

## **CABINET REPORT**

June 2, 2015

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Gareth Thomas

**Subject:** Reorganisation of the Education Provision in Y Berwyn Catchment Area

**Contact Officer:** Iwan T Jones – Corporate Director

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### **Purpose of the report**

The purpose of this report is to report to the Cabinet following a period of statutory consultation on the proposal to close Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol y Berwyn and to establish a 3-19 Learning Campus, ("The Campus"), on the current site of Ysgol y Berwyn in Bala. The Campus will provide education for pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol y Berwyn.

### **The decision sought**

- i. To approve the proposal for the closure of Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol y Berwyn. The aim is for the schools to close on 31 August 2018 and for a Voluntary Controlled (VC) Welsh Medium 3-19 Learning Campus to be established on the existing site of Ysgol y Berwyn to open on 1 September 2018.
  - ii. To approve the issue of statutory notices on the proposal in (i) above in accordance with the requirements of Section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.
  - iii. Following discussion on the comments from the consultation regarding the importance of appointing a head teacher and the need to appoint well in advance, to approve the appointment and the funding of the head teacher for 3-19 Learning Campus from the savings gained from the plan, at least one year prior to the opening of the school in September 2018.
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### **Views of the local members**

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

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Council Cabinet's consent whether or not to proceed with the proposal to re-organise education provision in Y Berwyn catchment area in Bala. The Cabinet is asked to:

- i. Consider the comments received during the statutory consultation period and the response to those comments
- ii. Decide whether or not to continue with the proposal in its current form
- iii. Approve the publication of statutory notices should the decision be to proceed

- 1.2 The Council has implemented the strategy 'Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd' since it was adopted in April 2009. At its meeting of 9 October 2012, the Cabinet decided on a 'Priorities Plan - Reorganisation of Education Provision', based on this strategy. In accordance with this Strategy discussions regarding school re-organisation in the Berwyn catchment have taken place since 2009.
- 1.3 A report was submitted to the Full Council on July 15, 2010 regarding the reorganisation of education in Y Berwyn catchment area. The report is relevant to this current report and a copy is included in the background pack. Copies of other relevant papers can be viewed on the Council website at: [www.gwynedd.gov.uk/schoolorganisation](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/schoolorganisation) and [www.gwynedd.gov.uk/thecabinet](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/thecabinet).
- 1.4 A period of statutory consultation was held between 13 December 2010 and 4 February 2011.
- 1.5 A further report was submitted to the Full Council on 12 May 2011, and agreement was reached on the following recommendations:
- i. approve the proposal for the closure of Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol Y Berwyn on 31 August 2015*
  - ii. approve the proposal to establish a Community School on the sites of Ysgol Y Berwyn and Ysgol Beuno Sant to receive pupils between the ages of 3-19 as part of the proposal to establish a Lifelong Learning Campus in Y Bala, to open on 1 September 2015*
  - iii. approve the closure of Ysgol y Parc by 31 August 2012, to provide places for those pupils in Ysgol OM Edwards, Llanuwchllyn, and to upgrade the building at Ysgol OM Edwards*
- 1.6 Between 2010 and 2012, the methods used by the Welsh Government for funding large projects were changed and there was uncertainty regarding the availability of funding for the Lifelong Learning Campus in Y Bala. The Council decided to guarantee the funding for the improvements at Ysgol OM Edwards, but no further steps were taken over reorganisation in the remainder of the catchment area.
- 1.7 Ysgol Y Parc closed on August 31 2013, and improvements to Ysgol OM Edwards were completed by September 2013.
- 1.8 After a period of delay, a further report was submitted to the Cabinet on 1 April 2014, when a decision was reached:
- i. To approve permission to extend the work and enable the formation of a range of models which would greet strategic, managerial and/or governance aspects for the catchment area in its entirety, with the aim of submitting specific recommendations for statutory consultation in accordance with Section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013*
  - ii. Authorise an assessment to be undertaken in order to identify and measure the need for education provision of a specific category and designation within the catchment area and to meet the requirements of the process of identifying the recommendations noted in i. above.*
  - iii. Since one of the schools in the catchment area is a voluntary aided Church in Wales school (VA), in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2013, delegate the right to hold a pre consultation meeting with the Church in Wales to the Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Young People.*

- 1.9 Following this, the Catchment-area Review Panel (CRP) was re-established and meetings were held on 6 May 2014 and 15 January 2015. During this period, 3 additional meetings were held to discuss educational matters and education with the head teachers of the catchment area schools. The Panel discussed a wide range of evidence, including statistical information of the various schools, financial information and the new guidelines introduced by the Welsh Government on proposals to re-organise school provision, as well as the new Regulations recently introduced in relation to the federation of schools.
- 1.10 Various discussions took place between April 2014 and January 2015. Although Ysgol OM Edwards was part of the previous reorganisation, this school was included in the discussions for developing different models for further consideration. The most recent CRP meeting was held on 14 January 2015 when background studies based on the entire catchment area were presented. These included a long list of models, the proposed way forward (i.e. the direction at present) and an explanation of the statutory processes.
- 1.11 Through the Welsh Government programme - *'Twenty First Century Schools Programme'*, a sum of £9.27million has been earmarked for Y Berwyn catchment area (contribution of £4.635m from the Welsh Government, £4.635m from Gwynedd Council). In order to attract the funding, a comprehensive business plan will have to be submitted in three stages. The first stage of the business plan has been approved by the Welsh Government, but the sustainability of the rural schools and the post-16 provision was strongly challenged. Although the Welsh Government has been convinced for the time being of the need to safeguard the rural provision and also the post-16 provision in the catchment area, these matters could be raised again as stages 2 and 3 of the business plan are submitted. This will be during the next few months.

## 2 BACKGROUND – CHOOSING THE FAVOURED OPTION

- 2.1 A number of models were discussed before agreeing on a long list.

<b>Model 1</b>	Do nothing
<b>Model 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close Ysgol y Berwyn, Ysgol Bro Tegid and Ysgol Beuno Sant and create a Lifelong Campus (LC) on the existing site of Ysgol y Berwyn, in Bala</li> <li>• Then, create a catchment joint-committee between the LC and the three rural schools, namely Ysgol OM Edwards, Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and Ysgol Bro Tryweryn.</li> </ul>
<b>Model 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close Ysgol y Berwyn, Ysgol Bro Tegid and Ysgol Beuno Sant and create a LC on the existing site of Ysgol y Berwyn, in Bala</li> <li>• Plan to federate the three rural schools, namely Ysgol OM Edwards, Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and Ysgol Bro Tryweryn and then create a catchment joint-committee between the federation and the LC</li> </ul>
<b>Model 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close Ysgol Y Berwyn and Ysgol Bro Tegid and create a LC on the existing site of Ysgol y Berwyn, in Bala</li> <li>• Establish a Local Collaboration Trust between Ysgol Beuno Sant and the LC</li> <li>• OM Edwards, Ffridd y Llyn and Bro Tryweryn schools to continue as present</li> </ul>
<b>Model 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close Ysgol Y Berwyn, Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol Beuno Sant, Ysgol OM Edwards, Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and Ysgol Bro Tryweryn and create a catchment LC on the existing site of Ysgol y Berwyn, in Bala</li> </ul>
<b>Model 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close Ysgol y Berwyn, Ysgol Bro Tegid and Ysgol Beuno Sant and create a LC on the existing site of Ysgol y Berwyn, in Bala</li> <li>• Plan to federate the three rural schools, namely Ysgol OM Edwards, Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and Ysgol Bro Tryweryn with the LC</li> </ul>
<b>Model 7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close Ysgol y Berwyn, Ysgol Bro Tegid and Ysgol Beuno Sant and create a LC on the existing site of Ysgol y Berwyn, in Bala</li> <li>• Close Ysgol OM Edwards, Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn, Ysgol Bro Tryweryn and establish a Multi-site Area</li> </ul>

