

CABINET REPORT

6 November 2018

Cabinet Member: Councillor Gareth Thomas

Subject: Reorganisation of Primary Education Provision in the Bangor catchment area

Contact Officer: Diane Jones – Bangor Project Leader

THE DECISION SOUGHT

Implement the proposal published 4 September 2018 to close Ysgol Glanadda and Ysgol Babanod Coedmawr on 31 August 2020, and offer places to pupils at Ysgol y Garnedd (subject to parental choice); and increase the capacity of Ysgol y Garnedd to 420 on 1 September 2020.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 At the end of 2016, the Welsh Government reported that there was an opportunity for Local Authorities with the capacity to carry out additional projects within Band A of the 21st Century Schools Programme. The Welsh Government has recognised Gwynedd as one of the most successful Authorities delivering its Programme, demonstrating good practice in its implementation of projects. As a consequence, the Authority was successful in a bid to re-organise primary education in the Bangor catchment area under Band A.

1.2 The size of the package available to modernise primary education provision in the city of Bangor is an important element of the project. Following the beginning of discussions in the catchment area, a programme of capital investment was adopted by the Welsh Government under the 21st Century Schools Programme. This would be likely to include a total investment of £12.7 million, with £6.35 million being a grant from the Welsh Government. There is also a commitment from a housing development company, as part of an agreement for the new Goetre Uchaf development in Penrhosgarnedd.

1.3 As part of the process, a number of objectives have been identified for consideration relating to provision in the Bangor catchment area, namely:

- Ensure enough places for each child in the appropriate locations;
- Ensure that no school is overcrowded;
- Ensure that no school building is assessed to be in condition C or worse;
- Reduce surplus places in schools significantly or increase efficiency;
- Reduce the range of cost per head for the provision of education in the catchment area;
- Ensure that class sizes are appropriate in the primary schools;
- Ensure that there are no more than 25 pupils of the same age in one class;
- Ensure there are no more than 20 pupils of different ages in one class;
- Reconcile the quality of education in the catchment area;
- Ensure that no head spends more than 20% of his/her time teaching;
- Develop the use of schools as a community resource;
- Improve additional learning needs provision in the catchment area.

- 1.4** A report was presented to Cabinet on 17 January 2017 and a recommendation was approved, 'to request the right to initiate local discussions in accordance with the report regarding the review of primary education provision in Bangor'.
- 1.5** The Bangor Catchment Area Review Panel (CRP) was established during June 2017, with four meetings held between June and November, the last being held on 29 November 2017. Representatives from each school in the catchment area were invited, including a head teacher, Chair of Governors and parent governors. Invitations were also given to the Local Members and to the representatives of the Church in Wales (the Diocese of Bangor) and the Catholic Church.
- 1.6** A number of options were discussed before the long list was established. The rationale underpinning the options was to consider each school in the catchment area, seeking ways that would improve and maintain the quality of education. The options included,
- A collaboration/federation between some or all existing schools without school closures
 - A collaboration/federation between schools following the closure of some schools
 - Closure of some primary schools by transferring pupils to neighbouring schools without capital investment or collaboration between the remaining schools
 - Closure of some primary schools transferring pupils to neighbouring schools without capital investment, and establishing a collaboration between the remaining schools
 - Closure of some primary schools and establishing an area school(s) following capital investment
 - Establishing one school for 3-16 or 3-18 on one site for all pupils in the catchment area
- 1.7** A further report was presented to the Cabinet on 13 March 2017 and a recommendation was approved to hold a statutory consultation on the process to re-organise the primary school education provision in the Bangor Catchment Area.

2.0 Statutory Consultation Period

- 2.1** In accordance with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the statutory requirements of the School Organisation Code (006/2013), a statutory consultation period was held on the proposal with relevant consultees between 10 April 2018 and 13:00hrs on 22 May 2018.
- 2.2** A statutory consultation document was produced in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code (006/2013). A copy of the document was distributed to all relevant consultees, either in hard copy or by sending an email that included a link to a dedicated page on the Council's website (www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation).
- 2.3** The Council received **68** responses to the statutory consultation, including responses from pupils, staff, governors, residents and individual as well as from several bodies.
- 2.4** During the Consultation Period two "drop in" sessions were held at Neuadd Reichel, Bangor University. An exhibition of the information in the consultation document was held, and officers from relevant departments (e.g. Education, Property, Human Resources etc.) were available to explain and respond to enquiries. There was also an opportunity for those attending to receive a hard copy of any documentation relevant to the proposal, and to submit written comments. **33** people attended the drop-in sessions.

2.5 A consultation document for primary school children was created with associated questionnaires. An arrangement was made for a facilitator to visit the schools which were part of the consultation to hold sessions with the pupils and obtain their views.

2.6 On 3 July, 2018, a report was again made to the Cabinet, in order to present the main stakeholder comments made during the statutory consultation, as well as the Council's response to those comments. At its meeting, the Cabinet resolved to:

i. Approve the proposal for the closure of Ysgol Glanadda and Ysgol Babanod Coedmawr on 31 August 2020, and offer places to pupils at Ysgol y Garnedd (subject to parental choice); and increase the capacity of Ysgol y Garnedd to 420.

ii. Approve the issue of statutory notices on the proposal in (i) above in accordance with the requirements of Section 48 of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

3.0 Objection period

3.1 In accordance with the School Standards and Organisation Act 2013 and guidance in the School Organisation Code (006/2013) and the decision by the Cabinet on the 3 July, 2018, statutory notices were published on 4 September 2018 and a statutory objection period on the proposal was held between 4 September and 2 October 2018.

