

**CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.**

**CABINET EXECUTIVE  
29<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

**REPORT AUTHOR:** County Councillor Arwel Jones  
Portfolio Holder for Education

**SUBJECT:** Welsh-medium Stream at Brecon High School

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**REPORT FOR:** Consultation Report for Information

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**Summary**

The purpose of this report is to inform members of the responses received to the formal consultation on the proposal to close the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School from the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2016 as set out in the Consultation Report in Appendix D.

The report contains the following appendices:

- Appendix A – Consultation Document
- Appendix B – Impact Assessment Document as published with the Consultation Document
- Appendix C – Young People’s Version of the Consultation Document
- Appendix D – Consultation Report

**Background**

The formal consultation for the removal of the Welsh-medium stream from Brecon High School has been undertaken in accordance with Sections 38 and 39 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 – the School Organisation Code.

The Code states that a consultation report must be published ‘within 13 weeks of the end of the period allowed for responses’, and that this report must:

- Summarise each of the issues raised by consultees
- Respond to these issues
- Set out Estyn’s view of the proposal

These 3 statutory issues are dealt with in the Consultation Report attached as Appendix D to this report.

The Code goes on to state

'Unless proposers have applied for and been granted a time extension by the Welsh Ministers, proposals **must** be published within 26 weeks of the end of the period allowed for consultation responses, otherwise the proposals will lapse and a new consultation document **must** be issued to revive them.'

On the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2015, Cabinet approved a recommendation to commence formal consultation on the withdrawal of Welsh-medium provision from Brecon High School from the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2016.

### Formal Consultation

Consultation on this proposal took place between the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015 and the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

The consultation documentation (Appendices A, B and C) was available on the council's website throughout the consultation period. Copies of the consultation document (Appendix A) were also sent to stakeholders as required by the School Organisation Code. Consultees were invited to respond to the consultation by either completing an online form, filling in a paper copy of the form and returning it to the Schools Transformation Team or by writing to the Schools Transformation Team.

Meetings were also held with the following:

- Staff and governors of Brecon High School
- Staff and governors of Builth Wells High School
- Staff and governors of Ysgol y Bannau
- Staff and governors of Sennybridge CP School

Two public consultation events were held, in Brecon High School and Builth Wells High School.

Consultation also took place with pupils. A separate young people's version of the consultation document (Appendix C) was available on the council's website throughout the consultation period, and copies were also distributed to pupils at the affected schools. In addition, council officers discussed the proposal with the following groups of pupils:

- Ysgol y Bannau
- Sennybridge CP School
- Brecon High School Welsh-medium Pupils
- Brecon High School English-medium Pupils
- Builth Wells High School Welsh-medium Pupils
- Builth Wells High School English-medium Pupils

### Consultation Responses

A total of 193 written responses were received to the consultation. In addition, a copy of an online petition opposing the closure of the Welsh-medium stream

at Brecon High School was received. This was signed by 390 people, and included 124 comments on the proposal.

The majority of responses received were in opposition to the proposal, but a number of the responses were in support of the proposal. The full list of issues raised during the consultation period along with the Authority's response to these, are listed in Appendix D – Consultation Report.

### **One Powys Plan**

'Transforming Learning and Skills' is a key priority within the One Powys Plan, and the Authority's aim is to ensure that 'all children and young people are supported to achieve their potential'. The plan states that the Authority needs to 'reorganise schools (primary, secondary and post 16) to ensure affordability, sustainability and appropriate leadership capacity'.

### **Proposal**

1. That Cabinet notes the content of the Consultation Report.
2. That a further report will be brought back to Cabinet for decision at a later date

During the consultation period, concerns were raised that the current proposal in respect of the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School cannot be considered in isolation from the work that is ongoing in both Mid Powys and South Powys.

Welsh-medium provision in both areas will now be considered as part of these reviews, and a recommendation on the future of the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School will be made in due course.

