

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 13 July 2018

- PRESENT:** Councillor Aled M. Jones (Chair)
Councillor Dylan Rees (Vice-Chair)
- Councillors Lewis Davies, Richard Griffiths, Bryan Owen, Alun Roberts, Nicola Roberts.
- Co-opted Member: Mr Keith Roberts (The Catholic Church)
- Portfolio Member**
- R. Meirion Jones (Portfolio Member for Education, Libraries, Youth & Culture)
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive
Assistant Chief Executive (Partnerships, Community & Service Improvement)
Head of Function (Council Business)/Monitoring Officer
Head of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer
Scrutiny Manager (AGD)
Committee Officer (ATH)
- APOLOGIES:** Councillors Richard Owain Jones, J. Arwel Roberts, Mrs Anest Frazer (Church in Wales) Councillor Dafydd Rhys Thomas (Portfolio Member for Corporate Services)
- ALSO PRESENT:** **Portfolio Members:** Councillors Llinos Medi Huws (Leader), Carwyn Jones (Portfolio Member for Major Projects and Economic Development), Richard Dew (Portfolio Member for Planning and Public Protection), Alun Mummery (Portfolio Member for Housing and Supporting Communities), R.G. Parry, OBE, FRAgS (Portfolio Member for Highways, Property and Waste) Robin Williams (Portfolio Member for Finance), John Griffith.
- Officers:** Business Planning and Performance Manager
- Public Speakers: Ysgol Llangoed** – Dr Ruth Parry (Temporary Chair of the Governing Body), Mrs Katie Jones (Parents), Mrs Delyth Jones (Community Council) **Ysgol Beaumaris** - Emma Taylor (Chair of the Governing Body), Rhian Jones (Chair of the Response Committee), Councillor Jason Zalot (Mayor), Councillor Alwyn Rowlands (Town Council)

The Chair welcomed all those present to this meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee including Members, Officers and representatives of Ysgol Llangoed and Ysgol Beaumaris.

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Alun Roberts declared a personal interest in respect of item 2 on the agenda as a member of the Governing Body of Ysgol Beaumaris.

Councillor Carwyn Jones (not a member of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee) declared a personal and prejudicial interest with regard to item 2 on the agenda as Chair of the Governing Body of Ysgol Llandegfan and also on the grounds of his wife's and mother's employment in Ysgol Llandegfan and his cousin's employment in Ysgol Beaumaris. Councillor Carwyn Jones said that he had been granted dispensation by the Standards Committee on 18 July, 2017 to represent the local viewpoint throughout the process.

Councillor Lewis Davies informed the Committee said that he had resigned as Chair of the Governing Body of Ysgol Llangoed because he wished to be objective in the consultation process.

2 SCHOOLS' MODERNISATION PROGRAMME - SEIRIOL AREA

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Partnerships, Community and Service Improvement) incorporating a report on the outcome of the Statutory Consultation on the reconfiguration of primary education provision in the Seiriol area (Ysgol Llandegfan, Ysgol Llangoed and Ysgol Beaumaris) held during the period from 22 May, to 2 July, 2018 was presented for the Committee's consideration.

The Portfolio Member for Education, Libraries Youth & Culture reported that the schools' modernisation process involves assessing and weighing up the future of schools and the effect this will have on parents, children, teachers, school governors and a range of other stakeholders. It can be a contentious matter; it is a challenging task for the Council and is a matter that causes concern for parents and stakeholders which he could understand. However, what is under consideration is the future of schools perhaps for the next 50 years; a schools' service that is wilting under the pressure of financial cuts; a maintenance backlog, the demands of the curriculum as well as a number of other issues. The Council has to give serious consideration to making the schools system more effective so as to create an environment wherein both pupils and teachers can succeed, and also to making it more efficient so that resources are used effectively and all schools get a fair share of the budget. The Portfolio Member said that the introduction of the 21st Century Schools' Programme whereby Welsh Government is prepared to contribute half the cost of projects to refurbish or rebuild schools and colleges in Wales provides an opportunity to rationalise and modernise the primary school stock on Anglesey and to create high standard schools for this generation and those to come. This funding will not be available for ever.

