

**Responses to the Statutory Consultation on the Proposal to Close schools in the Gader Catchment Area and establish an All-through Welsh Medium, Community Catchment on Six Sites in September 2017**

82 Written Responses Received

Comment Code	Comments	Responses that included the comment	Gwynedd Council's Response
<b>1</b>	<b>Education</b>		
1.1	Change is inevitable if we are to ensure the best benefits for the children, families and teachers.	3	The Council appreciates these comments and agrees with them, and that is why a consensus has been reached that continuing with the existing system is no longer an option and that for this reason the Council is putting forward this proposal.
1.2	A pioneering and innovative plan needs to be adopted, at short notice, in these areas - areas which are by now, more's the pity, in a state of emergency, considering the destruction and tearing apart that is taking place with regard to the economy, society, education and culture. We can only predict that if no action is taken these problems will increase / Support the plan, and see the need to move forward as soon as possible, on the basis of the recommendations in this the consultation document / As a parent and as a member of the public, I support the proposed plan which deals with the future of education in the catchment area. As we all know, changes are needed. A number of schools in the catchment area have surplus places and others are in a desperate condition with the children being educated in buildings that are not fit for purpose / Support Model 8	4	
1.3	Dolgellau Town Council supports the proposals in the consultation document and looks forward eagerly to a time when a substantial investment will be made in the area in order to ensure that the young people in the future receive education of the very best standard.	1	The Council is pleased that Dolgellau Town Council is in support of the proposal.
1.4	Estyn is of the opinion that this proposal is likely to maintain and possibly improve the present standards of the educational provision in this area of Gwynedd.	1	The Council is of the opinion that the proposal will maintain, if not improve, the quality of education in the catchment area and is very pleased to learn that Estyn agrees with that opinion.
1.5	Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the consultation. Llandrillo Menai Group are very proud of the collaboration between the Group	1	The Council welcomes the comments and also the close working relationship that exists between itself and the Llandrillo Menai Group.

	and Gwynedd County Council in the context of education and business development arrangements. In particular, the work of the post-16 Consortium is strategically important for us. We believe that the plans in terms of establishing one school for ages 3-16 under the wing of Ysgol Y Gader in Dolgellau is sensible and sustainable. Therefore, I confirm our official support to the proposal put forward.																														
1.6	A number of children attend Ysgol Clogau because it is a quiet school and is not too full.	1	As you can see from the table below, numbers have been falling in Ysgol Clogau for a number of years, and the predictions do not show any considerable increase in numbers: <table border="1" data-bbox="1272 403 2024 576"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Number</th> <th>Year</th> <th>Predictions</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2009</td> <td>39</td> <td>2015</td> <td>27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2010</td> <td>36</td> <td>2016</td> <td>26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011</td> <td>33</td> <td>2017</td> <td>27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2012</td> <td>32</td> <td>2018</td> <td>24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2013</td> <td>25</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014</td> <td>28</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The Council acknowledges the fact that the proposal will involve a change of sites for a number of pupils and the aim is to arrange a transition period involving bridging activities which will alleviate any negative effects for the pupils.</p>	Year	Number	Year	Predictions	2009	39	2015	27	2010	36	2016	26	2011	33	2017	27	2012	32	2018	24	2013	25			2014	28		
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1.7	The closure of Ysgol Clogau would have substantial negative effect on a number of children.	1																													
1.8	Section 2.3, Page 8 – suggestion that the vision is a ‘rationalisation’ and that the education of children and young people is a secondary consideration.	1	One of the aims of the school reorganisation strategy for the County is to improve the quality of the education and the experiences provided for the children; factors such as class sizes, leadership and management, pupil numbers, quality and fitness of buildings – all of which affect the experiences of pupils - are factors taken into consideration when the options were under appraisal.																												
1.9	The advantages noted in the grid at the top of page 61 are in truth the advantages expected for good education in any school. These are not specific advantages for the type of catchment area school that is offered – there are schools throughout Wales, primary and secondary – which reach the core aims of the League of Nations on children’s rights very successfully.	1	The Council agrees that these are advantages which are taken for granted at any school and the same will be expected of the all-through catchment area school if the decision is taken to implement the proposal.																												
1.10	The consultation document states that secondary school teachers will travel to the primary sites to teach specialist subjects. Suggestion by the Council that the primary teachers in the catchment area are not specialist enough in their own fields? Many primary teachers are steeped in all curriculum subjects and they also have their specialist subjects. Is it not possible that primary teachers can offer expertise to the secondary sector too? The document strongly suggests that if staff has to be cut in the future, it will be those staff members who teach Key Stages 2 and 3 who will suffer / Why give the impression that secondary teachers are more able to provide tuition on some primary subjects? According to Estyn reports, there is no need to raise	4	Creating flexibility within the staffing structure in the catchment area is advantageous to all the staff and pupils within the catchment area. The staffing possibilities mentioned in the document do not reflect badly on the current primary or secondary school staff. These are examples of the advantages which the Council predicts:  Teachers who specialise in music can visit primary sites for specific periods to teach music. This will mean that all the primary school pupils within the catchment area will receive the same music tuition so that they will all have reached the same level when they transfer to the secondary site. It is not possible for every primary school to employ a teacher who can teach music to the level that a specialist music teacher is able to. Some primary schools buy																												

standards in the 'specialist' subjects / Whilst welcoming any collaboration, we emphasise that this is not practical, nor is it efficient use of staff time to be travelling between so many sites – this needs to be acknowledged financially and would put extra expense on the proposed school's budget./

We note that the 'pupils would benefit greatly from the new management structure and gain access to new resources and experiences.... They could also travel to other sites on some occasions for their lessons'. A fair investment would have to be made in each site for this to work successfully.

in the expertise but the above arrangement would do away with this need. Such an arrangement can release primary teachers to give their non-contact time without the need for supply teachers. It would be beneficial for the secondary sector also, since there would be less need for a music teacher to teach a second (or even a third) subject. The Council believes that such an arrangement would be beneficial on more than one level.

The Council agrees that it would be possible to utilise primary expertise in the secondary sector as well. As stated in the consultation document, it would be advantageous *"to use a combination of teaching and learning techniques in primary and secondary schools, in order to improve pupils' learning across the bridging period"*. This can involve primary teachers helping secondary teachers in the development of teaching methods for literacy and numeracy.

This can involve primary teachers giving teaching assistance in the secondary sector. The difference between primary teachers and secondary teachers is their level of expertise to teach a subject up to GCSE level. Since there is no sixth form in Y Gader, there is no need to consider teaching methods beyond GCSE level.

In the primary sector the curriculum is planned and taught either as specific subjects or as activities derived from the Literacy and Numeracy Frameworks. There is a tendency for ex-core subjects to be taught 'thematically' and with the aim of improving Literacy and Numeracy skills.

Secondary teachers teach within specific subject sessions and Literacy and Numeracy skills are given increasing attention in the ex-core subjects.

Bearing in mind the increasing shortage of specialist teachers in the secondary sector and also the reduction in pupil numbers in this sector, teachers in both sectors need to work together on pedagogy, joint planning and adapting both teaching and learning methods in order to make appropriate use of any subject expertise within the two sectors as the Lifelong School is established.

It is acknowledged that an arrangement whereby staff travel from site to site can affect their teaching time but this could be met by careful and effective timetabling which will result in travelling time being kept to a minimum. It will greatly assist in the effort to make best use of resources.

			The hope is that the model will allow the necessary flexibility to make best use of resources across the sectors.
1.11	On what grounds does the Council feel confident that model 8 is going to be successful in Y Gader catchment area? Did the majority of the governing bodies in the catchment area not refuse the proposal for a lifelong school / all-through catchment area school? This type of model does not exist anywhere at all therefore how can the Council be so certain that this will solve all problems in Y Gader catchment area? The schools in Cwm Afan have kept their identity and in that area, they closed the schools with the lowest number of pupils. There is not sufficient evidence to prove that this type of model can succeed	1	<p>The Council is not aware that any governing body in the schools in question is opposed to the model. Indeed, there has been very little negative response to the proposed model during the statutory consultation. Most of the responses express views on the choice of sites.</p> <p>The Council is aware that the model has not been established exactly as stated in the former proposal. Considerable research has been undertaken on different situations and establishments and these have been adapted in order to develop the model considered the most appropriate for Y Gader catchment area.</p>
1.12	The proposed model is new and unproven. Considering that the schools in your model are so far apart (20 miles), how can you take the risk, especially with one Head Teacher for all the sites, and considering the problems that have arisen in Ysgol Y Gader over the last two years? / If the model collapses, who will be accountable? / Developments should take place within education but not if this involves risks.	8	<p>The Council is not of the opinion that because this is an innovative model the catchment area all-through school should not be established, considering the various advantages that such a school can offer.</p> <p>The Council is not of the opinion that this option is a high risk level model, the proposal is an innovative one but different factors have been considered before a decision was reached on the favoured option.</p>
1.13	Many parents express concern regarding the standard of the education in Ysgol Y Gader and are considering moving their children to Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn following a misconception that standards are going to continue to fall. The process can strengthen this feeling among parents if it gives the impression that all pupils receive the same education. Concern that parents are considering moving their children to another primary school and then to Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn. There is no need for parents to decide that education is better in the next catchment area / During this academic year, the children at Ysgol Y Gader had hardly covered half their syllabus for GCSE / Many problems at Ysgol Y Gader during the last year – they have lost out on work. If the change does happen, yes, one head teacher will look after 6 sites – we do not need problems DURING the GCSE period / How can you risk this model, especially with one head teacher for all the sites, in view of all the problems at Ysgol y Gader over the last three years? / One of the Council's arguments is that too much of head teachers' time is spent on teaching rather than on management. How can the Council expect one Head Teacher for the whole catchment area run a multi-site school	7	<p>The Council is aware that some parents have been concerned over the standard of the education at Ysgol Y Gader recently. The education department has put measures in place to help the school on this score.</p> <p>Ysgol Y Gader is receiving additional support and help in order to develop further the leadership and management already in place and this is measured by monitoring the achievement standards of the pupils. In 2014 there is strong evidence that the co-operation between staff, governors and officers has improved matters, and the local and national results and comparisons are available to parents.</p> <p>At the moment, there is a Strategic Head Teacher working with a Temporary Acting Head Teacher and two Assistant Head Teachers in response to a specific improvement plan compiled jointly with GWE officers and monitored at regular intervals by a sub-panel of the governing body.</p> <p>The new proposed model offers an opportunity to create an innovative staffing structure. It is true that the school will have one head teacher but there will also be a senior</p>

	effectively? And both primary and secondary sectors? The Head Teacher (and it is doubtful if an individual of the right calibre can be found to run such a large school) will spend too much of his/her time travelling from one school to another. This model might work in more urban areas but not in this area / Considering the vulnerable state of Ysgol y Gader at the present time, the governing body was concerned about any uncertainty which would arise over discussions and plans regarding the all-through school. This situation needs to be maintained and supported in a constructive way.		management team working with the head teacher over the running of the school.
1.14	The standards at Ysgol y Gader have always been high and the All-through School will confirm this and develop education of exceptional standard.	1	
1.15	How is reducing the number of staff and increasing the size of classes going to improve education?	1	The proposal will ensure the appropriate staffing level and will create more classes of appropriate size with pupils of the same age. This will facilitate the teaching and the learning and will involve teaching fewer different syllabuses (curriculum). The pupils will be able to learn alongside children of their own age.
1.16	Why the emphasis on the closure of small, happy and successful schools and not on the secondary school?	1	The emphasis in the proposal is not on the closure of small schools but on the development of a sustainable, appropriate educational system for the future. In order to be able to achieve this, the number of primary sites needs to be reduced in view of the fact that there are 9 sites to serve fewer than 350 pupils; this on average means sites with approximately 40 pupils. In establishing a school with 5 primary sites the average would be around 70 pupils.
1.17	The proposer shows that there are benefits from making the proposed changes and that these outweigh the benefits of leaving things as they are. The proposal would fulfil six of the main aims stipulated in the schools reorganisation strategy.	1	These are some of the reasons why the proposed option is favoured and the Council is proud to have received comments in support of these points.
1.18	The proposer rightly notes that it illustrates in a number of sections what the benefits of the plan are in terms of improving educational opportunities for children.	1	The Council can see a number of educational advantages for all the pupils within Y Gader catchment area by establishing the proposed model.
1.19	The proposer rightly suggests that the proposal is likely to have a positive effect on improving the educational environment and provision for school pupils in the catchment area.	1	By investing £4.34 million of capital money to upgrade the sites, the Council is committed to ensure a learning environment of the highest quality. In addition to this work, the sites of Y Friog, Gader and Dinas Mawddwy are to receive accumulated maintenance funds for improvement purposes. The total post use maintenance expenditure is £491,000. This means that the Council is committed to invest £4,831,000 by September 2017 in order to ensure the best possible quality education if the Catchment Area all-through School is established.

1.20 The proposer states that the proposal could offer an opportunity to improve education across the catchment area. However, the proposal does not give examples of cases within the local authority or beyond where such arrangements have led to better provision and outcomes in the Foundation Phase or in any other key stage.

1 Different types of all-through schools already exist in Wales, see below some information about them:

Name	Location	Age group	Sites	Date opened	Number of pupils
<b>Ysgol Bro Pedr</b>	Llanbedr Pont Steffan	3-19 years	2	-	1,086
<b>Ysgol Bro Hyddgen</b>	Machynlleth	3-19 years	2	September 2014	539
<b>Ysgol Llanhari</b>	Llanhari	3-19 years	2	September 2012	491
<b>Ebwy Fawr learning Community</b>	Glyn Ebwy	3-16 years	2	September 2012	1,488

An arrangement which shares some of the virtues of the proposed model is the Federation of School in Cwm Afan Uchaf in South Wales. The federation includes one secondary school and four primary schools, and since its establishment it has seen an improvement in both the achievement and the attendance figures of pupils as seen below:

Attendance – showing an improvement:

	2012/13	2013/14
Primary	92%	94.40%
Secondary	90.45%	91.02%

Achievement in Key Stage 2 – showing an improvement:

	2012/13	2013/14
English	73%	77%
Mathematics	71%	77%
Science	77%	77%
Social/Personal	67%	77%

Achievement in Level 2 KS4 (5A\* - C) – showing an improvement:

Year	Achievement	Year	Achievement
2010	41%	2013	63%
2011	48%	2014	88.50%
2012	57%		

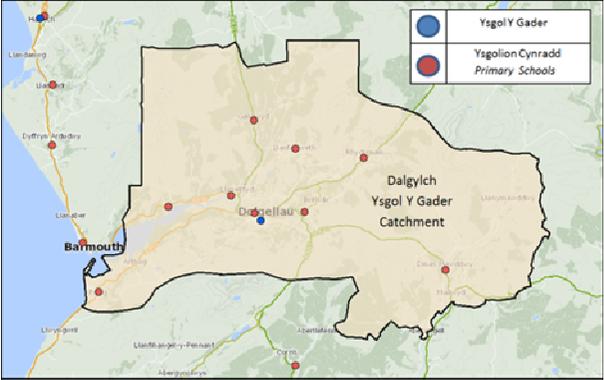
Although every school has its own unique character, every school within the federation shares the same ethos, attitudes, resources, staff and good practice. What steps were

			<p>taken by the Federation to improve progress among the pupils?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work scrutiny sessions and idea sharing were held by teachers of the four primary schools in each Key Stage. The Governors also attended the sessions in order to obtain full information.</li> <li>• Tracking of Reading, Spelling and Maths age levels during the year in order to assess the continual progress of the pupils.</li> <li>• Assessing the pupils in every school by the same method. This means that data can be compared and problems can be quickly detected and responded to.</li> <li>• Detailed assessment leads to effective work plans for every pupil.</li> <li>• Consistent and clear marking guidelines for every school – pupils understand the system and what they need to do in order to improve their work. Understand the specific targets.</li> <li>• Progression from one key stage to the next and the relevant data also transferred.</li> </ul> <p>In terms of external inspection, Estyn held an inspection at Ysgol Gynradd Cymer Afan in October 2011, shortly before the school joined the federation in 2012. At that time, the performance and improvement prospects for the school were 'Sufficient' but work was needed in order to respond to the recommendations. Estyn returned on a Monitoring Visit in January 2013 and by that time it was seen that the school had partly met the requirements. By the second monitoring visit in March 2014, the school's performance had greatly improved and it had succeeded in either fully achieving or almost achieving all of Estyn's recommendations. Estyn then decided to withdraw the school from the list of schools in need of substantial improvement.</p>
1.21	The statutory consultation document notes the possibility of ensuring flexibility across every age group so that sharing resources, staff and equipment would become a standard practice and have a positive effect on the implementation of the curriculum.	1	This is one of the main virtues of the proposed model and the Council is proud that the consultee points this out and acknowledges it as one of the advantages.
1.22	Opportunity for consistency and continuity in planning the curriculum and in methods of teaching, learning and assessment that are used across all the sites and sectors.	1	The Council acknowledges that some voluntary collaboration practices are already in place in the catchment area. Since the schools at present are separate educational establishments, with their own governing bodies, it is not easy to ensure complete consistency across all the schools. For example, one body could decide not to collaborate and this causes inconsistency across all the schools.
1.23	The document does not acknowledge the strong collaboration that already takes place within the catchment area, especially between the primary schools, and this very often on a voluntary basis. It is a matter of disappointment for our members, in the face of current developments, that they have not benefited from the money made available for other catchment areas to promote such collaboration.	1	Although the same curriculum is followed at the present time, the new proposal can ensure that the same themes are being taught at the same time so that collaboration is possible over a specific period of time. The Council acknowledges that the existing schools work within the same systems but by establishing one school under one management system
1.24	The document presumes that having one school will guarantee that the	1	

	same experiences and opportunities will be available across every site. At the moment, the schools are working on the same National Curriculum document, responding to the Literacy, Numeracy and Skills Framework and working under the guidance of one Authority and under the eagle eye of one Consortium. Is it realistic to assume that more consistency can be achieved than what already exists?		(one governing body, one head teacher and one management team) the experiences will be reconciled still further. It has to be acknowledged that at times different governing bodies and head teachers put emphasis on specific aspects and that by establishing one managerial system this will be reconciled, not only within the primary sector but within the secondary sector as well.
1.25	It would also enable small school sites to collaborate effectively and share expertise, whilst still retaining the presence of school sites in the rural communities.	1	
1.26	The proposal states that the plan would not have a negative impact on vulnerable groups, including children with Special Educational Needs – it seems that this is true. The provision for children with specific special needs is provided at two special centres at present, these are located at Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau and Ysgol Y Gader. This arrangement will continue. Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd is the catchment area primary school which at the moment has been designated to receive pupils with physical disabilities but there is no Unit at the school. The document states that the new school could receive pupils with physical disabilities / Ensure that the opportunity continues to be valid for pupils with severe and complex Additional Educational Needs – provision and resources which ensure equal opportunity for pupils with severe needs who would wish to receive rural education in south Meirionnydd (retain the existing equipment which is modern and of high standard – hoist, wet room, shower, specially designed bed, disabled toilet)	2	This is true - as part of this proposal, there is no change to the provision at Tŷ Aran and Tŷ Meirion units and Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau site will be able to accept pupils with physical disabilities.  The proposal on its own looks at special needs education provision in Meirion/Dwyfor. The objection period for the statutory notice to relocate Tŷ Aran (which is at the moment located on the Cynradd Dolgellau site) and Ysgol Hafod Lon in Y Ffor to a new site on Penrhyndeudraeth came to an end on 19 December 2014. A final decision on the proposal will be taken early in 2015.
1.27	UCAC is putting pressure on the Council to do everything possible to reach a final decision on the future of schools in Y Gader catchment area as soon as possible. UCAC accepts that maintaining the same standards is challenging at a time of reorganisation and this is seen as a 'risk'.	1	Gwynedd Council understands the desire to take the reorganisation programme forward without delay in accordance with the School Organisation Code (006/2013). The Cabinet will discuss the matter in January 2015, and decide whether to issue a statutory order or not.  It also understands the concern regarding the period during which the changes are to be implemented. In terms of maintaining standards in a time of change, every effort will be made to ensure that the standard of the education provided for the children of the catchment area will not be negatively affected during this period.
1.28	The document does not acknowledge or celebrate the high standards in the schools at present, with most of them providing education of good quality with obvious elements of excellence / Ysgol Brithdir has been an excellent school for 35 years.	2	The statutory consultation document illustrates the educational standards of the existing schools and specifically refers to the latest reports by Estyn.