	<p>School on the existing sites of the three rural schools, namely, Ysgol OM Edwards, Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and Ysgol Bro Tryweryn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration between the Multi-site Area School and the LC</li> </ul>
<b>Model 8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close Ysgol y Berwyn, Ysgol Bro Tegid and Ysgol Beuno Sant and create a LC on the existing site of Ysgol y Berwyn, in Bala</li> <li>• Close Ysgol OM Edwards, Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and Ysgol Bro Tryweryn and establish a Multi-site Area School on the existing sites of the three rural schools, namely Ysgol OM Edwards, Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and Ysgol Bro Tryweryn</li> <li>• Plan to federate the LC with the rural Multi-site Area School</li> </ul>

2.2 The different options were appraised and further comparisons of the models were made against factors in the strategy 'Primary Education of the Best Quality for the Children of Gwynedd', factors in the Organisation Code (006/2013), the vision for Y Berwyn catchment area and other relevant factors.

2.3 A report was presented to the Cabinet on 17 February 2014, where **approval was given to the following recommendations:**

i. *To undertake a process of statutory consultation in accordance with Section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 to close Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgo Beuno Sant and Ysgol y Berwyn. The intention is that the schools will close on 31 August 2018.*

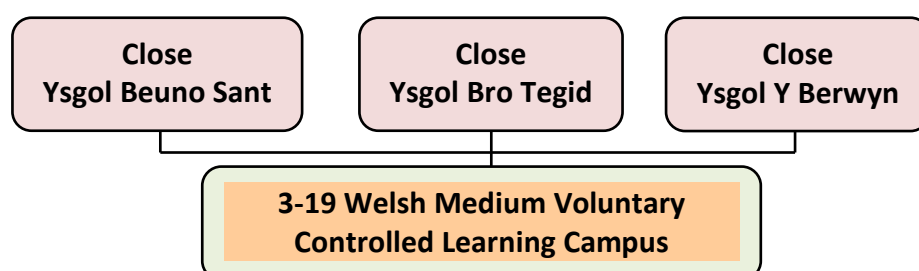
ii. *To undertake a process of Statutory consultation in accordance with section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 on the favoured option, which is to establish a Welsh Medium 3-19 Lifelong Campus with voluntary controlled (VC) status, on the current site of Ysgol y Berwyn. It is intended that the school will open on 1 September 2018.*

iii. *To undertake a process of statutory consultation on federating the three rural schools in the Berwyn catchment, Ysgol Bro Tyrweryn, Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and Ysgol OM Edwards.*

2.4 The statutory consultation process in relation to federating the three rural schools in the Berwyn catchment will take place at a future date and is a separate process to the statutory consultation which is the subject of this Cabinet report.

### 3. THE PROPOSAL

3.1 Ysgol Bro Tegid and Ysgol Beuno Sant will close, and the provision of education moved from these schools to the 3-19 Learning Campus. Ysgol yBerwyn will also close, and education for pupils of secondary school age will be provided on the Learning Campus. The Learning Campus will be developed on the existing site of Ysgol Y Berwyn.



3.2 This entails **the closure of 3 schools**:

- Ysgol Bro Tegid
- Ysgol Beuno Sant
- Ysgol y Berwyn

3.3 It also entails **the establishment of a 3-19 Welsh Medium Voluntary Controlled (VC), Church in Wales Learning Campus** on one site in the centre of the town of Y Bala, namely the existing site of Ysgol y Berwyn.

3.4 The Ysgol Bro Tegid and Ysgol Beuno Sant sites will close and they will not reopen.

The proposal will:

- Improve educational standards by enabling flexibility across all age ranges so that sharing of resources, staff and equipment will become standard practice.
- Impact the size of classes and the age range within them
- Considerably improve the condition and standard of the school buildings in the town of Bala through an investment of £9.27 million
- Improve the efficiency of the schools run by Gwynedd Council
- Enable a new and modern senior management system, which will release the head teacher from the classroom, offer flexibility in the staffing structure across the sectors, and provide new career opportunities
- Reduce the number of surplus places in the catchment area
- Realise approximately £85,000 in revenue savings, and rationalise the range in cost per pupil in the catchment area
- Safeguard and strengthen the post-16 provision in the catchment area
- Create a new resource which will be available outside customary school hours for the use of pupils in the rural schools within the catchment area and also for the local community

#### 4. STATUTORY CONSULTATION PERIOD

4.1 In accordance with the Schools Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013 and the statutory requirements of the School Organisation Code (006/2013), a statutory consultation period was held with the relevant consultees on the proposal between 13 March and 13:00 pm on 28 April 2015.

4.2 A statutory consultation document was prepared, in accordance with the requirements and the guidance of the School Organisation Code (006/2013). At the start of the statutory consultation period the document was distributed to the relevant consultees and it was ensured that hard copies were sent to the schools for the attention of the parents, governors and staff. The document and all the documentation of the background pack is available on the Council website [www.gwynedd.gov.uk/trefniadaethysgolion](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/trefniadaethysgolion).

4.3 A total of 220 responses to the statutory consultation came to hand including responses from pupils, staff, governors and individual parents , as well as from the following bodies:

- Bala Town Council
- Llangywer Community Council
- Llanuwchllyn Community Council
- UCAC
- Estyn
- Bangor Diocese Statutory Education Board, The Church in Wales
- Ysgol Y Berwyn Governing Body
- Ysgol Bro Tegid Governing Body
- Ysgol Beuno Sant Governing Body
- Ysgol O M Edwards Governing Body
- Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn Governing Body
- Ysgol Bro Tryweryn Governing Body
- 2 Local Members from Y Berwyn catchment area
- Bishop of Bangor
- Bishop of StAsaph
- Mudiad Meithrin (Nursery Movement)
- Cynefin Group

- Officer - Pobl Ifanc Egniol (Energetic

Young People)

All the responses, having removed personal details and some responses whose authors did not wish them to be published, are available in full on the Council website: [www.gwynedd.gov.uk/trefniadaethysgolion](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/trefniadaethysgolion). Further details regarding the responses are as follows:

Number of Responses stating contact with a School						
Ysgol Bro Tegid	Ysgol Beuno Sant	Ysgol y Berwyn	Ysgol Bro Tryweryn	Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn	Ysgol OM Edwards	Other
15	117	45	4	8	8	-
<b>Total = 197</b>						
<b>Eleven responses noted 2 school contacts / One response noted 3 school contacts / One response noted 6 school contacts</b>						

Number of responses from <i>Children and Young People</i> which noted contact with a school					
Ysgol Bro Tegid / Ysgol Beuno Sant	Ysgol y Berwyn	Ysgol Bro Tryweryn	Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn	Ysgol OM Edwards	Other
2	1	-	-	-	-
<b>Total = 3</b>					

- 4.4 On 26 March 2015 an open day was held at Ysgol y Berwyn, between 14:00 and 20:00. Exhibited were the contents of the consultation document, and various officers from the relevant departments (e.g. education, property, personnel etc) were at hand to offer explanation and to respond to enquiries. There was also an opportunity to obtain a copy of any documentation and to present any written observations. 93 people attended the open day.