### **Sustainability and Environmental Issues/Equalities/Crime and Disorder,/Welsh Language/Other Policies etc**

An Equality Impact Assessment, Community Impact Assessment and Welsh Language Impact Assessment were produced and were published with the consultation documentation.

During the consultation period, a number of respondents expressed their disagreement with the conclusions made by the authority in respect of the proposal's impact on the Welsh language in the area. The issues raised and the Authority's response to them are listed in Appendix D – Consultation Report.

### **Children and Young People's Impact Statement - Safeguarding and Wellbeing**

The authority's Secondary Reorganisation Programme is intended to improve educational outcomes for children and young people. This aligns with the aspiration to improve safeguarding and wellbeing for children and young people.

### **Local Member(s)**

The following comments were received from local members:

To Follow (when received)

### **Other Front Line Services**

None identified.

### **Support Services (Legal, Finance, Corporate Property, HR, ICT, Business Services)**

Legal: For the consultation exercise to remain valid, the Cabinet must make a decision on the proposal by 26<sup>th</sup> January 2016, unless an extension to that period is granted by the Welsh Ministers. Members will be required to re-read the Consultation Report before a decision can be made.

Corporate Finance: No comment is appropriate until such time as a decision is to be made by Cabinet.

### **Local Service Board/Partnerships/Stakeholders etc**

There are no implications for the LSB.

### **Corporate Communications**

The report has significant service user and public interest and should be publicised through proactive news release and use of social media.

### **Statutory Officers**

Strategic Director Resources (Section 151 Officer): The Strategic Director Resources (S151 Officer) notes the comments made by Finance.

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report.

### **Members' Interests**

The Monitoring Officer is not aware of any specific interests that may arise in relation to this report. If Members have an interest they should declare it at the start of the meeting and complete the relevant notification form.

### **Future Status of the Report**

**(This section must be completed if the report is a confidential/exempt report)**

Members are invited to consider the future status of this report and whether it can be made available to the press and public either immediately following the meeting or at some specified point in the future.

The view of the Monitoring Officer is that:

<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>Reason for Recommendation:</b>
1.To note the content of the Consultation Report. 2. That a further report will be brought back to Cabinet for decision at a later date.	To gain a full understanding of the views of stakeholders on the proposal to close the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School

<b>Relevant Policy (ies):</b>	Schools Transformation Policy, Welsh in Education Strategic Plan		
<b>Within Policy:</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Within Budget:</b>	<b>Y</b>

<b>Relevant Local Member(s):</b>	All local members representing wards in the catchment areas of the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School and the Welsh-medium stream at Bulth Wells High School:  Cllr Paul J. Ashton, Cllr John H. Brunt, Cllr Kelvyn W. Curry, Cllr Melanie J.B. Davies, Cllr Steve Davies, Cllr Matthew Dorrance, Cllr David O. Evans, Cllr W. John Evans, Cllr Liam Fitzpatrick, Cllr M. Rosemarie Harris, Cllr Jeff C. Holmes, Cllr Geraint G. Hopkins, Cllr Hywel Lewis, Cllr Maureen C. Mackenzie, Cllr David W. Meredith, Cllr Evan T. Morgan, Cllr John G. Morris, Cllr W. John T. Powell, Cllr William D. Powell, Cllr David R. Price, Cllr Gary D. Price, Cllr Gareth W. Ratcliffe, Cllr Kathryn S. Silk, Cllr Keith F. Tampin, Cllr D. Gillian Thomas, Cllr Tony Thomas, Cllr Tom Turner, Cllr Tim J. Van-Rees, Cllr Gwilym Williams, Cllr Avril York
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<b>Person(s) To Implement Decision:</b>	<b>Schools Service (Schools Transformation Team)</b>
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<b>Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:</b>	<b>End of October 2015</b>
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**Background Papers used to prepare Report:  
School Organisation Code**

CABINET REPORT TEMPLATE VERSION 3