

THE EXECUTIVE

Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 18 July, 2018

PRESENT:	Councillor Llinos Medi Huws (Chair) Councillor Ieuan Williams (Vice-Chair) Councillors Richard Dew, Carwyn Jones (also a Local Member) R. Meirion Jones, Alun Mummery, R.G. Parry, OBE, FRAGS, Dafydd Rhys Thomas, Robin Williams.
IN ATTENDANCE:	Chief Executive Assistant Chief Executive (Partnerships, Community & Service Improvement) Head of Function (Resources) & Section 151 Officer Committee Officer (ATH)
APOLOGIES:	None
ALSO PRESENT:	Councillors Lewis Davies, John Griffith, Glyn Haynes, Aled M. Jones, Eric Jones, Alun Roberts, Nicola Roberts.

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Carwyn Jones 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 but not to vote on the matter.

Councillor Alun Roberts (not a member of the Executive) declared a personal but not prejudicial interest with regard to item 2 on the agenda as a member of the Governing Body of Ysgol Beaumaris.

2. SCHOOLS' MODERNISATION – SEIRIOL AREA

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Partnerships, Community and Service Improvement) incorporating the report on the outcome of the statutory consultation on the modernisation of the primary education provision in the Seiriol area (Ysgol Llandegfan, Ysgol Llangoed and Ysgol Beaumaris) was presented for the Executive's consideration. The statutory consultation process was conducted in the period from 22 May, to 2 July, 2018.

The Portfolio Member for Education, Libraries, Culture and Youth reported that Welsh Government's Twenty-First Century Schools Programme which involves long-term capital investment in schools and colleges was introduced in 2013. The programme provides an opportunity to create high quality, sustainable schools for children now and for generations to come. Funding under the programme will not be available for ever. The Portfolio Member said that the issues affecting the three schools under consideration at this meeting form part of a bigger picture encompassing the Island as a whole and the Education Service within it.

The Education budget makes up 40% of the Council's overall budget; the Education Service faces having to implement savings of up to £5.2m over the course of the next 3 years. Added to this are schools' maintenance backlog costs of £16m. Historically, the Authority has sought to protect the Education Service in implementing budget cuts – this is no longer possible. The financial challenges facing this and other local authorities is the result ultimately of austerity imposed by the Westminster Government which results in less funding to Welsh Government which in turn affects councils in Wales whose budgets are reducing year on year.

The Portfolio Member said that closing a school is not a decision that anyone wants to take; however the education community on Anglesey including a number of head teachers and school governors have repeatedly said that doing nothing is not an option. The Authority's School Modernisation Programme is about evaluating the future of schools and the effects on stakeholders including children, parents, school staff and governors. It is a contentious matter and a challenging task for the Authority; it is also an issue that causes concern for parents and this is acknowledged. However, what is being considered is the future of the Island's schools 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 must 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. In implementing the modernisation programme the Authority is also seeking to improve educational outcomes for children; to improve leadership standards and the quality of teaching and learning and also to ensure there are sector leading schools in each area. The drivers of change are the same as they have been and are set out in the report. The Portfolio Member said that when it comes to the role of Elected Members in this process they have a duty to their individual communities but they also have a duty to consider what is in the best interests of the Island as a whole i.e. to take a corporate perspective that goes beyond any single area. The Portfolio Member thanked everyone who had taken the time to respond to and participate in the consultation process.

The Assistant Chief Executive referred to the themes and issues raised by stakeholders in responding to the consultation process and the Authority's response to the representations made; these are set out in section 10 of the report. Those issues along with other key considerations can be summarised as follows –