1.29	<p>UCAC accepts that the transitional stage from primary to secondary is all important in the life of a child and that several national studies have recognised weaknesses in the transition process. The document suggests that there are no local plans in place for responding to this challenge. Good practice has in several contexts reduced the negative effects of moving from one school to another. In terms of educational standards and social welfare there are several similar processes at work in the Dolgellau catchment area / The emphasis on strengthening experiences for pupils during the transition stage from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 is welcomed. All-through educational provision should promote change and be of assistance to reduce the reduction in the attainment levels of a significant number of pupils when they move from the primary and into the secondary sector. It should reduce the duplicating of learning experiences between Key Stages 2 and 3. Within the same progressive structure, there should be more opportunities to ensure consistency in effective teaching and learning methods, use of assessment systems and tracking pupils' progress across the primary and secondary teaching stages and an opportunity for KS 2 and 3 teachers to collaborate much closer under more productive and supportive conditions within the same establishment.</p>	1	<p>Gwynedd Council acknowledges the importance of the transitional period from the primary to the secondary. We hope that the proposed model will make the transition an even smoother process within the catchment area.</p>
1.30	<p>The main focus of any educational reorganisation should be on the ability of the proposal to improve service for the children: their education, their relationship with others, rather than on buildings and locations. We therefore hope that one of the main aims of an area all-through school which will ensure that children in every one of the six sites will have access to educational experiences of high standard including suitable learning locations which meet the basic requirements for education in the twenty first century e.g. appropriate areas for each Key Stage, appropriate spaces for the Foundation Phase and suitable facilities for physical education.</p>	1	<p>Gwynedd Council acknowledges this important point. The main purpose of the proposal under discussion is to offer education of the best possible quality which will give the children of the County the best experiences and skills and also the confidence to develop into bilingual, successful and complete citizens. Ensuring suitable space and appropriate resources is essential within any educational context.</p> <p>By investing £4.34 million of capital money to upgrade the sites, the Council is committing to ensure a learning environment of the very best quality. As well as this work the sites at Y Friog, Gader and Dinas Mawddwy will receive maintenance accrued funding for improvements. The total maintenance post use expenditure is £491,000. This means that the Council is committing to invest £4,831,000 by September 2017 in order to ensure teaching of the best possible quality if the All-through Catchment Area School is established.</p>
1.31	<p>Talking and interaction is of key importance in child development and teaching. Social development influences the interaction patterns between children. Research in the various curricular fields including the arts, science and mathematics supports the view that joint activities</p>	1	<p>Pleased to receive these comments which summarise some of the possible advantages of establishing the proposed model.</p>

	<p>should be a central aspect of school life. Due to the very low numbers in some school years at several of the schools, these basic requirements cannot be conveyed to some children. If the favoured plan is implemented, there will be an opportunity to provide more fair play for all the children of the catchment area in terms of learning experiences, curricular opportunities, funding per pupil and access to suitable learning spaces. Creating a shared ethos and expectations for pupils, staff and parents / carers; include more flexibility in planning and applying the curriculum; providing education which is more suitable to the individual educational needs of the pupils because staff can contribute to policies and practices in every field across the age range and create suitable policies for pastoral care, consistent with the ages and understanding levels of the pupils.</p>		
1.32	<p>The predicted fall in pupil numbers in the catchment area over the next three years is frightening. It has to be accepted that the reorganisation of educational provision for ages 3-16/19 is an organisational change which is taking place in both rural and urban areas in Wales, in Britain and in Europe. Unless reorganisation moves forward very swiftly, what kind of educational provision and future is going to face our pupils in the face of dwindling numbers, the budgetary squeeze and the wider national and worldwide economic challenges?</p>	1	<p>The Council acknowledges the fact that it is necessary to move ahead with reorganisation, and that is the reason for this consultation. Continuing with the present system is no longer possible. The Council welcomes the comments in support of an all-through school.</p>
1.33	<p>It would be appreciated if the 'Lifelong' document which is being prepared by the County could be published – this would offer guidance in terms of possible options within the new organisation and suggestions for their implementation.</p>	1	<p>There is no formal 'Lifelong' document; discussions have been held on developing the lifelong/all-through concept. Discussions have been held with the Meirionnydd Local Members and professional educational input received from Head Teachers; presentations were given in seminars by Head Teachers of 3-18 establishments.</p>
1.34	<p>We are very concerned that so many rural schools in the area will close under this Model. We do not support the Model.</p>	1	<p>Accept the comment regarding opinion of the model. In terms of the number of rural primary schools facing closure, the Council would like to point out that four educational rural sites will be retained in order to protect rural education.</p>
1.35	<p>My main concern regarding the new school is that the school has been programmed to open in my son's GCSE year. How will all the change into the new system affect his education? I would like to see this matter explained more fully in the analysis.</p>	1	<p>If it is decided to move ahead with the proposal, then throughout the period of change every effort will of course be made to ensure that the quality of education will not be negatively affected.</p>

1.36	<p>The term 'catchment area' needs to be discussed, considering the number of pupils who will come from Barmouth, not on the grounds of historical definition but based on the beginning of a new era in the history of education in the area. The Body detects an inconsistency in example 3 (page 64) in view of the fact that it is one all-through school that is under discussion here.</p>	1	<p>The Council has established a specific system regarding catchment areas – this is a map of Y Gader catchment area :</p>  <p>Barmouth is not included in Y Gader catchment area.</p> <p>Regarding the transport example given of a primary pupil from Barmouth, if the pupil attended a primary school in Y Gader catchment area today, he/she would not receive free transport. This arrangement will not change.</p> <p>Of course, it is possible for ex-catchment area pupils to attend the all-through school if there is room, and subject to parents' choice.</p>
1.37	<p>Disappointed in the proposal to close Ysgol Gynradd Brithdir. It was a very happy and successful school, and although it was small in size it did not affect my education at all. In sports / physical education - we did not have a large playground in Ysgol Brithdir and yet it did not hold us back at all since we very often won netball and football competitions. Obviously we did not suffer in Ysgol Brithdir, we had every opportunity there. We were also very successful in eisteddfodau and we went through tie the national on more than one occasion. We were like one big, happy family there, and children of all ages played together. Ysgol Brithdir has definitely given me a good, strong start. So please consider again, seriously, before closing Ysgol Brithdir, this would be an enormous mistake.</p>	1	<p>The Council is pleased to learn that the education provided at Ysgol Brithdir is of high quality and that the school is a happy one with a 'family' atmosphere. The Council also understands that it is not easy to face any change.</p> <p>The aim of this proposal is to maintain and to continue with the best elements of education and the ethos in the catchment area whilst investing in resources fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century in order to offer varied experiences and develop skills and confidence in all the pupils of the catchment area.</p>
1.38	<p>The aim of having classes of between 12 and 25 in number is commendable as are the advantages of having a smaller age range in each class. It is not clear from the document to what extent the learning groups are going to be viable in the secondary sector and what</p>	1	<p>The secondary teaching structure will be decided upon by the head teacher, the governing body and the staff appointed to the all-through catchment school.</p> <p>There is an opportunity to create a new and modern staffing structure to purposefully</p>

	kind of system is predicted for Key Stages 3 and 4. There is no mention of the need to reconcile the present allowances across the schools and there are financial implications to this matter.		respond to the needs of pupils in the catchment.
1.39	Certainly, not enough attention is given to the present staffing structure in the secondary school and also the aims under the favoured structure. The need for subject expertise in the secondary sector will remain. Is the allocation and the staffing structure in the secondary sector going to guarantee sufficient leaders in the fields of science, languages, creative arts, humanities etc. to maintain the statutory curriculum in KS 3 and KS4? ? How will these curricular fields be led and how will the new school be part of any collaboration within the secondary sector in Meirionnydd? We have not been convinced by statements such as 'shouldering cross-sector responsibilities', 'reducing the use made of staff working outside their area of expertise', and 'appoint specialist staff in order to ensure consistency across every age group'.	1	
<b>2</b>	<b>Community</b>		
2.1	A number of community connections have been formed in Y Friog, how will these be recreated with the new staff?	1	Community contact will be one of the matters considered when establishing the proposed new school. The Council acknowledges the fact that closing educational establishments in villages has a negative impact on the communities but points out that alleviating methods can be used to reduce this negative impact. The community impact report notes as follows: <i>"The impact of the Models on the communities, and how far reaching the impact, depends on the alleviating measures adopted in response to the change. This is true of every one of the 8 models.</i>
2.2	Closure of Ysgol Y Clogau will have a negative impact on the village	1	<p><i>For the communities where the schools have to close, it is suggested that some alleviating measures are adopted in order to reduce this negative impact. These alleviating measures will be considered by the Council for inclusion if the decision is to implement the recommendations in the catchment area.</i></p> <p><i>In order to create an inclusive spirit and to promote ownership, it should be ensured at the start, and throughout the transition process, that the Governors of every school are an integral part of the developments and the decisions and that information is transmitted to parents on a regular basis.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Appropriate consultation with the villages and the local communities in terms of agreement on suitable use for all the building for the future.</i></li> <li><i>• Programming should be undertaken to ensure that some of the social activities</i></li> </ul>

			<p><i>arranged by the new school (concerts, coffee evenings etc.) are held in the villages where the school has been closed as well as in the villages where a school presence still exists.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The Council should ensure that the school transport plans are suitable.”</i></li> </ul> <p>If the model is implemented, the Council can give appropriate consideration to the alleviating measures noted here.</p>
2.3	Against the closure of the village school in Brithdir – the school is the heart of the community, bringing young and old people together regularly. Friendship and close environment here/ When the school holds an event, the whole community always support it and many people attend / Asking the Council to reconsider / All the village people, Welsh and English, are always willing to support any event that the school is arranging. It would be a shame to lose this connection / A school anchors children to their home area and this transplantation will alienate Brithdir from their familiar setting and create an immense loss for our district.	4	<p>The purpose of a school in any village is to provide education of the best possible quality for the pupils. Even so, it is acknowledged that any school can be an essential part of the neighbouring community and that the residents have strong feelings in terms of retaining the local school.</p> <p>What this proposal does is attempt to deal with the present situation which - as it stands - is not sustainable. The purpose of this proposal is to establish an educational system of the highest possible quality for the pupils within Y Gader catchment area and developing experiences, skills and confidence which will allow them to develop to their full potential.</p>
2.4	In the past, there have been as few as 20 pupils in Ysgol Brithdir and parents and the community raised money to keep the school open. This dedication ensured the best for the children. One year, it was the parents who painted and decorated the school because the Council refused to undertake the work.	1	The effort by the parents at Brithdir and every other village to support the education of their children is acknowledged. Education is a partnership between parents, pupils and the school. The good news is that parents will not have to do such work from now on as part of the proposal put forward.
2.5	Losing the school (Brithdir) could affect the nursery, fewer jobs and possibly a vacant building. The success of the nursery demonstrates the fact that the residents of the village of Brithdir do not want to see a vacant building in the village, and the committee is very active. Finding an alternative venture would be very difficult.	1	Seren Fach Nursery is a private nursery in the village of Brithdir. Any changes within towns and villages can affect businesses and companies in those areas- some for the better, others for the worst.
2.6	UCAC agrees that maintaining education in as many communities as possible is desirable for the benefit of the wider community and in order to reduce travelling time for pupils. The loss when a school closes cannot be measured and specific plans will be needed for those communities who are losing their local school. The suggestions for after use are too general and ambiguous.	1	Gwynedd Council is aware of the concerns expressed regarding the effect of the possible closure of schools on the communities in the catchment area of Y Gader and is awake to the challenge of alleviating those possible impacts. If this proposal is implemented, the Council is committed to work with those communities and for their benefit.
<b>3</b>	<b>Staffing Matters</b>		
3.1	Support the appointment of local staff who know the area and local families.	2	It will be possible for members of the shadow governing body, namely representatives from the catchment area, to give input into the appointment process.

3.2	<p>The statutory consultation document does not give any indication of the number of redundancies / possible relocations. Barmouth Town Council opposes the steps to make workers redundant / How many surplus jobs will there be? Causing distress and worry / Who will be left out? / Great concern that school staff are not protected / We do not feel that officers have any answers regarding the future of jobs / Everyone is very concerned about this / Could you confirm the number of staff who will be affected by the proposal? / It has been suggested by a member of the audience at a meeting in July that 70 staff will be made redundant. The report suggests “uncertainty and redundancies” and no clear way ahead.</p>	4	<p>Since consultation on the favoured option is the only matter under discussion and since the final decision has not been taken, it is very difficult to put a definite figure on the number of jobs that will be available at the new school. Also, the decision regarding the staffing structure will be in the hands of the shadow governing body. Consultants from the Human Resources department of the Council will be available to discuss with school staff throughout the catchment area at every step in the process and will update them as required. Considering that 4 educational sites will close there will be fewer jobs compared with the present figures but it is not possible to give any further details.</p>
3.3	<p>UCAC acknowledges that the Authority has responded positively to a number of concerns raised by the Union in the wake of reorganisation in other areas. We press again for an early decision on staffing matters and for assurance that staff will receive regular updates on all the latest developments and every support and assistance as they go through the process of finding jobs. Clear and consistent communication can be of great help in times of reorganisation which can cause much uncertainty and concern in terms of employment.</p>	1	<p>If the final decision was taken to implement the proposal, consultants from the Human Resources department of the Council will be available to give assistance throughout the process. During the last 6 months, several meetings have been held with school staff and assistance offered with regard to the development of Groeslon, Carmel and Bronyfoel Area School and the same assistance will be available for the staff of the schools in Y Gader catchment area. The Cabinet needs to be aware of the need for support from consultants in the Council’s Human Resources department, in view of the fact that the staff of 10 schools will need help should the proposal be implemented.</p>
3.4	<p>Brithdir has attempted to ease the process by inviting the head teacher of Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd to run Ysgol Brithdir – the County and Estyn note the success of this arrangement – is this recognised in your decision? / During the reorganisation years several head teachers have been running two schools and as a result the teachers in those schools have had to shoulder additional duties as assistant heads as well as their own class responsibilities.</p>	2	<p>The Council is pleased to see the practice of sharing a head teacher succeed in the catchment area. Indeed, leadership and management is one of the matters considered when comparing models and it is intended to develop the type of system used in Brithdir and Ieuan Gwynedd with one head teacher managing 6 sites. Such an arrangement will ensure formal collaboration in order to share expertise and resources and to plan a curriculum across the whole catchment area. It would also involve more non-contact time for the head teacher to dedicate for leadership and management purposes and there would also be more career development opportunities for staff if they were part of a larger staff team.</p>
3.5	<p>Problem in trying to recruit head teachers and teachers of high standard and with the experience to run the schools in the catchment area / The proposal clearly states the difficulties faced by the existing schools in terms of leadership and management and in terms of staff recruitment and allowing sufficient time for head teachers to fulfil their leadership roles. The proposal includes details of the expected improvement in terms of leadership time and notes a number of opportunities for developing staff within the new staffing structure, including leadership roles as pastoral and curricular leaders / And one</p>	3	<p>Recruiting head teachers is a challenge in Meirionnydd at the moment, and this could be due to sparse population and the rural element, but other factors could also be involved. The Council acknowledges that appointing a head teacher for the proposed school will be a challenge but it is taking action to meet this challenge.</p>

	could also argue that it is easier to attract a head teacher of the required calibre to a school in a more populous urban area.		
3.6	An explanation regarding the managerial procedure for the plan would be appreciated.	1	As stated in the consultation document, at the moment it is not possible to predict what the staffing structure will be. If the proposal is implemented and a new catchment area all-through school is established, then it will be necessary to establish a shadow governing body which will include representatives from every part of the catchment area. That governing body would be responsible for appointing a head teacher and then, jointly with the head teacher, establishing a staffing structure.
3.7	Without a clear staffing model it is difficult to see how realistic statements such as 'management teams of viable size' are. The new school will have around 600 pupils, fewer than several secondary schools within the County and we know how tight the financial situation is in those school. Every site will have administration requirements as well as whatever location is regarded as the headquarters / In preparing a staffing structure and specific job descriptions it is of key importance to take into consideration the responsibility placed upon the governing body to ensure that any staffing situation gives careful consideration to the workload of all the teachers at the school, including the head teacher. The school has a statutory duty to ensure an appropriate life and work balance under the requirements of the School Teachers Wages and Work Conditions document.	1	 <pre> graph TD     Head[Head] --&gt; SPL[Secondary Phase Leader]     Head --&gt; PPL[Primary Phase Leader]     SPL --&gt; LL[Learning Leader]     SPL --&gt; PL[Pastoral Leader]     SPL --&gt; HCS[Head of Core Subjects]     PPL --&gt; LSL[Literacy Site Leader]     PPL --&gt; RSL[Religious Site Leader]     PPL --&gt; DASL[Drama / Assembly Site Leader]     PPL --&gt; PSL[Prep Site Leader]     PPL --&gt; SPSL[Specialist Primary Site Leader] </pre> <p>The point raised here is a valid one. It is of key importance and statutory for every school to look after members of staff in terms of working conditions and workload, in accordance with the Teachers' Wages and Conditions Document.</p>
3.8	The fact that setting the staffing structure will be the task of the Shadow Governing Body means that the Council avoids the main challenge of establishing a school of this type. It is accepted that the final decision lies with the Body, but the Council should offer definite guidance on this since it is of key importance for the success of the school. It would be unfair to expect the Body to start work with a clean sheet.	1	The Shadow Governing Body will receive guidance from an officer from the Education Department from the time of its establishment to the time when the responsibility is transferred to the permanent body. The permanent body will have to be in place before the end of the first term following the opening of the new school (in this instance, before the end of December 2017). The Education Officer will lead every meeting of the Shadow Governing Body and clear guidance from a Senior Education Officer will be available for the Shadow Body and the new Head Teacher with the task of compiling a Staffing Structure.
3.9	The first step is to appoint a head teacher - UCAC wants to see this happening at least a year beforehand in a development as exciting as this one. We agree that the work calls for a person of special calibre in order to fulfil this challenging role and the question has to be asked whether it is possible for one person to run an All-through School over six sites. As well as leading the 3-16 year old curriculum, this person will need to manage a fairly large team of staff. From the discussions that UCAC has held with head teachers in multi-site schools, the parents, and the public in general expect the presence of the head teacher to be prominent, consistent and fairly equal on each site. Having one Governing Body will be advantageous in terms of the head teacher's	1	<p>It is agreed that the appointment of a suitable individual to the post of Head Teacher for the catchment area all-through school is essential. The post calls for a person with a definite vision, a presence for dealing with parents and other key stakeholders and the ability to win respect, to collaborate and gain credibility among staff and pupils on every school site. However, we also believe that the appointment of enthusiastic, experienced and professional staff for the 6 sites will be essential and of key importance for the success of the new school.</p> <p>In terms of workload for the Head Teacher, it will have to be ensured that the staffing structure developed will ease the day to day work and that the workload will be shared between the senior management team in order to ensure that the school is run in the most</p>

	<p>workload. But even so the requirements will be very heavy under this type of structure in terms of having to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse the Core Data Set of several different units and interpret them.</li> <li>• Provide a separate self-assessment based on that data, possibly, and without doubt when faced with an inspection</li> <li>• Create a School Development Plan which responds to the needs of each site.</li> </ul> <p>How will Estyn or the Consortia respond, I wonder, if their findings are different from site to site and is there certainty that the school will only receive one “visit” each time?</p>		<p>efficient way for the benefit of the pupils.</p> <p>Regarding the question of inspection, if the plan goes ahead the Catchment Area All-through School will be regarded as one entity for inspection purposes since there will be one set of staff, one governing body and one set of data and policies whilst the education is conducted on 6 sites.</p> <p>Based on lessons learned from experiences in 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 staffing structure and staff appointments can be dealt with and sufficient time allowed to create strong policies and procedures before the school opens. The Cabinet will need to discuss this and ensure that resources are earmarked out of the savings from the plan in order to appoint a suitably qualified individual in good time.</p>
3.10	<p>The role of the site leaders is going to be of key importance to the success of the new school. Concerned that insufficient non-contact time and financial recognition will be allocated to the site leaders. To all purposes, they will be accomplishing a major part of the present head teacher’s role and the Document acknowledges that the teaching commitment of these head teachers is a concern as things stand. Members who hold such jobs in Gwynedd – and in other authorities – feel that not enough time is set aside to accomplish all that is required of them and that there is ambiguity regarding the responsibilities of a ‘strategic’ head teacher and those of a site leader. Before appointing people to these positions, the Shadow Governing Body should be clear regarding the teaching commitment of the person appointed and will the expectations be fairly equal for every site. Staff recruitment procedure for the new school should concentrate on internal advertising across the schools due for closure. Compulsory redundancies should be avoided.</p>	1	<p>Once the Head Teacher has been appointed a Senior Officer will assist the new Head Teacher and the Shadow Governing Body to create a Staffing Structure, giving detailed consideration to the specific responsibilities of the various roles; the key roles will be those undertaken by the individuals who manage the sites from day to day.</p>
3.11	<p>In terms of work, the staff throughout the catchment area are very concerned for the future – many with permanent contracts. What measures or intentions does the Council have for protecting this workforce?</p>	1	<p>Gwynedd Council – in conjunction with the Trade Unions and the head teachers - has developed a detailed staffing policy. It would be the decision of the Shadow Governing Body whether to adopt the policy or not. It would be necessary for any redundancies that stem from the plan to conform with the relevant employment legislation and with Gwynedd’s Redundancy Plan. Transparent and open communication with staff will play a key part in implementing any proposal.</p>
3.12	<p>It was very disappointing to learn, during the consultation days, that</p>	2	<p>Unfortunately it is not possible to know what the exact situation of individual staff will be</p>

