**

5.2.1. A small number of responses noted that the quality of the education in small rural primary schools is much better in comparison with education in larger schools. Also mentioned was the challenges that have been encountered in the secondary school lately and it was questioned why the changes seem to be affecting the primary sector mainly.

5.2.2. It was explained in the consultation document that there are opportunities for the whole age range of pupils within the catchment area(3-16). It will moderate class sizes in most primary sites, head teachers will be released from teaching for a large proportion of their time so that the management team can concentrate on effective leadership and management, less duplication of work across the catchment area and opportunities for sharing staff expertise and resources across the sector as well as sharing good practices. In the case of small rural schools, the favoured proposal will retain four rural primary sites.

5.2.3. Some respondents stated that education should be moved forward but not by taking risks, in view of the fact that the all-through catchment area school model has not as yet been put to the test.

5.2.4. It is true that the model is an innovative one but this should not be a reason for not taking the opportunity to establish a strong educational system for the future. The all-through school model has been established in 4 schools in Wales and there is a federation in South Wales which includes one secondary school and four primary schools. The Council has held discussions in forums with the managers of these organisations and adapted the model so that it is suitable for Y Gader catchment area. The benefits and the risks associated with the model have been fully considered in the appraisal of the models and it is felt that the proposed option is the best way forward.

5.2.5. A response was obtained from Estyn which stated that the proposal is "*likely to support and possibly improve the existing standards of the educational provision*" within the catchment area. A response was also received from the Llandrillo Menai Group which stated that the proposal is "*sensible and*

*sustainable*" and which also officially supports the development. The Council appreciates the feedback and the support from these educational organisations.

### 5.3 Community

- 5.3.1. Some respondents noted that removing the school presence from the villages will have a negative impact on those communities. Some mention that the school is the heart of the community and that local residents always show their support by attending activities arranged by the school.
- 5.3.2. The Council acknowledges the fact that closure of schools in small villages will have a negative effect on the communities and maintaining community connections will be one of the matters considered when the proposed new school is established. The community impact assessment notes some alleviation measures that the Council and the proposed new school can adopt should the proposal be implemented.

### 5.4 Linguistic Matters/ Status

- 5.4.1. The proposed linguistic status of the school has been discussed by some respondents during the consultation and some stated that they would prefer the school to be bilingual rather than Welsh medium.
- 5.4.2. Linguistic status is a technical term, which has to be earmarked when a new school is established – in accordance with the Schools Organisation Code (006/2013) and the lead document from the Government , "*Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision*" (023/2007).
- 5.4.3. Linguistic status is a technical term in Gwynedd also since the language policy for the schools within the County is relevant to all schools and means that all schools are subject to the same expectations. The aim of the policy is as follows:  
*"The aim of the language policy is to ensure that all the pupils within the county have the appropriate linguistic skills in both Welsh and English. The expectation is the same for every one of the schools.....Although the general aim of the policy is bilingualism, the balance is weighed in favour of the Welsh language."*
- 5.4.4. Considering the fact that all primary schools are all Welsh medium, giving the primary sector a bilingual status would have a negative effect on the Welsh language. In accordance with the predictions for September 2017 there are more primary pupils than secondary pupils therefore in practice there will be no change in the everyday language provided for the secondary pupils since it will be necessary to provide education through the medium which serves the demographic cross section of the catchment area.
- 5.4.5. Some respondents noted that the Welsh language is at its strongest in small rural schools and that it would be a shame to weaken the language by closing schools where the language is strong.
- 5.4.6. In the context of Y Gader catchment area, an independent linguistic impact assessment was commissioned in order to assess the models. This assessment pointed out the inconsistencies within the catchment area in terms of the Welsh language, but also noted the benefits of moving ahead with the favoured model of creating a Welsh medium school for 3 – 16 year old pupils:  
*"Model 8: Catchment area All-through School on the existing site of Y Gader, Cynradd Dolgellau, Friog, and Dinas Mawddwy schools and the closure of Ganllwyd, Clogau, Machreth and Brithdir schools. One Head Teacher, one governing body. Verdict of **positive impact** which offers an opportunity to ensure consistency across the entire catchment area. Whilst it is not possible to set every model in a score position according to impact on the language, we gather that this model offers **special opportunities in terms of the planning and the provision of statutory education**, which will be **consistent and the outcome of one complete vision** rather than various directions from a number of establishments which will be inevitable, and various standpoints in terms of attaining the County's language policy with the*

*aim of creating bilingual, proficient young citizens. In a catchment area where the Welsh language is facing many basic challenges, it is indeed possible that **planning the provision according to one vision is the best method** of trying to achieve the aims of the language policy, utilising the additional staffing and teaching resources that one establishment would have for **best use across the various sites of the catchment area.***

- 5.4.7. One of the challenges of establishing the all-through catchment area school would be establishing the appropriate linguistic structure across the age sector. Responding to the challenge and implementation of the Language Policy will be the responsibility of the Head Teacher and the Governing Body, with assistance from the County. The County Language Policy will need to be implemented appropriately and in a way which will meet the challenge in the linguistic assessment.

