ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
Committee:	Corporate Scrutiny
Date:	20 June 2023
Subject:	Consultation Report on the 'Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy'
Purpose of Report:	To present findings from the public consultation relating to the 'Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy', and to seek the views of the Scrutiny Committee on the proposed amendments to the updated strategy, prior to the Executive considering them to decide on whether to adopt the revised strategy.
Scrutiny Chair:	Councillor Douglas Massie Fowlie
Portfolio Holder(s):	
Director:	Marc B Hughes - Director of Education, Skills and Young People
Report Author: **Tel:** **Email:**	Arwyn Hughes 01248 751894 ArwynHughes3@ynysmon.gov.uk
Local Members:	Relevant to all elected members

1 - Recommendation/s

The Council undertook a public consultation on the draft 'Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy' from 31 March 2023 – 18 May 2023. Nearly 300 responses were received, and a summary of the feedback has been included within the consultation report (Appendix 1).

In response to feedback received during the consultation process, Council officers have considered the points raised, and it is recommended to make the following changes to the draft strategy:

a. Re: Implementation Timetable – Stage 3 – 2025 Onwards.
   The draft strategy stated:
   "Post-16 provision in its new form is **operational**."
   This is to be amended to:
   "**Decisions made** in relation to post-16 provision on Anglesey"

b. Re: Sources requested - A new section is to be added at the end of the 'Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy' to recognise the sources of information used to populate the data within the strategy. This section is titled **'Information Sources'.**

c. Re: Governance model - The ‘Monitoring, Management and Governance’ section will be **updated to reflect governance changes.**

The above changes do not impact the vision of the strategy.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee is therefore asked to forward its views on the recommendation of the consultation report including the amendments proposed to the strategy to the Executive.

2 – Link to Council Plan / Other Corporate Priorities

The Authority's strategies linked to the Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language are as follows:

2.1 Council Plan 2023/28:

One of the six key objectives identified within the Council Plan is:

- Education – ensuring an effective provision for today and for future generations.

A key workstream related to achieving this objective is noted as follows:

- Adopt and deliver a new strategy for Modernising Communities for Learning and Developing the Welsh Language.

The work undertaken to date has been commenced in order to meet the above workstream.

2.2 Welsh Language Policy

The Council has adopted the principles that the Welsh language should be treated no less favourably than the English language and that persons in Wales should be able to live their lives through the medium of the Welsh language if they choose to do so.

2.3 Towards Net Zero Plan (March 2022 – March 2025)

The aim of the strategy is to:
"Modernise and adapt to become a Net Zero Council by 2030".

The plan states that one way this will be achieved, is by delivering the following objective:
"Reduce and decarbonise the energy use of the Council's buildings and assets."

The school estate contributes significantly to the Authority's emissions. 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.

2.4 Medium Term Financial Plan

The Council is required to put in place a robust system to monitor and control its revenue budget and a key element of that system is a Medium Term Financial Plan. The plan sets out the Council's budget strategy over the next three-year period and sets out the assumptions which will be taken forward to the annual budget setting process. The plan will identify the projected budget challenges (savings requirement) for the next 3 years.

3 – Guiding Principles for Scrutiny Members

To assist Members when scrutinising the topic:-

3.1 Impact the matter has on individuals and communities **[focus on customer/citizen]** See Impact Assessment – Appendix 9.

3.2 A look at the efficiency & effectiveness of any proposed change – both financially and in terms of quality **[focus on value]**

Details in the 'Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy' – See 'Drivers for Change / Strategic Objectives'.

3.3 A look at any risks **[focus on risk]**

Not applicable at the moment as no specific proposal is made.

3.4 Scrutiny taking a performance monitoring or quality assurance role **[focus on performance & quality]**

Not applicable at the moment as this is a consultation report on the draft 'Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy'.

3.5 Looking at plans and proposals from a perspective of:

- Long term
- Prevention
- Integration
- Collaboration
- Involvement

[focus on wellbeing]

Not applicable at the moment as no specific proposal is made.

If the Strategy is adopted by the Council, and Council officers are instructed to progress with the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, by developing specific proposals, a separate impact assessment will be undertaken for each proposal, which will address these aspects.

4 - Key Scrutiny Questions

1. The report discusses a public consultation which was undertaken recently. To what extent was the process comprehensive, appropriate and robust?
2. In what ways have the outputs of the consultation process influenced the revised document?
3. How does the revised strategy allow the Council to realise the strategic objectives within the 2023 – 2028 Council Plan?
4. To what extent does the 'Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy' seek to address the objective of education provision and educational buildings of the highest possible standards for Anglesey learners?
5. What challenges and risks face the council in trying to make the proposed Strategy a reality?
6. How will implementation of the strategy be monitored?

7. How does this consultation period compare in terms of stakeholder engagement compared to last time in 2018?

5 – Background / Context

In March 2023, The Executive resolved to approve the draft 'Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy' for consultation.
A public consultation was undertaken between 31st of March 2023, and 18th of May 2023. Nearly 300 responses were received during the consultation period.

This Consultation Report summarises the main points raised by stakeholders during the consultation period, before making a recommendation as to how to progress.

6 – Equality Impact Assessment [including impacts on the Welsh Language]

Impact assessments on equality, the Welsh language and the community are included as part of the consultation report (Appendix 9).

If the Strategy is adopted by the Council, and Council officers are instructed to progress with the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, by developing specific proposals, a separate impact assessment will be undertaken for each proposal. These impact assessments will analyse the effect of that specific proposal on equality, the community and the Welsh language. These will be working documents and will be revised on a regular basis. There will be an opportunity for stakeholders to contribute to these assessments during the next consultation stages.

7 – Financial Implications

7 – Financial Implications

There are no financial implications at this stage, as no specific proposals are made.

Specific future proposals, could be financed by means of:

- Welsh Government grant funding via the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme
- Capital Receipts from sale of surplus sites
- Unsupported Borrowing
- Undertaking developments via Welsh Governments Mutual Investment Model
- Revenue Savings

8 – Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Consultation Report
Appendix 2 – Examples of comments made via the online survey
Appendix 3 - Examples of comments made via the online survey
Appendix 4 - Examples of comments made via the online survey
Appendix 5 – Consultation with children and young people
Appendix 6 – Response from the Welsh Language Society
Appendix 7 – Response from Grwp Llandrillo Menai
Appendix 8 – Response from Mudiad Meithrin
Appendix 9 – Equality Impact Assessment
Appendix 10 – Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy

9 - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):
School Organisation Code (11/2018) Council Plan 2023-2028 Equality Monitoring Form Pupil Level Annual Census Estyn inspection report on Anglesey Council Learning Service (2022) Census Stats Wales Data from Property Services on Building Condition Responses to the Public Consultation on the draft strategy

CYNGOR SIR
YNYS MÔN
ISLE OF ANGLESEY
COUNTY COUNCIL

CONSULTATION REPORT

MODERNISING LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND DEVELOPING THE WELSH LANGUAGE STRATEGY

Outcome of the consultation undertaken between

31 March 2023 to 18 May 2023

MAY 2023

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

Hard copies of this report are available on request by sending an email to angleseyschools@ynysmon.gov.wales

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Isle of Anglesey County Council in its recently adopted Council Plan 2023-28 identified 6 strategic objectives towards which they are working. One of these key objectives is entitled –

- Education – ensuring an effective provision for today and for future generations

A key workstream related to achieving this objective is noted as follows –

  - Adopt and deliver a new strategy for Modernising Communities for Learning and Developing the Welsh Language

The work undertaken to date has been commenced in order to meet the above workstream and in doing so shows the Council's commitment to seeking the views of its residents and any other interested parties on matters such as the draft 'Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy'.

From 31 March 2023 to 18 May 2023 the Council held a formal consultation process on the 'draft strategy'

When adopted, the 'Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy', will replace the existing 'Isle of Anglesey Education Strategy (Schools Modernisation)'.

The purpose of undertaking the consultation was to seek the views of stakeholders/ interested parties on the draft strategy.

The purpose of this consultation report is to inform stakeholders/ interested parties of the outcome of the consultation by means of:

- Summarising the issues raised by stakeholders/ interested parties inclusive of children and young people's views and coming to a conclusion whether the draft strategy is fit for purpose and ready or not for adoption.

2. CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

On 21 March 2023 the Council's Executive approved the draft Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language strategy for public consultation.

The Consultation was held between 31 March 2023 and 18 May 2023. During this period stakeholders / interested parties were invited to express their views on the draft strategy.

The consultation document itself was circulated to stakeholders / interested parties (including but not limited to Headteachers, School Governors, Parents, Pupils, Town / Community Councils, Estyn, Gwe etc) and the consultation document was published on the Council's website www.anglesey.gov.wales

Consultees were advised of the following opportunities to respond to the consultation by:

- Completing the on-line response form or
- Completing a paper response form, and send by email to angleseyschools@anglesey.gov.uk

Or posted to:
Arwyn Hughes
Human Resource and Transformation Service
Council Offices,
Llangefni,
LL77 7TW

Hard copies of the 'Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy' was also available on request.

Briefing sessions were held to present the consultation documents and explain the consultation process to Headteachers, and School Governors. Attendees were advised of the importance of responding to the consultation as no formal minutes were taken at the briefing sessions themselves.

Date	**Location /Method**	**Stakeholders**	**Time**
28 April 2023	Llangefni Town Hall	Primary Headteachers	9 am – 10 am
2 May 2023	Online (Zoom)	School Governors	6 pm – 7pm
11 May 2023	Council HQ	Secondary Headteachers	9 am – 10 am

The views of Children and Young People were deemed imperative as part of the process and Council officers arranged five consultation meetings with pupils from the primary sector (one for schools within each secondary catchment area), where each school was asked to nominate three pupils to participate.

Officers from the Council also conducted one consultation meeting with pupils from the secondary sector, and one meeting with pupils from Canolfan Addysg Y Bont.

The information provided was presented to the participants in such a way that was relevant to their age and level of understanding and in accordance with practice agreed with Headteachers beforehand.

A summary of the feedback received from children and young people can be found at Appendix 5.

In comparison with the consultation on the 2018 'Isle of Anglesey Education Strategy', this consultation process has been more concentrated, with more focus on consultation with children and young people.

3. RESPONSES AND COMMENTS

3.1 Summary of respondents

The Council during the 6 week consultation period received 293 responses from the on-line survey and 5 responses in the form of letters and e-mails, which is higher than the number of responses received during the 2018 consultation process. The 298 responses were categorised as follows:

Respondent category	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
School Governor	26	9%
Staff (School)	51	17%
Staff (Other)	11	4%
Parent / Guardian	126	42%
Elected Member	4	1%
Town / Community Councillor	16	5%
Resident	50	17%
Other	14	5%
Total	**298**	**100%**

*Of the 14 responses categorised as 'Other' in the table above, these included:

- Interested Parties
- Individuals who fell into more than one of the above categories, e.g Teacher and Parent.
- Student
- Grandparents
- Teachers Union – The respondent did not state which Teachers Union they were responding on behalf of.
- Welsh Language Society (Grwp Ymgyrch Addysg – Cymdeithas yr Iaith)
- Grwp Llandrillo Menai
- Mudiad Meithrin

The table above shows that 298 people responded to at least one question relating to the 'Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy' and that the majority of responses (126 or 42%) came from Parents / Guardians, whereas (51 or 17%) of responses were from School based staff.

