

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>Gwynedd Council Cabinet</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>5 November 2019</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER</b>	<b>Councillor Cemlyn Rees Williams</b>
<b>OFFICER</b>	<b>Gwern ap Rhisiart</b>
<b>TITLE OF ITEM</b>	<b>Ysgol Llanaelhaearn</b>

## 1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

The permission of the Council Cabinet is sought to begin a period of statutory consultation in accordance with the requirements of section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 on the proposed proposal to close Ysgol Llanaelhaearn on 31 August 2020 and to provide places for pupils at Ysgol Bro Plenydd, Y Ffôr, on 1 September 2020.

## 2. THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

- 2.1. The reason for seeking permission to consult on the basis of the preferred proposal is the need to address the vulnerable position of the school. There has been a significant fall in numbers recently which has led to a critical situation with eight pupils on the roll in the September 2019 census, with projections indicating that there will be a further fall to five pupils on the roll by 2021. The eight pupils are taught in two classes - one class of three and one class of five pupils.

## 3. BACKGROUND

### 3.1. Recent Developments

- 3.1.1. Ysgol Llanaelhaearn is located in the centre of the village of Llanaelhaearn between Pwllheli and Caernarfon. Pupil numbers at Ysgol Llanaelhaearn have been falling over recent years, and this has led to the critical situation of only eight pupils on the register.
- 3.1.2. At the Cabinet meeting on 4 June 2019, the Cabinet's decision was *'to grant permission to the Education Department to hold formal meetings with the governing body and other relevant stakeholders to discuss a range of potential options for the school's future'*.
- 3.1.3. Three meetings were held between June and October 2019. During the initial meeting, the Governing Body and other relevant stakeholders presented ideas for possible options to resolve the key challenges facing the school. Following a detailed assessment of these options, a second local meeting was held, in which the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for these options were outlined, with input provided by the Governing Body and stake-holders. This information was used to weigh up the options on the basis of whether they addressed the challenges facing the school. A third local meeting was then held to present these options.

### 3.2. The Strategic Context

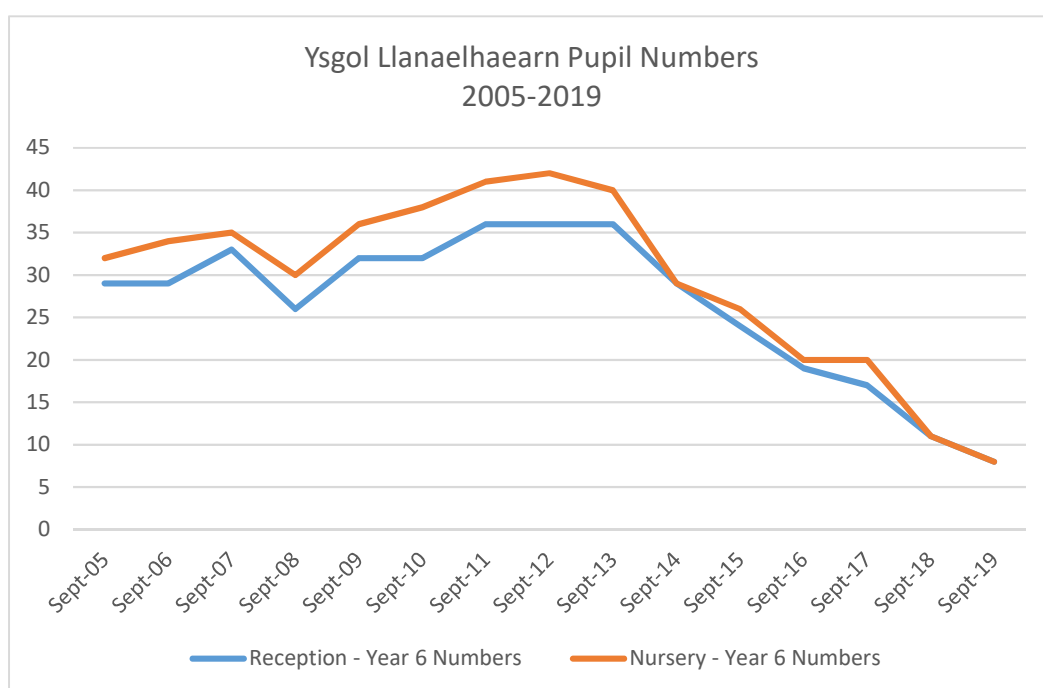
- 3.2.1. At its meeting on 18 December 2018, the Cabinet approved the principles of a *'Fit for Purpose Education System'*, as the foundation for delivering the Education Department's vision and developing a system to ensure high quality education for the children and young people of Gwynedd for the twenty first century. This would specifically be achieved through rationalising the age ranges