- 4.5 A consultation document for primary and secondary children together with an appended questionnaire was prepared. Arrangements were made for a specialist children and young people facilitator to visit all the schools and hold sessions with the pupils to discover their opinions. The facilitator's analysis of these sessions is available in appendix 2 of this report.

- 4.6 The main points raised during the consultation with children and young people

Primary	Secondary
More opportunities to learn new subjects	Not enough room for everybody
Children worried about bullying	Better resources
Keen to retain the historical element of the schools and the area	Sport is very important
Children do not want to lose their friends	Desire to retain the historical element of the school
Having a choice of dinner menus	Language

- 4.7 The report comes to the conclusion ...*“What became clear from the consultation process was that children are willing to adapt to a new situation although they are worried about bullying, losing friends and teachers, but in general the feedback was fairly positive in most schools.”*

## 5. COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE STATUTORY CONSULTATION

5.1 The purpose of this part of the report is to present some of the main points that became evident during the statutory consultation period. It is not possible to respond to every comment in detail in this report, but all the comments were analysed and the response of the Council noted. All this information is included in appendix 1 of this report.

5.1.1. The majority of the comments received during the statutory consultation period were supportive of establishing a Learning Campus for children aged 3-19 on the site of Ysgol Y Berwyn, and the closure of Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol y Berwyn. The feeling was that the proposal would improve the quality of education and improve the learning environment for the children of the town of Y Bala. Although there was some concern over the 3-19 model, specifically in terms of primary and secondary age pupils sharing the same site, support was in general expressed for this model.

5.1.2. However, it was in relation to the the question of the legal category of the proposal that most comments arose. Of the 230 responses received to the consultation, 154 were in relation to the legal category status of the school. Of the 154 comments, 116 were in favour of designating Church Voluntary Controlled (VC) status for the Campus, and 38 were against this status, favouring instead designating Community status on the Campus. **This matter is dealt with in detail in part 6 of this report.**

5.1.3 The responses received were concentrated on the following matters:

- Education
- The Community
- Staffing Matters
- The Welsh language
- The Legal Status (see part 6 of this report)
- Design and Plan of the Building
- Consultation with Children and Young People
- The Statutory Process
- 3-19 Learning Campus (Follow-Through School)
- Cylch Meithrin
- Statistics and Finance
- Alternative Options

### 5.2 Quality of Education

5.2.1 The investment was welcomed, with the majority believing that the proposal for a 3-19 Campus and a new building would contribute towards improving the quality of the education. However, not everyone was of the opinion that a new building in itself would improve the quality of education.

5.2.2 The investment of £9.27m will considerably improve the learning environment for the pupils. A good learning environment promotes better education. However, the plans for Y Bala lead to more than an investment in the learning environment alone. By bringing the schools of the town of Y Bala together as one establishment for ages 3-19, resources and staff expertise can be shared and this will lead to a better quality of education, and direct the advantages of the 3-19 model towards improving education in the town of Bala and making it more consistent.

5.2.3 Some of the respondents mentioned that the standard of the provision and the buildings of Ysgol y Berwyn have been unacceptable for some time, and that this has led to a reduction in pupil numbers since pupils have chosen to attend other schools.

5.2.4 As was explained in the statutory consultation document, the Council is of the opinion that this type of proposal can offer an opportunity for improving educational standards across the catchment area. Establishing one 3-19 Learning Campus in Y Bala would enable flexibility across all the age ranges so that sharing resources, staff expertise and equipment would become standard practice. These are some of the possibilities:

- Specialist secondary teachers can share their expertise with primary age pupils e.g. music.
- The same primary curriculum and timetable can be operated across all the sites so that pupils of the same age group are taught the same subjects at the same time – this would ensure that they all reach the same level as they enter year 7 in the secondary site.
- Primary staff on every site can meet to discuss and to share best interest, encourage and learn from each other.
- There would be better continuation in every aspect of the curriculum because it would be programmed across the catchment area, ensuring the same experiences and opportunities for every pupil.

5.2.5 A response was received from Estyn which stated that the proposal is *“likely to at least maintain educational standards in the area since the proposed development would be likely to ensure consistent new leadership with a focus on raising standards and improving the quality of the provision.”*

### 5.3 The Community

5.3.1 Support was expressed for the proposal to continue with a library provision in the 3-19 Campus. One comment stated support for keeping Neuadd Buddug open, whilst another comment expressed support for the proposal to provide new theatre and cinema facilities on the Campus. Another respondent could see no purpose in installing cinema facilities in a school.

5.3.2 In a period of financial hardship the Council is looking to see if it is possible to provide services by using a different method, and one way of doing this would be by sharing and centralising resources. This development offers an opportunity to ensure a library and arts service as part of the Campus development. Developing these resources will not be a burden on the educational resources since other financial sources will also be used.

5.3.3 A user Group has been established in order to discuss the future of Neuadd Buddug, and input from stakeholders will be gathered with the aim of developing any other resources and community facilities on the Campus.

### 5.4 Staffing Matters

5.4.1 Some comments were received which dealt with staffing matters. Most expressed concern that sufficient discussion had not been held on the implications of the proposal for the jobs of the existing staff at the schools, and that the reorganisation process was leading to uncertainty. It was suggested that the Authority should work closely with the Shadow Governing Body in order to ensure as little uncertainty as possible.

5.4.2 It was acknowledged that school organisation discussions was causing uncertainty within the catchment area. Since the final decision has not as yet been taken, (this step is consultation alone), it is not possible at present to give detailed information on the situation with regard to individual posts. With regard to the number of jobs which will be lost, it is too early to reach a conclusion on this, because the staffing structure of the new Campus will be a matter for the shadow governing body to discuss.

