

MEETING	Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet
DATE	7 November 2023
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Beca Brown
OFFICER	Gwern ap Rhisiart
TITLE OF ITEM	Ysgol Felinwnda

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

- a) The Cabinet is requested to give its final approval to the proposal under Section 43 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, issued through a statutory notice to close Ysgol Felinwnda on 31 December 2023, and the current pupils to transfer to an alternative school nearby, namely Ysgol Bontnewydd or Ysgol Llandwrog, according to the parents' choice, from 1 January 2024.
- b) To approve transport arrangements for the transition phase only, where free transport would be provided for those pupils who are currently enrolled at Ysgol Felinwnda and living within the catchment area of Ysgol Felinwnda, to Ysgol Bontnewydd or Ysgol Llandwrog, for the remainder of the learner's time in either of those schools, in accordance with Cyngor Gwynedd's transport policy.
- c) To allow further consultation to take place on the future of the current catchment area of Ysgol Felinwnda to agree what school, or schools will serve as a catchment area school in the future for the children of the existing Ysgol Felinwnda catchment area.

2. THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

- 2.1 Based on the PLASC (Pupil Level Annual School Census) January 2023, Ysgol Felinwnda is the school with the lowest number of learners in the county, with a total of 8 learners. Consequently, the Education Department submitted a report to Cabinet on 11 July 2023 requesting permission to hold a statutory objection period on the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda in accordance with the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the statutory Welsh Government Code (School Organisation Code 011/2018).
- 2.2 Section 48(3) of the 2013 Act provides that the requirement to consult does not apply to proposals to close a 'small school' as defined in the Act, and the School Organisation Code 011/2018 provides as follows:

"Where a school has fewer than 10 registered pupils (or there are no pupils remaining at a school) at the January census point, the 2013 Act permits governing bodies/local authorities to undertake a streamlined procedure to bring about official closure.

This consists solely of the issue of the notice of closure – the requirement for general consultation being waived, provided sufficient equivalent school places have been identified which would be reasonably accessible to those pupils actually or potentially displaced."

Since there are only 8 registered learners at Ysgol Felinwnda in the January 2023 PLASC, the School Organisation Code allows the authority to follow a streamlined procedure to close the school. Specifically, the requirement for general consultation is waived. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code, the authority was only required to publish a statutory notice and undertake the normal objection period, and then to consider any objections received before reaching a final decision.

Following the submission of a report to Cabinet on 11 July they:

- a) Approved the commencement of the process to close Ysgol Felinwnda on 31 December 2023 under Section 43 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.
- b) Approved to issue a statutory notice, on the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda on 31 December 2023, allowing a statutory objection period of 28 days in accordance with the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 011/2018, and to transfer the current pupils to an alternative school nearby, namely Ysgol Bontnewydd or Ysgol Llandwrog, according to parents' choice, from 1 January 2024.
- c) Approved transport arrangements for the transition phase only, where free transport would be provided for those pupils who are currently registered in Ysgol Felinwnda and living in the catchment area of Ysgol Felinwnda, to Ysgol Bontnewydd or Ysgol Llandwrog, for the remainder of the learner's time in either of those schools, in accordance with Cyngor Gwynedd's transport policy.
- d) Subject to the Cabinet's decision regarding the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda, to allow a consultation to be held on revising the catchment area boundaries of schools that border Ysgol Felinwnda's current catchment area.

3. STATUTORY OBJECTION PERIOD

In accordance with the Cabinet's decision, a Statutory Notice was issued (**Appendix A**) on 5 September 2023, commencing the objection period of 28 days. The notices were posted on the school gates and on the Council's website with the background to the proposal, a link to a report submitted to Cabinet on 11 July 2023, along with an explanation of how to submit objections. All the relevant stakeholders received an e-mail with a link to the website, informing them that the objection period would commence on 5 September 2023.

The Schools Organisation Code 011/2018 notes:

In the case of schools where some pupils remain, proposers must make sure that the closure notice is brought to the pupils' attention, that its meaning is made clear to them, and that appropriate steps are taken to enable these pupils to respond to the notice if they so wish. It is essential that pupils are provided with the opportunity to contribute to the decision-making process and proposers must ensure that full account is taken of any views they express before a final decision is taken.

In accordance with the Code, a session was conducted on 26 September 2023 with learners at the school to discuss the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda. The report on the session can be seen in **Appendix C**.

The objection period ended on 4 October 2023, and 4 objections were received.

Following the objection period, the Cabinet is required to consider a formal report on the objections together with the Council's response to them prior to reaching a final decision to implement the proposal or otherwise. **Appendix B** contains an analysis of the objections received and the Council's response to those objection comments.

4. OBJECTIONS

The purpose of this part of the report is to present a summary of the objections received during the objection period, together with the Council's response to them. All the objection comments with the Council's response to them are set out in **Appendix B** of this report.

4.1 Responses to the proposal from the learners of Ysgol Felinwnda

A session to discuss the proposed closure of Ysgol Felinwnda was held with all Ysgol Felinwnda learners on 26 September 2023. Appropriate documentation was prepared for the learners following consultation on their content with the Headteacher. Arrangements were made for the Headteacher to take the lead on discussing the proposal with learners, with administrative support from an officer from the Modernising Education Team, to ensure that they understood what was being proposed and to give them an opportunity to state their views on the proposal.

These were the main points raised during the consultation with the learners:

- The proposal saddened all the learners.
- The loss of friendship and the sense of Ysgol Felinwnda as a family should they attend a new school, worried each one of the learners.
- Many were worried about the future of the school building and its contents and didn't want it demolished should it be closed.
- Some learners were concerned about the support they would receive at an alternative school.
- Each one conveyed that friendly teachers and friends, creating memories, along with a safe building and environment are the most important things to them in any school.

Ysgol Felinwnda learners' comments during the session conveyed a tendency towards opposing the proposed closure.

Should the proposed closure be implemented, there will be a choice for current school learners to transfer to either Ysgol Llandwrog or Ysgol Bontnewydd. Ysgol Llandwrog is familiar to learners because of the collaboration that has existed between the two schools for some time. In addition, a number of Felinwnda catchment learners already attend Ysgol Bontnewydd.

The Authority recognises that this period is one of uncertainty that could lead to stress and impact on learners. However, if the proposal was implemented, the Authority would make every effort to assist the learners to transfer and settle into their new school.

4.2 Impact on the community

Some comments indicated concern about the future of Canolfan Bro Llanwnda and the Cylch Meithrin there, if the school closes. In addition, comments were received stating that the Llanwnda, Dinas and Saron area will lose an invaluable community resource through the closure and asked what long-term support the Council will be willing to invest in ensuring the prosperity of the local

community.

Cyngor Gwynedd has seen a substantial decline in the number of learners at Ysgol Felinwnda in the past 10 years, from 31 in 2012 to 8 in 2022, with only 3 of these learners living in the Ysgol Felinwnda catchment area.

In accordance with the Schools Organisation Code (011/2018), an impact assessment was undertaken regarding the impact of the proposed proposal on the community. Further consideration has been given to the impact of the proposal on the community following the receipt of the above objections. It is stated in the latest community impact assessment that there is no community use of the school. Canolfan Bro Llanwnda is located next door to the school and hosts a number of activities including the Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi. For this reason, it is not anticipated that the closure would have a directly significant impact on the school as a community resource for the Felinwnda community, but it is recognised that it may have a partial impact on the Cylch Meithrin and possibly on the Cylch Ti a Fi.

In relation to the concerns about the future of Canolfan Bro Llanwnda, should the school close, it is noted that supporting communities is something the Council's Community Support Service does, and we will direct your enquiry about support for the centre to them.

4.3 Cylch Meithrin

A comment was received that the Cylch Meithrin had been an initial educational link for many of the school's learners, and the Cylch would have an uncertain future without a school nearby.

Learner numbers have been fairly consistent at Cylch Meithrin Dinas and Llanwnda over the years. However, comparing the numbers of Cylch Meithrin learners with the number of learners in Ysgol Felinwnda's Nursery and Reception classes, it will be seen that the majority of children in the Cylch have not transferred to Ysgol Felinwnda. It is therefore likely that the closure of Ysgol Felinwnda would have a partial effect on parental choice to send their children to the Cylch.

The Council's Early Years Service is available to support the Cylch Meithrin with any childcare placements matters.

4.4 The Statutory Process

Comments have been received expressing disappointment that no consultation was held before an objection period was held on the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda.

At the outset of discussions on the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda, officers from the Education Department made it clear that any statutory process is carried out in accordance with the Welsh Government's Statutory Code (Schools Organisation Code 011/2018) which states:

"Where a school has fewer than 10 registered pupils (or there are no pupils remaining at a school) at the January census point, the 2013 Act permits governing bodies/local authorities to undertake a streamlined procedure to bring about official closure.

This consists solely of the issue of the notice of closure – the requirement for general consultation being waived, provided sufficient equivalent school places have been identified which would be reasonably accessible to those pupils actually or potentially displaced."

However, after listening to local concerns about the original intention of holding an objection period on the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda and offering a place for children in the catchment area at

Ysgol Bontnewydd, the Cabinet Member for Education decided to defer taking the report on the proposal to Cabinet in March 2023. Subsequently, and as an additional step to the requirements of the Schools Organisation Code and in response to the aspirations of the community, officers from the Education Department and the Cabinet Member for Education held engagement sessions in Felinwnda, Bontnewydd and Llandwrog to explain that the Council now intended to hold an objection period on the proposed closure of Ysgol Felinwnda, and, subject to the Cabinet's decisions, to hold a separate consultation on a review of the catchment boundaries of schools adjoining Ysgol Felinwnda's existing catchment area.

4.5 The reasons for the proposal to close

Comments indicated that pupil numbers and budget, namely data and money, formed the basis of the proposal rather than a proactive vision to enable vulnerable rural Welsh communities to continue and thrive.

The Authority is proposing to close Ysgol Felinwnda as it is faced with a number of challenges, specifically:

- The number of learners at the school is causing concern, with only 8 learners attending the school,
- Learner number projections remain vulnerable,
- The class sizes are small - 2 classes with 3 pupils in one and 5 in the other (January 2023),
- There is an age range of 3 years or over in both classes

The Council is of the opinion that implementing the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda would provide better experiences for pupils to socialise and collaborate on a daily basis with peers and mean that children are taught in more suitably sized classes.

No community use is made of Ysgol Felinwnda with Canolfan Bro Llanwnda used for community events. Occasional use of the Centre is made by the school. As a result, it is not anticipated that the closure would have a directly significant impact on the community use of Canolfan Bro Llanwnda.

4.6 The impact of constructing the Caernarfon and Bontnewydd bypass.

One comment noted that no consideration had been given to a negative impact experienced by the school during the construction of the Caernarfon and Bontnewydd bypass and that this had influenced new parents to take their children to other schools nearby.

The number of learners in the Ysgol Felinwnda catchment choosing to attend other schools was high before the construction of the Caernarfon and Bontnewydd bypass began. For example, here were 50 learners attending other schools in 2019 and 46 learners attending other schools in 2017 and 2018. We can therefore conclude that the construction of the bypass did not have a negative impact on the number of learners.

4.7 Ysgol Bontnewydd Plans

One comment stated that he was suspicious of the coincidence of a Welsh Government announcement to fund £12 million to build a new 'district' School for Bontnewydd and that it

looked like a deliberate attempt to undermine and jeopardise the future of the area's rural schools in order to justify a new large school.

The Education Department was successful in a national competition, namely the Welsh Government's Sustainable Schools Challenge, to secure a substantial capital investment in Ysgol Bontnewydd. The success of the application was not certain as it was a competitive process. The investment in Ysgol Bontnewydd is a project that responds to the needs of that particular school's catchment area.

4.8 Education Strategy

Comments have been received asking whether the new Education Strategy will provide an operational and credible strategy for the County's small and rural schools in the future.

The Authority is in the process of formulating an Education Strategy and as part of this work, a public consultation is planned. There will be an opportunity to give an opinion on the content of the draft Education Strategy as part of the proposed consultation.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

As part of the process of developing the proposal, a range of options for the school were considered and evaluated and a series of impact assessments were undertaken, including:

- Impact Assessment on the Equality Characteristics of Welsh and Socio-economic Disadvantage
- Impact Assessment on the Well-being of Future Generations Act
- Community Impact Assessment Report
- Language Impact Assessment Report
- Assessment Report on the Probable Impact on Travel Arrangements
- Quality and Standards of Education Assessment Report

Further consideration was given to the above assessments, following the objection period. It is considered that the findings of the assessments are still current and relevant to the recommendation. The latest assessments have been included in **Appendix D**.

6. SPECIFIC FACTORS WHEN CONSIDERING CLOSING THE SCHOOL

Although a process to close a school that has fewer than 10 pupils waives the requirement for general consultation, the Schools Organisation Code 011/2018 states that relevant matters included in the Code must be considered. It notes that when considering whether a school closure is appropriate, special attention should be given to the following options:

a) Whether the establishment of multi-site schools might be considered as a means of retaining buildings, or the reasons for not pursuing this option;

With only 8 learners, Ysgol Felinwnda is facing an increasing challenge to set a balanced budget as the school will receive an allocation based on the number of learners, and this, along with a protected sum allocated to them which enables them to employ a headteacher and assistant only. Because of this, Cyngor Gwynedd is of the opinion that consideration cannot be given to the establishment of multi-site schools as a means of keeping the school open.

b. Whether alternatives to closure, such as clustering, collaboration or federation with other schools, might be considered or the reasons for not pursuing these as an alternative.

As clustering, collaboration or federation with other schools, would mean continuing with the existing school, and therefore there would be a high likelihood that the current challenges would continue and intensify over the next few years, therefore the Council is of the opinion that these options do not address the challenges facing Ysgol Felinwnda now and in the future.

c. Whether the possibility of making fuller use of the existing buildings as a community or educational resource could be explored;

Since Canolfan Bro Llanwnda is located next door to the school and holds a number of activities including the Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi it is not anticipated that there is a need for another community resource in the area. However, should the proposal be implemented, Cyngor Gwynedd has a school building after-use policy, and this policy would be followed when considering the site's future.

d. The overall effect of closure on the local community (including the loss of school-based facilities which are used by the local community)

Observations were received regarding the impact of the school's closure on the local community and Canolfan Bro Llanwnda following the objection period. The full responses can be seen in **Appendix B** with a summary in **4.2** above.

In accordance with the Schools Organisation Code (011/2018), an impact assessment was undertaken regarding the impact of the proposal on the community. Further consideration has been given to the impact of the proposal on the community following the receipt of the above objections. It is stated in the latest community impact assessment that there is no community use of the school. Canolfan Bro Llanwnda is located next door to the school and hosts a number of activities including the Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi. For this reason, it is not anticipated that the closure would have a directly significant impact on the school as a community resource for the Felinwnda community, but it is recognised that it could have a partial impact on Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi.

In relation to the concerns about the future of Canolfan Bro Llanwnda, should the school close, it is noted that supporting communities is something the Council's Community Support Service does and we will direct your enquiry about support for the centre to them.

e. How parents' and pupils' engagement with the alternative school and any facilities it may offer could be supported.

To mitigate against any potential negative impact on learners, we would encourage discussions between the alternative school, or schools, and the parents of learners at Ysgol Felinwnda so that they can take advantage of their facilities and after-school activities, and to encourage collaboration between the school and the community of Felinwnda.

7. CONCLUSION

Although the authority received 4 objections to the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda on 31 December 2023, following consideration of all objections received, the Council remains convinced that this proposal is the most appropriate response to the challenges faced by the school.

The analysis of the comments and objections received is addressed in *Section 4* of this report and the comments and responses are fully available in **Appendix B**.

It is anticipated that the closure of Ysgol Felinwnda on 31 December 2023, and offering current learners to transfer to a nearby alternative school, namely Ysgol Bontnewydd or Ysgol Llandwrog, in accordance with parental choice, from 1 January 2024 will solve the challenges of low numbers, small classes and high costs by:

- offering education in classes of a more suitable size
- offering education in classes with more children of the same age
- reducing the cost per head

There will be improved educational environments for future learners in the school / schools that will serve Ysgol Felinwnda's catchment area following the completion of the consultation on which school, or schools, will serve as a catchment school for the children of Ysgol Felinwnda's current catchment area in the future.

8. IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSAL

8.1 Current learners

Should the Cabinet decide to implement the proposal, Ysgol Felinwnda will close on 31 December 2023 and current learners will transfer to an alternative school, in line with parental choice, from 1 January 2024.

8.2 Transport

Should the Cabinet decide to implement the proposal, Ysgol Felinwnda will close on 31 December 2023 and transitional transport provision would be available for existing Ysgol Felinwnda learners (who also live in the school catchment area) to either Ysgol Bontnewydd or Ysgol Llandwrog, in accordance with the County's Schools Transport Policy, at an annual cost of between £7,600 - £22,800, depending on parental choice and the mode of transport..

8.3 Staffing Considerations

Should the proposal be implemented, it is anticipated that staffing implications would lead to redundancies. Cyngor Gwynedd has developed a detailed staffing policy, jointly with Trade Unions and headteachers. Any redundancies resulting from this proposal will have to comply with that policy. Clear and open communication will play a fundamental part in implementing any proposals.

Discussions have already begun with staff and Unions to give them prior warning of the objection period on the option to close Ysgol Felinwnda and we will meet with them following the Cabinet's decision to discuss the next steps.

8.4 Canolfan Bro Llanwnda and the Cylch Meithrin

Should the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda be implemented, we will refer concerns about the sustainability of the centre and Cylch Meithrin to the Council's Community Support Service and Early Years Service to assist them with any issues.

9. RECOMMENDATION

Following consideration of the objections, it is recommended that the Cabinet:

- a) Approve the decision sought, of final confirmation of the proposal under Section 43 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 given via statutory notice, to close Ysgol Felinwnda on 31 December 2023 and offer learners a place at either Ysgol Llandwrog or Ysgol Bontnewydd from 1 January 2024, subject to parental choice.
- b) Approve transport arrangements for the transitional phase only, where free transport would be provided for those pupils who are currently registered at Ysgol Felinwnda and living in the Ysgol Felinwnda catchment area, to Ysgol Bontnewydd or Ysgol Llandwrog, for the remainder of the learner's time in either of those schools, in accordance with Cyngor Gwynedd's transport policy.
- c) Permit a consultation to take place on the future of the current catchment area of Ysgol Felinwnda to agree what school, or schools will serve as a catchment area school for the children of Ysgol Felinwnda's current catchment area in the future.

By undertaking the consultation on the future of Ysgol Felinwnda's current catchment, the Council will gather the views of key stakeholders locally before reaching a decision on which school, or schools, will serve Ysgol Felinwnda's catchment area in the future.

The consultation will take place early in the Spring 2024 term before a report on the consultation is brought back to Cabinet for a final decision.

Subsequently, the area served by Ysgol Felinwnda from September 2024 would form part of alternative school, or schools, catchment areas, and access to the school, or schools, would be offered in accordance with the county's access policy, and transport would be provided to the school or schools in accordance with the County's School Transport Policy.

10. NEXT STEPS

Subject to the Cabinet's decision, these are the next steps together with an outline timetable:

November 2023	<p>Share the decision with all relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Offer a place to those learners currently enrolled in Ysgol Felinwnda, who live in the catchment area of Ysgol Felinwnda, at Ysgol Bontnewydd or Ysgol Llandwrog, offering them transport in accordance with Cyngor Gwynedd's transport policy for the remainder of the learner's time at one of those schools.</p> <p>Offer a place in an alternative school to those learners currently enrolled in Ysgol Felinwnda and living in other catchment areas.</p> <p>Hold discussions with staff at Ysgol Felinwnda.</p>
31 December 2023	Implementation of the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda.
January - February 2024	Consult on the future of Ysgol Felinwnda's current catchment area to agree which school, or schools, will serve as a future catchment school for the children of Ysgol Felinwnda's current catchment area.

March - April 2024	Return to Cabinet for approval on a preferred option on which school, or schools, will serve Ysgol Felinwnda's catchment area in the future.
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11. VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

The Monitoring Officer:

The report has been the subject of advice from Legal Services. No observations to add in relation to propriety

Head of Finance Department:

From a financial perspective, I cannot see that there has been any change in the situation since the Cabinet discussed this matter in July and the process of closing the school was started. Ysgol Felinwnda's current situation is not sustainable, and the previous report showed that an assessment had been carried out of the options available, and I was satisfied with the robustness of the financial estimates contained therein. I support the decision sought."

The Local Member:

I note the recommendation presented to the Cabinet, which is to approve the closure of Ysgol Felinwnda from 31 December 2023, following the publication of the Statutory Notice on 5 September 2023.

The closure of a school that has served the local community and provided good education in a homely atmosphere since 1895 is a sad event.

However, the school's current numbers are very low, with no forecasted increase. It must therefore be accepted that difficult decisions must be made by Cyngor Gwynedd's Cabinet.

Moving forward, what is important is that the comments received as part of the objection to the Statutory Notice, and during the statutory process are addressed.

These include the effect of closing Ysgol Felinwnda on Canolfan Bro Llanwnda and Cylch Meithrin Dinas and Saron.

I welcome what Cyngor Gwynedd says when responding to the objections received, that is, that there will be support from Cyngor Gwynedd's Community Support Service and the Early Years Service for Canolfan Bro Llanwnda and the cylch meithrin.

Cyngor Gwynedd will hold a consultation on the future of Ysgol Felinwnda's catchment area, and it is important to ensure that this process will be one that succeeds in gathering the opinions of residents and the local community through a thorough and sincere process.

I, and many in the community, are of the strong opinion that the Felinwnda catchment area should be reshaped so that pupils in the catchment area go to Ysgol Llandwrog, rather than Ysgol Bontnewydd. Felinwnda and Llandwrog schools have worked closely together over the years and the rural nature of the two schools is very similar. This would also help to protect the future of Ysgol Llandwrog which provides good education in the local community.

I know that Cyngor Gwynedd is in the process of developing a draft education strategy, which will be subject to consultation. As the demographics of Gwynedd's pupils for the future are fragile, I would like to emphasise how important it is for this strategy to be workable and credible, in the context of small and rural schools in Gwynedd. It should propose a procedure that explains what part these schools have in terms of protecting Gwynedd's rural and Welsh communities for the future. It should also ensure strategic planning by catchment area rather than closing schools when the numbers reach a certain threshold, without consideration of the wider picture.

Appendices

Appendix A: Statutory Notice

Appendix B: Analysis of objection comments

Appendix C: Responses of Ysgol Felinwnda learners to the proposal

Appendix D: Impact Assessments

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS - All relevant background documentation on the proposal is available on the Council's website via the following link [Ysgol Felinwnda \(llyw.cymru\)](#)

CYNGOR GWYNEDD
SECTION 48 SCHOOL STANDARDS AND ORGANISATION ACT (WALES) 2013
NOTICE OF PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE YSGOL FELINWYDDA
CYNGOR GWYNEDD, COUNCIL OFFICES, CAERNARFON, GWYNEDD, LL55 1SH

Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 43 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code that Cyngor Gwynedd propose to discontinue YSGOL FELINWYDDA, Dinas, Gwynedd LL54 5UG. The school is currently maintained by Cyngor Gwynedd.

It is proposed to implement the proposal on **31 December 2023**.

Subject to parental choice, current pupils at Ysgol Felinwdda will transfer to either Ysgol Llandwrog, Llandwrog, Gwynedd LL54 5ST or Ysgol Bontnewydd, Bontnewydd, Caernarfon, Gwynedd LL55 2UF on 1 January 2024. Ysgol Llandwrog is a Welsh-medium voluntary controlled Church in Wales school and Ysgol Bontnewydd is a Welsh medium Community School. Both schools are for girls and boys aged 3 to 11.

The admission authority for Ysgol Llandwrog and Ysgol Bontnewydd will be Cyngor Gwynedd and pupils will be admitted to the schools by Cyngor Gwynedd in accordance with its admissions policy. The admissions arrangements for the school will not make provision for selection by aptitude or ability (pupil banding).

Transport will be provided to the schools in accordance with Cyngor Gwynedd's School Transport Policy, and transitional transport provision arrangements will be provided for pupils who are registered at Ysgol Felinwdda on the date of this notice, to Ysgol Llandwrog or Ysgol Bontnewydd.

Cyngor Gwynedd is the maintaining authority and will implement the proposal.

Any persons may object to the proposal within a period of 28 days of the date on which the proposal was published, that is by **4 October 2023**.

Objections should be sent to the Head of Education, Cyngor Gwynedd, Caernarfon, LL55 1SH or by sending an e-mail for the attention of the Head of Education to modernisingeducation@gwynedd.llyw.cymru.

The future of Ysgol Felinwdda's catchment area will be subject to a separate consultation on the matter if there is a decision to close the school following the objection period.

Signed:



Gareth Jackson
Head of Education, on behalf of Cyngor Gwynedd
Publication Date: **5 September 2023**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(The following is not part of the notice but is intended to explain its general purpose)

Cyngor Gwynedd is proposing to close Ysgol Felinwdda on 31 December 2023 and offer places for current pupils at Ysgol Llandwrog or Ysgol Bontnewydd.

In accordance with the Authorities admissions policy, parents are entitled to apply for admission (or transfer request) to any school.

Transitional provisions for free school transport will be in place for those pupils who are registered at Ysgol Felinwdda on the date of this notice, to Ysgol Llandwrog or Ysgol Bontnewydd, if they live more than 2 miles from the school of choice, or if they would be eligible for free transport due to the nature of the route to that school, in accordance with the current transport policy. This would be a temporary arrangement for the remainder of their time at the school.

If the closure of Ysgol Felinwdda is carried out on 31 December 2023, a consultation will be held to decide on the future of Ysgol Felinwdda's catchment area.

Objections to the statutory notice on the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda on 31 December 2023, and provide a place for the pupils in Ysgol Llandwrog or Ysgol Bontnewydd from 1 January 2024.

(Objection Period 5 September – 4 October 2023)

4 objections were received and they were sorted under the following headings:

A) Impact on the community

D) Reasons for the proposal to close

F) Plans for Ysgol Bontnewydd

B) Cylch Meithrin

E) Negative impact of constructing the Caernarfon and Bontnewydd bypass

G) Education Strategy

C) Comments on the statutory process

Observations		Cyngor Gwynedd's Response
A	Impact on the community	
1	<p>Having considered and discussed the notice, it was agreed that Llanwnda Community Council accepted that a total of 8 pupils was impossible on an educational level.</p> <p>However, there was concern about the security of the hall, members will be grateful to Cyngor Gwynedd for considering the sustainability of the hall for the future - regular use.</p>	<p>The Council notes that you do not object to closing Ysgol Felinwnda as the low number of pupils makes it educationally impossible.</p> <p>Supporting Community Centres is something that is done by the Council's Community Support Service and we will refer your concern to them about the impact of closing the school on the sustainability of the centre.</p>
2	<p>If the school closes, we have real concern about the future of Canolfan Bro Llanwnda community centre and the Cylch Meithrin, which is based there. Although the School does not make direct use of the Centre, the School contributed towards community activities held there, such as the Christmas Concert. As a result, the parents used the Centre for things such as birthday parties.</p>	<p>Supporting Community Centres is something that is done by the Council's Community Support Service and we will refer your concern to them about the impact of closing the school on the sustainability of the centre.</p> <p>Should there be a decision to close the school, the Council's Early Years Service is available to support the Cylch Meithrin with any childcare placements matters.</p>
3	<p>Should the Cabinet decide to close Ysgol Felinwnda, there would not only be a negative impact on the pupils and those families who currently attend the school, but it would also have a negative impact on the community.</p>	<p>The numbers in Ysgol Felinwnda have substantially reduced in the past 10 years, from 31 in 2012 to 8 in 2023, with only 3 of these learners living in the Ysgol Felinwnda catchment area. The other 45 learners (94%) who</p>

	<p>Canolfan Bro Llanwnda community centre is not far from the school. Although the school does not make direct use of the Centre, the school's presence is a great asset and promotes community use of the Centre.</p> <p>For example, Ysgol Felinwnda contributes towards various activities held there, and parents and members of the community use the Centre, who would not do so if it were not for the presence of the school nearby.</p> <p>In addition, Cylch Meithrin Dinas and Llanwnda is one of the main users of the Centre, and there will be uncertainty about its future without the educational provision next door.</p> <p>Although there were calls in recent months for Cyngor Gwynedd to collaborate with the community and relevant parties, in order to ensure the future of Canolfan Bro Llanwnda and the Cylch Meithrin, there have only been informal suggestions from Cyngor Gwynedd and no commitment to ensure their future, should the educational provision be lost in the area. I therefore ask Cyngor Gwynedd to confirm whether they will proactively act to ensure the future of Canolfan Bro Llanwnda and the Cylch Meithrin should a decision be made to close.</p>	<p>live in the catchment area attend other schools.</p> <p>No community use is made of Ysgol Felinwnda and Canolfan Bro Llanwnda is used for community events, including occasional use of the Centre by Ysgol Felinwnda. As a result, it is not anticipated that closing the school will have a significant direct impact on community use of Canolfan Bro Llanwnda.</p> <p>As no final decision has been made on the future of Ysgol Felinwnda, it would currently be premature to start planning for any impact on Canolfan Bro Llanwnda and the Cylch Meithrin. If the Cabinet decides to close Ysgol Felinwnda, the Council's Community Support Service is available to support Canolfan Bro Llanwnda and we will refer your concern about the impact of closing the school on the sustainability of the centre to them.</p> <p>Although the numbers have been fairly consistent at Cylch Meithrin Dinas and Llanwnda over the years, comparing the figures with the number of learners in the nursery and reception classes in Ysgol Felinwnda (see B below) suggests that the majority of children in the Cylch have not been transferring to Ysgol Felinwnda as a matter of course. These figures also suggest that the Cylch Meithrin, potentially, serves a wider area than the catchment area of Ysgol Felinwnda. Consequently, it is likely that closing Ysgol Felinwnda would only have a partial impact on parents' choice to send their children to the Cylch.</p> <p>Should there be a decision to close the school, the Council's Early Years Service is available to support the Cylch Meithrin with any childcare placements matters.</p>
4	<p>What will be the future of the Centre in terms of contributory facilities that are linked to the School, such as the sewerage system?</p>	<p>The Council will ensure that Canolfan Bro Llanwnda will continue to benefit from the contributory facilities until there is any change in use of the Ysgol Felinwnda site which will possibly involve the need to review any services that are shared between the school and the centre.</p>
5	<p>Our schools are the main, if not the only, community resource that Cyngor Gwynedd has a direct influence on. Small rural schools in Gwynedd and across Wales draw families and communities together and, as a result, protect and</p>	<p>Cyngor Gwynedd has seen a substantial drop in the number of learners in Ysgol Felinwnda in the past 10 years, from 31 in 2012 to 8 in 2023, with only 3 of these learners living in the Ysgol Felinwnda catchment area. In</p>

	promote Welshness and the Welsh language.	comparison with the other catchment areas in the area, the number of learners in the Ysgol Felinwnda catchment area who choose to attend an out-of-catchment area school is high. The latest data shows that 48 learners aged between 3-11 (September 2022) lived in the Ysgol Felinwnda catchment area; with only three of them attending Ysgol Felinwnda. This means that 94% of the learners who live in the catchment area of Ysgol Felinwnda attend out-of-catchment area schools.																										
6	We have real concern that the Llanwnda, Dinas and Saron area will lose an invaluable community resource and become an area without any heart or identity. What are the Council's intentions to alleviate these negative impacts on our community; and what long-term steps and support will the Council be willing to invest to ensure the prosperity of the local community?	<p>Also, it is noted in the community impact assessment that no community use is made of the school. Canolfan Bro Llanwnda is located next door to the school and holds a number of activities including the Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi. As a result, it is not anticipated that closing the school would have a significant direct impact on the community of Felinwnda.</p> <p>Supporting communities is something that is done by the Council's Community Support Service and we will refer your enquiry about support to them.</p>																										
B	Cylch Meithrin																											
7	Over the years, the Cylch Meithrin has been an initial educational link for a number of pupils at the School; an uncertain future is now anticipated for the Cylch without a School nearby. It is clear that the Council has not sufficiently considered the future of these community resources or, at worst, has ignored their future.	<p>Although the numbers have been fairly consistent at Cylch Meithrin Dinas and Llanwnda over the years, comparing the figures with the number of learners in the Nursery and Reception classes in Ysgol Felinwnda suggests that the majority of children have not been transferring to Ysgol Felinwnda as a matter of course. Consequently, it is likely that closing Ysgol Felinwnda would only have a partial impact on parents' choice to send their children to the Cylch.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Year</th> <th rowspan="2">Cylch Meithrin Dinas and Llanwnda</th> <th colspan="2">Ysgol Felinwnda</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Nursery Class</th> <th>Reception Class</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2018-19</td> <td>11</td> <td>1</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019-20</td> <td>6</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020-21</td> <td>9</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021-22</td> <td>8</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022-23</td> <td>16</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Cylch Meithrin Dinas and Llanwnda	Ysgol Felinwnda		Nursery Class	Reception Class	2018-19	11	1	4	2019-20	6	2	2	2020-21	9	2	2	2021-22	8	1	1	2022-23	16	0	0
Year	Cylch Meithrin Dinas and Llanwnda	Ysgol Felinwnda																										
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2022-23	16	0	0																									

