



Wrexham County Borough Council

Post Consultation Report

Proposal to Increase the pupil Capacity at

Ysgol Bro Alun, Wrexham

Ysgol Bro Alun

Delamere Avenue

Gwersyllt

Wrexham

LL11 4NG

Page

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Publication of Consultation	3
3.	Consultation Meetings	5
4.	Consultation with children	6
5.	Consultation Feedback	8
6.	Parent/Governor & Community Feedback	9
7.	ESTYN Feedback	15
8.	Executive Board Decision	17

1. Introduction

Wrexham County Borough Council has recently completed a period of consultation in relation to the proposal to increase the pupil capacity at Ysgol Bro Alun. The consultation period began on **03 October 2018 and ended on 15 November 2018**.

The consultation has been carried out in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 which requires the School Organisation Code 2013 to be issued to and give guidance to relevant bodies (Local Authorities, Governing Bodies).

This document will set out the steps taken during the formal consultation period, refer to findings obtained during the consultation and will aim to answer and tackle queries that have been put to the Authority.

2. Publication of Consultation

The consultation began with the bilingual publication of the Consultation Document on 03 October 2018 on the Council's website. Links to the documents were emailed to the full list of consultees. The detail below sets out the list of recipients, as guided by the School Organisation Code (2013), who received a copy of, or were directed to the Consultation Document during the consultation period.

List of Consultees

- The proposed maintaining authority Wrexham Council Borough Council (Executive Board).
- Other local authorities, including neighbouring authorities Flintshire County Council and Denbighshire County Council.
- The Governing Bodies of all Wrexham primary schools.
- The Governing Body of Ysgol Morgan Llwyd.
- The Governing Body of Ysgol Plas Coch/Ysgol Bro Alun Federation
- Parents (and where possible prospective parents) carers and guardians.
- The Welsh Ministers.
- Assembly Members: including AM Llyr Gruffydd, AM Lesley Griffiths, AM Mark Isherwood, AM Ken Skates.
- Members of Parliament: to include MP Susan Jones, MP Ian Lucas.
- Estyn.
- Teaching and staff trade unions representing teachers and other staff.
- GwE.
- Wrexham Council's Transport Department.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner.
- Gwersyllt Community Council.
- Llay Community Council
- Gresford Community Council
- The Children and Young People's Partnership and The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships.

Consultees were invited to respond to the consultation by completing the consultation form provided or by emailing or writing to the Education Department. Responses could be submitted electronically or in hard copy paper format.

3. Consultation Meetings

As part of the consultation process, a number of drop in sessions were held by Education Officers at Ysgol Bro Alun. Parents and interested parties were able to attend the sessions.

Venue	Stakeholder	Date	No. of Consultees Attended
Ysgol Bro Alun	Parents and Community	Tuesday 23 October 2018 8:30am-9:30am	1
Ysgol Bro Alun	Parents and Community	Tuesday 23 October 2018 5:00pm-6:00pm	2
Ysgol Bro Alun	Parents and Community	Wednesday 24 October 2018 3:00pm-4:30pm	6

Further meetings were held at Ysgol Bro Alun where Local Authority Officers met with the Governing Body of the school and staff.

Venue	Stakeholder	Date	No. of Consultees
Ysgol Bro Alun	Staff of Ysgol Bro Alun	Thursday 8 November 2018 3:30pm-4:30pm	All Staff
Ysgol Bro Alun	Governing Body	Monday 1 October 2018 6:30pm	Full Governing Body

All attendees of the various drop-in sessions were advised to provide feedback to the consultation. It was explained that there are several ways in which this communication could be made. Attached to the consultation document was a proforma. This could be completed and returned to the address indicated. Contact could also be made via email or letter.

It was also communicated that any responses at this stage were not treated as objections.

4. Consultation with Children

A bilingual children's version of the consultation document was published on Wrexham Council's website alongside the full consultation document.

During the consultation Local Authority Officers met with the School Council to discuss the proposals.

School	Stakeholder	Date	No. of Consultees
Ysgol Bro Alun	School Council	23 October 2018	7 children

During the school council meetings, the children were asked if they had seen copies of the children's consultation document and officers explained what the consultation was about. The children were encouraged to ask any questions and share ideas that they may have.

The following feedback was recorded on the day and the children were also asked if they could send their ideas and opinions to Wrexham Council via the school co-ordinators. It should be noted that the School Council did submit a formal response.