5.4.3 If a final decision was taken to implement the proposal, a shadow governing body would need to be established. This shadow governing body would be established in accordance with national guidelines, far in advance of the proposed implementation date namely September 2018. Sufficient time would be required to create the relevant policies and governing instrument, appoint a head teacher and form a staffing structure jointly with the head teacher. Also consultants from the Human Resources department



of the Council will be at hand to offer support throughout the process. A number of meetings have been held and support given to staff at the schools involved in the development of Ysgol Bro Llifon (the area school for Groeslon, Carmel and Bronyfoel) during the last 6 months, and similar support will be available for the staff of schools in the town of Bala. The Cabinet needs to be aware of the possible need for support from the Council's Human Resources Consultants, in view of the fact that staff from 2 primary schools and 1 secondary school will need help if the proposal is implemented.

- 5.4.4 Some of the parents were also worried about the impact that staff change and staff turnover would have on the children's education. There is no reason to think that there would be more staff turnover at the existing schools during the period of change and every effort will be made to ensure that the shadow governing body, the head teacher and the entire staffing structure will be established as quickly as possible in order to reduce the period of uncertainty.
- 5.4.5 Some responses came to hand emphasising the need to ensure a clear and definite management and staffing system for the Campus, in order to ensure that it operates efficiently and that the utmost benefit is derived from the follow-through campus structure.
- 5.4.6 In response to these concerns, it is recommended that the Head Teacher is appointed by September 2017, that is at least one year prior to the proposed opening date for the Campus in September 2018, in order to ensure that the management system operates effectively before the new establishment opens.

## 5.5 The Welsh Language

- 5.5.1 A number of comments were received requesting that the proposed Campus be given Welsh only status. Some mentioned their concern that the proposed VC status would have a negative impact on the Welsh language.
- 5.5.2 Linguistic status is a technical term which needs to be earmarked when establishing a new school in accordance with the School Organisation Code (006/2013). Gwynedd Council's Language Policy (Strategic Plan for Welsh in Education 2014-17) is relevant to all the schools within the County and means that the same language expectations are stipulated for every school. The question of status for the Campus is discussed in more detail in part 6 of the report but there is no reason to believe that the status would have a negative impact on the Welsh language, in view of the fact that the education language Policy is relevant to every school within the County.
- 5.5.3 An assessment was carried out on the impact that the development of this model would have on the Welsh language, and part of the report on the assessment reads as follows: *"...opportunities are foreseen to strengthen the Welsh language through establishing a Learning Campus in Y Bala, by ensuring that all the pupils attend a school which is educationally and socially a Welsh medium school"*. The aim is to continue the linguistic status of the schools within the town of Y Bala on the 3-19 Campus. Bearing in mind the language medium and the status of the language at the three existing schools in the town of Y Bala, this will mean that the provision at the 3-19 Campus will be among the most Welsh in Gwynedd and throughout Wales.

## 5.6 Design and plan of the building

- 5.6.1 A number of comments were received regarding the design and plan of the proposed building. Most of the comments noted the need for considerable investment in the building at Ysgol Y Berwyn, because the building is in very poor repair and has not been allocated any investment for many years.
- 5.6.2 A number of the comments also dealt with concern over the principle of a Follow-Through Campus, namely concern that primary and secondary age pupils both share the same site. Specifically, concern was voiced that primary and secondary pupils will use the same entrance. There is no intention for primary and secondary pupils to use the same entrance, and the existing plans show a separate entrance for the

primary and secondary sectors. The usual procedure at a school which encompasses both primary and secondary is to ensure that the two age categories are kept separate. The proposed plan for the campus is such that a new primary block will be built separate from the secondary block. Although the aim is for facilities such as the gym, refectory and hall to be shared, use by the primary and secondary sectors will take place at different times through careful timetabling. Doors will be located in strategic locations within the building to ensure that entry is controlled.

5.6.3 A number of comments offered views regarding a 3G field in Y Bala. A 3G Field is an artificial field for playing Football, Rugby and Hockey. Bala Football Club has been holding initial discussions with the Football Association of Wales in order to submit an application for grant funding for a 3G field. Gwynedd Council has taken part in these discussions.

5.6.4 So far, only initial discussions have been undertaken. Although a 3G field could be a useful resource for the Campus, this will be a matter for the future, and it does not form part of this proposal. However, the Council is grateful for the comments received and these will be considered as part of any further discussions.

5.6.5 There were also specific comments regarding the following matters:

- Concern that the classrooms could be too small
- Need for a better and more modern sixth form room
- Concern that there is insufficient play areas for the primary pupils.
- The need to provide a hall/meeting room for the primary pupils
- The need to consider the location of the toilets inside the school and bullying
- Concern that the campus would not be big enough for the primary and secondary sectors
- Concern over sharing the refectory

Comments on the design and plan of the proposed campus will be considered during the process of designing the 3-19 Campus.

## 5.7 Consultation with Children and Young People

5.7.1 During the consultation, one or two responses were received from pupils, in addition to the formal consultation held with the children and young people facilitator in every school (this report can be seen in appendix 2) Some had stated that they are happy with the proposal and that interesting lessons and good and happy teachers are what makes a good school. Some stated that they were looking forward to better resources and buildings of good standard. One stated that he/she was concerned about teachers losing their jobs.

5.7.2 The Council is pleased that the pupils of the area have voiced their opinions during the consultation period, as part of the sessions with the facilitator and also individually. Every comment will be considered as the proposal is developed and every effort will be made to ensure that the period of uncertainty for staff will come to an end as soon as possible.

## 5.8 The Statutory Processes

5.8.1 Some voiced concern that the consultation document is misleading since it deals with a proposal for the schools within the town only but includes other models and discusses federation and a joint committee which will impact rural schools.

5.8.2 It needs to be emphasised that the proposal directly impacts the schools within the town only and that this is a consultation on the future of Ysgol y Berwyn, Ysgol Bro Tegid and Ysgol Beuno Sant. However, as part of the long term vision for the catchment the document mentions federation of the rural schools and then the creation of a joint committee between the campus and the federation. A separate consultation

will be undertaken on the federation of the rural schools in accordance with the relevant guidelines. It is worth stating that the consultation document has been distributed to all parents/guardians and to the governors of the rural schools so that they can voice their opinions in view of the fact that the proposal impacts the secondary school which serves the whole catchment area.

5.8.3 Some stated that there are incorrect statistics in the consultation document. This document is based on the statistics pack and head teachers in the catchment area were given the chance to correct the data prior to its publication. It needs to be made clear, since the statutory process takes time, that a snapshot of the data for one academic year was taken (2013/14) and that these data figures were then used consistently to avoid any misunderstanding.

5.8.4 Some mentioned frustration due to the delay in the reorganisation process and that this had been a disadvantage for Ysgol y Berwyn, on account of the state of the building. Even so, it was also noted that they appreciated the fact that the process is now going ahead.

## 5.9 3-19 School

5.9.1 As stated in 5.6.2 above, some expressed discontent and concern that the 3-19 Learning Campus would mean that primary age pupils would have to mix with secondary age pupils. As has been outlined above, it is customary for 3-19 schools to very strictly separate the primary and secondary ages. – gym, refectory and hall being designed so that there is entry only for specific categories of pupils at the same time. Also, there will be separate entrances for primary age pupils and those of secondary age.

5.9.2 It is fair to say that there was comparatively little concern or objection to the 3-19 learning model, especially in view of the fact that it is a new and innovative model.

