

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
Report to:	Executive Committee
Date:	17 December 2018
Subject:	Modernising Schools on Anglesey – Report following publication of statutory notices for a new primary school to replace Ysgol Bodffordd and Ysgol Corn Hir and approval of the original proposal
Portfolio Member(s):	Councillor R. Meirion Jones
Head of Service:	Arwyn Williams
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Local Members:	Councillor Bob Parry Councillor Dylan Rees Councillor Nicola Roberts

A – Recommendation(s) and Reason(s)
<p>Reasons: In order to conform with the School Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013 and the School Organisation Code, the Authority issued a Statutory Notice of their intention to:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. Combine two schools - Ysgol Bodffordd and Ysgol Corn Hir – in one new school on a site in Llangefni and that the new primary school will be a welsh medium community school.</p> <p>The Statutory Notice was issued on 2 October 2018 and there was a period of 28 days to object to the proposal to follow. Therefore, the objection period ended on 29 October 2018. 111 objections were received to above proposal .</p> <p>In accordance with the School Organisation Code 2013 issued by the Welsh Government, the proposer or proposers, namely the Isle of Anglesey County Council in this case, need to issue a report describing any objections received i.e. an objection report. See the objection report in Appendix 1.</p> <p>109 of the objections were presented on a standard proforma as in Appendix 2.</p> <p>The way the Council deals with objections to a statutory notice is in line with the procedure set out in the School Organisation Code that has been in force since October 2018.</p> <p>Therefore, in accordance with the 2013 School Organisation Code, section 5.3, the Executive Committee needs to “decide whether the proposals should be approved’, rejected or approved with adaptations.”</p>

It is recommended that the Executive:

- i. Decide to approve the original proposals namely:
 - Propose not to support Ysgol Bodffordd, Bodffordd, Anglesey LL77 7LZ and Ysgol Corn Hir ,Llangefni, Anglesey LL77 7JB ,that are at present maintained by the Isle of Anglesey County Council and to set up a new Welsh-medium community primary school to be maintained by the Isle of Anglesey County Council on land by the Bryn Meurig housing estate ,Llangefni LL77 7JB for boys and girls aged 3-11 years old.
- ii. Authorize officers to continue with the process of :
 - (a) building a new primary school in Llangefni on land near the Bryn Meurig housing estate (subject to the site being suitable).

Background:

In its meeting on 20 June 2016, the Council's Executive resolved:

- To authorize officers of the Lifelong Learning Department to enable them to hold an informal or non-statutory consultation process on the primary education process in the Llangefni area.
- Subsequently prepare several options on the way forward by the end of 2016.

Because the Council consulted with parents, governors and staff in the six schools in the area and also with the local communities, local councillors and with the Welsh Government and other stakeholders. The consultation period continued from 3 October 2016 until 13 December 2016.

Consultation meetings were organized with the staff, governors and parents of the 6 schools involved and over this period. 21 possible options were considered on the way forward for the primary education provision in the Llangefni area in the non-statutory or informal consultation process.

After the non-statutory consultation, these options were reduced to 9 options and these options were evaluated and scored out of 10 against the change drivers outlined below:

1. Raise educational standards
2. Reduce number of surplus places
3. Reduce the variation in the pupil's cost
4. Ensuring that school buildings create a best possible learning environment
5. Ensure that school buildings are in good condition and there are no health and safety issues
6. Increase leadership capacity
7. Community use of the school building
8. Welsh-medium and bilingual provision
9. Geographical factors and travelling

The options were scored in the non-statutory consultation report, and the report was discussed by the Executive at its meeting on 19 December 2016.

The Executive's decision was:

Authorize officers to proceed to the formal or statutory consultation process where they consult on Options A and B below.

