

## **CABINET REPORT**

February 19, 2015

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Gareth Thomas

**Subject:** Reorganisation of the Education Provision in Y Berwyn Catchment Area

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

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### **The resolution sought / purpose of the report**

The purpose of this report is to ask the permission of the Council Cabinet to proceed with implementing the statutory measures that will complete the school reorganisation process in Y Berwyn catchment area. Specifically:

1. To obtain the permission of the Council Cabinet to undertake statutory consultation in accordance with Section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013 in Y Berwyn catchment area on the favoured model, namely the proposal to close Ysgol Beuno Sant, Ysgol Bro Tegid and Ysgol Y Berwyn in the town of Y Bala, and to establish a 3-19 Lifelong School (“Lifelong Campus”) on the existing site at Ysgol Y Berwyn.
2. Obtain the permission of the Council Cabinet to undertake a statutory consultation on the federation of the three rural schools in Y Berwyn catchment area, namely Ysgol Bro Tryweryn, Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and Ysgol OM Edwards, in accordance with the provisions of the Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014.

These two matters require two separate decisions. Even so, they are both associated with the reorganisation of education provision in Y Berwyn catchment area, and thus appropriate for consideration within the same Cabinet report.

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### **Views of the local members**

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

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This report requires two decisions, namely:

- i. Permission from the Council Cabinet to commence a period of statutory consultation on the proposal to reorganise the education provision in Y Berwyn catchment area before completing the process of school reorganisation in Y Berwyn catchment area. We ask that the Cabinet decides on:
  - (1) The favoured model on which to hold a statutory consultation, and
  - (2) The legal category for that model (Community, Voluntary Controlled (VC) or Voluntary Aided (VA)).

- ii. Permission from the Council Cabinet to undertake a statutory consultation on the federation of three rural schools in Y Berwyn catchment area, namely Ysgol Bro Tryweryn, Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and Ysgol OM Edwards.

The two matters call for separate decisions, since the two statutory processes to be followed are specific statutory processes and are subject to different systems and processes.

- 1.2 The Council has implemented the strategy '*Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd*' since it was adopted in April 2009. At its meeting of 9 October 2012, the Cabinet decided on a '*Priorities Plan - Reorganisation of Education Provision*', based on this strategy.
- 1.3 In accordance with the strategy '*Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd*' discussions have been held since 2009 on the provision of education in Y Berwyn catchment area.
- 1.4 A report was submitted to the Full Council on July 15, 2010 regarding the reorganisation of education in Y Berwyn catchment area. The report is relevant to this current report and a copy is included in the background pack. Copies of other relevant papers can be viewed on the Council website at: [www.gwynedd.gov.uk/schoolorganisation](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/schoolorganisation) and [www.gwynedd.gov.uk/thecabinet](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/thecabinet).
- 1.5 A period of statutory consultation was held between 13 December 2010 and 4 February 2011.
- 1.6 A further report was submitted to the Full Council on 12 May 2011, and agreement was reached on the following recommendations:
  - i. approve the proposal for the closure of Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol Y Berwyn on 31 August 2015
  - ii. approve the proposal to establish a Community School on the sites of Ysgol Y Berwyn and Ysgol Beuno Sant to receive pupils between the ages of 3-19 as part of the proposal to establish a Lifelong Learning Campus in Y Bala, to open on 1 September 2015
  - iii. approve the closure of Ysgol y Parc by 31 August 2012, to provide places for those pupils in Ysgol OM Edwards, Llanuwchllyn, and to upgrade the building at Ysgol OM Edwards
- 1.7 Between 2010 and 2012, the methods used by the Welsh Government for funding large projects were changed and there was uncertainty regarding the availability of funding for the Lifelong Learning Campus in Y Bala. The Council decided to guarantee the funding for the improvements at Ysgol OM Edwards, but no further steps were taken over reorganisation in the remainder of the catchment area.
- 1.8 Ysgol Y Parc closed on August 31 2013, and improvements to Ysgol OM Edwards were completed by September 2013.
- 1.9 After a period of delay, a further report was submitted to the Cabinet on 1 April 2014, when a decision was reached:
  - i. To approve permission to extend the work and enable the formation of a range of models which would greet strategic, managerial and / or governing aspects for the catchment area in its entirety, with the aim of submitting specific recommendations for statutory consultation in accordance with Section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013

- ii. Authorise an assessment to be undertaken in order to identify and measure the need for education provision of a specific category and designation within the catchment area and to meet the requirements of the process of identifying the recommendations noted in i. above.
- iii. Since one of the schools in the catchment area is a voluntary aided Church in Wales school (VA), in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2013, delegate the right to hold a pre consultation meeting with the Church in Wales to the Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Young People.

1.10 Following this, the Catchment-area Review Panel (CRP) was re-established and meetings were held on 6 May 2014 and 14 January 2015. During this period, 3 other meetings were held to discuss educational matters and education with the head teachers of the catchment area schools.

1.11 The Panel discussed a wide range of evidence, including the statistics at the various schools, financial background, and the new regulations which have been introduced on establishing federations between schools.

1.12 Varied discussions took place between April 2014 and January 2015. Although Ysgol OM Edwards was part of the previous reorganisation, this school was included in the discussions for developing different models for further consideration. A long list of possible options was compiled for the reorganisation of schools in the catchment area and the list included several variations of the following:

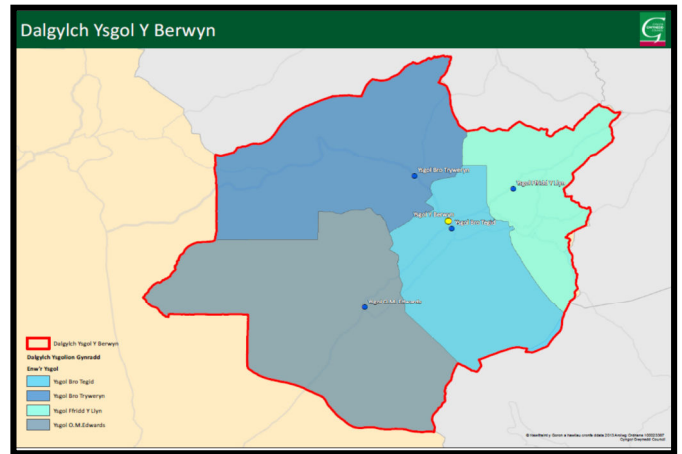
- Do nothing
- Area School(s)
- Multi Site Area School(s)
- Lifelong Campus in Y Bala only
- Catchment Area Lifelong Campus
- Collaboration between schools
- Close some schools and transfer pupils to neighbouring schools
- Federation – some schools or all schools in the catchment area
- Federation between the rural schools and the Lifelong Campus
- Collaboration Trust between Ysgol Beuno Sant (VA School) and the other school
- Lifelong Learning Campus in the town of Bala, and various methods of collaboration / federation with the rural schools.

1.13 The most recent CRP meeting was held on 14 January 2015 when background studies based on the entire catchment area were presented. These included a long list of models, the proposed way forward (i.e. the direction at present) and an explanation of the statutory processes.

1.14 Through the Welsh Government programme - 'The Twenty First Century Schools Programme', a sum of £9.27million has been earmarked for Y Berwyn catchment area (contribution of £4.635m from the Welsh Government, £4.635m from Gwynedd Council). In order to attract the funding, a comprehensive business plan will have to be submitted in three stages. The first stage of the business plan has been approved by the Welsh Government, but the sustainability of the rural schools and the post-16 provision was strongly challenged. Although the Welsh Government has been convinced for the present of the need to keep the rural provision and also the post-16 provision in the catchment area, these matters could be raised again as stages 2 and 3 of the business plan are submitted.

## 2 THE PRESENT SITUATION IN Y BERWYN CATCHMENT AREA

2.1 Y Berwyn catchment area includes 6 schools. There is one secondary school for pupils aged 11-19, (Ysgol Y Berwyn), and 5 primary schools. The primary schools are Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol Bro Tegid in the town of Bala and 3 rural schools namely Ysgol OM Edwards, Llanuwchllyn, Ysgol Bro Tryweryn, Frongoch, and Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn in Cefnddwysarn. Further details regarding the schools are included in the Statistical Pack which is part of the background pack sent to Cabinet members with this report.