		Should there be a decision to close the school, the Council's Early Years Service is available to support the Cylch Meithrin with any childcare placements matters.
C	Comments on the statutory process	
8	<p>Although we succeeded to get the Council to defer their original proposal back in March with the promise of having a discussion and listening to the voice of both communities in the area of Ysgol Felinwnda and Ysgol Llandwrog, no consultation of value was undertaken. "Engagement" sessions were held, which were essentially information sharing sessions only. Although the Portfolio Leader promised to gather observations to provide feedback to the Cabinet, no such presentation was seen.</p> <p>At the beginning of all this, an informal meeting was held between Council officers, the Headteacher and the two Governing Body Chairs in January this year. We were assured that there was "no need to worry" at the time, that there was no need to share anything with the remaining Governors and that they would "update and share information" with us, after further discussion with the Education Department.</p> <p>At the end of February, the Clerk of Ysgol Felinwnda Governors received a request to arrange an urgent meeting of the Governing Body. An urgent meeting was held at the beginning of March where Council Officers presented their intention to submit a report to the Cabinet recommending the closure of the School due to the low numbers of pupils. By 20 March, the report had been published on the Council website and we informed parents of children at the School at that time.</p> <p>No further communication was received by the Education Department after the informal meeting in January until the urgent meeting with the Governors at the beginning of March. It seems that the impact assessment process had commenced since the beginning of February, three weeks after the informal meeting but the School, Ysgol Llandwrog or the wider community were not engaged with as it was drawn up. It seems that the impact assessments are factually incorrect on a number of analyses. Although we drew attention to this, the analyses in the latest report had not been amended.</p>	<p>At the beginning of discussions on the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda, officers of the Education Department explained that any statutory process is undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 which notes:</p> <p><i>"The requirement to consult does not apply to proposals to close a small school..." (section 48(3))</i></p> <p>The Welsh Government's Statutory Code (The Schools Organisation Code 011/2018) notes:</p> <p><i>"Where a school has fewer than 10 registered pupils (or there are no pupils remaining at a school) at the January census point, the 2013 Act permits governing bodies/local authorities to undertake a streamlined procedure to bring about official closure.</i></p> <p><i>This consists solely of the issue of the notice of closure – the requirement for general consultation being waived, provided sufficient equivalent school places have been identified which would be reasonably accessible to those pupils actually or potentially displaced."</i></p> <p>However, after listening to local concerns about the original proposal of holding an objection period on the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda and offering a place for children of the catchment area in Ysgol Bontnewydd, the Cabinet Member for Education resolved to defer submitting the report on the proposal to the Cabinet in March. Following this, and as an additional step to the requirements of the Schools Organisation Code and in response the community's wishes, officers from the Education Department and the Cabinet Member for Education held engagement sessions in Felinwnda, Bontnewydd and Llandwrog to explain that the</p>
9	The contact between Cyngor Gwynedd and the school and the community prior to issuing the Statutory Notice was disappointing. Although the original proposal to issue a Notice was deferred in March, and that there was a	

	<p>promise to consult and gather the observations of stakeholders, only engagement sessions were held. In these, Cyngor Gwynedd explained their intentions but there was no opportunity for the community to express its opinion. Should the community have received a better opportunity to express an opinion, it is possible that Cyngor Gwynedd would not have proceeded to issue a Statutory Notice and that other options could have been considered.</p>	<p>Council would now hold an objection period on the closure of Ysgol Felinwnda and then undertake a separate consultation on a review of the catchment area boundaries of schools that border with the current catchment area of Ysgol Felinwnda.</p> <p>The impact assessments met the statutory requirements and the Council is confident in the accuracy of the information submitted in the documentation.</p> <p>Apart from correspondence from the Cylch Meithrin questioning the number of children that had been noted in the impact assessments, offering accurate numbers, the Education Department has not received any other correspondence about errors in the analyses in the impact assessments. As a result of receiving observations about the Cylch Meithrin, the impact assessments were amended in the July 2023 Cabinet report to include the information from the Cylch.</p>
10	<p>On behalf of Canolfan Bro Llanwnda Committee, I would like to convey our disappointment about the proposal and the likely decision from Cyngor Gwynedd to close Ysgol Felinwnda.</p> <p>We express our dissatisfaction about this process so far and the lack of full consultation with the local community and the errors in the analyses of impact assessments within your report the Cabinet.</p>	
D	Reasons for the proposal to close	
11	<p>If the main arguments are based on data and funding, we have no evidence to provide a strong counter case. However, the fact that the School has faced such arguments in the past must be noted and that the community's needs changed where a growth was seen in numbers.</p> <p>Based on this, the area of Llanwnda, Dinas and Saron will lose an invaluable community resource and become an area without any heart or identity.</p>	<p>The Authority is proposing to close Ysgol Felinwnda as it is faced with a number of challenges, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of learners at the school is causing concern, with only 8 learners attending the school, • The estimates of learner numbers remain vulnerable, • The class sizes are small – 2 classes with 3 pupils in one and 5 in the other (January 2023), • There is an age range of up to 3 years in both classes
12	<p>We are very disappointed that Cyngor Gwynedd has reached the conclusion that it wants to close Ysgol Felinwnda. The decision is being made based on pupil numbers and budget, namely data and money, rather than based on a proactive vision to enable vulnerable Welsh rural communities to continue and thrive.</p>	<p>The Council is of the opinion that implementing the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda would offer better experiences for pupils to socialise and work together on a daily basis with peers, and means that children are taught in classes of a more suitable size.</p> <p>No community use is being made of Ysgol Felinwnda and Canolfan Bro Llanwnda is used for community events. Occasional use is made of the Centre by the school. As a result, it is not anticipated that closing the school will have a significant direct impact on community use of Canolfan Bro Llanwnda. If the Cabinet resolves to close Ysgol Felinwnda, then the</p>

		Council's Community Support Service is available to support Canolfan Bro Llanwnda.
E	Negative impact of constructing the Caernarfon and Bontnewydd bypass	
13	<p>Of course, after the School is finally closed, no increase in numbers will bring the School back to existence. There has been no consideration of the negative impact on the School during the work of constructing the Caernarfon and Bontnewydd bypass. For an approximately 18 month period, a number of pupils were forced to find alternative transport to take them past the road works. It was obvious that this had also influenced new parents to take their children to other nearby schools. This has not been considered at all by the Council.</p>	<p>The number of learners in the Ysgol Felinwnda catchment area who chose to attend other schools was high prior to commencing the work of constructing the Caernarfon and Bontnewydd bypass. For example, 50 learners attended other schools in 2019 and 46 learners attended other schools in 2017 and 2018. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was no negative impact on the number of learners as a result of the work of constructing the bypass.</p>
F	Plans for Ysgol Bontnewydd	
14	<p>The whole process has now been split where a discussion will be held about reviewing the boundaries of School catchment areas in the next phase after closing Ysgol Felinwnda.</p> <p>We are still suspicious of the coincidence of the announcement from the Welsh Government at the same time to fund £12 million to construct a new 'area' School for Bontnewydd. It appears to be a deliberate attempt to undermine and endanger the future of rural schools in the area in order to justify a new super School. This should be a warning to other rural schools in Gwynedd. When closing Ysgol Felinwnda, we continue to have a strong opinion that the catchment area should be redrawn to Ysgol Llandwrog rather than Ysgol Bontnewydd, and this for the benefit of protecting and strengthening that rural School.</p>	<p>After listening to local concerns about the original proposal of holding an objection period on the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda and offering a place for children of the catchment area in Ysgol Bontnewydd, it was resolved to defer submitting a report to the Cabinet in March. Following on from this, officers from the Education Department and the Cabinet Member for Education held engagement sessions in Felinwnda, Bontnewydd and Llandwrog to explain that the Council would now hold an objection period on the closure of Ysgol Felinwnda and then undertake a separate consultation on a review of the catchment area boundaries of schools that border with the current catchment area of Ysgol Felinwnda.</p> <p>Therefore, if the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda is approved, we would hold this consultation to give an opportunity to those who would be affected by the proposal to voice their opinion on potential new catchment area(s) before Cyngor Gwynedd's Cabinet makes a final decision on changing any boundaries of school catchment areas that about the current catchment area of Ysgol Felinwnda.</p> <p>The Education Department was successful in a national competition, namely the Welsh Government's Sustainable Schools Challenge, to secure a substantial capital investment in Ysgol Bontnewydd. The success of the application was not certain as it was a competitive process. The</p>

		investment in Ysgol Bontnewydd is a project that responds to the needs of that particular school's catchment area. However, should the outcome of the consultation show that space is needed for any additional learners from the current catchment area of Ysgol Felinwnda, then there will be a need to ensure sufficient space for them when planning the new school.
G	Education Strategy	
15	<p>I would also like to highlight the need for Cyngor Gwynedd to ensure that it has an operational and credible strategy in terms of the county's small and rural schools in the future. This would provide an additional opportunity to eliminate the vulnerability of Gwynedd's small and rural schools, and give them an opportunity to thrive.</p> <p>A question must be asked whether the new draft Education Strategy by Cyngor Gwynedd expresses a broad enough vision in respect of the county's small and rural schools. Does it sufficiently respond to the drop in numbers of pupils who will attend schools like these over the next ten years?</p> <p>Although acknowledging that the strategy is not in its final form, it is currently vague and superficial. I cannot see that it explains what part small and rural schools will play in Gwynedd communities in the future. I would be grateful if you could consider my above observations.</p>	<p>An objection period on the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda has just been held and the sole purpose of this report is to respond to observations on that proposal.</p> <p>The Authority is in the process of drawing up a draft Education Strategy and, as part of this work, it is intended to undertake a public consultation. There will be an opportunity to voice an opinion on the draft Education Strategy as part of the proposed consultation.</p>
16	<p>Although there was a mention of a new Education Strategy by the Council, it still has not been published. Will the new Education Strategy be innovative and set a more proactive direction on sustaining our Welsh communities? Will the Strategy establish a better way of holding a discussion and consensus on the future of education provision within every community, rather than expect the data and funding to force the closure of more small rural schools? Instead of following some organisation code, a Council led by a political party that had a specific rural manifesto and states that they are the only party that promises to <i>"safeguard, protect and promote the rural Wales"</i> is expected to provide better guidance on saving rural Welsh schools. We continue to live in hope for a turnaround.</p>	

Any personal information about the objections has been deleted in order to comply with the Data Protection Act 2008 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Appendix C

Proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda

Session with Ysgol Felinwnda learners as part of the Objection Period

At a Gwynedd Council Cabinet meeting on 11 July 2023, the Cabinet decided to issue a statutory notice, on the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda on 31 December 2023 in accordance with the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the Schools Organisation Code 011/2018, and the current pupils to transfer to a nearby alternative school, namely Ysgol Bontnewydd or Ysgol Llandwrog, in accordance with parental choice from 1 January 2024.

The statutory consultation was held between 5 September 2023 and 4 October 2023.

The School Organisation Code 011/2018 notes:

In the case of schools where some pupils remain, proposers must make sure that the closure notice is brought to the pupils' attention, that its meaning is made clear to them, and that appropriate steps are taken to enable these pupils to respond to the notice if they so wish. It is essential that pupils are provided with the opportunity to contribute to the decision making process and proposers must ensure that full account is taken of any views they express before a final decision is taken.

In order to do this appropriate documents were prepared for all the learners of Ysgol Felinwnda, and it was arranged that the Head of Ysgol Felinwnda discussed the proposal with the children with the help of an officer from the Modernising Education Team to ensure that they understood what was being proposed in order give the children a chance to express an opinion about the proposal.

It was explained that the change meant:

- *That Ysgol Felinwnda will close on 31 December 2023;*
- *That Ysgol Felinwnda learners will transfer to Ysgol Bontnewydd or Ysgol Llandwrog or another school of choice on 1 January 2024.*

The session was held at Ysgol Felinwnda at 11:00 on Tuesday, 26 September 2023. It included explaining the proposal and holding a discussion regarding the questions within the questionnaire, with an Officer recording the learners' comments.

All learners at Ysgol Felinwnda attended the session, that is 8 children.

Below are the responses received from the learners

NOTE - The comments of the children and young people have been quoted directly from their responses.

1. How do you feel about this?			
School	Happy	Not Sure	Sad
Ysgol Felinwnda	0	0	8
Total	0	0	8

Question 1 - How do you feel about this?

- *Sad – I like this school a lot*
- *Sad – I have been here for long*
- *Really sad – the work is easier here and less people makes it easier*
- *Sad – i really want to stay here longer*
- *Sad – because the school is closing*
- *Sad – because I really want the same friends, but I still want a few more friends*
- *Sad – I won't be able to see my friends*
- *I worry about the building - sad that the building will no longer be a school*
- *I will miss the teachers*
- *I worry about the things (resources) that will be left here*

Question 2 – What would you like to see happen next?

- *Do the same work in the next school*
- *If we go for a walk, to come and see this school (keep in touch)*
- *Sell the school's things*
- *I want to see the tree stay – not cut it down*
- *For the schools to turn into somewhere to help people like a small hospital or an old people's home with carers*
- *I want to know what the school will be next*
- *Make new friends in the next school*

Question 3 – What worries you about this?

- *Not sure what will be happening in the school next*
- *Worry about having to move in case there are nasty people or bullies in the new school*
- *In case the teachers can't get a new job*
- *I will miss the teachers and my friends*
- *Will i be able to do my work as well*
- *If the school doesn't close we would all be happy*
- *If this school gets knocked down and abandoned*
- *Worried about what will be happening to the yard*

Question 4 – What are the important things to you in school?

- *Nice teachers*
- *Friends*
- *No bullies*
- *No nasty teachers*
- *The memories in a school (creating memories)*
- *Pictures of children who have been in the school*
- *It's important for the building to be strong*
- *Safe school – which doesn't go on fire*
- *Making friends quickly*

The Ysgol Felinwnda learner's comments during the session conveyed a tendency towards opposing the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda, as they expressed that they were worried about going to another school and the proposal saddens them. Ysgol Felinwnda learners showed a mature understanding of the difficult circumstances and contributed to the discussion with a number of reasons for what they felt and worried about.