Therefore, officers went out to conduct a statutory consultation on the following options:

Option A

This would be based on :

- Option 3, the construction of one school for Ysgol Corn Hir and Ysgol Bodffordd
- Option 8, adapting of Ysgol Esceifiog
- Option 7, extending Ysgol y Graig to take pupils from Ysgol Talwrn and closing Ysgol Talwrn
- Option 9, adapting of Ysgol Henblas

Any remodeling needed to address the traffic issues identified at the beginning and end of the school day. The options would be subject to affordability. These options could also include the federation of Ysgol Henblas with another school and maintain the school at the present site but under a different management arrangement.

Option B

This would be based on :

- Option 3, the construction of one school for Ysgol Corn Hir and Ysgol Bodffordd.
- Option 6b, the construction of a new primary school in Gaerwen for 150 children instead of Ysgol Esceifiog on an alternative site
- Option 7, extending Ysgol y Graig to take pupils from Ysgol Talwrn and closing Ysgol Talwrn
- Option 9, adapt Ysgol Henblas

Any remodeling needed to address the traffic issues identified at the beginning and end of the school day. The options would be subject to affordability. This option could also include the federation of Ysgol Henblas with another school and maintain the school at the present site but under a different management arrangement.

The statutory consultation period took place between 30 January to 12 March 2017.

After 2 elections (local government elections on 4 May 2017 and General Election on 8 June 2017), a report on the statutory consultation was discussed by the Executive.

The Executive resolved at its meeting on 17 July 2017 that :

Option B is the preferred option and that will incorporate:

- Option 3 - the replacement of a new school for Ysgol Corn Hir and Ysgol Bodffordd
- Option 8 - adaptations to Ysgol Esceifiog, Gaerwen;
- Option 7 - the option of extending Ysgol y Graig will need to be consulted on further to make room for pupils from Ysgol Talwrn School, and close Ysgol Talwrn;
- Option 9 - adaptations to Ysgol Henblas.

Numbers at Ysgol Henblas have decreased in recent years, from 101 in September 2015 to 84 by September 2017. Following the Estyn Inspection in 2017, the school is in an 'Estyn Monitoring' sequence category, where by the Authority had to put interim arrangements in place to ensure appropriate leadership.

Considering the above points, on Monday 18 December 2017, the Executive decided to 'pause and review' regarding the future of education provision in the Llangefni area. As a result, options for the future of education provision in the Llangefni area were re-assessed following confirmation of significant new funding. The Executive decided to ask Education Officers to look at the Llangefni area once again.

After reviewing the situation, it was decided to restart the consultation process in the western area of Llangefni, Ysgol Bodffordd, Ysgol Corn Hir and Ysgol Henblas. This meant that the Authority would arrange further consultation meetings with staff, governors and parents, as part of a statutory consultation process.

Following that statutory consultation, at its meeting on 30th April 2018, the Executive decided to:

- Approve Option 2, namely the construction of a new school for Ysgol Bodffordd and Ysgol Corn Hir and continuing to maintain educational provision in Llangristiolus either by maintaining Ysgol Henblas in its current form or as a multi-site school [i.e. merge Ysgol Henblas with the new school and create one school on two sites]. This decision would have to be related to obtaining assurance in one year [i.e. By the end of the 2018/19 school year] that standards at Ysgol Henblas are rising, the current pace of improvement increases and the projections of pupil numbers remain consistent or rising.

B – Which other options did you consider and what were their reasons for declining them and/or choosing this option?

Originally, 21 options were considered by the Executive at its meeting on 19 December 2016 for a possible configuration of the primary education provision in the Llangefni area and the reasons for disregarding some options in the consultation reports were outlined.

The options in the report to the Executive for the meeting, can be viewed on the date above and in the non-statutory consultation document.

Subsequently, 10 sites were considered for the proposed new primary school. See the analysis of the potential sites in the Site Options Appraisal document.

C – For what reason is this a decision for the Executive Committee?

The Executive Committee is responsible for school organisation matters.

D – Is this decision consistent with the policy approved by the full Council?

Yes

DD – Is this decision within the budget approved by the Council?