in classes and providing head-teachers with the opportunity to focus on leadership issues in primary schools.

- 3.2.2. The Council has implemented the '*Excellent Primary Education for the Children of Gwynedd Strategy*' since its adoption in April 2009. This strategy notes factors which support the process for reviewing catchment areas or specific situations. The details relating to these factors appear later in the report (Part 5 - Options Appraisal).

#### 4. THE CURRENT SITUATION AT YSGOL LLANAELHAEARN

- 4.1. Pupil numbers at Ysgol Llanaelhaearn have fallen in recent years. There has been a substantial drop in numbers since 2013, as seen in the graph below. Although the school has a capacity of 47 (Reception to Year 6) and six nursery places, since 1980, the highest number on the school register was 42 pupils in 2012. Since then, numbers have fallen with eight pupils attending the school in September 2019.



- 4.2. As a result of the current low numbers, the school is in a vulnerable position and under increasing budgetary pressures, specifically:
- School numbers are concerning. In September 2019, eight pupils were registered at the school.
  - The classroom sizes are small - with one class of three pupils and one class of five.
  - Projections indicate seven pupils in 2020, five pupils in 2021, and five pupils in 2022.
  - Number of surplus places - 83% surplus places (39 Reception to Year 6, and six surplus places in Nursery).
  - Ysgol Llanaelhaearn receives an additional sum to the usual allocation via the minimum staffing protection policy. This additional sum during the 2019/20 financial year was £43,774. This will only enable the employment of a head-teacher and assistant in the future.
  - The per pupil cost for Ysgol Llanaelhaearn during the 2019/20 financial year is £12,671 (based on September 2018 numbers, i.e. 11 pupils), compared with the county-wide average per pupil cost of £3,884 for the same period.
  - 2018 data shows that 39 children live in the Llanaelhaearn catchment area, 28 of whom attend other schools.

## 5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1. During the local meetings several possible models were proposed and discussed, specifically:
- i. Do nothing (maintain the status quo)
  - ii. Change the staffing structure
  - iii. Establish an Early Years Observation unit at the school
  - iv. Formally federate with another school or other schools
  - v. The Authority to guarantee that the school remains open for five years to provide an opportunity to increase numbers.
  - vi. Establish a childcare club on the site of the school
  - vii. A community café at the school
  - viii. Close the school, with pupils being educated at an alternative school.

Appendix A contains an appraisal of these options.

- 5.2. In line with the '*Excellent Primary Education for the Children of Gwynedd*' Strategy, many factors were considered in appraising the options for the situation, specifically:
- i. Classroom Sizes
  - ii. Pupil Numbers
  - iii. Leadership and Staffing
  - iv. The Community
  - v. Financial Resources
  - vi. The Welsh Language
  - vii. Geographical Factors
- 5.3. During the Options Appraisal, the Governing Body and other relevant stakeholders provided input and comments.
- 5.4. It should be noted that the option described above in 5.1 (v) was proposed by the Governing Body in view of their concern that a meeting with Education Officers, parents and School Governors during July 2016 resulted in a significant reduction in pupil numbers. It was alleged that comments from Education Officers had led to parents deciding to move their children to nearby schools.

The Governing Body invited the Education Officers to the meeting as the School did not have a headteacher in place for the following September. This represented the severity of the situation at the time as a school cannot open without a Headteacher. In accordance with normal practice, the Department advertised the Headteacher's post twice externally, and twice internally. However, there were no suitable candidates. This was the context for the meeting. At the end of the meeting, a number of parents made enquiries with the Education Officers about the procedure to transfer children to other schools. Officers informed them in accordance with the usual procedure.

