Isle of Anglesey County Council	
Report to:	The Executive
Date:	21 March 2023
Subject:	Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Ieuan Williams
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Local Members:	Relevant to all Elected Members

A –Recommendation/s and reason/s

Recommendations

Approving and supporting the draft plan for a public consultation.

Background

The Isle of Anglesey County Council has the ambition of ensuring that all our children and young people, despite their background and circumstances, achieve their full potential, enabling all learners to develop towards the four purposes of the curriculum, the aspiration for each child and young person in Anglesey.

Since publishing the original strategy in 2013, the Authority has worked with headteachers and elected members to modernise the school stock on the island. Three projects have been completed thus far, and another two projects are currently underway. By the time of completing these two projects, the Council will have opened five 21st century buildings in four areas (including the Isle of Anglesey County Council's first net zero carbon building), updated and expanded a further two schools, and closed 11 small schools.

By the time of completion for both projects currently underway, it is estimated that approximately 25% of primary learners in Anglesey will be receiving their education in 21st century buildings. The projects we have undertaken thus far have had a positive impact on surplus places in the primary sector, in addition to leading to revenue savings and removing current and projected maintenance costs for the future.

Estyn's report (June 2022) acknowledges that the Council is making good progress in terms of the modernisation of school organisation:
"The authority has invested in a range of capital projects during the first stages of the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools programme. They are making good progress in ensuring suitable schools of the appropriate type in the appropriate locations to meet learners' needs."

Whilst Welsh Government has contributed towards 50% of Band A projects, and 65% of Band B projects, it is required for the Council to contribute towards the

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg / This document is also available in Welsh

A –Recommendation/s and reason/s

remainder of the cost. The cost of building new schools is expensive, especially at this moment in time as a result of global events.

It is important that the Council takes advantage of the opportunity to attract external funds (grant) to improve the condition of our educational building estate. However, considering the financial challenge the Council is likely to face over the coming years, the Council will need to prioritise the related work.

Whilst good progress has been made in the primary sector as outlined above, there are over 20% surplus places in the secondary sector, and the condition of secondary school buildings has declined. As a result, the strategy anticipates the need to remodel secondary provision over the coming years, whilst also implementing other difficult decisions.

This Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy has been constructed to:

- Establish school organisation that is suitable for the next thirty years to ensure the best opportunities for our children and young people to thrive and to utilise the opportunities on the horizon in the world of work;

- Continue to take action to ensure that standards and provision at our schools are amongst the best;

- Ensure that the Council's resources are used effectively and efficiently by developing more equal organisation in terms of cost per head across schools and establishing a suitable pattern for post-16 education;

- Ensure that all schools set robust foundations to ensure that each learner reaches a level of proficiency in both languages that is relevant to their ability;

- Create the circumstances for leaders to succeed by ensuring sufficient time and support for them to lead and manage;

- Establish a system that ensures appropriate succession of school leaders;

- Ensure that the strategy contributes to the aims of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and contributes to 'Place Shaping'.

The Council is eager to hold a consultation on the strategy before it is adopted, in order to be able to take comments from stakeholders and other partners into account before making further decisions on how to move forward with the programme.

B – What other options did you consider and why did you reject them and/or opt for this option?
Not applicable – No specific proposal is being made at this stage.

C – Why is this a decision for the Executive?
The Executive is responsible for school modernisation matters.

Ch – Is this decision consistent with policy approved by the full Council?
It matches the direction and strategic objectives of the new Council Plan 2023-2028 (adopted by the Council in its meeting on the 9th of March 2023).

D – Is this decision within the budget approved by the Council?
There is no financial commitment as this stage.

Dd – Assessing the potential impact (if relevant):		
1	How does this decision impact on our long term needs as an Island?	The strategy has been constructed to ensure effective schools with a suitable teaching environment. It will also ensure that new school buildings are fit for purpose and meet the Sustainable Communities for Learning, BREEAM and Net Zero Carbon standards.
2	Is this a decision which it is envisaged will prevent future costs / dependencies on the Authority? If so, how?	No specific proposals are being made at this stage, however, generally there is potential for plans to lead to reduction in current and projected maintenance costs by investing in school buildings.
3	Have we been working collaboratively with other organisations to come to this decision? If so, please advise whom.	The recommendation of this report is to approve officers to consult on the strategy. Subject to the consent of the Executive, we will consult with the following stakeholders:

Dd – Assessing the potential impact (if relevant):		
		• Primary Headteacher Forum • Secondary Headteacher Forum • Headteacher of Canolfan Addysg y Bont • Pupils who attend Anglesey schools • Parents / guardians • Governing bodies • Town and community councils • Local Elected Members • Local Member of Parliament • Local Member of Welsh Parliament • Regional Members of Parliament • GwE • Estyn • The Police and Crime Commissioner • Welsh Government • Welsh Language Commissioner • Neighbouring local authority • Local town and community councils • Trade unions representing teachers • Cylchoedd Meithrin • Isle of Anglesey County Council Senior Officers • Isle of Anglesey County Council's Principal Youth Officer • Scrutiny Committee • Other parties of interest
4	Have Anglesey citizens played a part in drafting this way forward, including those directly affected by the decision? Please explain how.	The recommendation of this report is to approve officers to consult on the strategy before the final strategy is adopted. The comments of Anglesey citizens and others will be taken into account.
5	Note any potential impact that this decision would have on the groups protected under the Equality Act 2010.	No specific proposal is being made at this stage. When the final strategy has been adopted, and as it is realised, specific proposals will be made. Individual impact assessments will be made for each proposal as they are developed. The impact assessment will assess, for the specific proposal concerned, any possible impact this

Dd – Assessing the potential impact (if relevant):		
		decision would have on protected groups under the Equality Act 2010.
6	If this is a strategic decision, note any potential impact that the decision would have on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.	No specific proposal is being made at this stage. When the final strategy has been adopted, and as it is realised, specific proposals will be made. Individual impact assessments will be made for each proposal as they are developed. The impact assessment will assess, for the specific proposal concerned, any possible impact this decision would have on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.
7	Note any potential impact that this decision would have on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.	When the final strategy has been adopted, and as it is realised, specific proposals will be made. Individual impact assessments will be made for each proposal as they are developed. The impact assessment will assess, for the specific proposal concerned, any possible impact this decision would have on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and to not treat the Welsh language any less favourable than English.