Key points from the consultation:

<p>The proposal saddened every learner.</p>
<p>Losing the friendship and the feeling of Ysgol Felinwnda family if attending a new school worries all the pupils.</p>
<p>A number of learners worried about the future of the school building and its contents, and don't want it to be knocked down if Ysgol Felinwnda was to close.</p>
<p>Some learners worried about the support they will receive in a new school if Ysgol Felinwnda were to close.</p>
<p>All Ysgol Felinwnda's learners conveyed that friendly teachers and friends, creating memories together with a safe building and surroundings are the most important things to them in any school.</p>

Assessing the Impact on Equality Characteristics, the Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Disadvantage

For help to complete this form see the *How to Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment* leaflet. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Gadlys Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on ext. 32708 or DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru for further assistance.

The Council's is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the effect any change in policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), has on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has a general duty to ensure fairness and foster good relations. A timely Equality Impact Assessment must be undertaken before making any decision on any relevant change (i.e. which has an effect on people with protected characteristics).

The Council is also required, under the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011) to consider the effect of a change in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), in its opportunities for people to use Welsh and to ensure that Welsh is not treated less favourably than English. This document therefore ensures that these decisions protect and promote the use of the Welsh language.

From April 1st 2021 onwards, the Council has a duty to give tackling socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decisions due regard.

1) Details

1.1. What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda on 31 December 2023 and offer a place for the pupils in a nearby alternative school from 1 January 2024 onwards.

1.2 What is the purpose of the policy/service that is being created or amended? What changes are being considered?

Ysgol Gynradd Felinwnda is located near the village of Saron and Dinas on the outskirts of Caernarfon and serves the surrounding villages and area. Ysgol Felinwnda's situation has come to the attention of the Education Department since the September 2022 School Census, as this is the school with the smallest number of learners in Gwynedd. There has been a significant reduction in the numbers of Ysgol Felinwnda learners over the past 10 years, from 31 pupils in 2012 down to 8 pupils today, which leads to uncertainty about the future of the school.

As there were less than 10 registered learners in the school in PLASC (Pupil Level Annual School Census) January 2023, it is considered a "small school" under the Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. This allows the authority to follow a simpler procedure to close the school. In particular, the requirement to consult in general is not needed, and the only thing required is to hold an objection period following the publication of the statutory notice, this will give 28 days for anyone to object to the offer. We will then create an objection report allowing the Cabinet to consider any objections before reaching a final decision.

As part of the process of developing a proposal/proposals for the reorganisation of a school/schools, the authority is required to carry out an assessment of the likely impact on equality, the Welsh language and socio-economic disadvantage.

1.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Gareth Richard Jones (Education Modernisation Officer)

1.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?

Version 1: 8 February 2023
Version 2: 6 March 2023
Version 3: 9 March 2023
Version 4: 14 June 2023
Version 5: 12 October 2023

2) Action

2.1 Who are the stakeholders or partners you need to work with to undertake this assessment?

Education Department and Officers from other Cyngor Gwynedd departments
Governors and Headteacher of Ysgol Felinwnda

2.2 What measures have you taken to engage with people with equality characteristics, regarding the Welsh language or with communities (either of place or of need) that live with socio-economic disadvantage?

A conversation has been held with the Local Member, the Headteacher of Ysgol Felinwnda and the Governing Body.

Consultation sessions on the proposal under consideration were held at Canolfan Dinas Llanwnda, Ysgol Felinwnda, Ysgol Llandwrog and Ysgol Bontnewydd.

As there are less than 10 registered learners at Ysgol Felinwnda in the January 2023 census, it is considered a "small school" under the Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. In accordance with the Schools Organisation Code this allows the authority to follow a simpler procedure in order to close the school. In particular, the requirement to consult in general is not needed, and the only thing that is required is to hold an objection period. We did this by publishing a statutory notice on the proposal and allowing 28 days for parents, learners, staff and other stakeholders to respond to the proposal and then submitting an objection report to the Council's Cabinet to decide on the next steps.

2.3 What was the result of the engagement?

Following the above consultation, a report on the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda was presented to Cyngor Gwynedd's Cabinet on 11 July 2023, and permission was given to proceed with the objection period in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code.

2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you operating?

- **Number of learners** - In the January 2023 PLASC census, there were only 8 full-time pupils on the school register with 3 from the Felinwnda catchment area and 5 from Bro Llew and Bro Llifon catchment areas.
- **Children going outside the catchment area** - 45 going outside the catchment area including 31 to Ysgol Bontnewydd and 5 to Ysgol Llandwrog and the remaining learners travelling to other schools further away.
- **Number projections** - Figure projections suggested that numbers will continue to decrease: September 2024= 5; September 2025 = 3; September 2026= 2
- **High percentage of surplus places** – Based on the January 2023 figures, there are approximately 87% of surplus places in the school (53 in number)
- **Small class sizes** – there are 2 classes with 3 in one and 5 in the other (January 2023)
- **Wide age range within classes** – one class is for year 1–3 learners and the other for year 4–5. There is not a single child of nursery age, reception class or year 6 in the school.
- **Additional funding to the allocation** - Ysgol Felinwnda receives £62,717 for 2023-24 through the minimum staffing policy (which guarantees at least a headteacher and a teacher in every school, and a headteacher and an assistant in schools that have less than 15 pupils).
- **Cost per learner** - the total allocation for the financial year 2023-24 (based on September 2022 numbers) is £114,000 which means that the cost per head of Ysgol Felinwnda is £14,211 (2023-24). The county average for cost per pupil in the same year is £4,773.
- **Challenge to the future** - Ysgol Felinwnda is facing a challenge to set a balanced budget for 2023-24 as the school will receive an allocation based on learner numbers and that together with the amount of care allocated to them will enable them to employ a head teacher and assistant only.

2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be collected?

No

3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 The Council must give due regard to the effect any changes will have on people with the equality characteristics noted below. What impact will the new policy/service or the proposed changes in the policy or service have on people with these characteristics?

Characteristics	What type of impact?	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including nationality)	None	<p>Gwynedd schools have policies in place to protect individuals from any discrimination based on race, such as Equality, Inclusion and Anti-Bullying Policies. The Anti-bullying Policy provided by Cyngor Gwynedd sets out anti-bullying guidelines and procedures based on factors such as race at school. In addition, the Equality Policy implemented by Gwynedd primary schools states that the schools:</p> <p><i>“...opposes to all types of prejudice and discrimination and acknowledges that pupils have different needs, requirements and objectives.”</i></p> <p>It is therefore not anticipated that the proposal would have an impact on this feature.</p>
Disability	None	<p>It is not anticipated that the change would have a negative impact on this feature. An accessibility assessment of any relevant alternative school would be carried out and we will ensure that any transport required will be suitable for the needs of the individual. The needs of any disabled child will be considered in accordance with the Education Department's Accessibility and Equality policies.</p>
Sex	None	<p>Implementation of the proposal would not affect this feature. The implementation of the proposal will mean that everyone will be treated according to their needs regardless of their gender. Ysgol Felinwnda and nearby alternative schools implements an Equality Policy which states that the school:</p> <p><i>“...opposes to all types of prejudice and discrimination and acknowledges that pupils have different needs, requirements and objectives.”</i></p>
Age	Positive	<p>Ysgol Felinwnda provides education for pupils between the ages of 3-11. Ysgol Felinwnda's children will benefit from having more age-relevant peers in a school with more</p>

		<p>learners at nearby alternative schools, which will ensure educational and extracurricular experiences suitable for their age together with access to more extracurricular activities.</p> <p>We believe that learners will receive more suitable opportunities for their age when they are placed at nearby alternative schools because the learners will receive learning experiences in mass groups, smaller groups, partner work and individually within their specific age range together with lessons differentiate them appropriately for the age range.</p>
Sexual orientation	Positive	<p>Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) is a statutory requirement in the Curriculum for Wales framework and is published under section 71 of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 and is mandatory for all learners from ages 3 to 16. RSE has a positive and empowering role to play in the education of learners and it is essential to form and maintain a range of relationships, which are all based on mutual trust and respect, at the core of relationship and sexuality education. These relationships are crucial to develop emotional well-being, resilience and empathy. An understanding of sexuality with an emphasis on rights, health, equality and fairness empowers learners to understand themselves, take responsibility for their own decisions and behaviours and form relationships. We believe that learners will receive more opportunities to develop relationships and learn collaboratively as part of a larger class at an alternative school.</p> <p>It is stated in the Equality Policy which is implemented by Gwynedd's primary schools that the schools are <i>"...opposes to all types of prejudice and discrimination and acknowledges that pupils have different needs, requirements and objectives."</i></p>
Religion or belief (or non-belief)	None	Each school has an Inclusion Policy that would deal with any discriminatory incident that might occur in the school, related to religion or belief.
Gender reassignment	None	It is stated in the Equality policy which is implemented by Gwynedd's primary schools that the schools <i>"...opposes to all types of prejudice and discrimination and acknowledges that pupils have different needs, requirements and objectives."</i>
Pregnancy and maternity	None	Not applicable.

Marriage and civil partnership	None	Not applicable.
The Welsh language	None	<p>The goal of the Gwynedd Education Language Policy is the same for all primary schools in the county, and all primary schools (except one school) fall into category 3 in accordance with the Welsh Government's guide for categorising schools according to Welsh-medium provision. This means that Ysgol Felinwnda learners will be able to continue receiving their education in Welsh and bilingually in accordance with the Language of Education Policy at the alternative school.</p> <p>It is not anticipated that there would be a negative impact if the proposal were to be implemented, and it is likely that the proposal will have a positive impact on the Welsh language as Ysgol Felinwnda learners benefit from more opportunities to use the Welsh language with a wider range of peers in class and socially. Both nearby alternative schools, namely Ysgol Bontnewydd and Ysgol Llandwrog serves areas that are strongholds of the Welsh language.</p> <p>If the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda were to be realised, then it is anticipated that some elements of community events will be affected, and as a result, the use of the Welsh language in the community. It is anticipated that there may be some negative impact arising from the realisation of the proposal, as parents/guardians/families will not meet daily in the Llanwnda community when dropping off/collecting children from school. If this option were to be realised, then the neighbouring schools could be encouraged to make use of Llanwnda's facilities. It will be essential as part of the process to encourage discussions between the neighbouring alternative schools and the parents of Ysgol Felinwnda learners, and the wider community, in order to encourage the neighbouring schools to take advantage of the facilities of the Llanwnda community as well.</p>
Socio-Economic Disadvantage	None	It is not anticipated that the nearby alternative schools, which are within 2.5 miles of Ysgol Felinwnda will create a socio-economic disadvantage. The proposal will reduce social disadvantage by ensuring more experiences and diversity of learning, more resources and access to more services and activities.

* Delete as appropriate

3.2 The Council has a duty under the 2010 Equality Act to contribute positively to a fairer society by promoting equality and good relations in

its activities regarding the following characteristics – age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, gender reassignment, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must give due attention to the way any change affects these duties.

General Duties of the Equality Act	Does it have an impact?*	In what way? What is the evidence?
Abolishing illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation	No	It is not anticipated that the proposal will have an impact on the school's statutory duty to protect learners from any discrimination, harassment or persecution.
Promoting equal opportunities	Yes	<p>The aim is to promote equal opportunities and encourage the alternative schools to continue following equality policies and procedures.</p> <p>If the proposal were to be realised, it is anticipated that learners will receive more equal opportunities when placed at an alternative school because the learners will receive learning experiences that are based on national learning principles, with a variety of styles including working in mass groups, smaller groups, partner work and individual within their specific age range together with lessons differentiated appropriately for the age range.</p>
Encouraging good relationships	Yes	<p>As a number of children who live in Ysgol Felinwnda's catchment area already attends Ysgol Bontnewydd and Ysgol Llandwrog, a connection has already been formed between the schools and the Felinwnda community. However, opportunities are promoted for the school to build on its current connections with the Felinwnda community.</p> <p>Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) is a statutory requirement in the Curriculum for Wales framework and is published under section 71 of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 and is mandatory for all learners from ages 3 to 16. RSE has a positive and empowering role in learners' education and plays a vital role in helping learners to form and maintain a range of relationships, which are all based on mutual trust and respect, are at the core of relationship and sexuality education. These relationships are critical to the development of emotional well-being, resilience and empathy. An understanding of sexuality with an emphasis on rights, health, equality and fairness</p>

		empowers learners to understand themselves, take responsibility for their own decisions and behaviours and form relationships. If the proposal is implemented, it is anticipated that learners will receive more opportunities to develop relationships and learn collaboratively as part of a larger class.
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* To be deleted as appropriate

3.3 How does your proposal ensure that you work in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English and that you seize every opportunity to promote the Welsh language (beyond providing services bilingually) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

Our expectations are that all learners in the County have balanced bilingualism and relevant ability so that they can be complete members of the bilingual society of which they are a part. The proposals for changing local arrangements will need to take full account of all the linguistic effects. Maintaining and increasing the use of Welsh as an educational and social language among the learners will be a key consideration when drawing up the proposal.

The goal of the Gwynedd Education Language Policy is the same for all primary schools in the County, and all primary schools (except one school) fall into category 3 in accordance with the Welsh Government's guide for categorising schools according to Welsh-medium provision. This means that Ysgol Felinwnda learners will be able to continue receiving their education in Welsh and bilingually in accordance with the Language of Education Policy at the alternative schools.

It is not anticipated that there would be a negative impact if the proposal were to be implemented, and it is likely that the proposal will have a positive impact on the Welsh language as Ysgol Felinwnda learners benefit from more opportunities to use the Welsh language with a wider range of peers in class and socially.

From the perspective of the community, 1,145 (83%) Welsh speakers live in the Llanwnda ward while 1,015 (82%) Welsh speakers live in the Bontnewydd ward (Census Source 2021) and 1247 (75%) of Welsh speakers live in the Llandwrog ward.

As can be seen from the table below, a high percentage of learners at the 3 schools speak Welsh at home:

School	Speak Welsh fluently at home	Percentage	Do not speak Welsh at home but fluent	Speak Welsh at home but not fluent	Do not speak Welsh at home and are not fluent	Do not speak Welsh at all	Total
Felinwnda	6	75%	1	0	1	0	8
Bontnewydd	167	84%	5	17	6	4	199
Llandwrog	28	88%	0	1	1	2	32
	Fluent Welsh			Some Welsh		No Welsh	

In the period between 2011 to 2022, 29 residential units have been completed in the Felinwnda catchment area and children from the houses are already attending primary and secondary schools of their parents' choice. If the proposal is implemented, we are confident there will be enough space at Ysgol Bontnewydd and Ysgol Llandwrog for any additional learners in the future.

It is not anticipated that the closure of Ysgol Felinwnda will have a negative impact on the community or the Welsh language as only 8 children attend the school, 3 of whom are from the Felinwnda catchment area. 45 primary children in the catchment area already attend other schools for their education with 31 attending Ysgol Bontnewydd and 5 attending Ysgol Llandwrog.

Canolfan Bro Llanwnda Community Centre is located next door to the school and hosts several activities including the Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi. As the Centre is independent from the school it is not anticipated that the closure of the school will have a significant direct impact on the continuation of the Cylch Meithrin, Cylch Ti a Fi or other events. Should the proposal be implemented, support will be available from Gwynedd Council's Community Support Unit in order to assist with any negative effects.

The Cylch Meithrin figures over the last 6 years:

2017-18	12
2018-19	11
2019-20	6
2020-21	9
2021-22	8
2022-23	16

Sources: Cylch Meithrin Dinas a Llanwnda

As shown above, the Cylch Meithrin numbers have remained constant for several years. Unfortunately, it is not possible to predict whether there will be an impact on the numbers attending the Cylch if Ysgol Felinwnda were to close. Support will be available from Gwynedd Council's Early Years Service in order to assist with any issues relating to the childcare location.

3.4 What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice in order to have a positive impact on people's opportunities to use the Welsh language, and to reduce or prevent any adverse effects that the policy / practice may have on the Welsh language?

It is anticipated that the proposal will have a positive impact on the Welsh language as the learners of Ysgol Felinwnda benefit from more opportunities to use the Welsh language with a wider range of peers in the classroom and socially.

