

GWYNEDD CABINET DECISION NOTICE

Date of Cabinet Meeting:	28 September 2021
Date decision will come into force and be implemented, unless the decision is called in, in accordance with section 7.25 of the Gwynedd Council Constitution	13 October 2021

SUBJECT

Item 8: YSGOL ABERSOCH

DECISION

To finally confirm the proposal issued through statutory notice to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 December 2021, and to provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 January 2022 in accordance with Section 53 of the School Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013 and the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

At its meeting in September 2019, the Cabinet supported a recommendation to commence formal discussions with the Governing Body of Ysgol Abersoch in order to consider options for its future following a decline in the number of pupils at the school. During the meetings, a number of options were considered for primary education in the Ysgol Abersoch catchment area in order to ensure a sustainable provision for the future, and respond specifically to the main challenges facing the school.

In September 2020, the Cabinet resolved to undertake a statutory consultation process, in accordance with the requirements of section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, on the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 August 2021 and to provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 September 2021. The decision was confirmed by the Cabinet on 3 November 2020, after the original decision was called in and referred back to the Cabinet by the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee.

The Education Department commenced the consultation on 5 January 2021 originally, but as no child attended the School site that day due to the latest Covid-19 restrictions, there was local discontent that the authority had not acted in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code to publish the consultation on a "school day". Welsh Government published a temporary modification to the School Organisation Code and it was decided to re-publish the consultation after 8 January 2021, and hold the consultation between 12 January and 23 February 2021.

154 responses had been received to the statutory consultation and the Cabinet considered the observations received during the statutory consultation period and the response to those observations, prior to making its decision to:

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- i. Approve issuing a statutory proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 December 2021, and provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 January 2022
 - ii. Approve the publication of statutory notices on the proposal in (i) above in accordance with the requirements of Section 48 of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

In accordance with this decision, a statutory notice was issued in accordance with the Schools Standards and Organisation Act 2013 and the Schools Organisation Code (011/2018), which commenced a 28-day statutory objection period.

211 objections and two petitions had been received and following the objection period, the Cabinet was required to consider a formal report of the objections and the response to them prior to reaching a final decision.

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Declaration of interest by Cllr. Dewi Roberts as he is a member of the Governors of Ysgol Abersoch.

ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

The Statutory Officers were consulted to seek their views, which had been included in the report.

A Statutory Consultation was undertaken and the Local Member's observations were received, which have been included in the report.