65% of respondents (who answered the optional equalities question regarding 'age' were between 35 and 54 years old and the majority were female.

The full responses received on behalf of The Welsh Language Society (Cymdeithas yr Iaith), Grwp Llandrillo Menai, and Mudiad Meithrin can be found at Appendixes, 6, 7 and 8 respectively.

3.2 Summary of Responses

The questionnaire was structured in a way which engendered specific answers through closed questions whilst also allowing for more of an open and free response to other questions. This was drafted in order to allow individuals the opportunity to raise issues and inform the Council of concerns related to the implementation of the developing strategy.

In considering the answers to those of a closed nature, it is apparent that the majority agree with the reasons behind why continuous change is needed (55%), the vision and leading principles (58%), and the drivers for change and strategic objectives (53%) of the current draft strategy.

There was a two sided response regarding developing the Welsh Language, with some in agreement to further develop the Welsh Language as part of the strategy, whereas others believing that there is already too much focus on developing the Welsh Language at schools.

In response to the open-ended questions there appears to be 4 themes emanating from those responses. The themes relate to –

The number and sufficiency of schools and school buildings

The Welsh Language

Clarity and Detail

The Net Zero Agenda

There is a close link between these themes, and the strategic aims identified within the Council Plan

3.2.1 Theme 1 - The number and sufficiency of schools and school buildings

This theme emanated from a number of respondents querying or questioning the validity of different sized schools (the small through to the large) and the perceived benefits and misgivings associated with those of differing types of schools.

There was a clear split response from comments falling under this theme, with some of the respondents wanting to see the education provision centralised and modernised, whereas others stating that they did not want to see education centralised and were opposed to the potential closure of schools.

The reasons given for some respondents wanting to see schools modernised / rationalised included:

For more of the education budget to be spent on teaching, rather than on running / maintaining buildings.

To give pupils access to updated facilities, resources and technologies.

To address some of the challenges facing smaller schools

To improve the condition of the school building estate, as some schools (particularly in the secondary sector) were in poor condition or were not fit for purpose.

It was also noted that some felt that it's disappointing for some pupils to move from new 21st Century Primary Schools to a Secondary School which was not of the same standard.

Of the responses which fell within the category of not wanting to see education centralised / schools closed, these were due to reasons such as:

Did not believe that moving to a larger school would lead to better performance

The closure of schools would be a loss to many close communities. This was a key point raised within the response from the Welsh Language Society (Cymdeithas yr Iaith), who stated that local schools which are open to communities can play a part in social economic regeneration.

The closure of schools could lead to less opportunities to participate in extra curricular activities – especially within deprived areas.

The possibility of pupil numbers increasing – potentially as a result of the freeport or more affordable housing being provided.

The council should do more to address young people moving off the island to live and believe schools had a role to play.

The Teachers Union also responded the consultation. They stated that creating cross-sector schools would not address the challenges facing teachers. There will still need to be the same number of subject specific experts. Having pupils aged 3-11 as part of the school will not help attract subject specific teachers for the secondary sector. They also stressed the importance that the post 16 provision does not deteriorate as a result of any review, and questioned how the condition of secondary schools have been allowed to deteriorate to such a poor condition, compared to the condition of primary schools.

These comments demonstrate that there was no over-riding specific agreement as to people's opinions re: the strategy and indeed this view can be further evidenced in the responses gained by pupils who took part in the consultation meetings.

Pupils from some schools stated that they prefer attending a small school, and were more comfortable attending a smaller school, whereas others felt there were benefits of attending larger schools. Some pupils added that everyone should be treated equally and given the same opportunities. Some wish they had more space or wanted to see school buildings modernised.

Mudiad Meithrin stated as part of their response, that they could understand the reasoning behind the strategy, after seeing the fall in the number of children – 2021 census. However, they believed that the Council need to consider the impact of combining schools on the Nursery Groups and if this was realised that they outlined the need to consider providing transport for non-statutory age (2-3 year olds), to ensure nursery provision is accessible to all.

The Mudiad Meithrin could see benefits of having larger locations, due to being able to offer longer hours, and more development opportunities for staff, however they felt that nursery groups should be kept in some local communities.

Grwp Llandrillo Menai also provided feedback on the Consultation, stating that they welcomed the consultation, and agreed with the drivers for change identified, along with ensuring that the education provision is sustainable on the island for the future.

Further examples of the types of comments made can be seen at Appendix 2.

3.2.2 Theme 2 – The Welsh Language

There were also conflicting opinions regarding the development of the Welsh Language, with some eager to see the Welsh Language further developed and promoted via the strategy, whereas others felt there was already too much focus on the Welsh Language at schools.

Of the responses who were opposed to further development of the Welsh Language via the strategy, their reasoning included:

- It can be difficult for pupils from non-Welsh speaking household to follow the learning through the medium of Welsh, when they only have a basic understanding of the language. There were concerns that this could prevent pupils from achieving their potential.
- Both English and Welsh should be treated equally. The Welsh language is already treated equally / favourably.
- There should be a separate strategy for developing the Welsh Language and Modernising Learning Communities. Some felt that it was important to develop the Welsh language, but disagreed that this should be done at schools. It should be done in communities or by possibly using school buildings as community resource in the evenings to promote and facilitate Welsh Language activities.
- Pupils need to be developed for future career opportunities, with more and more opportunities for local people to follow careers and gain employment outside of Wales, particularly given the movement towards more remote working.

Of the respondents that wanted to further develop the Welsh Language, some were of the opinion that the strategy as it is would further develop the Welsh language, whereas others had concerns that the strategy could be detrimental to the development of the Welsh Language. By far the most common reason for these concerns, was the perceived impression that the strategy would lead to the closure of smaller schools. A number of respondents stated that they believe that the closure of schools would be detrimental to the Welsh Language. The Welsh Language Society (Cymdeithas yr Iaith) shared this concern. They stated that small community schools are the link between the community and the Welsh language, and are the means to the assimilation of immigrants. The Teachers Union also commented that joining a school with a high percentage of Welsh speakers with another school which has less Welsh speakers could have a detrimental effect on the Welsh Language.

The Welsh Language Society also had concerns due to the loose commitment of “Welsh and Bilingual education”. They feel it is important that schools are recognised as Welsh schools in the highest Welsh category to avoid any uncertainty.

The Teachers Union stressed the importance of ensuring that all post 16 choices are bilingual.

The Mudiad Meithrin recognised the need to increase the number of children who can speak Welsh across Wales, and believe that the Education, Care and Early Years sector have a role to play. The Mudiad Meithrin believe that immersion in the Welsh Language is important at the early years, to establish a sound foundation for children to progress from during their statutory education.

Many suggestions were made as to how the Welsh Language could be further developed, both from the on line responses, and from the feedback from consultation meetings with children and young people. Examples have been included at appendix 3 and appendix 4 respectively and as the strategy notes that the aim is to "develop and strengthen the Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in the classroom and in informal contexts", then these factors will need to be taken into account when it's implementation stage begins.

3.2.3 Theme 3 - Clarity and Detail

There were some comments made within the theme 'Clarity and Detail'. Comments made have been listed in Appendix 2. The most common feedback, was that the Strategy does not include enough detail on proposed plans.

The purpose of this strategy is to agree on the Council's vision, strategic objectives and drivers for change. Once the strategy has been adopted, the Council will consider, and carefully evaluate area specific options, before making a proposal. This will provide the required detail and clarity sought by respondents on that specific proposal and include the necessary data.

Feedback was also received via the on line survey, and from the consultation sessions with Children and Young People, stating that the strategy does not back its data up by providing the sources of information. This has been noted, and will be given further consideration before the strategy is presented for adoption.

As part of the on-line responses, it was also noted that it was too ambitious to have a new Anglesey wide Post 16 provision operational by 2025 and that this part of the strategy should be re-considered.

3.2.4 Theme 4 -The Net Zero Agenda

Some of the feedback received during the consultation period has been categorised under the 'Net Zero Agenda' theme.

The comments included:

- Many small schools result in high carbon emissions .
- Closing schools will result in further travelling distances. This will result in increased carbon footprint.
- Retrofitting existing buildings would be better than building new schools.

These comments were received via the on line survey, and via the consultation sessions with children and young people.

The Welsh language Society (Cymdeithas yr Iaith) also stated that closing community schools will lead to more travelling thereby outlining an issue which would need careful attention and consideration in developing future proposals.

4. CONCLUSION

During the 6 weeks consultation period, a total of 298 responses were received, with the majority of respondents agreeing with the reasons 'why continuous change is required', the 'vision and leading principles' and the 'drivers for change'.

As part of the consultation survey, there was an opportunity for respondents to leave comments regarding the strategy, as well as to express their opinion on how the strategy will effect the Welsh language, and specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on

treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English. There was also an opportunity for respondents to make suggestions as to how the strategy could be changed to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language, and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

The responses to these open questions as evidenced above could be categorised into 4 themes:

1. The number of and sufficiency of schools and school buildings
2. The Welsh Language
3. Clarity and Detail
4. The Net Zero Agenda

Within these themes a number of valid points were raised, and will need to be considered further as proposals are developed. Not all these valid points would result in the need to revise or adapt the strategy.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

In response to feedback received during the consultation process, Council Officers have considered the points raised, and it is recommended to make the following changes to the draft strategy-

a. Re: Implementation Timetable – Stage 3 – 2025 Onwards.
   The draft strategy stated:
   "Post-16 provision in its new form is **operational**."
   This is to be amended to:
   "**Decisions made** in relation to Post 16 provision on Anglesey"

b. Re: sources requested - A new section is to be added at the end of the 'Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy' to recognise the sources of information used to populate the data within the strategy. This section is titled **'Information Sources'**

c. Re: governance model - The 'Monitoring, Management and Governance' section has been **updated to reflect governance changes**

The above changes do not impact on the vision of the strategy.

Following the above amendments to the strategy as a result of the feedback received during the consultation period, it is recommended that the Executive approve and adopt the revised 'Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy', and instruct officers to progress with the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, in accordance with the revised strategy.

APPENDIX 2 – Further examples of comments made via the online survey in response to the question:

"Do you have any further comments on the draft 'Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy'?"

