

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
Report to:	Executive Committee Meeting
Date:	July 14 2014
Subject:	Modernising Anglesey Schools – report on the recent consultaion conducted in the ‘Llannau’ area regarding a new primary school
Portfolio Member(s):	Councillor Ieuan Williams
Head of Service:	Gwynne Jones
Report Author: Phone Number: E-mail:	Emrys Bebb
Local Members:	Councillor Ken Hughes Councillor Llinos Medi Huws Councillor John Griffith

A – Recommendation(s) and Reason(s)
<p>At its meeting on February 11, 2013, Anglesey County Council’s Executive Committee resolved to support Option 5 (namely a new area school for Llanfachraeth, Llanfaethlu and Llanrhuddlad) as the option that the Executive Committee favoured for formal consultation on a review of the primary education provision in North West Anglesey, conditional upon identifying suitable finance and site for the development before beginning the formal consultation process.</p> <p>It was reported back to the Executive Committee on March 17, 2014 that the Lifelong Learning Department Officers had:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ensured finance in principle for the new primary school and 2. had identified a preferred site for the new primary school. <p>In order to ensure half the finance for the project from the Welsh Government, a Strategic Outline Case was required by Welsh Government.</p> <p>The consultation period in the area has been concluded and the points raised are noted in the attached report.</p> <p>It is recommended that the Executive Committee approve the report.</p>

B – Which other options did you consider and what were your reasons for refusing them and or for choosing this option?

A number of options were considered by the Executive Committee in its meeting on February 11, 2013. In that meeting, the Council's Executive Committee resolved to support Option 5 (namely a new area school for Llanfachraeth, Llanfaethlu and Llanrhuuddlad) as the favoured option for formal consultation. The options can be seen in the relevant report to the Executive Committee and in the statutory/formal consultation document.

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

The Executive Committee is ultimately responsible for the Schools' Modernisation Programme.

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

Yes

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

Yes – It is one of the plans in the Strategic Outline Programme approved by the Executive Committee in its meeting on January 13, 2014.

E – With whom did you consult?		What were their comments?
1	Chief Executive / Senior Management Team (SMT) (mandatory)	
2	Finance / Section 151 (mandatory)	
3	Legal / Monitoring Officer (mandatory)	
5	Human Resources (HR)	
6	Property	
7	Information Communication Technology (ICT)	
8	Scrutiny	
9	Local Members	
10	Any other external body/bodies	

F – Risks and any mitigatory steps (if relevant)		
1	Economic	
2	Anti-poverty	
3	Crime and Disorder	
4	Environmental	
5	Equalities	
6	Result Agreements	
7	Other	

FF - Appendices:

G – Background Papers (please contact the Report’s author for any further information):
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on February 11, 2013. 2. Statutory Consultation Document 3. Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) presented to the Welsh Government in December 2013. 4. Letter from the Welsh Government dated January 31 2014.



CYNGOR SIR
YNYS MÔN
ISLE OF ANGLESEY
COUNTY COUNCIL

SWYDDOGOL / OFFICIAL

**CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN
ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**ADRAN DYSGU GYDOL OES
LIFELONG LEARNING DEPARTMENT**

**YMATEB I ADOLYGIAD YSGOLION CYNRADD
GOGLEDD ORLLEWIN MÔN – YMGYNGHORIAD
FFURFIOL
(MAWRTH - MAI 2014)**

**RESPONSE TO NORTH WEST ANGLESEY PRIMARY
SCHOOLS REVIEW – FORMAL CONSULTATION
(MARCH - MAY 2014)**

Mehefin / June 2014

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 As part of the formal consultation in North West Anglesey, a number of consultation meetings were held with parents, governors and the staff of three schools involved as listed in Table 1 below and with parents of pupils living in Llanddeusant. The consultation period began on Monday March 31 2014 and ended on Monday May 19 2014.

Table 1

School	Date (2014)	Meeting with		
		Staff	Governors	Parents
Cylch y Garn	Monday 7th April	3.30	5.00	6.00
Ffrwd Win	Tuesday 8th April	4.30	5.30	6.30
Llanfachraeth	Wednesday 9th April	3.45	5.00	6.00
Llanddeusant	Tuesday 13th May	-	-	6.00

- 1.2 As a reminder, the proposal that was being consulted on was Option 5 namely:

A new area school for Llanfachraeth, Llanfaethlu, Llanrhuddlad

- 1.3 In accordance with the guidelines in the School Organisation Code 2013, the consultation document was issued to the following consultees:-

- Staff, Governors and Parents
- The local Member of Parliament and Assembly Member
- Estyn
- The School Reorganisation Manager for North and mid Wales (Welsh Government)
- Teaching and staff union representatives
- GwE (the regional education consortium)
- Taith (the regional transport consortium)
- The Police and Crime Commissioner for North Wales
- Local Community Councils including Tre Alaw Community Council (Llanddeusant)
- The Cylch Meithrin in Llanfaethlu
- Children and Young People's Partnership

- 1.4 The views of consultees were gathered and they are summarised in this report.

