

EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23rd November 2020

MODERNISING EDUCATION PROGRAMME

PROPOSAL TO REVIEW PRIMARY EDUCATION PROVISION IN THE MYNYDDYGARREG AND GWENLLIAN AREAS

To consider and comment on the following issue:

- The proposal as outlined below and in the attached consultation document.
- Officers to initiate formal consultation on the proposal.
- That a report is submitted to the Executive Board at the end of the consultation period.

Reasons:

- To comply with statutory procedures and guidance in relation to school re-organisation.
- To formulate views for submission to Executive Board for consideration.

Exec. Board Decision Required: YES – 21/12/2020

County Council Decision Required: NO

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Cllr. Glynog Davies
(Education & Children)

Directorate:
Education & Children

Name of Head of Service:
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Designations:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 23rd November 2020

MODERNISING EDUCATION PROGRAMME

PROPOSAL TO REVIEW PRIMARY EDUCATION PROVISION IN THE MYNYDDYGARREG AND GWENLLIAN AREAS

Background

The Authority has a legal responsibility to review the number and type of schools it has in an area and whether it is making the best use of resources and facilities to deliver the opportunities that children deserve.

Ysgol Gynradd Mynyddgarreg

Ysgol Gynradd Mynyddgarreg is a Welsh medium community primary school located in the village of Mynyddgarreg with capacity for 55 pupils between 4-11 years. In recent years pupil numbers have remained consistent but are still well below capacity. January 2020 PLASC showed that there were 36 pupils at the school with 19 surplus places, or 35%. Welsh Government through the School Organisation Code advises local authorities to review their provision where there are more than 10% surplus places in an area.

Whilst there are 113 pupils living within Ysgol Gynradd Mynyddgarreg's catchment area **only 22 of those pupils attend the school**, meaning that 91 pupils living within the school's catchment area attend 16 other schools within the County, many being neighbouring catchment schools.

Based on current projections (2020) it is estimated that pupil figures will remain well below capacity for the foreseeable future. Additionally, Ysgol Gynradd Mynyddgarreg's building condition is 'poor' and the school has been in deficit since 2016/17 and remains with a deficit of £48,265 going into the 2020/21 financial year. Their original funding allocation for 2020/21 was £172k.

From an educational perspective having such a small number of pupils and mixed age classes makes it extremely difficult for the school to deliver the breadth and depth of curricular and social experiences which pupils of this age require to fully develop.

The culmination of these unavoidable facts presents a school model which does not represent a sound, stable educational model for best use of resources. With no prospect of there being a significant increase in pupil numbers for the foreseeable future, consideration is required on the sustainability of the school.

Ysgol Gymraeg Gwenllian

Ysgol Gymraeg Gwenllian is a Welsh medium 3-11 community primary school situated in the historical town of Kidwelly. In recent years, pupil numbers have remained consistent and slightly below the school's capacity of 140. However, based on current pupil projections (2020), pupil numbers are expected to increase the school is expected to be close to capacity by 2025 and this trend is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. As a result, the Local Authority are developing a scheme to provide a new school with facilities fit for the 21st Century on a new site.

The project will re-locate Ysgol Gymraeg Gwenllian from its current site to a new site which is within the current catchment area of Ysgol Gymraeg Gwenllian. The new school will provide a Welsh Government standard primary school building with capacity to accommodate 240 pupils (210 + 30 nursery places) between the ages of 3-11 years old and ensure that the school is able to deliver the full curriculum in a modern, safe and inspiring learning environment with enhanced outside areas.

This proposed investment will address poor building condition and lack of adequate space and provision in the existing school by providing a category **A** school with sufficient places for current and projected demand.

As a result of the ongoing challenges that both schools face, it is not possible to sustain current arrangements.

The Proposal

- Discontinue Ysgol Gynradd Mynyddygarreg as from 31st August, 2021.
- From 1st September, 2021 all pupils will be registered at Ysgol Gymraeg Gwenllian operating on both sites (Ysgol Gymraeg Gwenllian and the former Ysgol Gynradd Mynyddygarreg) increasing its capacity to 178 + 17 nursery places.
- Re-designate Ysgol Gymraeg Gwenllian's catchment area to include that of the former Ysgol Gynradd Mynyddygarreg's catchment area as of 1st September, 2021.
- Relocate Ysgol Gymraeg Gwenllian to a new site and increase its capacity to 210 + 30 nursery places as of September 2023, when occupation of the new school is proposed.

Recommendation

E&C Scrutiny Committee is requested to endorse the proposal and recommends to the Executive Board that a formal consultation be initiated.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

YES: Draft Consultation Document

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report:

Signed:  Head of Access to Education

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

- 1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities**
 Developments are consistent with the Authority's Corporate Strategy and the Modernising Education Strategic Outline Programme.
- 2. Legal**
 Appropriate consultation will need to be initiated in accordance with the relevant statutory procedures.
- 3. Finance**
 Revenue implications will be catered for within the Local Management of Schools Fair Funding Scheme.
- 4. ICT**
 ICT colleagues will be consulted with in relation to the potential relocation of IT equipment.
- 5. Risk Management Issues**
 Continuing with current provision would see current problems being perpetuated with the education of children in the area being placed at unacceptable risk and the County Council failing to meet WG target that all buildings should be of an appropriate standard.
- 6. Staffing Implications**
 Staffing implications will be addressed in accordance with the County Council's Policy and Procedures.

7. Physical Assets

- i. One redundant school site – Ysgol Gynradd Mynyddygarreg. Should the proposal be adopted the property will be transferred to Corporate Property Division of the Regeneration and Policy Department for the procedures outlined in the 'Future Use/Disposal of Redundant Land and Buildings' arising from the Modernising Education Programme policy to be actioned.
This policy has been developed to allow the community to be offered the asset in the first instance before placing the site on the open market.
- ii. If the proposal is implemented to discontinue Ysgol Gynradd Mynyddygarreg, Ysgol Gymraeg Gwenllian will proceed to operate on split sites occupying both current Ysgol Gynradd Mynyddygarreg and Ysgol Gymraeg Gwenllian locations until the proposed new Ysgol Gymraeg Gwenllian school building is ready for occupation.
- iii. Following the project completion of developing a new school building for Ysgol Gymraeg Gwenllian the current Ysgol Gymraeg Gwenllian will become redundant as point i. above.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below:

Signed:



Head of Access to Education

1. **Scrutiny Committee** – Will be consulted on 23/11/2020.
2. **Local Member(s)** - The local members will be notified of the proposal and will be consulted during the formal consultation period.
3. **Community / Town Council** - Will be consulted during the formal consultation period.
4. **Relevant Partners** - Will be consulted during the formal consultation period.
5. **Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations** - Will be consulted during the formal consultation period.

**EXECUTIVE BOARD PORTFOLIO
HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED**
YES

N/A

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Title of Document	File Ref No./Locations that the papers are available for inspection
Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan	https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-democracy/strategies-and-plans/welsh-in-education-strategic-plan/
MEP Biennial Review	www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk Executive Board 20 th June 2016
21 st Century Schools Website	www.21stcenturyschools.org