

THE EXECUTIVE

Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 20 January 2020

- PRESENT:** Councillor Llinos Medi (Chair)
- Councillors Richard Dew, Carwyn Jones, R. Meirion Jones, Alun Mummery, R.G. Parry, OBE FRAgS, Dafydd Rhys Thomas, Robin Williams.
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive
Deputy Chief Executive
Director of Education, Skills and Young People
Director of Function (Resources) & Section 151 Officer
Director of Function (Council Business)/Monitoring Officer
Programme, Business Planning and Performance Manager
Programme Manager (CS)
Committee Officer (ATH)
- APOLOGIES:** Councillor Ieuan Williams
- ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Aled Morris Jones (Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee)

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Richard Dew declared a personal and prejudicial interest with regard to item 2 on the agenda and was not present when the item was considered.

2 SCHOOLS MODERNISATION PROGRAMME - LLANGFNÍ AREA: YSGOL BODFFORDD AND YSGOL CORN HIR

The report of the Director of Education, Skills and Young People incorporating a proposal paper on schools' modernisation in the Llangefni area with reference to Ysgol Corn Hir and Ysgol Bodffordd was presented for the Executive's consideration. The report sought the Executive's approval to proceed to a statutory consultation on the proposal to "relocate and extend Ysgol Corn Hir to a different site to accommodate pupils from Ysgol Bodffordd, close Ysgol Bodffordd and review the catchment areas of Ysgol Bodffordd and Ysgol Corn Hir."

As he had declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this matter, Councillor Richard Dew withdrew from the meeting during the discussion and determination thereof.

The Portfolio Member for Education, Libraries, Culture and Youth presented the report which set out the proposal for schools modernisation in the Llangefni area with specific regard to Ysgol Corn Hir and Ysgol Bodffordd. He referred to the decision in May, 2019 which was entirely the Council's own decision made through the Chief Executive and the Executive, to rescind the original decisions in respect of schools' modernisation in the Llangefni area and to request Officers to look afresh at the various issues in relation thereto and the requirements under the School Organisation Code 2018 and report back to the

Executive in due course. The proposal paper forms part of this process and represents an initial internal assessment for which the Executive's approval is sought as a basis for statutory consultation. The cornerstone of the vision for schools' modernisation has always been the future of the Island's children with the principal objective of the programme being to create the best possible educational environment for teachers and pupils to succeed thereby promoting high standards. Change can be difficult and implementing the schools modernisation agenda to date has at times been challenging, and whilst on the one hand it has involved the closure of some primary schools, it has also meant a significant investment of £22m in education on the Island through the creation of three new schools for present and future generations. In outlining the process and timeline to be followed for statutory consultation should the proposal paper be approved, the Portfolio Member urged all interested parties and stakeholders to take part and submit their views in order to ensure the consultation is as meaningful as possible.

The Director of Education, Skills and Young People guided the Executive through the proposal paper and confirmed that it had been the subject of legal advice in terms of the process and the expectations of the Schools Organisation Code 2018. He outlined the School Modernisation Strategy key drivers for change and the criteria that must be met when those drivers are applied to education provision in the Llangefni area and said that eleven reasonable alternatives/options for the Llangefni area had been considered which encompass Ysgol Gyfun Llangefni, Ysgol Bodffordd, Ysgol Corn Hir, Ysgol Y Graig and Ysgol Talwrn. A detailed analysis of each reasonable alternative has led to the conclusion that there is no viable whole Llangefni area solution (section 5 of the proposal paper refers). As a result and because of their geographical proximity, attention has focused on a possible solution for the Ysgol Bodffordd and Ysgol Corn Hir catchment areas, and separately for the Ysgol Y Graig and Ysgol Talwrn catchment areas (addressed in detail under item 3 on the agenda).

The Officer summarised the process since June 2019 which had involved identifying the criteria for education provision in the Llangefni area and considering alternatives for the Llangefni area in totality. Since there is no viable whole Llangefni solution, the modernisation strategy has led to consideration being focused on identifying solutions based on the Ysgol Bodffordd/Ysgol Corn Hir and Ysgol Y Graig/ Ysgol Talwrn catchment areas being mindful of the challenges in those schools and the presumption against the closure of rural schools in the School Organisation Code 2018, and the need therefore to explore all reasonable alternatives to closure for Ysgol Bodffordd and Ysgol Talwrn (although unlike Ysgol Bodffordd, Ysgol Talwrn is not a designated a rural school under the Code). Thirteen reasonable alternatives (inclusive of the proposal) for Ysgol Bodffordd and ten reasonable alternatives (inclusive of the proposal) for Ysgol Talwrn were considered; the majority of those did not meet the drivers for the Llangefni area nor were they viable as regards the long-term education provision within the schools.

