

APPENDIX B



Proposal to close the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School

Community and Welsh Language Impact Assessment

Powys County Council is proposing to close the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School from the 31st August 2016, with Brecon High School becoming an English-medium School with effect from the 1st September 2016.

The proposal is that there will be no Welsh-medium provision in Brecon High School for pupils in years 7, 8, 9 and 10 from the 1st September 2016. Provision will continue for Welsh-medium pupils that will be entering year 11 in September 2016, to enable them to complete their GCSE subjects at Brecon High School.

From the 1st September 2016, Welsh-medium provision for pupils from the Brecon area in years 7, 8, 9 and 10 will be provided at Builth Wells High School. This will also be the case for pupils in year 11 from the 1st September 2017. Free transport will be provided for qualifying pupils.

Pupils living in parts of the Brecon catchment that live closer to alternative Welsh-medium secondary provision outside Powys will have the opportunity to transfer to these schools. Free transport will be provided for qualifying pupils.

In accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2013), Local Authorities are required to assess the impact any proposal may have on the local community by carrying out a Community Impact Assessment. For proposals which affect teaching through the medium of Welsh, local authorities are also required to carry out a Welsh Language Impact Assessment.

1. The Affected Communities

i) Brecon

With a population of around 8,250, Brecon is the third largest town in Powys. It is the main market town in the area with a strong service economy and is popular as a holiday destination, being on the northern edge of the Brecon Beacons National Park. English is the main language spoken in the area, however according to the 2011 Census, 21.6% of the population of Brecon have one or more skills in Welsh. There is also a high Nepalese population in Brecon due to the Ghurkha regiment based in the town.

It is also an area that has mixed levels of social deprivation and poverty. There are 5 Local Super Output Areas (LSOA) within the town of Brecon. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014 ranks them as follows, where 1 is the most deprived LSOA and 1909 is the least deprived:

Local Super Output Area (LSOA)	WIMD Rank 2014
St John 2	495
St David Within	1065
St Mary 1	1181
St John 1	1658
St Mary 2	1703

The area has a vibrant cultural scene, with the Brecon Jazz Festival being held in the town every August, and Theatr Brycheiniog providing facilities for performing arts in the area.

Brecon High School is a dual stream secondary school which provides education for pupils aged 11 – 18. 57 pupils in years 7 – 11 are currently taught through the medium of Welsh. There is no Welsh-medium post-16 provision at Brecon High School. The catchment area includes the town of Brecon and the surrounding rural area.

The catchment area for the Welsh-medium stream at the Brecon High School is larger, and includes the catchment areas of Gwernyfed High School and Crickhowell High School. However, as there is no Welsh-medium primary provision in either of these catchments, pupils wishing to access Welsh-medium provision travel from these catchment areas to Ysgol y Bannau, Brecon, and would traditionally progress to the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School.

ii) Builth Wells

The town of Builth Wells has a population of approximately 2568. The town is located in mid-Powys. English is the main language spoken in the area, however, according to the 2011 Census, 23.3% of the population of Builth Wells have one or more skills in Welsh. The proportion of the population belonging to ethnic groups other than White is very small.

There are 2 Local Super Output Areas within the town of Brecon. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation ranks them as follows, where 1 is the most deprived LSOA and 1909 is the least deprived:

Local Super Output Area (LSOA)	WIMD Rank 2014
Builth 1	1143
Builth 2	1805

The Royal Welsh Showground is located in Builth Wells, and the town hosts a number of events during the year. The largest of these is the Royal Welsh Show, which is held every July, however a number of other events are hosted on the Showground during the year.

Builth Wells High School is a dual stream secondary school which provides education for pupils aged 11 – 18. 107 pupils in years 7 – 11 are currently taught through the medium of Welsh. In addition, some post-16 subjects are offered through the medium of Welsh and during the current academic year, 13 pupils in year 12 and 9 pupils in year 13 are studying subjects through the medium of Welsh. The school serves a very large catchment area in mid-Powys, however the catchment area for the Welsh-medium stream is even larger, and also includes the catchment area of Llandrindod Wells High School.