E – Who did you consult?		What did they say?
1	Chief Executive / Senior Leadership Team (SLT) (mandatory)	Incorporated into this report.
2	Finance / Section 151 (mandatory)	Incorporated into this report.
3	Legal / Monitoring Officer (mandatory)	Incorporated into this report.
4	Human Resources (HR)	Any Human Resources matter that arises from the recommendations should be dealt with in line with recognized consultation processes and other HR processes.
5	Property	Incorporated into this report.
6	Information Communication Technology (ICT)	
7	Procurement	
8	Scrutiny	Not applicable

E – Who did you consult?		What did they say?
9	Local Members	

F - Appendices:
Appendix 1 – Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy

Ff - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):
School Organisation Code (11/2018) Anglesey's School Modernisation Strategy (revised) – October 2018 Council Plan 2023-2028

CYNGOR SIR
YNYS MÔN
ISLE OF ANGLESEY
COUNTY COUNCIL

MODERNISING LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND DEVELOPING THE WELSH LANGUAGE STRATEGY

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March 2023

Status – OFFICIAL

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Introduction

In March 2022, Jeremy Miles, Minister for Education for Wales said:

''Tackling the impact of poverty on attainment is essential if we are to achieve high standards and aspirations for all. We know that the life chances of children and young people are hugely influenced by their home and community and that teachers need more support in addressing the issues some children and young people face. By investing in Community Focused schools, we are ensuring that learners have the support they need to reach their full potential.

Community Focused schools develop partnerships with a range of organisations, and make services accessible locally to families and the wider community. They use their facilities and resources to benefit the communities they serve, improve the lives of the children, strengthen families and build stronger communities.

Above all else, our national mission is to tackle the impact of poverty on educational attainment and to set high standards for all. I want all young people to have high aspirations for their education and future careers and that means using every lever we have to support them.''

In order to respond to this and to ensure that learners across Anglesey receive the education they deserve, the Isle of Anglesey County Council has reviewed its Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language strategy. Positive attention was given to this in Estyn's inspection report of the Isle of Anglesey County Council in 2022:

"There is a clear vision on the reorganisation and modernisation of schools, based on ensuring that schools are suitable for the 21st century and making the best use of modern technology. Prominent attention is given to developing provision for Welsh-medium and bilingual education within the modernisation strategy. Some elements of the vision are in place and having a positive effect, for example the expansion of provision of language centres and reducing surplus places in schools. Some aspects of the vision, for example the modernisation of post-16 education on the island, are in their early days."

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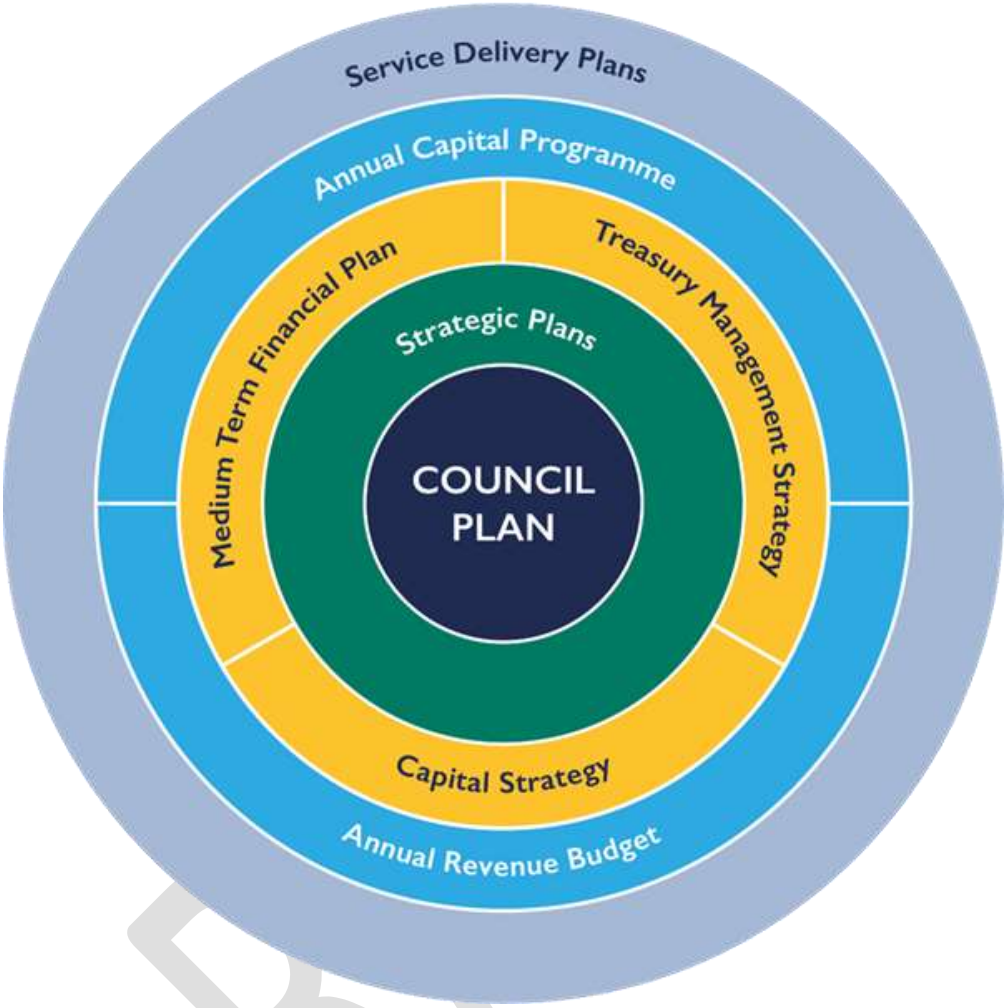
Council Plan – The Strategic Circle