- 2.2 The area has been prioritised for a review of the educational provision because of the numerous challenges facing it:
- Pupil numbers in the catchment area have diminished over the last quarter of a century. Therefore pupil numbers are low, although constant and consistent at present in most schools within the catchment area.
  - The cost per pupil in the majority of primary schools in the catchment area is slightly higher than the County average of £3,856, and in Ysgol Y Berwyn as it stands at £5,174 as compared to the county secondary school average of £4,623
  - There is a range of between £3,378 - £4,202 in the cost per primary pupil within the catchment area
  - There are two primary schools in the town of Y Bala and both are situated fairly close together. This signifies ineffective use of resources
  - The three schools in the town of Y Bala are under a Head Teacher in Care or receiving help from the head teachers of the rural schools.
  - There is inconsistency in the quality of the education within the catchment area, especially in the schools within the town.
  - The buildings at Ysgol Beuno Sant, Ysgol Bro Tegid and Ysgol Y Berwyn are not in the best condition and neither are they suitable for twenty first century teaching and learning. The building at Ysgol Y Berwyn in particular is in very poor condition – it has deteriorated considerably and has an accrued maintenance expenditure amounting to £1,233,000
  - Ysgolion Beuno Sant has 48% surplus places and Ysgol Y Berwyn has 57% surplus places. In contrast to this, Ysgol Bro Tegid is full and pupil numbers exceed its capacity.
  - There is a need to ensure viability and sustainability for the educational system in the catchment area for the future.

## 3 RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS – CHOOSING A MODEL

- 3.1 Prior to compiling the long list, a number of models were considered. The philosophy behind the models was to study each one of the 6 schools in the catchment area with the aim of discovering ways of improving and maintaining the standard of education within the catchment area.
- 3.2 The models included:
- a. Models of collaboration/ federation between some or all of the existing schools without any closures.
  - b. Models of collaboration/ federation between schools after the closure of some schools

- c. Closing some primary schools and transferring the pupils to neighbouring schools with no capital investment or collaboration between the remaining schools
- d. Closing some primary schools and transferring the pupils to neighbouring schools with no capital investment, and establishing a system of collaboration between the remaining schools
- e. Closing some primary schools and establishing an area school / area schools following capital investment
- f. Closing some rural primary schools and establishing a multi site area school / multi site area schools following capital investment
- g. Establishing one school for the primary pupils of the entire catchment area on one site, the site of an existing school or a new site.
- h. Establishing one all-through school for pupils aged 3-19 on one site for all the pupils in the catchment area
- i. Establishing an all-through school for pupils aged 3-19 on the site of Ysgol Y Berwyn for primary pupils from the town of Bala only
- j. Establishing an all-through school for pupils aged 3-19 on more than one site
- k. Establishing an all-through school for pupils aged 3-19 for the whole catchment area on a number of sites

3.3 The above list is a summary, since many of the models considered included different variations and combinations depending on what schools and sites would be chosen. The main models are described in more detail below.

#### 3.4 **Informal Collaboration Model**

3.4.1 Informal collaboration has its advantages, and to some extent it is already in practice in the catchment area.

3.4.2 The advantages of this type of model would be ensuring that the education provision would continue on every site where education is provided at present. This would safeguard the rural communities. There would be opportunities for sharing expertise, resources and good practice.

3.4.3 However, informal collaboration to a degree depends on goodwill and if a number of schools are involved, on different personalities and attitudes. This can make the collaboration vulnerable as school leaders within the catchment area change. Successful collaboration at strategic catchment area level is difficult in the long term since agreement and co-operation between as many as 6 schools, head teachers, and governing bodies would be required.

3.4.4 Another disadvantage of collaboration is the fact that it would not solve the problem of falling pupil numbers or the situation regarding the high number of surplus places in individual schools, pupil numbers and age range in existing classes, high level of teaching time for head teachers and neither would it lead to financial savings. There would be no difference to the learning environment and the maintenance cost would remain for the same number of old and unsuitable buildings.

#### 3.5 **Federation Model**

3.5.1 Federation means a formal collaboration arrangement between schools. The schools share one governing body, but at the same time retain their legal status as separate entities, their financial allocation, name and school uniform, and continue to undergo their own Estyn inspection. This means that federation enables each school to retain its own individual character within a strong

and formal partnership. In rural areas where there is a thriving rural community a federation could balance the need to ensure the viability of these schools for the future – by protecting the uniqueness and identity of the rural communities they serve. The Penllyn area is well known for the cultural vitality that stems from the traditional way of life in the area.

- 3.5.2 The structure of the governing system shared through a federation will allow schools to:
- Collaborate in an effective and sustainable way to raise standards and improve opportunities for pupils and staff
  - Share resources, expertise and equipment and offer the children wider social experiences
  - Use more strategic management structures
  - Strengthen and ensure consistency in the collaboration that exists between schools at present
- 3.5.3 Federation does not bring substantial financial savings to Local Authorities, but it can alleviate the financial burden of schools through sharing resources and distributing them conveniently across the federation. In a period of cuts to school budgets, this is a factor that could become increasingly important.
- 3.5.4 Since the Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014 came into force, it is not possible to federate schools with charity status with schools that have Community status. Therefore it would not be possible to establish a federation between a Church status school and a Community status school.

### 3.6 **Area School Model**

- 3.6.1 An Area School is defined as a school which replaces other schools by the establishment of one new school to serve a wide area and becomes the legal entity which replaces them. For example, if there was an Area School in Y Berwyn catchment area, it is likely that it would be a Lifelong School for ages 3-19, located centrally in the town of Bala and providing education for the whole catchment area. The existing schools in the town and in the rural areas would close.
- 3.6.2 It is this model that offers the most substantial revenue savings and capital expenditure, but this model also requires the highest investment in the short term. It would also make the cost per pupil in a catchment area consistent and impact the size and age range within classes, meaning that the Head Teacher and senior managers could prioritise their time for leadership and management purposes rather than teaching. This model also reduces the number of surplus places.
- 3.6.3 There are some disadvantages. Pupils might have to travel further to school. In Y Berwyn catchment area, for a number of pupils, this could mean a journey of over 45 minutes from their home to school since many of them live in rural and remote communities where the travelling times would often be longer than what the distance suggests. Also, a number of pupils travel to Y Berwyn from outside the County and the catchment area border, from the communities of Llangwm and Edeirnion mainly.
- 3.6.4 Also, considerable travelling means high transport costs which reduces the revenue savings, and means that money is being spent on a resource that does not directly lead to improving the quality of education. This is particularly true in an area as rural as Y Berwyn catchment area, where a number of pupils live in scattered communities, often quite a distance from the main road.

3.6.5 This model also has a negative effect on the communities which lose the presence of a school.

### 3.7 **Multi Site Area School Model**

3.7.1 This model is a variation on the Area School. The school is one school and one legal entity which serves a wide area. However, in contrast to the area school, a multi-site area school provides education on a number of sites.

3.7.2 The benefit of this type of model is that the managerial system can be re-structured whilst still retaining the presence of education in more than one community. It is a model which can work well in very rural areas where the distance to another school is very far to travel. Also it means that the sites of small schools are not left isolated but instead are part of a larger educational establishment. Therefore, better use can be made of resources e.g. one head teacher for more than one site, sharing resources and staff between sites and bringing the pupils of different sites together to hold events with a higher number of pupils. The model also affords revenue savings and keeps the presence of a school site in more communities.

3.7.3 There are disadvantages to this model too. It is not possible to ensure that the size and age range of classes in some educational establishments will change for the better. The model does not give the highest possible revenue savings (very often there are more savings with an Area School), but it makes better use of resources and rationalises the cost per pupil. This model also has a negative effect on the communities which lose the unique presence, identity and character of a school. It can also weaken the relationship between school and parents, the school and its community, a relationship which is often of core importance in ensuring a successful school. This would be especially true in Y Berwyn catchment area where there is a strong feeling of community and numerous community and cultural events which are all held entirely and naturally through the medium of Welsh.

### 3.8 **Lifelong School Model**

3.8.1 In this case, a Lifelong School is defined as a school for pupils whose ages range from 3-19 years. The main advantage of this model is that it does away with the performance gap which often occurs as children transfer from primary to secondary school. A Lifelong School can be on one or more sites.

3.8.2 One advantages of this model is that it allows flexibility to make the most effective use of funding and resources e.g. make use of secondary teachers' subject expertise to teach specialist subjects to primary pupils, or extend the use of primary literacy and numeracy teaching methods to the secondary sector. The aim would be to close the gap which exists in pupils' attainment levels during the transitional stage from primary to secondary (year 6 to year 7).