Although the three schools in the Seiriol area are the focus of discussion for this meeting, they form part of the bigger picture comprising of Anglesey as a whole and the Education Service within it. The budget for the Education Service makes up 40% of the Council's overall budget; the Service is facing having to make savings of £5.2m over the next 3 years. Whilst the Council has in the past sought to protect Education from budget cuts, it cannot continue to do so. An additional consideration is the school maintenance backlog cost of £16m. The financial pressure which this Authority and others are experiencing is the result of the Westminster Government's continuing austerity agenda. The Portfolio Member said that whilst closing a school is not a decision that anyone wants to make, the current situation is not sustainable and the Authority has to act reasonably. The Authority's School Modernisation Programme has as its aims to improve educational outcomes for children; to improve leadership standards and the quality of teaching and learning and to ensure there are sector leading schools in each area. The drivers of change are the same as they have been for previous consultations and include improving teaching standards and attainment,

reducing the variation in pupil cost, and ensuring there are sufficient Head Teachers for the future. The Portfolio Member acknowledged that Elected Members have a dual role in the schools' modernisation process which includes a duty to their individual communities but also a duty to provide direction for the Council through firm and clear guidance. He thanked all those who had contributed to the consultation process either by attending the drop-in sessions or by other forms of communication.

The Assistant Chief Executive referred to Section 10 of the report wherein the issues raised by stakeholders from the three schools in responding to the consultation process and the Authority's response to those matters are set out. Those issues as well as the performance of the schools against the drivers of change can be summarised as follows –

- **Ysgol Llandegfan**

- There is some variance in the school's performance in both the Foundation Phase and KS2 over the past three years. As regards inspection, it could be argued that the inspection profile of Ysgol Llandegfan is stronger than that of Ysgol Llangoed and that of Ysgol Beaumaris with performance against all indicators assessed as Good except one which was assessed as Adequate.

- The expenditure per pupil at the school at £3,589 is below both the Wales average (£3,690) and the Anglesey average (£3,972) and is also less than the spend per pupil at the other two schools. Ysgol Llandegfan receives £58,982 less funding than the Authority average.

- The maintenance backlog costs at the school at £86,000 are the lowest of the three schools.

- As at January 2018 there were 154 pupils at the school meaning it is over its 145 capacity and has no surplus places.

- Leadership and management requirements have increased substantially and are expected to intensify in future; the Authority considers that Head Teachers should have a minimum of 60% non-contact time in order to meet the requirements. Currently, the Head Teacher at Ysgol Llandegfan has 60% non-contact time.

- The percentage of pupils at Ysgol Llandegfan who speak Welsh at home is 43%.

- Traffic was noted as an issue at the school. This will be addressed as part of the Traffic Impact Assessment carried out for each new project.

- **Ysgol Llangoed**

- The school's performance in the Foundation Phase has varied over the past three years. It was in the lowest quartile in 2016 and in the highest quartile in 2017. The school's performance in KS2 has been in the lowest quartile for the past two years. The school's inspection profile reflects a predominance of Adequate Grades. Following inspection in 2014/15, Estyn returned on a monitoring visit in June 2016 and concluded that the school had made good progress on key matters for action following inspection and that it did not require any further monitoring.

- The expenditure per pupil at the school at £4,077 is higher than the Anglesey and Wales averages. Ysgol Llangoed receives £8,190 more funding than the Authority average for 2017/18.

- Maintenance backlog costs at the school are £107,000.

- As at January, 2018 there were 78 pupils at the school with 20 (20%) surplus places. Pupil projections indicate that the number of pupils at the school will decrease over the period to 2023.

- Currently the Head teacher at Ysgol Llangoed has 40% non-contact time.

- The percentage of pupils at the school who speak Welsh at home is the highest of the three schools at 46%.

- It was noted in the consultation process that Ysgol Llangoed's expenditure on fuel is the lowest of the three schools as is its carbon emissions. Closing the school would result in an increase in carbon emissions.

- **Ysgol Beaumaris**

- As regards performance in the Foundation Phase the school has been in the highest quartile for two out of the past three years and in the lowest quartile in the other year. Its performance in KS2 has been varied and overall, its performance profile is similar to that of the other two schools. The school's inspection profile is similar to that of Ysgol Llangoed, and like Ysgol Llangoed it too received a monitoring visit by Estyn in March 2015 when it was assessed as having made good progress on key matters for action following inspection and did not require any further monitoring.