## 5.5 Staffing Matters

- 5.5.1. Some of the responses, including staff responses, note concern over the period of uncertainty for the future if the proposal is implemented. Some pointed out the fact that staff in the catchment area have been under strain for some time, considering that discussions on reorganisation have been ongoing for some years. Some noted that insufficient information was available on the statutory consultation stage, and – noting the number of jobs which will be lost - they wished to be told what their personal situation will be. A number mentioned the importance of appointing a suitable Head Teacher as leader for the new school.
- 5.5.2. It was recognised that school reorganisation discussions did lead to uncertainty within the catchment area and that the immediate future could be uncertain and could also lead to redundancies. Since the final decision has not yet been taken (this stage is consultation only) it is not possible to give detailed information on individual situations. In terms of the numbers of jobs to be lost, it is also premature to give any figures because the staffing structure for the new school will be a discussion point for the shadow governing body. If a final decision is taken to implement the proposal, personnel officers from the Council will be at hand throughout the process to offer advice. A number of meetings have been held and support given in the last 6 months with regard to the development of an Area School for Groeslon, Carmel and Bronyfoel, and this support will be available for the staff of Y Gader catchment area schools. The Cabinet needs to be aware of the need for support from the Council personnel service, in view of the fact that the staff of 10 schools will need help if the proposal is implemented.
- 5.5.3. From the consultation process, it became evident that the appointment of a suitable individual for the role of head teacher is of core importance for the success of the model. Some respondents noted that recruiting an individual of the right calibre could be a challenge and it would have to be ensured that they are given every support on the task of leading and managing so many sites. Based on lessons learned from other counties, the head teacher should be appointed at least a year before the proposed catchment area all-through school opens. This will allow preparation time so that appointments can be made and the staffing structure established and time allowed for creating strong organisation and policies before the school opens. The Cabinet will need to consider this and to ensure that resources are committed from the savings derived in order to appoint an individual who is appropriately qualified, ensuring that this is carried out at an early stage.

## 5.6 Legal Status - Community/Church

- 5.6.1. Some responses were received in support of community status. Some noted discontent with the fact that the Church in Wales has been included in the discussions prior to the statutory consultation. (e.g. assisting in the planning of the needs assessment questionnaire on different types of schools and the pre-consultation discussions). Discontent was expressed that nonconformist denominations were not invited to be part of the initial discussions since the Catholic Church had also been invited to voice its opinion.
- 5.6.2. Bangor Diocese is a joint education provider in Y Gader catchment area since Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau and Ysgol Machreth are voluntary controlled schools (Church in Wales). This means that in the event of

school reorganisation, the Council has specific duties - in accordance with the School Organisation Code (006/2013) – and one of these duties is to arrange a period of pre-consultation discussions. The only denomination to give an input prior to the statutory consultation was the Church in Wales, in accordance with statutory requirements.

- 5.6.3. One or two of the respondents voiced discontent over the Church in Wales's presence on the governing body of the new school with no fair play for the nonconformist churches of the area as well. Since the proposal has favoured community status for the all-through catchment area school, there will be no specific seat for a representative of the Church in Wales on the shadow governing body.

## 5.7 Proposed development at Rhydymain

- 5.7.1. The fact that the Rhydymain site will be developed was very welcome and a number of further suggestions were mentioned after the proposed plan (see below) was exhibited e.g. the location of the extension. It was noted that a number had pointed out the need for the school staff members to be allowed input before the final design is approved.



- 5.7.2. Even though the extension is shown in one location on the current plans, this is only a conceptual plan showing one option only. We will continue to consider whether it will be possible to put an extension at another location (at the back perhaps) in order to have the least impact on the site. Discussions will continue over the coming months.

- 5.7.3. It is not possible to change the investment figure of £620,000 which has been earmarked for improving the Rhydymain site. It is only conceptual plans that exist at this point, should the Cabinet decide to proceed with the proposal, there will be full consultation with the Head and members of the governing body to further develop the plans.