	<p>the Personnel Department could not give us any information which would alleviate our concerns over job losses until a decision had been made on the proposal. Having representatives from the Union in attendance during those two days would have been beneficial for the workforce / A pity that the Union representatives were not aware of the statutory consultation period so they were unable to act in the interest of the staff and advise them effectively.</p>		<p>until the decision has been made. Throughout the process, consultants from the Human Resources department will be at hand to explain the process and explain what help is available.</p> <p>The open days were held for anyone to attend. The consultation document was sent to union representatives and the document noted the dates of the open days.</p>
3.13	<p>The document that was circulated to pupils states that the all-through school will 'offer career opportunities for staff'. This is total irony since the aim obviously is to cut down on staff in order to save money. What opportunities does the Council have to offer staff who lose their jobs in Meirionnydd? / The Cabinet Report of 16/09/14 states (4.6.6) that there will be exciting opportunities for staff to develop their careers in a larger establishment – the school will be larger on paper only; the number of sites – and as a consequence, the number of jobs – will be greatly reduced, not to mention the number of people who will lose their livelihood. How can the Council justify this promise? They claim that there will be exciting opportunities for staff under Model 8; losing your job is not an exciting opportunity.</p>	4	<p>At the moment, a number of primary head teachers are teaching for the major part of their time and are not released for sufficient time to attend to leadership, management and planning duties. By creating a new leadership and management structure in the proposed school, it will not be necessary for the head teacher to teach for the major part of his/her time. The structure will allow site managers/leaders to be developed and to gain the necessary skills to be successful leaders, with secure support from experienced individuals ready to offer advice.</p>
3.14	<p>The statutory consultation document outlines the possible opportunities for staff to work together, discuss and share best practice, help each other and learn from each other.</p>	1	<p>The Council considers these points as some of the advantages of the proposal under discussion.</p>
3.15	<p>The Council intends to save money by reducing the number of staff, consider the size and the seriousness of the cloud that has been hanging over all staff for ten years.</p>	2	<p>The Council acknowledges the fact that the school reorganisation discussions are creating uncertainty within the catchment area and that the near future will be an uncertain period which could lead to redundancies. Since the final decision has not yet been taken (this is a consultation period only) it is not possible to give detailed information on individual cases. Regarding the number of jobs which will be lost, it is premature to quote numbers on this point as well, because the staffing structure for the new school will be a matter for the shadow governing body to discuss. If a final decision is made to implement the proposal, consultants from the Human Resources department of the Council will be at hand to give support and assistance throughout the process. Over the last 6 months, a number of meetings have been held and help given to the staff of schools associated with the development of the Area School for Groeslon, Carmel and Bronyfoel, and that help will be available for the staff at the schools in Y Gader catchment area. The Cabinet needs to be aware of the need for support from the consultation service of the Council's Human Resources department if the proposal is implemented.</p>
3.16	<p>The present situation has put extreme strain on staff, parents and governors but it has not affected the pupils' education because the staff stayed at Brithdir school despite everything – and their reward is to be made redundant without any certainty about the future under the new arrangements / We understand the need for reorganisation but we emphasise the dire need now to move on, for everyone's sake. Staff are working under considerable additional strain because of this never-ending process. Need to go the extra mile and collaborate effectively and ensure high standards. The Council needs to make sure that the plan is successful and that worthy investment is being made in order to achieve this. We feel that even though the area has been treated badly for years and that despite the cuts, the future of every</p>	2	

	child in the catchment area depends on the success of the plan.		
3.17	We understand the need for reorganisation but we emphasise the dire need now to move on for everyone's sake. Staff are working under considerable additional strain because of this never-ending process. Need to go the extra mile and collaborate effectively and ensure high standards. The Council needs to make sure that the plan is successful and that worthy investment is being made in order to achieve this. We feel that even though the area has been treated badly for years and that despite the cuts, the future of every child in the catchment area depends on the success of the plan.	1	
3.18	UCAC is concerned that there is too much ambiguity surrounding the staffing system within the multi-site school and too many presumptions. The consultation document acknowledges, such systems are still fairly unique in Wales and there are many challenges which have not yet been identified – not to mention being solved. However, the Union hopes that much more information will be available on the matters noted above within any final proposal.	1	The Council accepts the point regarding the concerns and understands that this period of change is very difficult. Once the decision has been made on an option, it will be possible to look more closely at the staffing system and information will be distributed in good time to the relevant stakeholders.  Four 3-16 (3-19) schools already exist in Wales and these could be of assistance in establishing the new staffing system.
3.19	Obviously, within a catchment area school structure there will be better opportunities for teachers to specialise in specific curricular subjects within the primary sector and spread their expertise across the primary locations. By this type of arrangement, general specialist experiences could be offered to all the pupils, an opportunity for children to receive more specialised educational experiences from an early age and as a result, raise the achievement standards among pupils. As well as this, the roles of subject co-ordinators could be developed over a period of time, which will also contribute to developing teachers' expertise and improving pupils' achievement standards. There will be obvious opportunities for ensuring that staff from the different sectors share good practice and take advantage of each other's experience and expertise. By drawing upon a wider range of expertise and experiences across the sectors the pupils' learning experiences will be developed.	1	The Council is aware that this is an important point and one of the main advantages of the proposed plan. The aim of the whole plan is to provide education of the best possible quality which will offer a wide variety of experiences and develop skills and confidence in the children and young people of the catchment area and give teachers an opportunity to spend more time to concentrate on their specialist fields, sharing good practice and learning from one another, thus adding to the value of the education imparted to the pupils.
3.20	Some parents express concern regarding the suggestion that some specialist lessons could be provided for the older pupils in the primary sector on the secondary school site. But this practice already exists to a degree since several schools use the physical education facilities at the school and leisure centres in towns some distance from the schools, and parents do not voice any objection to this practice.	1	As stated, such an arrangement is already in place and in terms of the transitional phase between KS2, KS3 and the secondary sector. The opportunity for Year 6 pupils to attend the secondary school site for some lessons and also to be part of group activities will be of great advantage to alleviate fears and create a feeling of progression.

3.21	Document acknowledges the fact that there is a risk regarding the appointment of enough qualified staff to maintain the new catchment area all-through school. In view of the difficulties with the recruitment of head teachers and other managerial problems which exist in some schools as things stand, is the education authority totally confident that it is possible to appoint a Head Teacher who will manage the new school successfully, achieve the Council's vision, and be a person teaching staff of all the key stages, pupils and parents will have complete confidence?	1	<p>The Council acknowledges that this is a risk, and once the final decision is taken, forward planning will take place in order to alleviate the risk.</p> <p>Based on the lessons learned from other counties, the head teacher should be appointed at least a year before the proposed new catchment area school opens. This will allow time for preparation so that appointments and a staffing structure can be attended to and sufficient time allowed for creating strong policies and procedures before the school opens. The Cabinet will need to consider this request which is included in the cabinet report.</p>
3.22	Not looking after the staff at the schools because the staff at Llanuwchllyn did not have to apply for their posts, this causes bad feeling between local schools, staff and parents. It is obvious that the decisions have already been taken.	1	There has been no change to the status of Ysgol OM Edwards in Llanuwchllyn; therefore the staff did not need to re-apply for their jobs. The decision on education in Y Gader catchment area has not yet been taken – the statutory consultation period has been held in order to discover the opinion of the local people on the proposal and a period of time will be allowed for people to oppose the proposal before the final decision is taken.
<b>4</b>	<b>The Welsh Language</b>		
4.1	Of the 39% of pupils attending Ysgol y Gader from outside the catchment area, 80 come from Barmouth (20% of the school's population) – Barmouth Town Council opposes the proposal to change the school from being bilingual to a being a Welsh Medium school / Page 39 – need to look at the 'true reasons' why pupils choose Ysgol Y Gader – suggests that it is because it is a bilingual school.	1	<p>Parents and pupils can choose schools for various reasons, and the reason can change over time.</p> <p>Language status is a technical term, which needs to be earmarked when creating a new school, in accordance with the School Organisation Code (006/2013) and the Governments lead document "Defining Schools according to Welsh Medium Provision" (023/2007).</p>
4.2	I would like to see a bilingual school.	2	
4.3	For the benefit of the rural community and the Welsh language, it is essential that a rural site in the Wnion Valley is sustainable. The language is at its strongest here (93% and 94% fluent). In rural schools, learners are immersed in natural Welshness and are more likely to adopt the language fully. The state of the language in the area is vulnerable – Welsh speaking locals leaving the area to find work / The geographical uniqueness of the area offers itself to a unique educational opportunity. We see our small community schools as the perfect medium for bilingualism to flourish and also suitable for providing education in rural areas on a suitable scale / It is essential that the rural site to the east of the Dolgellau area is sustainable in order to ensure the future of the Welsh language. 93% of the pupils at Ysgol Brithdir are fluent in Welsh. The language is alive on the school playground and is the natural language at work and at play. If the site at Rhydymain fails, and its present numbers, together with its position on	7	<p>Gwynedd Council's Education Language Policy (Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2014-17) is relevant to all schools in the County and means that the linguistic expectation is the same for every school. The aim of the Language policy is to ensure that – <i>"pupils possess appropriate language skills in Welsh and English. The expectation is the same for all schools...although the Policy's overall objective is bilingualism, the balance is in favour of Welsh during the early years so as to establish firm foundations for further development. At other key stages, schools are expected to plan purposefully so as they develop pupils grasp of Welsh..all the County's educational establishments are expected to reflect and strengthen the Language Policy in their administration, their social life and pastoral arrangements as well as in their curricular provision"</i>, therefore language status is a technical issue in Gwynedd.</p> <p>When considering that every primary school is a Welsh school, putting bilingual status to the primary phase would have a negative effect on the Welsh Language. In accordance with projections for September 2017 there are more primary pupils than secondary. On a</p>

	<p>the edge of the catchment area suggests that this will be the case, then the pupils will have to go to the site in the town as this will be the closest site. Only 34% of pupils in Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau are fluent in Welsh. How can the Council support a site which is not sustainable, knowing that rural education is the back bone of the Welsh language in the area? / If you proceed with the proposed Model, families who would otherwise bring their children to Brithdir to receive natural Welsh education will choose the easy option of taking them to Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau (since the Rhydymain site is much further). What will be the impact on the Welsh language? / Also, it is likely that pupil numbers, following the reorganisation, will continue to fall in Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd, and therefore at least 3 of the 4 rural primary schools (IG, Dinas Mawddwy and Friog) will have surplus places. How can the Council expect this new model to succeed on this basis and how will this be explained to the Welsh Government and the Minister for Education and Skills / Strong emphasis on the Welsh language in Ysgol Brithdir as the language of education and the social medium, this would be lost in a larger and busier environment.</p>		<p>practical level there would be no change to the language provided to secondary pupils on a daily basis as it will be necessary to provide education through the medium which responds to the demographic cross section within the catchment.</p> <p>One of the challenges of establishing the all through school would be to establish the correct language structure across the age range. Responding to the challenge and implementing the Language Policy would be in the hands of the Headteacher and the Governing Body, with help from the County. The Language Policy will need to be implemented appropriately and in a way that responds to the challenge identified in the language assessment.</p>
4.4	<p>I am concerned after hearing in a parents' meeting that there is a call for 'insisting that children speak Welsh in the playground' and 'insisting that children ask their questions to teachers in Welsh'. As a non-Welsh speaking Welsh person, I believe that this is discrimination. My child should have the freedom to be encouraged to ask questions in his/her native language and receive an answer in his/her native language. If he/she does not understand anything, he/she should have the right to ask for an explanation without having to translate for himself/herself. I want 'linguistic equality' to be considered in the same way as the Welsh language is considered.</p>	1	
4.5	<p>The meaning and significance of the term 'Welsh School' need to be defined.</p>	1	
4.6	<p>I disagree with the statistics on page 11 of the statistical pack and page 58 of the consultation document – incorrect analysis of the linguistic ability of pupils in Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau – this reflects badly on standards at the school – call for this to be corrected, the correction recorded at central level and distributed to the catchment area.</p>	1	<p>The statistical document was created using 2013/14 data. Individual meetings were held with catchment school headteachers to give them the opportunity to challenge and verify the information. Nevertheless, it seems there is a mistake in Dolgellau Primary School's linguistic data.</p> <p>For accuracy, the most recent information regarding Dolgellau Primary School's linguistic data is the January 2014 PLASC calculation. This data, along with the data of all the other</p>

primary schools in the catchment are below for information:

School	Speak Welsh fluently at home	Do not speak Welsh at home but are fluent	Speak Welsh at home but not fluent	Do not speak Welsh at home and are not fluent	Do not speak Welsh at all	Total
Brithdir	30	1	4	7	4	46
Clogau	3	0	3	9	9	24
Cynradd Dolgellau	54	37	12	26	22	151
Dinas Mawddwy	11	1	3	4	1	20
Friog	0	10	3	9	5	27
Ganllwyd	11	5	0	4	0	20
Ieuan Gwynedd	10	1	1	4	1	17
Llanelltyd	14	19	0	6	2	41
Machreth	7	5	1	0	1	14

4.7 Surprised to read the language assessment and note that table 5 (page 7) records incorrect information about Ysgol Ardudwy – the school is portrayed as a totally English school. I note that the after school club is irrelevant – certainly this is not true, there is a varied programme of after school clubs being held through the medium of Welsh. It is disgusting that the document has been distributed to councillors, other schools and the public. Who decided on the definitions for Welsh?

1 The language assessment was commissioned by an independent company, Gweriniaith. The company has noted that the data in connection with Ysgol Ardudwy was based on a language assessment undertaken in 2011. In order to complete the report Headteachers were asked to complete a questionnaire – and the Head ar Ysgol Ardudwy completed the questionnaire at the time. It appears that the information was incorrectly transferred from the 2011 assessment into the 2014 assessment. The information should read:

Gwynedd Secondary Schools	Breakfast Club	Play time	In the School buildings	By the lunch table	In the classroom	Afterschool club
Ardudwy	Irrelevant	Other – not specified	Other – not specified	Other – not specified	Welsh mostly	Welsh mostly

A correction sheet on the Council’s website, published during the early stages of the consultation period, identifies these changes in order to ensure that anyone who looked at the statutory consultation documents was aware of the change.

4.8 In the past, tendency for some Yr.6 pupils to transfer to Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn rather than to Ysgol Y Gader. A number of reasons for this e.g. standards, linguistic element (many pupils from English homes). Following work on transition and activities, a good relationship was established with Ysgol Y Gader – number of pupils who transfer to Y Gader is on the increase.

1 Parents and pupils can choose schools for various reasons, and the reason can change over time.

4.9 How can bilingualism be more successful in a much larger school? What evidence is there to support this?

1 The Council’s Language Policy states that “the objective is to ensure that all pupils in the County possess balanced bilingualism”.

			A language assessment was commissioned by an independent company, Gweriniaith and the report's conclusion regarding the proposed model was that " <b>planning the provision according to one vision is the best method</b> of trying to achieve the aims of the language policy, utilising the additional staffing and teaching resources that one establishment would have for <b>best use across the various sites of the catchment area</b> "
4.10	The expected benefits of the existing proposal will help achieve the strategic aims of Gwynedd Council and the Welsh Government of introducing sustainable bilingual educational provision. The proposal appropriately states that there is possible negative impact as well.	1	The Language Assessment has been completed completely independent from the Council and reflects the linguistic aspects for the whole catchment, be it positive or negative.
4.11	In the statutory consultation document, the proposers have included the findings of an independent linguistic impact assessment on each of the eight possible options; the background information is posted on the Council website and provides comprehensive information regarding the assessment outcomes. The independent assessment report suggests that the proposal will have a positive impact on Welsh provision in the area. The claim in the report is based on the presumption that planning the provision on the basis on one organisational vision is the best way of trying to achieve the demands of the local authority. A reasonable claim in the context of this specific proposal.	1	A language assessment is a statutory requirement when undertaking a school re-organisation process and the Council is happy that the respondent agrees with the conclusions of this independent report.
4.12	93% of the pupils at Brithdir are fluent Welsh speakers and because it is accessible from the town it is successful and full. Indeed, the linguistic score for Ysgol Brithdir is 23.	1	In accordance with the Language assessment and Language Policy there is no reason to assume that establishing a school at the Rhydymain site will have detrimental effect on the language. There is no evidence to suggest that bringing the pupils of the three schools together at one site, with that site being located further from the town, will have a negative effect on the language.
4.13	It is easy for Councillors in the vicinity of Caernarfon to feel self-satisfied because the Welsh language is so strong in your area. The linguistic impact assessment describes the linguistic health at Ysgol y Gader as "fair" and that there are 'specific elements of deterioration at work'. Rural schools are totally essential for the protection of the Welsh language. And those schools have to be a realistic choice / If you want the Welsh language to flourish the future of rural schools has to be ensured. It is only in those areas that Welsh is heard as the natural language of the playground. If the Model fails, (due to the weakness of the rural element) the effect will be permanent and will impact the future of the children and the Welsh language for generations. As Councillors, you have a responsibility to act for the benefit of the Welsh rural communities.	2	Safeguarding and sustaining the Welsh Language is a critical element of the Council's work in order to ensure that Gwynedd remains as one of the strongholds of the Welsh language. There are constant challenges facing the Language, but the Council's Welsh Language Education Policy states " <i>as well as developing pupils competence in both languages, all the County's educational establishments are expected to reflect and strengthen the Language Policy in their administration, their social life and pastoral arrangements as well as in their curricular provision....schools are expected to plan purposefully so as to develop pupils grasp of Welsh</i> ".