THEME 1: THE NUMBER AND SUFFICIENCY OF SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL BUILDINGS	
Ref.	**Examples / Summary of the type of comments made**
1	The push to close small schools does not take account of the fantastic provision they provide
2	The potential closure of schools will be a loss to many close communities
3	There is no evidence that performance is better in larger schools than in small schools. Some also stated that some of the challenges facing smaller schools also face larger schools e.g recruitment.
4	Were supportive of area schools / centralisation of Education. Reasons for which included: Education budget should be spent on teaching, not maintaining / running buildings. To respond to the decrease in pupil numbers To address the challenges facing smaller schools.
5	Possibility for the number of children to increase in the future, particularly if the Freeport lives up to expectations, or if new affordable horses are developed
6	Wanted to see investment in the secondary sector. Reasons for which included: Money has already been invested in the Primary Sector Secondary buildings and resources are not fit for purpose. It's disappointing to see pupils move from new modern schools to secondary schools which are not fit for purpose and are in poor quality.
7	Supportive of modernising learning communities, and giving pupils access to updated facilities and technologies
8	The push to close schools is driven by economic factors
9	Questioned the cost of maintaining certain aspects of new school buildings
10	Need to ensure there is a quality offer for post-16 pupils that is suitable for the future needs of Anglesey
11	There needs to be one less secondary school
12	Anxious regarding the development of a 3-16 / 3-18 school. Some secondary pupils don't always behave appropriately. This could lead to safety concerns, and younger pupils not wanting to go to school.
13	It is important to give attention to welfare in the workplace
14	It's important to develop schools as community hubs

THEME 2: THE WELSH LANGUAGE	
Ref.	**Examples / Summary of the type of comments made**
1	There is too much focus on the Welsh Language, rather than on skills for future careers. This can prevent pupils from achieving their potential. Both languages should be taught equally
2	Closing schools will have a detrimental effect on the Welsh Language
3	Too many young Welsh people are leaving the island to find work. Non-Welsh speakers moving onto the island to retire contribute towards this problem, by pushing up the price of houses on Anglesey. Investment is required to attract companies to Anglesey. This would provide jobs for local people to stay on Anglesey, and would protect the Welsh Language.
4	There should be a separate Strategy for 'Modernising Learning Communities' and 'Developing the Welsh Language', as they are two separate matters.

THEME 3: CLARITY AND DETAIL	
Ref.	**Examples / Summary of the type of comments made**
1	The Strategy does not include enough detail / would like more clarity on proposed plan
2	Feel as if the decision has already been made
3	Survey has been worded so that you can only agree with the statement
4	It is too ambitious to have a new Anglesey wide Post 16 provision operational by 2025

THEME 4: THE NET ZERO AGENDA	
Ref.	**Examples / Summary of the type of comments made**
1	Retrofitting existing buildings would be more efficient and cheaper than closing schools and creating new buildings.
2	Closing schools will result in further travelling distances and the need for buses – particularly in rural areas. This will lead to increased carbon footprint.

APPENDIX 3 - Further examples of comments made via the on line survey in response to the question:

"We would like to know your views on the effects that the 'Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy' would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.

What effects do you think there would be?

How can positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?"

Ref.	Examples / Summary of the type of comments made
1	Closing schools will have a detrimental effect on the Welsh Language
2	The Welsh Language is already treated equally / favourably
3	There is already too much focus on developing the Welsh language in schools
4	All schools should be equally responsible for developing the Welsh language, by providing education through the medium of Welsh
5	No support is offered to non-Welsh-speaking parents to be able to support their children in their learning
6	Schools should work more with third party companies and the community to develop the Welsh language
7	There should be a review to see if the Welsh language centres provide value for money.
8	More use should be made of the language centres
9	All teaching staff should be fluently bilingual, and there should be a minimum number of school governors that should be Welsh speakers on each governing body. Governing bodies should conduct meetings in Welsh.
10	Parents need to be encouraged to use the Welsh language at home
11	Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language should be two separate strategies
12	If implemented effectively the strategy should have a positive effect on the Welsh language
13	Schools need more budget to allow more resources to develop the Welsh Language
14	Nurseries within communities contribute towards developing the Welsh language
15	Removing post 16 provision will have a detrimental effect on the Welsh language
16	Student language skills should be assessed independently
17	3-16 / 3-18 schools will have a detrimental effect on language skills of younger pupils

Ref.	Examples / Summary of the type of comments made
18	There is not enough detail within the strategy stating how development of the Welsh language will be measured
19	There needs to be more opportunaties for young people to stay on Anglesey
20	There needs to be more Welsh content on social media
21	There is a need to simplify written communication in Welsh – to be more similar to how it is spoken

APPENDIX 4 - Further examples of comments made via the on line survey in response to the STATEMENT:

"Please also explain how you believe the 'Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy' could be used or changed to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language, and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language."

Ref.	Examples / Summary of the type of comments made
1	Closing small / rural schools will have a detrimental effect on the Welsh Language
2	Extra Curriculum activities should be undertaken in Welsh from school sites
3	Welsh language should be promoted in schools – some added that this should include parents as well
4	There needs to be more opportunities for young people to stay on Anglesey
5	Welsh lessons should be available locally – possibly from school sites
6	The Welsh Language is already treated equally / favourably
7	There is already too much focus on developing the Welsh language in schools
8	Welsh should be developed in homes and communities as well as at schools
9	Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language should be two separate strategies
10	If implemented effectively the strategy should have a positive effect on the Welsh language
11	Schools need more budget to allow more resources to develop the Welsh Language
12	Nurseries within communities contribute towards developing the Welsh language
13	All post 16 provision should be billingual
14	Combining and reducing the number of schools
15	Need to address the tendency to use English on corridors / school yard at secondary schools
16	Need to monitor how other developments have effected the Welsh language
17	Policies need to be more favourable towards the Welsh language
18	There needs to be more Welsh content on social media

APPENDIX 5 – CONSULTATION WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Arrangements

Council officers conducted consultation meetings with pupils of primary and secondary school age to hear their views on the draft strategy.

For the primary sector, five consultations meetings were held via Zoom. There was one session for primary schools within each of the secondary school catchment areas.

Each primary school was asked to nominate 3 pupils from their school to participate.

A separate meeting was held for secondary school pupils. This meeting was also held via Zoom. Each Secondary School was asked to nominate 3 pupils to participate in the consultation session.

A face to face session was held with 3 pupils from Canolfan Addysg Y Bont.

We also undertook an additional session to allow a second chance for anyone who was unable to attend their allocated session.

A presentation was prepared for each group, and was presented in a way which was relevant to their age and learning ability. The contents of the presentations had been agreed with Headteachers beforehand.

The children were reminded of Article 12: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

'Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account'.

Primary Consultation Sessions

The Primary children were asked the following questions:

Do you disagree or agree with the reasons ‘Why change is needed’?

Do you disagree or agree with ‘What we want to achieve’?

Do you disagree or agree with ‘How we suggest to do this’?

Do you have anything else you would like to say about the plan / strategy?

Do you have any ideas about how we can ensure the plan / strategy supports and increases the use of the Welsh Language?

Pupils from 23 primary schools participated in the consultation sessions. There was a mixture of Girls and Boys, and a good representation from schools of small, medium and large sizes.

Pupils from 16/23 (70%) of the primary schools which participated agreed with the reasons 'Why Change is Needed'.

There was strong support amongst pupils to the question 'Do you disagree or agree with 'What we want to achieve'?' - pupils from 91% of the schools which participated agreed, 9% were not sure, and no-one disagreed.

The response to the question 'Do you disagree or agree with 'How we suggest to do this'?', was similar to the response to the first question, with pupils from 68% of the schools which participated in agreement,

Comments made by children and young people have been included in part 3 of this report, with agreed minutes shown below.

Secondary Consultation Sessions

The Secondary Pupils were asked the following questions:

Do you disagree or agree with the reasons 'Why change is needed'?

Do you disagree or agree with the Council's vision?

Do you disagree or agree with the 'Drivers for Change / Strategic Objectives'?

Do you have anything else you would like to say about the 'Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy'?

Do you have any ideas about how we can ensure the plan / strategy supports and increases the use of the Welsh Language?

Pupils from 4 Secondary schools participated in the consultation session.

Pupils from all 4 schools agreed with:

The reasons 'Why Change is Needed'

'The Council's Vision'

'Drivers for Change / Strategic Objectives'

There were again similarities between the messages received from pupils, and the feedback to the survey, such as:

Spending needs to be more equal / Pupils should be given equal opportunities

Schools should help communities

Pupils would welcome investment in the school buildings.

The strategy does not include enough information / evidence to support statements.

Support to develop the Welsh Language

More detail can be found within the agreed minutes below.

Canolfan Addysg Y Bont Consultation Session

Pupils from Canolfan Addysg Y Bont were asked the following questions:

Do you disagree or agree with the reasons 'Why change is needed'?

Do you disagree or agree with the Council's vision?

Do you disagree or agree with the 'Drivers for Change / Strategic Objectives'?

Do you have anything else you would like to say about the 'Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy'?

Do you have any ideas about how we can ensure the plan / strategy supports and increases the use of the Welsh Language?

Three pupils from Canolfan Addysg Y Bont attended the consultation session (2 Males and one female, all aged 16 – 18 years old).

All participants agreed with the questions:

Do you disagree or agree with the reasons 'Why change is needed'?

Do you disagree or agree with the Council's vision?

Two of the Three Participants agreed with the question "Do you disagree or agree with the 'Drivers for Change / Strategic Objectives'?", whereas one pupil was unsure.

Their comments can be found within the agreed minutes below.

Agreed Minutes from consultation sessions with children and young people

Primary Schools within Ysgol David Hughes Catchment Area	
How many children attended?	Representatives from Ysgol Llanfairpwll, Llangoed and Llandegfan a total of 9 children (9-11 years old) 5 Female / 4 Male, meeting held on the 10-5-23. One full class from Parc Y Bont (Years 5 and 6) meeting held on the 18-5-23.

Primary Schools within Ysgol David Hughes Catchment Area	
Question	**Answers**
Do you disagree or agree with the reasons 'Why change is needed'?	Llanfairpwll – not sure, school's need to be modernized but we don't want them to close. Llangoed – not sure, don't want to see schools closing. Llandegfan – agree, but the money needs to be spent equally. Parc y Bont – agree because of the climate/environment.
Do you disagree or agree with 'What we want to achieve'?	Llanfairpwll – agree, the Welsh language is important. Llangoed – agree, important that everyone is confident speaking the Welsh language. Llandegfan – agree, well-being is important. Parc y Bont – agree, we think it's important for children to be fluent in both English & Welsh so if that we move away we'll have the same opportunities as everyone else. We have a lot of space outside of the school but inside the school is quite small. Classrooms not big enough for everyone.
Do you disagree or agree with 'How we suggest to do this'?	Llangoed – not sure, need to improve the school's technology, internet not the best. Need to spend on buildings to improve them. Llandegfan – not sure how it would affect our school. Llanfairpwll –not sure , need to improve buildings Parc y Bont – agree, Headteachers should be in the classrooms as well , so that they can get to know the pupils. Every headteacher has qualified to teach therefore would be a waste of a qualification if they didn't teach. More friends in smaller schools.
Do you have anything else you would like to say about the plan / strategy?	Llanfairpwll – houses are expensive which means people have to move away and therefore less children in our school. Parc y Bont – how is this plan going to affect smaller schools like ours?
Do you have any ideas about how we can ensure the plan / strategy supports and increases the use of the Welsh Language?	Llangoed – Welsh club in school and outside of school. Llanfairpwll – visit other school's and hold Welsh activities. Llandegfan – increase how much Welsh is spoken, need more Welsh celebrations. Urdd improves the Welsh language Parc y Bont – more Welsh posters about, around the community promoting the Welsh language