## 5.10 Cylch Meithrin Bro Tegid (Nursery Group)

5.10.1 Cylch Meithrin Bro Tegid Nursery Group uses a cabin on the site of Ysgol Bro Tegid at present. If a 3-19 Campus was established, and Ysgol Bro Tegid closed, then consideration would have to be given to a location for the Nursery Group by September 2018 when the 3-19 Campus opens.

5.10.2 The Nursery Group Movement (Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin) has asked about the intentions of the Council with regard to a location for the Nursery Group for the future. Possible options will need to be discussed with representatives from the Cylch Meithrin and the Nursery Group Movement so that any alternative provision will have been agreed upon well in advance of the campus opening in September 2018.

## 5.11 Statistics and Finance

5.11.1 Very few comments were received regarding statistics and finance. Some stated that they were surprised that Ysgol Bro Tegid has the lowest cost per pupil in the catchment area, and that it is difficult to understand how the cost is higher at Ysgol Beuno Sant which provides education for pupils of the same age. The explanation is simple – it is the fact that Ysgol Bro Tegid is full whilst Ysgol Beuno Sant has a number of surplus places. One of the aims of the proposed reorganisation in the town of Y Bala is to try and gain consistency in the cost per pupil.

5.11.2 One person commented that the Council has chosen and published the most negative data about the existing schools in the consultation document. In order to conform with the School Organisation Code the Council has a duty to provide relevant statistics (especially in the context of education quality) regarding the schools in question in the consultation document, whether or not they are positive or negative.

## 5.12 Alternative Options

- 5.12.1 During the consultation period, no-one offered an alternative option, that is a different model to the 3-19 Campus that was put forward by Gwynedd Council for school organisation in the catchment area.
- 5.12.2 Whilst comments were received which objected to the legal category of the favoured option, not one of those objected to the principle of a 3-19 Learning Campus in the town of Bala. Those who objected agreed with the favoured option but suggested giving it Community status rather than Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled, (VC), status. This matter is dealt with in detail in the next part of the report.

## 6 LEGAL STATUS (COMMUNITY/CHURCH)

6.1 The need to designate a legal status on the school is a matter which has received careful consideration - this is a legal requirement. Following an initial discussion at Cabinet level, as recorded in the report of February 19th 2015, it was decided to undertake a consultation on placing Voluntary Controlled (VC) status on the entire Learning Campus. Among the factors in favour of placing Voluntary Controlled status on the Campus were the following:

- the joint provision which exists at present within the catchment area and the fact that there is Voluntary Aided (VA) provision in the catchment area at present
- the views of the Church following pre-consultation
- the similarity between Community and Voluntary Controlled (VC) categories
- the opinion that quality of the education and resources are the most important factors in a school according to an assessment undertaken
- the strategic decision to ensure the continuation of a choice of provision within a wider area in the southern part of the County

6.2 As stated previously, this is the matter that generated the most comments during the statutory consultation period.

6.3 In this part of the report, consideration is given to the specific matters raised on this subject. All the comments and the response of the Council to these comments can be viewed in appendix 1.

6.4 This is a summary of the main concerns raised:

- A number of comments expressed the view that the school would have the same status as Ysgol Beuno Sant. It is therefore clear that the public is unclear in its understanding on of the difference between VC and VA categories.
- The influence and representation on the Governing Body by the Church to the future.
- A number were concerned that the Church would influence the name of the new Learning Campus
- The need to emphasise the history and the non-conformist traditions of the area and concern over the English image of the Church and the possible impact that this could have.

6.5 A number of the comments suggest that the school would have the same status as Ysgol Beuno Sant (VA). **This is not correct.** Voluntary Controlled (VC) is the category under consideration , and therefore there is public misunderstanding of the differences between VC and VA categories.

6.5.1 In accordance with the Schools Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013, schools are defined under one of the following categories:

- Community
- Voluntary Controlled (VC) with religious designation (Church in Wales)
- Voluntary Aided (VA) with religious designation (Church in Wales)

- 6.5.2 The Council and the Church in Wales are joint education providers in the Berwyn catchment area. Ysgol Beuno Sant is a Voluntary Aided (VA) school with religious designation (Church in Wales). This means that the Church has very specific rights through the Voluntary Aided (VA) status, for example:
- The Church has a majority on the Governing Body
  - The Church controls admission
  - The Church is responsible for appointing staff
  - The school is responsible for Religious Instruction which is of denominational character. Christian values and ethics will filter through the operation and the ethos of the school and will be an important part of the life of the school.

The above features would not be applicable to the Voluntary Controlled (VC) category.

- 6.5.3 In comparison – the Voluntary Controlled category (VC) is very similar to the Community category but with some variations:

- In a Voluntary Controlled (VC) school the Church would have representation on the Governing Body, but this representation would be in the minority. It is not certain at the moment what the size of the Governing Body will be but it will be either 18 or 21 members - and the Church would have 4 members out of 18 or 5 out of 21.
- There would be a technical legal conditional transfer of the land to the Church. The land would return to Council ownership should the Church educational provision come to an end on the site.

Otherwise – the following is true of both categories - Community and Voluntary Controlled (VC):

- Gwynedd Council would decide on pupil admission
- Gwynedd Council and the governors would be responsible for appointing staff
- In terms of joint worship, legal requirements for daily worship would have to be met. The act of worship would be entirely of a Christian nature but the individual would have the right to opt out of joint worship and religious education lessons
- The Head Teacher and the Management Team would be responsible for the day to day running of the school.

- 6.5.4 In the comments received, concern was expressed following a recent report by Estyn after an inspection at Ysgol Beuno Sant. What is stated above in terms of the virtues of the legal categories notes that there are significant differences between VA and VC status. Since the Learning Campus would be a new school with a new Governing Body, there would be an opportunity to learn from past experiences, and for building on the present good work accomplished at the current schools. In addition, one needs to remember that the educational quality in schools varies across Gwynedd and Wales, and there is no evidence that a school's legal status and the principles of a Voluntary Controlled (VC) school in itself has direct effect on the quality of education.

## 6.6 Influence and representation on the Governing Board to the future:

- 6.6.1 As stated above, in a Voluntary Controlled School (VC) the Church would have representation on the Governing Board, but that representation would be in the minority – it would be less than a quarter of the Board membership. **They would not therefore have the power to force any decisions because they would be in the minority.**
- 6.6.2 With regard to the Shadow Governing Body – it has been noted that membership of that Body would be appointed from the Governing Bodies of the existing schools, namely Ysgol y Berwyn, Ysgol Bro Tegid and Ysgol Beuno Sant. Therefore, every effort would be made to ensure fair representation from these establishments by following specific procedures and by following statutory guidelines.