4.14	UCAC welcomes the finding that the favoured development could be advantageous to the Welsh language. Maintaining the Welsh language is a challenge in every part of Wales. A Head Teacher with clear vision and commitment will be needed in order to ensure the success of Welsh Education and a Welsh ethos in the new school.	1	There are constant challenges to the Welsh Language and the language assessment notes that the language is already in decline within the catchment, however developing this model could have a positive impact on the language and an opportunity to ensure consistency across the catchment.
4.15	Because promoting and protecting the Welsh language and the use made of it is one of the strategic aims of Gwynedd Council, by establishing general policies across the all-through school sites there is an opportunity to strengthen and extend good practices in the primary schools in terms of promoting and developing the skills of pupils in the Welsh language and to promote Welshness, and also to ensure stronger appropriate linguistic progression in the secondary sector, across the curriculum. Maintaining progression and linguistic continuity between Key Stages 2 and 3 is challenging and this is more likely to be achieved through a progressive structure and a strong language policy in place. Research studies (e.g. Gruffudd, 1996,2002; Gruffudd and Hallam, 1999; Hughes, 2013) show that the most obvious factors that influence the language use patterns among pupils are the linguistic background of the family and also the linguistic nature and content of the teaching class in which the pupil is placed; also that linguistic resolutions made by teachers and in classrooms impact pupils' linguistic practices (Hughes, 2013).	1	<p>The main purpose of the Language Charter is to ensure that the Welsh language, and the social use of the language by our children and young people flourishes, i.e. to get children to speak Welsh in their everyday life. But more than that is required as is stated here. Cooperation between parents has to be ensured so that the Welsh language is spoken by children in every context in order to ensure strong foundations and establish lifelong patterns.</p> <p>One of the challenges of establishing the all through school would be to establish the correct language structure across the age range. Responding to the challenge and implementing the Language Policy would be in the hands of the Headteacher and the Governing Body, with help from the County. The Language Policy will need to be implemented appropriately and in a way that responds to the challenge identified in the language assessment.</p>
4.16	The impact on rural communities, and on the Welsh language will be immense.	1	<p>According to the language assessment there is an <i>“obvious language decline”</i> currently in the catchment, even so <i>“with willpower, help, sufficient resources and local and county guidance, the catchment area can continue to arm the young people of North Meirionnydd with confident skills in both Welsh and English so that they develop to be wholesome and bilingual citizens”</i>. According to the independent assessment - <i>Model 8: Catchment Area All-through School on the existing sites of Y Gader, Dolgellau Primary, Friog, and Dinas Mawddwy schools and closure of Ganllwyd, Clogau, Machreth and Brithdir schools. One head teacher, one governing body. Conclusion of <b>positive impact</b> which <b>offers an opportunity to ensure consistency across the entire catchment area</b>. Whilst it is not possible to place every model in order according to linguistic impact, we gather that this model offers <b>special advantages in terms of planning and providing statutory education</b> which is <b>consistent and stems from one holistic vision</b> 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, <b>it</b></i></p>

			<b><i>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.</i></b>
4.17	During my time at Ysgol Brithdir, two families from two different countries came to live in the area and none of the children spoke a word of Welsh. In no time at all, they were fluent in both Welsh and English. Also, there were a number of English families with children at the school but despite this it was Welsh that was spoken in the playground at all times. This shows the strength of a small rural school in terms of the Welsh language and if the language is to be retained, small schools such as Brithdir have to be kept open.	1	Should this proposal be implemented the hope is that this strength continues and indeed improves by bringing children together at the Llanelltyd and Rhydymain sites. The Council has made a commitment to keep rural education in the catchment and by continuing with the sites in Dinas Mawddwy, Llanelltyd, Rhydymain and Friog.
<b>5</b>	<b>Status – Community or Church</b>		
5.1	The hope is that a close relationship will remain between all the religious denominations in the town and the area following the loss of formal connection with the Church.	1	The proposed status of the school is community status. All maintained schools are required to teach religious education from Foundation Phase to age 19, whether they have a religious character or not. While RE is part of the basic curriculum, it is not part of the National Curriculum and is therefore not subject to statutorily prescribed attainment targets, programmes of study or assessment arrangements. Schools without a religious character, voluntary controlled and foundation faith schools, make use of the locally agreed RE syllabus, taking advice from the SACREs to help ensure that each RE syllabus reflects the religious make-up of the local area.
5.2	Totally in favour of the recommendation that the favoured option is community / 8 out of the 10 schools are community schools and according to your own suggestion in your statements there is no strong call for the educational provision to be Church education / Wholly in favour of the recommendation in the Report, namely “in terms of category, the option favoured for consultation is community”. We believe that every denomination should have an opportunity to play an equal role within the new school organisation.	5	Following consideration of this information and other factors, the Council decided to consult on the community status as the favoured status.
5.3	Disappointed that the Church in Wales had a voice in the discussions regarding the legal category of the proposed new school – “discussions were held with representatives of the Church in Wales during the period of preparation for the questionnaire and meetings were held with every party to discuss the nature and exact questions to be included in the questionnaire” “Every party”/ - the nonconformists were not included in any discussions or consultation. This could lead to the Church in Wales having too much influence over the content of the	1	Due to the fact that the Church in Wales was a co-provider of education in the Gader catchment area, there was a requirement to include representatives from the Church in discussions regarding the development of the favoured option. When the questionnaire was created as part of the assessment of different schools, a meeting was held with an NFER independent consultant, a representative from the Church in Wales and officers from the Council.  A pre-consultation was held with the Church in Wales before the full statutory consultation

	questionnaire and the statutory consultation process.		was held, in line with the Schools Organisation Code. This was a statutory requirement.
5.4	Disappointed that the Council held a pre consultation meeting with the Bangor Diocese on a historical issue and ownership of a small piece of land namely the site of the Babies class in Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau. The Catholic Church was also invited to voice an opinion, disappointed that the nonconformist denominations were not given the opportunity to be part of the initial discussions / It is a disappointment for me, as for a number of nonconformists in the area that our opinion and input was not invited and possibly not considered – we were disregarded with such an important issue as the future of children’s education in the area at stake.	2	The statutory consultation document was published on the Council’s website, and copies were sent to core consultees and to each individual/group who had contacted the Office regarding the development in the Gader catchment area. This was the first step in the process of gaining the opinion of relevant parties. If the Cabinet decides to publish a statutory notice, everyone who received the consultation document would receive a copy of the statutory notice,
5.5	15 years ago, Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau was a community school; the status was given up in order to gain ownership of land across the road from the school. Ysgol Machreth was built during Victorian times when the education system was in the hands of the local squire who was a Church man. In the light of the weak connections with the Church in Wales, as the Cabinet reaches a decision on the constitutional structure for the governing body of the new school, it would be very unwise to allocate a seat to a representative of the Diocese without ensuring that the nonconformist churches of the area are fairly and equally represented.	4	The proposed status of the school is community status, which would mean that the education would not be co-provided.
5.6	Every denomination within the catchment area should have the same clear and equal opportunity to contribute to the spiritual, moral and religious life of the new school.	1	
5.7	Changing the educational status within the catchment area to Church would involve substantial change in the managerial resources and ownership of the sites. The Church system would be relevant to all the schools and land would have to be transferred to Church ownership – that would be foolishness.	2	It is true that if the proposed all-through catchment school were to have Church status, then all the school sites would have to be transferred to the ownership of the Church in Wales. The favoured status for the proposed all-through catchment area school would be community status.
5.8	It would be sensible to persuade the Bangor Diocese to transfer the Babies site into the ownership of Gwynedd Council.	2	It is now not possible for schools to be federalised if those schools are from different categories according to The Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014. Therefore creating a catchment federation which would continue with community and church primary education would not be an option. The status of the proposed school in this proposal is community and the Council would have to be the owners of the Dolgellau primary school infants building in order to do this.
5.9	Status is a sensitive matter in an area with a clear history of fighting for religious, social and political right. Every public meeting and governors	2	The Council makes every effort to work in a transparent, democratic and open method while consulting with all stakeholders in a timely manner.

	meeting in the area should be under neutral, independent and transparent chairmanship.		
5.10	The Presbytery stretches from the Llein Peninsula to Aberdyfi. The Committee deals with all types of matters along with the spiritual and worldly interests of members of the Welsh Presbyterian Church in the area, including the catchment area of Y Gader. The changes recommended in the Consultation Report would have far reaching effects, directly and indirectly, on members of our churches within Y Gader catchment area and beyond.	1	<p>The school which is part of this proposal would have community status which means no religious group or denomination would be a co-provider of education in the school. The school would employ staff, be owner/holder of the school's site and building, be the owner/holder of the playing fields and act as the admissions authority.</p> <p>All maintained schools are required to teach RE from Foundation Phase to age 19, whether they have a religious character or not. While RE is part of the basic curriculum, it is not part of the National Curriculum and is therefore not subject to statutorily prescribed attainment targets, programmes of study or assessment arrangements. Schools without a religious character, voluntary controlled and foundation faith schools, make use of the locally agreed RE syllabus, taking advice from the SACREs to help ensure that each RE syllabus reflects the religious make-up of the local area.</p>
5.11	We would strongly oppose any intention to favour the Church in Wales by giving Church status to the new school. In this age of equality, every faith and denomination should be given the same status and fair play in everyday life and work and no denomination should be given any advantage / We would not be happy with a Church School.	2	The proposed status of the school which is part of this proposal is Community School.
5.12	The proposal affects the designation of the schools in the catchment area. The statutory consultation document does not clearly state what impact the favoured designation will have on the new school.	1	The favoured option to be statutory consulted upon with regard to legal category was community. This would mean that the local authority would employ the members of staff, would be the owner/holder of the school site and buildings, would be the owner/holder of the playing fields and act as the admission authority. While these schools meet the legislative requirements for a daily act of worship and the delivery of statutory religious education, they may not in themselves have a distinctive religious character.
5.13	Following an assessment of the need for different categories of education it is perfectly clear that the majority of parents in the catchment area do not wish their children to attend a school which is run in partnership with the Church in Wales. Does not the opinion of the vast majority of parents in the catchment area make it clear that community status is their wish and should not the Church in Wales respect that opinion?	1	In the Assessment of Need regarding the different kind of schools in the Gader catchment area, it was the quality of education that was the most important factor for the parents of pupils within the area.
<b>6</b>	<b>Transport and Travel</b>		
6.1	Have traffic hold-ups been included in the travelling times?	1	The average distances and travel times were calculated using 3 different electronic 'Route planners'. It is considered unlikely that congestion would significantly affect the times specified and no pupil will travel further than the national policy.
6.2	It is not acceptable for children to travel back and forth from site to site	2	As part of this model, it is not expected that pupils will travel from one site to another on a

	all the time for their education. Children from the Brithdir and Cwm Hafod Oer areas would have travelled more than enough already.		daily basis. Pupils will attend one site daily and occasionally may attend a secondary site for specialist lessons. It is anticipated that it will be staff rather than pupils who will move between sites.
6.3	The roads in this area do not allow anyone to travel 9 miles in the same time as 8 miles on the motorway.	1	The Council recognises that it is important to consider travel times as well as distances – indeed, travel time has been considered as part of the options assessment.
6.4	The Council intends to pay transport costs of £45,000 in Rhydymain and £30,000 in Llanelltyd. For how long in the future will the Council pay for transport for children when Brithdir and Machreth would have been their nearest schools? And if it does not pay for transport for children in the future, how can the Council attract the expected numbers (66) to Ysgol Rhydymain in the future? / High cost of transport / Need to ensure transport for everyone within the catchment area of the site and this should continue into the future in order to ensure the viability of the Rhydymain site./ We emphasise the need for any plans to be long term. We also ask for a promise that any plans will be sustained e.g. the promise of unconditional travelling costs - not for the length of the pilot scheme only and then nothing)	6	<p>There is no set time limit on the availability of transport; transport will be offered in accordance with the transport policy, as is the case throughout the County.</p> <p>As outlined in the statutory consultation document, there will be a need to modify the transport policy slightly in order to recognise the multi-component site nature of the proposed school, therefore it will need to state that the County provides free transport for pupils under the following circumstances:</p> <p>"Primary Aged Pupils - for pupils who live 2 miles or more from their catchment area school site, or nearest school site.</p> <p>Secondary Aged Pupils - for pupils aged up to 16 who live 3 miles or more from their catchment area school site, or nearest school site."</p> <p>Transport costs are estimated to be £75,000, based on previous experience of transport costs and pupil projections in the existing schools.</p>
6.5	Statistical analysis May 2011, 6 children in the catchment area travel for more than 20 minutes to school (one way). Based on the figure of 66 pupils in Ysgol Rhydymain (approximately 14 pupils at present) – up to 50 children will have to travel further to Ysgol IG. How can the Council justify the extra travelling time to reach school and the travelling time that the pupils will have to face to attend lessons or activities beyond the school site? / Pupils from all sites can travel to use facilities in the central site in the town e.g. science lessons. Why do the pupils in the Rhydymain site have to travel miles back and forth all the time? The situation will be no better than the situation as things stand. In terms of distance, the Rhydymain site is on the furthest edge of the area– won't these children be travelling enough already to reach their section of the all-through school?	9	<p>The Council recognises that more pupils will be required to travel further to their educational site; however no pupil will travel beyond the County / National policy.</p> <p>It is not expected that pupils will travel from one site to another on a daily basis as part of the model.</p>
6.6	Are parents willing to make the journey to Rhydymain and back twice a day? Having made informal enquiries, the parents in the Brithdir/Machreth area <u>will not</u> be sending their children to Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd after all – it is too far and on the very edge of the catchment area / The location is inconvenient for parents.	8	The Council has provided sufficient places to all existing pupils attending Brithdir, Ieuan Gwynedd and Machreth Schools at the Rhydymain site. Of course, choosing a site is subject to parental choice and the decision of the governors.

6.7 Tried to convince us by sending Mr Mike Tate, head of the Cwm Afan Uchaf Federation of Schools to the open days to try and persuade us that this new model is going to succeed. The five sites within this Federation are all within 5 kilometres of each other. There are 30 kilometres between the six sites in the model under consideration for Y Gader catchment area (Dinas to Rhydymain - 19.8 Kilometres; Dinas to Friog 30.7 Kilometres. How can the two areas be compared? One is an urban area and the other rural and scattered with narrow, winding roads and two steep mountain passes / The new model has not been proven: a 6 site Model cannot be compared with a model such as the one in Rhydaman in South Wales – the establishment there has 4 sites and all the schools are within 5 miles of each other. 20 miles between the schools in Y Gader catchment area, a steep mountain pass and very narrow, winding roads. It might work in an urban area where schools are located close to each other, but not in this area / In a rural, scattered area such as Y Gader catchment area, it will be impossible to implement – there is almost 20 miles between some sites / The schools in your model are so far apart (20 miles), – how can this be ventured? The similar school mentioned to us did not have sites so far apart. It is not fair to try and compare the two models. The education of 3 – 16 year old pupils in the area depends on the success of this model / Parents will not send their children to Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd. Will parents spend up to 20+ minutes each way every day to carry their children to and from Ysgol IG in the future? If the favoured option is chosen, many of the Ysgol Brithdir parents (at least), and from informal enquiries, other parents outside the Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd catchment area (e.g. from Machreth / Brithdir schools), although reluctant to do so, will either send their children to other schools straight away and / or choose not to send their children to the school in years to come. If Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd fails, and everything points that way, your new model will collapse and who will be accountable? The councillors and officers will possibly have left their posts in 5-10 years, but the impact will remain permanently on the future of our children for generations to come / No investment has been made to find out how many children will be going to Rhydymain, nor how many will attend that school in the future.

10 The Upper Afan Valley Federation of Schools is a formal federation of four primary schools and one secondary school. The Head of the school is Mike Tate and he was invited to the statutory consultation open days in Dolgellau on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of November in order to share his experiences. Of course, a model that works in one area is not necessarily going to work in another area; however it is possible to share experiences and good practice and apply those elements to areas within Gwynedd.

Cymer Afan Comprehensive School and Cymer Afan Primary School are located in the village of Cymer. The village has a population of around 2,883. Pen Afan Primary School is located in the village of Blaengwynfi which has a population of about 1,495. Glynorrwg Primary School is situated in the village of Glynorrwg which has a population of around 5,544, and Croeserw Primary School is located in the village of Croeserw which has a population of around 1,380.

Distance between each primary school and the secondary school

From:	Primary School	Kilometres	Miles
Ysgol Gyfun Cymer Afan (the secondary school)	Penafan, Blaengwynfi	4.5 kilometre	2.8 miles
	Croeserw	1.9 kilometre	1.2 miles
	Glynorrwg	4.2 kilometre	2.6 miles
	Cymer Afan, Cymer	0.3 kilometre	0.2 miles

Pupil numbers in the schools in 2014/5

School	Pupil Numbers
Ysgol Gynradd Penafan, Blaengwynfi	104
Ysgol Gynradd Croeserw	149
Ysgol Gynradd Glynorrwg	95 (3-11 years) 12 (2 yrs. - Dechrau'n Deg)
Ysgol Gynradd Cymer Afan, Cymer	70
Ysgol Gyfun Cymer Afan, Cymer	244

The Gader catchment area is rural and geographically widespread and therefore it is essential to consider transport and travel times. In some cases, although the distances are short, the condition and the nature of the roads means that the journey can take longer than expected.

In terms of distance travelled, the Council anticipates that pupils who attend Ysgol

			Ganllwyd and Ysgol Clogau would be able to travel to the Llanelltyd site and pupils who attend Ysgol Brithdir and Ysgol Machreth would be able to travel to the Rhydymain site. The Authority will manage access to the school and governors will decide on access to specific sites. To ensure that the implementation of the proposal does not go beyond the policy travel time (no more than 45 minutes one way), the travel times were calculated through using the farthest places in the area when estimating the travel time (see maps on page 53 in the Statutory Consultation Document for schools in the Gader area).
6.8	It seems that the proposal satisfies the aims of the Council and works well in terms of meeting the needs of a very rural area where long travelling distances can arise.	1	The Council has considered the distances and travel times as part of the options appraisal to ensure that the preferred option meets the needs of a rural catchment.
6.9	The proposers has included details of the existing travelling distances for primary school pupils in the catchment area. None of the pupils travel further than the recommended time stipulated by the government, namely 45 minutes. The information provided suggests that, although changes will affect the travelling arrangements for pupils and that some will have to travel further to school, these distances are not substantial and are within the guidelines.	1	This is true. However, it is not expected that any pupil will travel further to school than is recommended in the National Guidelines.
6.10	Does Gwynedd Council not have a policy to encourage staff/councillors to save energy? Cycle to work? Sending the above number of children on a longer journey on account of reorganisation is totally contrary to the energy saving policy. Isn't the aim to reduce the carbon footprint, not to add to it?	4	Regarding the carbon footprint, consideration should be given that, as 4 educational sites will close, this will result in fewer sites to heat etc. The Council always encourages car sharing to work and some staff will be able to do this if the model is implemented.
6.11	It is essential that the choice of Welsh, rural education is available to everyone, but Model 8 limits the choice on account of travelling cost and time.	2	The Council does not agree with this point. The Welsh language, and time / distance travelled by pupils were factors considered during the options appraisal. Four rural primary sites will remain in the area and therefore pupils will be able to receive a Welsh rural education.
6.12	I believe that transport is going to be a major issue and personally I would not wish to see my four year old child travelling on a bus service every day with my 12 year old child. Children's language and behaviour is disgusting, they do not use the seatbelts, they stand and walk around the bus. A wild and dangerous rush to get on the bus in Dolgellau, but I understand that this is a different matter.	1	It is not the intention to have pupils of primary school age (4-11) and secondary (11-16) travelling on the same bus together. It is expected that children and young people will behave appropriately when using school transport, more information is available in the statutory guidance on the travel behaviour code (December 2009), Welsh Government.
6.13	Many more children (84%) live closer to Ysgol Brithdir than to Ysgol Rhydymain – much less travelling for the children and a reduction in the carbon footprint - which should be an important factor.	1	The Council recognises that more children live closer to the Brithdir site, indeed, this was part of the reason why the Brithdir site was put forward as part of the previous proposal. Unfortunately, developing the Ysgol Brithdir site is no longer an option.
<b>7</b>	<b>Rhydymain Site</b>		
7.1	I am happy that Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd, Rhydymain is being developed /	19	The Council welcomes comments on the design and development of the Rhydymain site.