3.8.3 It is also possible to ensure consistency in teaching and assessment methods and the opportunities available to pupils, and planning some curricular aspects e.g. numeracy and literacy in terms of the whole school. Also, policies and systems can be standardised and this will increase efficiency.

3.8.4 At the moment there are very few Lifelong Schools in Wales (in September 2014, there were 4) which means that evidence of their success is limited. However, this model has shown successes, for example Ysgol Bro Pedr in Lampeter has shown clear improvement in terms of performance at both primary and at secondary levels during the 2 years that it has been open.

3.8.5 This model forms the core of the favoured model that the Cabinet is asked to approve for statutory consultation. Details of the virtues of this model are given in part 5 of this report.

### 3.9 Catchment Area Lifelong School Model

3.9.1 This model is a variation on the Lifelong School model. The difference is that the school serves the whole catchment area. This can be on one site or on a number of sites, and involves one head teacher, one staff team, one governing body and one budget for the whole catchment area.

3.9.2 This Model would not retain the identity of the rural schools and the strong relationship that exists at present between the rural schools and their communities.

### 3.10 Long List of Possible Models

3.10.1 A long list of options was compiled. Although the case for change had been established, the “Do Nothing” model has been included for comparison reasons:

<b>Model 1</b>	Do nothing
<b>Model 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close Ysgol y Berwyn, Ysgol Bro Tegid and Ysgol Beuno Sant and create a Lifelong Campus (LC) on the existing site of Ysgol y Berwyn, in Bala</li> <li>• Then, create a catchment joint-committee between the LC and the three rural schools, namely Ysgol OM Edwards, Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and Ysgol Bro Tryweryn.</li> </ul>
<b>Model 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close Ysgol y Berwyn, Ysgol Bro Tegid and Ysgol Beuno Sant and create a LC on the existing site of Ysgol y Berwyn, in Bala</li> <li>• Plan to federate the three rural schools, namely Ysgol OM Edwards, Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and Ysgol Bro Tryweryn and then create a catchment joint-committee between the federation and the LC</li> </ul>
<b>Model 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close Ysgol Y Berwyn and Ysgol Bro Tegid and create a LC on the existing site of Ysgol y Berwyn, in Bala</li> <li>• Establish a Local Collaboration Trust between Ysgol Beuno Sant and the LC</li> <li>• OM Edwards, Ffridd y Llyn and Bro Tryweryn schools to continue as present</li> </ul>
<b>Model 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close Ysgol Y Berwyn, Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol Beuno Sant, Ysgol OM Edwards, Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and Ysgol Bro Tryweryn and create a catchment LC on the existing site of Ysgol y Berwyn, in Bala</li> </ul>
<b>Model 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close Ysgol y Berwyn, Ysgol Bro Tegid and Ysgol Beuno Sant and create a LC on the existing site of Ysgol y Berwyn, in Bala</li> <li>• Plan to federate the three rural schools, namely Ysgol OM Edwards, Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and Ysgol Bro Tryweryn with the LC</li> </ul>
<b>Model 7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close Ysgol y Berwyn, Ysgol Bro Tegid and Ysgol Beuno Sant and create a LC on the existing site of Ysgol y Berwyn, in Bala</li> <li>• Close Ysgol OM Edwards, Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn, Ysgol Bro Tryweryn and establish a Multi-site Area School on the existing sites of the three rural schools, namely, Ysgol OM Edwards, Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and Ysgol Bro Tryweryn</li> <li>• Collaboration between the Multi-site Area School and the LC</li> </ul>
<b>Model 8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close Ysgol y Berwyn, Ysgol Bro Tegid and Ysgol Beuno Sant and create a LC on the existing site of Ysgol y Berwyn, in Bala</li> <li>• Close Ysgol OM Edwards, Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and Ysgol Bro Tryweryn and establish a Multi-site Area School on the existing sites of the three rural schools, namely Ysgol OM Edwards, Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and Ysgol Bro Tryweryn</li> <li>• Plan to federate the LC and the rural Multi-site Area School</li> </ul>



### 3.11 Appraisal of Options

3.11.1 During the discussions a document was developed which summarised the various advantages and disadvantages of the models discussed. The different options were appraised and further comparisons of the models were made against factors in the strategy *'Primary Education of the Best Quality for the Children of Gwynedd'*, factors in the Organisation Code, the vision for Y Berwyn catchment area and other relevant factors. The full appraisal of the options can be viewed in **Appendix 1**.

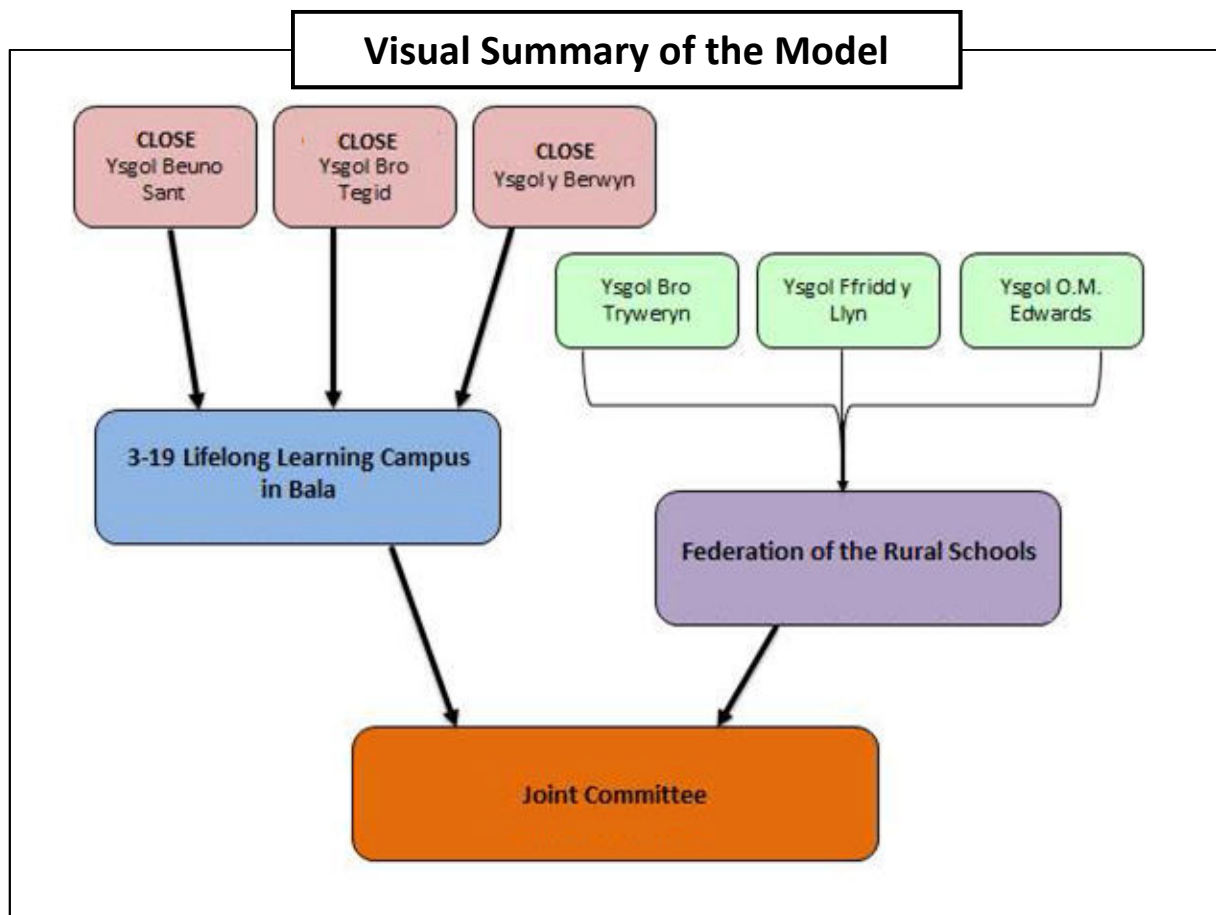
## 4 THE DIRECTION FOR THE CATCHMENT AREA

4.1 The direction suggested at present for the catchment area is **Model 3**:

**Model 3:**  
**Establish a 3-19 Lifelong Campus in Y Bala. Federate Ysgol OM Edwards, Ysgol Bro Tryweryn and Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn. Catchment area joint committee between the Lifelong Campus and the three federated rural schools**

4.2 This means:

- i. Closure of Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol Y Berwyn in the town of Bala, and the establishment of a 3-19 Lifelong Campus (namely a 3-19 Lifelong School) on the site of Ysgol Y Berwyn.
- ii. Federate the rural schools of the catchment area and establish a joint committee between the rural schools and the Lifelong Campus in the town.