The strategic circle identifies the plans the Council has in place to ensure we can achieve our priorities and objectives and they identify what needs to be achieved, how we will achieve it, and why. The Council Plan and the strategic plans declare the Council's vision, alongside the general principles and key priority areas. This strategy is one of the Council's strategic plans and it will be an integral plan to support the vision and key objectives within the Council Plan.

What has been Accomplished

Since publishing the original strategy in 2013, the Authority has worked with headteachers and elected members to modernise the school stock on the island by combining 10 smaller primary schools and building 21st century schools in three areas. Two other projects are currently underway, where decisions have been made to extend one school, relocate one school to a new building, and to close one school. By the time of completing these two projects, the Council will have closed 11 small schools, updated and extended two schools, and opened five 21st century buildings in four areas, including the Isle of Anglesey County Council's first net zero carbon building.

The projects completed thus far have:

- Had a positive impact on surplus primary school places on the island, with the current situation showing that 13% of surplus places belong to the primary sector in September 2022 (compared to 28% in 2011).
- Led to revenue savings via the school funding formula of close to £350k, and led to a reduction in current and projected maintenance costs of over £1.6m.

Both projects currently underway will lead to a further saving in current and projected maintenance costs of approximately an additional £1m.

By the time of completion for both projects underway (2024), it is estimated that around 25% of primary learners in Anglesey will be receiving their education in 21st century buildings.

The Estyn Report (June 2022) recognises that the Council is making good progress in modernising the organisation of schools:

"The authority has invested in a range of capital projects during the first stages of the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools programme. They are making good progress in ensuring suitable schools of the appropriate type in the appropriate locations to meet learners' needs."

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The Current Situation – Why Continuous Change is Required?

A High Percentage of Small Schools

Welsh Government, through the *Education (Schools) (Wales) Order 2014* defines small schools as schools with less than 91 pupils. Although the number of schools meeting the definition has decreased substantially over the past decade in Anglesey (based on September 22 numbers), there are still 17 (43%) schools on Anglesey considered to be small schools according to Welsh Government's definition.

The challenges that face small schools are:

- Teaching mixed age classes, including more than 2 or 3 age groups;
- A limited number of peers and sufficient challenge;
- Limited opportunities for social interaction;
- Challenges with recruiting and retaining staff;
- Excessive workload for staff with higher expertise who are required to support pupils with additional learning needs.

Whilst these challenges face schools, it is important to note that it is getting more difficult to balance the corporate budget each year.

Change in Demographic

It is clear from census data that the population of Anglesey has and continues to age. According to the 1981 census, 23% of the island's population was within the under 15 age group, with only 15% of the population aged 65 or older. By the 2021 census, the percentage of the population aged 15 and under had decreased to 16%, and the percentage of the population aged 65+ had increased to 26%. It is estimated by 2031 that the percentage of children under the age of 15 will have decreased to 13% with the percentage of people over the age of 65 increasing to 28%.

In January 2021, 5,177 pupils (Reception – Yr 6) attended Anglesey's primary schools, whilst 3,908 pupils (Yr 7 – Yr 12) attended Anglesey's secondary schools.

Based on the change in demographic noted above, it is estimated that these numbers will decrease to 4,264 primary pupils, and 3,219 secondary pupils by 2031. This amounts to a decrease of 913 primary pupils, and 689 secondary pupils. This corresponds to the need for approximately 7 less primary schools (based on the average of 130 pupils in each school), and one less secondary school (not considering the current surplus places).

The data also shows that less school-aged children between the ages of 3 and 15 in Anglesey speak Welsh compared to a decade ago. There was a decrease of 3.5% between 2011 and 2021. Usually, the ability to speak Welsh in this age group is higher than for every other age group.

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Pupil Numbers

Whilst the percentage of surplus places at the primary schools has decreased substantially, the forecasts received from school headteachers estimate that primary numbers could decrease by a further 419 pupils by 2027. It will therefore be important that the number of surplus places continue to be assessed. Welsh Government defines 'a substantial number of surplus places' as 25% or more of the school's capacity. There are still 13 primary schools on Anglesey that meet this definition.

In the secondary, the percentage of surplus places (21%) is a concern ("relatively high" as noted in the Estyn Report). As a result of this, consideration will need to be given to reducing the number of secondary schools or changing the nature of the schools if to ensure the future of secondary schools in some parts of the county.

Financial Pressure

Global matters, including the war in Ukraine, an increase in energy costs and problems pertaining to supply chains have and continue to have a substantial impact on inflation. As a result, it is foreseen that the Council's budget would need to be increased of around £18m by 2023/24 for the same level of service to be offered. The Learning Service's budget accounts for circa 36% of the Council's net budget.

