

## REPORT TO THE CABINET

13 January 2015

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Gareth Thomas

**Subject:** The future of special educational needs provision in Meirionnydd and Dwyfor

**Contact officer:** Iwan T Jones – Corporate Director  
Garem Jackson – Education Quality Improvement Officer / Project Lead

---

### The decision sought/purpose of the report

- A) As part of the formal procedures, following a Statutory Notice period, the Cabinet is asked to confirm the proposal to relocate Ysgol Hafod Lon and Uned Tŷ Aran to the new site in Penrhyndeudraeth on 1 September 2016, to increase the school's capacity and add a residential element to the provision.
- B) Allocate additional capital funds to cope with the effect of inflation and therefore avoid having to cut back on some of the essential outputs of the project.

### Local member's views

Any observations by the Local Members will be presented at the meeting.

---

**A) Confirm the proposal to relocate Ysgol Hafod Lon and Uned Tŷ Aran to the new site in Penrhyndeudraeth on 1 September 2016, to increase the school's capacity and add a residential element to the provision.**

#### I. Introduction

- I.1 Following the statutory consultation period a report was submitted to the Cabinet on 16 September 2014 that included the comments of stakeholders and Estyn, and Gwynedd Council's response to them.
- I.2 The Cabinet was requested to consider the report that contained the Council's response to the comments received during the statutory consultation period, in accordance with the requirements of Section 44 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act (Wales) 2013, and to approve conducting a Statutory Notice period on the proposal to relocate Ysgol Hafod Lon and Uned Tŷ Aran to a new site in Penrhyndeudraeth on 1 September 2016, to increase the school's capacity and add a residential element to the provision.
- I.3 The Cabinet approved the recommendation.
- I.4 The Statutory Notice was published on 21 November 2014 and the objection period ended on 19 December 2014. During this period no objections to the proposal were received.

## **2. Statutory Notice**

- 2.1 The Statutory Notice was published on 21 November 2014.
- 2.2 The Statutory Notice was placed in prominent locations at Ysgol Hafod Lon, Y Ffôr, Uned Tŷ Aran, Dolgellau and near the proposed site of the new school in Eryri Business Park, Penrhyndeudraeth.
- 2.3 Paper copies of the Statutory Notice were distributed to relevant governors, staff and parents.
- 2.4 The Notice was placed on the Council's website and e-mailed to other relevant stakeholders, in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (006/2013).
- 2.5 A 28 day period for people to object to the proposal was held following the date of publishing the statutory notice (21 November – 19 December 2014).
- 2.6 No objections were received during this objection period.
- 2.7 As no objections were received, the Cabinet is asked to approve the recommendation to relocate Ysgol Hafod Lon and Uned Tŷ Aran to a new site in Penrhyndeudraeth on 1 September 2016, to increase the school's capacity and add a residential element to the provision.

## **3. Welsh Government Funding**

- 3.1 Following presenting a business case to the Welsh Government we received confirmation that their Capital Investment Panel has approved the application for £6.2m from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme towards capital costs of developing the new provision.

## **B) Allocate additional capital funds to cope with the effect of inflation and therefore avoid having to cut back on some of the essential outputs of the project**

- 4.1 A report was presented to the Informal Cabinet on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014 noting that, following the tender process under OJEU rules, the tender that came to the fore was around £0.9m above the original project budget of £12.4m. It was reported that inflation was the main reason for this, noting that a significant inflation of 9.4% had occurred over the last year in the field of building specifically in this area.
- 4.2 Before Christmas, a formal negotiation process to try and reduce the cost was conducted with the companies that had presented tenders. It was recognised that it would not be possible to reach a figure within the original budget without cutting back on some of the essential outputs of the project i.e reduction in the specialist resources, reduction in school places, discard the residential unit etc, and cuts of this nature would be likely to affect the business case and create a risk of having to re-conduct the consultation process and present a new business case to the Welsh Government. This would result in adding a number of months to the project timetable.
- 4.3 However, following negotiations, we have been able to reduce the gap from £0.95m to £0.55m.