- 4.3 After considering a number of factors, this is the favoured option, which includes, but is not restricted to:
- The Quality of the Education
  - The size of classes and age range within classes
  - Pupil numbers and surplus places
  - Learning Environment – quality and suitability of the buildings
  - Status / Category of the School
  - Leadership and Staffing
  - The Community
  - The Welsh language
  - Equality Impact
  - Financial Resources
  - Geographical Factors
  - Local opinion

This model will not close any rural school or have any impact on any of the communities within Y Berwyn catchment area.

- 4.4 In order to achieve this model and the vision for the catchment area, two statutory consultation processes must be implemented – two separate processes which follow specific statutory guidelines.

## **5 CONSIDERATIONS IN ESTABLISHING 3 – 19 LIFELONG CAMPUS IN Y BALA**

- 5.1 One of the main drives behind the reorganisation of education is to improve the quality of education and pupils' experiences.
- 5.2 In using the term Lifelong Campus, what is meant is a 3-19 Lifelong School which includes some elements for the community e.g. library. Establishing a Lifelong Campus in Y Bala would strengthen the urban educational provision. At the moment there are some weaknesses. Ysgol Bro Tegid and Ysgol Beuno Sant at present depend on help from the head teachers from two of the rural schools and this is not sustainable. It is reckoned that an improvement in standards is called for at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 levels at Ysgol Y Berwyn and the school was placed under Band 3 by the Welsh Government in 2013/14; it has been categorised under Amber under the Welsh Government categorisation of schools system in 2015. Ysgol Beuno Sant has been categorised as a school in need of substantial improvement and Estyn is monitoring progress over a period of 12 months which started in April 2014. Ysgol Beuno Sant is also in the Amber category, whilst the remainder of the schools in the catchment area are either in the yellow or the green categories.
- 5.3 Establishing one 3-19 school would enable flexibility across the whole age range so that sharing resources, staff and equipment would become standard practice. These are some of the possibilities:
- Common ethos and values shared across the school
  - Opportunities for teaching across age ranges and sharing activities
  - Planning the curriculum so that there would be more cohesion between primary and secondary age groups
  - The primary curriculum and the timetable across all the schools could be arranged so that all pupils of the same age learn the same subjects at the same time – this would ensure that they are all at the same level when entering Year 7 in the secondary section.

- Primary staff from every school can meet to discuss and share good practices and also to support, encourage and learn from each other
- More access for pupils to a range of buildings, amenities and specialist learning equipment
- Better consistency in the learning and teaching methods
- There would be better progression in every aspect of the curriculum since it would be programmed across the catchment area, ensuring the same experiences and opportunities for every pupil
- More consistency in the learning and teaching methods
- Developing a strong relationship and sharing expertise and equipment between primary and secondary
- Less duplication of work between Key Stages 2 and 3
- The primary and secondary elements managed jointly and a common system of recording and tracing pupils' progress implemented
- As one entity, stronger connections can be formed with parents and with the local community
- By having a united managerial system, more effective use can be made of both financial and human resources.

5.4 The option continues with the post-16 provision in the catchment area. The post-16 provision contributes towards the sustainability of the school, gives added value and benefit to the school, the rural community and the Welsh language.

5.5 An agreement is in place at the moment between Ysgol Y Berwyn and Coleg Meirion Dwyfor in terms of collaboration over the post-16 provision. It will be possible for Coleg Meirion Dwyfor students to attend post-16 courses at Ysgol Y Berwyn, and for Ysgol Y Berwyn pupils to attend courses at the College. Since the partnership is comparatively new, there is room for it to develop over time, and any new Lifelong Campus video conferencing provision will be an important asset in this.

#### 5.6 **Class sizes and age range within classes**

5.6.1 Putting forward the Lifelong Campus Model would make the size of classes for primary age pupils in the town of Y Bala more consistent and would enable more pupils to receive their education in evenly sized groups.

5.6.2 The extremes of age range within classes would also be reduced and this would alleviate the challenges and problems associated with effective teaching and learning in a class where there is a wide age range

#### 5.7 **Pupil numbers and surplus places**

5.7.1 Pupil numbers in the primary schools in the town of Y Bala have fallen considerably since 1980, a reduction of 48% and 43% in Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol Y Berwyn between 1980 and 2014. In contrast, and despite the fact that the three rural schools are comparatively small in size, there has been a constant and substantial growth of 20% at Ysgol Bro Tryweryn, 25% at Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and 29% at Ysgol OM Edwards between 1980 and 2013. The table below shows the number of surplus places in Y Berwyn catchment area.

School	Cost of Surplus Places September 2014		
	Capacity	Surplus Places % and number	Total cost Primary x £262 Secondary x £510
Bro Tegid	95	0	0
Bro Tryweryn	60	18%/11	£2,882
Ffridd y Llyn	71	10%/7	£1,834
Beuno Sant	89	48%/43	£11,266
O.M. Edwards	98	4%/4	£1,048
<b>Primary Total</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>16%/65</b>	<b>£17,030</b>
Y Berwyn	730	57%/413	£210,630
<b>Catchment Area Total</b>	<b>1,143</b>	<b>42%/478</b>	<b>£227,660</b>

- 5.7.2 It shows that there are a number of surplus places in Y Berwyn catchment area, especially in the town of Bala, in Ysgol Y Berwyn and in Ysgol Beuno Sant – 413 in the secondary and 43 in the primary in September 2013, making a total of 456 surplus places in the town of Y Bala.
- 5.7.3 In May 2012, there was a request from the Minister for Education and Skills for Authorities with more than 20% of surplus places in their schools to outline their plans for reducing the number of these surplus places. Further communication came to hand in December 2014 underlining the need for the Council to reduce the number of surplus places. In response, the Council noted its aim to reduce surplus places across the County.
- 5.7.4 If the proposal was implemented the Lifelong Campus would be established with the appropriate capacity for the existing number of pupils and allowances made for changes in the future - at present, a Lifelong Campus with a capacity of approximately 560 pupils – 180 primary and 380 secondary - is predicted.
- 5.7.5 Based on present predictions, implementing the Lifelong Campus in September 2018 would mean reducing the number of surplus places in the catchment area from 42% to 13%. This is a considerable reduction.
- 5.8 Learning environment – quality and suitability of the buildings**
- 5.8.1 The Twenty First Schools Programme by the Welsh Government notes that the learning environment is an important factor in providing education. Estyn also believes that school buildings of quality and a good learning environment can improve pupils' achievement levels. (Appraisal by Estyn of schools performance before and after moving into new buildings or renovated property - 2007).
- 5.8.2 Also, new or revamped buildings mean less expense on building maintenance and heating.
- 5.8.3 The buildings on school sites within Y Berwyn schools catchment area are not in the best condition for teaching and learning in the twenty first century. This is particularly true of Ysgol Y Berwyn.
- 5.8.4 Ysgol Y Berwyn is in very poor condition. The building has deteriorated over a period of time and the school itself is a collection of buildings. Most of the building dates from the 1960s and although modern at that time, it has now become dated. There are flat roofed sections with

long, dark corridors and part of the flat roofs are leaking and showing signs of collapse. The building is expensive to heat and is unfit for purpose since it was designed for 700 pupils.