- 5.7.4. Some voiced concerns regarding two dinner sittings, and requested further extension of the hall (suggestion of installing a glass passage which could be used as part of the hall). This would also mean that games sessions, meetings and dinner for all the pupils on the site could be held in the hall. A number had voices their wish for a higher investment than the proposed figure so that the development would reflect more closely the work carried out at Ysgol OM Edwards. Respondents who voiced objection to the Rhydymain site regarded the investment as unfair to the pupils in the east of the catchment area, considering the proposed investment in Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau and Ysgol Llanelltyd.

- 5.7.5. The school hall will be of sufficient size for holding services, physical training activities and musical activities etc. Two dinner sittings will be required if the site is at full capacity. Having two dinner sittings is not an unusual practice in Gwynedd schools. The Council has considered enlarging the hall

but in view of the budget available a higher cost than what has been allocated cannot be justified. As part of the plan, the Council will invest £620,000 in the Rhydymain site, which is a substantial sum. Under the plan, the aim of the proposed investment is to ensure that every educational site in the catchment area has a proper hall so that there will be no need for the pupils to continue to eat in their classrooms, as is the case in some schools at present.

- 5.7.6. A number also noted speed restriction on roads connecting to the Rhydymain site, some would like to see the main road (A494) restricted to 50/40/30 mph and the road through the village to 20 mph.
- 5.7.7. During the planning process and presenting planning application, in depth discussions will take place on what traffic controlling measures need to be implemented at the site and associated roads. Risk assessments will be undertaken in order to ensure that the appropriate risk alleviation measures are incorporated as part of the work.
- 5.7.8. Several of the consultees noted that it would be better to have an extension so that 4 classrooms could be accommodated on the site rather than 3, and noted that the numbers in the foundation phase would have risen above 30 pupils next September 2017 and pointed out that it is unlawful to have in excess of 30 pupils in the foundation phase.
- 5.7.9. The report in the consultation document is based on the predictions given in September 2013 by head teachers, and one possible way of arranging class sizes on the Rhydymain site was put forward. This is only an example, the table below shows three different ways by which pupil numbers could be arranged, based on the predictions received from head teachers in September 2014 .

Site	Nursery	Recept ion	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Yr6	Total	Class no	Largest class	Small est class	Classroo m average	
<b>September 2017 projections based on information received from Headteachers in September 2013</b>														
Rhydymain	8	8	7	8	9	8 4 4	12	7	67	3	23	21	22	
	23			21		23								
<b>September 2017 projections based on information received from Headteachers in September 2014 – Possibility 1</b>														
Rhydymain	8	7	6	9	8	8 4 4	13	7	66	3	24	21	22	
	21			21		24								
<b>September 2017 projections based on information received from Headteachers in September 2014 – Possibility 2</b>														
Rhydymain	am pm	4 4	7	6	9	8	8	13	7	66	3	26	16	19
	26			16		20								
<b>September 2017 projections based on information received from Headteachers in September 2014 – Possibility 3</b>														
Rhydymain	am pm	4 4	7	6	9 5 4	8	8	13	7	66	3	20	17	19
	17			20		20								

- 5.7.10. From the examples in the above table, dependent on the head teacher's decision, it is possible to create a class structure so that the key stages do not clash. A decision on class structure will be taken by the head teacher and the governing body, based on the true numbers of children and on the number of staff appointed to the site. Establishing four classes would cost much more, thus creating more surplus places and lead to the need for more staff. It is considered that three classes on this site will offer appropriate rural education provision for the number of pupils in view.
- 5.7.11. Mention was made of a number of responses voicing concern over the sustainability of the Rhydymain site in view of the present low pupil numbers, the high number of surplus places, the distance of the site, considering that it is located on the outskirts of Y Gader catchment area and the danger that the ex-catchment area pupils who attend Britdir at present will not be able to attend the site, or indeed choose to attend the site in the future.

5.7.12. Planning places in schools is difficult because the parents can choose the school for their children and some travel outside the natural catchment area. In the proposed favoured option, there is sufficient room in the Rhydymain site for the existing pupils at Brithdir, Rhydymain and Machreth schools. It is predicted that the Rhydymain site can accommodate around 70 pupils and – based on the predicted figures of September Medi 2014 – there will be 66 children present, including the ex-catchment area pupils who attend the three schools at present. With regard to the distance of the site, free transport will be offered in accordance with the transport policy, as explained in the statutory consultation document and in the transport section of this report.