- The expenditure per pupil at the school is the highest of the three schools at £5,976 and is well above both the Anglesey and Wales average. Ysgol Beaumaris received £80,160 more funding than the Authority average for 2017/18 which pattern has existed for several years.

- Maintenance backlog costs at the school at £936,000 are the highest of the three schools which reflect the condition of the school building. This was assessed as grade C following condition reviews held by the Council's Surveyors from the end of 2015 to the beginning of 2016. Grade C denotes that the building is in poor condition with several defects requiring attention.

- As at January, 2018 there were 40 pupils at Ysgol Beaumaris with 103 (72%) surplus places. 8 pupils or 17% came from outside the catchment area whilst 34 pupils or 72% from the catchment area attended other primary schools. Pupil projections indicate that the number of pupils at the school will increase in the period to 2023.

- Currently the Head Teacher at Ysgol Beaumaris has 30% non-contact time.

- The percentage of pupils at the school who speak Welsh at home is the lowest of the three schools at 20%.

- The school's expenditure on fuel and electricity is higher than that of Ysgol Llangoed as are its carbon dioxide emissions.

- During the consultation process, a number of points were raised –

- The future of the pre-school provision. With such developments pre-school facilities are always considered as part of the education strategy for the area.

- Increase in population as a result of the Wylfa Newydd project. Notwithstanding some workers could settle in the area, it would need a significant number of families with children of primary school age to do so to make Ysgol Beaumaris viable.

- The maintenance backlog costs are excessive. These are as a result of a condition survey undertaken by the Council's Surveyors. Even if the total cost was halved, the figure would still be substantial and unaffordable.

- The Council has turned its back on the Seiriol area and many of its facilities. The Council has collaborated with groups in the area on the transfer of assets and, in the current financial climate this will happen increasingly across the Island in the future.

- Should Ysgol Beaumaris close, parents will not necessarily send their children to Ysgol Llangoed. This is acknowledged and is a matter of parental preference.

- Closure of the school will affect the town's demographic leading to a preponderance of older people. The Council is working on trying to regenerate Beaumaris. It is one of ten areas earmarked for a council house building programme.

- Alternative options have been put forward. These have all been considered and evaluated as set out in section 10.5 and in the appendix to the report.

The Officer said that correspondence has been received from the Member of Parliament for Anglesey, and from Beaumaris Town Council which highlight the absence of any option that would see the retention of the three schools or the building of a new school, and which

state that the Seiriol area deserves the same kind of investment as other areas on the Island. The Officer pointed out that there is investment in Seiriol perhaps to a lesser extent than in Holyhead or Llangefni which have both benefited from European and Welsh Government grant funding. The Officer added that should the proposals in the report be accepted, then two of the area's primary schools would be upgraded to twenty-first century schools' standards. The option of a new school was considered but the lack of suitable land made this unfeasible. The Officer also referred to the financial considerations which are an important factor in the Schools' Modernisation Programme. As the pressures on the Council's budget mount, it is less able to maintain a large number of ageing school buildings. In financial terms Option 1 is the most advantageous; keeping all three schools open would mean spending £1.129m of the Council's money without any capital receipts to offset the expenditure. It would also lead to additional revenue costs of £87,159.

The Committee sought clarification of the Officer of the number of additional children approximately which it was anticipated the Wylfa Newydd project would bring to the Island compared to when the original Wylfa Power Station was built. The Officer said that although she did not have comparative data to hand, based on discussions with and documentation from Horizon, 230 families are predicted to move onto the Island over the course of the Wylfa Newydd project's 10 year+ construction phase, most of whom are expected to settle towards the North of the Island. Many workers will be short-stay dependent on if and when their particular expertise is required.

The Chair read out a letter dated 12 July, 2018 submitted by the Member of Parliament for Anglesey who stated that residents are concerned that the consultation process is flawed and does not reflect concerns raised in the original consultation exercise nor does it take account of residents' views that Seiriol deserves the same investment as that offered to other areas on Anglesey which have gone through the modernisation process i.e. the option of a new twenty-first century school. The letter proceeds to say that until such time as this is the case the proposals should be put on hold maintaining the three schools whilst looking for a site in future to host a new, fit for purpose school. The letter concludes by saying that the Seiriol area deserves an innovative solution to future school modernisation which does not appear in the present or previous consultation.

