

Report To: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 29th October 2013

Lead Member / Officer: Councillor Eryl Williams, Lead Member for Education

Report Author: Head of Customers and Education Support

Title: Formal Consultation – Ysgol Llanbedr

1. What is the report about?

The report is to update Cabinet Members of the discussions with the Church in Wales Diocesan Authority regarding the Ruthin Primary review and the proposal to close Ysgol Llanbedr.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

A decision will be required by Cabinet whether to proceed to formal consultation for the proposal in relation to Ysgol Llanbedr and to note further recommendations to improve education provision in the area

3. What are the Recommendations?

The recommendation is to approve formal consultation for proposals to close Ysgol Llanbedr on the 31st August 2014 with existing pupils transferring to Ysgol Borthyn, subject to parental preference, subject to the findings of the discussion with the Church in Wales.

4. Report Details – Closure of Ysgol Llanbedr with the transfer of pupils to Ysgol Borthyn, Ruthin subject to parental preference

Case for Change

- 4.1 Ysgol Llanbedr is an English Medium, Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled Primary School which serves an age range of 4-11. The school is located on the outskirts of the Village of Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd. As at January 2013 (the date of the annual pupil census) Ysgol Llanbedr had 21 Full Time pupils on roll. Pupil numbers have declined over the past 18 months as illustrated in the table below;

Full Time Pupil Numbers 2009-2012

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
67	63	59	37	21

*Data from January of each year

- 4.2 At the January 2013 the year groups were as follows;

Year Groups 2012-2013

Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
5	4	7	0	3	1	1

***Data from January 2013**

- 4.3 The Council's pupil projection forecast based on current pupil numbers suggests that there will be an increase in numbers of pupils at the school, this is illustrated below;

Pupil Projections 2014-2018

2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
24	27	28	32	29

***Data from June Pupil Projections 2013**

- 4.4 The intake for Nursery and Reception for the academic year 2013/2014 was as follows;

Nursery	7
Reception	3

Following the Cabinet meeting in June 2013 the Council have been informed by the Governing Body that potentially 12 applications were to be expected for entry into Nursery in September 2014. The deadline for applications to Nursery and Reception and Nursery respectively are the 29th November and 21st February 2014 respectively. As at the time of finalising the report the authority had processed 4 applications for Reception and 5 applications for Nursery provision.

- 4.5 The capacity of the permanent school building has previously been recorded as 77. This included 54 Permanent places and 23 places in mobile accommodation. The Governing Body have made representations for the mobile provision to be removed from the school and so for the purposes of this report the capacity has been calculated at 54 Full Time pupil places.
- 4.6 Based on the September 2013 pupil return the school currently has 21 Full Time Pupils and 7 Part Time Pupils. Using the suggested revised capacity figure of 54 the school currently has 33 surplus places and a surplus % of 61.1%. Authorities are advised by the Welsh Government to 'act purposefully' in instances where schools have a surplus above 25%.
- 4.7 Although pupil projections show an increase in pupil numbers over the coming years that could potential reduce surplus places at the school, Ysgol Llanbedr will still remain a 'small school' and issues will still remain regarding the sustainability and viability of Ysgol Llanbedr and standards of education and attainment in the future. Within the suite of proposals considered by Cabinet in June 2013 all schools will pupil numbers less than 80 will be subject to proposals for change.
- 4.8 The Cabinet agreed at its June meeting to proceed towards formal consultation for the closure of Ysgol Llanbedr.

- 4.9 As of 1st October the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 has become the primary legislation for the progression of school organisation proposals. The Act requires consultation with the appropriate religious body before any decision is made to proceed to formal consultation. To ensure compliance with the legislation it was agreed to defer the implementation of the decision to consult on this proposal, pending formal consultation with the St Asaph Church in Wales Diocese. This consultation took place between the 9th September and the 7th October. As part of this consultation a meeting was held with Education Officers from the Diocesan Authority on the 25th September to discuss this proposal and the wider issues impacting upon Ysgol Llanfair and Ysgol Borthyn.
- 4.10 In respect of this specific proposal the outcome was that no agreement was reached between Denbighshire and the Diocese of St Asaph regarding the closure of Llanbedr. Should the proposal go forward the Director, on behalf of the Diocese, will make a formal response, having consulted again with the Board of Education.
- 4.11 It is anticipated that the Consultation on the proposal (see Appendix A) to close Ysgol Llanbedr would take place between the 11th November and the 23rd December. This will allow the discussions to commence during the school term with consultation taking place for at least six weeks. This consultation process will give parents, pupils, governors and staff the opportunity to comment upon the proposals before a decision is made by Cabinet whether to proceed and formally publish proposals for change.

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

The proposal supports the priority of “Improving performance in education and the quality of our school buildings” and has been highlighted as a workstream as follows:

“We will continue to review school provision across the County to ensure that we provide the right number of school places, of the right type, in the right location.”

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

- 6.1 The main cost for this stage of proposals will be around printing and posting and the costs associated with arranging public meetings. Should the proposals proceed and become implemented, it is anticipated that there will be a need for HR support for staff that will be impacted upon by the proposed changes.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.

An EqIA has been undertaken on the decision and is attached as Appendix B.

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

Full consultation has been undertaken with all stakeholders and the findings from the Formal Consultation period are summarised in the main body of the report.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

The cost of the formal consultation is not thought to be significant and should be contained within existing resources.

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

There is a strong possibility that the proposal could result in adverse publicity for the Council and in adverse public comments.

To minimise this risk the Council will seek to ensure clear communication with all stakeholders.

11 Power to make the Decision

School Standards and Organisations (Wales) Act 2013
Modernising Education Policy Framework (approved by Cabinet January 2009)