## 5.8 Brithdir Site

- 5.8.1. Most of the responses to the statutory consultation from Brithdir residents want the Council to reconsider and to use the site at Ysgol Brithdir as part of the proposed model. There has been much confusion over the decision to banish the former plan (Multi-Site Area School at Brithdir and Dinas Mawddwy) and the implications of the rock formation in front of the school.
- 5.8.2. A number noted that they had understood that the main reason for not continuing with the proposal at Brithdir was the presence of rocks on the site adjacent to the school. A number of respondents were surprised to learn from the Property Department during the open days that planning problems were also a challenge. Some stated that they had contacted Snowdonia National Park and that no planning application had been submitted with regard to the proposal, therefore no application had been refused. Some respondents stated that the National Park as the Planning Authority had only received initial plans. Some respondents made a request that the Council submit a planning application based on the development of the Brithdir site.
- 5.8.3. Several open discussions took place with Planning Officers from Snowdonia National Park. Plans were presented along with a 3D model. Changes were proposed. The response was negative and they presented fair arguments to decline the planning application. Continuing with the work required in order to present a full application would have cost tens of thousands and the Cabinet decided, in light of all the factors, to discontinue with the development.
- 5.8.4. A number of respondents expressed concern regarding the equipment used for assessing the geology of the site. It became evident that some parents had visited the field to undertake their own research with a machine and that they had failed to discover the rock. It was stated by a number of respondents that more evidence and more honesty and clarity on why the Council has not continued with the development of the Brithdir site.
- 5.8.5. A private company Betts Geoenvironmental were commissioned to complete the ground works at a site near Ysgol Brithdir. It was the company's decision to use a bucket without teeth to dig the field. The reason was that the site was within a specific distance to archaeological remains. A toothed bucket is likely to destroy any archaeological remains and this is a crime. This is the equipment used by every specialised company in such a situation – the aim of the investigation is to reach the level of the rock and not to dig through it and therefore a bucket without teeth is perfectly reasonable.
- 5.8.6. The geotech report confirms that a rock was found 1 metre under ground – the term "rock" is used to describe the composition of the material under ground – it is not necessarily one solid rock. The increase in costs was a combination of more than one factor which included digging the material from the site, the cost of installing services through the material, the cost of installing drainage through the material, new requirements by the Government (including an increase in area, and the complex link between one level and another on the site (to include a lift a.s.o.).
- 5.8.7. It is not the presence of a rock which was the only reason for the Cabinet to decide to discontinue with the process. It was noted in the report presented to Cabinet in July 2013:

*"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 involved 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.*

*As a result the conclusion reached was that the original proposal will not be implemented and that another plan will have to be developed".*

- 5.8.8. The main reasons for not continuing with the previous proposal to create a multi site area school was:
- a) The significant risk of not being able to get planning permission come what may. During the design period the opinion of the planning officers became much more negative than during the consultation period and they became more concerned as time went on. We had reached a point where the chance of being successful was small if not impossible. This is therefore the main reason, a matter which money cannot overcome.
  - b) During the design period the Governments' requirements became clearer. In order to use grant money, additional expenditure was required on the nature of the construction in order to meet very high environmental requirements. Also, an additional 70m<sup>2</sup> was required than originally presumed in order to meet the expected standards to ensure grant funding.
  - c) During the design the Park insisted that the level of the new building would have to be significantly lowered (up to 3m) so as not to infringe upon the present school and the amenities of the house at the back. The present school is already 1 metre higher than the site next door and therefore it would be necessary to excavate 4 metres. The specialist survey confirmed that a rock was found 1 metre under ground. This in itself did not mean that it was impossible to achieve the development but it obviously added to the costs. The difference in levels also meant that a complex and costly link would have to be created between the old and new buildings, including a lift a.s.o.

- 5.8.9. A number of responses stated that Ysgol Brithdir is the most central site, it is convenient for parents since a number already transport their children there. It was stated that the pupil numbers at Ysgol Brithdir are high with no surplus places and it offers itself as the most viable site into the future. Some respondents mention that there is a private nursery close by in Brithdir which facilitates matters for parents and also the travelling distance to Rhydymain will be a major inconvenience. A higher number of pupils will have to travel to school and some respondents stated that parents will not carry their children from Dolgellau to Rhydymain on account of the distance. In the opinion of some respondents, this could affect the viability of the Rhydymain site into the future. A number agreed that the Brithdir site would be the viable one for the future, and a number of requests were put forward for the development of the Brithdir site to be reconsidered.