The Officer outlined the specific challenges facing Ysgol Bodffordd and Ysgol Corn Hir (section 6 of the proposal paper) are. Thirteen reasonable alternatives (inclusive of the proposal) for Ysgol Bodffordd and eleven reasonable alternatives (inclusive of the proposal) for Ysgol Corn Hir have been considered and analysed against the key school modernisation drivers and criteria for education provision in the Llangefni area (sections 7 and 9 of the proposal paper). Each reasonable alternative for Ysgol Bodffordd has also been assessed in relation to the likely impact on standards, the community and pupils' travelling arrangements (section 8). Section 5 of the paper sets out the reasonable alternatives for the Llangefni area which can be summarised as follows –

- Retain the status quo – leave Ysgol Gyfun Llangefni, Ysgol Bodffordd, Ysgol Corn Hir, Ysgol Y Graig and Ysgol Talwrn as they are;

- federate Ysgol Bodffordd, Ysgol Corn Hir, Ysgol Y Graig , Ysgol Talwrn and Ysgol Gyfun Llangefni (secondary school);
- federate Ysgol Y Graig and Ysgol Corn Hir (move Ysgol Corn Hir to a newly built school and increase the capacity of Ysgol Corn Hir). Extend the federation later on to include Ysgol Bodffordd, Ysgol Talwrn and Ysgol Gyfun Llangefni under one governing body.
- One new primary school for the Llangefni area to take pupils from Ysgol Bodffordd, Ysgol Corn Hir, Ysgol Y Graig and Ysgol Talwrn;
- a new all-age school for Llangefni to include Ysgol Gyfun Llangefni, Ysgol Bodffordd, Ysgol Corn Hir, Ysgol Y Graig and Ysgol Talwrn;
- conduct backlog maintenance work on all the schools;
- extend all the primary schools;
- clustering, collaboration of primary schools in the Llangefni area;
- using the schools as community hubs to accommodate/support community services e.g. health, childcare facilities, family and adult learning, community education, sport, recreation, social activity
- co-locating local services within schools
- establishing multi-site schools (KS1 – on one site) (KS2 – on another site)

He confirmed that assessment has shown that the proposal presented has a positive impact on standards, a neutral impact on the community and a negative impact on some pupils' travelling arrangements. It has also led to the conclusion that the Council would need to mitigate the effect of potential closure of Ysgol Bodffordd by working with the community to ensure the long-term viability of the present community centre and by providing a bus service from the village to the new Ysgol Corn Hir site for eligible pupils in line with the Authority's schools transport policy. Following careful consideration of the reasonable alternatives for Ysgol Bodffordd and Ysgol Corn Hir and their likely impact on quality and standards in education, the community and pupils' travelling arrangements for Ysgol Bodffordd, the Authority's preferred proposal for statutory consultation is to "relocate and extend Ysgol Corn Hir to a different site to accommodate pupils from Ysgol Bodffordd, close Ysgol Bodffordd and review the catchment areas of Ysgol Bodffordd and Ysgol Corn Hir." The proposal would entail relocating Ysgol Corn Hir to a new site with the school continuing to operate into the future; the governing body of Ysgol Corn Hir would govern the new school. The Authority would seek to ensure representation on the governing body from Ysgol Bodffordd and Ysgol Bodffordd would close.

Councillor Aled Morris Jones, Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee was invited to present the Committee's perspective on the matter following its scrutiny of the proposal paper at its meeting on 14 January, 2020. Councillor Jones reported that the meeting had been well attended with representatives from Ysgol Bodffordd, Ysgol Corn Hir, Ysgol Y Graig and Ysgol Talwrn present to give their points of view. The Committee was provided with an overview of the situation in Llangefni at the outset of the meeting and after considering the case for the preferred proposal for Ysgol Corn Hir and Ysgol Bodffordd as set out in the proposal paper, the Committee was in agreement about the need for a new school for Ysgol Corn Hir but voiced some concerns about the potential closure of Ysgol Bodffordd. Although an alternative proposal to build a new school for Ysgol Corn Hir and retain Ysgol Bodffordd by federation with another school was put forward it did not gain sufficient support, with the Committee formally resolving by a majority of its members to recommend the proposal to "relocate and extend Ysgol Corn Hir to a different site to accommodate pupils from Ysgol Bodffordd, close Ysgol Bodffordd and review the catchment areas of Ysgol Bodffordd and Ysgol Corn Hir" to the Executive.