There is a substantial difference in schools' cost per pupil, with a range of £3,313 to £11,846 in the primary, and £5,148 to £6,440 in the secondary.

It could be argued that the fact that smaller primary schools receive what corresponds to additional funds to maintain the minimum staffing levels means that the largest schools that often serve the most disadvantaged areas receive less funds. This isn't sustainable for the future, especially if costs continue to rise. With the presumption calculated above regarding the change in demographic, pupil numbers will decrease again by 2031. The result of this is that it will be likely that more small schools will be protected, and as a result, there will be less funds to share between the remainder of the schools. This means that the variety in cost per pupil will increase.

Moving forward with the programme, it will need to be ensured that resources are used in a fair and efficient manner, and that the opportunity is utilised to ensure that the school funding formula is suitable considering the changes that arise through modernisation, as noted by Estyn.

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Condition of Buildings

Welsh Government categorises the condition of school buildings on an A-D scale.

See below a definition of the different categories.

A – As new

B – Functionally safe and shows only minor deterioration

C – Operational but major repair or replacement needed in the short to medium term

D – A severe risk of failure

Whilst all of Anglesey's primary school stock has been assessed as condition grade 'A' or 'B' in exception to one school, 4/5 of Anglesey's secondary schools have been assessed as condition grade 'C'. This highlights the need for attention to the condition of our secondary school buildings.

Current and projected maintenance costs of schools are rising from one year to another. Costs of £22.3m were foreseen when the last assessment was completed in December 2021, with £9.3m in relation to the 40 primary schools and £13m in relation to the 5 secondary schools. The Council doesn't have the budget to undertake this work. This highlights the need to rationalise our stock of buildings, so that there are means to invest more in the remaining buildings.

Decarbonisation

In response to the climate change emergency, the Council is committed to being a net zero carbon establishment by 2030. In order to reach this target, the Council (and the whole public sector) faces multiple challenges and decisions to reduce carbon emissions and to respond to climate change.

At least 12/40 (30%) of Anglesey's primary schools are performing worse than normal in terms of energy efficiency, with three schools in the worst possible category.

Energy efficiency will need to be substantially improved in our stock of schools if to reach the target of being a net zero carbon establishment.

In light of the above, please note that this Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy has been constructed to:

- Establish school organisation that is suitable for the next thirty years to ensure the best opportunities for our children and young people to thrive and to utilise the world of work opportunities that are on the horizon;
- Continue to act to ensure that standards and provision at our schools are amongst the best;
- Ensure that the Council's resources are used effectively and efficiently by developing more equal organisation in terms of cost per pupil across schools and establishing a suitable pattern for post-16 education;

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- Ensure that all schools set robust foundations to ensure that each learner reaches a level of proficiency in both languages that is relevant to their ability;
- Create the circumstances for leaders to succeed by ensuring sufficient time and support for them to lead and manage;
- Establish a system that ensures appropriate succession of school leaders;
- Ensure that the strategy contributes to the aims of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and contributes to 'Place Shaping'.

The Vision and Leading Principles

'A Learning Island with Learning Communities, a Learning Service and Schools as Learning Organisations'.

The Isle of Anglesey County Council has the ambition of ensuring that all our children and young people, despite their background and circumstances, achieve their full potential, enabling all learners to develop towards the four purposes of the curriculum, the aspiration for each child and young person in Anglesey.

The Learning Service's main principles are:

- Ensuring that all children in Anglesey achieve their full potential and have the best possible experiences.
- Ensuring that each child and young person is completely bilingual and can use Welsh and English equally at the end of their period at school.
- Community-focused schools, with stakeholders and partnerships contributing to this role. Preparing young people for future workforce needs by developing skills and digital experiences.
- Attracting the best staff to our schools to give the best experiences to our children.
- Operating in the most cost-effective, efficient, supportive and eco-friendly manner.
- Ensuring that the wellbeing and inclusion of learners is a priority and is core to any educational matter.
- Ensuring that decisions made today effectively contribute towards environmental and climate change matters.
- Ensuring a quality offer for post-16 pupils that is suitable for the future needs of Anglesey.

This will mean that all our children, young people and learners are:

- **Ambitious, capable learners**
- **Venturous, creative contributors**

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- **Principled, knowledgeable citizens**
- **Healthy, confident individuals.**

The Sustainable Communities for Learning programme will be key to realising the ambitious vision above by ensuring effective schools of the right size, in the right locations, with a suitable teaching environment and led by inspirational leaders. To achieve this aim, the current situation will need to be reviewed and the best way forward considered, based on the requirements and nature of the needs.

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Drivers for Change / Strategic Objectives

Standards – Providing the best education for young people in the financial climate we are in so that education can thrive following Covid-19 and respond to the future needs of Anglesey's citizens.

The Authority wants to ensure the best possible outcomes for learners by ensuring that the system is suitable for this generation and future generations.

This strategy will address this, looking at creating the conditions so that headteachers, teachers and pupils succeed. The Authority's experiences with smaller schools have confirmed that higher support than expected is required for some smaller schools, and this is clearer where there are concerns regarding the quality of leadership and/or quality of teaching in individual classes.

In smaller-sized secondary schools, it is a challenge to maintain the quality and breadth of the curriculum. In addition to this, the ability to retain specialist staff, especially in the core subjects and on a managerial level, is challenging.