2. Community Impact Assessment

2.1 Current use of school buildings as a community resource

Brecon High School

The facilities of Brecon High School are hired out by a number of organisations, including the South Powys Youth Orchestra, Brecon Athletic Club and Brecon Basketball Club. The facilities have also been made available for Road Safety events, and are let for use by Caravan Clubs based in Gwent. NPTC Group of Colleges also have two rooms based on the school site.

Builth Wells High School

Builth Wells High School is used by a range of community groups, including the Brownies and Scouts Associations, the local Rotary club, the local Young Farmers club and local sports clubs. Welsh for Adults lessons are also held at the school.

2.2 Other facilities provided by the school

Brecon High School

A number of extra-curricular activities are organised by teaching staff at different points during the year. These include the following:

Music activities: Ensembles, Performance opportunities, School Musical

Sports activities: Rugby, Netball, Basketball, Athletics, Hockey, Cricket, Football, Swimming

Other clubs: Domino Club, Revision Club, Additional Maths Club

In addition, the school's facilities are used for different events such as the cross country championships and events such as 'Race to the Sun'.

Builth Wells High School

The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities for pupils, these include the following:

Music activities: Orchestra, Choir, Jazz Band, Composition Club, School Musical

Sports activities: Rugby Club, Hockey Club, Football Club, Basketball Club, 5 x 60 activities

Other clubs: Design and Technology Club, Film Club, Art Club, Homework Club / Revision Sessions

2.3 Conclusion

It can be concluded that if the proposal were to go ahead, the impact on the communities involved would be very limited.

As the proposal does not involve closure of Brecon High School, it is not anticipated that the proposal will have an adverse impact on the facilities available to the community.

In terms of extra-curricular activities, it is expected that Welsh-medium pupils will be able to access a similar range of extra-curricular activities at Builth Wells High School. The Authority accepts that it might be more difficult for pupils from the Brecon area to access after school activities in Builth Wells due to their reliance on home to school transport.

3. Welsh Language Impact Assessment

3.1 Background information

The proportion of Welsh speakers in the communities where the two dual stream high schools in south Powys are located are fairly similar. Information from the 2011 Census shows that 21.6% of the population of Brecon town have one or more skill in Welsh, whilst 23.3% of the population of Builth Wells town have one or more skill in Welsh. The percentage of Welsh speakers in the surrounding communities is varied.

Based on the Welsh Government's language categories, Brecon High School is currently categorised as a category 3 bilingual school, whilst Builth Wells High School is categorised as a category 2C bilingual school. The number of Welsh-medium subjects at both schools during the current academic year (2014-15) is as follows:

Brecon High School

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Number of Welsh-medium subjects	9	9	9	3	3
Number of English-medium subjects	14	14	14	16	19
% Welsh-medium subjects	64%	64%	64%	19%	16%
Language category	2C	2C	2C	4	4

Builth Wells High School

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Number of Welsh-medium subjects	12	12	12	10	10
Number of English-medium subjects	15	15	15	20	23
Number of bilingual subjects	0	0	0	2	2
Total number of subjects	15	15	15	22	25
% Welsh-medium subjects	80%	80%	80%	46%	40%
Language category	2B	2B	2B	3	3

One of the Strategic Aims stated in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) is 'to provide robust linguistic continuity of Welsh-medium provision across all key phases of education'. The Authority's current policy as stated in

the WESP is to aim that all dual stream schools become category 2B¹ bilingual schools by 2020. However, schools' progress towards achieving this aim has been limited.

As the current position at both schools does not fully meet the aspirations of the Authority's WESP for linguistic continuity, the Authority has identified the need to centralise provision in south Powys, in order to ensure that a greater level of provision can be offered to pupils.

3.2 Standards in Welsh

The following tables provide information about Standards in Welsh First Language at Brecon High School and Builth Wells High School for the last 3 years.