- In relation to standards, there is some variance in performance across the three schools in the Foundation Phase over the past three years. Two schools (Ysgol Beaumaris in 2016 and Ysgol Llangoed in 2016) have been in the lowest quartile and two schools (Ysgol Beaumaris in 2017 and Ysgol Llangoed in 2017) have been in the highest quartile. Based on Table 1 at Section 10.3, it could be argued that the outcomes profile of Ysgol Llangoed for the Foundation Phase is slightly lower than that of the other two schools. The performance of the three schools in KS2 has varied over the last three years and overall, their performance profile is similar (Table 2 at section 10.3)
- All three schools have been inspected during 2014/15. The inspection profile of Ysgol Llandegfan with a predominance of Good grades and one Adequate grade is stronger than that of Ysgol Beaumaris and that of Ysgol Llangoed whose profiles are similar. Both these schools are assessed as Adequate against the majority of inspection indicators. The Authority is keen to ensure that inspection outcomes are good. Estyn returned on monitoring visits to both Ysgol Beaumaris and Ysgol Llangoed in March 2015 and June, 2016 respectively. Both schools were judged to have made good progress and both were taken out of monitoring by Estyn.
- Expenditure per pupil for 2017/18 is higher than the average for Wales (£3,690) in Ysgol Beaumaris (£5,976) and Ysgol Llangoed (£4,077) whilst it is less in Ysgol Llandegfan (£3,589). The table at paragraph 9 of section 10.3 of the report shows that

Ysgol Beaumaris received £80,160 more funding than the Authority average for 2017/18 - this pattern has existed for several years. The corresponding figure for Ysgol Llangoed is £8,190. The same calculation shows that Ysgol Llandegfan received £58,982 less funding than the Authority average.

- Many stakeholders at Ysgol Llangoed refer to the school being in a good condition with scope to extend it further. Condition surveys were carried out by the Council's surveyors from the end of 2015 to the beginning of 2016 and this review provides an indication of the cost of maintenance backlog at schools. The maintenance backlog costs for Ysgol Beaumaris is £936k which reflects its Grade C condition (poor with big shortcomings) – the accuracy of this figure has been questioned by stakeholders. For Ysgol Llandegfan the backlog maintenance cost is £86,000 and for Ysgol Llangoed £107,000. The Council's Chartered Surveyors have also carried out an initial assessment that shows that land is available around Ysgol Llangoed for extending the building further.
- A large number of stakeholders at Ysgol Llangoed refer to the school having less surplus places than Ysgol Beaumaris. The percentage of surplus places in the three schools as at January, 2018 varied. Ysgol Llandegfan with 154 pupils is overfull whilst Ysgol Llangoed has 20% surplus places and Ysgol Beaumaris has 72% surplus places with 34 pupils attending schools outside the catchment and 17 coming into Ysgol Beaumaris from other areas. In grouping them, there are 32% (or 123) surplus places in the Seiriol area.
- There is a need to ensure that Head teachers have at least 50% non-contact time in which to address, with the support of a deputy or senior management team, matters in relation to raising standards, teaching and learning and staff's continuous professional development. In Ysgol Llandegfan, the Head teacher has 60% non-contact time, in Ysgol Llangoed the Headteacher has 40% non-contact time and in Ysgol Beaumaris, the Headteacher's non-contact time is 30%.
- A number of stakeholders from Ysgol Llangoed commented on the Welsh language and in particular the potential impact on the language of closing Ysgol Llangoed and moving the children to Ysgol Beaumaris. In terms of the Authority's Language Charter, Ysgol Llangoed and Ysgol Beaumaris have reached the silver standard. The percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home is 20% at Ysgol Beaumaris, 43% at Ysgol Llandegfan and 46% at Ysgol Llangoed.
- In relation to fuel expenditure, Ysgol Llangoed has the lowest spend of the three schools and it also has the lowest carbon dioxide emissions.
- A number of respondents were concerned about the effect on the community which closing either Ysgol Llangoed or Ysgol Beaumaris would have. Although it can be a challenge, there are examples where communities continue to thrive in villages where the school has closed; examples where a new school has created a wider community and also examples of flourishing communities where there is no school e.g. Penmynydd.
- Many stakeholders from Ysgol Beaumaris highlighted the importance of the current pre-school provision i.e. Little Puffins and were worried that this would cease if the school was to close. The Authority recognises the importance of this provision, and with such developments pre-school facilities are always considered as part of the education strategy in the area. In the past a Stakeholder Group has been established after the decision has been made by the Executive which would help determine the future of any current provision.
- Respondents from Ysgol Beaumaris were concerned that closing the school would lead to even greater demographic imbalance by discouraging young families from moving into the town; it was felt that this and the lack of social housing will strengthen the impression of Beaumaris as a retirement town. The Council recognises that having enough affordable housing for Anglesey residents is one of its priorities and is keen to start a new council house building programme and wants to hear from