The Chair in thanking Scrutiny for its input advised that Local Member, Councillor Dylan Rees who was unable to attend this meeting due to another Council commitment had submitted comments on the matter via e-mail which she read out, and had attached to the

e-mail the submission made by the Chair of Ysgol Bodffordd Governing Body to the 14th January Corporate Scrutiny Committee meeting. Councillor Rees highlights the point made in the submission about the unfairness of the proposal which would see a new replacement school being built for Ysgol Corn Hir, but would mean Ysgol Bodffordd closing and being absorbed by the new Ysgol Corn Hir which he felt was inequitable and morally wrong and which possibly raised equal opportunity issues. The original scheme had envisaged a new school jointly for Ysgol Corn Hir and Ysgol Bodffordd and was a fairer solution. As it was, he believed that the alternative proposal put forward at the Corporate Scrutiny Committee meeting for a new school for Ysgol Corn Hir and the retention of Ysgol Bodffordd by federation with another school although it failed to gain majority support, was the best option and he asked that the Executive reconsider it.

The Executive considered the proposal paper in light of the comments made and Scrutiny's recommendation of the preferred proposal, and was keen to emphasise that the proposal is presented for the purpose of statutory consultation to enable stakeholders' views to be obtained making it vitally important therefore that all those with an interest in the matter respond to the consultation. The Executive recognised that school reorganisation can be a difficult issue and reaffirmed that the underlining rationale for the school modernisation programme remains ensuring the best possible education provision for the Island's children and improved school effectiveness across the Island's schools.

The Portfolio Member for Education, Libraries, Culture and Youth summarised by referring to the conclusion reached by the proposal paper which states that in the Council's opinion, the proposal is the optimum solution that addresses the key drivers for the Llangefni area and the key challenges faced by both Ysgol Bodffordd and Ysgol Corn Hir, and he reiterated the importance of taking part in the consultation. He proposed the report to the Executive.

It was resolved to approve the proposal to “re-locate and extend Ysgol Corn Hir to a different site to accommodate pupils from Ysgol Bodffordd, close Ysgol Bodffordd and review the catchment areas of Ysgol Bodffordd and Ysgol Corn Hir”, and authorise Officers to conduct a statutory consultation on the proposal.

3 SCHOOLS MODERNISATION PROGRAMME - LLANGEFNI AREA: YSGOL Y GRAIG AND YSGOL TALWRN

The report of the Director of Education, Skills and Young People incorporating a proposal paper on schools' modernisation in the Llangefni area with reference to Ysgol Talwrn and Ysgol Y Graig was presented for the Executive's consideration. The report sought the Executive's approval to proceed to a statutory consultation on the proposal to “increase the capacity of Ysgol Y Graig to accommodate pupils from Ysgol Talwrn, close Ysgol Talwrn and review the catchment areas of Ysgol Talwrn and Ysgol Y Graig.”

The Portfolio Member for Education, Libraries, Culture and Youth presented the report which set out the proposal for schools modernisation in the Llangefni area with specific regard to Ysgol Talwrn and Ysgol Y Graig. As he had done under item 2, he referred to the background wherein the Council had in May, 2019 through the Chief Executive and the Executive, rescinded the original decisions in respect of schools modernisation in the Llangefni area and had requested Officers to look afresh at the various issues in relation thereto and the requirements under the School Organisation Code 2018, and report back to the Executive in due course. The proposal paper forms part of this process and represents an initial internal assessment for which the Executive's approval is sought as a basis for statutory consultation. He referred to the Authority's vision in instigating the schools modernisation programme and the main objective of the programme in seeking to create the best possible educational environment for teachers and pupils to succeed thereby

promoting high standards. In doing so he accepted that change can be difficult and that implementing the schools modernisation agenda to date has at times been challenging, resulting on the one hand in the closure of some primary schools, but on the other hand leading to a £22m investment in education on the Island through the creation of three new schools for present and future generations. In outlining the process and timeline to be followed for statutory consultation should the proposal paper be approved, the Portfolio Member urged all interested parties and stakeholders to take part and submit their views in order to ensure the consultation is as meaningful as possible.