Whilst this is useful as background information, the relatively small number of pupils in each year group at each school mean that it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from this information with regard to standards in Welsh at the two schools.

i) End of Key Stage 3

Brecon High School

	2012	2013	2014
Total number of Year 9 pupils assessed in Welsh First Language	19	13	8
Number of pupils that achieved Level 5+	19	10	8
% of pupils that achieved Level 5+	100%	76.9%	100%

Builth Wells High School

	2012	2013	2014
Total number of Year 9 pupils	17	17	22

¹ As stated in the Welsh Government document, 'Defining Schools according to Welsh-medium Provision', published in 2007.

assessed in Welsh First Language			
Number of pupils that achieved Level 5+	15	16	20
% of pupils that achieved Level 5+	88.2%	94.1%	90.9%

i) End of Key Stage 4

Brecon High School

	2012	2013	2014
Total number of GCSE Welsh First Language entries	18	12	18
Number of pupils that achieved grades A* - C	7	6	14
% of pupils that achieved grades A* - C	38.9%	50%	77.8%

Builth Wells High School

	2012	2013	2014
Total number of GCSE Welsh First Language entries	13	22	17
Number of pupils that achieved grades A* - C	10	13	13
% of pupils that achieved grades A* - C	76.9%	59.1%	76.5%

3.3 Welsh language activities provided by the schools

Brecon High School

The majority of extra-curricular activities at Brecon High School are carried out through the medium of English, however some activities take place in Welsh or bilingually, depending on which member of staff is responsible and which pupils are taking part.

The south Powys Urdd Eisteddfod is held in Brecon High School each year.

Builth Wells High School

A number of the school's extra-curricular activities and clubs are Welsh or bilingual, depending on which member of staff is responsible and which pupils are taking part.

In addition, the school provides a range of additional opportunities for pupils to use Welsh outside the classroom. The school choir takes part in Urdd competitions, and pupils also take part in written competitions. Workshops are arranged with Welsh speakers from speciality areas, as well as workshops with Welsh poets and Welsh bands. The school holds an annual Eisteddfod, which gives additional opportunities for pupils to use their Welsh. The school puts on a musical every two years, and this is always bilingual, with some of the songs being in Welsh.

The school also supports the local 'papur bro', 'Y Fan a'r Lle', by submitting information to be included in the paper, and also supports the local Eisteddfod held annually in Llanwrtyd Wells.

Welsh for Adults lessons are held at the school on a weekly basis.

3.4 Conclusion

The proposal provides positive benefits for the Welsh Language and Welsh-medium education through improved linguistic progression and opportunities for pupils through all key stages of education.

The Authority's view is that the proposal will provide additional opportunities for Welsh-medium pupils to use their Welsh. The Welsh-medium subject provision at Builth Wells High School is greater than that at Brecon High School, and the Authority's view is that accessing a greater level of subjects through the medium of Welsh will enable the learners to become more confident Welsh speakers.

In addition, more Welsh-medium extra-curricular activities take place at Builth Wells High School, and a larger Welsh-medium stream would enable the school to provide more Welsh-medium activities. This will provide even more

opportunities for pupils to use their Welsh outside the classroom, further strengthening their confidence in using the language. However, the Authority accepts that it might be more difficult for pupils from the Brecon area to access after school activities in Builth Wells due to their reliance on home to school transport.

Removing the Welsh-medium stream from Brecon High School may be perceived by some to be detrimental to the Welsh language in the area. However, the continued presence of Ysgol y Bannau in Brecon, with clear partnership links with Builth Wells High School, along with the Welsh-medium stream at Sennybridge C.P. School, will provide local access to Welsh-medium primary provision in the Brecon area.

Whilst Welsh-medium pupils would be leaving Brecon to access Welsh-medium secondary provision, they will continue to live in the town and surrounding areas, and will continue to be able to participate in Welsh language activities in the local community. The Authority's view is that the increased level of Welsh-medium provision available to them will enable all Welsh-medium pupils to become more confident Welsh speakers, who will be able to play a greater role in terms of the Welsh language in the community.