Primary Schools within Ysgol Gyfun Llangefni Catchment Area	
Who Attended?	Representatives from Ysgol Corn Hir, Esceifiog, Talwrn, Santes Dwynwen, Y Graig, Llanbedrgoch and Henblas totalling approximately 30 children together with a full class from Ysgol Bodffordd (Years 4,5,6), meeting held on the 10 -5-23.
Question	**Answers**
Do you disagree or agree with the reasons 'Why change is needed'?	Corn Hir – agree Bodffordd – agree Esceifiog – agree Talwrn – not sure, you get more of a community feel in a smaller school Santes Dwynwen – not sure, we have a new school but a lot of empty spaces Graig – agree Llanbedrgoch – not sure, we enjoy having a small school, everyone knows eachother Henblas - agree
Do you disagree or agree with 'What we want to achieve'?	Santes Dwynwen – agree Graig – agree Llanbedrgoch – agree Corn Hir – agree Bodffordd – agree Talwrn – agree Esceifiog – agree Henblas – agree, to speak more Welsh
Do you disagree or agree with 'How we suggest to do this'?	Henblas – agree Esceifiog – agree Santes Dwynwen – agree Graig – unsure, money seems to be going to bigger schools, needs to be distributed evenly Bodffordd – agree & share everything equally Llanbedrgoch – agree, small schools are important Corn Hir - agree
Do you have anything else you would like to say about the plan / strategy?	Esceifiog – more Welsh, maybe the use of technology to promote the Welsh language. Staff need to be paid better so that they stay in their jobs. We also need new windows and doors to keep the heat in the building. Need a new arts room and more space in general. Henblas – Welsh lessons in the village Corn Hir – more Welsh books in the school Graig – a green screen or more technological devices, and for it to be used less for bullying Bodffordd – more visits from people outside the school to talk about different things, different activities Santes Dwynwen – too many holiday homes in the area, no houses for local people Llanbedrgoch – more activities
Do you have any ideas about how we can ensure the plan / strategy supports and	Graig – stickers for whoever speaks more Welsh, also need more Welsh television programmes Santes Dwynwen – more Welsh being used in this new school than there was in the old school (before they joined together)

Primary Schools within Ysgol Gyfun Llangefni Catchment Area	
increases the use of the Welsh Language?	Llanbedrgoch – make more use of the Language Centres so that children can be educated Henblas – more Welsh software Esceifiog – we need to hear more Welsh rock bands Bodffordd – award the Welsh

Primary Schools within Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern Catchment Area	
How many children?	Representatives from Ysgol Y Ffridd, Llanerchymedd, Bodedern and Rhyd y Llan totalling 14 children (9-11 years old) 5 Female / 9 Male, meeting held on the 10-5-23
Question	**Answers**
Do you disagree or agree with the reasons 'Why change is needed'?	Ffridd – agree Llanerchymedd – agree Bodedern – agree but some school's don't need to change everything Rhyd y Llan – agree
Do you disagree or agree with 'What we want to achieve'?	Rhyd y Llan – agree, need more Welsh in the community Llanerchymedd – agree Bodedern – agree, important to understand Welsh, need English people to learn Welsh Ffridd – agree with Rhyd y Llan. Lots of friends who don't speak Welsh in Holyhead.
Do you disagree or agree with 'How we suggest to do this'?	Bodedern – agree, the building is suitable, but we could use more space. Lots of children but not enough space Llanerchymedd – agree, our school needs to be modernised, it's an old building, and it needs new windows and doors. Ffridd – unsure, receive less attention in big schools because of larger pupil numbers in large schools. Children do not get the same opportunities, attention, and experiences that children in smaller schools get.) In small schools we can all play football, more opportunities in smaller schools.
Do you have anything else you would like to say about the plan / strategy?	Bodedern – nothing to add Ffridd – smaller schools don't get as much money as bigger schools Rhyd Y Llan – will there be school closures? Llanerchymedd – nothing to add
Do you have any ideas about how we can ensure the plan / strategy supports and increases the use of the Welsh Language?	Ffridd – important to have 2 languages, potential for a better job in the future. Seems to be more English spoken since Covid. Suggests separate classes for Welsh and English students. Bodedern – Welsh club in the Village Hall and language charts. Lots of Welsh activities happening in Adran Bro Alaw on the weekend. Band of the week, (Welsh bands)

Primary Schools within Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern Catchment Area	
	Ffridd – parents need to learn Welsh, Welsh app maybe?

Primary Schools within Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones Catchment Area	
How many children?	Representatives from Ysgol Amlwch , Cemaes, Garreglefn totalling 9 children (10-11 years old) 6 Female / 3 Male , meeting held on the 15-5-23 . School Council from Ysgol Rhosybol meeting held 18-5-23
Question	**Answers**
Do you disagree or agree with the reasons 'Why change is needed'?	Amlwch – agree, we need to change to improve. Our school is like a big school, trying to improve our Welsh. Cemaes – disagree, a bigger school wouldn't make a different with the education Garreglefn – disagree, prefer a smaller school Rhosybol – agree but need more information. If small schools closed no one would want to live in Rhosybol without a school
Do you disagree or agree with 'What we want to achieve'?	Cemaes – unsure Amlwch – important to have potential and to speak bilingually so we have better job opportunities. Schools also need to be eco-friendly Garreglefn – unsure Rhosybol – agree, everyone needs the same opportunities. We need bigger classrooms. Need fairness for everyone.
Do you disagree or agree with 'How we suggest to do this'?	Garreglefn – disagree, feel more comfortable in a smaller school Amlwch – agree, we're quite lucky as we have a Sports Centre nearby. Our headteacher can manage instead of teaching. Lot of smaller schools cause carbon. Cemaes – if we had a new school we might have to drive there which would cause more carbon. Rhosybol–we need more details, not enough information on the slides, what is the better offer?
Do you have anything else you would like to say about the plan / strategy?	Amlwch – change doesn't always mean closures. Garreglefn – what will happen to the old schools if the schools start merging? Rhosybol – if there were more jobs on the island more people would stay here
Do you have any ideas about how we can ensure the plan / strategy supports and	Cemaes – this school always speaks Welsh, during lunchtimes also. Everyone's friendly. Amlwch – more people need to speak Welsh, maybe create posters or badges. 'Sgwad Safonau', might be a good idea for other schools. If they speak Welsh give them an award.

Primary Schools within Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones Catchment Area	
increases the use of the Welsh Language?	Garreglefn – no ideas as of yet Rhosybol – make use of the Language Centres.

Primary Schools within Ysgol Uwchradd Caergybi Catchment Area	
Who Attended?	Representatives from Ysgol Cybi,Llanfawr and Tywyn, totaling 9 children (10-11 years old) 5 Female / 4 Male, meeting held 10-5-23
Question	**Answers**
Do you disagree or agree with the reasons 'Why change is needed'?	Cybi – agree Llanfawr – agree Tywyn - agree
Do you disagree or agree with 'What we want to achieve'?	Cybi – agree Llanfawr – agree, we need more companies/businesses to come to the school to give talks, more work experience Tywyn - agree
Do you disagree or agree with 'How we suggest to do this'?	Llanfawr – agree Tywyn – agree, but don't want to travel far to go to school Cybi – agree, enjoy the new school. Make work equal and ensure every subject gets equally taught. Maybe teach parents to speak Welsh at home more.
Do you have anything else you would like to say about the plan / strategy?	
Do you have any ideas about how we can ensure the plan / strategy supports and increases the use of the Welsh Language?	Llanfawr – parents to work on their Welsh, children to teach adults? Cook through Welsh? Make it enjoyable? Tywyn-more lessons for parents so that they can learn to speak Welsh at home with the children Cybi – shops and maybe fast food restaurants to talk more Welsh, give free food if you speak Welsh. Download more Welsh apps.

Secondary Schools	
How many children?	Representatives from : Ysgol Uwchradd Caerbybi (YUC) meeting held 18-5-23 Uwchradd Bodedern, David Hughes(YDH) a Syr Thomas Jones(YSTJ) meeting held 15-5-23 In total 10 pupils and Criw Cyngor YSTJ (13-18 years old) 7 Female / 3 Male
Question	**Answers**
Do you disagree or agree with the reasons 'Why change is needed'?	Bodedern – too much difference between each schools with regards to spending, the spending needs to be more equal YSTJ – agree that change needs to be done but unsure what kind of change YDH – agree, we understand some schools are quite old but we have a new Sports Hall YUC – agree, but one small school closed in Holyhead to combine multiple schools together, about 150 houses were built so has the carbon really decreased?
Do you disagree or agree with 'What we want to achieve'?	YSTJ – agree with the vision, happy with some things but also need to change some aspects Bodedern – agree but the school could also help the community, the money needs to also service the community YDH – agree but not sure YUC – agree, if we have new buildings students tend to respect them more. Need more activities in the school. We don't have a playing field to play basketball/netball, the gyms are old, ceiling falling down. H&S risk.
Do you disagree or agree with 'How we suggest to do this'?	YDH – agree with the change reasons, would like to know how. Will pupils be able to give their opinions? YSTJ – agree, all need to improve on certain parts that need more improvement. Don't need to add anything new, need to enhance what we already have. Bodedern – agree, how would you help each pupil bilingually? Our school is quite small, does everyone get the same standard of Education?

Secondary Schools	
	YUC – good ideas but the consequences for students are not clear and what effect this is going to have on us. The document needs to be clearer therefore overall unsure.
Do you have anything else you would like to say about the plan / strategy?	Bodedern – no additional comments YDH – no comments to add YSTJ – no YUC – we again feel there's no evidence backing up these questions, we need more information
Do you have any ideas about how we can ensure the plan / strategy supports and increases the use of the Welsh Language?	Bodedern – is it possible to have a Language Unit this side of the Island? Aware there's one in Moelfre. YDH – aware that the Language Unit works, would it be possible to have something like that in the school instead of having to physically go to the Units? YUC – we feel that there is a emphasis in Primary schools on the Welsh language therefore beneficial when students go to Secondary school it's a positive.

Canolfan Addysg Y Bont	
How many children?	3 pupils (16-18 years old) 1 Female / 2 Male, meeting held 16-5-23
Question	**Answers**
Do you disagree or agree with the reasons 'Why change is needed'?	Agree – life would be boring without change
Do you disagree or agree with the Council's vision?	Agree – the changes will help more people
Do you disagree or agree with the 'Drivers for Change / Strategic Objectives'?	2 pupils agreed and 1 pupil wasn't sure
Do you have anything else you would like to say about the 'Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy'?	Have different menus for food and bigger portions. Would like more space for play.
Do you have any ideas about how we can ensure the plan / strategy supports and increases the use of the Welsh Language?	Read more Welsh books in school, have more reading books in Welsh, speak more Welsh with pupils

APPENDIX 6 – Response from the Welsh Language Society (Cymdeithas yr Iaith)

It is difficult to accept that the document is a serious attempt to evaluate options to "modernise" learning communities or to develop the Welsh language. Instead, the Council's officers have returned to the ongoing obsession that has been highlighted over the last two decades of closing Welsh village schools as the only option. In this regard, the culture of the Council has not changed whatsoever, it has not learnt anything from the Commissioners' intervention – and particularly the Education Commissioner Gareth Jones – in 2013, nor has it learnt from the Minister for Education's intervention three years ago.