If the school were to close, the Local Authority and the Governing Bodies of the alternative schools could consider methods to promote the use of the Welsh language socially through extracurricular and community activities.

3.5 How does the proposal show that you have had due regard to the need to address inequality caused by socio-economic disadvantage? (Note that this is about closing inequality gaps rather than just improving outcomes for everyone)?

It is anticipated that the implementation of the proposal will reduce the inequality caused by socio-economic disadvantage by ensuring that the learners have more experiences and access to more services and activities at the alternative school. Learners will receive more equal opportunities because the learners will receive learning experiences that are based on national learning principles, with a variety of styles including working in mass groups, smaller groups, partner work and individually from within their specific age range together with lessons that are appropriately differentiated for the age range in question.

By implementing the proposal, Ysgol Felinwnda's learners will have a better learning environment in a school with more learners of the same age, and it will ensure that they make the most of their education. The learners would benefit from having more age-related peers in a school with more learners, which will ensure suitable educational and extracurricular experiences for them together with access to more extracurricular activities.

3.6 What other measures or changes might you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice to show that you have had due regard to the need to reduce disproportionate outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage, in accordance with the Socio-Economic Act?

If Ysgol Felinwnda were to close, the community will be able to call on relevant Gwynedd Council services for assistance with any negative impact as a result of the school closure.

4) Analysing the Results

4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the above and what is the reason for this?

If the proposal were to be implemented, it is anticipated that learners will receive more equal opportunities when placed at an alternative school because the learners will receive learning experiences that are based on national learning principles, with a variety of styles including working in mass groups, smaller groups, partner work and individual within their specific age range together with lessons that are appropriately differentiated for the age range in question.

By implementing the proposal, the learners of Ysgol Felinwnda will have a better learning environment in a school with more learners of the same age, it will ensure that they make the most of their education and allow access to more activities relevant to their ability level.

The learners of Ysgol Felinwnda will benefit from having more age-relevant peers in a school with more learners, which will ensure suitable educational and extracurricular experiences for them together with access to more extracurricular activities.

4.2 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the above and what is the reason for this?

The proposal is not likely to have a negative impact on any of the equality features or the General Duty. All schools in Gwynedd have equality and anti-bullying policies, as Ysgol Felinwnda currently has.

Like Ysgol Felinwnda, the alternative schools serve an area of linguistic significance, so if the proposal is implemented, the learners would join a Welsh language school. As no community activities are held at Ysgol Felinwnda, and Canolfan Bro Llanwnda is located next door, it is not anticipated that the closure of the school would affect the community's ability to continue to hold community activities, including Welsh activities in the area.

4.3 What should be done?

Choose one of the following:

Continue with the policy / service as it is robust	✓
Adapt the policy to delete any barriers	
Suspend and delete the policy as the detrimental impacts are too big	
Continue with the policy as any detrimental impact can be justified	
No further action at this time because it is too soon to decide, or there is insufficient evidence	

4.4 If continuing with the project, what steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?

It is recognised that the loss of a school as an institution within the community can have an impact on community cohesion, and the need to mitigate this is anticipated by fostering links between the nearby alternative schools and the community of Felinwnda. We will offer assistance to Canolfan Bro Llanwnda and the Cylch Meithrin through the relevant Council services, if there was a decision to close the school.

There is a community centre in Felinwnda, therefore it is unlikely that the community will need another community resource. However, Cyngor Gwynedd has a school post-use policy which gives the offer to communities of schools that are closing to submit a proposal for the ownership of sites for community use.

4.5 If you are not taking any further action to delete or reduce the negative impacts, explain why here.

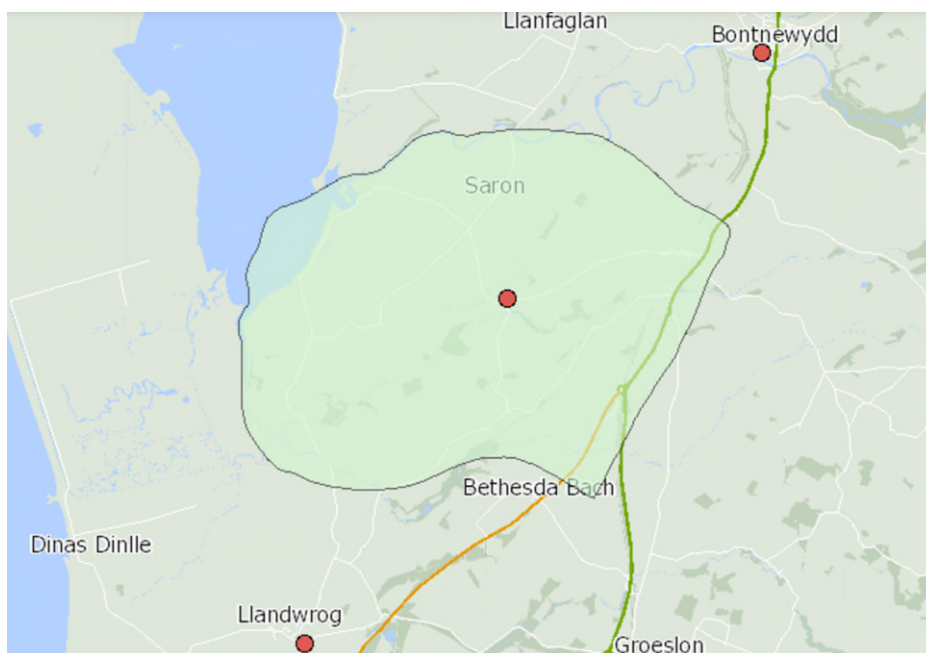
The school (and their Governing Body) is responsible for implementing its equality policy and the Authority, through its usual support and monitoring procedures, will ensure compliance.

Relationship and sexuality education has a positive and empowering role to play in the education of learners and is essential to forming and maintaining a range of relationships, all based on mutual trust and respect, at the core of relationship education and sexuality. These relationships are crucial to develop emotional well-being, resilience and empathy. An understanding of sexuality with an emphasis on rights, health, equality and fairness empowers learners to understand themselves, take responsibility for their own decisions and behaviours and form relationships.

5) Monitoring

5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?

If the proposal were to be realised, we would monitor the effects of the school closure and will endeavour to assist with any negative impact that may arise as a result of closing the school.



Impact Assessment Report of the Well-being and Future Generations Act

- October 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION
2. HOW DOES THE PROPOSAL MEET GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S WELFARE OBJECTIVES?
3. DOES THE PROPOSAL MEET THE ACT'S WELFARE OBJECTIVES?
4. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES
5. CONCLUSION

1. INTRODUCTION

We as a Council are committed to the principles within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) to improve the economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of Gwynedd's communities.

The Council's vision is:

Our vision as a Council is to support all the people of Gwynedd to flourish and to live a complete life in their community in a county that is one of the best counties to live in.

The Council has adopted well-being objectives which complement the national well-being goals ensuring that the residents of Gwynedd are:

- Giving our children and young people the best possible start in life
- Strengthening the economy and supporting the people of Gwynedd to earn a decent salary
- Supporting Gwynedd residents to live in suitable and affordable homes in their communities
- Supporting the residents of Gwynedd to live full and safe lives in our communities
- Ensuring that we give our residents every possible opportunity to use the Welsh language in the community
- Protecting the county's natural beauty, and responding positively to the climate change crisis
- Putting the residents of Gwynedd first and treating them fairly and ensuring that the Council performs effectively and efficiently

The table below outlines the link between our well-being objectives and the national well-being goals.

	Prosperous	Resilient	Healthier	Equal	Cohesive Communities	A vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	Globally responsible
TOMORROW'S GWYNEDD Giving our children and young people the best possible start in life							
A PROSPEROUS GWYNEDD Strengthening the economy and supporting the people of Gwynedd to earn a decent salary							
A HOMELY GWYNEDD Supporting Gwynedd residents to live in suitable and affordable homes in their communities							
A CARING GWYNEDD Supporting the residents of Gwynedd to live full and safe lives in our communities							
A WELSH GWYNEDD Ensuring that we give our residents every possible opportunity to use the Welsh language in the community							
A GREEN GWYNEDD Protecting the county's natural beauty, and responding positively to the climate change crisis							
AN EFFICIENT GWYNEDD Putting the residents of Gwynedd first and treating them fairly and ensuring that the Council performs effectively and efficiently							

The Education Department has a role to promote the well-being goals of the Act among learners through their activities and projects. The Act places a duty on public bodies in Wales to improve economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being. As part of the duty the Council has published well-being objectives which outline how it will improve in the "Gwynedd Plan 2023-2028"

1.1 Context

Ysgol Gynradd Felinwnda is located near the village of Saron and Dinas on the outskirts of Caernarfon and serves the surrounding villages and area. Ysgol Felinwnda's situation has come to the attention of the Education Department because, according to the September 2022 Census, this is the school with the least amount of learners in Gwynedd. There has been a significant reduction in the numbers of Ysgol Felinwnda learners over the past 10 years, from 31 pupils in 2012 down to 8 pupils today, which leads to concerns about the school's future.

1.2 The proposal in question

The proposal in question is:

Proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda on 31 December 2023, and the current pupils to transfer to a nearby alternative school, in accordance with parents' choice, from 1 January 2024.

2. HOW DOES THE PROPOSAL MEET GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S WELFARE OBJECTIVES?

Objectives	Details:
Giving our children and young people the best possible start in life	The proposal will ensure that children in the area foster experiences by socialising with a wider range of age-related peers and receiving a quality education in a school that can offer a learning environment and experiences to a wider range of learners.
Strengthening the economy and supporting the people of Gwynedd to earn a decent salary	It is anticipated that the implementation of this option would lead to staff redundancies. A detailed staffing policy was developed by Cyngor Gwynedd in collaboration with Trade Unions and head teachers. The policy will form the basis of any change to staff employment resulting from any proposal. Clear and open communication will be central to the successful implementation of any proposals.
Supporting Gwynedd residents to live in suitable and affordable homes in their communities	No effect.
Supporting the residents of Gwynedd to live full and safe lives in our communities	Ensuring that the learners receive a first class education will be at the core of the proposal, ensuring that they will receive an education of the same quality and standard in the alternative schools.
Ensuring that we give our residents every possible opportunity to use the Welsh language in the community	Ysgol Felinwnda's learners live in a Welsh-medium society and are educated in a Welsh-medium school, such as Ysgol Bontnewydd and Ysgol Llandwrog. It is likely that the proposal will have a positive impact on the Welsh language as Ysgol Felinwnda learners benefit from more opportunities to use the Welsh language with a wider range of peers in the classroom and socially. Ysgol Bontnewydd and Ysgol Llandwrog serve an area that is a stronghold of the Welsh language with over 70% of the population able to speak Welsh.
Protecting the county's natural beauty, and responding positively to the climate change crisis	No effect.
Putting the residents of Gwynedd first and treating them fairly and ensuring that the Council performs effectively and efficiently	No effect.

3. DOES THE PROPOSAL MEET THE WELFARE AIMS OF THE ACT?

Objective	Does the proposal contribute to this goal?	Measures to mitigate negative effects on this goal:
<p>A prosperous Wales An innovative society that uses resources prudently, educated people, that create wealth and work.</p>	<p>The implementation of the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda and teach the children in a nearby alternative school means that the learners build experiences by socialising with a wider range of peers, age-related and receiving a quality education in a school that can offer a learning environment and experiences to a wider range of learners.</p> <p>Introducing this option can lead to staff losing their jobs.</p>	<p>Gwynedd Council has developed a detailed staffing policy, jointly with Trade Unions and headteachers. Any redundancies as a result of this proposal will have to be in line with that policy. Clear and open communication will play a key role in implementing any proposals.</p>
<p>A resilient Wales A nation that maintains and enhances biodiversity and healthy ecosystems that support resilience and adaptability to change (for example climate change).</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that the proposal would be likely to have an impact on this aim.</p>	<p>No effect</p>
<p>A healthier Wales A society where people's physical and mental well-being is as good as possible, and people understand what affects their health.</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that the proposal would be likely to have an impact on this aim.</p>	<p>No effect</p>
<p>A more equal Wales A society that enables people to achieve their potential regardless of their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic background and circumstances).</p>	<p>The proposal will improve the Authority's ability to <i>"offer education of the highest possible quality which will give the County's children the experiences, skills and confidence and enable them to develop into bilingual, successful citizens and complete"</i> in accordance with the vision of the Excellent Primary Education for Children in Gwynedd Strategy.</p>	<p>The Equality Assessment stated that it is not anticipated that the proposal would have a negative impact on equality. In addition, it was noted that there are solid policies and arrangements in place that would ensure that the proposal considers and is compatible with equal rights. It is noted that measures are already in place to ensure that there will be no illegal discrimination or harassment.</p>
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Attractive, viable and safe communities that are well connected.</p>	<p>Llanwnda community is strong and hard-working, and it is recognised that closing the school would have some negative impact on the community.</p>	<p>An assessment of the likely impact on the community was carried out where it is noted that, although there is some negative impact on the community, that 31 learners who live in the Felinwnda catchment area already choose to attend Ysgol Bontnewydd and 5 attend Ysgol Llandwrog, and therefore there is already a link between the school and the wider area. It is also noted in the assessment that discussions would be held in order to discuss the possibility that any community activity in the alternative schools includes the Felinwnda community.</p>

		Canolfan Bro Llanwnda is located next door to the school and hosts a number of activities including the Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi. As the Center is independent from the school it is not anticipated that the closure of the school will affect the ability of the cylchs or other events to continue.
<p>Wales and a vibrant culture where the Welsh language flourishes</p> <p>An association that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language and encourages people to participate in the arts, sports and leisure activities.</p>	Completing the proposal will mean that Ysgol Felinwnda learners will continue to be educated in a Welsh-medium school, and in an area of linguistic significance, with over 70% of the population able to speak Welsh.	Canolfan Bro Llanwnda is located next door to the school and hosts several activities including the Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi. As the Center is independent from the school it is not anticipated that the closure of the school will effect on the ability of the Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi or other events to continue.
<p>Wales responsible at a global level</p> <p>A nation that, as it does anything to improve the economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales, considers whether doing such a thing could contribute positively to global well-being.</p>	It is not anticipated that the proposal would be likely to have an impact on this aim.	No effect.

4. PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Principles of Sustainable Development	Does the proposal consider the principle?
<p>Long Term</p> <p>Balancing short-term needs with long-term ones and planning for the future.</p>	The pattern of decreasing numbers of learners has been constant since 2012, with projections showing that the number of learners at Ysgol Felinwnda will decrease further over the next few years, and therefore shows that the current challenges facing the school will be long term and that the matter needs to be responded to as soon as possible.
<p>Prevent</p> <p>Allocate resources for preventing problems from occurring or getting worse. We will address problems by preventing and intervening early rather than by reacting.</p>	The needs of the pupils will be prioritised during each stage of the process.
<p>Integration</p> <p>Have a positive impact on people, the economy, the environment, and culture.</p>	The authority has decided to look at Ysgol Felinwnda's future due to the critical situation facing the school.