Emma Taylor (Chair of the Governing Body of Ysgol Beaumaris), Rhian Jones (Chair of the Ysgol Beaumaris Response Committee and Town Councillor), Councillor Jason Zalot (Mayor of Beaumaris) and Councillor Alwyn Rowlands (Beaumaris Town Council) all addressed the Committee with their views on the proposals for modernising the primary school provision in the Seiriol area. They made the case for why in their view, Ysgol Beaumaris should not close and in making their representations they drew the following points to the Committee's attention –

- That stakeholders at Ysgol Beaumaris understand why the Authority has decided to consult on the future of primary education both on Anglesey and in the Seiriol area and they understand the need for change to reduce costs and bring the school stock up to date. They also accept that things cannot stay as they are which is why during the previous informal and formal consultations they have been working proactively to find viable solutions that address the Authority's drivers of change whilst meeting the wishes of the residents and community and providing the best school and education for current and future pupils.
- That stakeholders at Ysgol Beaumaris take issue with the accuracy of the Authority's stated figure for maintenance backlog costs (£936k). A requested breakdown of the figure disclosed possible costs of £310k which by their nature cannot be defined as backlog and therefore should not have been included. Taking this figure out means that the maximum maintenance backlog cost for the school is £636k; this then has a significant bearing on the calculations in the financial appraisal of the four options contained in section

6 of the report leading to a more realistic assessment with the end result being that Option 3b (keep Llandegfan and Beaumaris open and close Llangoed) should show revenue savings rather than additional revenue costs.

- That for Option 2 (keep the three schools open but federate Llangoed and Beaumaris) although the Authority states that the schools need to be modernised to bring them up to twenty-first century schools standards the cost of doing so is not factored in even though it may be assumed that Welsh Government would contribute to the cost based on the statement made by the Cabinet Secretary for Education in April that under the terms of the Twenty-First Century Schools Programme the Welsh Government will contribute to the cost of refurbishing existing schools as well as building new schools. Although this could increase the capital cost of this option it would still be comparable with Option 3a.

- That the figure given for the average Anglesey spend per pupil is at odds with that in the previous consultation for the same period and also with that quoted in the Welsh Government's local authority budget expenditure for the same period both of which put the average per pupil spend for Anglesey at £4,560.

- Currently other Council services (Under 5s Learning Team and the Gwynedd and Anglesey ALN and Inclusion Service) use part of the school building without making a financial contribution to the school's budget. These services' overheads are then included in the per pupil spend thereby unfairly increasing the figure. The Governing Body has reduced the overall budget costs by 10% from 2016/17 to 2017/18 thus reducing the per pupil cost. With pupil numbers expected to rise over the next five years, the school expects the figure for per pupil spend to become much more comparable with the Authority's average figure.

- With regard to the number of pupils leaving the catchment area to attend a school elsewhere, Beaumaris has always had a history of pupils attending private schools – at least 10 children from the catchment area attend Treffos Independent Primary school. Additionally, 5 children attend Our Lady's Catholic School in Bangor. These therefore account for nearly half the number noted as attending schools out of the catchment area. It is possible that there is nothing either the school or the Authority can do to alter this situation as the parents have made a specific choice. The risk of closure that has been hanging over the school since the initial consultation in 2012 has also influenced parental choice and has consequently affected the number of children attending the school.

- The Governing Body has been aware of parents sending their children elsewhere and has actively sought to address the issue by speaking to parents to establish the reasons for their choice e.g. better wraparound care in schools elsewhere. As a result, the school has re-introduced its after school club and worked with Mudiad Meithrin to establish a Ti a Fi circle which now has 43 children and is the largest on the Island.

