

REPORT TO:	Executive Board
REPORT NO:	HEd/01/19
DATE:	8 January 2019
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Phil Wynn (People – Education)
CONTACT OFFICER:	Paula Parry (Tel: 295424)
SUBJECT:	Proposal to consult on the increase in pupil capacity at Ysgol Bro Alun – Consultation Feedback
WARD:	Gwersyllt East and South

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Executive Board with feedback on the recent consultation relating to the proposal to increase pupil capacity at Ysgol Bro Alun.
- 1.2 To seek approval to publish the relevant Statutory Notices (**Appendix 1**) and the Post Consultation Report (**Appendix 2**).

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 As part of any school organisation consultation, Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC) must produce a consultation document containing certain information in accordance with the School Standards & Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, and the School Organisation Code (statutory code document no 006/2013).
- 2.2 This consultation took place between **03 October 2018** and **15 November 2018**. The consultation lasted for at least 42 days with at least 20 of these days being school days as outlined in the School Organisation Code.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Members take note of the consultation feedback contained in this report.

3.2 That Members give their approval for Officers to proceed to Statutory Notices (Appendix 1) regarding the proposal to increase pupil capacity at Ysgol Bro Alun.

To create an extension to the current building to accommodate a further 105 pupils (15 pupils per year group). The first year of increase would be September 2019 for Nursery (additional 15 places) and Reception (additional 15 places) the increase in capacity would be restricted to those year groups only.

The annual admission number will increase by 15 places (from 30 to 45) for nursery and reception places from 2019 onwards and these classes will feed through the school until the maximum capacity of 315 (plus 45 nursery places) has been reached.

3.3 That these matters be dealt with as an urgent item of business in accordance with Standing Order 43 (1) of the Council's Standing Orders.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) There is continued demand for Welsh medium places within Wrexham. Whilst we are meeting current demand, further growth is projected.
- (ii) The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan identifies the growth in Welsh medium and the Welsh Government's aims for 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050.
- (iii) An opportunity has arisen where funding has been made available through Welsh Government for Welsh medium education.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 4.1 In order to secure the provision of a quality education service, Wrexham County Borough Council reviews its schools on a periodic basis in order to plan effectively and to restructure for the future.
- 4.2 As part of any school organisation consultation, Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC) must produce a consultation document containing certain information in accordance with the School Standards & Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, and the School Organisation Code (statutory code document no 006/2013).
- 4.3 The proposal is being introduced within the context of policies and plans that are already in progress - both locally and nationally - to transform services that are provided for children, young people and their families.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 **Policy Framework - PE1 – All children and young people have positive aspirations, learn and achieve their potential.** The proposals are in accordance with WG Guidelines on sufficiency, suitability, condition, quality and cost, and are in accordance with the School Standards & Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, and the School Organisation Code (statutory code document no 006/2013). The overriding aim of the proposal is to progress the Council's Corporate Priorities in relation to children and educational attainment.
- 5.2 **Budget** – There will be a capital investment of £1.3 million in Grant Funding and an ongoing revenue commitment from the Revenue Support Grant for running costs.
- 5.3 **Legal** – The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (Section 48) requires the Local Authority to consult with such persons as appear to them to be appropriate before considering the publication of any proposals. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (Section 51) gives the Local Authority the power to make the decision on School Organisation Proposals providing they do not need approval under (section 50).
- 5.4 **Staffing** – There will be an opportunity to recruit additional staff required at the school, both teaching and support staff.
- 5.5 **Equality/Human Rights** – Members are advised of their duty to consider the full Equality Impact Assessment which is available at <http://vmwinsqld/equalityisalive/Menu.aspx> report number E/EIA00013/2018. Members of the public can request a copy of the full Equality Impact Assessment from the Contact Officer named in the header box of this report. A summary of the Equality Impact Assessment is attached as **Appendix 3**.
- 5.6 **Risks** – There is a risk to the Authority that should we not increase capacity in this controlled manner that we may not meet demand with current stock and have to create 'quick fix' remedies, such as siting mobiles on current school sites.

All possible risks will be monitored as part of Wrexham County Council's School risk management strategy. By monitoring and ensuring there is a robust approach to the above risks and disadvantages, the impact on pupils/parents/carers/teachers and support staff can be minimised.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Following agreement from Executive Board on 10 July 2018, the Council carried out a Formal Consultation with stakeholders and communities on a proposal to increase pupil capacity at Ysgol Bro Alun from September 2019. The consultation ran from 3 October 2018 to 15 November 2018.
- 6.2 A communications campaign was carried out throughout the consultation period to ensure wide publicity and distribution. Key stakeholders were contacted to provide them with a link to the online survey / information on how to request hard copies.
- 6.3 A designated email account was set up for any queries about the consultation. The email address was referred to in the consultation literature and instructions (online

and paper). People were able to request further information, hard copies or information in a different format. In addition, people were able to feedback their views via letter or email, if preferred.

