

Report to: Communities Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 9th May 2019

Lead Member/Officer: Principal Manager – Education Support

Report Author: Geraint Davies

Title: Impact of the Closure of Ysgol Rhewl

1. What is the report about?

The report seeks to outline the support provided to Ysgol Rhewl during the closure process.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

The report was requested by the Committee at its meeting in October 2017.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the issues within the report be discussed and that the feedback received be used for future planning within the Service.

4. Report details

4.1 Actions undertaken by Education and Children's Services

4.1 During the academic year of 2017/18 officers worked closely with the Headteacher of Ysgol Rhewl to assist in the managed closure of Ysgol Rhewl. As of the final year of learning at the school there were 22 Full time pupils on roll at the school. 4 of these pupils were to transition to secondary provision meaning that the focus was on supporting the remaining 18 pupils in the process of seeking alternative provision for September 2018.

4.2 The process of support began following the decision by Cabinet to close the school and the importance of ensuring the opportunities for the school community to be engaged in events around the establishment of the new buildings for Ysgol Pen Barras and Rhos Street School. This included invitations to parents and pupils for the consultation events for the new building and ensuring involvement of pupils in site visits to the construction site so that they would be afforded the same level of involvement as pupils from Ysgol Pen Barras and Rhos Street.

4.3 In the build up to the closure of the school, support was provided to parents via the admission processes to enable them to secure a place in an alternative school. Although Ysgol Pen Barras / Rhos Street School was named as the alternative provision in the consultation and statutory notice, parents sought an alternative provision as follows:-

Destination School	Number of Pupils
Rhos Street School	8
Ysgol Borthyn	3
Ysgol Llanbedr	2
Ysgol Tremeirchion	2
Ysgol Bro Cinmeirch	1
Ysgol Esgob Morgan	1
Ysgol Trefnant	1

- 4.4 As a consequence of this, work was undertaken with the Acting Headteacher of Ysgol Rhewl and with those Headteachers of the 7 feeder schools to plan for transition. This included ensuring the relevant pupil specific information was provided to the school and an opportunity for the Headteacher at each school to discuss with the Acting Headteacher at Ysgol Rhewl the needs and requirements of these pupils. A transition day was also identified for these pupils to visit their new schools and to undertake a day's activity. To support this transportation was provided. To assist parents a uniform voucher was also provided to parents to enable them to purchase a school uniform.
- 4.5 For teachers and staff at the school, personnel support was provided via Corporate HR. This involved a range of functions such as advice over options, recruitment support and general support.
- 4.6 After the school closed at the end of the summer term in July, officers from Education took over the responsibility for the management of the building. This included recycling suitable equipment for use elsewhere in other schools and then clearing the building of redundant equipment.
- 4.7 Feedback Received
- 4.7 In terms of the impact of this support the views of parents of former Ysgol Rhewl pupils; the views of other Headteachers together with the view of the former Acting Headteacher of Ysgol Rhewl have been sought.
- 4.8 Only 2 responses were received from parents of former pupils of Ysgol Rhewl (Appendix 1) following the issue of the questionnaire in early 2019. Due to this limited response it is difficult for any judgement to be formed. In previous school closures there has been a reluctance for parents to re-engage with the service in the immediate aftermath of an event and this may have impacted the response.
- 4.9 Of the 7 Headteachers contacted who received pupils, 5 of the Headteachers responded to the request (Appendix 2). These responses covers only 10 of the 22 pupils as the school which received the largest number of pupils did not respond to the request. There appears to be a mixture of views of the support received. The same level of support was provided to the 7 schools and it is difficult to establish why there is a different perception around the same information being received.

4.10 The response from the Acting Headteacher at the school also illustrates the level of support provided to them during a difficult period and provides suggestions for the future. (Appendix 3)

4.11 The information gained will be used to assist in supporting similar events in the future.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

The decision was part of the wider Ruthin review. This is linked to the Corporate Plan to continue to modernise schools via the 21st Century Schools Programme. The savings from the closure of Ysgol Rhewl have been used for the investment in this programme.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

There are no cost implications directly from this report.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

Not applicable as no decision making is required from this report.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

The report includes feedback from consultation with former parents and Headteachers impacted by the proposal.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

Not applicable as no cost implications directly from this report.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

Not applicable as no decision making is required from this report.

11. Power to make the Decision

Section 7.2.3 of the Council's Constitution states that Scrutiny may consider any matter which affect the Council's area or its inhabitants, whilst Section 7.4.1 outlines Scrutiny's powers in relation to policy development and review, including analysing the impact of decisions.

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