

School Re-organisation Proposals

Parents meeting

7 March 2016

Preparing students for their future by developing strong values and maximising personal potential in a safe and caring learning environment



'Agenda' for tonight's meeting

- Introductions and purpose of the meeting
- To share the details of the re-organisation proposals
- To share the Governing Body position in regard the proposals
- To respond to any questions and queries
- To outline the next steps



Our purpose this evening

- To clarify what Powys County Council cabinet have agreed thus far.
- To share what we know of the timeline for the process that Powys County Council is required to follow
- To share the school's position regarding the school re-organisation proposal and our concerns
- To promote and develop the key areas messages and implications that need to be promoted with local stakeholders in responding to the consultation
- We are not going to respond to matters, on behalf of or instead of, the County Council.



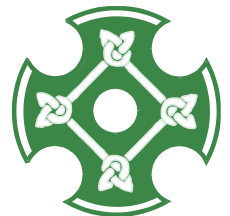
On 23rd February the cabinet voted unanimously on the following recommendations.....

- To receive the SORP' s recommendation in respect of Brecon and Gwernyfed High School
- To approve the **commencement of formal consultation** with stakeholders in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code on the following:-
 - ❑ The **closure of Brecon High School** and Gwernyfed High School on the 31st August 2017, and to establish a **new English Medium 11-16 secondary school** that will operate across the current sites of the two schools from 1st September 2017
 - ❑ From the 1st September 2017, **post 16 provision (academic and vocational) will be delivered by NPTC Group of Colleges in Brecon**

It continues.....



- ❑ From 1st September 2017, **Welsh Medium secondary education will be delivered at the Builth Wells site** of the proposed new school in Mid Powys (provided that the proposal is approved by cabinet following consultation)
- ❑ To close the school sites at Gwernyfed and Brecon upon the opening of a new build campus in Brecon, in 2019/20



The time line (as far as we are aware)

Date(s)	Actions
14 March 2016	Start of the consultation period (42 days)
19 April 2016	Public meeting with PCC @ BHS
May 2016	End of consultation period – PCC to start to write consultation report
End July 2016?	Publication of consultation report?
September 2016?	Cabinet meeting – final decision
October 2016	End of 28 day period – objections to decision
November 2016	Start of implementation?



What is the Governing Body position on this proposal?

The Governing Body has already set out its position regarding the future for Welsh Medium, the proposals regarding new buildings for the school and for the provision of Post 16 education. Essentially it is;

- That Brecon should continue to offer Welsh Medium education, within a strengthened primary provision – to increase and sustain numbers.
- The new buildings are essential for the pupils and community of Brecon
- That post 16 education should continue to be delivered through a school based model

Following a meeting with PCC in September 2015, the governing body provided details of an alternative remodelling of provision in Brecon. This included a through school model and a more contextually relevant post 16 offer as part of continued collaboration.



Responses to the proposals

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Questions and comments raised by parents

- Given that there would potentially be no new buildings for Brecon pupils until 2019, how are PCC going to manage/improve the current BHS site, given that it is already a category D in regards to its buildings.
- Why cannot there be a phasing of the school buildings to enable BHS pupils to get the learning environment they need sooner?
- There is little confidence in PCC to deliver new school buildings – they have allowed the physical state of the building to continue to decline.
- In the short term, should the school, parents and the community raise funds for a refurbishment of the current site?
- How can the school recruit and retain the quality of teachers (and wider staff) –in the context of the current position and a potential loss of Post 16 provision



Questions and comments raised by parents (cont.)

- Where can parents get access to the cabinet reports?
- How are PCC going to ensure there are no delays to any plans they have now set out?
- How do the current proposals fulfil the goals in the Well Being for Future Generations Act?
- Is the closure of Brecon and Gwernyfed a quick way out of special measures?
- Can the school invite the Welsh Government minister for education to Brecon – to meet with parents?
- What would be the class sizes should the 2 schools have to become one?
- If the College (NPTC) take over the Post 16 provision, who will be teaching them – a concern about the quality. Parents and pupils would consider going elsewhere rather than the College



Questions and comments raised by parents (cont.)

- Removing the Sixth Form for a high school removes a strength for any school – as role models, supporting younger pupils and as young leaders
- How would parents know that the College (NPTC) will have the interest of Brecon pupils and the local community at its heart?
- Parents may choose to vote with their feet, being prepared to send their children elsewhere, into schools in Herefordshire.
- The closing of schools and amalgamation will inevitably lead to increased spending on transport – with an environmental, social, and community impact.
- Why close schools in 2017, when there is still no guarantee of securing funding for new buildings?



Our Concerns regarding the proposals (in no particular order)

- The proposal is financially driven and not educationally driven – would this proposal even meet the reductions that would contribute to those required by PCC. What are they and what are PCC's expectations?
- To have a new learning environment for the pupils, will be dependant on two other proposals being successful. This has a high risk.
- The timelines for change are already very tight, any delay will continue to have a further negative impact on Brecon High School
- The lack of providing a 'school based' post 16 provision – the current proposal reduces choice of provision within Powys.
- The loss of Welsh Medium provision for this area – impact on Ysgol-Y-Bannau, a family commitment to access WM, decision will be a 'one way street' i.e. an irreversible decision.



Our Concerns regarding the proposals (in no particular order)

- Continues to create uncertainty for families in and around Brecon regarding what the exact provision will be – there is no plan from PCC to manage this
- There will be a continued lack of investment in the current school buildings and infrastructure with an expectation these building would be used until 2019 (at the earliest)
- Uncertainty will lead to difficulties in recruitment of the quality of staff our pupils deserve
- Uncertainty of post 16 provision – whilst we have a post 16 for Sept 2016 – what will the recruitment be in the context we have.
- What plans are being made for the increasing numbers that are currently in the primary sector on pupil places in the secondary phase?



Our Concerns regarding the proposals (in no particular order)

- Political transparency – The County Council Cabinet is dominated by members from North Powys, how will they ensure that there can be South Powys representation in the final decision making.
- There is no evidence to show that NPTC would become a preferred choice for Brecon High School pupils.



Any Questions?

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