

Isle of Anglesey County Council	
Report to:	Executive
Date:	18.07.23
Subject:	Provision of Free School Meals – Ysgol Bodffordd
Portfolio Holder(s):	?
Head of Service / Director:	Marc B. Hughes
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Local Members:	Relevant to all Elected Members

A –Recommendation/s and reason/s

Recommendation

That the Executive Committee approves the plan to relocate a portacabin on the old Ysgol Corn Hir site to Ysgol Bodffordd to ensure that Ysgol Bodffordd can provide free school meals in line with Welsh Government’s scheme to provide universal free school meals to primary school children.

Background

Following Welsh Government’s announcement in 2021 proposing universal primary free school meals by 2024, an increase was anticipated in the number of pupils who would choose to receive school meals over bringing packed lunches. Officers from the Learning Service have worked with the catering company Chartwells and officers from the Property Department to ensure that schools have the relevant resources to realise these plans for each primary school child in Anglesey.

Since September 2022, Reception and Year 1 children in every school have received free school meals, and Year 2 since January 2023.

Before introducing the universal rollout, the average uptake of free school meals during May 2022 was as follows:

- Reception: 28%
- Year 1: 32%
- Year 2: 57%

Since the UPFSM were introduced to Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, the latest uptake figures for these years are as follows:

- Reception: 67%
- Year 1: 88%
- Year 2: 67%

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It is foreseen that there will be a similar increase in the demand for school meals as the scheme is extended to include provision for years 3, 4, 5 and 6. Planning is now underway to ensure that schools are ready to provide free school meals for all primary schools in Anglesey by 2024.

To achieve this, more staff need to be recruited and building adaptation work needs to be undertaken in 3 schools.

The adaptation works on two schools, despite being semi-substantial, are within the footprint of the current building and are scheduled for the summer holidays 2023.

The challenges in relation to facilitating viable provision in Ysgol Bodffordd are more substantial and are a cause for risk to the Council's ability to fulfil the scheme.

Food is currently carried on a trolley through the classroom, transferred down steps to another trolley and down a corridor to the dining space. The dining space is within the Community Centre, and is shared between the school, the Cylch Meithrin and other communal use.

The current arrangements at this school are not really suitable for providing school meals in current demand, and extending the arrangements to accommodate more children is not practical in the long term.

The current arrangements are very time-consuming and managing health and safety risks for kitchen staff and children in the classroom next to the kitchen and the risk to food quality is burdensome.

There are currently 77 children attending Ysgol Bodffordd and between approx. 45 and 60 children are receiving school meals on the daily. By September 2023, 74 children will be attending the school and all these children will be offered free school meals, therefore there is a potential of an increase of between 15 and 30 additional meals a day.

Joint visits have been held to the school between the Learning Service, Property and Chartwells officers and discussions have been held with kitchen staff and the Headteacher.

It was decided that the only viable option as a result of the layout of the building and the wider site is to convert one of the classrooms adjoining the kitchen into a canteen, which would allow food to be transferred through a serving hatch from the kitchen into the dining area. This means that a classroom will need to be relocated, and as there is no suitable space within the current building, a new space will need to be created. Please note that the current dining area cannot be converted for classroom use as it is a multi-use community space.

Developing an extension to the existing building would be challenging due to layout and ground levels. Therefore, it is proposed that installing a portacabin on the school site which is separate to the main building for use as a classroom is the most appropriate resolution. The availability of a portacabin in good condition on the site of the old Ysgol Corn Hir means that it can be repurposed, and an opportunity is presented to maximise value for money.

The cabin placement works, to include securing planning permission, meeting procurement requirements and carrying out groundwork and service links along with the

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necessary alterations to the kitchen on operational premises, will be programmed over a period of up to a year to manage risks and limit disruption to the school's users.

Costs of up to £250,000 are foreseen, and they will be funded through the free school meals grant.

Outline Plan and Timetable

Date	Action
June 2023	Prepare tender documents to relocate the portacabin
August/September 2023	Procure the work of moving the portacabin
January 2024	Move the portacabin from the old Corn Hir site to Bodffordd
February 2024	Prepare tender documents for work in the kitchen
April 2024	Procure the work on the kitchen
Summer Holidays 2024	Complete the work on the kitchen

As this work won't be completed for another year and as the Authority is aiming towards providing free school meals to all primary pupils by September 2023, there are discussions underway to look at short term options, including increasing the number of staff at this school temporarily and building a platform lift to facilitate the work of moving the food from the kitchen to the hall.

B – What other options did you consider and why did you reject them and/or opt for this option?

Doing nothing and remaining with the status quo was considered, but the judgement was made that the current situation was undesirable and that there is an opportunity to improve the experience of pupils, teachers and kitchen staff by making adaptations that would be funded by grant funds.

No alternative resolutions to the food serving challenges are available without re-designing and very substantial work to the school that would be beyond what the grant could fund.

C – Why is this a decision for the Executive?

This is a matter for the Executive as the cost of the work is substantial and a large percentage of the grant will be spent on this plan.

Ch – Is this decision consistent with policy approved by the full Council?

Yes

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

Yes

Dd – Assessing the potential impact (if relevant):		
1	How does this decision impact on our long term needs as an Island?	The plan ensures that we respond to Welsh Government's decision of being able to provide free school meals to all primary children.
2	Is this a decision which it is envisaged will prevent future costs / dependencies on the Authority? If so, how?	This decision supports the wellbeing of children, which could reduce costs on other services in the long term.
3	Have we been working collaboratively with other organisations to come to this decision? If so, please advise whom.	N/A
4	Have Anglesey citizens played a part in drafting this way forward, including those directly affected by the decision? Please explain how.	Yes, we have consulted with schools, governors, parents and pupils on the universal primary free school meals rollout scheme.
5	Note any potential impact that this decision would have on the groups protected under the Equality Act 2010.	N/A
6	If this is a strategic decision, note any potential impact that the decision would have on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.	N/A
7	Note any potential impact that this decision would have on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.	N/A

E – Who did you consult?		What did they say?
1	Chief Executive / Senior Leadership Team (SLT) (mandatory)	
2	Finance / Section 151 (mandatory)	
3	Legal / Monitoring Officer (mandatory)	
4	Human Resources (HR)	
5	Property	
6	Information Communication Technology (ICT)	
7	Procurement	
8	Scrutiny	
9	Local Members	

F - Appendices:

Ff - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):