As the new curriculum is embedding, golden opportunities are arising to establish cross-sector schools [3-16 or 3-18] that make the most of staff expertise and the opportunities to teach and learn across subjects. Cross-sector schools also provide opportunities to avoid the 'decline in performance' seen amongst learners as they transfer from primary to secondary.

Leadership and Management – Increasing capacity to develop effective leadership at our schools and to plan succession.

Effective schools are led well. Our successful schools have strong leadership on all levels, including governors.

The challenges attached to leading and managing a school have increased substantially, and the expectations continue to rise. Currently, many primary headteachers have a substantial specific teaching commitment, especially in the small schools. The headteachers of smaller schools also fulfil a variety of administrative tasks. Recruiting headteachers under these conditions is challenging.

Primary schools need to be of suitable size to have a headteacher who doesn't teach for a substantial percentage of the time. This would give the necessary time to the headteacher to undertake key leadership functions within the school or federation, offering leadership experiences to members of staff and contributing towards succession planning.

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Pupil Numbers / Surplus Places – Providing education that corresponds to the requirements of the island's population. A reduction in surplus places to make efficient use of resources.

The island's population is ageing. A fall was seen in the percentage of school-aged children (0-15) in the most recent census. If this continues to fall, a further decrease of 3% is forecasted in the percentage of the population 'under the age of 15' by 2031. As a result of this change in demographic, and the proven fall in the number of school-aged children living on the island, in addition to the further fall seen in headteacher forecasts for the next 5 years, it is important that the Council continues to monitor the number of surplus places, to ensure efficient use of resources.

In September 2022, nearly half of all of Anglesey's primary schools met the Welsh Government's definition of a small school (less than 91 pupils), whilst 33% of our primary schools met the definition of having a substantial number of surplus places (25% or higher of the school's capacity). There was also one secondary school that met the definition of having a substantial number of surplus places, with 44% (427) surplus places.

The Sustainable Communities for Learning programme will address this by reviewing the future of each school based on area.

Wellbeing, Care and Health – Improving access to ensure wellbeing, care and health at our schools.

The Authority effectively engages with stakeholders including teachers, governors and parents to gather their views. As a result, wellbeing, care and health in our schools receives high and continuous priority.

Effective schools have safe environments for learners and staff, which also promote respect and diversity.

A well-designed school environment can improve the physical and mental health of children, in addition to improving the wellbeing of staff and making them feel that they are appreciated. There are currently 4 primary schools and one special school in an 'A' grade condition. It is anticipated that one further primary school will reach this category in 2023.

Well-designed and thoughtfully developed school grounds enrich opportunities to learn and play. Connection and contact with nature create more positive emotions and feelings of vitality, and less negative emotions; it also offers a release from mental fatigue, and the ability to concentrate for longer.

The Authority is committed to investing in a Community Focused Schools learning environment, by co-locating key services, and ensuring a stronger engagement with parents and carers outside traditional hours. The Council's Community Focused Schools programme will address child poverty and mitigate its effects, including educational inequalities children experience as a result of living in poverty.

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By investing in school buildings, we hope to create better facilities that learners and the wider community can use. This includes access to continuous adult learning, childcare and sport and leisure activities.

Post-16 Provision – Strengthening learner entitlement and experience for post-16 learners.

The Council operates the Post-16 Learning Partnership with Gwynedd and Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, and the Learning Partnership is responsible for commissioning post-16 provision to meet locally agreed curriculum requirements for education and training.

Although the Post-16 Learning Partnership has succeeded to rationalise provision, the current system isn't sustainable in terms of travel costs and small class sizes. Many classes currently have small pupil numbers. In the current financial climate, this isn't viable, cost-effective or sustainable. Additionally, as schools have already rationalised the number of non-viable courses, pupils spend regular intervals traveling from one school to another. The county's secondary school headteachers acknowledge the need to review the current situation.

As a result, consideration will need to be given to the future of post-16 provision in the county.

Buildings and Resources – Ensuring high quality and fit for purpose buildings and learning environments.

An inspection of school buildings denotes that severe deficiencies continue in many sites and buildings, especially in the secondary sector, which raises immediate questions regarding the long-term viability of some buildings. It isn't sustainable or possible to maintain a large number of ageing school buildings.

The number of school buildings will need to be rationalised in some areas where it is possible to combine two or more neighbouring primary schools because the space is available already at one of those schools. This would lead to financial savings, despite the need to transport the learners to another school. This will ensure that shrinking resources are used to improve the learning experiences of children rather than to maintain a building.

Anglesey is committed to ensuring that all school buildings meet the expectations of the 21st century, are fit for purpose, are in the right location, meet the needs of learners and are a resource for the community.

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Curriculum for Wales – Ensuring that schools have the resources and the capacity to drive Curriculum for Wales forward successfully.

As the new curriculum continues to be developed and introduced from September 2022, it will be all important that schools have the resources to drive the new curriculum forward successfully, to meet the four main purposes of developing:

1. Ambitious, capable learners
2. Enterprising, creative contributors
3. Ethical, informed citizens
4. Healthy, confident individuals

The new curriculum is designed by teachers, responds to the needs of all young people, and constructed for a fast-changing world. It focuses on progress-based learning (rather than age-based), has a clear purpose of what needs to be achieved. Pupils learn about things that will help them every day and moves them forward in their learning when they are ready to do so, not because of their age.

This is more relevant than ever due to the different effects the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the learning of young people. There will be close collaboration between teachers and pupils to gain a good understanding of the progress levels of individual pupils.

Community Use – Expanding use of school buildings and facilities by parents, the community and older inhabitants.

