

Appendix 3 Brecon High School and Gwernyfed High School

Draft Community Impact Assessment

1. Introduction

The School Organisation Review Panel (SORP) has been reviewing secondary education in South Powys during 2015/16. The SORP's recommendations are;

- **To establish a new build 11-16 English -medium secondary school in Brecon, replacing Gwernyfed High School and Brecon High School, with post-16 education delivered by NPTC Group of Colleges.**

There will need to be a significant capital investment by the Council to implement this recommendation, therefore **an interim recommendation** is proposed, which is:

- **To establish a new English-medium 11 – 16 secondary school that will operate from the current sites of Gwernyfed High School and Brecon High School from September 2017. This would involve the closure of both schools.**

In accordance with the Authority's School Transformation Policy (2014) and Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, Cabinet is required to consider a draft impact assessment assessing equality issues and impact on the community when determining whether or not to proceed with the formal statutory process.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been produced separately. This document considers the impact on the Community.

2. Methodology

This draft community impact assessment has been prepared in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2013. In order to prepare this assessment, a questionnaire was sent to each school on the 10th December 2015 to gather initial information about the community's use of school facilities. Following the SORP's feedback meetings with the school on the 26th January, the schools were invited to review and resubmit the questionnaires, having been informed of the SORP's draft recommendations. An example of the questionnaire is attached at the end of this document.

This draft impact assessment is based on the information received from the schools via the questionnaire.

3. The communities served by Brecon and Gwernyfed High School

The catchment of Brecon High School includes the town of Brecon itself as well as the surrounding rural area. The catchment area for the school's Welsh-medium stream 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.

There are 11 town or community councils in the area:

- Brecon Town Council
- Crai Community Council
- Felinfach Community Council
- Glyn Tarrell Community Council
- Honddu Isaf Community Council
- Llanddew Community Council
- Llanfrynach Community Council
- Llywel Community Council
- Maescar Community Council
- Merthyr Cynog Community Council
- Trallong Community Council
- Talybont on Usk Community Council
- Ysgir Community Council

The catchment of Gwernyfed High School includes the towns of Hay-on-Wye and Talgarth, and the surrounding rural area. The town and community councils in the catchment are:

- Gwernyfed Community Council
- Hay-on-Wye Town Council
- Bronllys Community Council
- Clyro Community Council
- Glasbury Community Council
- Llangors Community Council
- Talgarth Town Council
- Erwood Community Council
- Painscastle Community Council
- Bronllys Community Council
- Llanigon Community Council

4. Community Impact Assessment

4.1 Impact on pupil travel

Brecon

There will be no impact on pupil travel for pupils who live in the Brecon catchment and who wish to access English-medium provision at Brecon High School, as the draft recommendations suggest that secondary English-medium provision will remain in Brecon.

However, there will be an impact on pupil travel for pupils who live in the Brecon catchment and who wish to access Welsh-medium secondary provision.

The distances between Brecon High School and neighbouring schools that provide Welsh-medium secondary provision are as follows:

- Brecon High School to Builth Wells High School – 17.3 miles
- Brecon High School to Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera – 24.5 miles
- Brecon High School to Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw – 28.0 miles
- Brecon High School to Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun – 21.9 miles

In the event of closure of the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School, free transport would be provided for qualifying pupils to the nearest alternative Welsh-medium secondary provision, in accordance with Powys County Council's School Transport Policy.

Gwernyfed

The following figures have been provided through the Schools' Travel Time Model developed by PWC in 2014 / 15 and is an analysis of the travel times (excluding bus stops) from the home address of pupils as at January 2014 and the travel times required if Gwernyfed High School closed and the pupils were transferred to the remaining closest secondary school site within Powys. It shows that 216 pupils whose travel time was assessed to be 10 minutes or less would be required to travel up to an additional 20 minutes.

Travel Time (Mins)	Gwernyfed Pupils Travel Times to Gwernyfed	Gwernyfed Pupils Travel to other sites	Variance
5	116	19	(97)
10	186	67	(119)
15	98	162	64
20	57	120	63
25	10	100	90
30	9	24	15
45 ¹	15	0	(15)
100 ²	1	0	(1)
Total	492	492	0
<10	302	86	(216)
>10	190	406	216

¹ These figures indicate an anomaly with the registration details of pupils

² These figures indicate an anomaly with the registration details of pupils

4.2 Extra-curricular activities

Brecon High School

The following clubs are provided by the school outside school hours:

- i) Sports Clubs – Rugby, Football, Cricket (Summer), Netball, Basketball
- ii) Subject catch up sessions – a range of subjects
- iii) Art Club
- iv) Additional Maths GCSE

The following extra-curricular activities are provided by the school:

Duke of Edinburgh award; Drama – School Play; Lunchtime Art Club; Revision Sessions – KS4 and KS5; Music – additional study for KS4 pupils; Peripatetic Music Lessons.