2. RESPONSES FROM YSGOL LLANFACHRAETH

- 2.1 A total of 6 responses were received from the stakeholders of Ysgol Llanfachraeth. Three of these were responses using the feedback forms - one from a parent, one from a member of the community and another from a shopkeeper in the village. The other three responses were letters.
- 2.2 The parent mentioned above raised several points:-
- His desire to see the new school being located in Llanfachraeth as “it plays a large part in the community, hosts Clwb Ti A Fi on a weekly basis”.
 - Children of nursery age would not have an education if the school was located in another location.
 - If improvements are made to the A5025, that it would by-pass Llanfachraeth and make the village safer which in turn would make transport to the school in Llanfachraeth safer.
 - If a new area school is built, it should offer the following ‘amenities’:
 - A Nursery Group and Nursery Class with a Lunch Club for the Nursery (with parents contributing to the Club and Nursery education beyond the 10 hours). It was noted that this option was not provided in the schools under consideration and that it would enable parents to work and that there is not much child care provision in the area.
 - A Breakfast Club that was open from 8.00am and an After School Club.
- 2.3 The member of the community noted that it was important that the school is based in Llanfachraeth as the largest of the three villages and that it should not be built on land outside Llanfaethlu as this was in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). They stated that access to this land would be from “a busy road outside a 30mph zone, hence compromising safety for young children.” They also reasoned that locating the school in Llanfachraeth would only mean “one bus being required to transport pupils from Llanfaethlu and Llanrhuddlad”. They asserted that if a new school was created in Llanfaethlu, “two buses would be required to transport pupils from both directions hence significantly increasing the carbon footprint and cost of transport.” They also believed that for Llanfachraeth “to lose a school would have a definite impact on economic prosperity and businesses in the village.”
- 2.4 The shopkeeper in Llanfachraeth said that if the new school is not located in Llanfachraeth, that they would “miss the business from the school children and their parents” and that the current school “gives the community a base.”
- 2.5 In a letter another parent said that “parents and teachers feel that it is important that they support the case for Option 2 which is a new school in Llanfachraeth. They stated that they felt that they had been misled by the newspaper articles giving the impression that the new school would be located in Llanfachraeth. They were also anxious that the “Council sends out any further new information to parents before a final decision is

made” and they hoped that the Council “would consider Llanfachraeth for the new school.”

- 2.6 The same parent later wrote a letter to disagree with what was described in the consultation documentation as an “unsafe drop-off point”. She stated that the times for end of the school day are staggered and that the teachers help out in this respect. She also noted that information in the Community Impact Assessment was not accurate in that there was no garage selling car fuel in Llanfachraeth.
- 2.7 Another parent was initially was happy that Llanfachraeth was the location of the new school but once she was aware of other sites being put forward, hoped that parents could “see the new document before we decide on a site so that every parent can see a fair reason for the best site for locating a school.” She stated what she thought were the benefits of locating a school at Llanfachraeth (high percentage of Welsh speakers, children being able to walk to school and a safe location for the school). She was worried that some parents whose work is easily accessible from the A55 might send their children to Bodedern or Caergeiliog. However, she did state that she “supported a new area school and looked forward to her children attending that school to receive a first class education.”

3. RESPONSES FROM YSGOL FFRWD WIN

- 3.1 One response was received from a stakeholder of Ysgol Ffrwd Win. The stakeholder said “that out of fairness for all the children in the catchment area, option 7 should be chosen - (To adapt and extend Ysgol Ffrwd Win, Llanfaethlu and close Ysgol Cylch y Garn and Ysgol Llanfachraeth and transfer the pupils to Ysgol Ffrwd Win, Llanfaethlu). She claimed that all the village residents were in favour of this option.