Numbers have fallen steadily since 2012. Numbers decreased from 42 in 2012 to 26 July 2016 and fell further to 20 by September 2016. Therefore the fall in pupil numbers cannot be related to alleged comments from Education Officers at the end of one meeting. Rather, the meeting highlighted the critical situation of the School at that time and as a result many parents may have chosen to move their children as there was no Headteacher in post for September 2016. The Authority has been working with the Governors since 2016 to support and maintain the School.

It is also important to note that the Authority is unable to commit to not taking any action in respect of the school for 5 years. This would represent an unlawful fettering of its statutory rights.

- 5.5. Following the appraisal, two options emerged as being the most viable and realistic to address the school's situation:
- i. Formally federate with a nearby school or schools
  - ii. Close the school, with pupils being educated at an alternative school.

This report details and elaborates on the school's vulnerable situation and the need to take further steps to address this. Whilst the option of maintaining the current situation has been considered, we are not of the opinion that it would address the issues that need attention.

- 5.6. Several of the other options made better use of the building, such as establishing an Early Years Observation Unit, Opening a Café or a Child Care club. Nevertheless, these options were not considered to be ones that would resolve the key challenges facing the school when appraised against the factors noted above in 5.2 (A full assessment is provided in Appendix A).

### **IMPACT ASSESSMENTS - ASSUMPTION AGAINST CLOSING RURAL SCHOOLS**

- 5.7. The Schools Organisation Code 011/2018 has introduced new, special arrangements in relation to rural schools, establishing a procedural presumption against closure. This does not mean that a rural school will never close but that the case for closure must be strong, and that all other viable options have been conscientiously considered. Ysgol Llanaelhaearn is designated a 'rural school' for the purpose of the Code. This means that a more detailed set of procedures and requirements must be followed when formulating a closure proposal.
- 5.8. In addition to the factors relevant to the development of any proposal, specific assessments must also be carried out in relation to a proposed proposal of this kind. Several assessments were conducted in line with the requirements of the Code for the options considered to address the school situation. As noted above, these options were to federate or close the school.
- 5.9. An Assessment of the Likely Impact on the Quality and Standard of Education (Appendix B)
- 5.9.1. The Assessment of the Likely Impact on the Quality and Standard of Education demonstrates that forming a federation would not necessarily have an effect on the school's current situation in the short term due to an existing informal collaboration arrangement with another school which would be likely to be continued under a formal federal model arrangement.
  - 5.9.2. According to the most recent Estyn reports, Ysgol Bro Plenydd would offer education of equal if not better quality than Ysgol Llanaelhaearn.
  - 5.9.3. Ysgol Llanaelhaearn was last inspected in April 2015. The inspection concluded that the school's performance was adequate with expectations for improvement. It is acknowledged that the school, since the time of the inspection, has been on an improvement journey under the leadership of several different head-teachers.
  - 5.9.4. In 2019, the school was placed in the Welsh Government's 'yellow' category in terms of support and the school's ability to improve.
  - 5.9.5. Ysgol Bro Plenydd was last inspected in February 2015. The inspection concluded that the school's current performance was good.
  - 5.9.6. In 2019, the school was placed in the Welsh Government's green category in terms of support and the school's ability to improve.