- 5.8.10. The Council acknowledges the fact that the Brithdir site indeed has its virtues, and there are a number of reasons why it was decided to include it as a site in the previous consultation (2011) - this cannot be argued against. On account of technical problems, increasing cost of developing the site and planning restrictions, the Council was forced to make the difficult decision and consider other options and sites.

## 5.9 Matters relating to other sites

- 5.9.1. A response was received which welcomed with pride the investment in the site at Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau. A request was made for consultation with the school staff as users before the final plan is developed. As has already been noted, the real design work has not yet begun, at present concepts only are being discussed. Subject to the decision by the Cabinet following this report, further design work will be undertaken. There is a wish for a full consultation with the Head Teacher and also with the Governing Body as this process evolves. The views of those who use the school and their input will be essential if the plan is to be a success.
- 5.9.2. One response voiced concern over the investment level in the Friog site, concerned that it is not sufficient to attract parents to the site and that it will lose pupils to other sites. The Friog site is in an adequate condition and there are no more expenditure requirements to its condition. There is no budget available to upgrade the site in its entirety. Some respondents stated that there are a number of construction defects in the site at Ysgol Y Gader. All the backlog maintenance required at Friog, Dinas Mawddwy and Y Gader will be spent by September 2017. Ysgol Friog has indeed received investment during Summer 2014 where improvements to the kitchen, new radiators and new windows were completed. An additional £15,000 will also be spent. A backlog maintenance of £439,000 is required at Y Gader and this will be done in due course.

## 5.10 Consultation with children and young people

- 5.10.1. One or two parents voiced their dissatisfaction that sessions were being held with pupils without their having prior notice of this. They did not understand the need for discussion with the children and believe that it is the parents' responsibility to decide whether to share information with the children or not.
- 5.10.2. In accordance with the Schools Organisation Code (006/2013) it is vital, as part of any statutory consultation to consult with children and young people who attend the schools which are the subject of the consultation. In part 1 of the statutory consultation document it states as follows: *"Arrangements will also be made to obtain the views of children and young people who attend the schools in question. A specialist facilitator will visit every school to hold specific sessions in order to enable the children to voice their opinions. There is a consultation document for children and young people on the Council website [www.gwynedd.gov.uk/trefniadaethysgolion](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/trefniadaethysgolion) as well as an appropriate response form. This means that individual children and young people who are not part of the response sessions can also respond to the consultation."* A hard copy of the statutory consultation document was distributed to every parent/guardian associated with the 10 schools and the head teachers contributed to the arrangements made for the visit by the facilitator. One or two parents decided not to allow their children to attend the sessions, and in one school members of the governing body decided to observe the session. The full report by the facilitator can be seen in appendix 3.
- 5.10.3. A number of primary questionnaires and one secondary questionnaire were received as part of the correspondence during the consultation period. Almost all the responses unanimously agreed that the most important things in a school are good friends, good teachers and good education. Some also stated that speaking Welsh on the playground is important and that opportunities for competing in games/recitation/dancing is very important.
- 5.10.4. 10 children had ticked the sad face in response to the proposal and the main concerns were travelling a long distance to a new school, being separated from their friends, new, unfriendly children, new

teachers and failure to understand the need for change since Brithdir is bigger than Ieuan Gwynedd at present and it is Brithdir - a happy rural Welsh community school – is the one being closed.

- 5.10.5. The Council appreciates the views of the children and young people of the schools and take note of the specific concerns voiced. Every effort will be made to alleviate the concerns should the proposal be implemented. E.g. arrangements for joint working so that pupils coming together from different sites can meet and get to know each other before September 2017 and making the children aware of the proposed travelling distances/times.
- 5.10.6. Two of the children had responded by ticking the happy face and stating that they were looking forward to a larger school with bigger classes and the possibility of making new friends in a new site. The Council appreciates the observations and is pleased to see the specific features which pupils are looking forward to and the matters children regard as important in a school.

