

Cabinet decision

In its meeting on 13 January 2015, the Gwynedd Council Cabinet approved to relocate Ysgol Hafod Lon and Uned Tŷ Aran to the new site in Penrhyndeudraeth on 1 September 2016, to increase the capacity of the school and add a residential element to the provision.

Councillor Gareth Thomas, Gwynedd Council Cabinet Member for Education said:

“I am delighted that work can now get underway to build this ambitious and much-needed facility. As a Council, we are committed to raising standards and ensuring that all of the county’s pupils have access to the very best educational facilities so that they can fully realise their potential.

“Our plans for this brand new school include the very latest facilities which will improve the lives of the children who attend as well as their families. The staff at Ysgol Hafod Lon and Uned Tŷ Aran provides excellent education, but the fact is that the present facilities no longer meet modern needs.

“We are therefore looking forward to this exciting project which will deliver a major investment in the Meirionnydd and Dwyfor area of the county.”

Appointment of a contractor

Following a tender procedure, the contract to build the new school has been awarded to Wynne Construction, a North Wales based construction firm.

Councillor Dafydd Meurig, Gwynedd Cabinet Member with responsibility for Property matters said:

“Over recent years, the Council has worked effectively in partnership with Wynne Construction to deliver a number of projects including both the new schools at Ysgol yr Hendre in Caernarfon and Craig y Deryn in Llanegryn that have won construction awards.

“We know from experience that Wynne Construction share our commitment to keeping as much of the benefit of such projects in the local economy by employing as many local contractors and staff on their projects as possible and supporting local businesses in their supply chains. We now look forward to finalising the agreement with them and to see work start on the new school.”

During January archaeologists will carry out the final checks before the site at Penrhyndeudraeth is levelled and we expect the contractor to move onto the site in the middle of February.

The next steps

Now that the final decision has been made by the Gwynedd Council Cabinet and the contractor has been appointed we will proceed to work towards ensuring that the school and residential and short break unit is ready to receive children in the Autumn Term 2016.

This will include:

- Agreeing the staff structure for the new school, discussing and agreeing posts with the present staff and recruiting any additional staff that is needed
- Registering and staffing the residential unit
- Providing support for staff, children and parents in order to make the move as easy as possible
- Supporting the governing body in its work leading up to relocating the present school
- Arranging transport for the children who will be attending the new school

At the same time we will be responding to any recommendations emanating from Gwynedd Council's Additional Educational Needs Strategy Review which will affect the new school. There will be an opportunity for you to respond to the review in February and an opportunity to discuss it in open days throughout Gwynedd.

Questions and answers

Here are some questions and answers relating to the main issues concerning the work leading up to opening of the new school.

Q: Where will the new SEN school be built?

A: The new school will be located on the Snowdonia Business Park in Penrhyndeudraeth. The architects have completed the plans and planning permission has been granted therefore we can commence with the building work.



An artist impression of the main entrance to the new school

Q: When will the building work begin?

A: Wynne Construction will be on site in February 2015.

Q: When will the school and unit be opening?

A: We aim to complete the building, furnishing and fitting work so that the school and residential and short break unit will be ready by September 2016.



An artist impression of one side of the new school

Q: What resources will be in the new school?

A: The new school will include the following resources:

- Hydrotherapy pool
- Sensory rooms
- General therapy rooms
- Rebound therapy room
- Hall with stage
- Kitchen, dining room and cafe
- Classrooms with essential equipment
- A stimulating and sensory external environment
- Outside resources for developing entrepreneurship (garden etc)
- Suitable play area
- Multi-purpose play court

Q: How many children will be able to attend the school?

A: The new school will be built to accommodate up to 100 pupils.

Q: Will children who go to the new school be entitled to transport from home?

A: Children will receive transport to the new school in accordance with Gwynedd Council's policy for transporting pupils with Special Educational Needs.

Q: Will staff at the present Ysgol Hafod Lon and Uned Tŷ Aran get work at the new school?

A: As what we will actually be doing is moving Ysgol Hafod Lon and Uned Tŷ Aran to a new site the present staff will also be given the option of moving. We have already consulted with staff and unions and will continue to engage with them during the transition period.

Q: Who will be responsible for staffing the new school?

A: The present headteacher along with the present Ysgol Hafod Lon board of governors will work together to agree the staffing structure and, in conjunction with the Education Department, recruit any necessary staff for the new school.

Q: How many beds will there be in the residential and short break unit?

A: The unit will have 6 beds for residential and short break use.

Q: Who will be responsible for the residential and short break unit?

A: The Council's Children and Family Support Services will be responsible for the unit and they will be working closely with the school in order to ensure the best use of the 2 resources.

Q: Will the resources such as the hydrotherapy pool, sensory room and hall be available for use outside school hours?

A: The intention is to ensure that people from outside the school, including children who stay at the residential and short break unit, are able to use the excellent resources available. We will be promoting this with partners such as the health board and the third sector.

Q: Will any other agencies be working from the school?

A: The intention is to offer room at the school for other agencies to use for the benefit of children with special needs in Meirionnydd and Dwyfor.

For more information you can contact the project team:

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