Yes – The Strategic Outline Programme plans approved by the Executive Committee on 13 January 2014. There will be a Full Business Case for the above plans presented to the

Executive early in January 2019.

E – With whom did you consult?		What were their observations?
1	Chief Executive / Senior Management Team (SMT) (mandatory)	Incorporated in this report
2	Finance / Section 151 (mandatory)	
3	Legal / Monitoring officer (mandatory)	
5	Human Resources (HR)	
6	Property	
7	Information Communication Technology (ICT)	
8	Scrutiny	
9	Local Members	
10	Any external bodies / other(s)	
F – Risks and any mitigation steps (if relevant)		
1	Economic	Not applicable
2	Anti-poverty	Not applicable
3	Crime and Disorder	Not applicable
4	Environmental	Mitigation steps are part of the planning application
5	Equalities	Not applicable
6	Result Agreements	Not applicable
7	Other	Not applicable

FF - Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Objection Report
Appendix 2 – Standard proforma

G – Background Papers (please contact the Report author for any further information):

1. Minutes of the meeting of the Executive for 19 Rhagfyr 2016.
2. Non-statutory Consultation Document and the Statutory Consultation Document and the Consultation Report
3. Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) presented to the Welsh Government in December 2013.
4. Letter by the Welsh Government dated 31 January 2014.
5. Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held on 30 April 2018.
6. Report to the Executive dated 4 November 2013.
7. School Organisation Code 2013, sections 1.2 to 1.14 and section 5.
8. Minutes of the consultation meetings with staff, governors and parents held in October

and November 2016 and February /March 2018.

9. Site Options Appraisal Documents.

10. Statutory notice dated 2 October 2018.



Objection Report

1. Background

In order to comply with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 2013, the Authority issued a **Statutory Notice** of its intent to:

- a. Combine two schools - Ysgol Bodffordd and Ysgol Corn Hir – in one new school at a site in Llangefni. The school will be a new Welsh medium communal primary school maintained on land near Bryn Meurig Estate, Llangefni, LL77 7JB for boys and girls aged 3-11 years old.

The **Statutory Notice** was issued on the 2 October 2018 and there was a period of 28 days to object to the following proposal. Therefore, the objection period expired on the 29 October 2018. **111 objections to the proposal above were received.**

Under section 49 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, proposers must announce a summary of the statutory objections and respond to those objections (“the objection report”) – which is this document.

2. Objections

Responses were received as follows:

- a. Response by the Cymdeithas yr Iaith central Education Campaign Group:
- b. 109 standard response forms by stakeholders from Ysgol Bodffordd. See the standard form used in Appendix 2:
- c. Response from stakeholders

From the responses on the standard response forms, the percentage of respondents to the points on the form are noted as follows -

Reluctant for my child to attend an urban school	Bus travel is unacceptable	IoACC policy prevents parents from choosing a local education environment for their children	The elected site is dangerous	The decision does not allow for green travel	Previous comments ignored
68%	89%	85%	82%	72%	91%

In addition, 111 of respondents noted that closing Ysgol Bodffordd would have a negative impact on the community.



Objection Report

Effectively, stakeholders state:

1. That their child(ren) are being forced to attend a large urban school
2. That “the expectation for young pupils from the Bodffordd area to travel by bus is unacceptable”
3. That “IoACC’s small school closure policy prevents parents from selecting a local environment for their child”
4. That “the preferred site for the new primary school is very dangerous”
5. That the “decision doesn’t allow the area’s pupils to choose green travel”
6. That they feel as though “their prior comments against closing the school have been ignored”
7. That “all consultation documents were not available in Welsh”
8. House prices in the village
9. The future of the Centre and school building
10. Transport to the new primary school from Bodffordd and maybe having to pay for this
11. Need for the Authority to “decide on a method of collaborating” between the catchment area’s schools
12. That the proposal means closing a school “with 89% Welsh speakers”
13. That the Council was not keeping to the School Organisation Code

Outlined below is the Authority’s response to these points:

1. Child(ren) being forced to attend a large urban school

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 allows parents to choose which school their child attends. As part of the statutory consultation, the present catchment areas will need to be reviewed and new catchment areas formed. In accordance with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the Authority could not force parents to move their children to new primary schools. This would increase the risk of a high level of empty places in the new school.