Feedback from School Councils:

Ysgol Bro Alun School Council – 23 October 2018

Positive points raised:

- **I think it is good that more children will grow up to speak Welsh.**
- **More children will be able to come to this amazing school.**
- **There will be new teachers.**
- **There will be more jobs.**
- **There will be more kids, more friends.**

Questions raised:

- **Money. Will there be enough money as we will need more money for more things?**
- **Will it be noisy when the building work happens?**
- **Will it be crowded, there isn't enough room in the hall?**
- **We have assembly in the hall it will be too small.**
- **What about our fields and play grounds, will we still have somewhere to play and have room for sports days.**
- **The children in the Cylch need a room so they can stay here.**
- **Where will the building be?**

On reflection the majority of questions raised were in relation to the proposed building works rather than to the increase in pupils at the school.

5. Consultation Feedback

During the course of the consultation period Wrexham County Borough Council received **14 responses** to the consultation document.

The table below demonstrates the preferred format of response used by stakeholders.

Format of Response	Number of Responses Received
Email/Letter	14
Total Received	14

Responses were received from the following stakeholders:

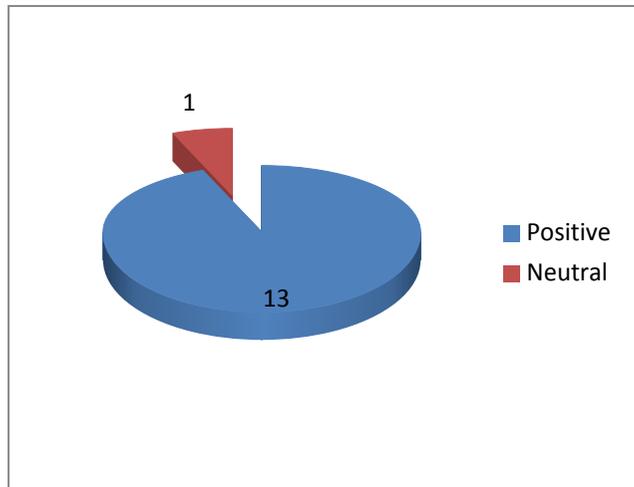
Parents	5
Governing Bodies	1
School Council	1 (a total of 7 children)
Staff	1 (Collective response)
Mudiad Meithrin	1
Community Council	1
Estyn	1
RhAG (Parents for Welsh Medium Education)	1
NASUWT Teaching Union	1
UCAC Cymru Teaching Union	1

All responses received are accessible for Councillors to view in full.

6. Parent/Governor & Community Feedback

Feedback from the consultation is summarised below:-

Positive Responses	13	92.86%
Neutral Responses	1	7.14%



Themes from the responses have been collated and analysed as follows:

There was a positive thread throughout the all the responses, however some concerns were raised in relation to what could happen should the proposal not proceed as detailed below.

Theme	No of times occurred
Concerns about not gaining an accessible Welsh medium place, reference to younger siblings or concerns about siblings having to attend different schools.	8

Theme	Local Authority Response
<p>Concerns about not gaining an accessible Welsh medium place, reference to younger siblings or concerns about siblings having to attend different schools.</p> <p><i>'I spent a whole year travelling to two separate schools, which was a nightmare to say the least'</i></p> <p><i>'Since the first time my children started school in 2015 there has been a huge increase in the demand for Welsh medium education. The numbers are increasing every year.'</i></p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>This proposal would allow us to best meet local demand for Welsh medium places.</p>

Further themes are summarised as follows:

Theme	No of times occurred
Concern about lack of outdoor space and existing school facilities.	3
Concern about staffing and leadership	3
Concern about future of Welsh medium secondary provision	1

Theme	Local Authority Response
<p>Concern about adequate outdoor space and the extension of existing facilities.</p> <p><i>'Need to expand the hall (particularly for lunchtime)'</i></p> <p><i>'Ensure sufficient room for play during the building work'</i></p> <p><i>'Union* members are very worried about the accommodation provision over the next two or three years.'</i></p>	<p>The site size is sufficient to accommodate a 315 (plus 45 Nursery place) school using the Building Bulletin Guidance 98/99 in respect of required facilities, including that of outdoor space.</p> <p>Funding has been secured to ensure a significant investment to include an extension should the decision be made to increase capacity.</p>
<p>Concerns about Staffing and Leadership.</p> <p><i>'Bro Alun has increased in size with every new year group that is added (and now it looks set to increase in size by 50%). Plas Coch also underwent a 50% increase</i></p>	<p>Plans to review the current Federation between Ysgol Plas Coch and Ysgol Bro Alun are not included under the remit of this consultation.</p>