- builders, developers and landowners who will work with the Council to build more houses in 10 areas on the Island; one of the areas is Beaumaris.
- Respondents from Ysgol Beaumaris were also disappointed that there was no option for a brand new school for the area nor an option to retain and invest in the three schools which they saw as indicative of less favourable treatment of the Seiriol area compared to other areas of the Island where the modernisation programme has been implemented. The option of a new primary school to replace the three schools in Seiriol has been considered but was not deemed an appropriate solution for the area with the lack of suitable land being a factor. Retaining all three schools is not a viable option in light of the financial challenges the Authority is facing. Whichever of the two options in the report is approved, refurbishing the other two schools entails considerable investment in bringing both buildings up to twenty-first century school standards.
 - Alternative options put forward by the Ysgol Beaumaris Response Committee were considered, evaluated and scored by the Authority; the outcome of this process is set out in section 10.5 of the report.
 - The work undertaken and the evidence it has produced lead to the conclusion that Ysgol Llandegfan because of the number of pupils, current performance, cost per head and maintenance backlog needs to be a central part of any new arrangement. The size of the schools, maintenance backlog, cost per head and the percentage of surplus places means that it is not possible to justify keeping Ysgol Beaumaris and Ysgol Llangoed open. Two options are therefore presented – to refurbish and extend Ysgol Llandegfan, close Ysgol Beaumaris and refurbish Ysgol Llangoed, or to refurbish and extend Ysgol Llandegfan, close Ysgol Llangoed and refurbish Ysgol Beaumaris.

Councillor Aled M. Jones, Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee reported from the Committee's meeting held on 13 July, 2018 which considered this matter. Councillor Aled M. Jones said that the Scrutiny Committee had heard representations on behalf of both Ysgol Llangoed and Ysgol Beaumaris. The Committee also heard that the Island's Member of Parliament had submitted a letter urging the Authority to keep the three schools open until a site can be found for a new school for the area in line with the kind of investment that has been made in other parts of the Island where the primary education provision has been modernised. The Scrutiny Committee was presented with three options – the two options in the Officer's report as referred to above and a third option namely a proposal presented at the meeting by a member of the Committee that the three schools be retained until a new area school is built. As no option voted on by the Committee gained majority support, no recommendation was made.

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

Councillor Lewis Davies was of the view that the Community Impact Assessment did not address in sufficient depth the effect which closing a school has on a community in terms of demographics and de-population; he felt that Seiriol as an area was falling behind other parts of Anglesey as regards investment and regeneration with the Council turning its back on the area by closing and/or transferring responsibility for existing facilities and not offering anything in their place i.e. a new school.

Councillor Carwyn Jones spoke about his disappointment that an innovative solution which would see the co-location of a primary school with the Extra Care facility in Beaumaris which he had spent a great deal of time developing was not presented to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee. It could have been an option which the Committee was able to support. He said that the modernisation programme is a good thing and that no one would not want to see improved education standards and state of the art provision in

viable schools that will last for the next 50 years. The local perspective is also clear in wanting to see the modernisation process being extended to all three existing schools in the Seiriol area which would make up for the closure of Ysgol Llanddona when no alternative investment was forthcoming. Based on current performance Ysgol Llangoed and Ysgol Beaumaris could be centres of excellence for STEM subjects. Building a smaller school of four classrooms on the site of the existing Ysgol Beaumaris at a cost of in the region of £744k (based on professional opinion) is small change compared to some modernisation plans. Shared facilities with the Extra Care provision would lead to reduced overheads and reduced costs per pupil with close contact between the children and older people proving beneficial to both. It would enable retention of education capacity in the south east corner of the Island in readiness for the potential increase in population in the wake of all the projects that are in the offing or in development on the Island and the immediate area with Wylfa Newydd, the National Grid project and Bluestone being but a few.