- 5.9.7. The alternative school offers education of at least equal standard, and provides pupils with more opportunities for collaborating and socialising with their peers, and enables the pupils to gain a range of curricular and extracurricular experiences. Further relevant information is available in Appendix B.
  - 5.9.8. Due to the existing low pupil to teacher ratio at Ysgol Llanaelhaearn, the children are making good progress.
  - 5.9.9. Delivering this proposal would give pupils opportunities to be educated in peer groups with a far smaller age range and would provide daily opportunities to improve the pupils' educational and social experience.
  - 5.9.10. The needs of any vulnerable groups, including children with additional learning needs, would be assessed and implemented in line with the Authority's policy and procedures.
- 5.10. Assessment of the likely impact on different transport arrangements
- 5.10.1. The Assessment of the likely impact on different travelling arrangements demonstrates that introducing a federal model would not have an effect on travelling arrangements for the pupils. They currently visit Ysgol Chwilog on a weekly basis using Ysgol Llanaelhaearn's minibus, and it is anticipated that this would continue under a formal federal model, by either federating with Ysgol Chwilog, or another local school.
  - 5.10.2. The option to close the school would result in pupils from Ysgol Llanaelhaearn travelling farther to school every day. As the alternative school is more than two miles from their homes, they would have the right to free transport to the alternative school. Ysgol Bro Plenydd, is 3.6 miles from Ysgol Llanaelhaearn, and it is anticipated that the journey would take five minutes each way in a car or by bus. This is deemed to be within the reasonable distance that primary pupils are expected to travel to school in line with the '*Excellent Primary Education for the Children of Gwynedd Strategy*' of 30 minutes each way.
  - 5.10.3. Transport to the alternative school would be offered in line with Gwynedd Council transport policy.
  - 5.10.4. Appendix B contains an assessment of the likely impact on transport arrangements.
- 5.11. Assessment of the likely impact on the community
- 5.11.1. An Assessment of the likely impact on the community was carried out which concluded that federating with another school would not have an impact on the community, due to the continuation of the school's presence and activities in the community, as in the current situation.
  - 5.11.2. Implementing the proposal to close Ysgol Llanaelhaearn and educating the pupils at Ysgol Bro Plenydd, Y Ffôr, would have some negative impact on the Llanaelhaearn community. Although the school building is not used by the community, the school uses the local community centre, Canolfan y Babel. However, in 2018, seven pupils living in the Ysgol Llanaelhaearn catchment area attended Ysgol Bro Plenydd. Therefore, a link already exists between the school and the wider area.
  - 5.11.3. To mitigate the impact, community collaboration between Ysgol Bro Plenydd and the community of Llanaelhaearn will be encouraged, where appropriate.

## 5.12. Other Options

5.12.1. The Schools Organisation Code 011/2018 notes examples of possible options that may be worthwhile considering in such circumstances, and these examples were considered in addition to the options in Section 5 of this report, with comments included below:

- i. Clustering, collaboration with other schools: Ysgol Llanaelhaearn already collaborates with Ysgol Chwilog through arrangement made by the Head-teacher.
- ii. Using the school as a community centre to hold and support a range of community services: the assessment of the probable impact on the community shows that a range of community facilities already exist in Llanaelhaearn. Furthermore, the building is not suitable for such use without modification.
- iii. Co-locate local services within the school to counter maintenance costs: there is no demand for a space in the area as other sites have available rental space.
- iv. Consider establishing schools on more than one site in order to retain buildings: Only Ysgol Llanaelhaearn is under consideration in this review, due to the critical situation rendered by the low numbers.

### **REASONABLE OPTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR THE SCHOOL**

## 5.13. Formally federate with a nearby school or schools.

5.13.1. The Code states that to federate brings particular benefits to rural schools and notes that the proposer must therefore demonstrate how federation has been considered as an option. It has been demonstrated that federating can offer advantages to rural schools in some situations, specifically by strengthening leadership and opportunities for collaboration.

5.13.2. Under a formal federal model, Ysgol Llanaelhaearn would collaborate with another school or other schools in the locality under one head-teacher (or more) and one governing body. The governing bodies of the individual schools would be dissolved and one new governing body would be established for the federation. The identity of the school in question (including name, ethos, and uniform) could be retained or changed to reflect the new federation. The federated model allows for the possibility of sharing staff, resources, IT, buildings and expertise.

5.13.3. However, this option did not address the key challenges facing the school. Numbers at the school would remain low, and classroom sizes would also remain small. Further details are provided in Appendices A and Ch.

5.13.4. The possibility of federating with a range of nearby schools, specifically Yr Eifl, Bro Plenydd, Llanybi, Pentreuchaf and Chwilog was considered.