3.2 The statutory notices were published on 4 September, 2018 and copies were placed on the gates of the 3 schools, which are Ysgol Glanadda, Ysgol Babanod Coedmawr and Ysgol y Garnedd, and on the Council's website www.gwynedd.gov.uk/modernisingeducation. Electronic and hard copies of the notices were distributed in accordance with the requirements of the Schools Organisation Code. It was clearly stated in the notices that it was possible for anyone to object and how to do so.

3.3 The statutory notice is summarised below:-

(a) **DISCONTINUE** YSGOL GLANADDA, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 4SG on **31 August 2020**

(b) **DISCONTINUE** YSGOL BABANOD COEDMAWR, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 4TL on **31 August 2020**

(c) **EXTEND** YSGOL Y GARNEDD, Penrhos Road, Bangor, LL57 2LX, by increasing its capacity to 420 reception to year 6 pupils and 30 full time nursery pupils. It is intended to do this by transferring the school to a new building to be built on the site adjacent to the existing building.

3.4 Following the objection period, the Cabinet is required to consider a formal report of the objections together with a response to these objections before making a final decision to implement the proposal or not.

4.0 Objections received during the objection period

4.1 The purpose of this section of the report is to present a summary of the objections received during the objection period as well as the Council's response to them. The objection period came to an end on 2 October 2018 and **1** objection was received on paper.

4.2 Following the receipt of 1 objection, it was then analysed. Comments were received relating to Traffic, Child Safety, Finance, Welsh Language and Educational issues, with some comments raised as part of the statutory consultation which had already been discussed at the Cabinet meeting held on 3 July 2018. A full breakdown of the objection together with the full response from the Council is available in **Appendix 1** of this report.

4.3 Following consideration of all the comments received during the statutory consultation period **Appendix 2** and the objection received during the objection period, the Council continues to hold the view that the proposal offers the best option for the future of education in the Bangor catchment area.

4.4 The Bangor catchment area is facing a number of challenges at present which this proposal will be able to address, responding in particular to the demand for places in the Penrhosgarnedd area and improving the provision for learners in the City. The proposed investment will enable the Council to:

- Achieve a better consistency in the standard and quality of education provided in the catchment area
- Improve the efficiency of the school estate by reducing the number of buildings in poor condition
- Make a significant contribution towards reducing surplus places
- Release funding to be spent on children within the education system rather than on buildings
- Rationalise the cost per pupil in schools.
- Ensure strong leadership and management
- Improve the learning environment for more pupils and increase the number of pupils who will benefit from a 21st Century learning environment.
- Achieve a better consistency in the size of classes and a reduction in the age range within primary school classes.

5.0 Summary

5.1 This recommendation is the result of a consideration of a wide range of possible options. These proposals were condensed to a long list of possible options, and these options were fully evaluated through comparing key advantages and disadvantages against specific factors. The factors included in the 'Primary Education of the Highest Quality for Gwynedd Children' strategy, the Code of Organisation, the Bangor catchment vision, and other relevant factors were used.

5.2 As part of this options appraisal, the findings of the Community, Linguistic and Equality impact assessments were also used. These assessments and all the background documentation of the proposal are available on the Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation. The Education Department has a role to promote well-being goals within the Future Generations Act 2015 among pupils of the County through activities and projects. Following consideration and assessment in accordance with the requirements of the Act, it is concluded that this direction intertwines with the 7 well-being aims of the Act, and the Council's well-being objectives.

5.3 If the Cabinet decides to support the recommendation in this report, it will be possible to proceed with the process of closing Ysgol Glanadda and Ysgol Babanod Coedmawr in August 2020 and building a new school for Ysgol y Garnedd to open officially in September 2020.

6.0 The next steps

6.1 Subject to the Cabinet's decision, the next stages of the process together with an outline timetable are shown below;

Steps on the journey	Outline timetable
Final decision by Gwynedd Council Cabinet (subject to the proposal being referred to the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Education following the Cabinet decision)	November 2018
Start the process of transferring to the new building	June 2020
Opening of the school	1 September 2020

7.0 Recommendations

It is recommended therefore to:

- i. Approve the proposal for the closure of Ysgol Glanadda and Ysgol Babanod Coedmawr on 31 August 2020, and offer places to pupils at Ysgol y Garnedd (subject to parental choice); and increase the capacity of Ysgol y Garnedd to 420.

Local Members' Views

Any comments from the Local Members will be presented at the meeting.

Statutory Officers' View

Monitoring Officer

The report has been the subject of input from the Legal Service therefore I have no observations to be added from a propriety perspective.

Head of Finance

I support action in accordance with the decision sought in the Bangor area, whilst encouraging the relevant members and officers to continue with the wider project to review and modernize school organisation without delay.

Appendices

Appendix 1	The Council's analysis and response to the objections received during the statutory objections period.
Appendix 2	Cabinet Report 3 July, 2018

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

All background documents relevant to the proposal can be seen on the Council's website by following this link www.gwynedd.gov.uk/modernisingeducation.

The background documents include:

- Schools Organisation Code 006/2013
- Schools Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013
- Excellent Primary Education for the Children of Gwynedd Strategy
- Statistics Pack 2017-2018
- Language and Community Impact Assessment Report
- Equality Impact Assessment
- Cabinet Report and Decision Notice– January 2017
- Cabinet Report and Decision Notice– March 2018
- Cabinet Report and Decision Notice– July 2018
- Statutory Consultation Document 10 April – 22 May 2018
- Consultation Documents with the Primary pupils effected by the proposal
- The Council's analysis and response to the observations received during the statutory Consultation period
- Statutory Notices published on 4 September 2018

