

**Meeting:** Y Berwyn Catchment-area Review Panel **Date:** 23 March 2010

**Present:** Liz Saville Roberts (LSR); Dewi R Jones (DRJ); Seimon Williams (SW); Tony Bate (TB); Hefin Owen (HO); Sian Gwenllian (SG); J Blake (John Blake); Gareth Williams (GW) Gwilym Hughes (GH); Carole Burgess (CB); Nia Wyn Morris (NWM); Dewi Davies (DD); Llinos Clwyd Owen (LICO); Alyson Evans (AE); Rhiannon Dafydd (RhD); Sharon Jones (ShJ); Bethan Emyr Jones (BEJ); W. Ann Jones (WAJ); Edwina Owen (EO); Rhian Llwyd Dafydd (RhLID); Llyr Edwards (LIE); Dylan Davies (DD); Dorothy Ann Jones (DAJ); Shan Mererid Edwards (ShME); Brian Llwyd (BLI); Dilys Ellis-Jones (DEJ); Gareth Llewelyn (DLI); Jano Owen (JO); Aeron Prysor Jones (APJ); Nia Roberts (NR); Elwyn Edwards (EE); Dylan Edwards (DE); Alan Evans (AE); Cefyn Williams (CW); Glenys Edwards (GE)

**Apologies:** Siwan Haf Davies (SHD); Rosalind Williams (RW).Gwion Lynch(GL); Ann E Jones (AEJ); William Edwards (WE) Sion Llewelyn (SLI); Teleri Llwyd Roberts (TLIR);

### Operational Summary

*(Note points for action from the report, and specify any points that need to be communicated to another forum, by whom, by when)*

Item No	Item/ Subject	Action	Responsibility	By

### Full Record

Item No	Item / Subject	Action	Responsibility	By
1.	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>	DRJ welcomed everybody to the meeting and apologies were received from Sion Llywelyn; Teleri Roberts and Wil Edwards. LSR stated that		



		<p>this was the final meeting where the county heard opinions from the catchment-area. It was explained that Dylan Bryn would give a presentation on the language and community impact and feedback from John Blake of the meetings held with staff, governors and parents of every school. This therefore is the final opportunity in practice to express a view on what PAD would like to see happening in the Y Berwyn catchment-area. LSR will hold discussions with other councillors in the PYS tomorrow evening, before presenting her recommendations at the PYS next week. The recommendations will then go through the democratic process.</p> <p>The PAD will be the first to hear LSR's recommendations next week. .</p>		
2.	<b>Matters arising from the last meeting</b>	<p>At the last meeting, it was agreed to confirm the minutes in the PAD prior to publication</p> <p>DRJ read through the minutes point by point. No comments were received. It was proposed and seconded that they were a true record.</p> <p>The same process was gone through with Newsletter 3 and was proposed and seconded as being a true record.</p>		
3.	<b>Language and community impact assessment.</b>	<p>Dylan Bryn was introduced to report on the Language and Community Impact Assessment. He began by explaining that he was giving a professional opinion and that this was also the first time that the Council had heard the presentation.</p> <p><u>Language Assessment</u></p> <p>Dylan explained the methodology and the work was undertaken and he explained that he had scrutinized the situation and the models objectively. It was noted that level of Welsh was higher in Y Bala catchment-area rural area and that the establishments were naturally Welsh. In general in the catchment-area, there are good achievements in levels in Welsh and second language pupils move on to speak Welsh to their children. The potential impact of the models on the Welsh language following any changes were explained, whether where</p>		

		<p>no change occurred, negative or positive.</p> <p>LSR noted that she did not want any child's Welsh to suffer in Gwynedd, whatever change occurred to schools organisation in the county.</p> <p><u>Impact on the Community</u></p> <p>Dylan again explained the methodology and process undertaken to hold the assessment. There were 89 responses to the questionnaire from the catchment-area.</p> <p>It was mentioned that there was close collaboration between schools in the catchment-area and that there was a buzz of community activities and various facilities in Y Bala catchment-area.</p>		
4.	<p><b>Feedback from staff, governors and parents meetings</b></p>	<p>Following the school visits, John Blake presented the following comments on behalf of the team of officers He explained that the visits had involved meetings with staff, parents and governors of every school. Three meetings had been held at every school. Every meeting took around an hour. There was a good response everywhere and an obvious feature throughout the schools within the catchment-area was the high level of interest and awareness of developments. He thanked everybody for the welcome received and for the high quality and standard of the discussion. He decided to report on comments and overall impressions and invited school representatives to expand on comments and add specific comments as required.</p> <p>Amongst the general comments received, the following were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ that the quality of the educational standards at every primary school was a feature that everybody appreciated</li> <li>▪ the need to safeguard rural culture and traditions, especially eisteddfodau and the small meetings</li> <li>▪ that several comments were received that it was not easy to give an opinion on the future of other schools</li> </ul>		