The attempt to dress an old obsession and prejudice in the new clothes of an anti-poverty agenda, or to reduce the carbon footprint, is not convincing either. It is clear that closing schools in village communities means that more people have to travel, and it would be poor families that are most affected by this. It is argued that the demographics of the county have changed and that there is a smaller proportion of young people in our communities. But if a school in a village closes, young families will be even less likely to settle in them.

The first lesson from the past comes from the period of the Education Commissioner, Gareth Jones, in 2013 **https://golwg.360.cymru/newyddion/cymru/79132-cyngor-ynys-mon-am-ail-ymgynghori-ar-ddyfodol-tair-ysgol**.
At the time, Mr Jones proposed a more superior strategy to modernise learning communities, coordinate education provision and ensure financial savings. His plan was to provide education based on secondary school catchment areas, with one governing board for the catchment area as a representative council to take decisions in terms of sharing resources between schools, planning joint activities, promoting the transition from primary to secondary, centralised administration and purchasing arrangements, and therefore freeing up individual school headteachers to focus on educational leadership and teaching with local community liaison committees. The savings would then be made within the administrative arrangements rather than by depriving communities of educational provision. 3-16 Schools in town areas could be part of such a reorganisation. The document does not discuss or evaluate this approach, or any other alternative option.

This strategy completely misunderstands the Welsh Government's policy and guidance. It is said that the Minister for Education is seeking to promote "Community Focused Schools". But the meaning of the phrase is not to centralise schools (having closed village schools), but rather to have schools that are open to their communities, and that can contribute to socio-economic regeneration. In centralising educational provision, the Council would by definition move education further away from the participation of communities - in terms of supporting their children's education and using their own resources.

The interpretation of community education is too simplistic. Of course, there is a need to develop particular resources in central locations. They would serve the pupils of the centralised school and those of surrounding schools and also adults outside of school hours. But there are other activities in terms of community education - mainly informal ones - where it is more suitable to provide the community education in the village school (sometimes with the help of voluntary organisations) e.g., Literacy, family learning, pre-school groups and the assimilation of incomers with Welsh lessons and community education so that they take

ownership of their learning. Community education needs to be planned on a catchment area basis.

It is beyond belief that this strategy suggests that the way to "develop the Welsh language" is to remove Welsh village schools from communities. These are the establishments that ensure the link between the community and the Welsh language and are a means of assimilating incomers. We are also concerned about what is loosely implied by the use of expressions such as "Welsh and bilingual education". It is important for the Council to respond to the Government's new linguistic categorisation system by designating the schools as Welsh schools in the highest category to avoid any uncertainty.

The School Organisation Code - even before the publication of the revised 2018 version, and now even in the context of schools that were not put on the official list of Rural Schools - requires that options be considered and evaluated rather than adopting a strategy of closing schools as the main option.
Particular reference is made to Federation, the plan favoured by the Member of the Senedd Rhun ap Iorwerth, namely multi-site community schools, and there is also the more ambitious plan by Gareth Jones that was referred to. This document does not evaluate any alternative options.
In terms of the cost of maintaining buildings, discussions have been held in other counties about the possibility of transferring a school building to a community trust (which could attract funding from various sources to improve the building) and then renting only the required space for the organisation of a school. It will not be sufficient to state that the alternative options will be considered (in classic "cut & paste" mode) when individual proposals are received to close schools. This document will form the Authority's initial position when entering into any statutory process, and therefore in practice represents a presumption against keeping a rural school open, which is entirely contrary to the School Organisation Code 2018.
By adopting this draft strategy, the Council would leave itself open to either expensive legal challenges or intervention from central Government. The Welsh Language Society (Cymdeithas yr Iaith) does not wish to see one or the other of these scenarios happen as we believe passionately in local democracy, and therefore we now implore the Council to pursue a course of collaboration with local communities.

Section 3.1 of the School Organisation Code highlights that the information given in this draft strategy is factually incorrect. It is clearly stated "Case law has established that the consultation process should be undertaken when proposals are still at a formative stage". In other words, the Council is initially obliged to hold informal discussions "with an open mind" with governors and the local community, before formulating any proposal. But this Draft Strategy clearly states under "Legislative Process" that stage 1 will involve officers preparing a Proposal Paper and then seeking councillors' permission to consult on their plan - rather than forming a proposal in collaboration with the local community.
A culture of "In our professional opinion" and contempt for the views of local communities runs throughout this draft strategy. Even if the exact wording is changed now - as opposed to a complete reconsideration of the strategy – in any individual disputes, it will be possible to refer to this document as proof that the Authority has formed a presumption AGAINST keeping village schools.

The statutory obligation to hold informal and non-statutory discussions with local communities before formulating proposals, and the necessity to completely review this draft strategy means that the proposed implementation timetable is completely impractical. BUT that should not mean delaying applications for funding from the Communities for Learning Fund - there was a delay in the case of Ysgol Corn Hir during futile attempts to close Ysgol Bodffordd. A letter from the current Minister for Education to the Welsh Language Society highlights that an application for funding from the Fund must not be dependent on the closure of other schools, and that it is also possible to apply for funding to upgrade small schools. This strategy should clearly state that rural communities also have a right to investment, following decades of neglect.

"Government guidelines for formulating applications for funding from the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme fund" (formerly the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Fund) state quite clearly:

"In an application there should also be a commitment to improving public services and community use. These considerations include –
** Are the options socially/politically acceptable?*
** Do they support learners walking and cycling to school?*
** An application for funding of less than £5million is more straightforward and requires only one single document, the "Business Justification Case"*
** Key words indicating Revenue expenditure - "Repair, Maintenance, Change, Like for Like, Restoration or Renewal "*

These are very clear guidelines which advise against an attempt to force bureaucratic changes on dissatisfied communities and to invite moderate applications to improve small schools' existing buildings. It is not necessary to focus exclusively on major applications for new schools that attract attention.

There is considerable emphasis in the document on unused space in village schools. But the School Organisation Code (2018) encourages Authorities to look for an alternative use of surplus space, for community or Council purposes, rather than being a reason to close a school. A space could also be decommissioned, or an Art Space could be created within it for use by local school pupils and the community.

There is also a considerable emphasis on the "Cost Per Pupil" of educating pupils. This is a mathematical formula, as the real cost of running the school is the same and, once again, the School Organisation Code warns against overemphasising this argument when determining the future of rural schools. Of course, all public services cost more to deliver in a rural area than in a populated urban area, but there are fewer public services overall in rural areas and therefore the total expenditure per pupil is likely to be less. We acknowledge that there is genuine concern here that there is insufficient funding for the additional costs of providing education in rural areas. But the situation should be redressed through political pressure on central government rather than by depriving rural communities of even more services so that only wealthier incomers can afford to live in them.

It can only be concluded that this is a depressing and unimaginative strategy, a continuation of a bureaucratic culture of organising education, and lacking in any attempt to harness community energy to improve our education and regenerate our communities. We call on the

Elected Members of the Council to demand an entirely new approach, but to proceed without delay in terms of funding applications where a case has already been prepared. Positive requests for funding where improvements and new resources are greatly needed must not be dependent on negative decisions to deprive other communities of their schools.

The Welsh Language Society Education Group
May 2023

APPENDIX 7 – Response from Grŵp Llandrillo Menai

“We very much welcome the consultation taking place and agree with the drivers for change identified in the paper together with the need to ensure that the education provision, primary and secondary and post-16, is sustainable on the island for the future.

As an important educational establishment on the island, we very much look forward to working with the authority to realise its vision and to play a central role in the developments. We believe that we have a significant contribution to make to the process as an organisation that has an excellent strategic relationship with the authority, this is demonstrated by the Partnership Memorandum we recently signed. We strongly believe that we can be a full and valuable partner in future negotiations.”

APPENDIX 8 – Response from Mudiad Meithrin

Do you disagree or agree with the reasons 'why continuous change is required' (as noted in the '**Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy')**

☐ Strongly disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Not sure
☐ Agree
☐ Strongly agree

Do you disagree or agree with the 'Vision and Leading Principles'? (as noted in the '**Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy')**

☐ Strongly disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Not sure
☐ Agree
☐ Strongly agree

Do you disagree or agree with the 'Drivers for Change / Strategic Objectives' (as noted in the '**Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy')**

☐ Strongly disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Not sure
☐ Agree
☐ Strongly agree

Do you have any further comments on the draft '**Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy**?

It is disappointing to see the extent to which the numbers of children have fallen and the prospects in terms of future numbers of children. In that respect, it is possible to understand the motivation behind the modernisation plans.
In order to plan for the future, attention must be paid to the county's wider policy plans which will create opportunities for families and young people to remain on the island rather than moving to urban / city areas. It is important that departments work together in order to respond to the depopulation challenge. Equally, it is necessary to take into account the implications of the changes on language transmission within families.
Although we recognise the need to plan for the future, we must also consider what impact developments in other policy areas have on care and educational provisions across the island. Is ensuring and planning for adequate care and educational provision being

addressed in local development plans, housing planning policies and other economic developments on the island?
Merging schools - what effect will this have on the ability of 'Cylchoedd Meithrin' playgroups to provide a pre-school service in the communities? It is important to include the early years sector and the non-maintained sector in planning to modernise education on the island. In the CM groups, a large number of children start there and then move on to the schools. We believe that some small rural CM groups should be maintained within some communities, and that some groups can be merged to create larger ones in other locations, but we must work together with MM to plan appropriately in the early stages. Merging CM groups can also contribute to the challenge within our sector in recruiting a qualified Welsh-speaking workforce. Similarly, the same principle applies in having to recruit a fewer number of management committee members, as in the case of School Governors, but the opportunity should be used to strengthen individuals' expertise and skills.
What effect will community schools have on the Cylchoedd Meithrin's ability to provide a Flying Start service to families within pram-pushing distance of their homes - we argue that there is role for small Cylchoedd Meithrin groups in some places in ensuring access to Welsh medium early years care and education provision for all children.
The implications of merging/relocating for Cylchoedd Meithrin groups, e.g., re-registering the provision with CIW, redundancies, or merging staff (TUPE, consultation etc.), closing charities and creating new structures, relocation costs, together with administrative work. Investment should be considered to support those provisions that will need to close/merge/move to school sites.
Will transport be provided to transport 2 – 4-year-old children from their communities to the larger provisions? There is a considerable risk that families who do not drive will miss out because they cannot get to the provision. Early Years transport is essential if small schools are to be closed. It is not acceptable to offer transport only to children of statutory age. We know that a large number of parents choose schools or childcare that are easy to get to rather than on the basis of language. Public transport is not sustainable for young children nor is it affordable on a daily basis, and therefore the impact of this on parents and carers must be considered.
You must be able to create a sense of belonging to the community provisions if there is no Cylch Meithrin or school in every village.
Does co-locating a service mean that there will be sufficient space from the outset for pre-school care and education? We feel that it is of key importance for Mudiad Meithrin to be involved in the planning process from the beginning.
We feel that joint-working and joint-planning is important, and the Mudiad Meithrin Set Up and Succeed Plan can be beneficial in expanding existing settings and working to open new provisions.
Cylchoedd Meithrin have developed expertise in the care and education of children aged 2 - 4 over the past 50 years, we need to hold on to this expertise and continue to use and develop it. There are excellent examples across Wales of CM groups working closely with schools, providing a service on school sites, and of staff from the Cylchoedd and the schools sharing expertise. These plans are also in line with the Welsh Government's vision for ECEC. Equally, a range of supplementary activities such as the Cymraeg for Kids scheme and Cylchoedd Ti a Fi groups play a key role in creating new speakers, and it is crucially important in terms of the viability of the Welsh language that these are also