The Council is eager to optimise use of resources and infrastructure to provide services to our communities. This means having flexible assets so that there are means for the community (including children, adults, and older people) to use the asset and the resources. This will support the resilience of communities and help avoid poverty. This is currently very important in the context of the cost-of-living crisis.

It is foreseen that a key aspect of the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme will be ensuring care provision for pre-school children on new school sites or on sites being adapted (to be managed with a partner in the local childcare sector) to provide care between 8:00am and 6:00pm for families, alongside nursery education, wraparound care and after school/holiday care clubs.

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Decarbonisation – Ensuring that our schools are sustainable and contribute to the Council's Net Zero agenda.

The Council is committed to being a net zero carbon service by 2030.

A key part of the journey to achieve net zero carbon will be to review the use and performance of all Council assets, ensuring the smallest possible carbon footprint whilst continuing to provide services to our communities.

Primary schools are the largest producers of carbon of all Council buildings, with secondary schools the second highest. Primary school carbon emissions in 2021/22 were equivalent to 30% of the emissions of all assets managed by the Council, whilst secondary schools were equivalent to 23% of the assets managed by the Council in the same period.

There is a substantial range in carbon emissions per pupil, with the highest being 2,079kgCo2e per pupil, and the lowest being 65kgCo2e per pupil. In this context, the smallest schools tend to be at top of the cohort.

The Council has already made a substantial saving in terms of carbon emissions via the plans of the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme, e.g., by combining four schools into one in the Rhosyr area. In 2018/19, altogether the carbon emissions of Bodorgan, Dwyran, Niwbwrch and Llangaffo schools were 100tCo2e. In 2021/22, Ysgol Santes Dwynwen's carbon emissions were 26tCo2e.

Anglesey's first net zero carbon building, via the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, will open in 2024, when the new Foundation Phase Unit of Ysgol y Graig is complete.

Any new building via the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme will be a net zero carbon building, and carbon emission implications will be an important consideration in assessing different options through the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme.

Financial – Ensuring that schools can operate effectively within the available budget. Aiming towards reducing the range in expenditure per pupil, ensuring more equal opportunity across schools.

A substantial range is acknowledged in funds per pupil the schools receive via the Delegated Schools Funding Formula. Some primary schools receive over double the average Anglesey primary school budget per pupil, and over three times more than some of the largest schools. This doesn't make fair or efficient use of the funds available, and fairness and efficiency will need to be ensured in proceeding with the programme.

Inflation is likely to have a substantial impact on the Council's finances for the coming years, and a raise in energy costs is also likely to substantially increase costs. This places substantial pressure on the finances available to provide services, and therefore it is more important than ever that funds are used efficiently and fairly.

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As building maintenance and running costs increase, options will need to be considered to rationalise or close some buildings, so that a higher share of the funds is spent on learning, rather than on running and maintaining buildings.

The Welsh Language – Offering Welsh-medium and bilingual provision to all our learners.

The Authority operates a bilingual policy throughout all the county's schools. The aim is to develop pupils' abilities as bilingual learners by the end of formal education. Each of the county's educational establishments is expected to follow the Welsh language policy for schools that has adopted the principle that the Welsh language should be treated no less favourably than English, and that the island's inhabitants should be able to live their lives through the medium of Welsh if they wish to do so.

In light of this, any new scheme presented, such as projects deriving from the Sustainable Communities for Learning, are subject to the requirements of the language policy.

Our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan refers to the aim of increasing the proportion of pupils who receive their education in Welsh as a First Language up to the end of their time at secondary school. It is also intended to use childcare models to increase Welsh-medium childcare capacity on Anglesey. The childcare partnership model has the potential to be a key contributor towards Welsh Government's ambition of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. It will also be important on a local level to meet the objectives of our Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2021-26.

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Designing the Workforce

The education workforce must evolve to keep pace with the rapidly changing world and embrace the new opportunities these changes bring. The future is one in which learners will experience a wide range of interactions with adults, peers and with technology to support their individual learning needs.

International research demonstrates that leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on learning and outcomes. All practitioners are leaders whether they lead learners, other practitioners or schools. We are committed to building leadership capacity by encouraging and supporting all practitioners to develop their own leadership potential and the leadership potential of others.

A progressive, practice-based, career-long development of leadership for all can be seen in the leadership development pathway. The pathway reflects national principles and strategies for leadership development and is consistent with the Professional Learning Model.

Quality teachers are the most important determinant of learner progress in schools. Teachers need to be supported in their own professional learning and have opportunities to collaborate with each other, have strong leadership support and have access to a range of experts to enable them to grow and provide the very best for all the learners in their care.

Modernisation of the workforce includes diversifying the workforce: teaching, learning, welfare, health and inclusion professionals, with different skill sets and experience levels, working together in teams to provide differentiated teaching and welfare support tailored to each child's individual needs. This, along with excellent school leaders and teachers, drawing from other sectors and the community, would provide learners with a greater connection to the world outside to ensure that there is alignment between the skills that children are learning and their relevance in the real world.

The role of the teaching assistant is key in schools. They are responsible for supporting children, ensuring that they get the most out of their school life and personal development in the classroom. They work one-to-one with pupils, as well as in groups, whilst also supporting the teacher in delivering lessons and activities. Through the Teaching Assistants' Learning Pathway, teaching assistants can develop their skills through a series of progressive, practice-based programmes, underpinned by the professional standards for teaching assistants.

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Strong school leadership supports high impact approaches such as teacher collaborative learning. There should be a shift away from leaders focusing on administrative tasks. School leaders support a concept where the collective capacity of a group of people is the way forward as opposed to focusing on developing the skills of individuals to do their work better. By working collaboratively in learning teams, school professionals are encouraged to provide effective teaching through targeting of specialist expertise, on the job learning and support, increased instructional time, workforce motivation and support for inclusion.