- 5.8.5 A number of rooms are unsuitable for teaching, since they are of incorrect size and some contain pillars which prevent teacher and pupil visibility. This prevents effective communication and interaction between teacher and pupils. A number of the classrooms are inflexible and there are no suitable corridors to go from one classroom to another without disturbing other classes. The entrance to the site is poor and the public library is at present located at the centre of the school building.
- 5.8.6 Ysgol Bro Tegid and Ysgol Beuno Sant were built in the Victorian era, and although in fairly good condition, the Victorian design is not suitable for modern day teaching. A number of classrooms are not of suitable size and their design prevents pupils from circulating and socialising within the building. The corridors are dark and narrow and the buildings are difficult to heat.
- 5.8.7 Also, Ysgol Beuno Sant has no playing field and the size of the playground is restricted. Although there is a grassed play area in Ysgol Bro Tegid, its size is restricted and a large proportion is used as parking area for the staff since the school has no parking facilities.
- 5.8.8 Both sites are ineffective to run, and are of inappropriate size, Ysgol Bro Tegid being too small and Ysgol Beuno Sant too big for the number of pupils at each site.
- 5.8.9 Ysgol Bro Tryweryn and Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn were constructed in 1970 and 1978, and their design is modern compared to Ysgol Bro Tegid and Ysgol Beuno Sant. Also, both schools have adequate parking facilities and playgrounds and playing fields of acceptable size. Although they are not new schools, none of the two have any suitability defects and no maintenance work is required.
- 5.8.10 Ysgol OM Edwards was extended and upgraded in 2013 as part of the investment already put into the catchment area.

## 5.9 Leadership and Staffing

- 5.9.1 The present staffing situation in the town of Y Bala requires attention and a long term solution found. At present, the Head Teacher of Ysgol Bro Tryweryn is Head Teacher in Care for Ysgol Bro Tegid. The Head Teacher of Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn is also Head Teacher in Care for Ysgol Beuno Sant. Although this arrangement is sustainable for the short term, and although it is a good thing to share the expertise and leadership skills of the two rural head teachers for the benefit of the town pupils, this arrangement is not sustainable in the long term, since it diverts time and resources away from the rural schools.
- 5.9.2 The Lifelong Campus could provide a number of new opportunities arising from a more innovative managerial and leadership structure. Combining all the resources in the area under one "roof" and one staffing structure will lead to many new possibilities.
- 5.9.3 The exact staffing structure at the school needs to be discussed further and this would be a matter to be referred for the attention of the Shadow Governing Body of any Lifelong Campus. The school will be a new entity; therefore a new Shadow Governing Body will need to be established together with a new governing tool, in keeping with current guidelines and regulations. The new Shadow Governing Body will need to appoint the Head Teacher and then all the remaining staff for the school.

- 5.9.4 Establishing a Lifelong Campus will offer career opportunities for teaching staff and for other staff. At the moment, a number of head teachers teach for a high proportion of their time, which reduces the time available for leadership and management purposes. In a larger school, there is more opportunity to release school leaders from their teaching duties in order to focus more closely on the leadership and managerial side and ensure continuous improvement at the school.
- 5.9.5 Also, there will be opportunities for teaching staff to share their expertise with a larger number of pupils and to see the benefits of teaching a smaller age range among pupils in their classes. In addition, in a new establishment there will be exciting opportunities for staff to develop their career.
- 5.9.6 Gwynedd Council acknowledges the importance of strong leadership in a school as a means of maintaining and improving standards. The following steps are in place in order to ensure strong leadership in Gwynedd schools into the future:
- GwE is training one senior manager from every secondary school to develop their own personal leadership skills, and also to develop the middle managers at their schools.
  - Successful schools share good practice and hold Leadership Development days for managers of the remaining schools
  - School to school plans ensure that school leaders collaborate and develop leadership expertise
  - Prospective leaders are encouraged to gain the NPQH qualification
  - Scheme for mentoring Head Teachers
  - Catchment Area Strategic Leader pilot scheme is in place to promote and develop strategic leadership in Gwynedd

## 5.10 Financial Resources

- 5.10.1 The expenditure per pupil varies greatly from school to school. On account of the difficult financial climate which exists at present, it is prudent to make as efficient use as possible of educational resources
- 5.10.2 In the context of efficient management of assets, it makes sense for Gwynedd to have a network of schools which is suitable for the nature of the population and conveniently located across the County, and at the same time provide education which matches and respects the social and economic requirements of the area and its rural nature.
- 5.10.3 In 2014/15, an allocation of £1,310,766 was made to the primary schools of the catchment area. This sum is on average £3,764 per pupil and close to the average cost of £3,856 per pupil for the whole of Gwynedd.
- 5.10.4 In 2014/15, Ysgol Y Berwyn had a cost per pupil of £5,174 which is £4,623 above the County average.
- 5.10.5 By establishing a Lifelong Campus we predict that this could lead towards revenue savings of approximately £62,938 with a possible further efficiency saving of around £23,000 by releasing maintenance funds and managerial costs to be re-utilised within the budget. This means that the project, in its entirety, could lead to over £85,000 in savings. This is in addition to savings of £66,000 have already been made as a result of previous re-organisation in the catchment area.

5.10.6 There will also be notional savings of around £227,660 per year, taking into account the fact that the Welsh Government calculates the cost of surplus places in primary schools at £262 and in secondary schools at £510.

5.10.7 We must acknowledge that national accounting arrangements NNDR (building tax) liability generally increases following a capital investment, but with the NNDR fund being redistributed to local authorities it is reasonable not to consider this issue when calculating revenue savings.

5.10.8 The Welsh Government has approved in principle a contribution of 50% towards the sum of £9.27 million intended as an investment to establish a Lifelong Campus, but this is subject to submission of a successful business case

## 5.11 **Geographical Factors**

5.11.1 In accordance with the strategy, if a Lifelong Campus was established in the town of Bala, there would be no need for any pupil to travel an unreasonable distance to reach an educational site.

5.11.2 Transport would be provided in accordance with the County Transport Policy and because there is no change in the primary school situation, and because the schools due for closure are in the town of Y Bala, no changes to the existing travel arrangements are predicted.

## 6 **OTHER MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED IF A LIFELONG CAMPUS IS TO BE ESTABLISHED**

### 6.1 **Legal category**

6.1.1 In developing this proposal, we must consider the legal category of any new model. In establishing a Lifelong Campus in the town of Y Bala it will be necessary to decide on the legal category of the establishment. In accordance with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, schools are categorised as one of the following:

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

6.1.2 The Council and the Church in Wales are joint providers of education in the Berwyn catchment area. Ysgol Beuno Sant is a Voluntary Aided School (VA) with religious character (Church in Wales). Ysgol Y Berwyn, Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol OM Edwards, Ysgol Bro Tryweryn and Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn, like the remainder of Gwynedd schools, are Community schools. The religious nature and character of a Voluntary Aided (VA) school influences:

- The character of the school
- Membership of the governing body
- Ownership of the site

6.1.3 The table below summarises the differences between community schools, VA schools and VC schools. It is evident that the difference between the Community and VC categories is comparatively small but that the difference is greater in the case of the VA category.

	Community Category	Church Category (Voluntary Controlled School ) (VC)	Church Category (Voluntary Aided School) (VA)
<b>Ownership of the school land and buildings</b>	Local Authority	The Church owns the school building and the Local Authority owns the playing fields	The Church owns the school building and the Local Authority owns the playing fields
<b>Responsibility for funding</b>	Local Authority	Local Authority	Local Authority funds the running costs 100%. Local Authority funds 85% of the capital work, the Church funds the remainder
<b>Responsibility for staff recruitment and appointment</b>	Local Authority	Local Authority	The Church
<b>Entry Policy</b>	Local Authority	Local Authority	The Governing Body
<b>Governing Body Constitution</b>	Representatives from among parents, Education Authority, Teachers, staff, Community Council and County Council	Church governors in the minority	Church governors in the majority
<b>Joint Worship</b>	Meet with legal requirements for daily joint worship. The worship to be entirely or mainly of Christian nature	Meet with legal requirements for daily joint worship. The worship to be entirely or mainly of Christian nature	Meet with legal requirements for daily joint worship. The worship to be entirely or partly of Christian nature
<b>Curriculum and Religious Instruction</b>	Religious Instruction to be included in the school curriculum  Religious Instruction syllabus to be agreed upon at local level through SACRE	Christian values and morals to be an important part of the running of the school, but to a large degree dependent on leadership by the Head Teacher and the Governors. Religious Instruction to be taught in keeping with a syllabus agreed upon at local level through SACRE	The school to be responsible for Religious Instruction which is of denominational character. Christian values and morality to filter through the running and ethos of the school and to be an important part of school life
<b>Inspections</b>	Inspection by Estyn only	Inspection by Estyn The Governing Body to be responsible for supervising the religious character of the school and school worship .	Inspection by Estyn The Governing Body to be responsible for supervising the religious character of the school and school worship .