5.13.5. Since numbers at Ysgol Llanaelhaearn had reached a critical point with eight pupils on the register, the assessment of federation demonstrates that there would be no clear advantages to other schools from federating with Ysgol Llanaelhaearn.

5.13.6. There was no clear evidence that a formal federation would lead to an increase in numbers.

5.13.7. It was therefore considered that this was not the best option for the situation.

## 5.14. Close Ysgol Llanaelhaearn, with pupils being educated at an alternative school.

5.14.1. This model means closing Ysgol Llanaelhaearn and moving the pupils to be educated at Ysgol Bro Plenydd, Y Ffôr. This proposal is discussed further in the report.

5.14.2. It was considered that Ysgol Bro Plenydd, Y Ffôr would be named as the 'alternative school' for several reasons, specifically:

- i. The closest school, geographically, to the school and centre of Llanaelhaearn village is Ysgol yr Eifl, Trefor, which is full. This school would not be able to accept eight additional pupils.
- ii. Ysgol Bro Plenydd, Y Ffôr, is the next closest school geographically.
- iii. The road to Ysgol Bro Plenydd from Llanaelhaearn village is convenient and has public transport links. The journey to other nearby primary schools would not be as easy from Llanaelhaearn. Ysgol Bro Plenydd, Y Ffôr, is 3.6 miles from Ysgol Llanaelhaearn and is more than two miles from all the houses in the Llanaelhaearn catchment.
- iv. Ysgol Bro Plenydd, Y Ffôr could accept with additional pupils. It currently has 30 surplus places, including nursery (*September 2019 census*).

5.14.3. Therefore, it is proposed that the Bro Plenydd school catchment area be extended to include the catchment of Ysgol Llanaelhaearn in future.

## 6. THE PREFERRED OPTION

Of the models considered, the preferred option for further consultation is the model of closing Ysgol Llanaelhaearn and transferring the pupils to Ysgol Bro Plenydd in Y Ffôr. This option is preferred for the following reasons:

### 6.1. Class sizes

6.1.1. Ysgol Llanaelhaearn only has two classes. One class has three pupils and one class has five pupils. The average size of classes at Ysgol Bro Plenydd is 23. Transferring to Bro Plenydd would mean that the children are educated in more appropriately sized classes and with peers.

### 6.2. Pupil Numbers

6.2.1. The latest projections, based on the September 2019 census, shows that numbers at Ysgol Llanaelhaearn will have fallen to five by September 2022, as the table below shows:

**Table 1 - Number projections for Ysgol Llanaelhaearn**

	N	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
September 2019	0	0	3	0	2	0	2	1	8
September 2020 Projection	0	0	0	3	0	2	0	2	7
September 2021 Projection	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	0	5
September 2022 Projection	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	5

6.2.2. Ysgol Llanaelhaearn has 39 (83%) surplus places (Reception - Year 6). There are 23 (25%) surplus places at Ysgol Bro Plenydd. By including the Nursery capacity and numbers for both schools, Ysgol Llanaelhaearn has 45 (85%) surplus places and Ysgol Bro Plenydd has 30 (29%) surplus places.

6.2.3. 68 pupils (Reception-Year 6) and 6 Nursery pupils attend Ysgol Bro Plenydd at present. Projections for Ysgol Bro Plenydd show that there will be 65 pupils (Reception-year 6) and nine Nursery age pupils at the school in September 2022. Numbers at Ysgol Bro Plenydd are more secure and sustainable for the future.

6.2.4. With 23 surplus places (and seven surplus places for Nursery), Ysgol Bro Plenydd has sufficient capacity for the number of pupils from both schools currently and for the next three years.

6.2.5. Currently, with a capacity of 492, there are 170 (35%) surplus places in the area (at Ysgolion Llanaelhaearn, yr Eifl, Bro Plenydd, Llangybi, Pentreuchaf and Chwilog). Implementing this proposal would reduce the number of surplus places in the area to 117 (27%).

### 6.3. Leadership and staffing

6.3.1. Ysgol Llanaelhaearn employs one full time primary teacher and a full time assistant. Up to four days a week, the primary teacher assumes the role of site manager and receives a management allowance.