School leaders are becoming more externally facing as teacher capacity grows to lead peer professional development. They increasingly look outward to draw in resources and expertise from wider sectors and networks, including other schools, community and external organisations. Successful school leaders are system leaders, providing peer school evaluation, acting as a critical friend, and coaching peers in their school improvement journey.

A learning community thrives in a diversified workforce - including networks of schools, education professionals and cross-sectoral partnerships. School staff directly involved in innovating and applying evidence of what works, and the resulting knowledge, data and evidence shared, create a system that cultivates learning, is able to learn itself, and adapts to change. A school with a community focus, and a with a workforce made up of a wide range of expertise, provides learners with a connection to the external world outside school, including work and the community, drawing support from increasingly professionalised specialists and vibrant school networks to improve teaching and learning. School professionals working together in a wide variety of teams providing greater opportunities for differentiated teaching around the individual needs of the learner.

Recruitment and retention of teaching and non-teaching staff is a challenge, especially in certain subjects, areas of expertise and those who are bilingual. We are committed to supporting the development of school staff and those interested in working in our schools. This includes working closely with universities and Initial Teacher Education partnerships to ensure that we are being proactive in responding to these challenges and are thus able to answer the needs of our children and young people.

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Related Challenges

The need for capital investment

The cost of building new schools is expensive. Three new schools have been completed thus far through the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme, with the cost ranging between £5.6m and £10.352m. Additionally, building costs have increased substantially over recent months as a result of global events.

Whilst Welsh Government has contributed towards 50% of Band A projects, and 65% of Band B projects, it is required for the Council to contribute towards the remainder of the cost.

It is important that the Council takes advantage of the opportunity to attract external funds (grant) to improve the condition of our educational building estate. However, considering the financial challenge the Council is likely to face over the coming years, the Council will need to prioritise the related work.

In regards to prioritisation, it is foreseen that secondary provision will need to be remodelled over the coming years, whilst also operating other difficult decisions.

Difficult Decisions

Whilst implementing the strategy, it is likely that the Council will need to make difficult, often unpopular, decisions when considering the future of school organisation.

Where the Council proposes to make a regulated alteration, a consultation and an objection period will follow, which allows stakeholders to give their views on the proposal, and to make a new proposal. The Council will consider this feedback carefully before deciding on whether to change or to proceed with the original proposal. In addition to this, an Impact Assessment will be held, which will specifically consider how any proposal would have an impact on communities, equality, and the Welsh language.

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Implementation Timetable

Implementation Period		
Stage 1 – 2023 onwards	**Stage 2 – 2024 onwards**	**Stage 3 – 2025 onwards**
Continue to address the condition of our school buildings through the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme, considering different types of education provision, e.g. 3-16 or 3-18 schools.	Continue to address the condition of our school buildings through the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme, considering different types of education provision, e.g. 3-16 or 3-18 schools.	Sustainable Communities for Learning programme plans are realised.
Look at improving the effectiveness of schools and ensure fair funding. Prioritising schools in areas with the highest number of surplus places and the highest cost per pupil.	Continue to look at improving the effectiveness of schools, reducing the variation in cost per pupil, and reducing the number of surplus places (primary and secondary), whilst also considering options for federalisation of schools.	Plans are realised to respond to the challenge regarding the variation in cost per pupil and reducing the number of surplus places.
Research the possibilities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of post-16 provision.	Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of post-16 provision.	Post-16 provision in its new form is operational.

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How will the Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy affect the experience of users?

- More community focus – more facilities (multi-purpose that can be used by the community in addition to the school), extended hours for use, more use by the community, community hub.
- Leadership – easier to appoint school leaders, more effective training, and more efficient meetings due to less participants.
- Staff collaboration – more opportunities due to being on the same site, e.g. co-planning, co-training, learning from each other, resource pooling opportunities, extra-curricular opportunities, catchment area working opportunities.
- Collaboration between children and young people – as part of teaching and learning, wider opportunities through a variety of teachers.
- Effective transition – strengthening familiarity with the children transferring, 3-16/18 opportunities, easy to swap primary and secondary teachers.
- Opportunities to develop and strengthen the Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in the classroom and in informal contexts.
- Opportunities to be more financially efficient – the Learning Service and individual schools.
- Governors are easier to appoint as there are less of them, and training and collaboration is more effective.
- Opportunities for more effective school administration and to develop catchment area business managers.
- More opportunities to develop technological systems and use of Hwb funds.
- Opportunities to develop buildings, including more effective maintenance.
- Environmental opportunities and less energy waste – net zero opportunities.

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Legislative Process

In line with the *School Organisation Code 2018*, the Council will follow the process below before implementing any plan considered to be a controlled change in line with the code's definition. There will be a simpler process to follow for any proposal that doesn't meet this definition.

Stage 1

- Developing a **proposal paper** to go before the Executive to decide whether or not to consult on the proposal.

Stage 2

- **Consultation** on the proposal (at least 42 days, with at least 20 of them being school days).

Stage 3

- **A report** on the output of the **consultation** before the Executive to decide whether or not to proceed with the proposal, or to change the proposal. If the proposal is changed, the process will re-start from Stage 1.