The Director of Education, Skills and Young People advised that the general introduction he had made under item 2 regarding the key drivers for change and the criteria for education provision in the context of the wider Llangefni area applied in this case also with analysis of all the reasonable alternatives for education provision in the Llangefni area (section 5 of the proposal paper) concluding that there is no viable whole Llangefni area solution. As a result, and due to their geographical proximity, attention has focused on a possible solution for the Ysgol Y Graig and Ysgol Talwrn catchment areas and separately for the Ysgol Bodffordd and Ysgol Corn Hir catchment areas (as addressed under item 2). The Officer outlined the key challenges facing Ysgol Y Graig and Ysgol Talwrn (section 6) and said that ten reasonable alternatives (inclusive of the proposal) for Ysgol Talwrn and nine reasonable alternatives (inclusive of the proposal) for Ysgol Y Graig have been considered and analysed against the key school modernisation drivers and the criteria for education in the Llangefni area (sections 7 and 8 of the proposal paper). The Officer referred to the reasonable alternatives for the Llangefni area set out in section 5 of the paper which he summarised as follows –

- Retain the status quo – leave Ysgol Gyfun Llangefni, Ysgol Bodffordd, Ysgol Corn Hir, Ysgol Y Graig and Ysgol Talwrn as they are;
- federate Ysgol Bodffordd, Ysgol Corn Hir, Ysgol Talwrn and Ysgol Gyfun Llangefni (secondary school);
- federate Ysgol Y Graig and Ysgol Corn Hir (move Ysgol Corn Hir to a newly built school and increase the capacity of Ysgol Corn Hir). Extend the federation later on to include Ysgol Bodffordd, Ysgol Talwrn and Ysgol Gyfun Llangefni under one governing body.
- One new primary school for the Llangefni area to take pupils from Ysgol Bodffordd, Ysgol Corn Hir, Ysgol Y Graig and Ysgol Talwrn;
- a new all-age school for Llangefni to include Ysgol Gyfun Llangefni, Ysgol Bodffordd, Ysgol Corn Hir, Ysgol Y Graig and Ysgol Talwrn;
- conduct backlog maintenance work on all the schools;
- extend all the primary schools;
- clustering, collaboration of primary schools in the Llangefni area;
- using the schools as community hubs to accommodate/support community services e.g. health, childcare facilities, family and adult learning, community education, sport, recreation, social activity
- co-locating local services within schools
- establishing multi-site schools (KS1 – on one site) (KS2 – on another site)

Analysis has shown that only the proposal under consideration has a positive impact on standards, the community and pupils' travelling arrangements in their totality. The assessment has also led to the conclusion that the Council will need to mitigate the effect of potential closure on Ysgol Talwrn by providing transport for eligible pupils attending Ysgol Talwrn to the newly expanded school. The assessment means that the Authority's preferred proposal for statutory consultation is to "increase the capacity of Ysgol Y Graig to accommodate pupils from Ysgol Talwrn, close Ysgol Talwrn and review the catchment areas of Ysgol Y Graig and Ysgol Talwrn." The proposal would entail Ysgol Y Graig being extended and continuing to operate into the future; the governing body of Ysgol Y Graig

would govern the extended school. The Authority would seek to ensure representation on the governing body from Ysgol Talwrn and Ysgol Talwrn would close.

Councillor Aled Morris Jones, Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee reported from the Committee's 14 January meeting where the proposal paper had been scrutinised with representatives of both Ysgol Talwrn and Ysgol Y Graig making a contribution to the meeting. An alternative option which was to retain Ysgol Talwrn and federate it with another school (possibly Ysgol Llanbedrgoch as the Committee was informed by the Ysgol Talwrn Chair of Governors that the two schools collaborate well) was proposed but did not garner sufficient support among the Committee's members. The Committee subsequently resolved by a majority of its members to recommend the proposal to "increase the capacity of Ysgol Y Graig to accommodate pupils from Ysgol Talwrn, close Ysgol Talwrn and review the catchment areas of Ysgol Talwrn and Ysgol Y Graig" to the Executive.

The Chair thanked the Corporate Scrutiny Committee for its detailed scrutiny of both proposal papers.

The Executive considered the proposal paper having regard to Scrutiny's recommendation of the preferred proposal and noted that the purpose of the proposal paper was to provide a basis for statutory consultation to which stakeholders were urged to respond; the importance of doing so was emphasised so that the consultation would be as meaningful as possible.

The Portfolio Member for Education, Libraries, Culture and Youth proposed the report to the Executive.

It was resolved to approve the proposal "to increase the capacity of Ysgol Y Graig to accommodate pupils from Ysgol Talwrn, close Ysgol Talwrn and review the catchment areas of Ysgol Talwrn and Ysgol Y Graig", and authorise Officers to conduct a statutory consultation on the proposal.

**Councillor Llinos Medi
Chair**