allowed to continue. The Cymraeg for Kids and Cylchoedd Ti a Fi groups play a key role in small communities in creating a sense of belonging, and are a means of transition to CM groups and early education provision. The county should invest in these groups.
We can see the advantage of larger settings as they could offer longer hours and a better career development path for staff. Providing full day care can contribute to the local economy, allowing parents to return to work. Offering longer hours/full time will attract practitioners to the workforce. However, it is important to ensure that arrangements to develop and build a highly qualified workforce are prioritised, consideration should be given to investing in the Cam Wrth Gam training plan and the MM schools plan.
Training expertise is available through the Cam Wrth Cam scheme to ensure a qualified workforce that can work through the medium of Welsh.
In terms of the cost per pupil, would having fewer small provisions mean that more funding would be available to fund education for 3-year-old children in larger provisions? Is this an opportunity to harmonise the rate per head whether it is the Childcare Offer or DD?
Welsh is the only language medium used within Cylchoedd Meithrin education and care provision. When becoming a member, the Cylchoedd commit to the Language Policy, and cannot operate under the Cylch Meithrin name unless they commit to this. In modernising education on the Island, is this an opportunity to develop Early Years care and education to be Immersion services only? Since the vision is to create purely bilingual speakers by the end of their time at school, then couldn't Cylchoedd Meithrin provide the solid foundation required for that journey? You would get the support and language plans from MM and Cwlwm, and it can help the English medium sector to progress along the language continuum in childcare provisions.
Losing schools and Cylchoedd Meithrin from the communities means losing the heart of a community, when a school closes in a village the effect is far-reaching, people become strangers, shops close.... What about the roles of other organisations such as the Urdd, the 'Aelwydydd', and the Language Initiative? This is an opportunity to ensure input that can continue to support communities.
What will the implications be in terms of funding CM if it is necessary to merge, or if some decide to continue within their communities? Local jobs need to be protected.
What are the implications of this for children with ALN? How do we ensure access for those children to GP or school provision if it is not within the community?
Families from various ethnic communities must be considered, is moving the community school an obstacle for them, especially those who wish to have Welsh-medium education or care for their children?

We would like to know your views on the effects that the '**Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy**' would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.

What effects do you think there would be?

How can positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

We note that the results of the 2021 Census have highlighted the need for deliberate action to increase the numbers who can speak Welsh throughout Wales, and that the education system and the early years care and education sector have an integral role to play in moving towards this goal.
There is a strong relationship between the availability of Welsh medium early years care and education in the non-maintained sector and the start of the child's statutory education journey in the statutory sector. We cannot over-emphasise the importance of working with Mudiad Meithrin and Cwlwm in order to plan to ensure the provision of Welsh-medium early years care and education, within easy reach of every community on Anglesey, to realise the aim of creating and increasing the demand for Welsh-medium statutory education in its communities.
It is very important to recognise the role of schemes such as Cymraeg for Kids which support parents through their community support groups to learn and pass on the Welsh language to their children at home, as well as raising awareness of the benefits of Welsh language education.
We must also consider linguistic support for the workforce and how we can develop a young workforce to take over in the future.
Pre-statutory sector transport is essential to ensure that all children have access to Welsh medium early years care and education.

Please also explain how you believe the '**Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy**' could be used or changed to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language, and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Ensuring that all children and young people are fully bilingual, and can use Welsh and English equally at the end of their time at school, is one of the guiding principles. In order to achieve this goal, the plans must ensure that the Welsh language, and Welsh-medium early years care and education provisions are visible in all of Anglesey's communities. Immersion, which is important in the Early Years, will lay a solid foundation for children when moving on to their statutory education. Cwlwm's partners are committed to developing the linguistic skills of childcare provisions (excluding CM) in order to support the English / bilingual sector workforce to progress along the language continuum. Mudiad Meithrin is prepared to meet with Anglesey County Council to discuss how we can work together to ensure the continuity of Welsh-medium early years provisions and services across the island in the future.

In implementing any modernisation strategy, it will be necessary to develop a joint timetable with partners, including Mudiad Meithrin and Cwlwm's other partners, in order to ensure continuity and development for these services.
It will also be necessary to consider the impact of the Welsh Government's childcare policy for 2 and 3-year-olds in any developments and changes that affect (intentionally or unintentionally) the availability and demand for early years care and education services for these families.
It must also be remembered that providing services such as Cymraeg for Kids groups and Cylchoedd Ti a Fi is an important part of ensuring the presence of the Welsh language and fostering a sense of community among young families. It will also be necessary to consider how the proposals affect the ability of less formal groups to continue to serve communities, in the case of where the closure of a school will lead to the closure of the only suitable facilities in the area.
How can we ensure access to Welsh language education for communities from different ethnic backgrounds if the local school closes? How can we avoid this obstacle for them?
The cost of living challenge and the impact of having to travel to the nearest Welsh school for disadvantaged families must be considered. Travel costs can be challenging if there is no transport, and if there is transport, how can parents be persuaded to allow their 3-year-old children to travel by school bus? It is necessary to think about holding parents' hands through this process so that they can see the value in the effort to choose a Welsh medium education.,

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Equality Impact Assessment Template (including the Welsh language and the Socio-Economic Duty)

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

Version	Date	Summary of changes
1	05/06/23	First Version

Step 1: Background	
1 - What are you assessing?	Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy
2 - Is this a new or existing proposal?	This is a new Strategy, based on the 'Education Modernisation Strategy' adopted by the Executive Committee on 15 October 2018.
3 - What are the aims and purpose of this proposal?	Identifying the current challenges which require attention. To agree on the 'Vision and Leading Principles' and the 'Drivers for Change / Strategic Objectives'. When the strategy is adopted, the above considerations will be used to assess different options when progressing with the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme (WG)

Step 1: Background		
4 - Who is responsible for the proposal you are assessing?	Marc B Hughes Director of Education, Skills and Young People	
5 - Who is the lead officer for this assessment?	Arwyn Hughes – Corporate Programme Manager	
6 - Who else is involved in undertaking this assessment?	Aaron Evans – Senior Manager – Secondary Sector Gethin Morgan – Programme Manager, Business Planning and Performance Alun Roberts – Corporate Programme Manager Emrys Bebb – Corporate Programme Manager Carol Sorahan – Corporate Programme Manager	
7 - Is the proposal related to other areas of work? For example, are there other proposals of policies that should be taken into consideration as part of this assessment?	Yes – This proposal is in line with the objectives / the need that has been identified within the Council Plan. It is also based on the 'Education Modernisation Strategy' adopted by The Executive Committee on 15 October 2018. The Strategy wil also conform with the 'Towards Net Zero Plan (March 2022 – March 2025)'	
8 - Is the proposal relevant to how the Authority complies with the public sector general duty relating to people who are protected by the Equality Act 2010?	The elimination of discrimination and harassment	✓
	The advancement of equality of opportunity	✓
	The fostering of good relations	✓

Step 1: Background		
As a general rule, any policy that affects people is likely to be relevant across all protected groups.	The protection and promotion of human rights	✓
9 – Is the proposal a strategic decision? If so, the Socio-Economic Duty is relevant - see appendix 1.	Yes	
10 - Who would be affected by the proposal(s) (adversely or positively, directly or indirectly)? **If this is a strategic proposal**, ensure that you give specific consideration to whether the proposal would affect more on people living in less favourable social and economic circumstances than others in the same society (see appendix 1)	No specific proposal is being made at this stage, however the strategy does highlight drivers for change. If the strategy is adopted, future proposals would be based on these principles. Future proposals to modernise learning communities will consider the drivers for change highlighted within this strategy. When new and specific proposals are made, an individual Impact Assessment will be conducted for each proposal. As the Strategy influences specific proposals for the future, it can be concluded that it could affect a considerable number of stakeholders, including (but not limited to): - Pupils - Parents - School staff - Governors - Local Neighbors etc. This can include people who live in less favorable socio-economic circumstances, and individuals belonging to the groups protected under the 2010 equalities act.	

Step 2.1: Information Gathering – Welsh Language Standards and the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011	
11 - Does this proposal ensure that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language, in accordance with the Council's Welsh Language Policy?	Developing the Welsh Language is a key part of this strategy. If the strategy is adopted, we will seek to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language when developing specific proposals. Specific proposals will be subject to a more comprehensive review of the effect on the Welsh Language.
12 - Is there an opportunity here to offer more opportunities for people to learn and / or use the Welsh language on a day-to-day basis?	It is emphasised again that no specific proposal is being made at this stage. However, if the Strategy is adopted, and as we move forward to look at new proposals, the Strategy states that there will be: "Opportunities to develop and strengthen the Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in the classroom and in informal contexts." (including at community level). Further consideration will be given to this when developing specific proposals.
13 – Will this area of work proactively offer services in Welsh for users?	As above
14 – Is this proposal likely to protect and promote the Welsh language within communities?	There were mixed views from stakeholders who responded to the consultation on this point. Some expressed their opinion that the strategy as it is would have a favorable effect on promoting the Welsh language, however others expressed concern. The main reason for this concern was the perception amongst some respondents that the strategy could mean the closure of small / rural schools. Several respondents expressed that this would have a detrimental effect on the use of the Welsh language within a community. This was also noted as part of the response of the Welsh Language Society (Cymdeithas yr Iaith) Education Campaign Group. See examples of comments made as part of the consultation report. It is emphasised again that no specific proposal is being made at this stage. However, if the Strategy is adopted, and as we move forward to look at new proposals, the Strategy states that there will be: "Opportunities to develop and strengthen the Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in the classroom and in informal contexts." (including at community level).

Step 2.1: Information Gathering – Welsh Language Standards and the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011
To help you to answer the questions above, the corporate **Impact Assessment Guidance** lists a series of questions which should be considered when assessing how proposals impact on the Welsh language in general. The extent to which these questions are relevant will depend on the proposal in question. However: • If you are looking at how the implementation of the Council's key policies, strategies or guidance would affect the Welsh language; or • If your initial response to the above questions raises any concerns or evidence to suggest that the proposal would treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language, or would have a detrimental impact on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language; **a more comprehensive impact assessment on the Welsh language should be carried out.** A separate template is available on MonITor. The **Welsh Language Commissioner's good practice advice document** is also available on MonITor to assist you further.

Step 2.2: Information Gathering – Human Rights Act 1998	
15 - Are there any Human Rights issues? If so, what are they? For example, could this proposal result in the failure to safeguard the right to privacy?	(The 16 basic rights are listed at Appendix 2). The Strategy will conform with all human rights.