## 5.11 Transport and travel

- 5.11.1. There were observations regarding the distance to travel from Dolgellau and Brithdir to Rhydymain, as some made the point that parents would not be willing to travel so far twice a day. Some respondents associated the success in numbers at Ysgol Brithdir with the Seren Fach nursery in terms of convenience, stating that the cost and time for travel to Rhydymain would be too high for them to transport their children there. Some of the respondents have asked for a guarantee of permanent transport for the pupils of the schools under closure.
- 5.11.2. Free transport will be provided in accordance with the schools transport policy which states that the County will provide free transport for pupils under the following circumstances:  
*"Primary Age Pupils – for pupils living 2 miles or further from their catchment area school, or the nearest school.*
- Secondary Age Pupils – for pupils under 16 who live 3 miles or further from their catchment area school or the nearest school."*
- 5.11.3. As stated in the statutory consultation document, the transport policy will have to be slightly adapted in order to accommodate the multi-site element in the proposed school, therefore it will have to read that the County will provide free transport for pupils under the following circumstances:  
*"Primary Age Pupils – for pupils living 2 miles or further from the **school site** in their catchment area, or the nearest school site*
- Secondary Age Pupils – for pupils under 16 who live 3 miles or further from the **school site** in their catchment area or the nearest school site."*

- 5.11.4. In addition to this, it became evident during the course of the statutory consultation that there are some pupils living in the existing catchment area of Ysgol Brithdir whose homes lie closer to Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau than to Ysgol Rhydymain. Since the Council plans places for all the pupils from Brithdir, Machreth and Ieuan Gwynedd schools in the Rhydymain site, it is recommended that specific reference be made to the old catchment areas of these schools so that the pupils from those catchment areas obtain free transport to Rhydymain (provided they live over 2 miles from the site). The catchment area in question is shown on the map to the right.



- 5.11.5. Some responses mentioned that the proposal means that: more pupils travel further to school (unfair in their opinion); higher transport costs and a negative impact on the Council's carbon footprint. The Council acknowledges the fact that more pupils will have to travel further to their education site, but no pupil will have to travel in excess of the distance stipulated in the County/National policy. In referring to the carbon footprint and transport costs, we need to consider the fact that 4 educational sites will close. This involves revenue net savings of £255,625 (after deducting transport costs), and

some of the remaining sites will be upgraded and environmentally improved. This will lead to a more effective system than the existing regime.

- 5.11.6. Some stated that planning to have children travelling from site to site on a daily basis is unacceptable. It is not intended that pupils should travel from site to site on a daily basis. Occasionally it would seem advantageous - in terms of the pupils' education – to make use of resources on other sites e.g. the older pupils in the primary sector attending science lessons in the laboratories of the secondary sector in Y Gader.

## 5.12 Governance, Entry and Finance

- 5.12.1. There was concern that all the communities would not be fairly represented on the shadow governing body. Some stated that there was insufficient information regarding the way that one governing body would work across a whole catchment area. One respondent was concerned that the proposal would do away with a substantial number of governors and leave one body, namely the secondary body, to govern education within the catchment area.
- 5.12.2. It will not be the secondary school governing body running the proposed school – a new shadow governing body will be established. The shadow governing body will be made up of existing members of the schools' governing bodies. In accordance with the guidelines, it is predicted that there will be 19 governors and the head teacher on the shadow governing body and these could come from any district within the catchment area.
- 5.12.3. One respondent stated that it was unclear in the consultation document as to what the ex-catchment area pupils who wish to attend the secondary site do to gain entry into the all-through catchment area school in Year 7. For clarity, these pupils will need to submit an application to the Authority – as is the procedure under the existing system.
- 5.12.4. Some respondents made reference to the staffing safety net and pointed out that Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd receives more protection than Ysgol Brithdir. In looking at the predictions for the various primary sites of the catchment area all-through school, some respondents foresee that 2 of the sites will still come under the staffing safety net.
- 5.12.5. The allocation for Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd equates to £10,616 per pupil. This includes a minimum staffing protection worth £45,201 and a further allocation of £29,750 for pupils with (Additional Learning Needs). When establishing an allocation formula for the All Through School we will take into consideration the need to provide a multi site allocation, in order to secure educational provision across the catchment.

## 5.13 The Statutory Consultation process – Current and the Process in 2011

- 5.13.1. The main message from the catchment area is that reorganisation has been under way for a considerable time and that residents are disappointed that the lack of action thus far has meant that discussions are still ongoing. A number referred to the statutory consultation in 2011 and how important it is for the Council to ensure that the right choice is made this time, for the benefit of the catchment area and especially for the benefit of the children. Some questioned the process of reaching decisions.
- 5.13.2. Some respondents stated that they were glad of the opportunity to voice their opinion and that the statutory consultation document had been very comprehensive.
- 5.13.3. Some were of the opinion that giving information about the Ysgol OM Edwards and Ysgol Penybrynn, Tywyn during the open days was a mistake since they considered the investment made in Y Gader catchment area was substantially less than the money spent at those schools.

