

Assessing the Impact on Protected Characteristics, the Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Disadvantage

For help to complete this form see the *How to Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment* leaflet. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Gadlys Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on ext. 32708 or DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru for further assistance.

The Council's is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the effect any change in policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), has on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has a general duty to ensure fairness and foster good relations. A timely Equality Impact Assessment must be undertaken before making any decision on any relevant change (i.e. which has an effect on people with protected characteristics).

The Council is also required, under the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011) to consider the effect of change in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), in its opportunities for people to use Welsh and to ensure that Welsh is not treated less favourably than English. This document therefore ensures that these decisions protect and promote the use of the Welsh language.

From April 1st 2021 the Council has a duty to have due regard to tackling socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decisions.

1) Details

1.1. What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Invest £3 million to improve the condition of Ysgol Hirael

1.2 What is the purpose of the policy / service that is being created or amended? What changes are being considered?

We are eager to commit £3m from the Sustainable Learning Communities Programme to address the needs of Ysgol Hirael which is the only primary school in Bangor yet to receive any investment as part of Band A or Band B funding. The sum of £3m is based on an estimate of the costs to demolish one Vic Hallam building at Ysgol Hirael which is in a very poor condition and ensure a new building in its place which would meet the requirements of the new Curriculum for Wales and education in the 21st century.

The purpose of the project is to:

- Reduce the inequality in the condition and suitability of primary school buildings in the city of Bangor

- Raising the condition category of Ysgol Hirael to A
- Improving the adaptability and accessibility elements
- Improve the building for potential community use
- Demolish and rebuild one of the school's Vic Hallam buildings
- Ensure a learning environment that meets the requirements of the twenty-first century and Curriculum for Wales.

1.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Sioned Medi Hughes (Modernising Education Officer)

1.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?

January 2023.
First version.

2) Action

2.1 Who are the stakeholders or partners you need to work with to undertake this assessment?

Gwynedd Council Education Department and Ysgol Hirael

2.2 What measures have you taken to engage with people with equality characteristics, regarding the Welsh language or with communities (either of place or of need) that live with socio-economic disadvantage?

The Bangor Catchment Review Panel (PAD) was established in June 2017 and the panel included representation from schools in the Bangor catchment area. During these meetings, several options were considered for the vision for education in Bangor and discussions were held regarding the poor condition of parts of Ysgol Hirael.

The intention is to engage with stakeholders, including the groups identified once the funding has been confirmed.

2.3 What was the result of the engagement?

The intention is to engage with stakeholders, including the groups identified once the financial element has been confirmed.

2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you operating?

The Governing Body has expressed their concern about the condition of the current building. A condition assessment by the Maintenance Unit states that the school's condition falls into category C. Significant upgrading work has been identified for part of the building which is of Vic Hallam construction.

2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be collected?

None at the moment.

3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 The Council must give due regard to the effect any changes will have on people with the equality characteristics noted below. What impact will the new policy/service or the proposed changes in the policy or service have on people with these characteristics?

Characteristics	What type of impact? *	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including nationality)	none	From a race perspective, there is no evidence that the change will affect this feature.
Disability	Positive	<p>Investing in a new building for Ysgol Hirael would mean that the school will contain modern resources that will be suitable for pupils and staff who have any specific physical impairments. Modern school building rules state that a school must be built that would be suitable for pupils and staff with specific impairments. In addition, it would allow a child with disability to have better access to activities outside school as well.</p> <p>The Unit will include suitable accessible access for all children, and the needs of any child with a disability will be considered in accordance with the Education Department's Accessibility and Equality policies. It would also include suitable access for parents who have a physical impairment to get in and out of the school safely.</p> <p>The Curriculum in Wales has changed significantly, using a cross-curricular and integrated approach, which enables learners to develop holistically. In response to this, spaces</p>