6.3.2. Over the past four years, Ysgol Llanaelhaearn has had three different head-teachers, two led other schools, and one was a retired head-teacher. Before this, the school had a full-time head-teacher.

6.3.3. In 2017/18, Ysgol Llanaelhaearn shared its head-teacher with Ysgol Garndolbenmaen. From September onwards, the head-teacher has agreed to act as head-teacher for Ysgol Chwilog as well. Therefore, Ysgol Llanaelhaearn shares its head-teacher with two other primary schools - the only example of one head-teacher for three schools in Gwynedd. The head-teacher spends one day a week leading Ysgol Llanaelhaearn.

6.3.4. In addition to a head-teacher, Ysgol Bro Plenydd has two teachers and four assistants.

### 6.4. Financial Resources

6.4.1 A total of £431,000 is allocated for both schools for the 2019/2020 financial year. The cost per pupil between schools ranges between: £12,671 at Ysgol Llanaelhaearn and £4,118 at Ysgol Bro Plenydd. The average county-wide cost per pupil during this period is £3,884.

School	2019/20 Allocation	Cost per pupil (based on September 2018 numbers)	Minimum staffing protection allocation policy
Llanaelhaearn	£139,000	£12,671 (11 pupils)	£43,744
Bro Plenydd	£292,000	£4,118 (66 pupils)	-

6.4.2. Ysgol Llanaelhaearn received a contribution of £43,744 this year via the minimum staffing protection policy. This guarantees a head-teacher and assistant (at schools with fewer than 15 children). The school's current staffing structure, which consists of a teacher, an assistant and a shared head-teacher, means that Ysgol Llanaelhaearn, without making any changes, would face a financial shortfall based on the current numbers and future projections.

6.4.3. It is anticipated that savings of £100,518 per year would be made from closing Ysgol Llanaelhaearn and educating the existing pupils at Ysgol Bro Plenydd, Y Ffôr. It is estimated that transportation costs for the eight pupils would be approximately £11,400. The proposed net saving, given transportation costs, would be approximately £89,118. If all the children in the catchment required transportation in future, transportation costs would increase to approximately £25,000 and the likely proposed net saving would be £75,518 a year.

6.4.4. Any savings in revenue costs would be utilised to benefit Gwynedd schools.

### 6.5. Learning Environment

6.5.1. Ysgol Bro Plenydd has capacity for its existing pupils, and the building is of a higher standard than Ysgol Llanaelhaearn. The most recent condition assessment by the Property Department states that Ysgol Llanaelhaearn is within the 'B' category for school condition, whilst Ysgol Bro Plenydd is in 'A'.



6.5.2. Both schools are community schools and provide Welsh medium education.

#### 6.6. The Community:

6.6.1. The Schools Organisation Code 011/2018 states that a community impact assessment must be held as part of any proposal for schools restructuring. A community impact assessment was completed on the reasonable options to address the key challenges facing the school.

6.6.2. The assessment of the probable impact on the community is included in Appendix B.

6.6.3. The assessment of the probable impact on the community states that there would be some negative impact from closing the school. It notes, however, that seven pupils who live in the Llanaelhaearn catchment area currently attend Ysgol Bro Plenydd. Therefore, a link between the school and the wider area already exists.

6.6.4. The community assessment notes that the school is involved with the Llanaelhaearn community, even though the community does not currently use the school building. Discussions will be held about the potential of including the community of Llanaelhaearn in the community activities of Ysgol Bro Plenydd.

#### 6.7. The Welsh Language

6.7.1. The Schools Organisation Code 011/2018 states that a Welsh language impact assessment must be held as part of any proposal for school restructuring. This assessment is seen in Appendix B.

6.7.2. The Language Impact Assessment (Appendix B) does not anticipate a negative impact on the Welsh language from the proposal, mainly because:

- i. The alternative school provides a Welsh medium education, also provided for pupils at Ysgol Llanaelhaearn.
- ii. Statistics from the 2011 census for the Llanaelhaearn ward indicates that 74% of the population is Welsh speaking, and 80% of the population of Abererch speaks Welsh.
- iii. PLASC January 2019 statistics show that 54% of pupils at Ysgol Llanaelhaearn speak Welsh fluently at home compared to 83% of pupils at Ysgol Bro Plenydd do so.