4. RESPONSES FROM YSGOL CYLCH Y GARN

- 4.1 Seven responses were received from parents of pupils at the school in the form of letters. No feedback forms were received. There were 13 responses from pupils in years 3, 4, 5 and 6 at the school. A letter was received from the Governing Body of Ysgol Cylch y Garn, Cylch Y Garn Community Council along with a letter from the secretary of the Rhydwyn W.I.
- 4.2 One prospective parent from the school’s catchment area said “he would mourn the closing of the school” but wanted his children to have the best education. He was concerned about the location and thinks it is unacceptable for children to have to travel 8 miles to Llanfachraeth and thought that Llanfaethlu was a much more central location.
- 4.3 Another parent reiterated the concerns mentioned by the parent in 4.2 above regarding the location of the school and that they would prefer it to be more central i.e. “one of the two

locations in Llanfaethlu.” They were concerned whether the new school would be big enough bearing in mind the potential new Wylfa development. They were anxious for swimming lessons to be provided in the new school. In conclusion, they said that “they agreed on Llanfaethlu as the site of the new area school.”

- 4.4 Even though they did not want to see any of the three schools close parents of a pupil at the school said they were in favour of the new school being located in Llanfaethlu as it is “a more central site between the three current sites”. They stated that a totally new site was required for the new school to have new “ethos and values”. They said that a bus journey to Llanfaethlu “would not be unreasonable”.
- 4.5 Another parent echoed the concerns regarding the school possibly being located in Llanfachraeth and thought it ought to be “in a more central location”.
- 4.6 As well as restating many of the concerns mentioned by other parents, one parent was concerned with potential loss of the school community hall. She also mentioned Wylfa Newydd and its potential effect on pupil numbers and thought that Option 7 should be the preferred option 7 (land in Llanfaethlu) should be the preferred option.
- 4.7 The clerk of the Cylch Y Garn Community Council wrote to state the Council’s concerns regarding the potential loss of the community use of the school. The Council also mentioned the possible effect of Wylfa Newydd on pupil numbers at the school. The thought that there was enough land around Ysgol Cylch Y Garn to build a new school and did not “foresee any problems with planning permission”.
- 4.8 A total of 13 responses from pupils in years 3, 4, 5 and 6 at the school were received. In Welsh, each one started with the equivalent of: “I am against closing Ysgol Cylch Y Garn because ...” and then each one listed numerous “reasons”.
- 4.9 A letter was received from the secretary of the Rhydwyn W.I. and she was concerned that the closure of the school “would have a detrimental effect on the community as a whole” and that the local W.I. would not have anywhere to meet if the school closed.

5. RESPONSES FROM LLANDDEUSANT

- 5.1 One feedback form was received from a parent living in the former catchment area of Ysgol Llanddeusant. She was in favour of option 6 - a site between Llanfachraeth and Llanfaethlu.
- 5.2 The Tref Alaw Community Council (Llanddeusant area) said it “accepted the idea of an area school as a school for the catchment area for Llanddeusant and Llantrisant from September 2016 (or whenever the new school is opened)”. The Council Clerk also said that they were “glad that pupils at Ysgol Gynradd Bodedern could finish their education if that is the parents’ wish”. As to the location of the new primary school, the Community Council said that it “felt strongly that the new school should be in a ‘neutral’ and central

location and not be located on or near one of the current three schools.” The Clerk also stated that they thought the new school required ‘future proofing’.

- 5.3 Pupils living in the catchment area of the former Ysgol Gynradd Llanddeusant currently attend Ysgol Gynradd Bodedern and free transport is provided for them. However, it is intended to bring this arrangement to an end when the new school opens in September 2016. There was some concern about this amongst parents but it was stressed that the catchment area of the old Ysgol Llanddeusant is now formally part of the catchment area of Ysgol Llanfachraeth. The parents emphasised that the new primary school should be of the correct size, be ‘centrally located’ and be ‘future-proofed’. Having the correct sized school was vital considering new development such as Wylfa Newydd and other developments on Anglesey.

6. **RESPONSE FROM THE SCHOOLS’ GOVERNING BODIES**

- 6.1 A letter was received from the Governing Body of Ysgol Cylch y Garn. The points mentioned were as follows:

- The possibility of the proposed new Wylfa project leading to increased numbers at the school.
- Horizon was looking at areas on Anglesey where their workers could stay. The Governing Body enclosed a map in that regard.
- They said that 10 primary schools on Anglesey had a higher percentage of surplus places than Ysgol Cylch Y Garn and therefore these should be looked at first.
- If Ysgol Ffrwd Win and Ysgol Cylch y Garn are closed, they asserted that there would be an area equivalent to one fifth of Anglesey (mainly North West Anglesey) would be without a school.
- They argued that Ysgol Cylch Y Garn was a more central location than Llanfachraeth for a new school.
- Since Ysgol Cylch Y Garn is a community school, where would the community hold their meetings if the school was closed?
- They stated that closing schools “in the country would further deprive the countryside”.
- They disagreed with the figures in the Options Appraisal document and argued that Option 5 (Ysgol Cylch Y Garn with an additional field) should have the highest score.
- The doubted that the Council owns the school.
- The Governing Body said that the Council’s preferred site “was very wet”. This, they said, could mean that the land and hence the project would be more costly.