<p><i>in size in 2016.'</i></p> <p><i>'In short, the situation in 2018-19 is very, very different to what it was in 2013-14. Surely the budgets of the two separate schools would now be robust enough to employ a Headteacher for each? '</i></p> <p><i>'The Union* must draw your attention to the fact that changing the capacity can adversely affect staff's conditions and morale, especially so for the leadership team. We are confident that the Authority's officers are doing everything possible within their powers to ensure that the work will not get too much for them. The view of the union* is that it would be a good ideal to urgently look again at the leadership model at the School and seek a resolution that will facilitate the work of the Leadership Team'</i></p>	
<p>Concern about the future of Welsh medium secondary provision.</p> <p><i>'Another issue is that numbers in the Welsh medium education sector are growing substantially and that proposed developments will only add to this. Several parents have shared concerns with the organisation regarding the ability of the only Welsh medium Secondary School in the Local Authority, Ysgol Morgan Llwyd, to cope with the growth in numbers that will follow. In this context, parents are of the opinion that a second Welsh medium secondary provision is required for the Local Authority. '</i></p>	<p>Ysgol Morgan Llwyd currently has surplus capacity as below:-</p> <p>Capacity including 6th form* = 1143 Surplus places = 412 (Number on Roll: 731) 36.05% whole school surplus capacity.</p> <p>Capacity 7-11* = 965 Surplus places = 342 (Number on roll: 623) 35.44% years 7-11 surplus capacity.</p> <p>*Based on January 2017 PLASC</p> <p>Ysgol Morgan Llwyd is also undergoing an expansion within Band A of 21st Century schools programme in order to accommodate the forecasted increase in demand.</p>

*Union redacted.

It should be noted that there were many **positive comments** made a sample of which have included below:-

'I fully support the proposal of increasing the capacity at Ysgol Bro Alun, it is clearly needed'. Parent, other primary.

'I think this school offers fantastic opportunities for the children and I am extremely keen for my youngest to experience the same as her older sister. In the current situation this is sadly not guaranteed. I think the expansion on Bro Alun would benefit so many children, and massively reduce the likelihood of siblings being split and increase children getting their first choice of school'. Parent, Bro Alun.

'From the outset it was clear that the demand for places at Ysgol Bro Alun was much higher than anticipated, with the result that in recent years some children have had their requests for places at Bro Alun refused.....Therefore, when considering demand for places, the land and the success of the school, the governing body of Ysgol Bro Alun strongly supports the proposal to expand the school's capacity from 30 new pupils per year to 45. The proposal to expand was passed unanimously by the governing body at our October meeting'. Governing Body, Bro Alun

'We as a family are extremely hopeful that this consultation will go ahead and that the battle to gain a place at a Welsh school in Wrexham is now a thing of the past'. Parent, Bro Alun.

'We're writing to you to support the Council's proposal to increase capacity at Ysgol Bro Alun. Mudiad Meithrin in Wrexham are delighted with the Council's decision to increase the standard number for Ysgol Bro Alun and thus ensure that more children get the opportunity to receive education through the medium of Welsh in a location within reasonable distance to their homes.' Mudiad Meithrin

'We're confident that the increase in capacity at Ysgol Bro Alun and the Authority's plans for the new Welsh medium school in Borrass will ensure that Wrexham is leading the way in reaching a million Welsh speakers.' Mudiad Meithrin

'I think the expansion on Bro Alun would benefit so many children, and massively reduce the likelihood of siblings being split and increase children getting their first choice of school. This would then reduce the need for appeals. The need for Welsh education is vast and is only getting bigger. I strongly believe that children should be able to access Welsh medium education. I really hope the extension goes ahead for next September. 'Parent, Bro Alun.

‘In addition, the Welsh Government’s ambition of achieving a million Welsh speakers by 2050 demands an innovative response from Local Authorities. The Local Authority must be congratulated on their work in education to this end ‘

There were a number of questions and comments received that are not directly connected to the current consultation on increasing the capacity at Ysgol Bro Alun.

Theme	Local Authority Response
<p>Building Works</p> <p><i>‘Will it be noisy when the building work happens?’</i></p> <p><i>‘The children in the Cylch need a room so they can stay here.’</i></p> <p><i>‘Where will the building be?’</i></p>	<p>Wrexham has built a number of extensions and indeed whole schools on ‘live’ sites with minimal disruption.</p> <p>Decisions on any design works would be completed should the proposal be approved by the Executive Board after the Statutory Notice period.</p>
<p>Class Sizes</p> <p><i>‘Before the school gets to its full new capacity, it is very likely there will be significant financial pressures on the school to hold classes with very high numbers of pupils. This will affect the Foundation Phase in the first instance, and the union* would strongly disagree with a situation where the numbers in a classroom goes against government regulations and good practise.’</i></p>	<p>Wrexham has carefully considered the gradual increase at the school ensuring sufficient time to plan for upcoming cohorts. There is no intention for there to be any classes of above 30 pupils as per the Foundation Phase Class Size Regulations.</p> <p>The decision on class structure remains a decision for the School and the Governing Body.</p>
<p>General trends in Education demand and projections</p>	<p>Wrexham continually monitors trends and updates projections with accurate timely data. Each consultation contains the most recent appropriate data as is required under the School Organisation Code 2013.</p>