#### 6.8. Geographical Factors

6.8.1. By closing Ysgol Llanaelhaearn and transferring pupils to Ysgol Bro Plenydd, it is not anticipated that any pupil would need to travel an unreasonable distance to an educational setting, that is, more than 30 minutes one way, in line with the '*Excellent Primary Education for the Children of Gwynedd Strategy*'.

6.8.2. It is not anticipated that travelling to school will add more than five minutes in one direction to the learners' current travel time.

6.8.3. Transport will be provided in line with the County's School Transport Policy.

**7. IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSAL**

**7.1. Schools admissions catchment areas**

7.1.1. In light of the preferred option, Ysgol Bro Plenydd’s catchment will include its own current catchment area and the current catchment area of Ysgol Llanaelhaearn.

**Map 1: Current situation of the area's catchments**



**Map 2: Ysgol Bro Plenydd catchment area if changes take place**



**7.2. Transport**

7.2.1. As noted above in 6.8, if the preferred option is implemented, pupils living in the Ysgol Llanaelhaearn catchment area will be provided transport in line with Gwynedd Council Transport Policy.

### 7.3 Staffing considerations

- 7.3.1. Should the proposal be approved, staffing implications could lead to redundancies. There will be specific consultation with staff and Union representatives as part of the statutory consultation period. Gwynedd Council has developed a detailed staffing policy, jointly with Trades Unions and head-teachers. Any redundancies resulting from this proposal will have to comply with that policy. Clear and open communication will play a fundamental part in the implication of any proposals.

## 8. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### 8.1. The Schools Organisation Code 011/2018

- 8.1.1. Any process will be conducted in accordance with Welsh Government Guidelines (*The Schools Organisation Code 011/2018*).

### 8.2. Equality

- 8.2.1. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure that the proposal considers and complies with equal rights.
- 8.2.2. An equality assessment was held on the options, which focused on different elements of equality such as race, sex, disability, language, religion or creed, and age.
- 8.2.3. The equality assessment stated the importance of positively promoting equal opportunities in light of the proposal, and that measures should be in place to ensure unlawful discrimination and harassment does not occur. Arrangements are also in place to monitor and review the situation.
- 8.2.4. The Equality Assessment is provided in Appendix B.

### 8.3. Recent discussions about the need for housing for local people in the Llanaelhaearn area.

- 8.3.1. It was brought to our attention that an open afternoon will be held on 23 October 2019 at Canolfan y Babell which aimed to identify whether there was a need for open market housing, affordable housing and/or social housing for local people in the Llanaelhaearn area. It was arranged by the Rural Housing Facilitator.
- 8.3.2. Subject to receipt of formal planning permissions, there is a possibility that 15 houses could be constructed on a proposed site (details included in Appendix C).
- 8.3.3. Should 15 houses be constructed in the future, in line with the planning guidance formula (*Housing Developments and Educational Provision*), this could lead to approximately 6 (15x0.4) children of primary school age in the proposed estate. Therefore, it could be anticipated that approximately six children could attend Ysgol Llanaelhaearn, or another local school, subject to parental choice if the proposal were to proceed.
- 8.3.4. If an additional six pupils were to attend Ysgol Llanaelhaearn, the numbers would increase to 14 (or 13 from September 2020) and the school would continue to be in a critical situation as a result of low pupil numbers.

### 8.4. The Well-being of Future Generations Act

- 8.4.1. A well-being assessment was carried out which gave consideration to Gwynedd Council's well-being aims.
- 8.4.2. The Education Department has a role in promoting the well-being objectives of the Act amongst pupils in the county through its activities and projects. The Act sets a duty on public bodies in Wales to improve economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being. As part of the duty, the Council

has published well-being objectives that outline the way it will improve well-being in the "2018-23 Gwynedd Plan".