- a comment that children's school travelling time should be reasonable and that 30 minutes mentioned in the Gwynedd strategy was preferable to the 45 minutes noted nationally
- the need to safeguard after school clubs
- the need to strengthen the nursery education provision in certain areas
- the obligation on Gwynedd Council to ensure that a school building that closed would continue to provide a community resource for evening activities
- that there were already excellent examples of area schools in the catchment-area and that some communities had lost their schools in the 70's
- that the notion of "collaboration" required further clarification as every school saw its future in such a plan and were eager to maintain the informal collaboration already implemented at some schools
- that no rural school wished to see their school close
- that schools in the town of Bala in general saw the closure of their school as being of benefit to their pupils

All options were discussed and feedback on options 6 and 7 was requested.

**Comments on Option 6 – One primary school for the catchment-area**

- little support on the whole
- not an option for discussion at some schools
- a feeling that it would be detrimental to the Welsh language
- that it would have a detrimental impact on rural culture
- several expressed concern that community life would suffer
- several supported the establishment of an area school in Bala but were doubtful whether merging two schools only would be acceptable by the

Assembly to release funding to build a new school

- the rural schools did not see a new school development at Bala was likely to attract children from their catchment-areas

**Comments on Option 7 – Lifelong School**

- the above points reiterated
- supported by the three schools in Bala only
- schools in town of Bala saw an exciting possibility if the town's support could be obtained to develop a new resource that would benefit the children and the local community
- a feeling that there is currently no collaboration or close enough contact between the primary and secondary schools to promote the vision.
- a perception that an English element amongst town children meant that the children were different in nature
- general doubts about the merits of a lifelong school due to lack of evidence of success
- some schools ready to consider the option of a lifelong community school in a purpose built building

**Other matters that were asked to be shared with Gwynedd Council:**

- Concern that Gwynedd does not have a policy that is similar to Ceredigion that requires a closure review when pupil numbers are 20 or below
- Gwynedd unwilling to say when a school closure is a sign of weakness
- Impact of re-organisation on posts, further details required
- Parents very willing to seek advice from officers a feature of the consultation
- Request details of financial savings earlier in the process
- A perception that rates are high and that services in rural areas are already scarce and that quality educational

		<p>provision is required</p> <p>Request for savings details</p>		
5.	<b>Models</b>	<p>It was explained that the saving made through adopting any model had been outlined under the models on the second and third page of the models paper and it was explained that the principle of a lifelong school had not been outlined as it was dependant on the final model. It was mentioned that the Assembly had published a definite pattern of federalization, that will be confirmed within the next 3 weeks. Comments can be presented up to that date. It was noted that elements of the pattern could work and which schools find more attractive. It was explained that there were several different definitions of collaboration within the pattern and that it allowed all kinds of collaboration as long as there was a wish for that at the schools.</p> <p>It was noted that school closures would not provide an opportunity for them to collaborate.</p>		
6.	<b>Any Other Matter</b>	<p>It was asked whether there had been contact with Ysgol Llangwm and other schools in other counties? It was explained that the schools had been invited and that they had received the papers for tonight's meeting. One school had accepted the invitation, and Glenys Edwards was welcomed to the meeting.</p>		
7.	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>	<p>18:30 on 30 March 2010 - Ysgol y Berwyn Before bringing the meeting to an end, LSR requested comments on the process thus far so as to bring recommendations to the next meeting. The panel's opinion on the length of the process was sought and the number of meetings held thus far.</p> <p>It was noted that it would have been more useful if a better definition of collaboration had been provided.</p> <p>The meeting ended with LSR inviting comments by e-mail from anybody who wished to do so before next Tuesday evening.</p>		