- 6.2 A letter was received from the Governing Body of Ysgol Ffrwd Win. They outlined what they saw as:-

- typographical and factual errors
- inconsistencies in the scoring
- doubts as to the validity of some of the information in the consultation documents.

7. RESPONSE FROM PARENTS OF PUPILS OF YSGOL LLANFACHRAETH

The meeting with the parents of pupils of Ysgol Llanfachraeth proceeded smoothly and comments and questions were raised in a mature fashion.

As the preferred option was for a new school to be built in Llanfachraeth, parents were pleased that was the case. They enquired further as to the next stages of the process and as to when the new school would be opening its doors.

One parent said that perhaps the new school should be located more ‘centrally’ out of consideration for the other schools involved in the consultation. Another said that if the new school was located more centrally, she would consider taking her child to another school e.g. Valley.

A question was raised by one mother regarding “how would the Local Authority ensure that standards are kept high in the new school, as they currently are in Ysgol Llanfachraeth”.

8. RESPONSE FROM PARENTS OF PUPILS OF YSGOL FFRWD WIN

The meeting with the parents of pupils of Ysgol Ffrwd Win proceeded well and comments and questions were raised in a mature fashion.

The parents of Llanfaethlu did not agree with Option 2 (Ysgol Llanfachraeth with additional fields) being the preferred option. They “felt strongly” felt it should be located on “neutral ground and this would be fair to everybody”. They were very concerned at the possibility of their children travelling to the potential new school if it was located in Llanfachraeth, especially for 4 year old pupils.

The parents also felt that the Local Authority “should realise that a suitable and central site was required and that the LA should consider children who travel outside the catchment area to attend other schools”.

Some felt that the ‘design size’ of the new school was too small and should be designed so that an extension could easily be added on at a later date if required.

One parent was concerned with “traffic passing through Llanfachraeth when work starts on Wylfa B given that the traffic would likely increase during the construction phase.”

9. RESPONSE FROM PARENTS OF PUPILS OF YSGOL CYLCH Y GARN

The meeting with the parents of pupils of Ysgol Cylch Y Garn was used to voice dissatisfaction with the proposal.

Most if not all the parents present felt that they were content with the present situation because:-

- “the equipment and facilities are fine here”.
- the preferred site is “unsafe”.
- Ysgol Cylch Y Garn is the only community school of the 3.
- “the geography of Ysgol Cylch Y Garn is best”.
- the condition of the school “is satisfactory so the Council should invest in it”.
- A school like Ysgol Y Graig “would not fit in here”.
- Surplus places are higher in other parts of Anglesey and these schools should be tackled first.

They stated openly that they “didn’t want a new school” and that they “were perfectly happy with what we have”.

The Site Options Appraisal was also criticised by the parents and they queried many of the scores in it. Because the preferred site was not sufficiently central, parents said they would take their children to other schools nearby e.g. Ysgol Cemaes.

However, by the end of the meeting, some parents were asking when the new school would be opening.

10. RESPONSE FROM ESTYN

As a consultee, Estyn give their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals. Their response was in the form of questions asked as criteria followed by their answer. Some of the points raised by Estyn are listed below:-

Are the proposals likely to maintain or improve the standard of education provision in the area?

It is Estyn’s opinion that, as the present standard of education in the three existing schools is good; it is likely that the proposed action will maintain the already good standards of education in the area.

What effect do the proposals have on other schools and educational institutions in the area?

The proposals will result in the closure of three village schools and the transfer of the pupils from these schools to the new community primary school. Based on current pupil numbers at the school it is anticipated that less than 10% of pupils would attend the new school from an out of catchment area.

Description and benefits

Has the proposer:

- **Given a clear rationale of the expected benefits of the proposals and disadvantages when compared with the status quo as outlined in the report?**

The local authority has given a clear rationale of the expected benefits and disadvantages when compared with the status quo as outlined in the report. This includes a detailed options appraisal for the site of the proposed new primary school.