2. That “the expectation for young pupils from the Bodffordd area to travel by bus is unacceptable”

Currently, Ysgol Gynradd Llanfairpwll and Ysgol David Hughes travel by bus from Penmynydd and Star villages to their schools. Additionally, Ysgol Rhyd y Llan pupils travel to the new school by bus from the adjacent villages. These arrangements are in-keeping with the Council’s School children’s transport policy which has been drafted in light of direction and lead by Welsh Government. The new school’s transport arrangements would be arranged within these policy expectations.



Objection Report

3. That “IoACC’s small school closure policy prevents parents from selecting a local environment for their child”

The Isle of Anglesey County Council doesn’t have a ‘small school closure policy’ and never has. Despite this, the Authority’s new strategy i.e. **Anglesey’s Education Strategy: Modernising Schools (2018 Update)** which refers to the need to greet the revised code updated on 15 October 2018, stating that the Authority will be modernising its school estate “by joining a school on one site, joining schools by forming a federal school, multi-site school, new area primary school, co-locating primary and secondary schools on one campus or establishing a new all ages school [on the same site or on different sites.” In this case, subject to the Executive’s final decision on 17 December 2018, a new primary school will be provided for the children of the village of Bodffordd.

4. “We consider the preferred site for the new primary school as very dangerous in regards to the road network / nature and business of transport around the location. We consider the site to be dangerous for all possible site users”

External specialists have assessed the possible transport to the new primary school and have come to the conclusion that a roundabout is needed on the B5109 (the road between Llangefni and Bodffordd) to provide access to the new proposed school. Following this and the fact that the school entrance will be within a 30mph speed restriction, the conclusion was that “there is no basis pertaining the safety and efficiency of operating the local highway network to reject this planning proposal.”

5. That the “decision doesn’t allow the area’s pupils to choose green travel”

It’s not possible for each child to walk to school or use a ‘green’ way of travelling to school. It’s difficult to calculate the carbon emissions that derive from parents taking their child(ren) to school but it’s likely that one bus from Bodffordd village to the proposed primary school would release less carbon emissions than if a number of parents took their children to the new primary school.

6. “We consider that our prior comments against closing the school have been ignored”



Objection Report

In each of the consultations carried out, the comments of Ysgol Bodffordd stakeholders were summarised in a report on each consultation. These comments were carefully considered by Executive Committee members before a decision was made.

7. “All consultation documents were not available in Welsh”

It appears that the stakeholders were discussing the consultation prior to applying for planning permission for ‘Ysgol Newydd Llangefni’ as the proposed new primary school is called in the planning documentation. As part of this process the documentation (including technical/expert reports) from external experts was published in English only for a short time. Following recognition of this shortfall, proactive remedial action was taken urgently by the County Council to rectify the situation and Welsh versions of the following documentation were issued:

- Draft planning application Form
- Floor Plan
- Site location Plan
- General organisation of Landscaping scheme
- Welsh language Impact assessment
- Community and Linguistic statement

8. House prices in the village

The potential effect on house prices due to the closure of Ysgol Bodffordd was assessed in the Impact Assessment. Closure of the school could have an effect on the attractive nature of the local area for prospective house buyers, especially those that have, or are intending on having children. This is true for any service, such as a surgery, library or leisure centre. To the contrary, local inhabitants could consider that closing or relocating a school far from an area is useful, making the area more attractive for house buyers that are looking for a quieter neighbourhood. No general positive or negative impact is suggested here, but the possibility of change in occupier constitution over time is acknowledged.