- 4.4 During the same period an application was presented to the Welsh Government for 50% of the shortfall. The Welsh Government have informed us that they will not be in a position to make a decision on this until late January 2015.
- 4.5 Because we won't know if the Welsh Government will be contributing additional funding until after the Cabinet meeting, the amount the Council needs to allocate is unclear at this point. We know that the shortfall has decreased and, at worst, the amount will be £0.55m. If a contribution of 50% is received from the Welsh Government then the amount will decrease further to £0.275m.

## **5. SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS**

- 5.1 If the Cabinet approves the recommendation to relocate Ysgol Hafod Lon and Uned Tŷ Aran to a new site in Penrhyndeudraeth on 1 September 2016, to increase the school's capacity and add a residential element to the provision, we will notify the Welsh Government and other relevant bodies of the final decision.
- 5.2 There will be a transitional period between the final decision and the implementation of the proposal on 1 September 2016. During this transitional period there will be support available to the head teacher, staff, governors, parents and children who are affected by the proposal.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 As no objections were received to the Statutory Notice, in accordance with section 49 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, the Cabinet is requested to approve the proposal to relocate Ysgol Hafod Lon and Uned Tŷ Aran to the new site in Penrhyndeudraeth on 1 September 2016, to increase the capacity of the school and add a residential element to the provision.
- 6.2 Approve the allocation of between £0.275m and £0.55m additional capital funding to cope with the effects of inflation on the Ysgol Arbennig Meirion Dwyfor project.

## **STATUTORY OFFICERS' VIEWS**

### **Chief Executive's comments:**

This is a further step in the process of improving the provision for children and young people with special educational needs in Meirionnydd and Dwyfor, following public consultation. I warmly welcome the development.

### **Monitoring Officer:**

This report has been subject to guidance from the Legal Department and therefore I have no further comments to offer regarding its propriety.

### **Head of Finance Department:**

The financial model has not changed from the perspective of costs and revenue savings since the previous report to the Cabinet on 16 September 2014. That report estimated “potential” annual savings of £101,574, but I noted at the time that there is a risk that there is no assurance that the relevant income can be attracted from outside the county and that I understood that the Education Department and the Children and Supporting Families Department have thoroughly considered the plan within their savings strategy, and are clear that those departments will be responsible for identifying any shortfall in the operating costs of the new school. Since the purpose of Recommendation 'A' is to formalise the arrangements that have already received thorough attention I have no further comments on this aspect.

With regard to Recommendation 'B', the Cabinet will see from the report that the Welsh Government has approved the request for a contribution of £6.2m towards the capital costs, but after the tender process, there is a shortfall of £550,000 in the capital budget. We will not know until January if our request for further assistance from the Welsh Government is successful, but in the meantime if the Cabinet approves the additional amount of up to £550,000 this additional requirement will be considered in the context of the priorities of the Asset Management Plan. It is seen from the report that there was originally a funding gap of £950,000 and I would like to record my appreciation to those who have been negotiating to bring the price down without, it appears, affecting the quality of education for the pupils.

### **APPENDICES**

(Can be viewed on the Council's website by following the links below)

#### **1) Cabinet Report 10 June 2014**

[https://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/en/Council/Councillors-and-committees/Meetings,-minutes-and-agendas/Meetings,-minutes-and-agendas.aspx?pwylgor=/2014-15/Cabinet\\_Cabinet/2014-06-10](https://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/en/Council/Councillors-and-committees/Meetings,-minutes-and-agendas/Meetings,-minutes-and-agendas.aspx?pwylgor=/2014-15/Cabinet_Cabinet/2014-06-10)

#### **2) Cabinet Report 16 September 2014**

[https://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/en/Council/Councillors-and-committees/Meetings,-minutes-and-agendas/Meetings,-minutes-and-agendas.aspx?pwylgor=/2014-15/Cabinet\\_Cabinet/2014-09-16](https://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/en/Council/Councillors-and-committees/Meetings,-minutes-and-agendas/Meetings,-minutes-and-agendas.aspx?pwylgor=/2014-15/Cabinet_Cabinet/2014-09-16)

#### **3) Statutory Notice**

<https://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/en/Residents/Documents-Residents/Schools-and-learning-documents/Reorganisation/Ysgol-Arbennig-Meirion-Dwyfor/Statutory-Notice.pdf>