- **Managed any risks associated with the proposals?**

The local authority has undertaken 'impact assessments' relating to the community, language and equality. These appear to take reasonable steps to attempt to counter the risks identified by the proposer. The proposer has provided responses to the range of possible issues listed in the impact assessments.

- **Considered suitable alternatives and given good reasons as to why these have been discounted?**

The local authority has considered nine alternative proposals including maintaining the three schools as independent units, federation of the three schools and various options to adapt and extend either of the existing buildings and transfer pupils from all three schools to one or two sites. Reasons for not choosing the alternative options were discussed by the Executive Committee of the Isle of Anglesey County Council. In the proposer's opinion, no additional investment would be required to maintain the status quo. However, the proposer feels that if this should happen:

- no contribution would be made to reducing the surplus places at the three existing schools;
- spending per pupil would be unchanged;
- there would continue to be a need for maintenance at all three school sites which
 - would be likely to increase as the buildings age further; and
 - leadership and management capacity would remain unchanged.

- **Considered the impact of the changes on learner travel arrangements and on accessibility of provision.**

The local authority has considered the impact of the changes on learner travel effectively. If the new school was to be located in Llanfachraeth, the minibuses from three villages would need to be redirected from existing schools to the new site and an additional two minibuses would be needed to transport pupils who are currently within walking distance of their primary school. It is estimated that additional transport costs would be approximately £40,000 per annum but the proposer feels that this cost would be offset against potential revenue savings of £135,217 per annum by combining the three schools.

- **Effectively show how surplus places will be affected? If surplus places will be increased, does the proposer give adequate reasons for this?**

The proposal considers this aspect effectively. There are currently 31 surplus places at Ysgol Ffrwdd Win, which is equivalent to 52% of the admission figure. Ysgol Cylch y Garn has 23 surplus places, equivalent to 38% and Ysgol Llanfachraeth has 26 surplus

places, equivalent to 36%. Projections to 2018 suggest overall surplus places at the three schools will range from 37% to 55%. The proposal to create one school will reduce the projected overall number of surplus places at the school to between 8% and 12% over the same period.

- **Where relevant, taken sufficient account of the impact of the proposals on Welsh medium provision within the local authority?**

The local authority has provided a detailed language profile which includes the number of pupils, teachers and governors who use Welsh as their first language. As all three primary schools currently provide education through the medium of Welsh and the proposed new school would also be a Welsh medium primary school, there will be no significant differences in the use of the language by pupils and staff. The local authority Welsh language impact assessment considers 13 aspects of the use of Welsh and finds a neutral or positive effect from each of these. Therefore, there would appear to be a positive impact on the Welsh language arising from the proposal.

Educational aspects of the proposal

- **Considered the impact of the proposals on the quality of the outcomes, provision and leadership and management?**

The local authority has considered the impact of the proposal on the quality of outcomes, provision and leadership and management adequately. They have also considered the impact of the proposals on the delivery of the full curriculum at the Foundation Phase and at key stage two. The proposal:

- recognises the need to raise standards as the percentage of pupils achieving the expected outcomes on Anglesey at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 is below the all Wales average. Data for both the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 for 2012/13 shows that one school was in the top 25% while the other two were both in the bottom 25% when compared to similar schools. However, the proposal recognises that the end of key stage data for the three schools needs to be treated cautiously since pupil numbers in the cohorts are often small;
- will improve the facilities available to pupils as they will be taught in a state of the art building with modern resources; and
- recognises the difficulties in smaller schools of securing sufficient non-contact time for headteachers to attend to leadership and management matters. The local authority does not provide its current judgements on outcomes, provision or leadership at the three schools.

- **How well has the proposer considered the likely impact of the proposals to ensure delivery of the full curriculum at the foundation phase and at each key stage?**

The local authority has considered the impact on curriculum delivery and considers that the proposal:

- will ensure pupils are taught in a larger cohort and with a reduced age range;
and
- will mean that the proposed school would employ more teachers and could ensure specialisms in many areas of the curriculum.

11. CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the idea of having an area school has been accepted even though there was opposition from one school. However, many stakeholders felt that the location for the preferred option in Llanfachraeth was not sufficiently 'central' in the combined catchment areas of the three schools.

12. FURTHER WORK

As noted above, during the consultation period, additional sites were put forward as possible locations for the proposed new school and these are currently being evaluated. This will lead to a shortlist of sites for further consideration and for ground assessments to be conducted prior to the selection of a site for the new school.