	<p>Wholeheartedly welcome the decision to choose Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd site as one of the sites for the new school / Need to ensure a fair investment in order to get a building of similar standard to the other sites (e.g. Llanelltyd and Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau, OM Edwards, Craig y Deryn, Penybryn, Groeslon) / If Rhydymain does not receive a fair investment and is not given the proper resources, how can it be ensured that the site will attract children and be sustainable? Pupil numbers is the most important factor for maintaining a school. It is vital that the rural area in the eastern part of the Dolgellau catchment area is sustainable. If the site is not sustainable, will Rhydymain close and the option of rural education be denied for the parents of the eastern part of the catchment area? / Does the Council have evidence of the number of parents who will send their children to the Rhydymain site? The Rhydymain site has 60% surplus places at the moment and this number will rise to 71% by 2017, and if the Council cannot attract children from outside the catchment area on account of distances in the future, will the site be sustainable? If Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd fails, and it seems that this will be the case, your new model will crash and who will be accountable? The damage will be permanent and will affect the future of our children and the community for generations to come / Regarding the schools at Llanfachreth, Brithdir and Ieuan Gwynedd, only one of them obviously is in a condition to merit further investment, namely Ieuan Gwynedd.</p>		<p>At this point, conceptual plans exist, and following the Cabinet's decision there will be a full consultation with the Head teacher and members of the Governing Body on any further designs.</p> <p>The investment figure of £620,000 earmarked for improving the Rhydymain site will not change.</p> <p>The Council is committed to keeping rural education as an option and does so by including the Rhydymain site as part of the favoured model. This provides an option of rural education to the East of the catchment. The sustainability of the Rhydymain site will be more viable following this investment. The message received during discussions is that there is a need to continue rural education provision. If there is local desire to keep rural education, the hope is that parents will support the Rhydymain educational site. By bringing the local area's (Machreth, Brithdir and Rhydymain) children together on one site, it is hoped that the school will thrive. If parents from the town continue to choose rural education for their children, despite the distance, this will contribute further towards the sites' sustainability.</p>
7.2	<p>The speed restriction on the main road in the Rhydymain vicinity should be lowered to 50 miles per hour / If the plans materialise, the speed restriction on the A494 needs to be lowered to 40 or 30 miles per hour and the road to the village restricted to 20 m.p.h.</p>	3	<p>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.</p>
7.3	<p>The extension to the Rhydymain site should be on the Llanuwchllyn side of the site. If it is planning matters that are preventing the extension from being located on the Llanuwchllyn side, the Snowdonia National Park should be challenged.</p>	1	<p>Even though the extension is shown in one location on the current plans, this is only a conceptual design 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.</p>
7.4	<p>The internal design of the Rhydymain site needs to be completely revamped so that there is no disturbance for classes, and an easier and cheaper way of extending the hall, bearing in mind the need for wheelchair access / It would be better to leave the car park for the time being and use the money to build an external corridor from the hall to the Foundation Phase rooms so that children do not have to walk</p>	7	<p>The exact design of the Rhydymain site (interior and exterior) will be confirmed following further discussions and in-depth designing. The way in which the earmarked funding is spent is dependent on the final design, following input from the relevant users.</p>

	through other classes to reach the hall.		
7.5	The staff room on the Rhydymain plan is inconveniently situated – too far from the office and the main entrance / Placing the staff room at the far end of the building is impractical. The front of the school could be extended and a room built beside the office.	3	This discussion can be re-opened after the Cabinet’s decision in order to receive input from the users before forming the final design. However, the funding available is limited.
7.6	The number of classes recommended for the Rhydymain site needs to be given careful consideration. If the provision is to be improved it needs to be ensured that there are 4 classrooms in the school. It is neither sensible nor practical to combine a class from the foundation phase with KS2, and is it not against the law to have more than 30 in a class? The fact that this happens in other schools does not mean that this is proper or fair practice. The child’s education should be the priority.	10	The number of classrooms will be decided in accordance with the schools financial allocation, which is based on the schools numbers. The projected pupil number warrant a budget for 3 classrooms. The Head teacher and Governing Body will decide on the exact form of the classrooms.
7.7	Need to extend and improve the hall resource so that every activity can be held there (e.g. serve dinner for the whole school, physical education activities, morning service, concerts). I feel that if the plan is implemented it would be better to invest the money reserved for the MUGA (since there is a field suitable for games on the site at present) to further extend the hall so that all the children can eat their dinner together.	7	The school hall will be of sufficient size for holding services, physical education 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 is considering enlarging the hall but in view of the budget available, a higher cost than what has been allocated (£620,000), cannot be justified. The way in which the allocated budget is spent is dependent on the final design, following input from all relevant individuals.
7.8	The store room on the yard, where equipment is kept, is old – need to look at it.	1	We will be looking into this when designing the work – a storage room is included in the conceptual plan.
7.9	Why the need for expensive astro turf? Would a grassed field not be sufficient? / Expense on the playground in Rhydymain is a mad waste / In this tight budgetary situation that we find ourselves in, it would be a total waste of money to create a multi-purpose field to replace the existing field / No need for a ‘multi-use’ playground – unnecessary expense. The school has a fine playing field and a good, spacious playground.	4	Agree that we would need to look at this again. It is not a necessity to provide this and if the consultation identifies that a grass field is favoured then we will respond to this.
7.10	We hope that representatives from the school governors, together with representatives from the new school’s catchment area will collaborate with the Council in the preparation of the final plan.	1	The opinion and input of those who use the school is essential if we are to have a successful design.
7.11	From the plans for the Rhydymain site, it seems that very few improvements will be made. The intention is to build one classroom and toilets, one cloakroom, a room for the staff and an external store room.	2	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 appropriate resources for providing education; the addition to the current building achieves this.
7.12	The Council is not willing to offer anything better than what we have	1	The Investment in Rhydymain will ensure that children in the area receive their education

	already in Ysgol Brithdir. The proposed site at Rhydymain does not compensate for the mistakes the Council has made in the past when dealing with Brithdir.		in an educational establishment suitable for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century and will ensure that pupils do not have to eat their dinner in the classroom.																																																																																																																																																																		
7.13	If Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd fails, and everything points to this happening, your new model will crash and who will be accountable? The damage will be permanent and will affect the future of our children and of our community for generations to come / The fear is that Ysgol Rhydymain, if developed further, will be a failure, since there will be too few children attending on account of the distance. What then? After wasted expense, the site will close and parents will have no choice but to take their children to school in the town. Have you any evidence of research to show how many parents will take their children to Rhydymain? / There is no purpose having a school for the future on a site with low pupil numbers, and the numbers unlikely to rise. "No children, no school". Pupil numbers is the most important thing if a school is to survive.	4	Planning for spaces in schools is always difficult due to the fact that parents can choose schools for their children and travel outside their natural catchment area if they so wish. If research work had been done, this would only have been a 'snapshot' at the time because parents' reasons for deciding on schools can change in a short period of time for a variety of reasons. In the proposed favoured option, there is plenty of space on the Rhydymain site for current Brithdir, Rhydymain and Machreth pupils but parents are welcome to enquire about admission to other specific sites. It is foreseen that by investing and upgrading the Rhydymain site to receive pupils currently attending three schools it will make the site sustainable into the future.																																																																																																																																																																		
7.14	A purpose built removable partition in the new classroom for the Foundation Phase (as in Ysgol O M Edwards) in order to ensure that the class can be split if numbers rise above 30 (unlawful to have more than 30 in a Foundation Phase class) and to ensure an opportunity to split the nursery/reception and ensure fairness and the best opportunity possible to maintain the high standards.	1	<p>The findings in the statutory document were based on projections created by head teachers in September 2013, and one possible arrangement for the class sizes on the Rhydymain site was proposed. This is just an example, the table below shows three different ways pupil numbers can be arranged based on projections provided by the head teachers in September 2014:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1106 911 2175 1417"> <thead> <tr> <th>Site</th> <th>Nursery</th> <th>Reception</th> <th>Yr1</th> <th>Yr2</th> <th>Yr3</th> <th>Yr4</th> <th>Yr5</th> <th>Yr6</th> <th>Total</th> <th>Class no</th> <th>Largest class</th> <th>Smallest class</th> <th>Classroom average</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td colspan="14" style="text-align: center;"><b>September 2017 projections based on information received from Headteachers in September 2013</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Rhydymain</td> <td>8</td> <td>8</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> <td>9</td> <td colspan="2">8</td> <td>12</td> <td>7</td> <td rowspan="2">67</td> <td rowspan="2">3</td> <td rowspan="2">23</td> <td rowspan="2">21</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">28</td> <td colspan="3">21</td> <td colspan="2">23</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="14" style="text-align: center;"><b>September 2017 projections based on information received from Headteachers in September 2014 – Possibility 1</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Rhydymain</td> <td>8</td> <td>7</td> <td>6</td> <td>9</td> <td>8</td> <td colspan="2">8</td> <td>13</td> <td>7</td> <td rowspan="2">66</td> <td rowspan="2">3</td> <td rowspan="2">24</td> <td rowspan="2">21</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">21</td> <td colspan="3">21</td> <td colspan="2">24</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="14" style="text-align: center;"><b>September 2017 projections based on information received from Headteachers in September 2014 – Possibility 2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Rhydymain</td> <td>am</td> <td>4</td> <td rowspan="2">7</td> <td rowspan="2">6</td> <td rowspan="2">9</td> <td rowspan="2">8</td> <td rowspan="2">8</td> <td rowspan="2">13</td> <td rowspan="2">7</td> <td rowspan="2">66</td> <td rowspan="2">3</td> <td rowspan="2">26</td> <td rowspan="2">16</td> <td rowspan="2">19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>pm</td> <td>4</td> <td colspan="2">26</td> <td colspan="2">16</td> <td colspan="2">20</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="14" style="text-align: center;"><b>September 2017 projections based on information received from Headteachers in September 2014 – Possibility 3</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Rhydymain</td> <td>am</td> <td>4</td> <td rowspan="2">7</td> <td rowspan="2">6</td> <td colspan="2">9</td> <td rowspan="2">8</td> <td rowspan="2">8</td> <td rowspan="2">13</td> <td rowspan="2">7</td> <td rowspan="2">66</td> <td rowspan="2">3</td> <td rowspan="2">20</td> <td rowspan="2">17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>pm</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td>4</td> <td colspan="2">20</td> <td colspan="2">20</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Site	Nursery	Reception	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Yr6	Total	Class no	Largest class	Smallest class	Classroom average	<b>September 2017 projections based on information received from Headteachers in September 2013</b>														Rhydymain	8	8	7	8	9	8		12	7	67	3	23	21	28		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		13	7	66	3	24	21	21		21			24				<b>September 2017 projections based on information received from Headteachers in September 2014 – Possibility 2</b>														Rhydymain	am	4	7	6	9	8	8	13	7	66	3	26	16	19	pm	4	26		16		20		<b>September 2017 projections based on information received from Headteachers in September 2014 – Possibility 3</b>														Rhydymain	am	4	7	6	9		8	8	13	7	66	3	20	17	pm	4	5	4	20		20	
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			From the examples in the above table, dependant on the head teacher's decision, it is possible to create a class structure so that the key stages do not clash. The decision on class structure will be taken by the Head Teacher and Governing Body based on the true numbers of children and on the number of staff appointed to the site.
7.15	Need to upgrade the school's heating system, reduce the cost of heating, avoid unnecessary waste of energy, better control over the heating system which is in need of constant attention during the winter months (additional maintenance costs at present due to constant problems with the heating system)	1	We will look at this during the design process.
7.16	There is no need for great expense on a car park. Lowering the pavement on the piece of land opposite the school would allow easy parking. The greatest expense needs to be made on the building and on the resources inside – in order to ensure that those who should be attending the site do so.	1	Agree that spending on resources for the children should be prioritised. However, health and safety should also be addressed, especially the parking arrangements and the traffic near the site.
<b>8.</b>	<b>Brithdir Site</b>		
8.1	We would like to see an extension built on to Ysgol Brithdir/ We are now asking for an extension, not a new school. The parents and the community of Ysgol Brithdir own excavation and groundwork companies, civil engineers who are used to dealing with rock etc. and who would be very willing to prepare the field close to the school beforehand for the developers.	13	It is possible of course to deal with the rock but it would mean additional cost. Unfortunately, the planning problems aren't as simple to sort out and the cost of making all necessary amendments to the site would mean going over budget.
8.2	Brithdir is more central – a larger number of children attend the school and it is convenient for parents who want to use the Seren Fach nursery / The location is also convenient for parents with younger children attending Seren Fach Nursery / Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd Rhydymain is very far from Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy site and from all other sites – Brithdir is much nearer and central. The proximity of the sites is of key importance in order to ensure that any model, especially a new model, is a success / The previous consultation in 2011 favoured Brithdir because: Many more children (84%) live closer to Ysgol Brithdir than to Ysgol Rhydymain – much less travelling (children and distance) thus reducing the carbon footprint which is supposed to be an important factor / Ysgol Brithdir is very convenient for many people in the area and it would be a shame to spoil the good work that the teachers do / Ysgol Brithdir is very central and convenient for us as parents / The fact that almost 50 children attend Ysgol Brithdir daily is proof of the need and the desire for an accessible rural school. If you need further proof, 70	14	<p>The Council agrees that the Ysgol Brithdir site is closer to the Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy site, and this is one of the reasons for developing the site at Brithdir when it was decided to include it as part of the original option. Unfortunately, it is now not possible to develop the Brithdir site.</p> <p>Between the Rhydymain site and the Dinas Mawddwy site there are 12 miles which means a journey of approximately 20 minutes.</p> <p>The Council is aware that Seren Fach is a private nursery located in Brithdir, but there are a number of reasons when selecting a site.</p> <p>Regarding the carbon footprint, consideration should be given that, as 4 educational sites will close, this will result in fewer sites to heat etc.</p>

	<p>children are also transported to the Nursery in Brithdir every week. The nursery school in Rhydymain has closed due to lack of demand. We know our area – do you?</p>		
<p>8.3</p>	<p>The Council has suggested that the mechanical assessment did not find rock, it was just that the JCB could not go any deeper – no wonder considering that a toothless bucket was used. The reason why a smooth bucket was used was the archaeological search close by, within 300m of Ysgol Brithdir (according to Council officers). Ysgol Brithdir is further than this from the Roman remains in Brithdir. A JCB with a suitable bucket would have been able to dig deeper, the parents themselves conformed this after digging in the field. Misleading / Developing the field adjacent to Ysgol Brithdir so vitally important for the future of the school; who made the decision to use a smooth bucket to bore holes in the field, and why? / It was mentioned that archaeological remains in the school field prevented the development from going ahead, but what is this? When a number of houses were built in Hengaer Brithdir, Roman remains were discovered but even so, bungalows were built on the site. Another excuse for not making improvements to the Brithdir site? / Some of the parents have been digging near the school using a bucket with teeth, and, in complete contrast to your conclusion that Betts Geoenvironmental Ltd had come across rock, we came across NO rock at all. One hole was bored on the top of the mound at the side of the school where you would be sure to find rock. Especially as this was the ONLY reason why it was decided to rethink and to close Ysgol Brithdir, parents are starting to ask serious questions and the situation threatens to turn nasty / In view of the fact that we as parents did not encounter any rock in the field beside Ysgol Brithdir, how can you justify the latest cost of £2.72m to develop Ysgol Brithdir?/ Council officers strongly suggested that it was not rock on the site, it was only that a toothless JCB could not dig any deeper. What effort was made? Especially in view of the fact that there were no archaeological remains within 300m of the site as the officers believed – the Roman remains are much further and houses have already been built on them! A very feeble excuse which has again violated parents and the residents of Brithdir / Strange that Gwynedd Council changed its explanation after Brithdir residents proved that there was no rock at a depth of 1 metre below ground. We managed to dig down to nearly 2 metres.</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>The Betts Geo-environmental private company was commissioned to complete ground works on the site near Ysgol Brithdir. The specialist company decided to use a toothless bucket to excavate the field due to the fact that the site is adjacent to archaeological remains. Using a toothed bucket can disperse any archaeological remains which is illegal. All specialist companies use this kind of machinery in this context – the aim of the excavation work is to reach but not penetrate the rock and therefore using a toothless bucket is totally logical.</p> <p>The report by Geotech confirms that rock was found 1 metre underground - the term 'rock' is used to describe the type of ground found – it does not necessarily mean a solid rock. The increase in cost was a combination of more than one factor of course including excavating the material from the site, the cost of installing Services through the material, the cost of drainage, the new Government requirements (including an increase in area, and the complicated link between one level of the site with another level (including a lift etc.).</p> <p>A report regarding this work has been circulated with the residents of Brithdir following a freedom of information application.</p> <p>The presence of the rock is not the only reason and not the main reason for the Cabinet's decision to draw the previous process to an end.</p> <p>Included below is part of the report presented to the Cabinet in July 2013:</p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>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</i></p>

8.4	<p>The parents at Brithdir are mad and cannot understand how you can close a successful and flourishing school with no surplus places, and move the children to a smaller school which is already failing and on the very edge of the catchment area. Claims that there is rock in the field by Ysgol Brithdir and that excavation costs would be high – the alleged excavation cost is the only basis for not proceeding with many months of consultation process, and a proposal approved by the Education Minister of the Welsh Government / By now, it is difficult to prove the reasons (e.g. unsuitable land, planning problems) for not following the usual procedure and it is possibly more likely that the Council is looking at cost alone / As your own Chief Executive has said, we need to have a viable answer for the future. Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd Rhydymain is not a viable answer, whatever your reasons for closing Ysgol Brithdir. You cannot persuade the parents and children of Ysgol Brithdir that they are moving to a better place. Maybe some parents will send their children to Ysgol Rhydymain for the short term, that is to finish their primary education, but in the long term parents will not send their children there as is happening already. The major problem with the public sector is lack of accountability and, in this case, who will be accountable in 5-10 years' time? It is very possible that the officers responsible for the reorganisation of schools will not be in their jobs, neither will the councillors who are responsible for making these far reaching decisions / A school on the Brithdir site would be the most sustainable into the future. It would be a total waste of money for the Council to invest in the Rhydymain site, which is not sustainable, especially in terms of pupil numbers.</p>	6	<p><i>have to be substantially lowered before construction could commence and since the area was very rocky it would involve considerable cost. During the same period it became apparent that the technical requirements imposed by the Government had changed and that the extension would have to provide more space. As a result, what is now being considered is different to what was discussed during the consultation, the cost would be higher and also there would be a strong risk that planning permission would not be obtained. The concern is that the additional money would need to be spent to overcome the mechanical problems on the site rather than on educational resources for the pupils of the area.</i></p> <p>1.6. As a result, the conclusion reached was that the original proposal will not be implemented and that another plan will have to be developed.</p> <p>There are therefore three reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The substantial risk of not gaining planning permission. During the design stage, the planning officers' opinion became much more negative and they became more concerned as time went by. We had reached a point where the chance of succeeding was small or even impossible. This was the main reason therefore, and a matter which could not be solved by spending more money.</li> <li>b) During the design stage, the Government requirements became known. If we were to use grant money, then additional spending would be required on the nature of the building work in order to fulfil the exceptionally high environmental requirements. Also an extra 70m<sup>2</sup> would be required if the required standards were to be met and the grant funding to be secured.</li> </ul>
8.5	<p>Brithdir parents are disappointed that no satisfactory explanation was given for not retaining Brithdir as a site – apart from lack of funding / Confusion, lack of transparency and information / Closing Ysgol Brithdir is a shame and a disappointment / Aren't public bodies accountable and shouldn't they have to show clearly how decisions are reached? / Explanation given to us did not do that / Feeling that someone is trying to pull wool over our eyes. The misleading information, lack of intention and serious contradiction is a true cause for concern to us. We must obtain truly transparent and honest answers on this matter.</p>	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c) During the design stage, the National Park insisted that the level of the new building would have to be lowered considerably (up to 3m) so as not to affect the current school and the amenities of the house at the back. The site of the current school is already one metre higher than the site next door and therefore an extra 4 metres would need to be excavated. The specialist survey shows that there is a rock one metre underground. This in itself did not mean that it would be impossible to complete the development but obviously it would mean additional cost. The different levels would also mean creating a complicated and expensive link between the old building and the new building including a lift etc.</li> </ul>
8.6	<p>The consultation document states that 'widespread technical</p>	18	<p>Several open discussions were held with the National Park Planning Officers. A 3D model of</p>

assessments' were undertaken on the site at Ysgol Brithdir and that any developments would be 'exceptionally expensive'. The impression given was that there was rock presence and that 'widespread excavation' was needed on the site. It became evident that there was no rock presence and that the Council had been putting the blame on problems with planning permission from the National Park. This fact was used as a scapegoat. It is very interesting to learn that the National Park had offered the Council to change the plans for Brithdir but that the Council had not even considered the invitation nor responded to it / In contrast to what was thought to be a reason for not developing Ysgol Brithdir, we were informed by Gwynedd Council officers that it was NOT the rock and the cost that were the main problems but that obtaining planning permission was almost impossible, and that the problems over rock and cost could be overcome but not the planning problem. The Park officers deny this and state that they would welcome a planning application but that the Council did not come back to them at all to agree on changes / Without doubt, the Park Authority is saying one thing and Gwynedd Council officers saying another. How can you expect parents, children and the community in Brithdir to accept this? We therefore demand that Gwynedd Council submit a PLANNING APPLICATION for an extension to the building at Ysgol Brithdir forthwith, in fairness to the first consultation process which favoured keeping Ysgol Brithdir open. The wrong impression was given at the ARC and the open days regarding the planning information / Suggestions from Park officers that it was almost impossible for the plans as they stood to be constructive and positive. The problem was not the small chance of obtaining planning permission but lack of intention and determination. Cheated out of a development / Following the open evening, parents contacted the Snowdonia National Park Authority - Park officers denied that it would be impossible to obtain planning permission. The plans were so poor that a Planning officer described them as 'the cheapest plans possible, mere sketches, only a box to consider' and that they would welcome a planning application. 350 people had opposed the plans for the school in Llanegryn, and the Park had also opposed them and action was taken on that occasion, wasn't it? Why not in Brithdir? / Why don't you at least be honest and not blame Planning Officers for example, and admit that saving money

the school was created and designs presented. Their response was negative and they presented logical reasons for refusing the planning application. Continuing with the work required to present a full application would have cost tens of thousands of pounds and the Cabinet, following consideration of all factors, decided not to move ahead with the development.