Stage 4

- Within 26 weeks of the end of the consultation, a **statutory notice** must be issued, giving stakeholders 28 days to object to the proposal (with at least 15 of those days being school days).
- This is the stage at which stakeholders are given the opportunity to object to the proposal (**objection period**). Informal comments during the consultation period (Stage 2) won't be considered as objections.
- ***Stage 5 and 6 can then be followed, depending on the proposal***

Stage 5

- **If a decision is required from Welsh Government ministers** (for example if the proposal affects post-16 provision)
- An **objection report** must be sent to the minister within 35 days of the end of the objection period.
- The minister will aim to respond within 16 weeks of the end of the objection period.

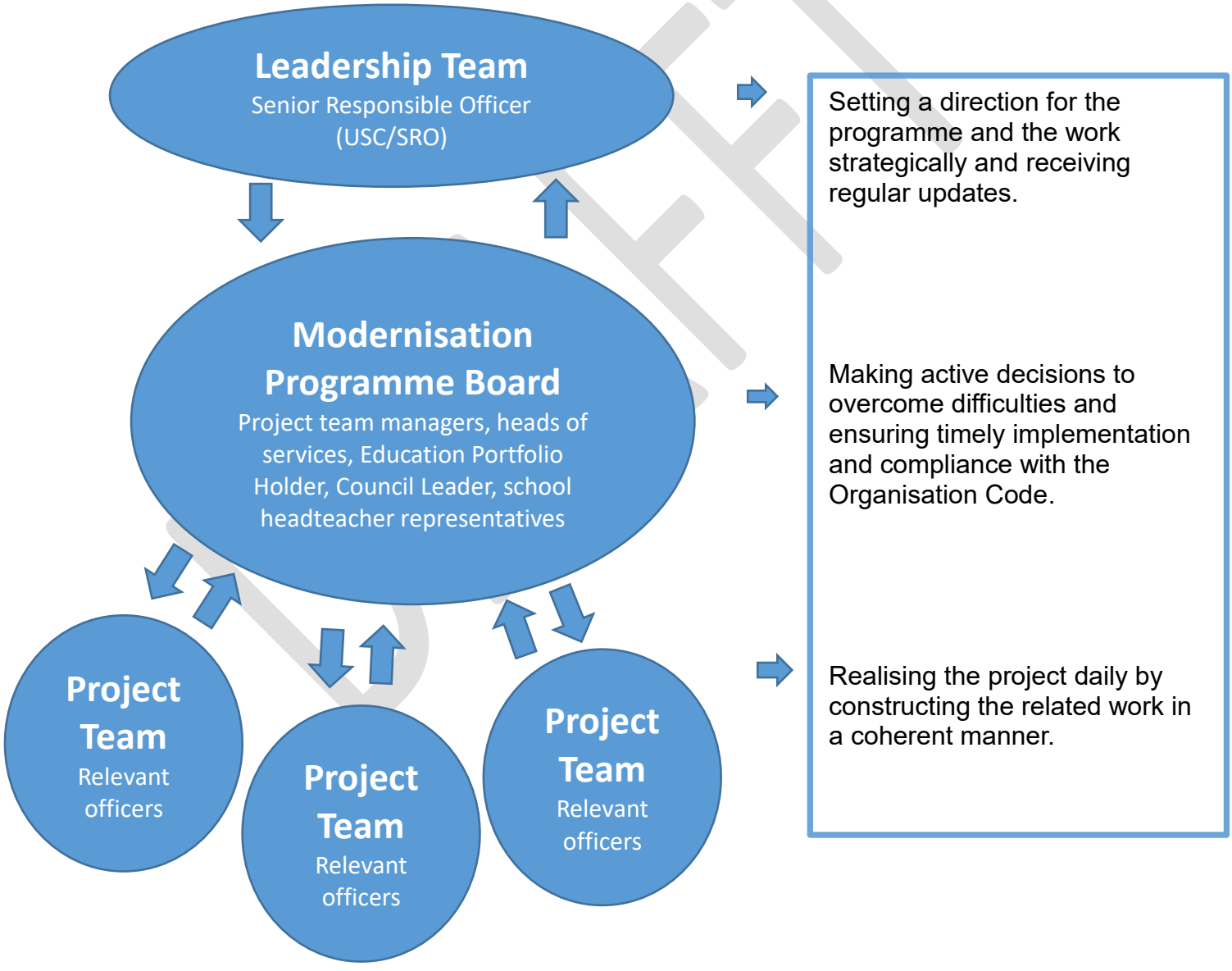
Stage 6

- ***When there is no need for the decision to be made by Welsh Government ministers***
- An **objection report** goes before the Executive to make a final decision on whether to realise the proposal or adapt the proposal.

Monitoring, Management and Governance

The principles of openness, integrity and accountability are relevant on all levels of governance. In the context of Learning Community modernisation and developing the Welsh language, this will include:

- Setting a clear purpose when funding the modernisation programme;
- Noting a suitable financial procedure;
- Monitoring the financial performance and the service of the modernisation board;
- Carefully considering the representation on the modernisation board;
- Maintaining audit access to support accountability.



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The Principles of the Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy

The programme will:

- Clearly express its vision and purpose, ensuring clear alignment between the programme's vision and the general strategic objective and direction of the organisation
- Adopt and use professional programme management methodology
- Have a clear overview and appropriate governance arrangements in place
- Have clear criteria for how councillors and officers are involved in the programme
- Work closely with the community and other stakeholders in the process
- Ensure that benefits are clearly linked to better outcomes for the community
- Thoroughly consider and evaluate alternative options
- Develop robust business cases, with clear reasons for its decisions and will not base them only on financial advantage which could be subject to change
- Be clear regarding the risks concerned, with scrutiny proportionate to the risk
- Clearly show how the programme ensures value for money.

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