Gwernyfed High School

The following clubs are provided by the school outside school hours:

- i) GCSE Revision Clubs – English, Maths, Science
- ii) GCSE Additional Maths
- iii) Homework Club
- iv) KS3 and KS4 Arts Club
- v) Duke of Edinburgh
- vi) Film Club
- vii) 5x60 activities
- viii) Badminton Club
- ix) Fitness for Sixth Form
- x) Music Tuition and Clubs – Junior choir, junior band, peripatetic lessons

The following extra-curricular activities are provided by the school:

Sports teams year 7-11 – Netball, Rugby, Football, Gymnastics, Cricket, Athletics, Badminton, Table Tennis, Hockey

4.3 Community Use of School Building

Brecon High School

The school's facilities are used by the community for the following activities:

- i) Regional Eisteddfod – annual
- ii) South Powys Music groups
- iii) Brecon Athletic Club
- iv) Brecon Basketball Club
- v) Brecon Fit Club
- vi) Brecon Netball Club
- vii) Brecon Triathlon Club
- viii) Welsh National Karate Squad
- ix) Hosting Charity Events – e.g. Dementia Awareness
- x) Provide facilities for local community events – Nepalese Community celebrations

Gwernyfed High School

The school's facilities are used by the community for the following activities:

- i) Local Sports Teams (Hay Juniors Football, Branson FC, GRFC minis, Rebecca Saunders Football, Kasasian Norris Badminton, Gwernyfed Hockey Team, Talgarth Town Junior FC, Hay St Marys FC, Steve Williams FC, Mertyr Town FC, Simone Hodges Fitness, Fencing Draig Wern Club, 14's Gwernyfed RFC, Cadence Cycle Club, Dawn Edwards Badminton, Powys Rugby, Gwernyfed RFC Warriors, Richard Jenkins Football)
- ii) 5x60 activities
- iii) All Wales Ploughing Championship
- iv) Welsh Netball Association
- v) South Powys Badminton Association

The school building and facilities are also used by the following:

Sports Centre, Glasbury Arts, Gwernyfed RFC, Church Groups – summer holidays and weekends, Scout Camps, Private Childrens Parties, Car Boot Sales, Hay Festival wet weather parking.

The school took ownership of the Leisure Centre in 2015.

4.4 Other links between the schools and the community

Brecon High School

The school has strong links with the community, which include the following:

Use of school facilities by Penmaes Special School – pupils also attend some lessons, Mount Street Primary use hall for rehearsals, Rugby Development Officer – Formal links to Brecon Rugby Club, Links with Army Base, Links with Brecon based organisation e.g. Brecon Food Bank, Brecon Rotary – Cooking competitions and interview experience for year 11 students, Fire Service – Road Safety Events

Brecon High School also makes their facilities available for other organisations.

Gwernyfed High School

The school has strong links with the community, which include the following:

Sporting events for surrounding areas e.g. Llangors, Felin Fach, Brecon Volleyball Club, Gwernyfed Geckos Netball Club, Strong Links with Gwernyfed RFC, Glasbury Arts, Friends of Clyro, Hay Veterinary Clinic – Work Experience, Shepherds Ice Cream – Trains students in customer relations.

5. Conclusion

This section focuses on the potential impact on the community in relation to the draft and interim recommendations, based on information gathered to date:

5.1 Recommendation: To establish a new build 11-16 English -medium secondary school in Brecon, replacing Gwernyfed High School and Brecon High School, with post-16 education delivered by NPTC Group of Colleges.

Brecon

It is clear that the community of Brecon makes use of the high school's facilities for a range of activities. However, the draft recommendation would involve retaining secondary provision in Brecon, therefore school facilities would continue to be available. It is likely that the proposed new building for the school would provide additional opportunities for the community to make use of the school's facilities.

The school provides a range of extra-curricular activities for pupils. The expectation is that a similar range of activities would be provided in the new school, and the proposed new school could offer opportunities to offer additional activities.

As the proposed new school would be located on the current high school site, there would be no impact on travel for English-medium pupils currently attending Brecon High School. However, the proposal to centralise Welsh-medium provision in the Builth Wells area means that there would be additional travel for Welsh-medium pupils from the Brecon area. Whilst free home to school transport would be provided for Welsh-medium pupils, the authority accepts that it would be more difficult for them to access after school activities due to their reliance on home to school transport.

Gwernyfed

The authority acknowledges that the closure of any school will have a detrimental impact on the facilities available in the local community.