## 6.2 Other Church in Wales schools in Gwynedd

6.2.1 It is important for the Cabinet to consider the wider context of the provision. Below are given the details of all the Church in Wales schools within the County. Ysgol Beuno Sant is a VA (Voluntary Aided) school whilst all the others are VC (Voluntary Controlled):

School	Distance from Y Bala	Age Range	Pupil numbers September 2013	Capacity	Surplus places	Predictions					
						2014		2015		2016	
						Pupil numbers	Surplus places	Pupil numbers	Surplus places	Pupil numbers	Surplus places
Pont y Gôf	52.2	3 - 11	117	122	5 (4%)	113	9 (8%)	106	16 (14%)	96	26 (22%)
Maesincla	49.2	3 - 11	309	360	51 (14%)	324	36 (10%)	336	24 (7%)	340	20 (6%)
Y Faenol	52.3	3 - 11	261	232	0	262	0	264	0	245	0
Foelgron	48.9	3 - 11	30	60	30 (50%)	35	25 (42%)	36	24 (42%)	38	22 (37%)
Llandygai	47.6	3 - 11	158	176	18 (10%)	163	13 (7%)	160	16 (9%)	155	21 (12%)
Llandwrog	45.6	3 - 11	68	86	18 (21%)	55	31 (36%)	53	33 (38%)	52	34 (40%)
Llanystumdwy	36.5	3 - 11	40	53	13 (35%)	36	17 (32%)	34	19 (36%)	36	17 (32%)
Tregarth	45.3	3 - 11	140	181	41 (23%)	136	45 (25%)	134	47 (26%)	134	47 (26%)
Cae Top	50.7	3 - 11	240	254	14 (6%)	240	14 (6%)	240	14 (6%)	240	14 (6%)
Machreth	17.0	3 - 11	16	46	30 (65%)	12	34 (74%)	9	37 (80%)	8	38 (83%)
Dolgellau Primary	18.0	3-11	147	213	66 (31%)	147	66 (31%)	143	70 (33%)	137	76 (36%)
Beuno Sant	0.0	3-11	53	89	36 (40%)	53	36 (40%)	59	30 (34%)	57	32 (36%)



### 6.3 The need for different types of schools

6.3.1 In order to understand the views regarding the need for education of different categories in Y Berwyn catchment area, an assessment was undertaken. This was carried out by distributing a questionnaire to the parents of pupils at every one of the 6 schools within Y Berwyn catchment area. 160 questionnaires were returned. A copy of the assessment can be found in **Appendix 3** of this report.

6.3.2 Some key points to note are the fact that the quality of education is the most important factor to parents as they choose a school for their children – this is clear with 79% of the respondents stating that this is the most important factor in a school. There were no views either way regarding the category of the school. It confirmed that educational matters – quality, good relationship with the school, standard of the resources and the learning environment are the main factors considered as important in a school.

### 6.4 Pre-consultation discussions with the Church in Wales

6.4.1 The Council has held regular discussions with representatives of the Church in Wales from the start of school reorganisation in the catchment area. In accordance with the School Organisation Code (006/2013) it is required that the Authority should hold a pre-consultation with the Church in Wales. This was held between 15 December 2014 and 19 January 2015.

6.4.2 The response of the Church in Wales after the pre-consultation was received through a letter dated 19 January 2015.

6.4.3 The view of the Church is as follows:

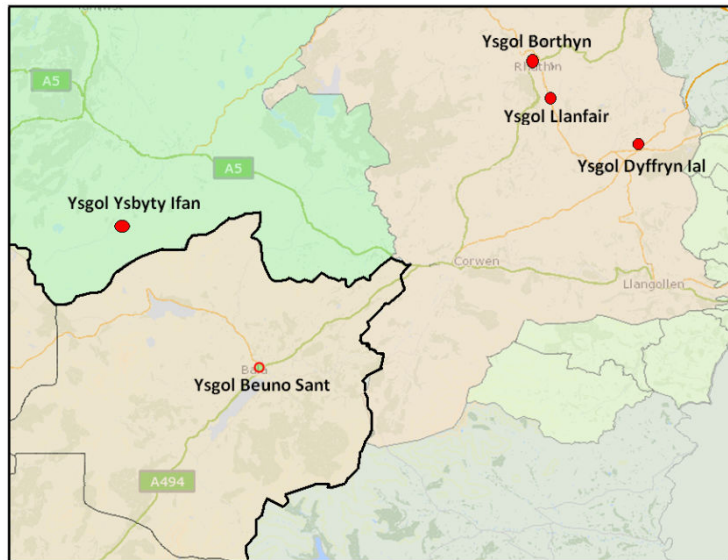
- i. Having discussed the options carefully, the Church in Wales agrees that establishing a 3-19 years Lifelong learning Campus in the town of Y Bala, by the closure of Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol Y Berwyn is the most appropriate model to consider and to hold a statutory consultation on.
- ii. The Church is of the opinion that the Lifelong Campus should have the voluntary controlled (VC) or voluntary aided (VA) status.

6.4.4 The response can be seen in full in the letter from the Church dated 19 January – included in **Appendix 2**.

### 6.5 Factors to be considered in deciding on the legal category

6.5.1 In considering the status of the proposed provision, the relevant context is the reorganisation which is taking place at the moment in the neighbouring Y Gader catchment area. On 13 January 2015, the Cabinet of Gwynedd Council agreed to Statutory Notices being issued which would lead to the establishment of a 3-16 years Follow On Catchment Area School with community status. This would involve losing the existing Church provision in the catchment area – at Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau (VC) and Ysgol Gynradd Machreth (VC), (total of 163 pupils).

6.5.2 In Gwynedd, the Church in Wales school closest to the Town of Y Bala is Ysgol Llanystumdwy (VC). The map below shows the location of Church in Wales schools closest to Ysgol Beuno Sant in the neighbouring counties of Conwy and Denbigh.



6.5.3 VC status for the Lifelong Campus would mean that the Church in Wales would be represented on the Governing Body, and it is likely, since one of the schools in question is a Church school, that this would be appropriate anyway. Therefore, if the Lifelong Campus was a school with VC status, it is likely that the governing body would mostly include lay governors as in the majority of schools within the County.

6.5.4 VC status would also mean that the Church would have ownership of the school building, and the Local Authority would own the playing fields. However, statutory provisions mean that ownership of the building would revert from the Church to the Local Authority if Church provision were to come to an end.

6.5.5 Therefore, there are a number of factors to consider, namely::

- The joint provision which exists at present in the catchment area
- The decision to abolish the joint provision in the neighbouring catchment area namely Y Gader catchment area
- Travelling distances
- The Church's standpoint following pre-consultation discussions
- The similarities between the community categories and VC
- The opinion that – according to the assessment - the most important factors in a school are the education and the resources.

6.5.6 Also considered was the wider context of other decisions which will impact the joint provision in the southern part of the County. There is an opportunity here to continue with the collaboration by placing VC status on the Lifelong Campus. Although the virtues of VC status would be different to the existing VA status, it would be a way of continuing with the joint provision. It is therefore recommended that a Lifelong Campus with VC status be established. The rural schools will continue to be under Community status.

## 6.6 Staffing considerations

6.6.1 If the proposal was approved there would be staffing implications which could lead to uncertainty and redundancies for some members of staff at Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol Y Berwyn. Staff and Union representatives will be included as part of any statutory consultation. Gwynedd Council has developed a detailed staffing policy, in partnership with the

Trade Unions and head teachers. Clear and open communication will play a core part in implementing any proposals.

6.6.2 If the proposal should reach the point where a school is established, the Shadow Governing Body will be expected to appoint staff for the new school. The Council's Personnel and Education Service will be available to give advice and help to the Governing Body and the staff regarding this process.

## **6.7 Establishing a Lifelong Campus**

6.7.1 In order to establish the Lifelong Campus, the legal and constitutional implications of doing so have been considered. It will be necessary to close the schools in question (Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol Y Berwyn), and to open a Lifelong Campus on the existing site of Ysgol Y Berwyn.

6.7.2 Establishing a one school entity has already been explained in terms of:

- Leadership (one Head Teacher)
- Government (one governing body)
- Finance (one budget)

6.7.3 In forming a Lifelong Campus it would be necessary to establish a Shadow Governing Body, compile a constitution for the school, and appoint staff. The staffing structure would be a matter for the Shadow Governing Body.

6.7.4 In implementing this proposal the existing schools' catchment areas would be adapted. Catchment areas are used to identify where the nearest school for the parents / children is located, depending on where they live. This is what makes it possible for the Authority's Transport and Entry Policy to be implemented.