Step 2.3: Information Gathering – Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015		
16 – Does this proposal meet any of the seven national well-being goals outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015? (Descriptions of the wellbeing goals are listed at Appendix 3)	A prosperous Wales	✓
	A resilient Wales	✓
	A healthier Wales	✓
	A more equal Wales	✓
	A Wales of cohesive communities	✓
	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	✓

	A globally responsible Wales	✓

Step 2.4: Information Gathering – Engagement / Consultation / Evidence / Filling gaps in information Please see the pre-consultation and pre-engagement checklist, which is available on MonITor	
17 - What has been done to date in terms of involvement and consultation with regard to this proposal?	The Council consulted on the draft strategy from 31 March 2023 until 18 May 2023. It wrote directly to Schools and stakeholders (including Headteachers, Governors, Town and Community Councils, Menter Môn, GwE, Estyn, Trade Unions, the local Member of Parliament, Regional Members of Parliament, the local and regional Members of the Senedd, and others) informing them of the consultation period. The school Heads were also asked to share the message with their school's parents, through their usual method of communication. The consultation was also advertised through our social media and on the Council's website. Briefing sessions were held with all the Members, Headteachers, and Governors, and a series of consultation sessions were held with children and young people. Almost 300 responses to the consultation were received. All the responses have been considered before presenting this Strategy. Overall, the majority of responses agreed with the reasons as to 'why continuous change is required', the 'Vision and Leading Principles' and the 'Drivers for Change / Strategic Objectives'. However, some noted their concerns about aspects of the strategy. The main concern was that closing small / rural schools could have a negative impact on the Welsh language and on communities.

	Drafting and reaching an agreement on the strategy was also an integral part of the work which is recognised as an action in the new Council Plan which was consulted on extensively. All citizens, businesses and partners were asked to participate in the consultation on the Council Plan, and over 2,500 responses to the consultation were received.
18 – What other information have you used to inform your assessment? Please list any reports, websites, links used etc here and include the relevant evidence in the table in Step 3 below	- The Council Plan - PLASC – Numbers Data - Estyn Inspection Report on Anglesey County Council - Census Data - Stats Wales - Building Condition Data – Property Department - Responses to the consultation on the strategy
19 - Are there any gaps in the information collected to date? If so, how will these be addressed?	No - The information collected to date is complete for the purpose of presenting the Strategy.

Step 3: Considering the potential impact and identifying mitigating action

20 – Note below any likely impact on equality for each individual group, and identify what action could be taken to reduce or improve the impact. *For determining potential impact, please choose from the following: **Negative / Positive / No impact**

Protected group	***Potential Impact**	**Details of the impact** (including evidence to support the findings)	**Actions to mitigate negative impact**
Age	No specific proposal is being made at this stage. If the Strategy is adopted, and as we move forward to look at new proposals, we will consider the impact of the proposal on this group as part of the Impact Assessment on that proposal.		
Disability		Note that one of the Strategic Objectives and Vision of the strategy will be to ensure that the	

Protected group	***Potential Impact**	**Details of the impact** (including evidence to support the findings)	**Actions to mitigate negative impact**
		wellbeing and inclusion of learners is a priority and a core consideration in any educational matter.	
Sex		No specific proposal is being made at this stage. If the Strategy is adopted, and as we move forward to look at new proposals, we will consider the impact of the proposal on this group as part of the Impact Assessment on that proposal. There is no visible evidence that gender discrimination occurs. If problems arise, they will be dealt with sensitively.	
Gender Reassignment		No specific proposal is being made at this stage. If the Strategy is adopted, and as we move forward to look at new proposals, we will consider the impact of the proposal on this group as part of the Impact Assessment on that proposal. There is no visible evidence that gender reassignment discrimination occurs. If problems arise, they will be dealt with sensitively.	
Pregnancy & Maternity		There is no visible evidence that pregnancy and maternity discrimination will occur. If problems arise, they will be dealt with sensitively.	
Race / Ethnicity / Nationality		No specific proposal is being made at this stage. If the Strategy is adopted, and as we move forward to look at new proposals, we will consider the impact of the proposal on this group as part of the Impact Assessment on that proposal.	

Protected group	***Potential Impact**	**Details of the impact** (including evidence to support the findings)	**Actions to mitigate negative impact**
		If problems arise, they will be dealt with sensitively.	
Religion or Belief		No specific proposal is being made at this stage. If the Strategy is adopted, and as we move forward to look at new proposals, we will consider the impact of the proposal on this group as part of the Impact Assessment on that proposal.	
Sexual Orientation		No specific proposal is being made at this stage. If the Strategy is adopted, and as we move forward to look at new proposals, we will consider the impact of the proposal on this group as part of the Impact Assessment on that proposal. There is no visible evidence that sexual orientation discrimination occurs. If problems arise, they will be dealt with sensitively.	
Marriage or Civil Partnership		No specific proposal is being made at this stage. If the Strategy is adopted, and as we move forward to look at new proposals, we will consider the impact of the proposal on this group as part of the Impact Assessment on that proposal. There is no visible evidence that marriage or civil partnership discrimination occurs. If problems arise, they will be dealt with sensitively.	
Welsh language		Ensuring that all children and young people are fully bilingual and able to use Welsh and English equally at the end of their time at school.	

Protected group	***Potential Impact**	**Details of the impact** (including evidence to support the findings)	**Actions to mitigate negative impact**
Human Rights		There is no evidence of any human rights discrimination taking place. If problems arise, they are dealt with sensitively.	
Any other relevant issue.			
There are clear links between equality and socio-economic issues. Discrimination against protected groups can be a direct cause of socio-economic disadvantage. If any such issues become apparent when assessing non-strategic matters, they should be given due regard and recorded under the relevant protected group, or under 'any other relevant issue' above.			

Please complete this section if the proposal is a strategic matter (see appendix 1)			
The Socio-Economic Duty	**Potential impact**	**Details of the impact (including evidence to support the findings**	**Actions to mitigate negative impact**
Is the proposal likely to cause any inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage?		In the Strategic Objectives / Vision section, the strategy refers to: ▪ Schools that are focused on their communities (community-focused schools), with stakeholders and partnerships contributing to this role. ▪ Ensuring that the wellbeing and inclusion of learners is a priority. The two points above can help to reduce the impact on some of the groups experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, for example: By ensuring that schools focus on communities, this can lead to activities and resources becoming available to groups that would not otherwise have access to them, for example due to poverty, living costs, or living in rural locations where there is no public transport.	

Step 4 – Outcome of the assessment

There are four possible outcomes – bear these in mind when completing the next section:

- **No major change -** The assessment demonstrates the proposal is robust; there is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. All opportunities to promote equality have been taken.
- **Adjust the proposal -** The assessment identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. Adjust the proposal to remove barriers or better promote equality.
- **Continue the proposal -** The assessment identifies the potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality. Clearly set out the justifications for continuing with it. The justification should be included in the assessment and must be in line with the duty to have due regard. For the most important relevant proposals, compelling reasons will be needed.
- **Stop and remove the proposal -** The proposal shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination. It must be stopped and removed or changed. (The codes of practice and guidance on each of the public sector duties on the Commission's website provide information about what constitutes unlawful discrimination.)

Step 4: Outcome of the assessment	
21 - Note the impacts identified and how it is intended to mitigate any negative impact in terms of equality, the Welsh language and, if relevant, socio-economic disadvantage (ie a summary of the table/s in step 3)	It is anticipated that the proposal will have a neutral, if not positive, impact in terms of equality, the Welsh language and those who are at a socio-economic disadvantage. The Strategy can lead to a positive impact in terms of equality, through: ▪ "Ensuring that the wellbeing and inclusion of learners is a priority" The Strategy can lead to a positive impact in terms of the Welsh language, through: "Ensuring that all children and young people are fully bilingual and able to use Welsh and English equally at the end of their time at school" However, some of the responses to the consultation (including Cymdeithas yr Iaith's response) indicated their concern that closing schools in communities could

Step 4: Outcome of the assessment	
	have a negative impact on the use of the Welsh language within the community, as the school plays an important role in terms of ensuring a link between the community and the Welsh language and as a means of assimilating incomers. Cymdeithas yr Iaith was also concerned about loose commitment of terms such as "Welsh and bilingual education". They felt that the Council should designate schools as Welsh schools in the highest category to avoid any uncertainty. Should the strategy be adopted, these points will receive further consideration when developing specific proposals. The Strategy can lead to a positive impact on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, through: “Ensuring that the wellbeing and inclusion of learners is a priority”, and through having “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”. When developing specific proposals, we will also consider if the proposal will lead to more travel.
22 - Describe any actions taken to maximise the opportunity to promote equality and the Welsh language, the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (sustainability) and, if relevant, ensure better outcomes for those facing economic disadvantage.	If the Executive Committee adopts the Strategy, individual proposals will be made for each area for the purpose of progressing the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. Individual Impact Assessments will be made for each proposal. As part of the assessments, further consideration will be given in terms of promoting equality and the Welsh language, the aims of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, and to ensure better outcomes for those facing economic disadvantage. We would expect the adoption of the strategy to have a neutral or positive effect on the promotion of Equality, the Welsh language, and those who experience a socio-economic disadvantage, as described above.

Step 4: Outcome of the assessment	
	The Strategy also refers to: "Ensuring that decisions made today effectively contribute towards environmental and climate change matters." We would expect this to contribute towards achieving the aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
23 - Would any aspect of the proposal contravene the wellbeing goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?	No
24 – Is there a need to look at what could be done differently, or to reconsider the entire proposal as a result of conducting this assessment? (Evidence of negative impact could render the proposal or decision unlawful. If you have identified negative impact, you should consider at this stage whether it is possible to proceed with the proposal).	No
25 - Is there a strategy for dealing with any unavoidable but not unlawful negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?	At present, no negative impact has been identified, however some concerns have been raised as part of the responses to the consultation. Mainly, the effect that closing village schools could have on the Community, the Welsh language and travel distance. Should a proposal to close a school be made, the Council will consider how these effects can be mitigated, and a specific Impact Assessment would be carried out for that specific proposal.
26 - Will the proposal be adopted / forwarded for approval? Who will be the decision-maker?	The Strategy will be considered by the Scrutiny Committee on the 20th of June 2023, and by the Executive Committee on the 18th of July 2023. If the Executive Committee decides to adopt the strategy, individual proposals will be developed and presented to the Executive Committee for the purpose of progressing the

Step 4: Outcome of the assessment	
	Sustainable Communities for Learning Programne, in accordance with the expectations of the School Organisation Code 2018.
27 - Are there monitoring arrangements in place? What are they?	Governance arrangements are being put in place to realise the strategy. The governance arrangements will include: • Modernising Learning Communities Delivery Group – the groups role includes contributing towards, challenging, and ensuring conformity with the School Organisation Code, and monitoring the progress of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. • Modernising Communities for Learning Operational Group – the groups role includes: - Giving guidance to officers on different operational matters relating to the modernisation programme. - Identifying and managing risks - Prioritising resources. As any specific proposals are formulated, an individual Impact Assessment will also be developed. These will be living documents, which will be updated regularly as the proposal develops. We would assess the impact of the proposal from an equality, community, and Welsh language perspective. If a negative impact is anticipated, we will carefully consider how it will be possible to mitigate the negative impact. As projects develop (where a financial contribution from the Welsh Government is required), business cases will need to be prepared to be presented to the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme - Welsh Government investment panel. The investment panel will assess the proposals carefully, considering the benefits and impact of the proposals before deciding if they will support the proposal.