		<p>within the school will reflect the need for multifaceted learning.</p> <p>We will work to improve the environment for education and the wider community, improving educational outcomes and well-being. The recommendations in the new PAS 6463 are to be considered to make the space inclusive for all by addressing sensory design considerations including lighting, acoustics, flooring and decorations.</p>
Sex	none	There is no evidence yet that the change will affect this feature.
Age	Positive	The learning environment for the children will be improved to ensure that they make the most of their education and have access to more activities.
Sexual orientation	none	There is no evidence yet that the change will affect this feature.
Religion or belief (or non-belief)	none	There is no evidence yet that the change will affect this feature.
Gender reassignment	none	There is no evidence yet that the change will affect this feature.
Pregnancy and maternity	Positive	Improved facilities for staff.
Marriage and civil partnership	Positive / negative / none	Not applicable
The Welsh language	Positive / negative / none	<p>It is anticipated that a significant investment in Ysgol Hiraef will create the very best conditions to support the prosperity of the Welsh language among the children and the community and the wider area. It will have a positive effect on the Welsh language, mainly, because there would be more opportunities for children to use Welsh socially and educationally, as the new school will offer better resources for carrying out more activities outside of school hours.</p> <p>Bangor is home to many languages and cultures that make Bangor a multicultural city, Bangor University is a key institution that attracts a large number of students and professionals to the city, and as a result increases the number of pupils in the surrounding schools.</p>

		<p>In order to support newcomers to blend into the education system and the bilingual society they are part of, the Education Department has Language Centres located across the County, the Cabinet approved a new vision for 'Immersion Education System towards 2032 and beyond' in July 2021, investing £1.1 million of the Welsh Government's Welsh language education capital funds in order to establish new immersion education sites, and Bangor is one of the sites receiving investment.</p> <p>Headteachers and teachers at mainstream schools in the catchment area will be able to refer learners who do not speak Welsh or lack confidence in their speaking, writing, and listening skills in Welsh to the attention of the Immersion Education System. Recently, the staff of the Immersion Education System have also been holding training sessions on the principles of language immersion in the Foundation Phase for teachers and school assistants throughout the county, to ensure that appropriate immersion takes place in the Foundation Phase. In addition, the Language Centres have a long tradition of providing 'Gloywi Iaith' support to mainstream learners who need an extra boost with their skills and confidence in the Welsh language. As the new Immersion System has become operational since the beginning of January 2023, the Department will ensure the continuation of this practice of being able to offer language refresher sessions to children and young people in our schools, in order to further reinforce their skills and confidence in the Welsh language.</p>
Socio-Economic Disadvantage	Positive / negative / none	<p>By investing £3 million in Ysgol Hiracl, we will ensure a suitable space for pupils in the catchment area and create the best conditions for the prosperity of the community and it would reduce the inequality in the condition and suitability of primary school buildings in the city Bangor. This is an economic advantage and a means of ensuring that the service the families need is within their local community.</p>

* Delete as appropriate

3.2 The Council has a duty under the 2010 Equality Act to contribute positively to a fairer society by promoting equality and good relations in its activities regarding the following characteristics – age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, gender reassignment, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must give due attention to the way any change affects these duties.

General Duties of the Equality Act	Does it have an impact? *	In what way? What is the evidence?
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Abolishing illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation	No	The proposal will not alter schools' statutory duty to protect pupils from discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.
Promoting equal opportunities	Yes	<p>Investing in the school will promote equality of opportunity by improving the resources and the learning environment to eliminate the inequality that exists between primary schools in the Bangor catchment area. This will be a means of promoting equal opportunities for all children in the catchment area and the community, and for children with disabilities.</p> <p>PSE lessons are held at the school which teach children about promoting equal opportunities. The school's current arrangements in the context of promoting equal opportunities will continue because of the proposal. The proposal will improve the school's ability to <i>"offer education of the highest possible quality which will give the children of the County the experiences, skills and confidence and enable them to develop into bilingual, successful citizens and complete"</i> in accordance with the vision of the Best Quality Primary Education Strategy for the Children of Gwynedd.</p>
Encouraging good relationships	Yes	<p>Investing in the condition of the school will be a means of fostering good relationships by ensuring a better learning environment for the staff and pupils and improving the building for possible community use. This will be a means of ensuring that all the children in the catchment area can receive an equal education in their local community, thus being a means of fostering good relationships between the children with each other, and between the school and the community.</p> <p>PSE lessons are held at the school which teach children about promoting equal opportunities. The school's current arrangements in the context of promoting equal opportunities will continue because of the proposal.</p>

* to be deleted as appropriate

3.3 How does your proposal ensure that you work in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English and that you seize every opportunity to

promote the Welsh language (beyond providing services bilingually) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

Having considered what is in this assessment, we are of the opinion that investing in Ysgol Hirael would have a positive effect on the Welsh language, mainly because there would be more opportunities for children to use the Welsh language socially and educationally, as the new school will offer better resources for extra-curricular activities.