6.7.5 However, because the aim is to close two sites in the centre of Y Bala town, and to move the educational provision to Ysgol Y Berwyn site, no change to the existing transport arrangements is foreseen, and no impact on the Authority's Entry Policy.

## **7 CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING FEDERATION OF THE RURAL SCHOOLS AND ESTABLISHING A JOINT COMMITTEE**

7.1 When holding discussions and undertaking work on possible options and models within the catchment area, it became evident that closing the rural schools would not contribute towards improving the education and experiences for the pupils in the catchment area. However, it also became evident that it would not be prudent to establish a Lifelong Campus without considering the future of rural educational provision.

7.2 The standard of the education in the rural schools is among the best in Gwynedd. Ysgol OM Edwards, Ysgol Bro Tryweryn and Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn fairly recently received good or excellent inspection reports from Estyn. Although the predicted pupil numbers for these schools are consistent, some of the schools are comparatively small.

7.3 As part of strategic planning, it is reasonable for Gwynedd to consider federation as an option for providing efficient schools within communities. With an investment of £9.27m in the town, it is prudent for the Council to consider how the children of the rural schools can benefit from the investment made in the town. Also, during discussions with the Welsh Government regarding

investment for the catchment area, it became clear that the Welsh Government would not be willing to contribute unless the rural schools would also benefit and be able to take advantage of the investment.

7.4 One way of strengthening the rural provision and ensuring that the rural pupils benefit from the Lifelong Campus is to federate the rural schools and to establish a joint committee between them and the Campus in the town.

7.5 Following the coming into force of the Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014, it is not possible to federate a Church school with a school without either VA or VC Church status. Therefore if any Lifelong Campus has VC status, the three rural schools cannot be federated directly with the Lifelong Campus.

#### 7.6 **Why federate?**

7.6.1 Not only can the federation of the rural schools strengthen the relationship between the rural schools and the Lifelong Campus, there are other valid reasons for federation and these include::

- Ensuring the viability of the schools and the rural communities in the catchment area
- Strengthening and ensuring consistency in the collaboration which takes place at present
- Wider opportunities for pupils and staff
- Maintaining and improving teaching and achievement standards
- Coping with the cuts agenda by sharing resources across the federation
- Catchment area changes – enable rural schools to benefit from the Lifelong Campus
- Ensuring that there is a strong collaboration framework within the education system in the catchment area to ensure opportunities for all pupils within the catchment area

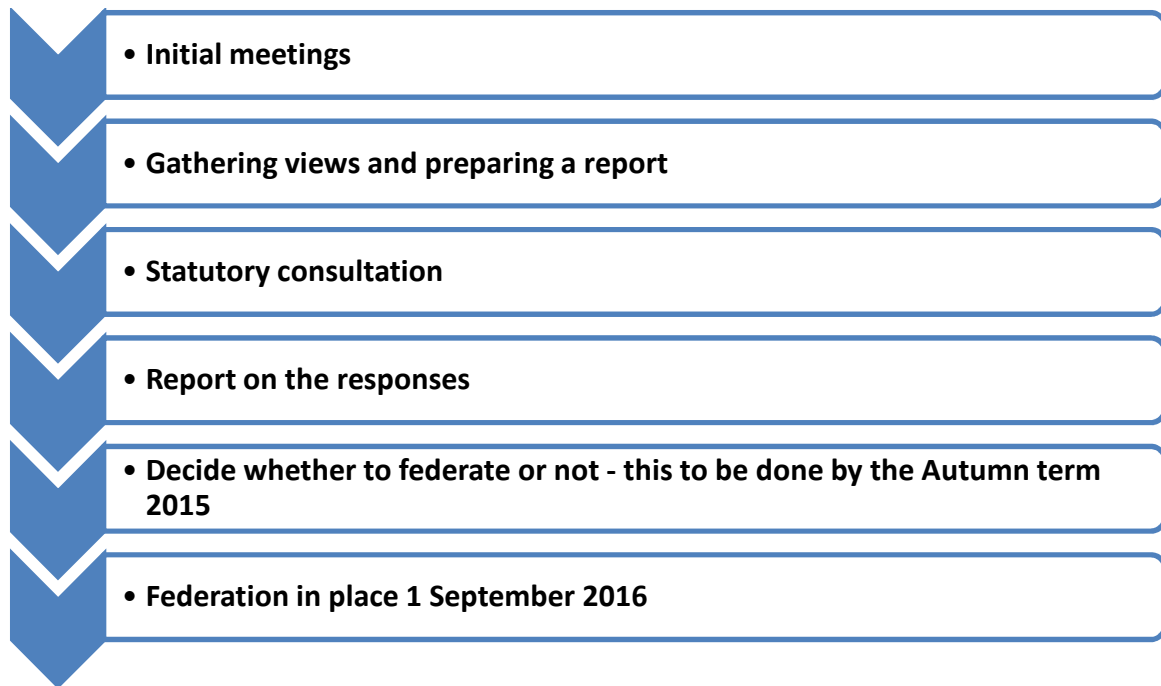
#### 7.7 **What would be the implications of federation for the 3 rural schools in the catchment area?**

7.7.1 Federation would ensure a balance between safeguarding the identity and character of the rural schools whilst establishing a strong basis for working together strategically and offering opportunities to benefit from the resources at the Lifelong Campus through the Joint Committee:

- One governing body for the three schools
- The funding allocation of each school remaining the same
- Name and status of each school to remain unchanged
- Changing any arrangements at the school would be a matter for the governing body
- Estyn inspection for each school
- No closures or amalgamation of schools, the three schools would continue but as part of a federation

#### 7.8 **Steps in the federation Process**

7.8.1 Since the Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014 came into force last year, for the first time, local authorities have the power to ensure that schools federate. Federation thus means following specific steps and undertaking a consultation process where views on the proposal to federate are gathered. Here is an outline of the process including the specific steps to be taken:



## 7.9 Establishing the Joint Committee

- 7.9.1 In order to establish effective managerial arrangements to link the rural provision with the Lifelong Campus, the aim is to establish a joint committee between the federation and the Campus in order to strengthen the relationship. A Joint Committee would be established under regulation 4 of the Collaboration Between Education Bodies (Wales) Regulations 2012, and would lead towards formalising joint work arrangements between the federation and the Lifelong Campus. The Local Authority can be a part in the Joint Committee, and Section 3 of the Education Measure (Wales) 2011 puts a positive duty on the Local Authority to consider practising its joint working powers (e.g. through the joint committee) as it practises its other functions.
- 7.9.2 The Joint Committee would delegate the governing body and Lifelong Campus functions to a committee containing representatives of the Campus and the Federation. The Cabinet does not need to make a decision regarding the Joint Committee, the latter will be established in September 2018, but it is mentioned in this Cabinet report so that the Cabinet has a clear picture and understanding of the long term vision for education in Y Berwyn catchment area.
- 7.9.3 The Joint Committee would:
- Ensure fair play and progression for all the pupils in the catchment area
  - Formalise the relationship between the rural schools and the Lifelong Campus in order to ensure that the rural pupils benefit
  - The Joint Committee will be made up of representatives from the governing bodies
  - A way by which senior leaders in the catchment area can plan and manage the educational provision for the benefit of the whole catchment area
  - Enable the Authority to be part of it
- 7.9.4 Section 3 of the Education Measure (Wales) 2011 puts a positive duty on the Local Authority to consider if its joint working powers (e.g. by operating a joint committee) would promote the aim of joint working as it practises its other functions.

## 8 IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED MODEL ON THE COMMUNITY, THE WELSH LANGUAGE AND ON EQUALITY

### 8.1 The Community

8.1.1 The Welsh Government guidelines (*School Organisation Code 006/2013*) states that a community impact assessment must be undertaken as part of any proposal to reorganise schools. A community impact assessment was completed on the long list of possible models.

8.1.2 The full report can be seen in **Appendix 3** of this report.

8.1.3 Since no rural school is to be closed, and as schools in the town of Bala move to one location namely a Lifelong Campus, there are no significant community impacts or implications involved in implementing the proposed model.