9. The Centre and the school building’s future

In the Executive’s meeting on 30 April 2018, it was decided to:

- Approve Option 2, to build a new school for Bodffordd and Corn Hir schools and continue to maintain educational provision in Llangristiolus either by maintaining Ysgol Henblas at its current form or as a multi-site school [i.e. joining Henblas and the new school and creating a school on two sites]. This decision would have to be connected to assurance in a year [i.e. by the end of 2018/19 school year] that Ysgol



Objection Report

Henblas' standards rise, that the current speed of improvement increases and that projections regarding pupil numbers remain constant or rise.

- That discussions are held with Bodffordd Community Council and with the Bodffordd community in order to protect and preserve the community hall. Those discussions will start during the next 6 weeks. The discussions regarding the Community Centre in Bodffordd have started since July 2018 and continue. The hope is to reach an agreement with the Community on the future of the centre before coming to a decision on the site

10. Transport to the new primary school from Bodffordd and maybe having to pay for this

The statutory notice says: "Arrangement of transport to the new school from the current Ysgol Bodffordd catchment area is intended." If the new primary school is built, there would be a change in travelling arrangements for learners from the community of Bodffordd. The Authorities Officers would then formally decide whether to provide transport to the new primary school after a safety assessment of the travel routes.

11. Need for the Authority to "decide on a method of collaborating" between the catchment area's schools

During the non-statutory consultation, at least 3 options in regards to federalisation were considered e.g. federating the new school with Ysgol Henblas or Ysgol Esceifiog, a 3-18 school on the Ysgol Gyfun Llangefni. Federating can lead to savings but does not change the situation regarding backlog maintenance and condition of the school. Even though the option with regard to federating were not considered further in the consultations, this does not mean that the Authority would not move towards achieving this in the future or collaborate more closely in the future.



Objection Report

12. That the proposal means closing a school “with 89% Welsh speakers”

The Isle of Anglesey County Council has adopted the principle that the Welsh language should not be treated less favourably than English, and that the inhabitants of the island should be able to live their lives through the medium of Welsh if they so wish. The expectation in relation to the Welsh language is the same for all schools, which gives all pupils in the county the opportunity to have the appropriate skills to be confident in their bilingualism. In light of this, the plan submitted will be subject to the requirements of our language policy. It will be our priority to strengthen and safeguard the Welsh language and bilingual education.

If the proposal is realised (as a result of the Welsh language impact assessment), the development will sustain the existing community and the effect of its realisation will be positive as it will allow bilingual education to continue

13. That the Council was not keeping to the School Organisation Code

The Council have kept to the School Organisation Code which existed at the time during the whole consultation process. The amended Organisation Code (November 2018) does not say that rural schools shouldn't close. Indeed, the Organisation Code states the priority is to provide education of high standard in small and rural schools, and it truly acknowledges that education is the main consideration. The reformed School Organisation Code has arrived since 1 November 2018 and the Authority were trying to address its contents before then.

**Statutory
Notice**

For the attention of: Programme Leader, Education Dept, Council Offices, Llangefni. LL77 7TW

I present this response to protest against the Statutory Warning notice served to close Ysgol Gymuned Bodffordd and Ysgol Corn Hir.

I wish to voice my objection to close Ysgol Gymuned Bodffordd. I present my response within the 28 days since the issue of the proposal.

I wish that you note my objection for the following reasons:

	Tick according to relevance
I am unwilling to accept that my child/ children will be going to a large town school.	
I consider the expectation for young children from Bodffordd to travel by bus unacceptable if they have no other means of transport.	
I consider Anglesey County Council's Policy to close small schools takes away parent choice over education in a local setting.	
I consider the proposed site for the new school to be dangerous regarding traffic movement and the nature of the surrounding roads. I consider the site to be potentially dangerous for all possible users.	
I consider that the ability to choose to travel in a 'green' fashion has been taken away from local children.	
I consider that my previous comments of objection to close the school have not been taken into consideration .	
Other comments	

Name :

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Address :

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Date

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