Step 5: Action Plan

Please detail any actions that are planned following completion of your assessment. You should include any changes that have been made to reduce or eliminate the effects of potential or actual negative impact, as well as any arrangements to collect data or to carry out further research.

Ref	Proposed actions	Lead officer	Timescale
1	Present the Strategy and the Impact Assessment to the Scrutiny Committee	Marc B Hughes	20 June
2	Present the Strategy to the Executive Committee	Marc B Hughes	18 July
3	Consider different types of education provision, e.g., 3-16 or 3-18 Schools	Marc B Hughes	2023 onwards
4	Look to improve the efficiency of schools, and ensure fair funding.	Marc B Hughes	2023 onwards
5	Investigate the possibilities of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of post-16 provision.	Marc B Hughes	2023 onwards

Appendix 1 – A More Equal Wales – The Socio-Economic Duty
(Commencement date of the Duty: 31 March 2021)

What is the Duty?

The general aim of the duty is to ensure better outcomes for those suffering socio-economic disadvantage. When making strategic decisions such as deciding priorities and setting objectives, due regard must be given to the need to reduce the inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage.

Who is likely to experience socio-economic disadvantage?

Socio-economic disadvantage can be disproportionate in both 'communities of interest' and 'communities of place', leading to inequality of outcome, which can be further exasperated when considering 'intersectionality':

Communities of interest – groups who share an experience, eg homelessness; or people who share an identity, eg lone parents, carers. Also those who share one or more of the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010.

Communities of place – people who are linked together because of where they live, work, visit or spend a substantial portion of their time there.

Intersectionality - crucially, this is about understanding the way in which a combination of characteristics such as gender, race or class, can produce unique and often multiple experiences of disadvantage in certain situations. One form of discrimination cannot and should not be understood in isolation from other forms. A truly intersectional approach ensures that this does not happen.

When will the Duty be relevant?

When making **strategic decisions***.* **T**he Welsh Government has provided some examples of strategic decisions (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Strategic directive and intent.
- Strategies developed at Regional Partnership Boards and Public Service Boards which impact on public bodies' functions.
- Medium to long term plans (for example, corporate plans, development plans, service delivery and improvement plans).
- Setting objectives (for example, well-being objectives, equality objectives, Welsh language strategy).
- Changes to and development of public services.
- Strategic financial planning.
- Major procurement and commissioning decisions.
- Strategic policy development

Further details can be found in the corporate equality impact assessment guidance.

Appendix 2 – Human Rights

Human rights are rights and freedoms that belong to all individuals, regardless of their nationality and citizenship. There are 16 basic rights in the Human Rights Act – all taken from the European Convention on Human Rights. For the purposes of the Act, they are known as 'the Convention Rights'. They are listed below:

(Article 1 is introductory and is not incorporated into the Human Rights Act)

Article 2: The right to life
Article 3: Prohibition of torture
Article 4: Prohibition of slavery and forced labour
Article 5: Right to liberty and security
Article 6: Right to a fair trial
Article 7: No punishment without law
Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life
Article 9: Freedom of thought, conscience and religion
Article 10: Freedom of expression
Article 11: Freedom of assembly and association
Article 12: Right to marry
Article 14: Prohibition of discrimination
Article 1 of Protocol 1: Protection of property
Article 2 of Protocol 1: Right to education
Article 3 of Protocol 1: Right to free elections
Article 1 of Protocol 13: Abolition of the death penalty

Appendix 3 - Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

This Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. Public bodies need to make sure that when making their decisions they take into account the impact they could have on people living their lives in Wales in the future. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals:

A prosperous Wales:
An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

A resilient Wales:
A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).

A healthier Wales:
A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

A more equal Wales:
A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).

A Wales of cohesive communities:
Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language:
A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.

A globally responsible Wales:
A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

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ISLE OF ANGLESEY
COUNTY COUNCIL

MODERNISING LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND DEVELOPING THE WELSH LANGUAGE STRATEGY

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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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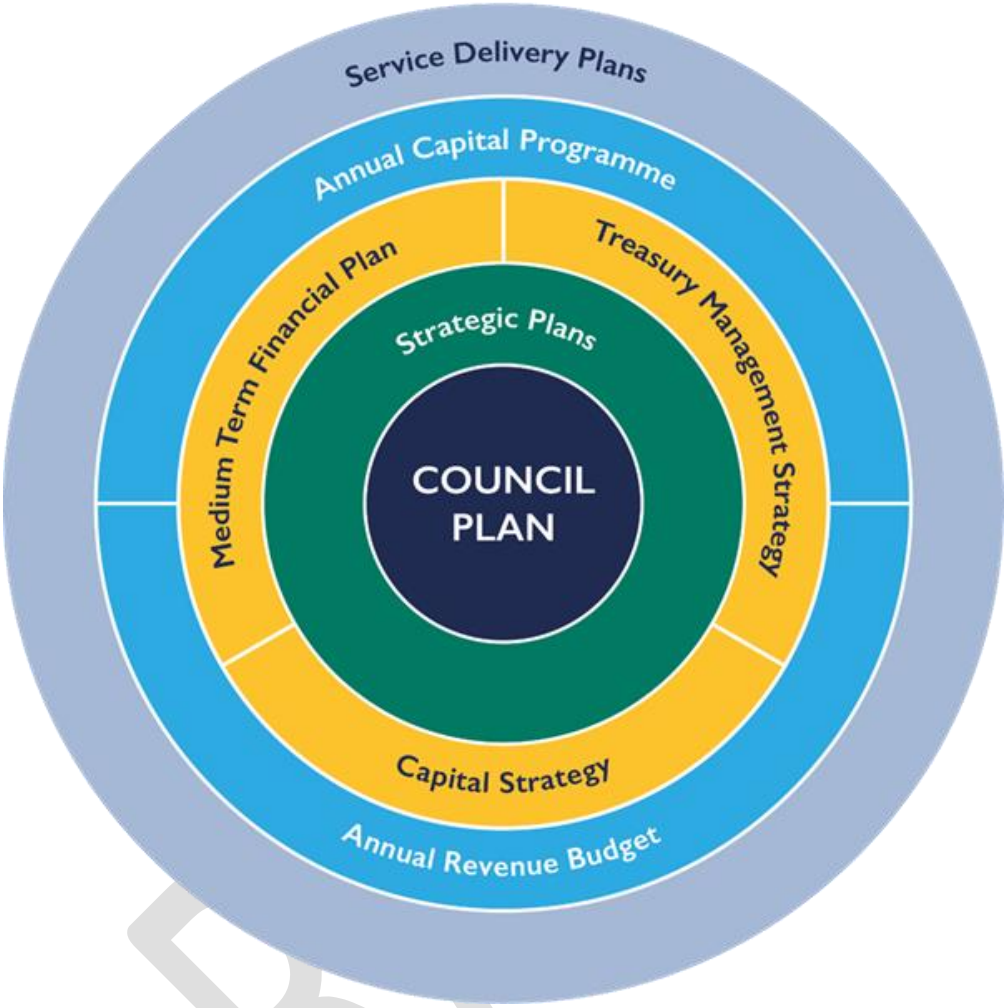
Council Plan – The Strategic Circle



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;

- 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.

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.

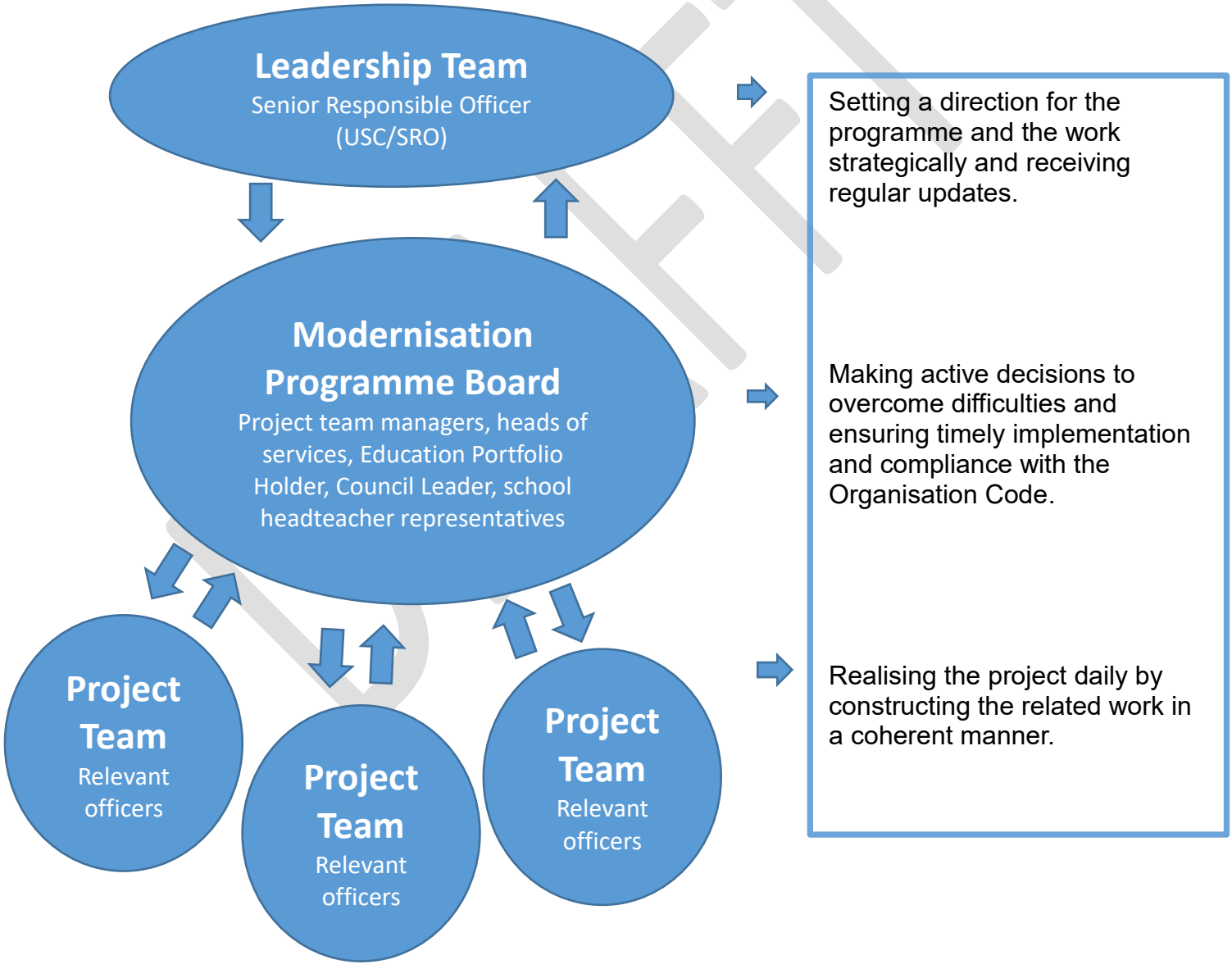
Stage 6

- ***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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