Some of the factors that should be considered by Cabinet are outlined below:

- From the evidence supplied by the school, it is clear that the communities served by Gwernyfed High School make significant use of the school's facilities for a wide range of activities and events. The community centre and sports facilities were partially financed by a Big Lottery Grant. There are no similar facilities in the area that will meet the needs of the users – the centre is extremely popular with local groups, with at least 34 different user groups. The sports centre transferred to the School in 2015.
- Due to the fact that there is no other suitable location to hold these activities in the area. It is currently unclear where these activities could take place within the catchment area, should Gwernyfed High School close. This will be taken into consideration by the Cabinet when making a decision in relation how to proceed.
- If these facilities were removed from the area, then it may be more difficult for clubs/groups to meet, leading to a reduction in the number of clubs/groups – this would have a detrimental impact on people's ability to contribute to the community, and could potentially have a negative impact on people's health and wellbeing, as well as the social cohesion of the community.
- School journey times would be longer therefore may impact on the ability of pupils to access out-of-school activities and clubs.
- Brecon Leisure Centre may not be a feasible alternative for these clubs/groups due its geographic location. If the usage of Brecon Leisure Centre increases due to these recommendations, then it may be more difficult for groups/clubs to book slots at the Centre, leading ultimately to the demise of groups/clubs.
- In terms of extra-curricular activities for pupils, it would be expected that the new school in Brecon would have a range of different activities. If these were provided after school hours, then it would be more difficult for those pupils for whom Gwernyfed High School is their closest school to access these activities if they were reliant on home to school transport.
- Gwernyfed High School has a drama studio that is well used as a venue for local arts activities, and without this facility, it may be difficult for arts societies to operate. For example, there is a strong linkage between Glasbury Arts, a community-based charity, and Gwernyfed High School. This manifests itself in arts-based partnership work with pupils of the school and also as a centre for the promotion of visual and performing arts within the community. There are no other non-commercial facilities that would be a suitable alternative within the community.

Based on information supplied by Gwernyfed High School, the following implications for the communities within the Gwernyfed catchment have been identified:

- Removing a secondary school from a rural area will impact negatively on the future housing market – people will not want to move to the area if there isn't a local, medium sized secondary school that they can access.

- There may be a possibility that families move away from the area to be closer to secondary provision. In the Gwernyfed area, many families live closer to secondary schools in England, and may prefer to transport their children to these schools. This may lead to a loss of skilled, educated and experienced workers in the area.
- Without a local secondary school, the area may not be attractive to young families, and the demographic of the area becomes unbalanced, with more of an ageing population. This could have an impact on pupil numbers in the primary schools.
- Local rural businesses will be negatively affected. Businesses in the vicinity of Three Cocks and other areas will be particularly affected through the removal of over 400 pupils from the area – loss of sales from shops, loss of fuel sales to parents - parents also use these businesses when they pick-up or drop-off their children, and therefore are critical to supporting the local rural economy.
- The future social interaction of pupils will become Brecon-centred, which will have an impact on businesses within the communities served by Gwernyfed High School. There would also be a further impact on the current supply chain that serves the school.
- Many local people are employed by Gwernyfed High School, or in the supply chain that supports the high school – leading to a loss of employment which will affect the local economy.
- Impact on the agricultural sector. In a traditional farming area such as Gwernyfed, many children offer a valuable additional resource for family farms. The impact of a longer school day, due to additional travel requirements, could have a detrimental effect on the industry.

5.2 To establish a new English-medium 11 – 16 secondary school that will operate from the current sites of Gwernyfed High School and Brecon High School from September 2017. This would involve the closure of both schools

This interim recommendation would mean that secondary education for pupils up to the age of 16 is retained on the current sites of Brecon High School and Gwernyfed High School, thus minimising the impact that a proposed removal of provision would entail. Post-16 provision for Year 12 in September 2017 would be delivered from the campus of NPTC Group of Colleges in Brecon, although Year 13 would be able to stay at the school in order to complete their A level courses.

Brecon

The impact on the community of Brecon would be minimal, as secondary and post-16 provision remains in the town.

Gwernyfed

There would be little or no impact on either community because secondary provision would remain in both communities for the interim period, although the implications of the transition to the new school in Brecon may cause parents to choose to move out of the area, or choose to transport their children to alternative secondary schools.

It is possible to argue that there may be a detrimental impact on the community from this proposal, due to post-16 pupils having to travel out of the area for post-16 provision. However, this is already the situation for learners from the Gwernyfed area who wish to access vocational provision, or other subjects, that are unavailable at the school.

It can also be argued that there may be a longer-term impact on the area, if families choose to move out of the area due to the fact that post-16 education isn't available locally. New families may not be attracted to the area for the same reason.

6. Next Steps

If Cabinet approve the commencement of consultation on the recommendations, then any information about community impact gathered during that exercise will be used to inform a **final community impact assessment**, for consideration by Cabinet following consultation.



Community use of school facilities - questionnaire

School:

Date questionnaire completed:

1. Please list any after-school clubs provided by the school:

2. Please list any other extra-curricular activities provided by the school:

3. Please list any other facilities or services the school accommodates e.g. youth club, play group:

4. Please list any other use by the community of the school building:

5. Please list any other links between the school and the community:

6. Please provide any additional comments you would like to submit:

Please return this questionnaire to:

School Transformation Team, Schools Service, Powys County Council, County Hall,
Llandrindod Wells, Powys, Ld1 5LG

Or by e-mail to school.modernisation@powys.gov.uk.