- 6.6.3 During discussions held after the consultation, the Church has been keen to respond to the concerns expressed and has confirmed that they would be happy to have **only 2 seats on the Governing Body**, allowing their other seats to be held by nonconformist denominations in the area.
- 6.6.4 Otherwise, of course, the constitution of the Shadow Governing Body and - in due course - the Permanent Body would include the usual mixture of school staff, parents, members of the community and Local Members as is the case in the majority of schools in the County.
- 6.7 A number expressed concern that the Church will want to influence the name of the new Learning Campus.
- 6.7.1 It will be the Shadow Governing Body which has the power to decide the name of the school.
- 6.7.2 Recent experience of this process in the case of Ysgol Craig y Deryn and Ysgol Bro Llifon has shown that their Shadow Governing Bodies have named their schools through a very open and inclusive method. It is very likely that the Shadow Governing Body of the Campus would adopt the same method.
- 6.7.3 In response to this concern, the Church has stated that they are totally open minded with regard to name choice and the process adopted by the Governing Body for choosing a name for the Campus.
- 6.8 The Nonconformist tradition in the area and concern over the impact of the English image of the Church on the school.
- 6.8.1 In response to these concerns, the Church has stated that they are totally aware of, and respect, the history of the area and are keen to ensure that the new Learning Campus reflects the history and traditions of the area. As stated previously, the proposal aims to ensure that part of the representation reflects the nonconformist tradition.
- 6.8.2 Also, the Church – and indeed the Council – believes that there is an opportunity through the Campus **to strengthen the Welsh language**. The aim is to assign Welsh medium language category for the Campus, which is the same category that is designated at present on all the schools in the town of Y Bala.
- 6.8.3 Gwynedd Council’s Education Language Policy (Strategic Plan for Welsh in Education 2014-17) is relevant to all the schools within the County and means that the same linguistic expectations are set for every school. The purpose of the Policy is -“..... *to ensure that all pupils in the County possess appropriate language skills in Welsh and English. The same expectation is made for every school... although the general aim of the policy is bilingualism, the balance is set in favour of Welsh in the early years in order to set strong foundations for further development. In the other key stages, schools are expected to plan carefully in order to develop the grasp of the pupils on the language.... all educational establishments within the County are expected to reflect and strengthen the Language Policy within their administration, their social life and their pastoral system as well as in their curricular provision.....*”
- 6.8.4 An assessment was made of the impact of developing this model, and the assessment concludes “**....it is predicted that there will be opportunities for strengthening the Welsh language through the establishment of the Learning Campus in Y Bala, by ensuring that all the pupils attend a school which is educationally and socially a Welsh medium school.**”
- 6.8.5 The aim is to retain the linguistic status of the existing schools within Bala on the 3-19 Campus. In view of the language medium at the three existing schools in the town of Bala, this will mean that **the linguistic provision in the 3-19 Campus will be among the most Welsh throughout Gwynedd and Wales.**
- 6.9 Considerations when deciding on the legal status
- 6.9.1 As has been discussed above, there was general support for the creation of a 3-19 Campus in Bala. The question that needs to be considered carefully before making a decision, is which legal category should

be designated on the 3-19 Campus. Should there be a decision to proceed with the proposal forming part of the statutory consultation, which is to designate Voluntary Controlled (VC) status, or should the Campus be designated with Community status? When considering this aspect, the Cabinet needs to consider carefully a number of aspects, including the original rationale for deciding to consult on a favoured option with Voluntary Controlled (VC) status, the comments received during the consultation period and the responses to those comments (see appendix 1). Has any new information or valid reason come to light during the consultation process which undermines the original decision or justifies a change in direction?

6.9.2 It is appropriate to remind the Cabinet once again of the factors considered in the Cabinet Report of 17 February, which led to the Cabinet deciding to consult on a Voluntary Controlled (VC) Campus. Amongst the factors considered which lead to the designation of a Voluntary Controlled (VC) Campus were the following:

- the joint provision of education which exists at present in the catchment
- the Church's views following pre-consultation
- the similarities between the community category and Voluntary Controlled (VC)
- the conclusion of the assessment undertaken, which is that the most important factors in a school is the quality of education and the resources available to it
- the strategic decision made to ensure that there was choice of provision in the south of the County

6.9.3 38 comments opposing the Voluntary Controlled (VC) status were received, and 116 comments were received in support. What is important is the substance and reasoning of these comments.

6.9.4 The comments in favour of designating Voluntary Controlled (VC) status emphasised the additional worth that a Voluntary Controlled (VC) school could offer, the fact that there is need for the choice of Church educational provision in South Meirionnydd, the fact that designating this status would support the views of the Church during the pre-consultation period, and also the similarities between Community and Voluntary Controlled (VC) status. The comments supported the rationale which led to the Cabinet deciding to consult on designating a Voluntary Controlled (VC) status on the Campus in the first place, as well as being in accordance with the principles contained in the Welsh Government document "Faith in education."

6.9.5 The comments opposing the Voluntary Controlled status (VC) were less numerous than the comments in favour, but their substance and rationale must be considered.

6.9.6 One thing that became obvious when considering the comments opposing was that those opposing were not clear on the differences between the various categories. People were unsure of the actual status which was to be designated on the Campus, and also of the implications of Voluntary Controlled (VC) category and this was especially so in terms of the obligations and effect of a Voluntary Controlled (VC) category on education and the day to day life of pupils at the Campus. Specifically, it became obvious that a number of those that offered comments believed that it was intended that Voluntary Aided (VA) status was to be the designation and not Voluntary Controlled (VC).

6.9.7 As previously explained in this report, (but it is worth emphasising again), the differences between Voluntary Aided (VA) and Voluntary Controlled (VC) category is significant. Specifically, in a Voluntary Aided (VA) school, such as the current Beuno Sant:

- The Church has the majority of Governors
- The Church controls admissions
- The Church appoints staff

- The Church is responsible for Religious Education and this is of a denominational nature with Christian values and morals forming part of the character and ethos of the school

It is therefore clear that the influence of the Church is strong in a Voluntary Aided (VA) school such as Beuno Sant. None of the above facts are applicable in a Voluntary Controlled (VC) school, and Voluntary Controlled (VC) status is very similar to Community status.

Specifically, in a Voluntary Controlled (VC) school:

- The representation on the Governing Body would be in the minority. The Campus would have either 18 or 21 governors. The Church has stated that it would be happy to keep only 2 of its 4 seats with its other seats being offered to other denominations in the area.
- Gwynedd Council would control school admission
- Gwynedd Council and governors would appoint staff
- The nature of Religious Education and the school's Christian ethos would be very similar to Community schools
- It would be the school Head and Management Team who would be responsible for running the school from day to day, and although the governors would be responsible for their appointment, the ability of the Church to influence these decisions would be in the minority.

The influence of the Church in a Voluntary Controlled (VC) school is therefore marginal.

6.9.8 In relation to the statements opposing designating Church status on the Campus, a number of the opposing comments were made in relation to the influence and power of the Church which would be valid grounds for opposition if it was the intention to designate the Campus with Voluntary Aided (VA) status. However, the strength and validity of a number of opposing comments is not as strong when applied to the Voluntary Controlled (VC) category. This is particularly true when consideration is given to the factor likely to most influence a Church school, which would be the Governors. It is the Governors who have the primary ability to be able to influence the day to day working of the school and pupil experience, but as they are in a minority in a Voluntary Controlled (VC) school, then whilst the power and influence of the Church in a Voluntary (VA) school would be strong, their power and influence would be comparatively marginal in a Voluntary Controlled (VC) school.