- The establishment of an Extra Care facility on the school site provides an opportunity to co-locate the two services in a way that will benefit both generations and may lead to cost savings for the Authority. There is enough space on the school site for a new school of 120 as well as the Extra Care facility. This innovative solution was proposed during the previous consultation and was supported by parents and community albeit in the belief that the school site is not the ideal location for Extra Care provision. Initial enquiries have shown that a scheme such as this or elements of it could also attract Big Lottery Funding

- Ysgol Beaumaris stakeholders believe the Authority is mistaken in not finding out before a decision is made where current parents would send their children if either Ysgol Beaumaris or Ysgol Llangoed is to close. This information is essential to ensure that schools of the right size are in the right places. At the time of the last consultation, the Governing Body of Ysgol Beaumaris distributed a questionnaire to parents of children at the school to establish to which school they would send their children were Ysgol Beaumaris to close. Only 2 indicated they would consider sending their children to Ysgol Llangoed and 6 to Ysgol Llandegfan due to the inconvenience of having to travel out of the way of their route to work. For this reason, 7 said they would send their children to Ysgol y

Borth and 8 said they would choose a school in Bangor. For children to leave the Island to be educated because of school closure would be difficult to accept.

- If Option 1 is approved, the Authority may end up spending a substantial amount of money on a school whose numbers are predicted to drop over the coming years and one which wouldn't benefit in terms of pupils from the closure of Ysgol Beaumaris. Consequently, the Authority could be revisiting this matter in a few years having to consider the closure of Ysgol Llangoed.
- That there are no indicative plans for the Ysgol Beaumaris building should the school close; as a listed building maintaining it will entail costs to the Council.
- That the Wylfa Newydd project is likely to bring additional families to the area whose children will need an education provision.
- For these reasons the Governing Body and stakeholders of Ysgol Beaumaris strongly oppose Option 1.

In responding to some of the points made, the Assistant Chief Executive said that the figure for maintenance backlog costs has been provided by the Council's Property Services. The possible costs are works that are likely to be required but have not yet been scheduled e.g. there are difficulties in heating the school which mean that the boiler will have to be replaced at some point involving a significant cost. The co-location of the Extra Care facility and a school for 120 pupils could be problematic in terms of the space available and also because of the specific land and space requirements stipulated by the Twenty-First Century Schools Programme

The Committee noted that a survey of parents' views with regard to their preferred school were either Ysgol Beaumaris or Ysgol Llangoed to close would have been helpful as it could influence the decision. The Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that the Authority had not undertaken this survey as the information gained from such an exercise is likely to be of limited help as not all parents will respond and the views and preferences of those who do, can and do change.

Dr Ruth Parry (Temporary Chair of the Ysgol Llangoed Governing Body), Mrs Katie Jones (Parents of Ysgol Llangoed) and Mrs Delyth Jones (Community Council) all addressed the Committee with their views on the proposals for modernising the primary school provision in the Seiriol area. They made the case for why in their view, Ysgol Llangoed should not close and in making their representations they drew the following points to the Committee's attention –

- That Option 1 is the most reasonable option in terms of meeting the drivers of change and delivering revenue savings.
- The facts favour retaining Ysgol Llangoed. This is because the expenditure per pupil at Ysgol Llangoed is less than that at Ysgol Beaumaris as is the number of surplus places. Pupil numbers at Ysgol Llangoed have been constant for many years. The condition of the school building is graded B which is good and the maintenance backlog costs are similar to those of Ysgol Llandegfan. The environmental credentials of the school are good.
- Ysgol Llangoed is well located and is accessible.
- The consultation document refers to the importance of the Welsh language and states that any arrangement developed as part of the modernisation programme will give priority to strengthening and protecting the Welsh Language. Ysgol Llangoed has always had a strong Welsh ethos which is attractive to parents who want their children to learn the language. Transferring children from a relatively English area to a Welsh area would better promote the Welsh language than vice versa.
- There is no concrete data provided to support the forecast for pupil numbers up to 2023 and the movement of children and families in and out of an area cannot be predicted with accuracy.

