

**Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2016**

**School Modernisation – School Standards and Reorganisation Action 2013 – Ysgol Llanfynydd**

The comments and concerns raised by Members of the Committee focused on the following areas:-

- **Transport and traffic**

A number of concerns were expressed around the impact school closure would have on the increased volume of traffic at neighbouring schools, with an example given on traffic problems currently being experienced at Abermorddu School.

Questions were also asked around whether the Council would provide transport to pupils at Ysgol Llanfynydd in the event of schools closure with a suggestion that the School Transport Task & Finish Group be made aware of any recommendation on transport from Cabinet, to ensure that when reviewing future school transport, no amendment be made to school transport eligibility for pupils where there has been a school closure.

***The Senior Manager, School Planning and Provision confirmed that the school closure could result in less traffic if the cohort of pupils transferred to Ysgol Parc y Llan as transport could be provided. Modelling work on transport issues had been undertaken on the basis of pupils transferring to Ysgol Parc y Llan.***

***The Chief Officer for Education & Youth commented that the issues raised about parking problems at Abermorddu School were being considered by County Council colleagues in Streetscene and Transportation. He also confirmed that transport would be provided for the current cohort of pupils at Ysgol Llanfynydd in the event of school closure, but explained that transport eligibility is based on the Authority where pupils live.***

- **Consultation process/documentation**

Concerns were raised around the consultation process, with comments made that all conclusions within the consultation document justified school closure and that the consultation documents did not measure the effect of school closure on the community and the lives of individuals.

Concern was also raised around the general process which was believed to be the first step in the Authority re-organising the whole excellent primary school network across Flintshire.

***The Chief Officer and Senior Manager, School Planning and Provision provided information on the consultation process and the legal requirements which the Authority had to follow.***

***The Cabinet Member for Education responded to the comments and outlined the level of austerity faced by the Authority. He outlined the impact of current and future cuts to the level of funding received on education and other areas of public service.***

- **Alternative School capacity and transition arrangements**

Questions were asked around capacity at neighbouring Schools to ensure sibling/friend groups remained together in the event of a school closure and whether childcare provision was similar at neighbouring Schools.

Further information on future transition arrangements, in the event of school closure, was requested, especially for those vulnerable groups of learners with Additional Learning Needs.

***The Chief Officer outlined the importance of supporting all children through the transition of school organisational change before, during and after the process and referred to the provision of individual plans for pupils, especially for those vulnerable groups of learners with Additional Learning Needs, in the event of school closure and transfer to other schools.***

***The Senior Manager, School Planning and Provision provided information on the childcare provision at neighbouring schools. He reported that Ysgol Llanfynydd did not offer 'wraparound' care and that the provision was similar at neighbouring schools.***

- **Federation**

A number of comments were made around the possibility of a federation, with questions being asked on whether enough time had been given to the school to explore the possibility of a federation.

***The Chief Officer for Education & Youth and Senior Manager, School Planning and Provision confirmed that no neighbouring school was willing to form a federation with Ysgol Llanfynydd.***

A number of questions were raised around the school funding formula in light of the request from Ysgol Llanfynydd for a reduction in its school funding formula allocation. Concern was raised on the cost per pupil at Ysgol Llanfynydd which was higher than at the nearest secondary school. A suggestion was made that the Council look to review the school funding formula in view of these comments.

***The Chief Officer confirmed that the School Budget Forum continued to monitor the funding formula following review and implementation of current arrangements in 2013/14. He confirmed that the Forum could consider the submission from Ysgol Llanfynydd when updating the formula for the next financial year.***

Comments were also made around pupils who thrive in a small school environment and would be disadvantaged by the school closure. A suggestion was made that the Committee monitor the effect of re-organisation on pupils and schools in the future.

***The Chief Officer commented that the neighbouring schools which pupils would be transferred to in the event of school closure were also small rural schools. He also agreed, in the event of school closure, to provide a report to the Committee a year after implementation to monitor the effect of re-organisation to ensure learning for all is shared.***

The Committee also asked questions on the projected savings from school closure and how these would be re-invested. Questions were also asked around the projected cost of replacing the roof at Ysgol Llanfynydd and in the event of a community asset transfer of the building, who would meet this cost.

***The Senior Manager, School Planning and Provision outlined the projected savings and commented that funding for pupils would 'follow' the pupil in the event of school closure. He also provided information on the projected cost of replacing the roof which had been provided by an independent contractor carrying out a condition survey.***

***The Chief Officer explained that the Authority would not determine the future use of a school building until it had become vacant. He added that discussions would need to take place, if the building was transferred, on funding for any necessary repairs and maintenance.***

A number of Members, raised concerns on the Welsh Government National Categorisation Model and that in the event of school closure, pupils would receive a similar standard of education at a neighbouring school.

***The Chief Officer and Senior Manager, School Planning and Provision explained that it was the opinion of Estyn that the proposals would at least maintain the quality of learning for the pupils in the event of school closure.***

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the comments of the Committee be collated and presented to Cabinet at its meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2016.