

CYNGOR GWYNEDD'S CABINET



Report to Cyngor Gwynedd's Cabinet meeting

Meeting date: 15th of September 2026
Cabinet Member: Councillor Nia Jeffreys
Contact Officer: Carys Fon Williams, Head of Housing and Property
Item Title: Lease of the former Ysgol Cwm y Glo site to Menter Fachwen

1 DECISION SOUGHT

To authorise the Assistant Head of Housing and Property to lease the site of the former Ysgol Cwm y Glo directly to Menter Fachwen at nominal rent in accordance with the General Disposal Consent (Wales) 2003.

Authorise the Assistant Head of Housing and Property to agree on the terms and conditions of the lease.

2 THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

- 2.1 To ensure compliance with the requirements of the General Disposal Consent (Wales) powers 2003 to lease the former Ysgol Cwm y Glo site directly to Menter Fachwen for less than market rent, a Cabinet decision is required.

3 PRESENTATION

- 3.1 Following reports submitted to Gwynedd Council's Cabinet on the 29th of March 2019, Ysgol Cwm y Glo closed on the 31st of August 2019. As a result, Menter Fachwen has shown an interest in taking over a long-term lease of the site in accordance with the School After-Use Policy. Menter Fachwen is a charity that offers education, development and training provision to individuals with learning disabilities. Their intention as a community group (not-for-profit) is to create a space that meets the requirements of the community, in order to create a facility for the benefit of the local community, beneficiaries, and Menter Fachwen as an organisation. This will ensure community use of the site.
- 3.2 An application has been submitted by Menter Fachwen to take a long-term lease from Ysgol Cwm y Glo, for a nominal amount to establish a multi-

purpose Community Hub. The organisation has been successful in securing grant funding to undertake the first phase of the refurbishment and is keen to move forward with the realisation of the scheme, as it grows beyond its current site.

4 RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

- 4.1 At its meeting on the 15th September 2009 the Council Board adopted the School Buildings After-Use Policy. The Policy recognised that reorganisation plans are likely to result in situations where school sites are disposed of in accordance with the usual principles, disposal policies and statutory requirements.
- 4.2 However, the After-Use Policy also gives the communities affected when a school closes a fair opportunity to consider drawing up a business plan to support the takeover of the property.
- 4.3 Menter Fachwen continues to carry out ongoing consultation by engaging directly with the individuals who use their sites, ensuring that the school's vision is informed by the voices of the local communities. The feedback received so far shows strong support for Menter Fachwen to obtain the lease.
- 4.4 If a lease were awarded, the next step would involve wider community consultation, including individuals who are not currently using their services. This wider engagement will be essential to strengthen the evidence base and to support future funding applications.
- 4.5 In addition, Menter Fachwen is developing a series of case studies demonstrating the positive impact of their services on individuals, providing clear evidence of outcomes that will directly support grant applications. They have also secured funding to provide a weekly community meal, prepared and served by people with learning disabilities who are supported by the charity. These meals are popular and offer important social opportunities, helping to foster stronger community ties and create more opportunities for meaningful engagement with the wider community.
- 4.6 Menter received a business plan in early 2026, along with an application to lease the school site for a period of 25 years for a nominal amount to develop a Multi-purpose Community Hub that would incorporate the following:
 - 4.6.1 A community hall that can be used for events, groups and health and wellbeing sessions for the community and charitable beneficiaries.
 - 4.6.2 A community coffee shop providing employment-based training and skills development to beneficiaries.

- 4.6.3 Cwm Cylchol is a circular economy hub that includes workshops, a clothes exchange bank, an antiques shop which will provide access to equipment and learning opportunities for beneficiaries and the wider community (led by Partneriaeth Padarn Peris with support from Borrow Wales).
- 4.6.4 A treatment and therapy room, a versatile space for mobile hairdressers.
- 4.6.5 A history space –mixed services and a community space for community groups and organisations to hold meetings. Including CAB, serving the Council and as well as continuing its role as a polling station.
- 4.6.6 Site for Radio Menter Fachwen
- 4.6.7 Community garden and accessible play facilities
- 4.7 Although a letter of comfort has been provided to Menter Fachwen in support of their initial funding applications, its use is limited. In order to be able to apply for grant pots of higher amounts, which are needed for the renovation, they will eventually need to hold the lease. Although they are currently unable to apply for these large funding streams, Menter Fachwen has been successful in securing funding to develop their existing sites.
- 4.8 Menter Fachwen has identified several funding streams such as the Cronfa Ynni Glan, Community Assets Fund as well as the Rayne Foundation Fund and the People and Places fund. These opportunities can provide funding of up to £2.3m subject to application and lease.
- 4.9 The demand for their services continues to grow, demonstrating a clear need coupled with a strong level of community engagement. This growing evidence base strengthens the case for expansion into a more suitable and expansive space.
- 4.10 The financial projections indicate that the income generated from the Enterprise Centre will not be sufficient to enable the Partnership to pay rent during the initial years of the venture, as it will face significant development costs. Consequently, the Partnership has submitted a request for a 25-year lease at a nominal rent.
- 4.11 The Council has a legal right under the powers of General Disposal Consent (Wales) 2003 to dispose of for less than market rent in cases where economic, social or environmental benefits are provided.
- 4.12 It is considered that disposing directly to Menter Fachwen for the development of the school would facilitate the following benefits:
 - 4.12.1 **Economic Benefits**
 - 4.12.1.1 To promote and promote the local economy by supporting entrepreneurs.
 - 4.12.1.2 Creating new permanent and seasonal jobs in the area.