### 8.2 The Welsh Language

8.2.1 The Welsh Government guidelines (*School Organisation Code 006-2013*) states that a Welsh Language impact assessment must be undertaken as part of any proposal to reorganise schools. A language impact assessment was completed on the long list of possible models

8.2.2 The full report can be viewed in **Appendix 3** of this report.

8.2.3 Since no rural school is to be closed, there is no impact on the Welsh language. The pupils of Ysgol Bro Tegid and Ysgol Beuno Sant will transfer to the Lifelong Campus, and the 11-19 year old pupils will continue to receive their education in an establishment with the same cross section of pupils as the existing Ysgol Y Berwyn. The language category of every school in the catchment area will remain the same, namely Welsh Medium category. There will also be an opportunity to further strengthen the implementation of Gwynedd's language policy by ensuring progression in the use of the Welsh language both in education and within the community.

### 8.3 Equality Assessment

8.3.1 An equality assessment was undertaken on a long list of possible models. The assessment pays particular attention to various equality elements such as race, gender, disability, language, religion or creed, and age. The assessment notes the present situation and the policies and arrangements in place to ensure that the proposal considers and agrees with equal rights. The full report can be viewed in **Appendix 3** of this report.

8.3.2 Because a number of models note the possibility of impact on the Church primary education provision, the Council commissioned a further assessment by an independent consultant. This assessment measured the desire for different types of schools in the catchment area so that the need at local level could be considered when reaching a decision on the favoured option. The favoured model, subject to the favoured legal category, will impact the choice between the different educational provision models in the catchment area, in terms of community or Church education. This factor is given full consideration in part 5 of the report, and the equality assessment and the assessment of need for different types of schools can be found in the background pack to this report.

8.3.3 Having discussed the relevant factors in detail, the conclusion reached is that equal opportunities will be promoted positively as a result of the proposal and that measures are in

place to ensure that there will be no illegal discrimination or harassment. Arrangements are in place to monitor and review the situation.

## **9. CONCLUSIONS**

- 9.1 It is recommended to undertake statutory consultation under the School Organisation Code (006/2013) on the proposal to establish a Lifelong Campus model in the town of Y Bala due to the advantages that it will bring. There will be various opportunities to develop on the existing quality teaching and learning basis. Implementing the proposal to establish a 3-19 years Lifelong Campus will meet many of the challenges presently faced in Y Berwyn catchment area, many of which relate to the educational provision in the town of Y Bala. Establishing a Lifelong Campus would be an innovative opportunity to tackle the educational challenges which exist at present in the catchment area. The buildings and the resources of the Lifelong Campus would be suitable for curricular provisions and contemporary vocational experiences. It would also be a new resource available for use by pupils of the rural schools in the catchment area as well as children and young people and the community within the catchment area outside normal school hours.
- 9.2 It is recommended to undertake a process of consultation in order to consider establishing a federation between the three rural schools in the catchment area - Ysgol OM Edwards, Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and Ysgol Bro Tryweryn, with the intention of setting the rural schools in a strong position in terms of management and government so that they can collaborate closely with the Lifelong Campus and ensure that all the pupils in the catchment area benefit from the investment.
- 9.3 The proposal will:
- Improve education standards across the catchment area by enabling flexibility across all age groups so that sharing resources, staff and equipment will become standard practice
  - Impact the size and age range within classes
  - Improve the condition and standard of the schools in the catchment area by means of an investment of £9.27 million to form a new Lifelong Campus and abolish two sites
  - Enable a new and modern senior management system which will release the head teacher from the class, bring flexibility into the staffing structure across the sectors and provide new career opportunities
  - Ensure that there is an education site within reasonable distance for all the pupils in the catchment area
  - Reduce the number of surplus places in the catchment area
  - Secure in total, approximately £85,000 of savings, and rationalise the range in the cost per pupil within the catchment area
  - Offer the best opportunity to try and accomplish the language policy, making best use of the additional staffing resources in the new establishment and across the various sites within the catchment area
  - Safeguard and strengthen the post-16 provision in the catchment area

## **10. NEXT STEPS**

- 10.1 If the Cabinet agrees to the recommendations in this report – it will be necessary to undertake a period of statutory consultation in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation Act 2013 and the guidelines in the Schools Organisation Code (006/2013), on the proposal to establish a 3-19 Lifelong Campus with VC status in the town of Y Bala.

- 10.2 It will also be necessary to hold a process of communication and statutory consultation with the rural schools in the catchment area, under the Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014 on the proposal to federate the three rural schools.
- 10.3 Following this, a further report on the results of these two consultations will be submitted to the Cabinet.
- 10.4 It will then be necessary for the Cabinet to discuss the consultation regarding the Lifelong Campus and, subject to the views of Cabinet members, decide whether a Statutory Order should be issued on implementing the proposal. If a Statutory Notice is issued, there will be a period of 28 days for any objections to be submitted. Following the objection period a report will be submitted to the Cabinet for a final decision. It has to be borne in mind that there are some circumstances where the final decision by the Council can be referred to the Minister for Education and Skills at the Welsh Government, in accordance with the School Organisation Code (006/2013).
- 10.5 Subject to the Cabinet's decision, these are the next steps in the process, along with the outline timetable:

<b>Steps in the Process</b>	<b>Outline Timetable</b>
Cabinet Report – Permission for consultation on the favoured option	19 February 2015
Statutory Consultation Period on the Lifelong Campus	March 4 – April 15 2015
Consultation Period on Federation	March – April 2015
Cabinet report following statutory consultation	May 2015
Statutory Notice issued and an opportunity for consultees to object	June 2015
Final decision by the Council Cabinet (possibility that the proposal can be referred to the Minister for Education and Skills at the Welsh Government)	September 2015
The matter can be referred to the Welsh Government by a third party, including the Church in Wales.	Approx. 6-7 months with the Government

## **11. RECOMMENDATIONS**

11.1 It is therefore recommended:

- i. To embark upon a process of statutory consultation in accordance with the requirements of Section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation Act 2013 on the closure of Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol Y Berwyn. The aim is for the schools to close on 31 August 2018.
- ii. To embark upon a process of statutory consultation in accordance with the requirements of Section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation Act 2013 on the favoured option, namely to establish a 3-19 years Welsh Medium Lifelong Learning Campus with Voluntary Controlled (VC) status on the existing site of Ysgol Y Berwyn. The aim is for the school to open on 1 September 2018.
- ii. To embark upon a process of statutory consultation on the federation of three rural schools in Y Berwyn catchment area, namely Ysgol Bro Tryweryn, Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and Ysgol OM Edwards.



## **VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS**

### **The Chief Executive:**

“There are a number of key elements to which the Cabinet must be satisfied, and these include the project’s business case. In addition, there are implications as far as the church status of one of the establishments is concerned, and that could have a significant effect on the timetable.

However, regarding the matter for consideration by the Cabinet today, that matter is comparatively simple, as the decision sought is part of a process which seeks to bring into effect an outcome which the Council has been working towards for some time, which is ensuring that school reorganisation is viable and of quality for the catchment’s pupils.”

### **The Monitoring Officer:**

“The proposals in the report seek permission to undertake a period of statutory consultation on two main matters, that is school organisation in the town of Bala, and the establishment of a federation between the other primary schools in the catchment. The report requests the Cabinet to decide on the favoured option to be consulted upon. However, it is important to bear in mind that as this is a consultation, the need to keep an open mind before making a decision on the final model until the responses to the consultation have been reported and considered.”

### **Head of Finance:**

“There is a long history to these plans, and at each step Finance officers have co-operated with the Education Department in developing the financial figures. I can confirm, therefore, that I am satisfied with the accuracy of the figures that appear in section 5.10 of the report. I am convinced that the business case remains strong, and there are clear reasons for supporting the recommendations and acting without further delay.”

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## Appendices

<b>Appendix 1</b>	Options Appraisal
<b>Appendix 2</b>	Church in Wales response to the Pre-consultation
<b>Appendix 3</b>	Language, Community and Equality Impact Assessments and the Need for Different Types of Schools

## Background Pack

Copies of the background pack will have been sent to Cabinet members and will also be available on the Council website: [www.gwynedd.gov.uk/schoolorganisation](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/schoolorganisation) or by contacting [school.organisation@gwynedd.gov.uk](mailto:school.organisation@gwynedd.gov.uk).

The background pack will contain:

- Report of the Full Council 15 July 2010
- Report of the Full Council 12 May 2011
- Cabinet Report 1 April 2014
- CRP minutes 6 May 2014
- CRP minutes 14 January 2015
- School Organisation Code (006/2013)
- Welsh Governments' Faith in Education Document (2011)
- Statistics Pack