Drop In Session

6.4 Drop in sessions were held for interested parties at Ysgol Bro Alun, Gwersyllt.

Location	Target Stakeholder	Date	Number of Attendees
Ysgol Bro Alun	Parents and Community	23 October 2018 8.30am – 9.30 am	1
Ysgol Bro Alun	Parents and Community	24 October 2018 3.00pm – 4.00pm	6
Ysgol Bro Alun	Parents and Community	23 October 2018 5.00pm – 6.00pm	2
Ysgol Bro Alun	Governing Body	1 October 2018 6.30pm – 7.00pm	1 LA Officer Full Governing Body
Ysgol Bro Alun	Staff	8 November 2018 3.30pm – 4.40pm	All Staff Invited Well attended

6.5 Childrens consultation was undertaken as follows:

Location	Pupils	Date
Ysgol Bro Alun	School Council	23 October 2018

Consultation findings and feedback

6.6 There were a total of 14 respondents to the consultation from the period 03 October 2018 to 15 November 2018.

Stakeholder/Respondees	Number of Responses received
Parents	5
Residents of Gwersyllt	0
Governing Bodies	1
School Councils	1
Mudiad Meithrin	1
Staff	1
Estyn	1
Community Council	1
NASUWT Teaching Union	1
UCAC Cymru Union	1
RHAG	1
Total	14

6.8 Feedback from the consultation is summarised below and within the Post Consultation Report (**Appendix 2**).

Full copies of all responses are available for Members to review.

- **Adequate Building & Outdoor Space:**

In response reassurance has been given that the site size is sufficient to accommodate a 315 (plus 45 Nursery places) using the Building Bulletin Guidance in respect of required facilities, including that of outdoor space. The site can accommodate a 315 capacity school, which is the proposed capacity of Ysgol Bro Alun.

Further to this funding has been secured to complete a permanent extension to accommodate the additional facilities required should the proposal be approved by the Executive Board.

- **Welsh Medium Provision:**

Theses related to concerns about not gaining an accessible Welsh medium place, reference to younger siblings or concerns about siblings having to attend different schools should the proposal not proceed.

In response The Local Authority continues to monitor the demand for school places through its parental preference survey as well as closely analysing the actual admissions requests, and we are committed via the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan to continue to ensure it provides Welsh medium places for all those who want them. Where funding allows, the Local Authority will seek to increase available Welsh medium places, so as to meet local demand, improve the distribution of school places and provide more choice for parents.

This proposal would allow us to best meet local demand for Welsh medium places.

- **Secondary Provision concerns:**

This related to the increased number of pupils that will in turn access secondary provision within Wrexham.

In response Ysgol Morgan Llwyd currently has surplus capacity as below:-

Capacity including 6th form* = 1143 | Surplus places = 412 (Number on Roll: 731) **36.05% whole school surplus capacity.**

Capacity 7-11* = 965 | Surplus places = 342 (Number on roll: 623) **35.44% years 7-11 surplus capacity.**

*Based on January 2017 PLASC

Ysgol Morgan Llwyd are also undergoing an expansion within Band A of 21st Century schools programme in order to accommodate the forecasted increase in demand.

- **Staffing and leadership:**

Plans to review the current Federation between Ysgol Plas Coch and Ysgol Bro Alun are not included under the remit of this consultation.

In Summary

Out of the **14** responses received throughout the consultation period **13** of these have expressed support for the proposal to increase pupil capacity at Ysgol Bro Alun. A further **1** response expressed that they were not for or against the proposal to increase pupil capacity at Ysgol Bro Alun. This particular respondent raised issues that are outside of the remit of this consultation.

If a decision is taken not to proceed with the current proposal it is likely that, given the increase in demand for Welsh medium, temporary accommodation would need to be provided on current sites, for which there is no current external funding available. This is, at best, a short term solution.

The Local Authority believes that this proposal remains the most effective use of resources available.

7. EVALUATION OF OPTIONS

- 7.1 Option 1 – Increase the pupil capacity at Ysgol Bro Alun, and phase admissions from September 2019 for Nursery and Reception. A permanent extension will be developed within the school site at a reasonable expense in order to create additional Welsh medium places. This would further develop the geographic spread of Welsh medium schools within the County and meet the growing demand for Welsh medium primary places.
- 7.2 Option 2 - Maintain the Status Quo - Maintain only the current Welsh medium primary places available. Manage demand as required given current provision.

BACKGROUND PAPERS	LOCATION	WEBSITE INFO.
School Standards & Organisation (Wales) Act 2013		This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's copies website at www.wales.gov.uk
Welsh in Education Strategic Plan		This Document can be accessed from Wrexham Local Authority website at http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/consultation/education/wesp.htm
Council Plan 2017-2022		This Document can be accessed from Wrexham Local Authority website at http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/assets/pdfs/councilplan/2017-22/council_plan.pdf
Schools Organisation Code (statutory document no 006/2013)		This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's copies website at www.wales.gov.uk
Other Related Documents		
<i>Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision (2007)</i>		
<i>Measuring the capacity of schools in Wales</i> Welsh Government Circular No: 021/2011 (2011).		