- Ysgol Llangoed is a thriving primary school at the heart of its community that produces good academic results and happy, healthy, well-rounded and bilingual children. It is a caring school whose staff take the time to understand individual needs which is relevant in the context of the inspection framework which stresses the importance of children's experiences and the contribution made by the environment to their safety, attitudes to learning and their well-being.
- Ysgol Llangoed is part of the Welsh Network of Healthy Schools and has achieved a gold standard for being a green, eco-friendly school. The children are taught about the benefits of healthy eating and sustainability and the school actively promotes healthy living through sporting events and activities.
- Ysgol Llangoed is inclusive and has an excellent Additional Learning Needs provision and is disabled-user friendly.
- Llangoed as a village is becoming a thriving young community particularly following the development of a new housing estate – Stad yr Ysgol which is the first new council housing estate to be built in Wales for 30 years. It has attracted many new young families to the village not least because of its close proximity to the school. Some of these families do not drive and have young children who will be of school age in the next two years. These 3-year olds will not have access to the free travel provision meaning that the children of non-driving parents will be disadvantaged.
- Ysgol Llangoed is actively involved with the community be that through Christmas Fairs and Pantomime, Thanksgiving and St. David's Day Services and other events and activities.

Councillors Carwyn Jones, Lewis Davies and Alun Roberts spoke as Local Members.

Councillor Carwyn Jones (not a Member of the Committee) spoke of his disappointment that his response was not included in full in the documentation as it proposed an innovative solution to the reconfiguration of schools in the Seiriol area. He said that the firm view from the Seiriol ward is that both Ysgol Llangoed and Ysgol Beaumaris should remain open and that a modern innovative approach to modernising the schools in this area should be considered. Councillor Jones highlighted that significant investment that has taken place in other areas of Anglesey where the Schools' Modernisation Programme has been implemented resulting in new schools in Holyhead, Llanfaethlu, Newborough and a planned new extension in Llangefni. However, when Ysgol Llanddona was closed no new investment followed. He said that the Seiriol area deserves investment on the lines of that made in other parts of Anglesey and this should take the form of refurbishing Ysgol Llandegfan and Ysgol Llangoed and building a new smaller school alongside the Extra Care facility in Beaumaris. The option of a new school co-located with Extra Care would provide an exciting and different solution which could reap benefits both financially in terms of reduced overheads and shared costs and educationally in terms of creating an inter-generational learning environment. This option would also meet Twenty-First Century Schools criteria in providing a new modern education facility for the next 50 years, it would cost a fraction of other modernisation schemes and it has the potential to bring down the cost per pupil to the lowest in Wales. Councillor Jones emphasised that taking education capacity out of the South East of the Island by closing either Ysgol Llangoed or Ysgol Beaumaris is a risk in view of the likely increase in population which the advent of Wylfa Newydd and other major economic developments on the Island and beyond will lead to.

The Chair suggested that correspondence submitted by Local Members by virtue of their role should be published in full as part of the published documentation.

Councillor Lewis Davies also expressed his regret that the Seiriol area is being treated differently and, in his view, unfairly in not being offered the option of a new school. He spoke of the adverse impact which closing either Ysgol Llangoed or Ysgol Beaumaris would have on the respective communities and felt that such a step is contrary to the Well-

Being of Future Generations Act which promotes the creation of safe cohesive and resilient communities. The Seiriol area is in need of regeneration which will become so much more difficult to achieve if either Ysgol Llangoed or Ysgol Beaumaris is closed. He said that he supported the retention of all three schools in the area on the grounds that they are needed to ensure the future of the communities which they serve, to act as a basis for the regeneration of those communities, to ensure demographic balance in the area in future and to provide the capacity to deal with the influx of families that will come with Wylfa Newydd and other developments.

Councillor Alun Roberts echoed his fellow Local Members in advocating that all three schools should remain open. He supported locating a smaller school alongside the Extra Care facility in Beaumaris as an original and leading-edge solution for Beaumaris. The evidence indicates that the projections for pupil numbers in Ysgol Llandegfan are excellent and are improving for Ysgol Llangoed and Ysgol Beaumaris and could be bolstered by incoming families in the wake of Wylfa Newydd. Councillor Roberts emphasised that closing either Ysgol Beaumaris or Ysgol Llangoed does not safeguard the future of the other and may well place the remaining school at greater risk as parents decide to send their children elsewhere as the survey by Ysgol Beaumaris Governing Body suggest they would.

The Chair highlighted at this juncture that as the Committee had now been in session for three hours, under the provisions of paragraph 4.1.10 of the Council's Constitution, a resolution was required by the majority of those Members of the Committee present to agree to continue with the meeting. It was resolved that the meeting should continue.