3.4 What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice in order to have a positive impact on people's opportunities to use the Welsh language, and to reduce or prevent any adverse effects that the policy / practice may have on the Welsh language?

It is not anticipated that investing in Ysgol Hirael will change the way the school deals with the Welsh language at present, and the school will continue to take advantage of every opportunity to promote the use of the Welsh language in the school and the community. Improving the building will be an opportunity for more possible community use which is an opportunity to further promote the Welsh language.

3.5 How does the proposal show that you have had due regard to the need to address inequality caused by socio-economic disadvantage? (Note that this is about closing inequality gaps rather than just improving outcomes for everyone)?

The proposal tackles inequality caused by socio-economic disadvantage by creating a first-class learning environment creating consistency across the county and ensuring equal opportunity for all learners to benefit from the very best conditions. It will be a means of reducing disadvantage for children in the catchment area and ensure that children with a physical impairment can stay in their catchment area.

3.6 What other measures or changes might you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice to show that you have had due regard to the need to reduce disproportionate outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage, in accordance with the Socio-Economic Act?

As a result of the proposal, the school will continue to operate in accordance with its policies and the expectations of the Education Department to reduce unequal results because of socio-economic disadvantage in accordance with the Socio-Economic Act.

4) Analysing the Results

4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the above and what is the reason for this?

We believe that the proposed investment of £3 million to Ysgol Hiracl is likely to have a positive impact on any of the equality features, and the Welsh language and on Socio-Economic disadvantage.

Investing in a new building for Ysgol Hiracl would mean that the school will contain modern resources that will be suitable for pupils and staff who have any specific physical impairments. Investing in the school will promote equality of opportunity by improving the resources and the learning environment in order to eliminate the inequality that exists between primary schools in the Bangor catchment area. This will be a means of promoting equal opportunities for all children in the catchment area and the community. It is anticipated that a significant investment in Ysgol Hiracl will create the very best conditions to support the prosperity of the Welsh language among the children and the community and the wider area. It will have a positive effect on the Welsh language, mainly, because there would be more opportunities for children to use Welsh socially and educationally, as the new school will offer better resources for carrying out more activities outside of school hours.

Our most important principle is to ensure that the welfare of the learners is central to everything. Therefore, investing and securing better resources that improve the experience of every pupil, and better buildings is an effort to improve the learning environment and the learning experience for Ysgol Hiracl pupils, whatever their background, age, ability, gender, race and nationality.

4.2 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the above and what is the reason for this?

It is not anticipated that the proposal will have a significant negative impact on equality, the Welsh language or socio-economic Disadvantage.

4.3 What should be done?

Choose one of the following:

Continue with the policy / service as it is robust	✓
Adapt the policy to delete any barriers	
Suspend and delete the policy as the detrimental impacts are too big	
Continue with the policy as any detrimental impact can be justified	
No further action at this time because it is too soon to decide, or there is insufficient evidence	

4.4 If continuing with the project, what steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?

Although we do not anticipate any negative impact we will continue to monitor and take action to mitigate any negative impacts as required. We will change the plan and the assessment if any negative effects are revealed after engaging with relevant stakeholders and groups.

4.5 If you are not taking any further action to delete or reduce the negative impacts, explain why here.

No negative impact has been identified at this stage.

5) Monitoring

5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?

The intention is to engage with stakeholders and relevant groups subject to the decision of the Cabinet and the Welsh Government, and it will be possible to adjust the plans and the assessment following comments from the engagement process.
We will monitor the impact of any change to ensure that the outcomes are positive and do not have any negative impact.