5.13.4. Pictures which were part of the consultation document and associated with proposed sites of the all-through school were the only pictures shown in the open days of Ysgol OM Edwards ac Ysgol Penybrynn, Tywyn. Ysgol OM Edwards received an investment of £1 million to be upgraded. This development is very similar to the proposed work to be carried out in Llanelltyd (£1.02 million investment) and that is why it was considered of interest for the open days. Ysgol Penybrynn, Tywyn received an investment of £1.47 million to be upgraded. The primary site at Dolgellau will receive an investment of £2.7 million and the improvements in Penybrynn show the type of changes that will be introduced. That is why these matters were considered of interest for the open days..

#### 5.14 Other options

5.14.1. Very few alternative options were put forward. One respondent stated that they favoured model 3 in the long list, another respondent offered the possibility of moving all catchment area year 6 pupils to Ysgol Y Gader. The main alternative option put forward was associated with the sites selected. A number of respondents favour Brithdir as the site for the catchment area all-through school rather than the Rhydymain site.

5.14.2. The Council has undertaken considerable research work on the option of extending the Brithdir site, indeed the site was part of the previous proposal for the eastern part of Y Gader catchment area. Unfortunately, due to factors discussed in 5.7 above, it is not possible to develop on the site at Ysgol Brithdir, therefore this is no longer a viable option.

### 6. SUMMARY

6.1 It is recommended to release statutory notices on the proposal to close all schools in the Gader catchment area and establish one 3-16 Welsh Medium, community all-through catchment area school on the present sites pf Y Gader, Dolgellau Primary, Ieuan Gwynedd, Dinas Mawddwy, Llanelltyd and Friog schools.

6.2 This recommendation follows **consideration of a wide range of possible models**. These proposals were summarised into a **long list of 8 possible models**, and **these options were fully analysed** by comparing advantages and disadvantages against **specific factors**. Factors in the '*Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd*' strategy, the School Organisation Code, and the vision for Y Gader catchment along with other relevant factors were used. The factors included, but were not limited to:

- Educational Standard
- Class sizes and age ranges within classrooms
- Pupil numbers and surplus places
- Teaching Environment – Standard and suitability of buildings
- School Status / Category
- Management and Staffing
- Community
- The Welsh Language
- Impact on Equality
- Financial Resources
- Geographical Factors

This full options appraisal has already been presented to the Cabinet for consideration in September 2014.

6.3 As part of this options appraisal, the conclusions of **Community, Language and Equality impact assessments** were also used. All these assessments and all background information on this proposal are available in appendix 1 of the report on the Council's website [www.gwynedd.gov.uk/schoolorganisation](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/schoolorganisation). In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 an equality impact assessment regarding the proposals was completed. The assessment notes the current situation and notes there are policies and procedures in place which would ensure that the proposal considers and is in line with equal rights. Having weighing the relevant factors, it was concluded that the proposal positively ensures equal opportunities and that

measures are in place to ensure there are no unlawful discrimination or harassment. There are also arrangements in place to monitor and revise the situation. It is therefore considered that the conclusions of the assessment continue to be current and relevant to the recommendation.

- 6.4 A **pre-consultation with the Church in Wales was completed** and their comments, in addition to the option appraisal and the impact assessments, were considered by the Cabinet before approving the statutory consultation period on the proposal.
- 6.5 Following **consideration of all the comments** received during the **statutory consultation period**, the **Council still believes that the proposal consulted upon remains the best option for the future of education in the Gader catchment area**. An analysis of the comments received is in section 5 and appendix 2 of this report, and the responses are available in full on the Council's website [www.gwynedd.gov.uk/schoolorganisation](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/schoolorganisation).
- 6.6 The proposal continues to be the favoured option for many reasons. By establishing a 3-16 all-through catchment school, it is possible to **address a number of challenges** currently found in the Gader catchment, **create a number of different opportunities to develop on the current educational standard**, in addition to provide the flexibility in a number of ways to **create a strong and sustainable educational provision into the future**. Some of the proposal's benefits are:
  - **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.
  - Have an **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** in the catchment
  - 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.