The situation at Llanegryn was not comparable. In that case, the planning officers were relatively supportive from the outset – the objections weren't related to planning issues.

	is the only reason for closing our schools?		
8.7	I would like to see a copy of the communication / e-mail between the Property Department and the National Park where the Park states that a traditional building alongside Ysgol Brithdir would not be acceptable by them, and that the school would have to be on a lower level and out of sight from the school house	1	Copies of correspondence have been presented to the enquirer. It was also explained that this information was distributed in a series of meetings and discussions.
8.8	The Brithdir Parents Group only received part of the Betts Geoenvironmental Ltd report – the first application under the Freedom of Information Act to see the full report was not fully met – under the Freedom of Information Act we would like to see the full report / We want to see pictures of Trial Pits 1 – 5 of the Geotechnical report. A request by the Brithdir Parents Group to see the report by the architects of Ainsley Gommon Architects, and any other report used as a basis for the decision to put an end to developing Ysgol Brithdir	1	No feedback was received following the response to the Freedom of Information application and therefore the Council was not aware of the wish for further information. Each part of the report which referred to the landscape assessment has been provided in the original response. This was part of wider report on the all of the site’s environmental matters e.g. bats, water, biodiversity etc. This additional information has been presented to the enquirer.
8.9	Representatives of the Brithdir Parents Group attended an open day on Thursday 6th November – they wished to speak to a person who understands mechanical excavation work and wished to obtain the technical reasons for not proceeding with the proposal, perhaps one of the architects or a groundwork engineer?	1	Because this request was received on 4 November, it was not possible to arrange for an architect or engineer to be present. Officers from the Property Department were present and a discussion was held with representatives in order to address specific technical questions regarding the site.
8.10	No technical or planning reasons available as to why building on the Brithdir site would not be possible. This was confirmed by the Property Department in the Glanwnion Centre on 6th November. Totally different from the information given to the Brithdir parents when the decision was made to stop the plan.	1	There are barriers to developing the adjacent site to Ysgol Brithdir as explained above. These have been explained continually in correspondence and verbally by the Property Department officers during the open days.
8.11	Parents and the community in the Ysgol Brithdir area own excavation and groundwork companies, civil engineers who are used to dealing with rock etc. and who would be very willing to prepare the field near the school for the developers in advance.	7	The problems regarding excavating the field weren’t the only reasons why it was decided not to continue with the development at Brithdir.
8.12	The parents and children of Ysgol Brithdir might be willing to consider the option of moving to a larger school with all the latest resources, such as Tywyn or Y Bale. How can you expect us to move to Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd which is unpopular in terms of location and with ever decreasing numbers? Better for our children....?	2	As part of the proposal, Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd will not continue in its current state. An educational site will continue at Rhydymain and there will be a £620,000 investment in order to extend and improve the buildings.  The work intended at the Rhydymain site includes creating a new classroom, a staffroom, improvements to the parking arrangements and drop off/collection point, more toilets and improving the current building.

8.13	<p>Concerns of the residents of the Brithdir area and some of the reasons for keeping Ysgol Brithdir open following the first consultation process in 2011:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ysgol Brithdir is the only school in the catchment area with no surplus places – increase of 114% in the number of pupils between 1975-2011, school is over capacity.</li> <li>● Many more children (84%) live closer to the school in Brithdir than is the case in Rhydymain – much less travelling (children and distance) which is in keeping with Gwynedd Council policy of reducing travel and thus reducing our carbon footprint. This will be an all important factor in the future.</li> <li>● Ysgol Brithdir is very central for promoting collaboration/ sharing of resources between sites.</li> <li>● The location of Ysgol Brithdir, so close to Dolgellau, is one of its strengths – it is a practical choice (in terms of distance) for those parents who want their children to receive rural education, where the Welsh language is heard and spoken as the natural language of the school playground.</li> <li>● Suitable geographical location (accessible)</li> <li>● Obvious increase in pupil numbers</li> <li>● Sustainable pupil numbers – no surplus places</li> <li>● Nursery provision close by (in Brithdir)</li> <li>● Closer to Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy</li> <li>● Acceptable travelling distances for ex-catchment area pupils</li> <li>● Wise and sustainable investment in order to safeguard rural education in Y Gader catchment area.</li> </ul>	8	<p>Several different options have been considered while developing the proposal. Several of the reasons listed were originally listed as reasons for choosing the Brithdir site in the previous proposal. Unfortunately developing the site at Ysgol Brithdir is not an option by now for several reasons already explained above.</p> <p>The Council realises that the Ysgol Brithdir site is nearer to the Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy site, and that it was included as a reason for including the site in the original proposal. Unfortunately, it is now not possible to develop the Brithdir site.</p> <p>The Council believes that the proposed option offers the best way forward in order to ensure viable educational provision in the Gader catchment area.</p> <p>Cyngor Gwynedd is eager to see every child throughout the county being offered the same education and opportunities. Hence, this proposal to offer primary education on 5 sites instead of 9 will lead to better resources, better storage of resources, library, information technology, hall and playing fields.</p> <p>It is the members of staff and pupils who create the comfortable and happy ethos within a school and who ensure the success of any school. This ethos and success will not disappear when combining schools in any scheme.</p>
8.14	<p>Disappointed that the Council is thinking of closing Ysgol Brithdir and not using the site. Obvious that the choice of local parents is Ysgol Brithdir / As a parent living in Brithdir, I believe that building an extension on Ysgol Brithdir is better than developing Rhydymain. I do not like the idea of sending a child further away – more convenient to fetch a child from Brithdir in the afternoon – cannot fetch her from Rhydymain / NO surplus places in Brithdir and no surplus places predicted in the future. This is the site and the location which attracts parents each year and continues to attract despite the threat of closure. The success of the Seren Fach Nursery in the village proves that</p>	11	

	Brithdir is a site which is accessible for parents and a site which will ensure a successful future for rural education in the eastern part of the Dolgellau catchment area.		
8.15	Is the Council undertaking an independent research to find out where the parents would wish to send their children? This is obvious because there are no surplus places in Brithdir and this is the site they favour.	2	Planning for spaces in schools is always difficult due to the fact that parents can choose schools for their children and travel outside their natural catchment area if they so wish. If research work had been done, this would only have been a 'snapshot' at the time because parents' reasons for deciding on schools can change in a short period of time for a variety of reasons. In the proposed favoured option, there is plenty of space on the Rhydymain site for current Brithdir, Rhydymain and Machreth pupils but parents are welcome to enquire about admission to other specific sites.
8.16	Ysgol Brithdir has no playing field, no dining room, no staff room and no modern image, yet parents prefer to send their children to Ysgol Brithdir to receive education of the best quality from dedicated staff.	1	The Council is aware that the Ysgol Brithdir site has some faults and that is why an extension would have to be built in the field next to the current school in order to admit more pupils and improve the quality and suitability of the buildings. The Council is aware of the fact that there are dedicated members of staff in the catchment area and the hope is that these members of staff will continue to work for the all-through community school.
8.17	Number of factors against Brithdir – building, difficult for buses to turn around, no suitable land.	1	Developing the Rhydymain site is easier and less costly than developing the Brithdir site.
<b>9</b>	<b>Matters relating to the Other Sites and Buildings</b>		
9.1	The investment in buildings at Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau is welcomed.	1	The investment will provide an appropriate resource for the twenty-first century.
9.2	Hope that a full consultation will take place with the staff of Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau when the new buildings are being designed in order to receive professional input and to ensure that the new building will be fit for purpose.	1	The success of the development is dependent on the ability to consult fully with all factions of the buildings' users.
9.3	Concerned that Y Friog site will be without equipment compared with the other sites, considering that only £15,000 is being invested in that site. Concern that parents will take their children to other sites which are receiving more investment.	1	The Friog building 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.
9.4	The photographs of Ysgol y Friog in the document do not convey the true condition of the site as the photographs are old and work has been undertaken since the pictures were taken. Concerned that this conveys a poor impression compared with the other sites.	1	Accept the comment – the building is in a good condition.
9.5	Since the school in the neighbouring catchment area is a new school with the best and most modern equipment and resources, it attracts the attention of parents. Need to continue with the high number of entries to the Nursery class in Y Friog – 7 in September 2014; there are 18 pupils in the Foundation Phase class. Outside area of high standard.	1	All options will be considered during the design phase with the goal of providing the best resource within the available budget.

	Concerned that the FPh classroom is not big enough to allow the FPh to operate to the best standard. At present, two classes are being used as teaching classrooms. The third classroom is used as an area for Technical Design, Art and Library. Hope that funding can be allocated to the school to demolish one wall and make 2 classrooms into 1.		
9.6	Investment needed in Ysgol Y Gader / Ysgol Y Gader does not receive as much attention as the others e.g. Ysgol OM Edwards / Discontent because of the lack of investment to improve the existing resources at Ysgol y Gader within the document – ask the Council to look again at this.	4	Backlog maintenance of £439,000 is required at Y Gader and this will be done in the next few years.
9.7	The windows in the 2 halls in Ysgol Y Gader are old and let cold in.	1	
9.8	Some rooms in Ysgol Y Gader are too small to be used as classrooms / the Geography room is ugly – brown walls and damp areas. There is mould on the walls - this affects the health of the children / major changes are needed to the classrooms, they are plain and ugly.	2	
9.9	One block in Ysgol Y Gader has not been used much – suggest that 1 store room and office could be converted to a classroom.	1	There is no need for additional classes in Y Gader currently.
9.10	The technology at Ysgol Y Gader – computers etc. – is old and affects course work / The cookery room has poor equipment and everything is dirty.	1	How to allocate/spend the school's finance will be the new headteacher and governing body's decision, they may decide to upgrade some specific resources.
9.11	Happy with some improvements that have already been carried out at Ysgol Y Gader e.g. carpet in the French room.	1	Welcome the comment.
9.12	The A496 road beside the Llanelltyd site is a very busy one and every effort must be made to slow the traffic down and create proper sites for parents to drop off and pick up their children.	1	Agree. The proposed plan will address the parking and traffic arrangements at the site.
9.13	It would be better to spend the money on better resources to be shared by all the catchment area than on extension and better parking facilities. The reduction in staff numbers, and the saving this entails, seems to be the main drive by the Council.	1	The Council's aim is to create a robust and sustainable educational provision for the future as there has been a consensus reached for some time that the current provision is unsustainable in its present form.
9.14	There is a need for a school fit for the 21 <sup>st</sup> century like the examples seen on the internet, not new plaster, heating system and paint / Where is the long term vision regarding buildings and facilities? The proposal denotes small extensions, better parking facilities and transport improvements. Can the expense on minor improvements be justified? How do these improve education?	2	This is not a small expenditure; a significant investment is being made in the area. The Dolgellau Primary, Llanelltyd and Rhydymain sites will receive an investment to upgrade them so that children receive their education in an educational establishment suitable for the 21 <sup>st</sup> century. Friog, Dinas Mawddwy and Y Gader school sites' backlog maintenance needs will also be completed.
9.15	The statutory consultation document includes details regarding work on upgrading existing buildings, which are likely to improve the learning	1	The Council is aware that some school buildings in the area are not fully fit for purpose. This is why there is a commitment to invest £4,831,000 in the catchment's educational

	environment.		sites by September 2017 – to ensure the best possible quality of learning if the catchment all-through school is established.
9.16	The school buildings in the catchment area date back to the Victorian age, and are unsuitable for the educational requirements of the present era.	1	
9.17	If every site in Y Gader catchment area is part of the same establishment, should every site not offer the same educational opportunities for the pupils? We have had to ‘make do’ for many years, therefore here is a chance for the Council to be innovative and improve all the sites equally for the benefit of every pupil, not just a few.	1	Given the economic climate a significant financial investment is being made to develop sites in the catchment. By investing £4.34 million of capital funding to upgrade sites the Council is committing to ensuring first class quality of learning environment. In addition to this work Friog, Gader and Dinas Mawddwy sites will receive backlog maintenance spend to improve them. The total expenditure of backlog maintenance is £491,000. This means that the Council is committed to investing £4,821,000 by September 2017 to ensure the best possible learning quality if the All-through school is established.
9.18	The cost for new classrooms is ridiculously overpriced. Who makes these decisions?	1	The costs have been calculated by Chartered Size-surveyors who are very experienced in this area and are based on prices received by tender in the area in the past year.
9.19	The Union welcomes the aim of getting new buildings and resources which are ‘fit for purpose’ in the 21st Century. We agree that having the best learning environment is essential for the education of the pupils; we would add that this is good for staff morale as well. In order to ensure this, detailed background work in terms of suitability and availability of land for building needs to be undertaken without delay. At present there is still too much ambiguity and uncertainty over such matters.	1	If the proposal is approved by the Cabinet we will be able to progress with the detailed work.
<b>10</b>	<b>Consultation with Children and Young People</b>		
10.1	The response to the question “What is the most important thing for you at school?” included: Good, kind and friendly friends / Teachers / Play / Fire alarm and toilets / Extension / Plenty of play area / Larger car park / Interesting lessons / Good friends / My teachers / School close to home / Rural education / Welsh being spoken naturally in the playground / Kind teachers and good friends and being able to take part in competitions such as netball, football and games and also taking part in singing, recitation, dancing / the local village school has good education and everyone in turn can take part in different activities / Work	12	The Council appreciates comments from children and young people and are pleased to see some specific features that pupils are looking forward to and consider important in a school.
10.2	Ticked the happy face in the children’s questionnaire - ☺	2	
10.3	Responded to the question “What do you look forward to most?” with: A bigger school so that the classroom is bigger / If I go to a school somewhere else, I will make new friends	2	
10.4	More friends and more room / More equipment in the hall.	2	

10.5	Responded to the question “What causes you worry over this?” with: Nothing	1	
10.6	Ticked the sad face in the children’s questionnaire - ☹️ One child had drawn a sad face crying / Feel very sad that you are making changes and intend to close my school / Sad and angry that my school is to be closed / Very sad and angry, Ysgol Brithdir is a happy school – there are many children there and everyone is friendly. We compete in the Urdd / I am not happy about the rumour that Ysgol Brithdir is going to close because it is a happy school with many children so there is no reason to move to a school with fewer children. It does not make sense.	12	The Council appreciates comments from children and young people and will take note of the specific concerns raised. Every effort will be made to mitigate the concerns should the proposal continue e.g. organise specific times for co-operation between pupils of different sites so they get together and know each other before September 2017.
10.7	Responded to the question “What causes you worry over this?” with: Ysgol y Brithdir is a good school and it is full, why does it have to close - Ysgol Rhydymain is far away / I am sad and worried that we have to go so far to school whilst Ysgol y Brithdir is such a good school / I am very fond of my school and I don’t want it to close / More unfriendly children / Fearful about a new teacher / Worried that I won’t be with my friends / I am very happy at my school / I don’t like change and I don’t want to travel far / I shall have to travel far to school and they say that I might have to travel to Ysgol y Gader site for some lessons. It worries me that you are going to close Ysgol Brithdir because it is a happy and successful school and full of children / My friends are not going to go because it is too far away from Ysgol Brithdir. If the children are not going to attend the school, we won’t be able to take part in competitions or anything else / The teachers will lose their jobs and will have to travel far every morning. Losing good friends / Many of my friends say that their mother is going to send them to another school because it is so far from the town / Secondary pupil worried about education in Y Gader	11	
10.8	Responded to the question “What do you look forward to most?” with: Nothing / Not looking forward / I am not looking forward to the changes that will close my school.	8	The Council accepts these comments, should the proposal continue, hopefully there will be some aspects of the proposal that these pupils enjoy.
10.9	I was looking forward to the new school in Brithdir.	1	The Council takes note of these comments and is aware of local frustration that the previous proposal was not implemented.
10.10	I like the school.	1	The council is pleased some pupils enjoy school and hope this would continue at the new proposed school.
10.11	Why consult with children/? They are young and there is no need to	1	In accordance with the School Organisation Code (006/2013) it is essential as part of any

	involve them.		statutory consultation period to consult with children and young people that attend the schools subject to the consultation.
10.12	<p>You have sent the children a leaflet explaining the consultation process and the need for this new proposal. In it, under point 1 – WHY THE CHANGE? – You have given the following reasons:</p> <p><i>Improve the quality of the education;</i>  <i>Improve the quality of the buildings e.g. paintwork</i>  <i>Make better use of resources e.g. IT equipment</i>  <i>Ensure a good education system into the future</i>  <i>Reduce the number of surplus places in the schools</i>  <i>Providing schools which is important for the communities</i>  <i>Strengthening the Welsh language</i>  <i>Having classes of suitable size</i></p> <p>Ysgol Brithdir already has all of these – so what improvement will there be for the children of this school?</p>	1	<p>The statutory consultation document has been summarised for children and young people, all the factors considered were not included. The Council is aware that there are some shortcomings in relation to Ysgol Brithdir school buildings and site. Should the site be retained as part of any proposal, it would need to be upgraded and extended to receive more pupils. This was part of the original proposal in 2011 but unfortunately this is not a viable option any longer and therefore the site is not included as one of the all-through catchment area school sites.</p> <p>The hope is that investing in Rhydymain will ensure quality first class learning environment as the upgrading work will meet 21<sup>st</sup> century expectations.</p>
10.13	<p>Why were parents not informed that a member of Council staff will visit the school? It is the responsibility and the decision of the parents to inform the children, not the Council's / It was a great mistake on the part of the Council not to include details of the timetable on page 74 of the Statutory Consultation Document where it states that an independent member would come round every school in the catchment area to give a presentation on reorganisation to the pupils. Many of the parents are greatly disturbed because they were not given information about this in advance and some refused to allow their children to attend the meeting.</p>	2	<p>It is noted in section 1 of the statutory consultation document:</p> <p><i>“Arrangements will also be made to obtain the views of children and young people that attend all the schools under consideration. A specialist facilitator will visit each school to run sessions specifically so that the children can give their opinion. There is a consultation document for children and young people on the Council’s website <a href="http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/schoolorganisation">www.gwynedd.gov.uk/schoolorganisation</a> as well as a suitable response form/questionnaire. This means that individual children and young people that do not attend a session can respond to the consultation as well.”</i></p> <p>Hard copies of the statutory consultation document were distributed to every parent/guardian of pupils in all 10 of the schools.</p>
10.14	<p>The proposer had included information in the statutory consultation document regarding the consultation to be held with pupils. This involved specialist facilitators the schools to hold sessions in which pupils expressed their views. Questionnaires were also available on the Council website.</p>	1	
<b>11</b>	<b>Governance and Admissions</b>		
11.1	<p>Concern that Friog will not be sufficiently represented on the shadow governing body in view of the current problems with trying to recruit governors.</p>	1	<p>As referred to in the statutory consultation document, the shadow governing body could include representatives from all parts of the catchment area, including Friog.</p>
11.2	<p>Constitution of the proposed shadow governing body – Strong feelings that representation from the 9 existing primary schools should be included on the body in question, this in addition to equal</p>	1	

	representation between the primary and secondary.		
11.3	Concern over the lack of information on how the Governing Body will operate across all the sites, the curriculum and the different age groups in the proposed new school.	1	The governing body would run in the same way as the current schools' governing bodies, but they would be responsible for several sites and for a broader age range. As is the case with the management of secondary schools, it would be possible to create governance sub-committees to look at specific areas, if they so wish.
11.4	How will abolishing all the school governors who dedicate hours of their time voluntarily to support the schools improve education in the area and create savings? Data and evidence please? Especially in view of recent events in the secondary school where the Chairman of the Governors has apologised in public for not taking action although the school was in a state of crisis. According to the plan put forward there will be one Governing Body for the whole catchment area namely the Secondary School Governing Body / Want the Shadow Governing Body in place as soon as possible and to be told what the teaching structure will be straight after a decision is reached, so that the indecision which has existed for years will finally come to an end. All the delay which has already occurred, and changing minds and looking again has led to bad feeling in the area.	2	<p>The current governing body of the secondary school would not run the proposed school. A new shadow governing body would be created. The shadow governing body would be created out of the current membership of all schools' governing bodies. According to guidelines, if a school has more than 600 pupils, there should be 19 governors and they could represent all parts of the catchment area.</p> <p>There is a specific process for electing members for the Shadow Governing Body including distributing an expression of interest application form to all governors of the current schools.</p> <p>It is proposed that should the proposal be implemented, beginning the process of establishing the shadow governing body will begin as soon as possible following the final decision.</p>
11.5	Emphasise that representation from every existing governing body is needed on the Shadow Governing Body / Essential that the Governing Body which is formed will include balanced representation from parents and from rural area communities as well as from the town and contain a significant number of members with strong understanding of the educational requirements of the twenty first century, in order to ensure its credibility. The process of selecting community members for the governing body should be completely transparent and consideration should be given to inviting applications for seats on the board as is the case with several governing bodies in other areas. If a seat on the Governing Body was offered to a representative of the Church in Wales as part of any discussions regarding obtaining a category for the school, will a seat also be offered to a representative of the nonconformist community in the catchment area? The Church in Wales is not the only representative of Christian interests in this catchment area.	3	Because the proposed option favours community status for the all-through school, there will not be an official representative by the Church in Wales on the governing body.
11.6	Would have liked the national guidelines for establishing the shadow governing body to have been included in the document.	1	It was not possible to include the complete details regarding the setting up of a shadow governing body in the statutory consultation document. Further information can be seen in <i>The New Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations (No 2912 (Cy.209)</i> and

