

CABINET MEMBER DECISION NOTICE

SUBJECT: Proposal to close Ysgol Machreth, Llanfachreth, on 31 August 2016

CABINET MEMBER: Coun. Gareth Thomas

DECISION

Following the publishing of a Statutory Notice on 14 June 2016 on the proposal to close Ysgol Machreth, Llanfachreth, (Voluntary Controlled, Church in Wales school), no objections were received during the objection period. As a result, Gwynedd Council recommends the proposal to close Ysgol Machreth, Llanfachreth on 31 August 2016.

Gwynedd Council will offer places to the pupils at Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd, Rhydymain during the transition period prior to the establishment of Ysgol Bro Idris (the All-through Catchment Area School) on 1 September 2017.

Transport will be offered to the alternative school, Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd, Rhydymain during the transition period in accordance with Gwynedd Council's transport policy.

REASON FOR THE DECISION

In the Cabinet meeting on 19 May 2015, Gwynedd Council decided:

To implement the proposal to close Ysgol y Gader, Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau, Ysgol Brithdir, Ysgol Machreth (Llanfachreth), Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd (Rhydymain), Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy, Ysgol Llanelltyd, Ysgol Friog, Ysgol Clogau (Bontddu) and Ysgol Ganllwyd on 31 August 2017 and establish a Welsh medium community Catchment Area All Through School for 3-16 year olds on the existing sites of Y Gader, Cynradd Dolgellau, Ieuan Gwynedd (Rhydymain), Dinas Mawddwy, Llanelltyd and Friog on 1 September 2017.

Following this decision, a letter was received from the Chair of Governors for Ysgol Machreth, Llanfachreth. The letter noted that the governing body had concerns that the school was no longer sustainable as a staffing crisis had arisen, as well as the fact that the school governors, with the co-operation of the parents, had arranged to move the pupils to an alternative school in accordance with the usual admissions procedure.

In the Annual School Census on Pupil Numbers in January 2015, there were 11 pupils on the school register. By May 2015, admission applications had been received to transfer 10 of the 11 pupils to other schools in the catchment by 1 September 2015.

Because of these circumstances, in its meeting on 23 June 2015, the Cabinet

approved:

- the withdrawal of the statutory notice regarding Ysgol Machreth, Llanfachreth.
- the approval of the commencement of an alternative process based on the proposal to close the school early in 2016.
- following the statutory process, to offer places to Ysgol Machreth pupils at Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd, Rhydymain during the transition period prior to the establishment of Ysgol Bro Idris (the All-through Catchment Area School) on 1 September 2017.

Because there were no pupils at Ysgol Machreth, Llanfachreth, on the 3rd Tuesday in January 2016, the day of the Annual Pupil Census, the Gwynedd Council Cabinet Member for Education published a Decision Notice on 2 June 2016 recommending publishing a Statutory Notice on the proposal to close Ysgol Machreth on 31 August 2016, in accordance with the approvals made by the Cabinet at its meeting on 23 June 2015.

Following the statutory notice period no objections were received to this Statutory Notice. Therefore, in accordance with Section 53 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 the Gwynedd Council Cabinet Member for Education, through this Decision Notice, confirms the decision to close Ysgol Machreth, Llanfachreth on 31 August 2016.

RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

The justification for conducting a statutory process for the earlier closure of Ysgol Machreth was formally reported to the Cabinet on 23 June 2015. This followed an original decision to publish a statutory notice in a Cabinet report on 13 January 2015. Subject to the change in circumstances that occurred in Ysgol Machreth the basis for the original decision to publish a statutory notice remain relevant and it is felt that the results of the community, equality and language impact assessments are still relevant and justify this decision.

Transport – In accordance with Gwynedd Council's transport policy, free transport will be available for pupils from the Ysgol Machreth, Llanfachreth catchment, to Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd, Rhydymain during the transition period before the establishment of Ysgol Bro Idris (the All-through Catchment Area School) on 1 September 2017.

Post-use of sites - In accordance with Gwynedd Council's post-use policy it is possible for the Council to dispose of (school) sites which are surplus to requirement for less than the best terms, but only in specific circumstances and upon receipt of a business case which clearly justifies the financial loss.

The Church in Wales are co-owners of the building and have noted:

"As co-owners of the building we would like to be involved in any discussions

regarding the future of the building, and we are aware of the Authority's priority to identify whether there could be any community use for the building in the future. We would like to collaborate on this."

VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

1. Chief Executive:- Nothing further to add.
2. Monitoring Officer:- The intention to confirm the statutory notice for a small school continues to be subject to the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 2013. Therefore, following confirmation of the proposal in the notice, the necessary steps regarding communicating the decision will need to be followed in accordance with the forementioned requirements.
3. Chief Finance Officer:- In the circumstances, I support the decisions sought, which are completely reasonable. I confirm that the net savings arising from these decisions have already been committed and contribute towards the target school savings (£4.3m).

VIEWS OF THE LOCAL MEMBER

SIGNATURE



DATE

08/08/2016