The Committee considered the information presented both in writing and verbally and it responded as follows –

- The Committee noted that one of the alternative options put forward is the co-location of a smaller school and Extra Care facility on the existing Ysgol Beaumaris site. The Committee sought clarification of how viable the option is given that Welsh Government defines a small school as one with 150 pupils or less.

The Assistant Chief Executive said that although the option is attractive, the business case for it does not bear up against the facts. It is doubtful that the Welsh Government would be prepared to support building a new school on as small a scale as that proposed.

The Head of Function (Resources) and Section 151 Officer said that every application for Welsh Government funding Under the Twenty-First Century Schools Programme must be supported by a Business Case which addresses affordability, value for money, delivery of revenue savings and a range of other factors. Securing Welsh Government's support for the creation of a small school is therefore difficult because of the financial considerations. As regards sharing facilities and costs with the Extra Care facility, with regard to taxation the Extra Care units would be liable for Council Tax and would be priced differently to the school there being no link between the two in this respect. Additionally, the Extra Care facility is to be funded from the Housing Revenue Account which is funded by rental income from the Council's housing stock. Use of the HRA is limited to purposes in relation to the Council's housing stock making it impossible to use the HRA to fund or subsidise costs that fall to the Council's General Account which is funded from Council Tax and the Revenue Support Grant.

- The Committee noted that there is a possibility that should Ysgol Beaumaris close, the parents of pupils at the school might choose to send their children to a school other than Ysgol Llangoed thereby putting the long-term viability of Ysgol Llangoed at risk. The

Committee sought clarification of whether this has been taken into account in the plans for Ysgol Llangoed.

The Chief Executive said that school modernisation always carries an element of risk. However, in this instance the Authority has sought to mitigate the risk by making the solution more sustainable. Whereas in the original consultation parents were asked to state their preference for Ysgol Llandegfan, Ysgol Llangoed or Ysgol Beaumaris the request has now been removed in line with Elected Members' wishes that whatever the final decision, the long-term sustainability of the solution should be more prominent, hence the "either or" options in the report – either Ysgol Llangoed or Ysgol Beaumaris be closed. If Ysgol Beaumaris was to close and the parents of pupils at the school were to choose not to send their children to Ysgol Llangoed, then the Authority would continue to maintain education provision for the 80 pupils at Ysgol Llangoed. The Officer said that if there is support for retaining a school of 40 pupils in Beaumaris, then the Committee has to consider how the £1.129m needed to resource this option is to be identified.

- The Committee noted that the Local Members are concerned that the exercise of parental choice will lead to some parents opting to take their children to schools in the Bangor area due to the proximity of the schools to their place of work. The Committee sought information about the position with regard to the availability of school places in the Bangor area.

The Chief Executive said that although the Authority has not investigated this matter, it is known that Gwynedd Council is currently reviewing the education provision in the Bangor area against the same criteria largely as those in Anglesey. As in Anglesey also, the ability to provide for up to 10% surplus places will probably apply so school places are limited in the Bangor area as well.

- The Committee noted that the Wylfa Newydd project will likely result in an increase in the Island's population during the project's construction and delivery phases and that it might be prudent to retain education capacity in the Seiriol area to accommodate the increase. The Committee sought clarification of whether creating a multi-site school is a feasible alternative.

The Assistant Chief Executive said that the multi-site option does not address the maintenance backlog costs nor the issue of surplus places.

- The Committee sought assurance that the Authority's Impact Assessment has taken into account the effects on the communities.

The Committee was informed that the Authority's Impact Assessment had taken into account the effects on the communities. Furthermore, Estyn has confirmed that the Authority's Impact Assessment was good in the context of this consultation.

- The Committee sought clarification of how areas have been selected for review under the Schools' Modernisation Programme given that some areas which have come under review have schools with a higher number of pupils than areas which have not been reviewed.

The Chief Executive said that the Seiriol area was one of the areas included in the initial Band A investment phase of the Twenty-First Century Schools Programme. Other areas of the Island will come under review in the second Band B investment phase which will commence in April, 2019. The selection of areas for review under Band A was the subject of a report to the County Council and was due in part to comments made by Estyn about the Authority's Schools' Modernisation Programme not being sufficiently ambitious.

Consequently, it was decided that the modernisation programme should initially be implemented in an urban area – Holyhead, and in a rural area – Y Llannau following which areas where the number of surplus places was high would be addressed i.e. the Rhosyr and Seiriol areas.