Councillor Alun Roberts thought that the consultation on modernising the primary education provision in the Seiriol area in leading to the conclusions and recommendation that either Ysgol Llangoed or Ysgol Beaumaris should close was short-sighted and lacking in vision; it is not based on sound education foundations and does not allow for education provision of value and standard that meets the needs of all children and residents in Seiriol into the future. He believed it to be a quick-fix for a problem that is far more extensive. Both Ysgol Llandegfan and Ysgol Llangoed require investment which leaves Ysgol Beaumaris which is the real problem. Councillor Roberts said that the favoured solution locally is to establish a smaller school on the site of the existing Ysgol Beaumaris and to integrate it with the Extra Care facility. This is an economically, educationally and socially innovative option which might also be eligible for external funding. As the most populated school Ysgol Llandegfan would be the area's mother school with ancillary schools in Llangoed and Beaumaris served by a single Headship. Councillor Alun Roberts emphasised that closing either Ysgol Llangoed or Ysgol Beaumaris does not ensure the future of the other – instead closure could put the other school at risk as parents choose to send their children to schools elsewhere. The proposals as presented could ultimately jeopardise the future of both these schools.

The Assistant Chief Executive said that the main driver of schools' modernisation above all else is to raise educational standards the objective being to make Anglesey one of the five best local authorities in Wales in terms of education. In formulating its proposals the Authority has had regard of the revised Schools' Organisation Code although the Code is not at present legally binding. Additionally, the Authority's Impact Assessment was deemed to be appropriate by Estyn. The Officer said that it is not possible to project population increase or movement in and out of an area with complete accuracy, but based on documentation and discussions with Horizon which foresees that the majority of workers linked to the Wylfa Newydd project will be living in areas in and around the development site, it is possible that the 10 year+ construction phase could bring 230 additional families to the Island. However, there would need to be a very significant number of additional children to bring Ysgol Beaumaris to full capacity. With regard to correspondence, whilst no respondents' individual letters have been reproduced in full in the report on the consultation outcome, they have all been considered and their substance conveyed in the body of the report. Also, every alternative option presented has been considered and evaluated, and whilst the integration of a school and Extra Care facility on the existing Ysgol Beaumaris site is an attractive option (Option D in the report), it does not overcome many of the issues identified by the drivers of change. For example, the resulting school would still be a small school by Estyn standards (a school with less than 150 pupils) leading in all likelihood therefore to costs per pupil above the Anglesey and Wales average, thereby perpetuating the current inequality of spend across the Island's schools; it would have mixed age classes making it more difficult to raise

standards; a Head Teacher would have insufficient non-contact time and the size of the school would make establishing a Leadership Team difficult. If federated, the school would still have to have a site manager. There are also safeguarding implications to shared facilities. The option would address the maintenance backlog but parking and traffic issues would need to be considered as would surplus places which the option does not solve in relation to the area overall. With regard to STEM subjects, the Donaldson review of the Curriculum in Wales expects all schools to develop these subjects as areas of learning. With regard to the risk posed to the future of one school by closing the other, the Officer said that the Authority cannot predict to which school parents may send their children be that within or outside the area, and that this is a matter of parental choice.

The Assistant Chief Executive added that a number of stakeholders from Ysgol Beaumaris have questioned the maintenance backlog costs cited for the school, in particular an additional sum of £310k for possible works. The Officer said that heating at the school has been an issue for many years meaning that a new boiler will be needed at some point; the floors, kitchen, windows, lights and hall could do with refurbishment and/or replacement which as the school is listed, are likely to come with added costs. These are the works which make up the extra £310k costs. Regardless of these, the maintenance backlog cost for Ysgol Beaumaris at £661k would still be significant and higher than for many other schools on Anglesey.

Responding to a paper that had been circulated immediately before the meeting which detailed the impact of removing the £310k additional maintenance costs from the figures the Head of Function (Resources) and Section 151 Officer said that he had reviewed the calculations with the result that removing the £310k from the equation would reduce the capital financing costs by £10,639k. This option, although it brings down the costs still involves an additional cost of £9,600. The paper also referred to transport costs which it states could be reduced from the £54k in the report to £38k in closing Ysgol Llangoed and not Ysgol Beaumaris. The figure of £54k in the report is based on running 2 buses from Llangoed to Beaumaris daily based on the number of pupils in Ysgol Llangoed and the value of current school transport contracts.