- 4.12.1.3 Potential to attract visitors and income from outside the area.
- 4.12.1.4 Any remaining profits will be invested in further projects creating a positive economic cycle.

4.12.2 **Social Benefits**

- 4.12.2.1 Provide a destination for the community offering opportunities to network and develop new skills through the activities offered.
- 4.12.2.2 Potential to support diverse generations of the community by offering services that will support local people, promote inclusion, and support health and wellbeing.
- 4.12.2.3 To raise awareness of the culture and heritage of the area and to promote the Welsh language.

4.12.3 **Environmental Benefits**

- 4.12.3.1 Contribute to a healthier local environment, protect biodiversity and encourage sustainable food practices by providing a community garden in the centre of the village.
 - 4.12.3.2 Reducing the Carbon footprint by improving the energy efficiency of the building and creating a central location for the community for various activities and services.
- 4.13 Accepting the recommendation and using the powers of General Disposal Consent (Wales) 2003 to deviate from the General Disposal Policy and Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, would mean waiving the opportunity to sell the property and generate a capital receipt.
 - 4.14 If the property were to be sold on the open market, we estimate the open market value to be around £80,000.
 - 4.15 Cabinet members therefore need to carefully consider the social, environmental and economic benefits against the potential financial loss.
 - 4.16 It should be noted that the intention is to lease the property. Menter Fachwen intends to invest significantly in the property, and should the scheme fail for any reason, the property will remain in the ownership of the Council. The Council would then be able to take a decision to dispose of it on the open market if it wished to do so. In addition, a lease arrangement gives the Council better rights by enforcing it to make it safe for Menter Fachwen to use the building for the agreed purpose.
 - 4.17 It should be noted that any decision to lease the property to Menter Fachwen will be subject to their ability to secure the necessary planning permission for a change of use to provide assurance that the enterprise will be able to realise the environmental, social and economic objectives referred to above.

5 NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

- 5.1 The Housing and Property Department will instruct the Legal Service to place a lease in place following confirmation that planning permission is in place for the intended use.

LOCAL MEMBER'S COMMENTS – As the Local Member for the Cwm y Glo constituency has disclosed an interest in Menter Fachwen, comments from a Councillor of an adjoining constituency have been sought:

Gwilym Evans – Llanberis Councillor:

"I am very pleased to offer comments regarding the transfer of Ysgol Cwm-y-glo into the capable hands of Menter Fachwen – a development that has strong support from the community. A community space will form part of what is available, and there has been significant demand for this among local residents.

Hwb Dyffryn Peris has been established relatively recently, and excellent work has been taking place there to support local people and to expand community activity. Embedding the Hub within the school will strengthen it and help it to grow and develop further.

I also believe there will be additional benefits for the staff and associates of Menter Fachwen in moving to the school, as it will create further opportunities for social interaction and for learning life skills as a result of this development.

A Food Scheme is already operating from the former school, and this will continue under the new arrangements, as it provides invaluable support to a number of individuals and families in the area.

This new space will also make it much easier for those providing useful services to visit clients – with the intention of offering visits from a chiropodist, a hairdresser, and organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau. There will also be opportunities to provide parent/carer and child sessions, offering something for everyone within the community.

There will also be a community café on site, which will attract people and create a lively atmosphere and positive social habits that help to reduce loneliness and isolation and bring the community together.

I believe this is exactly what Cwm and the surrounding area need, and I look forward to seeing all the activity and vibrancy that will result from Menter moving to its new home."

STATUTORY OFFICERS' COMMENTS

Head of Finance:

"I can confirm that the General Disposal Consent (Wales) 2003 allows the Council to dispose of these properties for less than the open market price if the sale meets certain conditions. If the Cabinet is satisfied that these conditions, as outlined in Part 4 of the report, have been met, I have no objection to the decision sought"

Monitoring Officer – Iwan Evans:

“The General Disposal Consent (Wales) 2003 allows the Authority to dispose of property at less than the open market value if the sale meets specific conditions which depart from the principle under the Local Government Act 1972. This Consent can be used for disposing of property below market value where the disposal provides economic, social or environmental benefits to the area or its residents, and where the value condition, as set out in the Consent, has been satisfied.

It is also noted that the intention here is to grant a lease for a period of 25 years rather than to sell. This decision falls within the executive functions of the Cabinet, and the Cabinet must satisfy itself that the above conditions have been met (Constitution Section 16.15.9). I am satisfied that the views of the Head of Finance have been obtained prior to submitting the report, in accordance with Section 16.2.12 of the Constitution. I am therefore satisfied as to the propriety of the decision sought.”

Background Document (excluded)

Ysgol Cwm y Glo Business Plan 2025