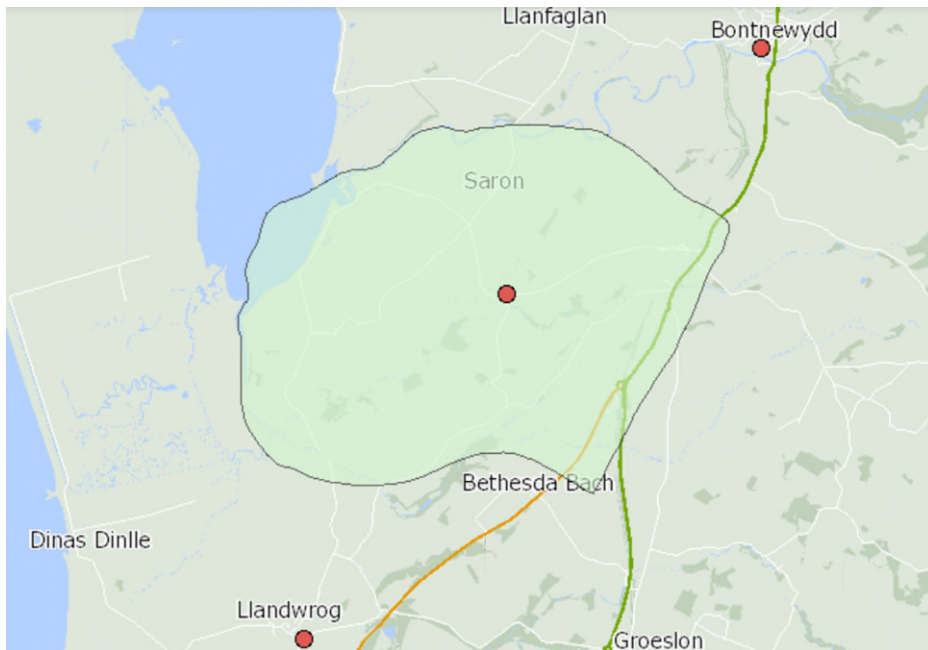
<p>Cooperation Work with other partners to provide services.</p>	<p>Collaboration with other relevant departments and the alternative schools will be an important part of achieving the objectives for the benefit of the school and the children of the catchment area.</p>
<p>Content (Communication and Engagement) Involve the people of Gwynedd in trying to complete our plan and ensure that those people reflect the diversity of the area.</p>	<p>The process so far has included local public sessions in order to engage with the relevant stakeholders of the schools affected by the proposal, as well as a period of public opposition, and engagement with Ysgol Felinwnda learners.</p>

5. CONCLUSION

Following consideration and assessment in accordance with the requirements of the well-being act, the 7 goals of the well-being act and the Council's well-being objectives were considered, and it is concluded that the proposal meets the requirements.

It is recognised that this proposal leads to the loss of a school in the Felinwnda community, however many of the children who live within the school's catchment area already attend the nearby alternative schools, and therefore there is already a link between the schools and the Felinwnda community. Every effort will be made to mitigate the impact on the community by encouraging links between the communities. Should the proposal be approved, discussions will be held to discuss the possibility that the alternative school community activity includes the Felinwnda community where appropriate.

The proposal will ensure that the children of the area are educated on a site that is suitable and in a natural Welsh language society, increasing opportunities to socialise and collaborate with others and give them a fair chance to flourish among their peers.



Community Impact Assessment Report – Ysgol Felinwnda

- October 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

As part of the statutory process, when developing a proposal for the reorganisation of a school, the Authority must carry out an assessment of the likely impact on the community, in accordance with the School Organisation Code (011/2018). This assessment is derived from the Welsh Government's national guidelines for the reorganisation of schools, including considerations regarding the unique needs of rural areas. It is stated in the Code:

"In some areas, a school may also be the main hub for community activity, and its closure could have implications beyond the provision of education. This can be a specific feature in rural areas if school buildings are used as a place to provide services to the local community."

"The case that will be prepared by those who present the proposals should show that the impact of closing the school on the community has been assessed by drawing up a Community Impact Assessment and show how it could be carried out any community facilities currently provided by the school."

Source: School Organisation Code 011 /2018

1.1 Background

Ysgol Felinwnda Primary School is located near the villages of Saron and Dinas on the outskirts of Caernarfon and serves the nearby villages and areas. The situation at Ysgol Felinwnda has been brought to the attention of the Education Department as according to the September 2022 Census, this is the school with the lowest numbers of learners in Gwynedd. There has been a significant reduction in the number of learners at Ysgol Felinwnda over the past 10 years, from 31 pupils in 2012 down to 8 pupils by today, and this leads to concerns regarding the school's future.

2. THE PROPOSAL

Following an evaluation of different options against the factors of the Strategy, it was concluded that the preferred option is:

Ysgol Felinwnda to close on 31 December 2023, and the current pupils to transfer to a nearby alternative school, in accordance with parents' choice, from 1 January 2024.

3. SUMMARY OF THE AREA

3.1 The Area

Ysgol Gynradd Felinwnda is located in the rural village of Llanwnda near the village of Saron and Dinas on the outskirts of Caernarfon in Gwynedd, with approximately 2000 residents. It is located 3.9 miles from Caernarfon. According to the 2011 census, 1,994 people live in Llanwnda ward.

3.2 The Economy

72.4% of people aged between 16 and 74 within the Llanwnda ward are economically active, and 2.9% of these are unemployed. 27.6% of people in the same age group are economically inactive with 13.8% of these being ill or disabled for a long period of time.

The type of industry in which the population is active is varied in the area, with the highest rate (18.5%) working in the health and social work field.

According to data from the 'Index of Multiple Deprivation Wales (2014)' the employment rate of Llanwnda ward compared to other wards in Wales gives a rank of 1254 out of 1909 wards. Felinwnda ward is therefore not within the most deprived 50% in Wales.

3.3 Deprivation

Llanwnda Ward is ranked within the least deprived 50% in Wales (rank 1046 out of 1909 wards).

A number of areas comprises this overall index, including income, employment, health, education, access to services, community safety, physical environment and housing.

It is noted that Llanwnda ward is within the 20-30% of the most deprived areas in Wales in the 'Housing' field. The indicators in this area are the proportion of people living in overcrowded homes (use of bedrooms), and the proportion of people living in homes without central heating.

In addition, Llanwnda ward is within the 10% of the most deprived areas in Wales in the area of 'access to services', i.e., deprivation because people are unable to access a variety of services that are considered essential for day-to-day living. The indicators include average public and private travel times to a number of services such as food shops, doctor's surgery, primary and secondary schools, post office, public library, pharmacy, leisure centre and private travel time to a petrol station.

Below is a summary of how the Llanwnda area is situated in the context of other areas in Wales according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (2014):

Field	Rank in Wales, out of 1909 areas. (1 = most deprived and 1909 = least deprived)	Most deprived % in Wales
Employment	1254	
Income	1092	
Health	1435	
Education	1437	
Housing	388	Within the 20-30% most deprived
Physical environment	1020	
Access to services	116	Within the 10% most deprived
Community safety	1513	

3.4 The Community

A number of activities are held in the Llanwnda Ward, including;

- Sensori Sara
- Reading club
- Rhostryfan Race
- Coffee morning
- Cylch Ti a Fi
- Cylch Meithrin
- Merched y Wawr
- Zumba
- Y Gymdeithas

In addition, there are several facilities in the catchment area, including a community centre, shops, a garage, public transport, a small train station and a children's playground.

4. CATCHMENT AREA SCHOOLS

4.1 The context of the schools according to the Estyn Inspection Reports

As part of Estyn's reports, the schools are placed in context, and their community relations are detailed. This is the context given to Ysgol Felinwnda by Estyn inspectors.

Ysgol Felinwnda

"Ysgol Gynradd Felinwnda is located near the village of Saron and Dinas on the outskirts of Caernarfon and serves the surrounding villages and area."

Source: Estyn Report, June 2017

4.2 Statistical information of the schools

The table below shows the numbers of Ysgol Felinwnda and the two nearby schools, namely Ysgol Bontnewydd and Ysgol Llandwrog. This table also shows the capacity of the schools and the number on the register in January 2023. Both schools teach through the medium of Welsh.

School	Full Capacity (N – Yr6)	Number on the register September 2022 (N – Yr6)	Legal Category
Felinwnda	61	8	Community School
Bontnewydd	208	210	Community School
Llandwrog	75	32	Ecclesiastical, The Church in Wales

Source: PLASC January 2023

4.3 Information about the location of pupil's dwellings and choice of school

Each school has a specific catchment area which it serves, and which is important in terms of the Council's access and transport policy. Learners do not have to attend their catchment area school, the choice is up to parents (in accordance with the admission policy).

Compared to other catchment areas in the area, the number of Ysgol Felinwnda catchment area learners who choose to attend an out-of-catchment school is high. The latest data shows that 48 children aged 3-11 (September 2022 data) live in Felinwnda catchment area; with only 3 of them attending Ysgol Felinwnda. This means that 94% of children who live in Ysgol Felinwnda catchment area attend schools outside the catchment area, including 31 who attend Ysgol Bontnewydd and 5 who attend Ysgol Llandwrog.

The table below shows the complete information in terms of learners' living locations and their choice of school.

		Home Catchment Area (September 2022)									School Total (N-Y6)
		Bontnewydd	Felinwnda	Llandwrog	Maesincla	Rhosgadfan	Rhostryfan	Y Gelli	Yr Hendre	Other	
Attend School (September 2022)	Bontnewydd	94	31	1	10	6	12	3	26	26	209
	Felinwnda	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	9
	Llandwrog	0	5	20	0	0	0	0	0	8	33
	Maesincla	0	1	0	212	1	1	5	44	9	273
	Rhosgadfan	0	0	0	0	38	0	0	0	7	45
	Rhostryfan	4	0	1	0	20	50	0	0	1	76
	Santes Helen	0	0	0	14	0	0	7	6	8	35
	Y Gelli	0	0	0	55	1	0	132	36	5	229
	Yr Hendre	3	5	2	131	2	0	18	232	4	397
	Other	11	3	7	20	16	12	9	19		
Total		112	48	31	442	84	75	174	363		

Source: September 2022 Census

4.4 Summary of the various facilities in the rural communities (March 2023)

	Felinwnda
Community Centre / Village Hall	✓
Chapel/Church	✓
Public Transport	✓
Shop	✓
Cafe/Pub	
Post Office	
Pharmacy	
Library	
Park	✓
Bank	
Care Home	
Leisure Centre	
Garage	✓
Tourist Attraction	✓
Cylch Ti a Fi + Meithrin	✓

Community Centre

Canolfan Bro Llanwnda is located next to Ysgol Felinwnda and hosts several community activities including:

- Sensori Sara
- Cymdeithas Hanes y Tair Llan
- Zumba

- Merched y Wawr
- Cylch Meithrin
- Cylch Ti a Fi

The Mudiad Meithrin website shows that the Cylch Meithrin meets Monday to Friday between 9:00-12:50 and the Cylch Ti a Fi that Wednesday afternoon (13:15 - 15:30). As the Centre is independent to the school it is not anticipated that the closure of the school will have any effect on the ability of the Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi to continue.

According to the Headteacher, there is no community use of Ysgol Felinwnda outside of school hours.

4.5 A summary of activities or groups that the school is regularly involved in:

	Felinwnda
Cylch Meithrin/Ti a Fi	
Eisteddfod (Local/County/National)	✓
Urdd Community	✓
Other activities (sports, clubs)	✓

4.6 If buildings, rooms, facilities, or services are provided by a school on behalf of the community, where would they be provided if the school is closed?

School	Where facilities will be provided if it closes
Felinwnda	There is no community use of the school and Canolfan Bro Llanwnda is available for holding activities in the area.

4.7 Information about distance and travel time to other schools in the catchment area

The table below indicates the distance and travel time between schools in the area. We see that Ysgol Bontnewydd is the closest to Ysgol Felinwnda. The travel times below consider the nature of the lanes and the effect that can have on travel time in a rural area.

School		Felinwnda
Felinwnda	Miles	
	Minutes	
Bontnewydd	Miles	1.8 miles
	Minutes	4 minutes
Llandwrog	Miles	2 miles
	Minutes	8 minutes

Source: Google Maps 2023

5. ASSESSMENT OF THE LIKELY IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

To assess the community impact of the possible models, it was decided to create criteria in accordance with the recommendations of the community assessment considerations of the School Organisation Code 011/2018.

PROPOSAL TO CLOSE FELINWENDA SCHOOL AND TRANSFER THE LEARNERS TO A NEARBY ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

Positive	Neutral	Negative
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Impact Criteria	Description	Status of the impact and the work
Impact on Health and well-being	As over 50% of the learners from the Felinwnda catchment area live within 2 miles of Ysgol Bontnewydd and Ysgol Llandwrog and with a safe route to the school they will have the opportunity to walk to school. Being in a larger school will offer more opportunities to play and take part in team sports and therefore contribute to the health and well-being of learners.	Neutral
The implications of the change on public transport provisions	There is no anticipated impact on public transport provision as any transport to an alternative school as a result of the change will be arranged specifically for learners in the catchment area who are eligible.	Neutral
Impact on other facilities / services provided at the school	There is no community use of Ysgol Felinwnda so no negative impact is anticipated on this criteria. Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi are located in Canolfan Bro Llanwnda which is located next door to Ysgol Felinwnda. As the Centre is independent from the school it is not anticipated that the closure of the school will have any effect on the ability of the Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi to continue.	Neutral
Impact on wider community safety	No impact on wider community safety is anticipated.	Neutral
Would the option encourage families and school age children to leave the community, or that young families are less likely to move into the community	Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi are located in Canolfan Bro Llanwnda. A number of other events are also held at the Centre. As the Center is independent from the school it is not anticipated that the closure of the school would have a significant direct impact on community use of the Llanwnda community centre.	Neutral
Impact on other services provided locally	Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi are located in Canolfan Bro Llanwnda. Several other events are also held at the Centre. As the Centre is independent from the school it is not anticipated that the closure of the school will have any effect on the ability of the Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi or other events to continue.	Neutral
Adverse effect on the wider economy of the community	As most children in the catchment area attend other schools, it is not anticipated that the closure of Ysgol Felinwnda would have an impact on the wider economy of the community.	Neutral
General impact on the local community	If the proposal is implemented the local school would be further from homes within the current catchment area, and from a deprivation point of view it means that one of the indicators of 'access to services' is moving away from the inhabitants of the village.	Negative

	As a high percentage of children in the catchment area already attend other schools, we do not anticipate that closing the school would have a negative or positive impact on the local community.	
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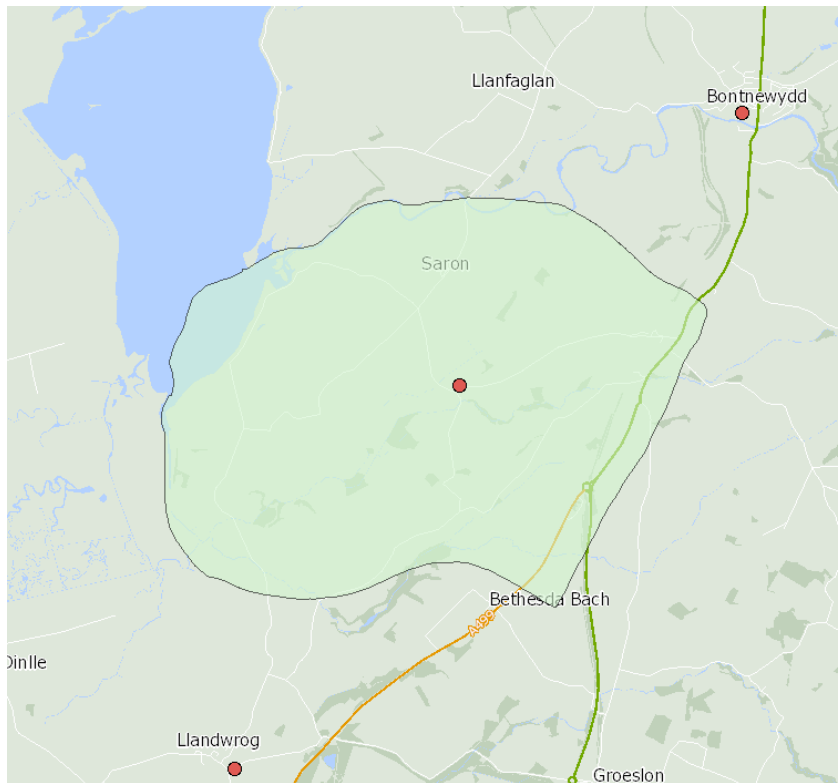
6. CONCLUSION

If the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda and transfer the learners to a nearby alternative school/schools were to be presented, it is anticipated that some elements of community events will be affected.

Although there is no community use of the school building, it can be seen in this assessment that the school is involved with its community and uses the community's facilities, such as Canolfan Bro Llanwnda occasionally. If this proposal were to be realised, then the neighbouring schools could be encouraged to make use of Llanwnda local facilities as well, occasionally.