*Union redacted

In Summary

The overwhelming majority, 13 of the 14 representations received during the consultation period, **3 October 2018 to 15 November 2018**, were highly supportive of the proposal.

It was noted by Officers that during the drop in sessions and meetings that there was an over-riding feeling of support for the proposal to increase the capacity of Ysgol Bro Alun, by the staff, pupils, parents and carers.

There were **no objections** or concerns received from local residents or the wider community. Gwersyllt Community Council extended their support for the proposals.

Further to this we received comments that were complimentary of the Local Authority in bringing this consultation forward.

7. ESTYN Feedback

The feedback provided by ESTYN is prepared by answering set questions to ensure that the local Authority have taken into account all educational requirements within their proposals. In answer to the question 'Are the proposals likely to maintain or improve the standard of education provision in the area?' ESTYN commented as such:-

Estyn response to the proposal from Wrexham County Borough Council to increase the pupil capacity at the Welsh medium school Ysgol Bro Alun from 210 to 315 from August 2019

This report has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer and other additional information such as data from Welsh Government and the views of the Regional Consortia which deliver school improvement services to the schools within the proposal.

Summary / Conclusion

The proposal appropriately sets out the need for additional Welsh medium educational provision in Wrexham, and in the Gwersyllt area in particular, due to sustained growth in demand. It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of educational provision in the area.

Description and benefits

The proposal explains how the demand for Welsh medium places is at capacity which means not all parents are able to send their children to the closest Welsh medium school.

The proposal clearly sets out the local authority's assessment of current capacity for expansion in each of its Welsh medium primary schools. This data shows that nearly all schools are at their full capacity. As Ysgol Bro Alun has capacity to increase its pupil numbers, it is reasonable for the local authority to suggest this is a good site for expansion.

This proposal should support well the local authority's duties for the provision of adequate Welsh medium education. The proposal appropriately considers the advantages and disadvantages associated with the expansion of the school, and the implications for other Welsh medium and English medium schools. Increasing the Ysgol Bro Alun site to accommodate the additional demand alleviates the need to use temporary accommodation in other schools and avoids possible overcrowding at these alternative sites.

The conclusions that the additional places will reduce pressure on other schools and enable more parents to access places at Ysgol Bro Alun where it is their nearest Welsh medium school, are consistent with the detail in the proposal.

The proposal suggest that there will not be a detrimental impact on home to school transport, rather the impact may be beneficial as more pupils will be able to access their nearest school places.

The proposal identifies the impact the expansion of the school will have on staffing levels, and suggest this will be addressed as and when necessary as the capacity expands. The proposal could be strengthened through identifying the capacity benchmarks

that may trigger the need for additional staff, and the financial implications and how these are offset by increased pupil funding, as this has not been set out.

Educational aspects of the proposal

The proposal sets out clearly how the school will increase capacity year on year, through increasing the number of places in the nursery, (and foundation phase in year 1). The gradual expansion of the school will therefore take place on an annual incremental process from 2019, as the larger year group feeds through the school year on year. This should not represent a risk to the school and its education provision.

The proposal considers the likely impact of the new school on standards, provision and leadership by to the Regional Consortium's categorisation of the school. There has not been an Estyn inspection of the school, and therefore this detail is not available. The local consortium categorises the school as yellow, which is 'an effective school which is already doing well and knows the areas it needs to improve'.

The local authority has categorised the building stock as 'Grade A', which means the quality of buildings are 'good', and are 'performing as intended and operating efficiently'. This information supports the proposer's reasonable claim that Ysgol Bro Alun should be able to maintain its current standards following the expansion.

8. Executive Board Decision

Wrexham County Borough Council Executive Board will meet on **08 January 2018** to discuss the consultation for the proposal to increase the pupil capacity at Ysgol Bro Alun.

The Executive Board will be asked for approval to continue to the **Statutory Notice** for determining the increase in pupil capacity at Ysgol Bro Alun. This consists of a 28 day formal Objection Period whereby any objections to the proposal must be made in writing. Following this the Local Authority will return to the Executive Board with an objection report to determine the final decision.