			<i>Guidance on the Law for School Governors (Chapter 20)</i>
11.7	Section 15:14, page 62 does not refer to entry for Year 7 students from schools outside the catchment area (39% in Ysgol y Gader at present), or what other plans could be set in motion to integrate those pupils.	1	The Council accepts that there are no specific references to year 7 pupils who attend Ysgol y Gader from outside the catchment area. These pupils will have to request the right for admission in accordance with the current Process.
11.8	If the proposal is approved and the school opens in September 2017, will the pupils from Ieuan Gwynedd, Llanfachreth and Brithdir sites move to the Rhydymain site no matter where their homes are situated? Or will the ex-catchment area pupils at those schools have to attend the site closest to their homes? It would be a shame and cruel for a unit of children who have always been together in one school to be parted. In order that the Rhydymain site be sustainable, all the pupils would need to attend since the largest numbers attend the Brithdir site / The situation worries the children as well – they are used to attending school along with their friends/ Is this fair?	2	The Council has allocated enough spaces on the Rhydymain site so that the current pupils of Brithdir, Ieuan Gwynedd and Machreth schools can attend the school (current within the area and out of the area pupils).  The proposal includes sufficient spaces at Llanelltyd to accept pupils currently at Ganllwyd, Clogau and Llanelltyd schools. The Rhydymain and Llanelltyd sites are being developed to accommodate approximately 70 pupils (3 classes on both sites). Based on the forecasts for September 2017, it is foreseen that there will be 74 pupils at Llanelltyd and 67 at Rhydymain. Parents' choice could affect these figures and (if the proposal is given the go-ahead) the shadow governing body of the all-through school will need to work closely with the County Council in order to manage admission to the current sites.
11.9	Developing Ysgol Llanelltyd will not create sufficient capacity for the pupils of Llanelltyd, Bontddu and Ganllwyd. It will force parents to send their children to the town school. Can you take this choice out of the parents' hands?	1	There will also be spaces at the Dolgellau Primary, Friog and Dinas Mawddwy sites if parents prefer other options.
11.10	Concern over the entry numbers quoted for some of the sites. Wondering whether the true number of children requiring entry to some sites in September 2017 will be in excess of the intended capacity for the sites in question.	1	It is foreseen that there will sufficient spaces for children from the sites that are closing at the new sites without the additional worry of separating from friends – this of course depends on the choice of parents.
<b>12</b>	<b>The Statutory Consultation Process</b>		
12.1	The people of Y Friog are grateful for the opportunity to present their views and their suggestions.	1	The Council is glad that local consultees have taken the opportunity to submit comments and express their opinion – 82 responses were received to the statutory consultation and over 100 people were welcomed to the open days.
12.2	The consultation document is comprehensive and detailed / We acknowledge the detailed and thorough work carried out by officers in preparation for the consultation.	2	The Council is glad the documentation has conveyed the necessary information so that the consultation can give people's views in full on the proposal.
12.3	UCAC is proud to have the opportunity to respond to the Statutory Consultation Document. UCAC also appreciates the desire of the Authority to 'ensure a strong and sustainable educational provision within the entire catchment area – also realise that Gwynedd Council is facing a substantial challenge 'in trying to plan for providing the best provision' in such a rural area as Y Gader catchment area. We also acknowledge the fact that school reorganisation is a complex matter	1	These comments are welcomed, highlighting some of the obstacles that have occurred in the Gader catchment area when trying to draw up suitable proposals to ensure sustainable education for the future. As the discussions develop, this consensus has developed. Indeed, from the response to the consultation, no one has noted that they oppose change. The response opposed to the proposed change has been scarce. Some consultees would wish to see elements of the proposal changed e.g. the sites selected etc.

	and those opinions and feelings strongly differ among pupils, parents, school staff and the communities themselves. Therefore it is good to learn that 'a consensus has been reached that the existing education provision in the catchment area needs to be changed'.		
12.4	UCAC is glad that no 'presumption of any specific plans' had taken place and that consideration had been given to several options; we agree that 'doing nothing' is not a realistic option. Our members in the area, however, are very concerned that so much delay has occurred before a final decision was reached for this catchment area. It is a cause for concern that so much time and energy has been spent on investigating proposals, not to mention the thousands of pounds spent on them and all in vain. It has all led to a lack of trust in the Council's ability to ensure that any outcomes from the consultation will be a foundation on which to operate. It has created a feeling of boredom and confusion as the future of schools and jobs remain in the balance for so long.	1	<p>Considerable research work has occurred before the proposed model was selected. Different models were developed and those models then evaluated against different factors. These factors included elements of the county's school organization strategy, the vision for the Gader catchment area, elements of the Schools Organization Code (006/2013) and other relevant factors.</p> <p>It was important to include the advantages, disadvantages and risks of the proposal in the consultation document so that the consultees could give their views based on complete information and give everyone the opportunity to ask for further information.</p> <p>The statutory process has been followed in holding a pre-consultation and then a statutory consultation. A report will be submitted to the Cabinet following the statutory consultation, including the comments from this table as an appendix in order that the Cabinet can consider the comments before coming to a decision whether to continue with the proposal or not. If it were decided to continue, a statutory notice would be published and there would be an opportunity for anyone to oppose the proposal. It will be necessary to report to Cabinet again after this, to make a final decision.</p>
12.5	The proposers have stated clearly and fairly the expected advantages and disadvantages in comparison with the present situation.	1	
12.6	The proposers have appropriately noted the possible advantages for pupils in terms of the core aims of the United Nations Conference regarding children's rights. These include joint ethos and similar expectations, reducing the uncertainty between the primary and secondary sectors and sharing good practice across every sector and across all sites. However, there is no reference in the proposal to the way any disturbance to pupils would be reduced if the proposal was implemented.	1	
12.7	It is a great disappointment that school reorganisation in this area has been under discussion for so long and that we are still in its midst. It has been a black cloud for a decade and working under such stress has been totally unfair to staff considering the promises made in the past and these being broken in due course. This catchment area has been treated disgustingly; it is high time that a fair solution is found.	1	The Council is also disappointed that a proposal has not been implemented in the Gader catchment area up to now. It's in the nature of schools reorganization, developing models and the consultation process that plans can be adapted and the way ahead changed as time goes on. The Council is aware and understands the frustration of people in the Gader catchment area. Depending on the Cabinet's decisions, the aim is to implement the proposal by September 2017.
12.8	Poor management has led to poor decisions / No effective action so far / No trust in the process, based on experience both past and present.	3	
12.9	Plans for the new school in Brithdir were shown to parents and children and it was revealed by the <i>Cambrian News</i> that these plans had been dropped on account of planning problems / Why tell the children that a new school was going to be built, and then – weeks later – announce	2	Plans were shown because the previous proposal (subject to consultation in 2011) was to develop the Ysgol Brithdir site. A newsletter was distributed in December 2012 noting there were obstacles with the original plan and there was doubt about its future. Another newsletter was published in May 2013 stating that it was not possible to move ahead with

	that there is no new school / Gwynedd Council needs to get things right this time, for the sake of the children.		the development of the Brithdir site and so a Multi-Site Area School in Brithdir and Dinas Mawddwy would not be implemented. The council sends an email copy of newsletters to the members of Gader Catchment Area Review Panel and sends hard copies to schools, for staff, governors and parents. There was no reason for people to discover only through the media that the proposal was not going ahead.
12.10	It was a mistake to exhibit pictures of Ysgol OM Edwards and Ysgol Penybryn where great expense had been made. Deceiving parents in Y Gader catchment area since there is no such money available for us / On November 5 a 6 in Glan Wnion Leisure Centre, splendid pictures were exhibited of schools constructed or renovated by the Council recently. Rather insensitive using such pictures to make parents and staff believe that they too would obtain such resources. Such funding is not available anymore and the money intended for this area is substantially less than the sums awarded for those areas. This is deceptive and gives the wrong impression.	2	<p>Apart from pictures that are part of the consultation document and associated with the proposed sites for the all-through school, the only pictures at the open days were those associated with Ysgol OM Edwards and Ysgol Penybryn, Tywyn.</p> <p>Ysgol OM Edwards received an investment of £1 million to upgrade it. This development is very similar to what will happen in Llanelltyd (an investment of £1.02million) and that's why it's considered to be of interest in the open days.</p> <p>Ysgol Penybryn, Tywyn received an investment of £1.47 million to upgrade it. The Dolgellau Primary site is receiving an investment of £2.7 million and the improvements in Penybryn can give an idea of the kind of changes to be proposed in the future, that's why they are considered to be of interest in the open days.</p>
12.11	Request to be told the cost of the 2 days of consultation in Dolgellau on 5-6 November.	1	It's not possible to give a detailed cost for holding the open days since they're part of the programme team's work and held as part of the statutory consultation. If the Council had held 30 separate meetings (in accordance with the former system) the cost would have been higher. The Council was glad to welcome over 100 people to the open days.
12.12	The whole process has been poorly planned and has led to suspicion, lies and anger / No clarity throughout the process / Disappointed with the feedback.	3	The Council recognizes there are frustrations at grass roots level because the previous consultation was not completed. That is the nature of the schools reorganization process, it's possible to adapt and re-consult on different options as the work goes on to develop the proposal. That's why the Council is clear that the proposal is the option favoured at present, the final decision has not yet been made.
12.13	The first consultation process in October -November 2011 came to the conclusion that a multi-site community catchment area school should be established for children of 3- 16 years of age on the sites of Brithdir and Dinas Mawddwy for a number of reasons / Ysgol Brithdir has already been proven to be the one that makes most sense. The portfolio holder and the Assembly both approved the Brithdir option, the reasons in favour of Ysgol y Brithdir at that time have not changed, and there is evidence to prove it.	2	<p>It's true there are a number of reasons for developing the Brithdir site and the council decided to include it as part of the original proposal. Unfortunately, substantial restrictions and problems were found which brought a substantial increase in the cost of developing the site and it was decided not to continue with the proposal to establish a Multi-Site Area School in Brithdir and Dinas Mawddwy.</p>
12.14	Misleading information, lack of intention and extreme contradiction: Ysgol Brithdir parents have been informed by officers in the open evening on 6th November 2014 that it is NOT the rock or the cost that is the main problem but failure to obtain planning permission. We feel that we have been badly misled in terms of what was the problem with	3	<p>What is noted in emails is a response to enquiries, in addition to what was noted verbally during the open days. The email notes that the presence of the rock is not the <b>only</b> reason.</p> <p>The newsletter in May 2013 notes that... <i>"detailed work was undertaken on the Brithdir school site and it became apparent that there were significant problems and obstacles as</i></p>

	<p>developing the field by the school; we could have asked for more information on the planning problem and pushed the matter forward much sooner. We were all under the impression that it was the rock and the cost of excavation in the rocky area that was the major problem – this is what the Council says on its website in the Archives: <i>‘In the meantime substantial background work was undertaken in order to develop the plan, giving close attention to the geology of the site and planning matters. Unfortunately substantial restrictions and problems were revealed which would involve a <u>substantial increase in the cost of developing the site</u> and it was decided not to continue with the proposal to establish a Multi-Site Catchment Area School in Brithdir and Dinas Mawddwy.’</i></p> <p>An e-mail from the Property Department on 5th November 2014 states the exact opposite to this: <i>‘Firstly I should emphasise one matter. The presence of the rock is not the only reason, not indeed the main reason for the decision of the Cabinet to end the latest process.</i> [and it goes on the explain]</p> <p><i>The substantial risk of failing to obtain planning permission, come what may. During the design phase the opinion of the planning officers became much more negative than it had been during the consultation and they were becoming more concerned as time went by. We had reached a point where the chance of success was very slight, if not impossible. That therefore is the main reason, a matter which money cannot overcome of course.’</i></p> <p>The Property Department also states in the e-mail that the rock problem and the cost problem could be overcome but not the planning problem.</p>		<p><i>regards design and cost issues.</i></p> <p><b><i>How and why did this happen?</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Since the consultation process and whilst developing the plans it became apparent that getting planning approval would prove difficult.</i></li> <li>• <i>It was noted that the level of the land would have to be significantly lowered, which would take the level down to the underlying rock, significant costs would be associated with this.</i></li> <li>• <i>During the same period it became apparent that the Government’s technical requirements had changed and that more space would be required in the extension.</i></li> <li>• <i>The result of this is what is possible is now different to what was considered during the consultation process, increasing costs and the risk that planning consent would not be given</i></li> <li>• <i>The concern is that more money would be required to remedy the engineering works of the site rather than on educational provision for the area’s pupils.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>In light of this it was concluded that the original proposal is no longer viable and that a new proposal will have to be developed.”</i></p> <p>Some enquiries have been received following the newsletter and a consistent response was given, expanding on specific points that were scrutinized.</p>
12.15	<p>We have already presented these questions but we have not received constructive answers which will enable us to gain correct understanding of the proposal. Lack of any data which supports and proves that the proposal can provide better for the children of the catchment area.</p>	1	<p>The School Organisation Office responds to all enquiries in accordance with the Council’s policy. Every comment received during the public consultation is submitted to the Cabinet. Full information about the proposal is available in the Statutory Consultation Document.</p>
12.16	<p>Why has the Council not asked parents which site they want to be developed and go with the choice of the majority?</p>	1	<p>The Council is not required to do this. The information contained in such an exercise would give a snapshot of information; parental choices can change from one year to the next, so no substantial advantage is seen in doing this.</p>
12.17	<p>The decision process which allows the Council and individuals to make the decisions is very suspicious – the information revealed is incomplete and in some instances untrue. Another classical example of</p>	3	<p>Reorganization of education within the Gader catchment area began some time ago. Following all the discussions, a vision for the catchment area has appeared. This vision states what the Council is aiming for in the area.</p>

	<p>the Council's stupidity / Agree that some changes have to be made, don't believe that the Council and others considering the change are giving out the full and correct information and that some of the information is obviously untrue. One concern is the 'incompetency' of the Council and the individuals who make the decision on our behalf / Who is relaying the views and the concerns of the people of Brithdir to the meetings and to the Cabinet? Because of the situation our councillors are in, we have no voice, be it to support or to object – where is the fair play in this?</p>		<p>A review of plans for the catchment area has happened and a meeting of local representatives was held – local elected members, headteachers, chair of governors and representatives of the Church in Wales – on 9 May 2013 to explain the delay and discuss the best way ahead.</p> <p>The Council makes every effort to to improve and maintain the quality of education in the catchment area. The Council can understand the frustration with the delay in moving ahead with the plan.</p> <p>Every comment submitted during the Public Consultation period is submitted to the Cabinet.</p>
12.18	<p>Disappointed with the lack of response from the Council to the questions of the residents and parents of Brithdir and also disappointed that a representative from the Organisation Office did not come and speak to the governors. No opportunity was given to speak face to face with anyone from the School Organisation Office and yet they came around to discuss with the children – sensible idea?</p>	2	<p>In accordance with the Schools Organization Code (006/2013) it's essential, as part of any statutory consultation, to consult children and young people attending the schools subject to the consultation, explaining any possible changes to them and getting their response. It was decided the best system for consulting them would be to arrange for a Specialist Facilitator to visit their schools and spend time with the pupils.</p> <p>It was noted in part 1 of the statutory consultation document:  <i>"Arrangements will also be made to obtain the views of children and young people that attend all the schools under consideration. A specialist facilitator will visit each school to run sessions specifically so that the children can give their opinion. There is a consultation document for children and young people on the Council's website <a href="http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/schoolorganization">www.gwynedd.gov.uk/schoolorganization</a> as well as a suitable response form/questionnaire. This means that individual children and young people that do not attend a session can respond to the consultation as well."</i></p> <p>A hard copy of the statutory consultation document was distributed to every parent/carer associated with the 10 schools.</p> <p>Members of the school organisation team were present at both open days.</p>
12.19	<p>Seren Fach was a major issue during the first consultation, why is it not considered anymore?</p>	1	<p>The Council is aware that Seren Fach is a private nursery located in Brithdir, but there are a number of reasons when selecting a site.</p>
12.20	<p>The Council has been receiving reports from our local Gwynedd Councillors on this work so the contents were not entirely new to the Town Council.</p>	1	<p>It stands to reason that information is presented to local members and Cabinet Members as the process moves on. It's obvious those members have been communicating effectively and have cascaded relevant and timely information to you in Dolgellau Town Council. It's greatly hoped this way of working will continue into the future.</p>

13 Alternative Options, Statistics and Finance			
13.1	Favour option 3 which would retain Ysgol Clogau and bring savings of £253,000	1	Option 3 involves a high degree of informal collaboration, education provision would be available within a reasonable travel distance and class sizes would improve compared to the current situation. However, there will be no formal collaborative arrangements, only an informal network and there is no guarantee that this will happen effectively. There will be no investment to upgrade sites and the sites will remain as they are. In addition, this would not alleviate the problems regarding staffing as the need for 7 governing bodies and 7 heads continues.
13.2	Governors have created a 'Facebook' page containing the presentation given to GC years ago – the principles are still the same, namely a clear vision for education and especially for the area. In short, you should: (i) Provide excellent resources, (ii) Retain the excellent qualities in our small schools (iii) Implement a proposal which takes into consideration our unique and Welsh rural area.	1	As is included in the Consultation Document, you refer to Option 3 of creating a network of collaboration between Clogau, Friog, Ganllwyd, Ieuan Gwynedd, Dinas Mawddwy, Dolgellau Primary and Gader schools. The options appraisal in the same document you would see that there are many reasons for not selecting Option 3 e.g. Informal collaboration is not effective, no investment revenue is happening in the area to improve resources at the sites, problems in recruiting head teachers and a governing body for each school (see page.27-32 in the Consultation Document).
13.3	Move Year 6 or those with the ability to move forward to Ysgol y Gader. Maybe be flexible with this?	1	Many different options were considered early on, including placing all primary pupils on one site in the catchment (one large primary school) or locating part of the primary age pupils from the catchment on the secondary school site. These were not deemed feasible.  As part of the proposed option there could be occasions where some of the primary pupils (including year 6) visit the secondary site. There are many options for airing and discussing, and it is a matter for the Governing Body in conjunction with the new Head to discuss the details.
13.4	The proposer, in section 4 of the consultation document, has included details of several models under consideration by the Council. Statutory consultation document clearly outlines the advantages and disadvantages of the models. The statutory consultation document includes details of the 'full appraisal of the options' put forward by the proposer.	1	In any process such as this, it is essential to consider all options carefully and weigh the pros and cons of any model which is contained in the Full Evaluation of Options.
13.5	Use Brithdir as a site - Brithdir did not appear in any of the 8 options, apart from 'do nothing'.	1	Because Brithdir site has been extensively researched previously and that decision has been made to bring the process to an end for many reasons, it was necessary to take a fresh look at the situation in the Gader catchment area and consider options new. This is what was done by drawing up a long list and then a short list of options.
13.6	Section 5:3, page 37 English document – incorrect statistics.	1	The statistics are not incorrect but we accept that the last line of the table should read 'number of pupils attending schools in the catchment area' rather than 'total of the catchment area' which gives the impression that it is pupils who live in the Gader catchment area that are in question.

