

## **Supporting the response to the School Re-organisation Proposals – thoughts to aid a response to the consultation document**

The Governing Body want to encourage as many members of our community to make a written response to the consultation. The questionnaire is available on line at <http://www.powys.gov.uk/en/corporate/find-out-about-consultations-in-powys/brecon-and-gwernyfed-high-schools/> or a printed copy is available from the school.

The deadline for returning consultation responses is now 1 June 2016 so please take the opportunity to submit your response and views on the proposal.

In addition to the specific questions, there are opportunities to provide further feedback if you are opposed to the current proposal. Please use the guidance below to help you consider your response.

The Governing Body has stated it is committed to –

- Continuing Welsh Medium Education within the Brecon community
- A school based sixth form provision
- A new school for the young people of the Brecon community

When writing your response think about including some or all of the following points. You may have others you wish to add.....

### **Welsh Medium Education**

- Removal of teaching in Welsh sends a difficult cultural message for Brecon and its community, but also carries a number of other practical and strategic problems.
- Pupils who want to continue to learn in Welsh will have to travel to Builth, but with ongoing uncertainty about the school provision between Builth and Llandrindod Wells, may have to travel even further. The time and the distance will reduce opportunities for extra-curricular activities, and make friendships difficult to maintain and develop outside school.
- If parents make the difficult decision to move from Brecon, or for those with younger children, rule Brecon out as a place to bring them up, because they will not have easy access to Welsh teaching, not only does the secondary school lose out, but this reduces the viability of Ysgol-y-Bannau as well.
- Consider how having no Welsh Medium in the Local area would impact on a decision to follow a Welsh Medium education in the Primary phase.
- For those that do live, or come, to Brecon the difficulty of accessing Welsh medium teaching may be a factor in the decision not to attempt to pursue that course. This will reduce the Welsh medium numbers further, and possibly threaten its viability in Builth too.
- Parents may consider moving to other areas to ensure that they can obtain Welsh provision.
- It is unclear how, by moving the Welsh Medium provision to Builth Wells, that this will lead to an increase in the breadth of provision at GCSE and A-level, the number of pupils who may move is relatively small, do you think it will grow over time?

### **Post 16 Education**

- Do you think that the current proposal would create a critical mass of learners for Post 16 education for NPTC in Brecon, or would the proposal have the reverse effect of forcing pupils to travel further to undertake Post 16 education.
- Transferring post 16 education to NPTC would remove a school based provision from your community – do you want this to be lost?
- Would the proposed model of deliver guarantee the range of A-level provision for our young people. While they plan to provide a minimum of 25 A-level courses to Brecon pupils, simple maths suggests that this going to be hard to economically fulfil. On average each

course would have 4 pupils, but since there will be 7 or 8 that are well subscribed, many of the 25 courses could have only one pupil. Will NPTC commit to providing these courses?

- Would the proposal provide the additional benefits of having a Sixth Form within a school – the structures, the opportunities for Sixth Formers to work with younger pupils, to participate in drama and sporting activities, to participate in activities that aid with applications for University?
- Bussing teachers from Neath to Brecon, as is planned, sounds like an uncomfortable situation for the teachers, and one that those more confident of their ability may well choose to avoid. How likely are they to want, or to be able, to be accessible to pupils outside of scheduled lessons, and normal school/college hours? Email and phones have a place, but there really is nothing like face to face support for someone who is feeling worried about their progress.
- NPTC may be doing well in Neath but the challenges for achieving good results and pupil satisfaction in Brecon are different.
- Whilst there will be a school based Post 16 provision in the South (at Crickhowell) and Mid Powys (proposed at Builth) there would be none for the Brecon area – We believe there should be equitable provision for all parts of the South Powys region.

### School Buildings

- We would want any new buildings to benefit the whole community? Welsh medium pupils travelling out of the area for their education would not benefit from these new buildings.
- The funding for a new school for the Brecon community is dependent on the current proposal being agreed by the County Council. We believe this could place the funding at risk.
- The proposed size of new school buildings may not meet the future needs for this area; we believe that additional capacity should be built into the new buildings.

### Transport

- We do not want pupils having to travel additional distances to access Welsh Medium education?
- The current proposal will lead to additional school travel for pupils. The cost of this will only rise and lead to more time spent on the road – would you want this?

### The Local Economy

- As a local resident, would you think that potential incomers decide that there is more stable school provision elsewhere (range of primary provision, English and Welsh Medium secondary provision and a range of post 16 providers), and decide against Brecon as a choice. Locals are expressing worries about the changes and more stable provision elsewhere may tempt those who can move, to do so. This can only harm the town's economic viability and impact on the ratio of young and old to everyone's disadvantage, including the Council's. It will also further impact on the viability of school provision with the area.
- Should there be movement out of the community, the town loses out in economic terms from the money that these families would spend within Brecon and in its surrounding small towns and villages.

### The School and Staff

- Many teachers with an interest in their subject are likely to be very keen to stretch their skills and develop their knowledge in teaching Sixth Formers. These are the teachers we want to inspire children across the subject ranges through the school. Without a prospect of teaching A-Levels, or having access to the equipment and resources A-Levels might bring, the pool of applicants to jobs in a rural area like Brecon might be further limited, and those already working in Powys may consider their alternatives.