The Executive considered the report and the views of the Local Members and responded as follows –

- The Executive noted that one of the Authority's main objectives in implementing the Schools' Modernisation Programme, is to raise education standards across the Island's primary schools sector. A key part of the programme is to ensure that school buildings create the best possible learning and teaching environment for pupils and staff and that they are sustainable and in the right place. The Executive noted that Ysgol Beaumaris requires substantial maintenance work and that the condition of the building has been assessed as poor.
- The Executive noted that the decline in the number of pupils at Ysgol Beaumaris from 189 in 1996 to 40 as at January, 2018 is significant and is a serious consideration. The Executive further noted that 17% of the pupils currently at Ysgol Beaumaris come from outside the catchment and that the school has 103 surplus places or 72%.
- The Executive noted that it is anticipated that the Wylfa Newydd project will increase the population of the Island during the construction and implementation phases and that it is a view held locally in Beaumaris as stated in the response to the consultation that senior officers would wish to live in Beaumaris and Llandegfan. The Executive noted further that senior officers relocating to the area are less likely to have children of primary school age and that it would need a significant percentage of families with children moving into the area to bring Ysgol

Beaumaris up to capacity and to make it viable. Also housing in the area can be expensive making it a less attractive and uneconomical location for young families to settle in.

- The Executive noted that the Member of Parliament has asked the Authority to reconsider its proposals for the Seiriol area in favour of identifying a site for a brand new school for the area. The Executive noted further that the Lairds site has been mentioned locally as a potential development site. The Executive sought clarification whether pausing to consider building a new school is a realistic option in light of the facts that the JLDP does not come up for review until 2022 so no new sites can be considered until then and that the planning and building process would take additional time. The Assistant Chief Executive said that the timescales and financial climate makes this an unrealistic option. Although schools and the Education Service have been protected in the past, given the extent of the pressure on the Council's budget it is very likely that both the primary and the secondary schools sector will face budget cuts next year. Also, the timescale for identifying land and for planning and building a new school could be lengthy and would have implications for other areas under the modernisation programme. The programme has to be implemented in the context of what is in the interests of education throughout Anglesey as a whole, and not by treating individual areas in isolation.
- The Executive noted that one option put forwards which has support locally is to combine an education provision with the Extra care facility on the existing Ysgol Beaumaris. In seeking clarification of whether this model would be feasible in relation to for example nursery provision, the Executive emphasised that the importance attached by the community to pre-school provision e.g. Little Puffins cannot be ignored and must be addressed. The Executive noted also that there is potential in the Seiriol area by harnessing the influence of Cwlwm Seiriol for example, to find workable solutions for the community that could include bringing the young and older generations together.

The Assistant Chief Executive said that the Authority recognises that the need for pre-school, nursery and childcare provision in the Seiriol area will have to be addressed whatever form this provision will take and this is acknowledged in the report.

The Chair highlighted that one respondent had found it difficult to respond via the online survey and she sought assurance that the consultation process in the Seiriol area had been conducted in the same way as for other areas. The Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that the consultation process has been undertaken using the same arrangements and format as for previous consultations in other areas. It was agreed that in future, consultation reports will carry a contact number in the event that any respondent has difficulty submitting their response.

The Portfolio Member for Education, Libraries, Culture and Youth concluded by saying that the responses from the areas where the modernisation process has been effected have been positive. The education system in Anglesey must be fair and must ensure that no schools are funded at the expense of others. Communities thrive because of people not because of buildings. The Portfolio Member said that the Executive has to make decisions based on facts having regard to what is in the long-term interests of the Island in totality. Those decisions can sometimes be difficult and unpalatable. The conclusions with regard to the consultation process on the modernisation of primary education in the Seiriol area as set out in section 13 of the report are clear; they lead regrettably to the conclusion that Option 1 is the most feasible option. The Portfolio Member proposed that Option 1 be approved by the Executive.

It was resolved –

- **To approve Option 1, namely to refurbish and extend Ysgol Llandegfan, close Ysgol Beaumaris and refurbish Ysgol Llangoed.**
- **That discussions with the pre-school childcare groups – Little Puffins and “Ti a Fi” – take place soon to establish the pre-school childcare provision required in the area.**
- **That Cwlwm Seiriol is included in the post-decision Stakeholder Group to be established.**

(Councillor Carwyn Jones declared an interest and did not vote on the matter)

**Councillor Llinos Medi Huws
Chair**

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