## **7. Next Steps**

- 7.1 If the Cabinet decides to proceed with the recommendations in this report – statutory notices will need to be published in accordance with School Standards and Organisation Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code (006/2013).
- 7.2 The statutory notices will be published on a school day and there is an objection period of 28 days from when the notices are published. Anyone can object to the proposal. Notices will be published so it is possible for the Council to monitor the schools and respond to any critical situation during the transition period before the proposed implementation date of September 2017.
- 7.3 Following the objection period a report will be presented to the Cabinet for a final decision. In some instances the Council's final decision can be referred to the Welsh Government in accordance with the School Organisation Code (006/2013).
- 7.4 The Council continues to be aware of the request made by the Church in Wales during the pre-consultation period and an effort to co-schedule the projects for Y Gader and Berwyn catchments will continue.
- 7.5 Subject to the Cabinet's decision, here are the next steps of the Process along with an outline timetable:

<b>Stages of the Journey</b>	<b>Outline Timetable</b>
Cabinet Report following statutory consultation	January 2015
Publish Statutory Notices and an opportunity for consultees to object	February – April 2015
Final Decision from Council Cabinet (it is possible for the proposal to be referred to the Welsh Government Minister for Education and skills after this decision)	May 2015
The matter could be referred to Welsh Government	7 months with the Government
Building Work Commences	April 2016
Open the All Through Catchment School	1 Medi 2017

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 It is therefore recommended:
  - i. To approve the proposal to close 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 and 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.
  - ii. Approve publishing statutory notices on the above proposal (i) in accordance with Section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation Act 2013.
  - iii. Following consideration of comments received during the consultation regarding the importance of appointing a Headteacher and the need for the appointment to be made in good time, approve financing the Headteacher for the all through catchment school from the programme savings for at least a year before the school opens in September 2017.

## **VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS**

### **Chief Executive:**

"It is obvious from this report, the change under consideration here is significant and ambitious. As a result, there are a variety of different considerations relevant to the discussion, each one of which is of paramount importance for those who feel strongly about these specific elements. The Cabinet's role, in this respect, is to ensure that all the elements have been considered in setting the forward direction.

I believe the report and the recommendations within it, does this, and offers a route which gives a particular opportunity to realise the outcomes of the vision noted in section 1.6 of this report."

### **Monitoring Officer:**

"The development of this proposal has been the subject of detailed input by the Legal Service. An extensive and detailed consultation process was undertaken in accordance with the School Organisation Code 2013. The Cabinet, in coming to a decision on the proposal needs to balance the outcome of the consultation against the other relevant factors which are reported on in the report and the Appendices."

### **Chief Finance Officer:**

"My comments on the business case that was approved by the Cabinet in September 2014 remain valid. The public consultation was based on thorough work and evidence while trying to move forward appropriately with reviewing school organisation in Y Gader catchment area, and I remain satisfied 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. This net saving is calculated after allocating prudent amounts of the budget to finance the multi-site factor and also transport costs.

From a financial perspective, the main substantial change in this report when compared to the business case is the request to fund the post of the head of the catchment area all-through school for at least one year before the opening of the school in September 2017. Since this would be a one-off cost, during the period before the savings are realised, there are appropriate ways of dealing with this matter without affecting the achievement of the scheme.

I would remind the Cabinet that ensuring savings from this project will help minimise any financial cuts to Gwynedd schools in the current unprecedented financial climate, as it seems increasingly likely that the schools budget will not be protected in the years to come."

## APPENDICES

<b>Appendix 1</b>	<p>All statutory consultation documents, including the statutory consultation document, the associated background pack, consultation document and questionnaire for children &amp; young people are available on the Council website <a href="http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/schoolorganisation">www.gwynedd.gov.uk/schoolorganisation</a></p> <p>The background pack includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School Organisation Code 006/2013</li><li>• School Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013</li><li>• Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd</li><li>• Priorities Plan Reorganisation of Education Provision</li><li>• Welsh Government Ffaih in Education</li><li>• Agenda and Minutes Y Gader Catchment Review Panel Meetings</li><li>• Statistics Pack</li><li>• Language Impact Assessment Report</li><li>• Community Impact Assessment Report</li><li>• Equality Assessment</li><li>• Assessment for the need for different types of schools</li><li>• Cabinet Report and Decision Sheet – 16 July 2013</li><li>• Cabinet Report and Decision Sheet – 17 December 2013</li><li>• Cabinet Report and Decision Sheet – 16 September 2014</li></ul>
<b>Appendix 2</b>	Analysis and Council response to comments received during the statutory consultation period
<b>Appendix 3</b>	Analysis of consultation held with children and young people by specialist facilitator

## BACKGROUND PACK

The correspondence received during the statutory consultation period (some published in full, some without personal details and some not published in accordance with the wishes of the respondent) are available on the Council's website [www.gwynedd.gov.uk/schoolorganisation](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/schoolorganisation).