6.9.9 In addition, it is worth noting that none of those opposing the Voluntary Controlled (VC) status did so by offering evidence that the Voluntary Controlled (VC) status would have an effect on educational quality. It is true that there were a number of comments expressing concern regarding the quality of education at Ysgol Beuno Sant. However, Ysgol Beuno Sant is a Voluntary Aided (VA) school, and it is not logical to assume that educational quality at the Campus would suffer simply because it had Voluntary Controlled (VC) status. School performance varies throughout Gwynedd and Wales, whatever their legal status. None of those who presented comments in opposition presented an argument that succeeded with any credibility to establish convincing arguments that the basic principles of a Voluntary Controlled (VC) school would be likely to have an effect on educational quality and the teaching experiences of pupils.

6.9.10 Regarding the other concerns raised, being the name of the proposed Campus and the Anglicised perception by many locally of the Church in Wales, these concerns have been addressed previously in paragraphs 6.7 and 6.8 above. The concerns raised in relation to these issues can be understood, but because of the reasons noted in the above paragraphs it is possible to mitigate these concerns to a significant degree, if not in full.



- 6.9.11 The differences in opinion on the proposed status of the Campus can be respected, but since the opposing comments do not offer any new evidence or any other factors which undermine the previous Council rationale of consulting on a Voluntary Controlled (VC) Campus, (see paragraph 6.1 for the reasoning), the arguments have failed to convince that there is a reason to reconsider the Voluntary Controlled (VC) status, and it is therefore reasonable to proceed with the proposal of a 3-19 Voluntary Controlled (VC) Campus.
- 6.9.12 Another relevant factor to consider is the need to ensure Church education provision in South Meirionnydd. With re-organisation taking place in the nearby Gader catchment, there is a proposal to close two Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools, as well as Ysgol Beuno Sant, Voluntary Aided (VA). This would lead to a loss of in excess of 200 Church school provisions in south Meirionnydd. This factor needs to be considered when making a decision. There is also a need to remember the result of the assessment for schools of different categories undertaken by Gwynedd Council in the Berwyn catchment, which concluded that educational quality was the most important factor to parents when choosing a school for their child. 79% of respondents said that this was the most important factor in a school. There was no opinion either way in respect of the school category. The assessment concluded that educational matters – quality, good relationship with the school and the quality of resources as well as the quality of the educational environment were the most important factors.
- 6.9.13 The legal Process needs consideration. If there was a decision to not to proceed with the original intention of designating the Campus Voluntary Controlled (VC), another consultation would have to be undertaken. This would lead to a slippage of approximately 10 months in the timetable. The Church has a right to refer proposals to the Welsh Government, and this referral would involve around 6/7 months for consideration by the Government and at the end the Welsh Government could either accept or refuse the proposal. Should the proposal be refused, then the process of developing a new proposal would have to be undertaken and also possibly the process of applying for funding from the Government. The Cabinet would then have to consider undertaking a further period of public consultation, before receiving a report on that consultation and then deciding whether or not to issue statutory notices. This could lead to a delay of approximately 10 months.
- 6.9.14 In the meantime, this would delay the submission of a business case until the beginning of 2016 and would push the expenditure towards the tail end of the existing Band A programme and could create problems in terms of ensuring Welsh Government funding.
- 6.9.15 These are not factors that should influence on any decision by the Cabinet not to designate the Campus a Voluntary Controlled (VC) Campus, because as is stated in paragraph 6.9.11, “.....the arguments have failed to convince that there is a reason to reconsider the Voluntary Controlled (VC) status, and it is therefore reasonable to proceed with the proposal of a 3-19 Voluntary Controlled (VC) Campus.”
- 6.9.16 Therefore, if the Cabinet wished to change the proposal, they would need to consider the following:
- The slippage in the time schedule
  - The need to consider other new models
  - Impact of the Church referral
  - The risk of the Government refusing the proposal
  - Further uncertainty for the business case

## 6.10 Conclusions on the category matter

- 6.10.1 The Council acknowledges that the category matter has – by means of the consultation - led to strong response for and against the proposal and careful consideration has been given to all the matters raised.
- 6.10.2 The Church in Wales has stated that they will co-operate fully in order to alleviate the concerns:

- Representation on the Governing Body will be opened to other denominations in order to reflect the traditions in the area,
- The Church is totally willing to support whatever name the Shadow Governing Body will give the learning Campus.
- In terms of the language – the Church fully supports the development of the Campus as an establishment to strengthen the Welsh language.

6.10.3 Therefore, in considering the original reasoning for consultation on a Voluntary Contolled (VC) category for the Learning Campus, the comments that were received and the response to those comments, the conclusion is that there is not sufficient justification following statutory consultation to change the category which formed part of the consultation.

## 7 TO SUMMARISE

7.1 Throughout the consultation, strong general support was expressed for the proposal to establish a 3-19 Learning Campus in Bala. The arguments for and against the legal status have been discussed and considered above. Therefore it is recommended that statutory notices be issued for the closure of Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol y Berwyn, and for a Welsh medium Voluntary Controlled (VC) 3-19 Learning Campus to be established on the present site of Ysgol y Berwyn. The aim is to close the schools on 31 August 2018 and that the Campus opens on 1 September 2018.

7.2 This recommendation comes after **consideration of a wide range of possible models**. These proposals were reduced to **a long list of possible models, and these options were fully appraised** by comparing the main advantages and disadvantages against **specific factors**. The factors used were those from the strategy '*Education of the Best Quality for the Children of Gwynedd*', factors in the Organisation Code, the vision for Y Berwyn catchment area and other relevant factors. The factors included, but were not restricted to:

- The quality of the education
- The size of classes and the age range within classes
- Pupil numbers and surplus places
- Learning environment – quality and suitability of the buildings
- Status / Category of the school
- Leadership and staffing
- The community
- The Welsh language
- Impact on equality
- Financial resources
- Geographical factors

The full options appraisal has already been submitted to the Cabinet for consideration in February 2015, and can be seen in appendix 3.

7.3 As part of this options appraisal, also used were the findings of the **Community, Linguistic and Equality Impact** assessments. These assessments and all the background documentation are available in appendix 4 of the report on the Council website [www.gwynedd.gov.uk/trefniadaethysgolion](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/trefniadaethysgolion). In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 an equality impact assessment was held in respect of the proposals. The assessment notes the existing situation and shows that policies and arrangements are in place to ensure that the proposal considers and conforms with equal rights. Having discussed in detail the relevant factors, the conclusion is reached that equal opportunities are positively promoted in the wake of the proposal and that measures are in place to ensure that there is no illegal discrimination or harrassment. Arrangements are also in place for monitoring and reviewing the situation. It is therefore considered that the findings of the assessments remain current and relevant to the recommendation.