A representative each from Ysgol Beaumaris and from Ysgol Llangoed were given the opportunity to summarise. Mrs Rhian Jones on behalf of Ysgol Beaumaris asked the Committee to recommend pausing in order to ensure that having had time to seriously consider alternative options to closure, the right solution is found for the communities involved. Dr Ruth Parry on behalf of Ysgol Llangoed asked the Committee to base the recommendation it makes on the facts.

The Portfolio Member said that although the situation is difficult, doing nothing is not an option either educationally or financially. The current pattern of primary schools and their location was generally established 150 years ago when children walked to school; it has to be adapted to fit circumstances as they are now, and into the future.

The Chief Executive acknowledged that notwithstanding this is a challenging matter, the decision has to be about making the primary education system on Anglesey more effective and more efficient. In the current climate, financial considerations are a factor but the quality of the education provision must carry weight as well. The Officer said that with two out of the three schools considered small by Welsh Government standards, the cost of education in the Seiriol area is well above the Anglesey average. In terms of pupil numbers, the original consultation indicated that the number of pupils at Ysgol Llandegfan and at Ysgol Llangoed have been constant but that pupil numbers in Ysgol Beaumaris have been on a downward trend. The backlog maintenance costs are high, and with Welsh Government capital funding having remained unchanged for many years and the funding having been allocated to Twenty-First Century schools, addressing this issue is problematic. The conclusions of the report make it clear that Options 1 and 2 are the only realistic options in the circumstances.

Having noted the information presented and the representations made at the meeting, the Committee considered its proposals.

After summarising the appeals made by those who had made representations to the Committee including the Member of Parliament for Anglesey who had conveyed his views by letter, the Chair referred to the two options put forward in the Officer's report namely –

Option 1 – Refurbish and extend Ysgol Llandegfan, close Ysgol Beaumaris and refurbish Ysgol Llangoed, or

Option 2 – Refurbish and extend Ysgol Llandegfan, close Ysgol Llangoed and refurbish Ysgol Beaumaris.

Councillor Lewis Davies proposed a third option (Option 3) which was seconded, to the effect that the Committee recommends to the Executive that the 3 schools (Ysgol Llandegfan, Ysgol Llangoed and Ysgol Beaumaris) remain open in order to have a discussion about investing in building a new, modern Twenty-First Century area school for Seiriol as has happened in other areas of the Island namely Y Llannau, Ynys Cybi, Cefni and the Newborough areas.

In justification of the proposal, Councillor Lewis Davies said that there is a possibility that the Lairds site may be developed in future and that it could prove a suitable site for a new school.

Councillor Nicola Roberts proposed an amendment and was seconded - that Option 1 of the report be recommended to the Executive. She referred to the statement made by the Welsh Government's Cabinet Secretary for Education on 25 April, 2018 in which she had said that planning school places is a matter for the Local Authority and that any application for capital funding under the Twenty-First Century Schools Programme is judged on criteria which are examined by an external board with reference to the value behind each individual application. The Cabinet Secretary had also said that she was not aware of any application being predicated on a need to close schools and that the funding is available for the refurbishment of existing sites, for replacement schools and for newly constituted schools. Councillor Roberts said that she believed that the comments applied in this case.

The Chief Executive said that a new area school as proposed by Option 3 was considered in the non-statutory consultation but was not taken forward. One of the options which was evaluated and scored at that time was to develop a large school in an area closer to Menai Bridge.

Councillor Lewis Davies subsequently withdrew his proposal and said that he would not be voting. Councillor Brian Owen who had seconded the proposal now proposed Option 3 and was seconded.

In the ensuing vote on the proposal, 2 voted in favour and 1 voted against with 5 abstentions. As there was not a majority vote in favour of the proposal, the proposal was not carried.

The Committee then voted on the amendment, namely that Option 1 be recommended to the Executive.

In the vote that followed, 2 voted in favour, 4 voted against with 2 abstentions. As there was not a majority vote, the Chair used his casting vote against Option 1.

Having considered all the information presented both verbally and in writing, the Corporate Scrutiny Committee Resolved not to accept the options in the Officer's report.

**Councillor Aled M. Jones
Chair**