13.7	<p>We strongly feel that this school has not been treated fairly and that the proposal in hand, along with the insufficient funding, is likely to cause distressing obstacles. Considering the length of the process in this area, we feel that by now respect and recognition should be shown by investing strongly for the sake of future. In order for a plan of this type to work, fair and equal resources should be ensured for every pupil (not just a few) and you should avoid planning for a situation with the immense challenge for the governors of the new school of ensuring quality and consistency across the whole catchment area. It is essential that the choice of rural education is of core importance in the catchment area.</p>	1	<p>The Council is aware and understands the frustration of people in the Gader catchment area taking into account that no offer has been implemented so far and that negotiations continue. The nature of school reorganisation, developing models and the consultation process means that it is possible to modify and change plans during the way forward as time progresses. Depending on the Cabinet's decisions, the aim is to implement the proposed offer by September 2017.</p> <p>Given the economic climate there is significant financial investment being made to develop sites in the catchment area. However, it is not possible to upgrade all sites to be the same.</p> <p>By investing £ 4.34m of capital funding to upgrade sites the Council is committed to ensuring a learning environment of the highest quality. In addition to this work, Friog, Gader and Dinas Mawddwy sites receive backlog maintenance payments for improvement. The total after-use expenditure maintenance is £491,000. This means that the council is committed to investing £4,831,000 by September 2017 to ensure the best possible standard of learning if the All-through Catchment School is established.</p>
13.8	<p>The original consultation in 2011 favoured the Brithdir site, one reason for this is that Ysgol Brithdir is the only school within the catchment area with no surplus places – an increase of 114% in pupils has occurred between 1975 – 2011. The school is full to overflowing, and in contrast, Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd has the second highest number of surplus places in the catchment area – it is as high as 60% now (the capacity of the school is 45, in 2013 the number on the register was 15, and only six between 3-7 years of age) with the prediction that the number will be 71% by 2017.</p>	4	<p>This is no small expenditure; a significant investment is being made in the area. Dolgellau Primary, Llanelltyd and Rhydymain sites will receive investment to upgrade so that children receive their education in an educational establishment appropriate for the 21st century. Maintenance backlog for Friog, Dinas Mawddwy and Y Gader school sites will also be completed.</p>
13.9	<p>Pupils attend schools outside their catchment area. One concern that the Council has is that 29% (average, May 2011) children of school age attend school outside the catchment area where they live (e.g. Ysgol Brithdir (26) 40%; Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd (7) 37%, 2012/13). Considering that many more children (84%) live closer to the school in Brithdir than to the school in Rhydymain, how will closing Ysgol Brithdir and moving its pupils to Ysgol IG – which is much further from their natural catchment area – solve this problem and how can the Council ensure that the school in Rhydymain will be sustainable for the future?</p>	4	<p>The Council is aware that the 2011 proposal included the Brithdir site as part of the consultation. Unfortunately, developing the Brithdir School site is not a possible option now. The numbers of pupils and empty spaces are some of the factors considered as part of the evaluation options and the Council is aware of the numbers in Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd at present.</p>
13.10	<p>Number of schools within the model which have surplus places: It is very possible that pupil numbers, despite the reorganisation, will continue to fall in Ysgol IG, at least 3 out of the 4 rural primary schools (IG, Dinas Mawddwy and Friog schools) will then have surplus places. With such a restrictive model, how can the Council expect it to work on this basis and how will it explain this to the Welsh Government and to the Education and Skills Minister?/ How can the Council expect parents to have faith in this model with Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd, Rhydymain (Ysgol</p>	3	<p>During the schools reorganisation discussions the catchment has been clear on the desire to continue with rural education. As a result the Council is committed to keeping rural education as an option and doing so by including Rhydymain site as part of the preferred model. This means that there is a rural education option for the East of the catchment area. The sustainability of the Rhydymain site will become more viable following the investment to extend. If the local desire is to keep rural education, the hope is that parents will support the educational Rhydymain site. By bringing children of the local areas (Machreth, Brithdir and Rhydymain) together on one site, it is hoped that the school will be</p>

	<p>IG) starting on such a shaky foundation in terms of numbers, and considering that two other schools within the new model (Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy and Ysgol Friog) also have a substantial number of surplus places and uncertain forecasts in terms of numbers for the future? / How can choosing a school that is already facing ruin with only 18 pupils over a school which is flourishing (Brithdir – 45 pupils) and with excellent prospects for the future, be a viable answer? And how can choosing a school which will certainly have more surplus places in the future be viable in terms of the cost of the provision? / The Council predicts (background Information Pack 16/09/14) that there will be 127 fewer children in the catchment area in general by September 2016 – total at present is 764 – prediction 637 – a further reduction of around 17%. Ysgol Brithdir has no surplus places (0%) and an increase of 114% has occurred in pupil numbers between 1975 and 2011. Ysgol IG has the second highest number of surplus places in the catchment area – it has now reached 60% (capacity of the school is 45, in 2013 there were 18 pupils on the register, and only six pupils aged between 3 and 7 years) with predictions that it will reach 71% by 2017. In the light of this information, and the fear that the Council cannot attract pupils from outside the catchment area in the future due to distance, how can the Council ensure that Ysgol IG is sustainable for the future?</p>		<p>prosperous. If the parents of the town continue to choose rural education for their children, despite the distance, this will further contribute to the sustainability of the site.</p> <p>As the Council is committed to keeping rural education and want to limit travel times to match County and National policy, full consideration has been made linked to which sites will be offered as part of the subsequent school catchment area.</p> <p>In terms of distances to sites, free transport will be provided in accordance with the transport policy to enable pupils to reach Rhydymain. As stated in the statutory consultation document, there will be a need to modify the transport policy slightly to recognizing multi-site component of the proposed school, to read that the County provides free transport for pupils under the following circumstances:  <i>"Primary Aged Pupils – for pupils who live 2 miles or more from their catchment area school site, or the nearest school site.</i>  <i>Secondary Aged Pupils - for pupils under 16 who live 3 miles or more from their catchment area school site or nearest school site. "</i></p> <p>In addition, it has become clear that some pupils who live in the catchment area of the existing Brithdir School live closer to Dolgellau Primary site compared to the Rhydymain site. As the Council is planning places for all Brithdir, Ieuan Gwynedd and Machreth pupils in Rhydymain site, specific reference to old school catchment areas is recommended so that pupils of the catchment areas have free transport to Rhydymain (if they live more than 2 miles from the site). The area in question would map on the right:</p> 
13.11	<p>Is £255,000 per year a substantial saving? Considering the intention of spending £4.34m (not counting maintenance costs) and the fact that the expected savings will be around £255,000 per year, it would take 17 years to regain the investment made on a model which is unsustainable and foolhardy in the opinion of many people. Is this wise use of public money in the present financial climate?</p>	3	<p>The Council considers that the expected savings of £255,625 is significant. Capital investment (one-off expenditure) of £2.54m will be made by the Council and £1.8m from the Welsh Government to upgrade the catchment area schools sites thus ensuring process and sustainable model for the future. Financial factors are considered one of the factors when comparing models as well as educational and building condition and suitability. The Council is committed to investment to ensure that the sites are suitable for educational</p>

			<p>purposes in the future.</p> <p>In the current unprecedented financial climate, with the possibility that the schools budget will not be protected in the next few years, saving £255,625 will ensure this will help minimize any budgetary cuts in Gwynedd schools.</p>
13.12	<p>Staff protection: One of the major concerns that the Council has is the cost of Staffing Protection. According to Council statistics (Background Information Pack for the Cabinet 16/09/14), 6 out of the 9 primary schools receive minimum staffing protection (almost £200k in 2013/14) to ensure minimum staffing even in small schools. Staffing protection in Brithdir is £6,109, and for Dinas Mawddwy, Ysgol Machreth and Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd it is £105, 507. Staffing protection for Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd Rhydymain is £39,908. Under the new model, I would think that at least 2 out of the 5 primary schools will continue to receive substantial protection. Where are the permanent savings here? / Brithdir does not receive staffing protection and the cost per pupil is low compared to Rhydymain</p>	5	<p>A saving calculation of £255,625 after considering funding the All-through School sites in full ensures the provision of education across the catchment area.</p> <p>The allocation of Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd equates to £10,616 per pupil. This includes minimum staffing protection of £45,201 and allocation of the value £29,750 for pupils with Additional Learning Needs).</p> <p>In establishing an All-through School allocation formula we will consider the need to provide multi-site provision, to ensure the provision of education across the catchment area.</p>
13.13	<p>It is an insult and a disappointment for Ysgol Brithdir on the eastern side of the catchment area that the Council intends to close our school with a cost per head which is substantially lower than the rest of the rural schools in the catchment area and which does not have a safety net.</p>	1	<p>It is true that Brithdir School has lower cost per head for the rural schools and does not receive minimum staffing protection. The cost per head and staff protection is part of the financial considerations, and a financial issue is one of several factors considered when comparing models. The preferred option is not selected based on fiscal matters only.</p>
13.14	<p>How much has the School Reorganisation process cost over more than a decade? Considering this, what 'savings' will be made?</p>	1	<p>The Council has committed to fund the organisation of schools so as to ensure a sustainable future for the educational system in line with the objectives of the restructuring strategy. It is true that not all savings will be realised immediately because there is the need to pay by one-off costs of realising the plan.</p> <p>Considering the economic climate, the savings created means that the cuts which will affect the rest of the County's schools is lower compared to the cuts that would have been made if the reorganisation of schools would not happen at all.</p>
13.15	<p>Almost certain that the pupil numbers, despite reorganisation, will continue to fall at Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd, and that at least 3 of the 4 rural primary schools (Ieuan Gwynedd, Dinas Mawddwy and Friog schools) will then have surplus places. With such a restrictive and scattered model, how can the Council expect it to work and how will the Council explain this to the Welsh Government and to the Minister for Education and Skills when the time comes? / If numbers continue to</p>	2	<p>The 'out-of-catchment' movement is of no concern to the Council but it is one important factor that needs to be kept in mind when planning educational places in the area for the future. During discussions of school reorganisation, a number of people have communicated the need to continue the provision of rural education and this is what the Council is trying to do to by continuing with 4 rural primary sites.</p> <p>Plenty of places are being planned in Llanelltyd for existing pupils of Ganllwyd, Clogau and</p>

	fall after the reorganisation, will the Council then close Ysgol IG and restrict the choice for parents still further? / If Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd fails the new model will collapse and who will be accountable?		Llanelltyd and plenty of places being planned in Rhydymain for existing pupils in Machreth, Brithdir and Ieuan Gwynedd. In terms of numbers on Rhydymain site, primary pupils who live in the catchment areas of existing schools Machreth, Brithdir and Ieuan Gwynedd and over 2 miles of the Rhydymain site get transport unpaid. Looking at the numbers in September 2013, 48 pupils were living in the catchment areas here. This means that there could be 48 pupils on the site without considering those 'out-of-catchment' pupils who attend the sites at this time.
13.16	One concern that the Council has is that 29% (average, May 2011) children of school age attend school outside the catchment area where they live (e.g. Ysgol Brithdir (26) 40%; Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd (7) 37%, 2012/13). Considering more children (84%) live closer to Brithdir school than Rhydymain school, how will closing Ysgol Brithdir and moving its pupils to Ysgol IG – which is much further from their natural catchment area – solve this problem and how can the Council ensure that the school in Rhydymain will be sustainable for the future?	1	It is not a requirement for the proposal to go to the Minister for Education and Skills for a final decision. It is possible for it to go but according to the Schools Organization Code (006/2013), only a few cases will be referred. Receiving objections to the statutory notice does not mean that the Minister decides, as happened in the previous proposal (2011).
13.17	Ysgol IG is a choice for Dolgellau parents already, so why are there only 18 pupils there?	1	The hope is by investing and uniting children of Machreth, Brithdir and Ieuan Gwynedd in the Rhydymain site, this will create an educational establishment fit for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century.
13.18	The document predicts that there will be fewer than 15 pupils in three of the primary schools in the coming five years. As a result, these schools will have a head teacher and a senior class assistant only (rather than a head teacher and teacher). The report states that 'this would be very challenging for those individuals trying to uphold educational standards in these schools'. These claims are reasonable.	1	Gwynedd Council is committed to protecting education in the area by ensuring sustainable provision and ensuring that resources are distributed more equitably. The intention is to ensure that any change in the provision of education for the area is resilient enough to meet potential changes in pupil numbers in the future. The reduction in pupil numbers over the last few years has created a significant number of surplus places in the Gader schools' catchment area - a total of 41% (or 248 in number). There are also a number of surplus places in the secondary department, 18% (86 places) which means that the number of vacancies across the catchment is 31% (334 of school places). The projections are a cause for concern as the schools will become very vulnerable; too much pressure will be on the heads as they try to maintain standards and provide quality experiences and opportunities to pupils. The pupils' that will be in the school at that time's personal and social well-being has to be taken into account.
13.19	The proposer has effectively shown how the surplus numbers will also be reduced.	1	The goal here would be to stabilise the numbers of pupils in the whole catchment area by offering flexibility to withstand future demographic changes.
13.20	Since the Council notes savings of £255,000, there must be savings in terms of staff numbers	1	Schools are funded through Allocation Formula established following specific legislation with any financial impact of any adjustment in the organization of schools from the allocation formula.
13.21	Looking at the extensive data produced by the Council, model 8 will close the only school which is full and which is operating within its budget	1	The Council considers that the preferred model is financially sustainable for the future.
13.22	It must be ensured that the funding system will take into consideration the number of sites and the travelling cost for teachers. The first years	1	The £255,625 saving has not considered additional costs for travel from one site to another for the staff, Management Team and the pupils. This is a matter for further discussion with

	will decide the fate of the school.		the head and the shadow governing body if the proposal is implemented.
13.23	I note that the statement that the funding allocation for the new school is 'already being developed' is too ambiguous and open-ended. How can it be claimed that such substantial savings will be made if the allocation for the new school has not been identified? As well as giving details of how the allocation for the new Catchment Area All-through School would be worked out, we need to know how much flexibility the Governing Body will have in terms of directing funds to the various sectors / Could a situation arise where the Body can decide that one or more of the sites is not sustainable and is a burden to the catchment area school budget? / Accept that there will be savings, uncertainty regarding the exact size of the savings, since the formula for the all-through school has not yet been fully developed. It has been emphasised that a long term investment is called for in order to ensure educational success within the area.	2	<p>A saving of £255,625 is calculated after considering funding in full all sites in the All-through School. Fiscal issues will be a matter for the new Head and the permanent Governing Body of the new school - Officers of the Authority will provide guidance to the organisation regarding these issues.</p> <p>It is true that future pupil numbers could decline. The Governing Body would need to consider the financial situation carefully including the Dismissal from Employment due to Surplus Requirements process as every other school if it was raised. The permanent Governing Body could decide that it is unsustainable to maintain a site but it is for the Governing Body to decide on this by taking into account a number of relevant factors including distance to other sites. The Governing Body would be expected to consult closely with the Authority if such a situation arises. Budgetary matters for the new school will be the responsibility of the new Governing Body.</p>
13.24	The experience of UCAC in dealing with the reorganisation of schools is that not enough attention is paid to the cost – in time and money – of travelling from one site to another. This is relevant in terms of staff, the Management Team and the pupils. Has this cost been fully recognised in the financial predictions?	1	The £255,625 saving has not considered additional costs for travel from one site to another for the staff, Management Team and the pupils. This is a matter for further discussion with the head and the shadow governing body if the proposal is implemented.
13.25	Strong feeling that there is a need for the lifelong funding formula to reflect the various challenges faced and not to be merely an extension of the existing funding formula.	1	The lifelong funding formula is in the process of being developed and will be subject to formal consultation with all schools in the new year.
13.26	The pupil numbers at some small schools are so low they are not viable.	1	The Council is aware of this and this is one of the reasons for the case for change.
13.27	In a time of unequalled cuts within the County, we have to ask if the funding needed for the plan to succeed is available?	1	The question of capital investment is extremely important in such financially challenging times. Through the '21 <sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme', the Council has £3.6m for the Gader catchment area which has been approved in principle. Comprehensive business cases will have to be submitted to attract the money. Careful consideration is needed of how to make the best use of investment and as discussed at the meeting of the Cabinet Council in December 2013, as the whole catchment area is being discussed, any additional financial needs are included as part of a review of the asset management plan. The Council is committed to its financial contribution.
<b>14</b>	<b>General</b>		
14.1	We have noted years ago that if the time and money spent on consultation had been put into efforts to attract families, the numbers at the schools would not have fallen so much and the rush to reorganise would not have been so prominent.	1	The scheme proposed in the opinion of the Council creates a sound educational establishment which can withstand future demographic changes.

14.2	No trust or common sense left in Gwynedd Council.	1	Understand that the situation is difficult for the Gader catchment area residents as well as staff members of the schools in the town and in the countryside and that any talk of introducing change is a concern in the current financial climate. The Council would like to assure you that there is a statutory process and that the consultation period has now ended since November 24 <sup>th</sup> . At the Cabinet meeting in January, the Cabinet Members will discuss the response to the consultation and decide whether to proceed with the proposal. Depending what that decision is, it will be necessary then set out a timetable for action.
14.3	Tired and sad that discussions on schools closure is still ongoing – it is disastrous for parents and staff who dedicate precious time to attend meetings / The system so far has created a very uncomfortable situation locally, and led to totally unnecessary stress.	2	
14.4	Not opposed to change	1	The Council is pleased to note this positive comment.
14.5	The Council has got what the Council wanted all these years.	1	The Council has held discussions with local people and followed consultation arrangements in accordance with the statutory procedures. The final decision has not been made yet. There will be an opportunity for people to object if the Cabinet decides to issue a statutory notice.
14.6	As a family we are considering staying in the area – one reason for staying is Ysgol Machreth	1	We fully understand and comprehend the attachment that families have with schools and accept that a period of change can be very difficult and cause concern and uncertainty. Children and young people of the area will be offered high quality education in whichever site they choose to attend.
14.7	I quote from the Report ‘State of the Nation – Social Mobility and Child Poverty’ (2014) and note the need for a plan based on evidence rather than on politics. The political element in the process has restricted the possible options and as a result it will prepare the children for the past rather than for the future. “The Welsh government should improve the quality of evidence on the impact of policies by designing and implementing programmes in a way that enables more rigorous impact evaluation to be built in from the outset” “Progress is being hampered by a lack of outcome measurement, especially in Scotland and Wales: neither parents nor childcare providers are clear on whether children are well prepared to start primary school or not.”	1	The proposed scheme is based on evidence and a full options appraisal.
14.8	It is unfair to rural education in Y Gader catchment area : The parents and children of Ysgol Brithdir would be willing to consider an option where they would have to move to a bigger school with all the latest resources, as happened in the Tywyn area (where Ysgol Brynchrug, which was also almost full, had to close) where the children moved to a new school in Llanegryn; or in the Bala area where Ysgol y Parc had to close but where the children were moved to the more spacious and extended school in Llanuwchllyn. But how can you expect us to accept	1	OM Edwards School received an investment of £1m to upgrade. The development here is very similar to what will be done in Llanelltyd (£1.02m investment) and this is why it was considered they are of interest in the open days.  Penybryn School, Tywyn received investment of £1.47 million to upgrade. Dolgellau Primary receive investment of £2.7million and the improvements at Penybryn give an idea of the kinds of changes that will be offered there, this is why they are considered of interest in the open days.

	that moving to Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd – which is already unpopular in terms of location and with ever decreasing numbers – be better for our children? IT IS NOT FAIR.		
14.9	It is essential that any rural site in the Wnion Valley is sustainable. If the new site is not successful, there will be no rural education to the east of Dolgellau. The sustainability of the Rhydymain site is totally dependent on the numbers in Brithdir. The sustainability of Brithdir as a site is not dependent on anyone since there are no surplus places there. There is no need for a safety net and the cost per pupil is substantially lower than at the other rural schools in the catchment area.	1	As set out in the statutory consultation document, this plan is a long term investment to ensure high quality education in the area in the future, regardless of any demographic changes that the area could face.  If Brithdir is being developed it would be dependent on numbers in Rhydymain and Llanfachreth to be sustainable.
14.10	There is no-one to fight our corner here in Brithdir because of the unique situation of our councillors. Who is aware of our concerns here in Brithdir and will voice our concerns to the Cabinet? We feel that we have no voice, we are isolated and of secondary importance.	1	All responses will be sent to the attention of Cabinet members so that the views of all respondents will be received.
14.11	We kindly ask that Y Gader catchment area be considered for any experimental strategic plans by the County in the future – this in order to enable the development of further collaboration within the catchment area during the period leading up to reorganisation, along with intentional and organised planning.	1	The Council was pleased to note this positive comment. It is key to look creatively and innovatively at education in the whole of Gwynedd for the benefit of children and young people of the County.
14.12	A need for more consultation with the parents of those children coming from outside the catchment area and who attend Ysgol y Gader. Where will parents send their children in the future, in the short term and in the long term, if this scheme goes ahead? I believe that they will choose another school. Integrating catchment area children with ex- catchment area children is a matter which should be considered since this transitional period is still difficult and stressful. The danger is for the ex-catchment area pupils to be at a disadvantage.	1	The document was sent to parents of all pupils in the statutory catchment area. Conducting research into parents' options was not considered to be useful as it would only be a snapshot - parental choice can change in a short time for a number of reasons. The school will welcome pupils from outside the catchment area and is subject to parental choice.
14.13	The strength of a rural school is ex-catchment area pupils. To win ex-catchment area pupils the rural school has to be within easy travelling distance. You will notice that Ysgol Llanelltyd is flourishing with almost 50 children, Ysgol Brithdir also with almost 50 pupils. Two schools within easy reach of the town of Dolgellau (Brithdir is 2 miles from Dolgellau, not 3 as stated in the Consultation Document). The population in rural areas cannot support rural schools any more, and that is why the only schools which still flourish are those close enough for parents who wish their children to receive rural education to transport their children there - Llanelltyd and Brithdir in this case. All	1	Pupil numbers, travel times and distances have been considered as part of the factors in evaluating the options. The Council is aware that a number of qualities favour the Brithdir site; in fact, this is why the site was proposed as part of the previous proposal in 2011. Unfortunately, the Council needed to consider other sites.

	<p>this research work has been carried out – how do you therefore disregard a site such as Brithdir in this option?</p>		
14.14	<p>In order to give this model a chance to be viable, the right locations have to be selected. Parents have the right to choose sending their children to any school, be it a Church or community school, an urban or a rural school. In order that the rural aspect of the model will work, and to ensure that parents have the right to choose a rural school, the correct location has to be selected.</p>	1	<p>The Council has given full consideration to the all-through school catchment sites and considers that the chosen sites are the most suitable. The proposal ensures the continuation of rural education by maintaining four rural sites.</p>