7.4 **A pre-consultation was undertaken with the Church in Wales** and their observations were noted, together with the appraisal of the options and impact assessments, before a decision was taken to recommend a period of statutory consultation on the proposal.

7.5 After **considering all the comments** received during the period of statutory consultation, **the Council is still of the opinion that the proposal consulted upon offers the best option for the future of education in Y Berwyn catchment area**. An analysis of the comments received is discussed in sections 5 and 6 and in appendix 1 of this report, and the responses are available in full on the Council website [www.gwynedd.gov.uk/trefniadaethysgolion](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/trefniadaethysgolion).

7.6 As stated in the report, a number of comments were received regarding the proposed design for the Campus; the Council appreciates these comments and is keen to work with stakeholders in order to develop the plan further.

7.7 As stated, the matter of status for the campus has received considerable attention during the consultation, but after further deliberation it is recommended to continue with the existing proposal and to designate Voluntary Controlled (VC) status on the 3-19 Learning Campus.

7.8 The proposal remains the favoured option for a number of reasons. By establishing a 3-19 Learning Campus, a number of challenges now faced in Y Berwyn catchment area can be dealt with, **a number of different opportunities for developing on the existing learning and teaching foundation** in the catchment area can be created, as well as offering flexibility in a number of ways **to create a strong and sustainable educational provision for the future**. Some advantages of the proposal are that it will:

- Improve the consistency in the standard and quality of education in the town of Y Bala
- Improve the standards of education by enabling flexibility across all age ranges so that sharing staff, resources and equipment will become standard practice
- Impact the size of classes and the age range within them
- Contribute considerably towards reducing the number of surplus places
- Improve the condition and standard of the schools in the catchment area by investing £9.27million on creating a new Follow-Through Campus and closing two sites.
- Bring the number of schools in par with the demand
- Rationalise the cost per pupil in schools and reduce the cost per pupil to equal or less than the County average, namely £3,856 for the Primary and £4,623 for the Secondary
- Enable a new and modern senior management system, which will release the head teacher from the classroom, offer flexibility in the staffing structure across the sectors and provide new career opportunities
- Ensure that there is an education site within reasonable distance for all pupils within the catchment area
- Ensure strong leadership and management
- Bring in total savings of £85,000 and rationalise the range of cost per pupil within the catchment area
- Offer the best opportunity to try and achieve the language policy, using the increased teaching resources that one establishment will possess to utilise across all the sites in the catchment area
- Safeguard and strengthen the post-16 provision in the catchment area

## 8 NEXT STEPS

8.1 Should the Cabinet decide to move ahead with the recommendations in this report – statutory notices will need to be issued in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013 and guidance from the School Organisation Code (006/2013).

- 8.2 The statutory notices would be issued on a school day and there would be an objection period of 28 days from the date when the notices were issued.
- 8.3 Following the objection period a report will be submitted to the Cabinet for a final decision. It has to be remembered that there are some circumstances where the final decision of the Council can be referred to the Education and Skills Minister at the Welsh Government for a final decision, in accordance with the School Organisation Code (006/2013).
- 8.4 Subject to the decisions of the Cabinet, these are the next steps in the process together with an outline timetable:

<b>Steps in the Process</b>	<b>Outline timetable</b>
Cabinet Report following the statutory consultation	2 June 2015
Statutory Notices issued and an opportunity for consultees to object	June – July 2015
Final decision by the Council Cabinet	September 2015
Start of the construction work	Early 2016
Opening of the Learning Campus	1 September 2018

## **9 RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 Therefore the recommendations are as follows:

- i. To approve the proposal for the closure of Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol y Berwyn on 31 August 2018 and for a Voluntary Controlled (VC) Welsh Medium 3-19 Learning Campus to be established on the existing site of Ysgol y Berwyn to open on 1 September 2018.
- ii. To approve the issue of statutory notices on the proposal in (i) above in accordance with the requirements of Section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.
- iii. Following discussion on the comments from the consultation regarding the importance of appointing a head teacher and the need to appoint well in advance, to approve the appointment and the funding of the head teacher for 3-19 Learning Campus from the savings gained from the plan, at least one year prior to the opening of the school in September 2018.

## IEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

### The Chief Executive:

“As I noted when making comments in relation to a similar report in respect of the Ysgol Y Gader catchment area, when a matter reaches this point in the school reorganisation procedure, it is time for the Council to ensure that the proposal is realised. Clearly, there will be objections when any change is proposed. It is clear that the question of the proposed status of the school has been a matter of some comment, but I would suggest that what is key to ensure matters move forward, is not as much its status, but the quality and sustainability of the provision.

Once again, there is a cost element attached to one of the recommendations and the Head of Finance has addressed that matter. I approve the recommendations.”

### The Monitoring Officer:

“Following the completion of a period of statutory consultation there is now a report on the outcome of that process together with a response on the comments received. The requirements of the School Standards and Framework Act (Wales) 2013 and the School Organisation Code 2013 have been followed as part of the process. The Cabinet needs to consider and reach a view on the information and comments received as part of the consultation Process, the responses to these comments as well as other relevant factors which are contained in the report and background documents when reaching a conclusion on whether or not to adopt the recommendations contained in the report.”

### Head of Finance:

“School re-organisation proposals in the Berwyn catchment have a long history. At every stage, Finance officers have worked closely with the Education Department when calculating financial details and obligations, and I can confirm that the figures used in paragraph 3.4 of the report are correct. I am convinced that the business case remains strong, and there are convincing reasons to support the recommendations and to proceed without further delay.

One “new” matter which arises from the report and which has Financial implications, is recommendation iii, which is *“to appoint and finance a head teacher for the 3-19 Learning Campus from the savings gained from the proposal, at least one year prior to the opening of the school in September 2018.”* I believe it reasonable to utilise a one-off sum of £90,000 (the estimated one year cost including National Insurance and pension) from the reorganisation savings to this effect.”

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## APPENDICES

<b>Appendix 1</b>	Analysis and the Council’s responses to the comments received during the statutory consultation period.
<b>Appendix 2</b>	Analysis of the consultation with children and young people by a specialist facilitator
<b>Appendix 3</b>	Options appraisal
<b>Appendix 4</b>	Language, Community, Equality and the Need for Different Types of School Assessments

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Correspondence received during the statutory consultation period (some of which has been published in full, some without personal details and some not published at the request of the respondents) is available on the Council website at: [www.gwynedd.gov.uk/trefniadaethysgolion](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/trefniadaethysgolion)

Other background documents, including those listed below, are also available on the Council's website at: [www.gwynedd.gov.uk/trefniadaethysgolion](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/trefniadaethysgolion).

- Statutory Consultation Document 13 March – 28 April 2015
- School Organisation Code 006/2013
- School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013
- Primary Education of the Best Quality for the Children of Gwynedd strategy
- Priorities Plan – Organisation of Education Provision
- Faith in Education document by the Welsh Government
- Agenda and Minutes of Y Berwyn Catchment Area Review Panel meetings
- Statistics Pack