It will be essential as part of the process to encourage discussions between the alternative schools and parents of Ysgol Felinwnda learners so that parents and learners can take advantage of their facilities and activities after school, and to encourage the neighbouring alternative schools to take advantage of community facilities Llanwnda as well.

This assessment shows that some negative impact on the community is anticipated if the proposal to close the school is implemented. To mitigate the impact on the community, opportunities are identified to ensure that the Llanwnda community is aware of the activity of the nearby alternative schools, and community collaboration between the nearby alternative schools and the Llanwnda community is encouraged, where appropriate.



Linguistic Impact Assessment Report

Ysgol Felinwnda

- October 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

Supporting and developing the ability of Gwynedd children to learn and use their language skills is key to the County's education strategies.

1.1 The Situation in Gwynedd

Figures in the 2021 Census indicate that 66% of people over the age of three can speak, read or write in Welsh. The 2021 Census also states that 64% speak Welsh which is a decrease since the previous census, when the figure was 65%.

In Gwynedd, as in many other Local Authorities in Wales, there is a considerable difference in the percentage of Welsh speakers within different wards. At one extreme, in wards such as Aberdyfi, Tywyn and Bangor Central between 26% and 44% of the population speak Welsh, while as much as 86% speak Welsh in the most Welsh areas e.g. Hendre and Llanrug.

1.2 Language Policy

Primary

The aim of the Language Policy is the same across all primary schools in the County, which is to develop the ability of all pupils to be proficient in both languages by the end of KS2. Welsh is the official language of assessment at the school at the end of the Foundation Phase. In KS2, pupils' grasp of the Welsh language continues to be developed, paying attention to developing their skills in both languages.

Secondary

In the secondary school, all pupils who have reached the necessary level, which is level 3+ at the end of KS2, are expected to follow Welsh as a First Language in KS3 in order to ensure appropriate progression and continuity. It is hoped that these pupils can study Welsh and English as subjects until the end of year 11.

The secondary schools build on the foundation laid in the primary by ensuring that all pupils continue to develop skills in Welsh and English. The County does not define secondary schools according to linguistic categories as there is the same expectation in relation to the Language Policy, which is to give all pupils in the County the opportunity to be proficient bilingually.

1.3 A million speakers by 2050

"The Welsh language is one of the treasures of Wales. It is part of what defines us as people and as a nation. Our ambition as the Welsh Government is to see a million people able to enjoy speaking and using the Welsh language by 2050."

"Responding to the challenge of having one million Welsh speakers by 2050 calls for far-reaching changes... We need to push the boundaries and take ambitious steps so that more people learn and use the Welsh language. This strategy builds on the foundations that are already in place and moves us forward to the next stage in our linguistic journey. We have identified three strategic themes for realising this vision. 1. Increase the number of Welsh speakers 2. Increase the use of the Welsh language 3. Create favourable conditions – infrastructure and context".

"This is a strategy for the whole of Wales, and we want all parts of the country to share the vision of a million Welsh speakers. There is potential for growth in the numbers of Welsh speakers, especially in those areas of Wales that have a high population density but lower percentages of Welsh speakers. But it is also necessary to ensure the viability of Welsh communities as places that facilitate the use of the Welsh language in all aspects of life. Our vision in every part of the country is to create favourable conditions that

support the process of acquiring the language and the practice of using Welsh skills. We want to see an increase in the practice of passing on the language within the family, the practice of introducing the Welsh language early to all children, an education system that gives Welsh skills to everyone, and a greater appreciation of language skills in the workplace. At the same time, we are committed to supporting people to use Welsh socially, in the workplace, and when using public services.

"The aim of securing a million speakers means further developing the methods most likely to lead to the progress required. There are two main methods: passing on the Welsh language from one generation to the next, and developing and maintaining Welsh language skills through education and training."

1.3 Welsh Language Promotion Plan in Gwynedd 2018-23

"Standard 145 of the Welsh Language Standards, imposed on Gwynedd Council in accordance with Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, places an expectation on the Council to draw up a 5-year strategy that will show how we intend to go about to promote the Welsh language and to facilitate the use of the Welsh language across the county. Gwynedd Council has a long history of promoting and protecting the language as a natural means of communicating its services. The Welsh language is given a prominent place in the Council's strategic plans, and the Council's Language Policy also states our commitment by stating that responsibility is given to all Council Officers and Members to promote the Welsh language in all areas of their work".

3.2 Priority Area 2 – Language of Learning

The vision:

- *Schools that give prestige and value to the Welsh language and encourage more use of the Welsh language as a means of learning and socialising by continuing to implement the Language Charter and Secondary Language Strategy.*
- *An increase in the number of young people who choose to study and receive recognised qualifications or accreditations through the medium of Welsh.*
- *More pupils continue to improve their Welsh skills when transferring from primary to secondary and to post-compulsory education.*
- *More extended learning opportunities being offered to young people - in the form of work experience and apprenticeships with employers who give a clear status to the Welsh language - which will develop young people's understanding of the need for Welsh language skills for the workplace"*

1.5 Educational Background

The strategy "Primary Education of the Best Quality for Gwynedd Children" was adopted by the Council in April 2009. A higher strategy "Strategic Program - Towards 2025" was developed and supported by the Council in October 2010. The document was provided as a strategic base to set a direction for developments in the field of education and training in Gwynedd for the next 15 years. The program was presented in the context of the policies and plans that are underway, locally and nationally to transform services provided for children, young people and their families. The "Strategic Plan for Welsh in Education for 2017-2020" was published in December 2017 which sets out a vision, commitment, and direction for ensuring that children and young people achieve the highest standards in order to maintain the language, culture and the economy locally.

2. LANGUAGE PROFILE OF YSGOL FELINWYNDY CATCHMENT AREA

2.1 Background of the Gwynedd Language Profile

64.4% of the County's population who are over the age of three are Welsh speakers - significantly higher than the figure for Wales as a whole of 17.8%. In Gwynedd, the ability to speak Welsh is highest in Hendre ward (86% speak Welsh), and lowest in the Bangor Central area (25.6%).

2.2 Wards

2.2.1 Llanwnda, Y Groeslon and Bontnewydd Wards

Ysgol Felinwnda's current catchment is within Llanwnda ward with Ysgol Llandwrog's catchment within Y Groeslon ward and Ysgol Bontnewydd within Bontnewydd ward (National Statistical Office). The linguistic profile of the wards of these schools is summarised in the table below:

	Llanwnda	Y Groeslon	Bontnewydd	Gwynedd	Cymru
Welsh identity only	1,082 (76.1%)	1,200 (72.2%)	917 (73.5%)	69,560 (59.3%)	1,715,975 (55.2%)
No Welsh identity	19.9%	23.7%	19%	36.3%	36.7%
Population 3+ years old	1,370 (100%)	1,621 (100%)	1,233 (100%)	114,308 (100%)	3,018,172 (100%)
Able to speak Welsh	1,145 (83.5%)	1,247 (77%)	1,015 (82.5%)	73,560 (64.4%)	538,296 (17.8%)
No Welsh skills	142 (10.4%)	237 (14.6%)	129 (10.5%)	29,977 (26.2%)	2,259,017 (74.8%)
Able to understand oral Welsh only	62 (4.5%)	98 (6.0%)	57 (4.6%)	8,166 (7.1%)	156,762 (5.2%)
Able to speak Welsh but unable to read or write Welsh	70 (5.1%)	58 (3.6%)	68 (5.5%)	6,142 (5.4%)	68,391 (2.3%)
Able to speak and read Welsh but not able to write Welsh	44 (3.2%)	43 (2.7%)	42 (3.4%)	3,170 (2.8%)	33,971 (1.1%)
Able to speak, read and write Welsh	1,013 (73.9%)	1,128 (69.6%)	894 (72.5%)	63,256 (55.3%)	429,313 (14.2%)
Another combination of Welsh skills	18 (1.3%)	18 (1.1%)	13 (1.1%)	993 (0.9%)	6,621 (0.2%)

Source: Census 2021, National Statistical Office

2.3 Ysgol Felinwnda

The information found in the table below outlines the linguistic background of Ysgol Felinwnda pupils.

School	Speaks Welsh fluently at home	Speaks Welsh at home but not fluently	Not speaking Welsh at home but fluent	None speak Welsh at home and none fluently	Not Welsh speaking at all	Total
Felinwnda	6 (75%)	0 (0%)	1 (12%)	1 (12%)	0 (0%)	8

Source: Data from Headteachers PLASC January 2023

2.4 Nearby schools

Linguistic data for Ysgol Llandwrog and Ysgol Bontnewydd can be seen below:

School	Speaks Welsh fluently at home	Speaks Welsh at home but not fluently	No speaking Welsh at home but fluent	None speak Welsh at home and none fluently	No Welsh speaking at all	Total
Llandwrog	28 (87%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	2 (6%)	32
Bontnewydd	167 (84%)	17 (8%)	5 (2%)	6 (3%)	4 (2%)	199

Source: Data from Headteachers PLASC January 2023

2.5 Activities after school

Activities are held after school in the Ysgol Felinwnda building such as Aelwyd yr Urdd. Many events are held at Llanwnda Village Hall as well.

Here is a summary of what Ysgol Felinwnda and the other nearby schools offer after school:

	Felinwnda		Llandwrog		Bontnewydd	
	School building	Village Hall	School building	Village Hall	School building	Village Hall
Playgroups (School Holidays)		✓			✓	
Aelwyd yr Urdd	✓		✓		✓	
Coffee Morning/Evening		✓	✓		✓	
Cylch/ Nursery school		✓			✓	
Club/After school club/Sports Activity	✓		✓		✓	

It can be seen in the table above that a number of schools in the area, including Ysgol Felinwnda, offer clubs with the Urdd after school. This means that the pupils could continue to take advantage of these activities as an additional opportunity to use and develop the Welsh language if the proposal was implemented.

2.6 Community Activities

Canolfan Bro Llanwnda is located next to Ysgol Felinwnda and hosts a number of community activities including:

- Sensori Sara
- Cymdeithas Hanes a Tair Llan
- Zumba
- Merched y Wawr
- Cylch Meithrin
- Cylch Ti a Fi

As the centre is independent of the school, it is not anticipated that the closure of the school would affect the ability of these community activities in Canolfan Bro Llanwnda to continue.

2.7 The Welsh Language in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032

The three schools, Ysgol Felinwnda, Ysgol Llandwrog and Ysgol Bontnewydd, implement the objectives of the Welsh Language in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 Gwynedd Council. This includes:

- That all pupils in the county have appropriate linguistic skills in Welsh and English, and that that expectation is consistent across all of the schools.
- That there is suitable provision to enable all pupils to develop proficiently bilingually. In this context, schools are expected to continue to nurture the skills of those pupils who are Welsh speakers, and to introduce the Welsh language to those who are learners.
- That all the county's education institutions reflect and reinforce the Language Policy in their administration, their social life and their pastoral order, as well as in their curricular provision.
- The implementation of the proposal would be in line with the objectives of the Welsh Language in Education Strategic Plan 2022-32.

2.8 Additional Evidence

Ysgol Felinwnda

Estyn's 2017 report says:

"Welsh is the everyday language of the school and the main medium of learning and teaching. English is taught formally in key stage 2. Around 80% of pupils come from homes where Welsh is spoken. There is not one child from an ethnic minority background"

[Estyn Ysgol Felinwnda inspection report 2017](#)

Ysgol Llandwrog

The 2019 Estyn report says:

"Welsh is the main medium of work and life at the School. Around 90% of the pupils speak Welsh at home."

[Ysgol Llandwrog Estyn inspection report 2019](#)

Ysgol Bontnewydd

The 2017 Estyn report says:

"Welsh is the everyday language of the school and the main medium of learning and teaching. English is taught formally in key stage 2. Around 75% of the pupils come from homes where Welsh is spoken, and very few pupils are from a minority ethnic background."

[Ysgol Bontnewydd Estyn inspection report 2017](#)

3. ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT ON THE WELSH LANGUAGE

The purpose of the assessment below is to consider the potential impact of the proposal on the Welsh language of closing Ysgol Felinwnda and transferring the learners to a nearby alternative school.

Impact Criteria	Description	Status of the impact and the work	Have any measures been identified to mitigate any negative impact or to create more positive opportunities	Final impact (following mitigation measures)
School language (formal)	<p>As the nearby alternative schools such as Ysgol Felinwnda are Welsh-medium schools, it is concluded that the proposal would not have an impact on the children's language of education.</p> <p>As the pupils would be taught in larger classes and with more children of the same age group, the proposal could have strengthened the opportunity for pupils to socialise in Welsh with their peers.</p>	<p>Neutral No effect on the school's language situation</p>	<p>Irrelevant</p>	<p>Irrelevant</p>
School language (informal)	<p>It is noted that a higher percentage of pupils come from homes that can speak Welsh at Ysgol Bontnewydd (92%) and Ysgol Llandwrog (90%), compared to Ysgol Felinwnda (75%).</p> <p>As the pupils would be taught in larger classes and with more children of the same age group, the proposal could strengthen the opportunity for pupils to socialise in Welsh with their peers. On that basis, if the proposal is realised, it is anticipated that there would be more opportunities for Felinwnda pupils to use the Welsh language informally with their peers inside and outside the classroom, and that the level of vitality of the Welsh language and the informal use of the language is stronger.</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Intentional linguistic planning by the alternative schools to ensure a positive impact on the language.</p>	<p>Positive</p>

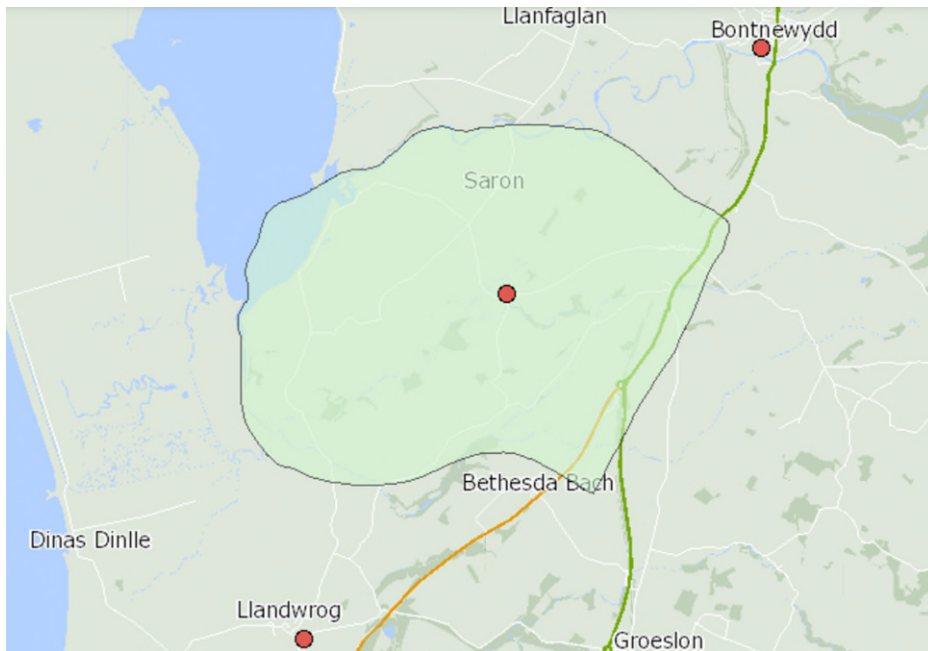
Access to Welsh medium education	The alternative schools are Welsh-medium schools, as is Ysgol Felinwnda. It is therefore not anticipated that the proposal would affect this criteria.	Neutral No effect on the language situation	Irrelevant	Irrelevant
Non-statutory provision	Pupils would have access to a higher number in terms of staffing, and they would be part of a larger group of peers of the same age.	Positive	The local authority and the Governing Bodies of the alternative schools could discuss methods to ensure that pupils can participate in extracurricular activities.	Positive
Activities before / after school	<p>The alternative schools are larger schools in terms of numbers of pupils so the peer groups will be larger.</p> <p>Like Ysgol Felinwnda, the alternative schools offer activities before and after school, and as a result it is not anticipated that the proposal would have an impact on this criteria.</p>	Neutral	The Local Authority and the Governing Body of the Alternative School could consider any additional opportunities for holding activities after school, ensuring that arrangements are as accessible as possible for all pupils.	Positive
Using the Welsh language in the community	<p>According to the 2021 census, 83% of the Llanwnda ward population were Welsh speakers.</p> <p>If the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda were to be implemented, then it is anticipated that some elements of community events will be affected. It is anticipated that there may be some negative impact arising from the realisation of the proposal, as parents/guardians/families will not meet daily in the Llanwnda community when dropping off/collecting children from school. Canolfan Bro Llanwnda is located next to Ysgol Felinwnda and hosts a number of activities. As the centre is independent of the school, it is not anticipated that the closure of the school would affect the ability of these community activities in Canolfan Bro Llanwnda to continue.</p>	Neutral	<p>The Local Authority and Governing Body of the alternative school can consider methods of promoting the use of the Welsh language in the community of Felinwnda through after school and community activities.</p> <p>It can be seen in the table which sets out the activities after school (2.5 above), that the neighbouring schools (Ysgol Bontnewydd and Ysgol Llandwrog), as does Ysgol Felinwnda, offer clubs with the Urdd after school. This means that the pupils could continue to take advantage of these activities as an additional opportunity to use and develop the Welsh language if the proposal were to be implemented.</p> <p>If the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda were to be implemented, then it is anticipated that some elements of community events will be affected. If this option was to be implemented, then the neighbouring schools</p>	Neutral

			<p>could be encouraged to make use of Llanwnda's facilities. It will be essential as part of the process to encourage discussions between the neighbouring alternative schools and the parents of Ysgol Felinwnda learners, and the wider community, in order to encourage the neighbouring schools to take advantage of the facilities of the Llanwnda community as well.</p>	
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4. CONCLUSION

Our expectations are that all pupils in the County have a balanced, age-relevant bilingualism so that they can be complete members of the bilingual society they are part of. The proposals for changing local arrangements will need to take full account of all the linguistic effects. Maintaining and improving the use of Welsh as an educational and social language among children will be a key consideration when drawing up proposals within the area.