8.4.3. Following consideration and an assessment in line with the requirements of the Well-being Act, it is concluded that the proposal meets the 7 well-being goals of the Act, together with the Council's well-being objectives. This proposal will allow us to respond to and address the children's needs today, and strengthen their future well-being. The proposal will ensure that the children of the area are educated on a suitable site and in a naturally Welsh-speaking community, thus increasing the opportunities to socialise and collaborate with others, and to give them the opportunity to thrive among their peers.

8.4.4. The Well-being Assessment is included in Appendix B.

## **9. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE**

9.1. Should the Cabinet decide to proceed with this report's recommendation, a period of statutory consultation must take place in line with the School Standards and Organisation Act (2013) and Schools Organisation Code 011/2018. It is anticipated that this will be held in coming weeks.

9.2. A further report will then be presented to Cabinet to report on the result of the statutory consultation period. The Cabinet will then be required to evaluate the consultation and, subject to the Cabinet's opinion at that time, decide whether or not to issue a Statutory Notice. If a Statutory Notice is published, there will be a period of one month for anyone to object to the proposal, known as the 'Objection Period'. Following that period a further report will be submitted to Cabinet for a final decision. That report will include a summary of any objections received and responses.

## **10. VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS**

### **Monitoring Officer:**

The contents of this report has been the subject of legal advice by the Legal Service.

No further comments regarding propriety.

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

There are obvious reasons (including financial ones) supporting the proposal to close Ysgol Llanaelhaearn. I confirm that the financial figures in sections 4.2 and 6.4 of the report and in part 6 of Appendix A are either true accurate costs, or fair estimates (where appropriate). Establishing the new arrangements (closing Ysgol Llanaelhaearn, and providing pupil places at Ysgol Bro Plenydd, Y Ffor) would save £100,518 less additional transport needs (currently estimated at around £25,000), resulting in annual net savings of approximately £75,518 (as noted in clause 6.4.3 of the report).

### **Local Member:**

I am concerned and disappointed by the situation that exists at Ysgol Llanaelhaearn, a school that provides a very high standard of education for children in the catchment area.

I accept that the number of pupils on the register has fallen to a very concerning level, and therefore the cost of providing the education is higher than the County's average.

As has already been said, there are a number of factors that have led to the current situation. As stated by the Chair of Governors at the meetings held in the Village, and in a letter to the Education Department on the 15th September, one of the main things that has led to a 60% drop in the number of children over the last 3 years is comments made at a meeting in the School during July 2016 by Officers from the Education Department regarding the future of the

School at that time. Following these comments a number of parents removed their children from the school. Indeed, it must be said that many of those on the School's governing body moved their children to other schools following the comments made by the officials at that meeting. This was undoubtedly the main 'catalyst' for a decline in the number of children over the last period. I believe the letter from the Chair is in your file. A warrant that the School be open for 5 years was requested in an attempt to recover the numbers and raise the confidence of parents to send their children to the school. The application was refused.

The governors felt that it was important that the Cabinet Members had the facts and complete background before deciding on the future of the school so they have asked me to include the comments in my provision for you.

As I have already stated, Ysgol Llanaelhaearn is a small, happy school and provides the children with an extremely good education. Recent reports confirm this.

It will be a very sad day if the school closes, and I think it would have a long-term impact on the attempt to regenerate and develop the community, attracting new families (with children) to live in the village. As you will be aware from the reports attached to this application, there is a plan to seek the development of 15 new social housing in the Village. It is likely that the closure of the school would influence the decision of some prospective families.

I trust that the statutory consultation will be fair and thorough and I hope that there will be some way to save the small school of Llanaelhaearn.

**Appendices:**

**Appendix A:** Comparison of the characteristics of the models against the strategy's factors.

**Appendix B:** Impact Assessments:

- An Assessment of the Probable Impact on the Quality and Standard of Education
- Assessment of the probable impact on travel arrangements
- Assessment of the probable impact on the community
- Language Impact Assessment
- Well-being Assessment
- Equality Assessment

**Appendix C:** Letter and leaflet about an open day regarding a possible housing development

**Appendix Ch:** Background pack, which includes presentations and minutes of the local meetings.