

This is the second in a series of newsletters for the attention of school staff, parents and others, setting out the discussions held on schools re-organisation in the Y Berwyn catchment-area. The first newsletter was sent following the initial Y Berwyn Catchment-area Review Panel meeting held on 4 November 2009. As the Panel has since held another meeting (on 2 December 2009) it is now timely to provide an up-date.

What developments have occurred since the last newsletter?

Visits to other counties

At the request of the Catchment-area Review Panel, a schools visit to other counties was arranged and to discuss the experiences of teachers and others of schools re-organisation. 5 head teachers from the catchment-area went on the visit on 30 November 2009 accompanied by an Officer from the Council's Education Department.

Ysgol Arberth, a new bilingual school in South Pembrokeshire accommodating approximately 300 pupils, was visited. Then, on to Ysgol Y Frenni at Crymch, which is a school for approximately 170 children that shares a campus with a Secondary School, leisure centre, theatre and community cinema, library, education centre for adults, and a nursery. The visit ended at Ysgol Bro Siôn Cwilt in Ceredigion which will open during January 2010.

The visit was of benefit so as to learn lessons from other areas. In reporting to the Catchment-area Review Panel on 4 December 2009, it was emphasised that there was no assumption that any of these examples would serve as an appropriate model for Y Berwyn.

Meetings with staff of individual schools

When embarking on the process, one of the Council's main commitments was to ensure that staff, parents and others fully participate in the development process in the area. Following a request from the Catchment-area Review Panel, these meetings were deferred until after the next meeting of the Catchment-area Review Panel to be held on 4 February 2010. Officers from the Council will be in contact to organize meetings with individual schools during the week commencing 8 February 2010.

Second meeting of Y Berwyn Catchment-area Review Panel, 2 December 2009

An up-date on visits and adjustments to statistical information was provided at the start of the meeting. The entire Panel gave their approval to the statistical analysis as being correct and complete.

Information was presented on the financial situation of the area's schools by Gwynedd Council's Education Finance Manager. He proceeded to report on possible projections for the next 3 years. These were based on projected pupil numbers (agreed on by every school individually) and the likely savings that the Council will have to make.

Following a request from the panel at the meeting held on 4 November 2009, for officers to prepare information on the type of possible alternative models, a paper was presented outlining over 40 possible models. It was agreed that some were more sensible than others. School representatives were asked to split up into discussion groups, asking them to respond to the proposed models and propose any alternative models.

At the end of the meeting, a summary was offered by DRJ of those models which officers will need to do further work on. It was noted that the school representatives provided the offers below:

- Schools within the catchment-area to collaborate.
- Bro Tegid and Beuno Sant schools either to merge to create a new Area School or merge with ysgol Y Berwyn to create a Lifelong School with Bro Tryweryn, Ffridd y Llyn, O M Edwards and Parc schools collaborating.

It was noted that the Head of Education outlined further models that would be the Council's duty to consider, namely:

- Bro Tegid and Beuno Sant schools either to merge to create a new Area School or merge with ysgol Y Berwyn to create a Lifelong School as well as closure of ysgol Y Parc and the pupils to attend ysgol O M Edwards. Bro Tryweryn to collaborate with Ffridd y Llyn and/or the new school in the town of Y Bala.
- Ysgol Bro Tryweryn to merge with schools in the Town of Bala to form an Area School or Lifelong School plan. O M Edwards, Y Parc and Ffridd y Llyn to collaborate or with the new school in the town of Bala.
- Ysgol Bro Tryweryn to merge with schools in the town of Bala to form an Area School or Lifelong School plan. Ysgol Y Parc to close and the pupils to attend ysgol O M Edwards. Ysgol O M Edwards and Ffridd y Llyn schools to collaborate with the new school in the town of Bala.
- Catchment-area's primary schools to merge and create a new Area School.
- Every primary school, as well as the secondary, to merge to create a new Lifelong School.

It should be emphasised that no decision has thus far been taken – this only serves as the basis for further work.

Date on which the next newsletter will appear

Your schools will receive the next newsletter following the next meeting of the Y Berwyn Catchment Area Review Panel on 4 February 2010.

Further Information

Further information is available from the Council web-site or through contacting the Education Department on 01286 679 247 or e-mail trefniadaeth.ysgolion@gwynedd.gov.uk.