From the point of view of the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda and the current pupils to transfer to a nearby alternative school, it is not anticipated that the proposal will have a negative impact on the children's linguistic ability. The option would mean that Ysgol Felinwnda pupils continue to be educated in a Welsh-medium school. It is noted that a higher percentage of pupils come from homes that can speak Welsh at Ysgol Bontnewydd (92%) and Ysgol Llandwrog (90%), compared to Ysgol Felinwnda (75%). As the pupils would be taught in larger classes and with more children of the same age group, the proposal could strengthen the opportunity for pupils to socialise in Welsh with their peers. On that basis, if the proposal were to be implemented, it is anticipated that there would be more opportunities for Felinwnda pupils to use the Welsh language informally with their peers inside and outside the classroom, and that the level of vitality of the Welsh language and the informal use of the language would be stronger.



Assessment Report on the Probable Impact on Travel Arrangements – Ysgol Felinwnda

- October 2023

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3.1 Alternative schools' locations

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4. CONCLUSION

1. INTRODUCTION

Ysgol Gynradd Felinwnda is located near the villages of Saron and Dinas on the outskirts of Caernarfon and serves the nearby villages and areas. The situation at Ysgol Felinwnda has been brought to the attention of the Education Department as according to the September 2022 Census, this is the school with the lowest numbers of learners in Gwynedd. There has been a significant reduction in the number of learners at Ysgol Felinwnda over the past 10 years, from 31 pupils in 2012 down to 8 pupils by today, and this leads to concerns regarding the school's future.

As part of the process of developing a proposal(s) for school reorganisation, the Authority must carry out an assessment of the likely impact on different travel arrangements, in accordance with the School Organisation Code (011/2018).

1.1 Cyngor Gwynedd Transport Policy

The '*Excellent Primary Education for the Children of Gwynedd Strategy*' aims to restrict travel from home to school to a one-way journey of no more than 30 minutes.

Cyngor Gwynedd provides free transport for learners who live two or more miles from the school in their catchment area, or the nearest school (not including nursery pupils). Learners who receive primary education are expected (except for learners with additional learning needs or disabilities), to walk up to two miles to meet any modes of transport provided by Cyngor Gwynedd. The transport policy can be seen in the parents' handbook:

<https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/en/Residents/Documents-Residents/Schools-and-learning-documents/School-Admissions/Guide-Book.pdf>

1.2 Context of Ysgol Felinwnda

Ysgol Gynradd Felinwnda is located near the villages of Saron and Dinas on the outskirts of Caernarfon and serves the nearby villages and area. It provides education for pupils aged between 3 and 11 years and has capacity for 61 (N-Yr6).

In September 2022, 48 learners aged between 3-11 lived in the Ysgol Felinwnda catchment area with three of those pupils attending Ysgol Felinwnda. This means that 45 learners in the catchment area (between 3-11) attend out-of-catchment schools, with 31 of these attending Ysgol Bontnewydd and 5 attending Ysgol Llandwrog.

2. THE PROPOSAL IN QUESTION

The proposal in question:

Close Ysgol Felinwnda on 31 August 2023, and the current learners to transfer to a nearby alternative school, in accordance with parent's choice, from 1 January 2024.

The nearby alternative schools are located approximately two miles from Ysgol Felinwnda. If the proposal is implemented, in accordance with the Cyngor Gwynedd transport policy, the authority would offer transport to the learners of the current Ysgol Felinwnda catchment area choosing to attend an alternative school and living more than two miles from the school.

In addition, in terms of the learners who would choose to attend an alternative school but who live less than two miles away from the school and therefore not entitled to free transport, but because of the fact that they would travel to school along a road considered by the Council to be very dangerous, then free transport will be provided to those learners.

3. ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT ON TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS

3.1. Location of the alternative school

Both nearby alternative schools are located approximately 2 miles from Ysgol Felinwnda.

3.2. Free transport options

In line with Cyngor Gwynedd's transport policy, learners who receive primary or secondary education (with the exception of learners with additional learning needs or disabilities), are expected to walk up to two miles to meet any modes of transport provided by Cyngor Gwynedd along the shortest route.

The shortest route available is the route which is not deemed by the Council to be especially dangerous, after assessing the other routes available for the journey, and these routes would be assessed in line with Cyngor Gwynedd's transport policy.

As the route to Ysgol Felinwnda is considered dangerous to some learners, the authority already provides a free taxi to two of the three learners eligible from the catchment area attending Ysgol Felinwnda and it is anticipated that this arrangement will need to be continued for the alternative schools if the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda is implemented on 31 December 2023.

If the proposal to close the school is implemented, the numbers for whom unpaid transport will need to be organised in the long term will depend on the result of the reviewing the boundaries of the school catchment area.

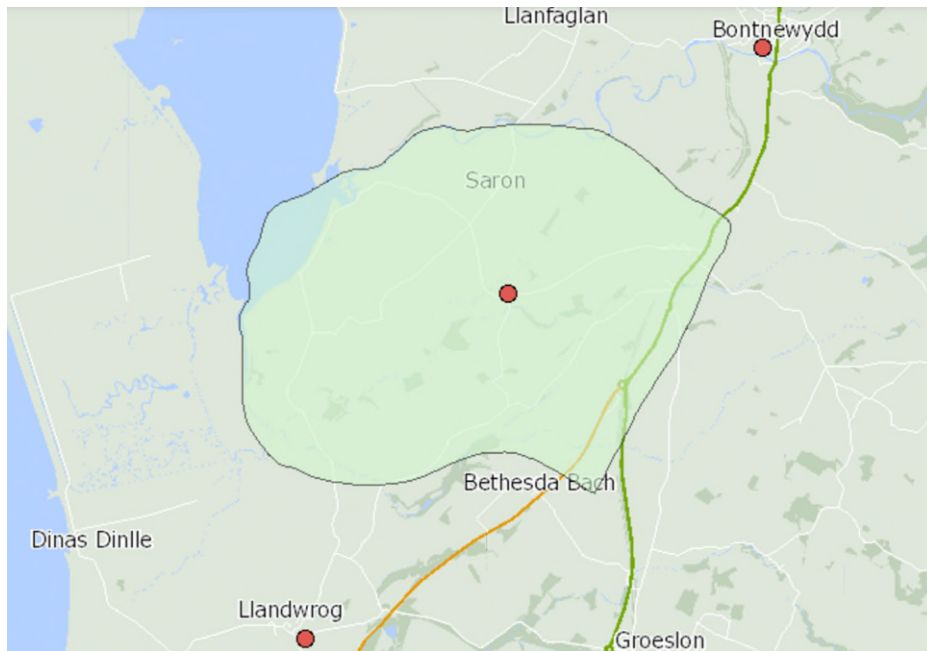
3.3. Financial impact

The cost of **closing Ysgol Felinwnda on 31 December 2023 and the transfer of current pupils to nearby alternative schools, in accordance with parents' choice, will be dependent on the parents' choice, from 1 January 2024** will be dependent on the parents of the 3 children living in Ysgol Felinwnda's catchment area's choice of alternative school.

Based on September 2022 cost, it is predicted that a 3-seater taxis costs £40-60 a day, therefore costing around £7,400 - £11,000 per annum. If the 3 children will require taxis to 2 schools, then the cost will be £14,800 – £22,000 per annum.

4. CONCLUSION

Should the proposal be implemented, the learners currently attending Ysgol Felinwnda, and living within the catchment area, will be offered free transport to the alternative school from 1 January 2024, in accordance with the Schools Transport Policy. The option would entail additional costs for the Authority. These costs are estimated to be approximately £7,600 - £22,800 per year.



Quality and Standards of Education Assessment Report - Ysgol Felinwnda

- October 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION
2. SUMMARY
3. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT ON STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION
4. CONCLUSION

1. INTRODUCTION

Ysgol Felinwnda Primary School is located near the villages of Saron and Dinas on the outskirts of Caernarfon and serves the nearby villages and area. The situation at Ysgol Felinwnda has been brought to the attention of the Education Department as according to the September 2022 Census, this is the school with the lowest numbers of learners in Gwynedd. There has been a significant reduction in the number of learners at Ysgol Felinwnda over the past 10 years, from 31 pupils in 2012 down to 8 pupils by today, and this leads to concern regarding the school's future.

As part of the process of developing a proposal(s) for school reorganisation, the Authority must assess the likely impact on the quality and standards of education, in accordance with the School Organisation Code (011/2018).

Due to the low numbers and other matters of concern regarding the school, an appraisal of the number of options that would respond to these was undertaken coming to the decision that the preferred option was to **close Ysgol Felinwnda on 31 December 2023 and the current pupils to transfer to a nearby alternative school, in accordance with parents' choice, from 1 January 2024.**

The Council is committed to providing an education of the highest possible quality that will give the County's children the experiences, skills and confidence that would enable them to develop to be bilingual, successful and well-rounded citizens.

It continues to be a high priority to provide the best possible learning experiences for every learner within the County, and ensuring an exciting and broad curriculum, as well as extra-curricular activities that motivate them to learn and understand, that will lead to improving standards.

2. SUMMARY

Following the last Estyn inspection in 2017, it was concluded that the performance of the current Ysgol Felinwnda was 'Good'.

See below a summary of Ysgol Felinwnda's latest surveys.

Ysgol Felinwnda Primary School is located near the villages of Saron and Dinas on the outskirts of Caernarfon and serves the nearby villages and area. It provides education for pupils aged between 3 and 11 years and has capacity for 61 (N-Yr6).

School	Inspection year	How good are the outputs?	How good is the provision?	How good is the leadership and management?
Felinwnda	June 2017	Good	Good	Good

3. THE OPTION IN QUESTION

Close Ysgol Felinwnda on 31 December 2023, and the current pupils to transfer to a nearby alternative school, in accordance with parents' choice, from 1 January 2024.

This option means that Ysgol Felinwnda will close, and that the current pupils would be offered a place at a nearby alternative school. Transitional transport provision would be available for current Ysgol Felinwnda pupils (who also live in the school's catchment area) to either Ysgol Bontnewydd or Ysgol Llandwrog, in accordance with the County's Transport Policy.

**CLOSE YSGOL FELINWENDA AND OFFER LEARNERS A PLACE AT A NEARBY ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL
ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT ON QUALITY AND EDUCATION STANDARDS**

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Impact Criteria	Description		Status of the impact and the work
Standards and general progress of specific groups and in terms of skills	<p>'Good' was the outcome of the Estyn inspection for the standards indicators at Ysgol Felinwnda, whilst Ysgol Bontnewydd was 'Excellent' and Ysgol Llandwrog was 'Good'. Therefore, based on the outcome of these inspections, it is concluded that there would be a positive or at least neutral impact on this criterion by teaching the learners in nearby alternative schools.</p>		Positive / Neutral
Well-being and attitudes to learning	<p>'Good' was the outcome of the 'Well-being' indicator at Ysgol Felinwnda, Ysgol Bontnewydd and Ysgol Llandwrog in their previous inspections in 2017. Therefore, based on the outcomes of these inspections, it is concluded that a neutral impact is anticipated on this field by teaching the learners in nearby alternative schools.</p>		Neutral
Teaching and learning experiences	<p>'Good' was the outcome of the 'Learning Experiences' indicator at Ysgol Felinwnda, Ysgol Bontnewydd and Ysgol Llandwrog in their last inspections in 2017. However, due to the size of classes, Ysgol Bontnewydd and Ysgol Llandwrog can offer an opportunity to learn in larger groups with age-relevant peers to expand their experiences. Therefore, based on this, it is concluded that there would be a positive impact on the teaching and learning experiences by teaching Ysgol Felinwnda's learners in nearby alternative schools.</p>		Positive
Care, support and guidance	<p>'Good' was the outcome of the Estyn inspection for the 'Care Support and Guidance' indicator at Ysgol Felinwnda in their last inspection in 2017, whilst the outcome at Ysgol Bontnewydd was 'Excellent' and Ysgol Llandwrog was 'Good'. Consequently, it is deemed that the option would have a positive or at least neutral impact on the care support and guidance to transfer Ysgol Felinwnda learners to nearby alternative schools.</p>		Positive / Neutral
Leadership and management	<p>In the previous Estyn report for Ysgol Felinwnda it was noted that the leadership and management of the school was 'Good', while it was judged that leadership and management at Ysgol Bontnewydd was 'Excellent' and Ysgol Llandwrog was 'Good'. Therefore, based on the outcome of these inspections, it is concluded that there would be a positive or at least neutral impact on leadership and management by educating Ysgol Felinwnda's learners in nearby alternative schools.</p>		Positive / Neutral
Vulnerable groups, including children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN)	<p>Support is provided to vulnerable groups, including children with additional learning needs, in accordance with the Authority's policy and the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and Education (Wales) Act 2018 as in every school in Gwynedd.</p>		Neutral
A provision that at least equates to what is available to learners at the time (including those with ALN)	<p>'Good' was the outcome of the Estyn inspection for the 'Standards' indicators at Ysgol Felinwnda, the same as Ysgol Bontnewydd and Ysgol Llandwrog. Therefore, based on this, it is concluded that there would be no impact on the standards of learners by teaching learners from Ysgol Felinwnda in nearby alternative schools.</p>		Neutral

The above assessment has been carried out based on information in the Ysgol Felinwnda Estyn report, June 2017, Ysgol Bontnewydd, February 2017 and Ysgol Llandwrog, July 2019.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the conclusion of the above assessment, it is concluded that the standard of education provided at both nearby alternative schools is higher (Excellent), or at least equal to (Good) the standard of education at Ysgol Felinwnda (Good). Consequently, it is anticipated that there would be a positive impact in terms of the quality and standards of education deriving from the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda and offer the learners a place in a nearby alternative school.