

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

CABINET EXECUTIVE

22nd November 2016

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Arwel Jones
Portfolio Holder for Education

SUBJECT: Schools Transformation Programme – Forward Plan
2016 - 18

REPORT FOR: Information

Summary

1. This report provides information about timescales for new draft recommendations to be prepared for the following schools:

- Brecon and Gwernyfed High Schools
- Llanbister and Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP Schools

Background

2. On the 27th September 2016, Cabinet approved recommendations related to Brecon and Gwernyfed High School, following a formal consultation process. The Cabinet report can be found at:
<http://powys.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=3029&Ver=4>

3. The recommendations for Brecon and Gwernyfed High Schools were:

- *To abandon elements A, B and D of the Proposal and to bring a new report back to Cabinet with **draft recommendations** for Brecon and Gwernyfed High Schools, in accordance with the Schools Reorganisation Policy 2015;*
- *To re-consult on element C of the Proposal, i.e. the closure of the Welsh-stream at Brecon High School from September 2017;*
- *To submit a revised Outline Business Case to Welsh Government's 21st C Schools Programme for capital investment in both campuses. This will include a new build 11 – 18 campus in Brecon and improvements to the Gwernyfed campus.'*

4. At the meeting, officers were requested to inform Cabinet of the anticipated timescales involved in establishing the new draft recommendations.
5. At the same meeting, Cabinet approved recommendations for Llanbister and Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP Schools, as follows:
 - *‘to abandon the current Proposals in respect of Llanbister C.P. School and Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School;*
 - *It is recommended that a new report is brought to Cabinet with draft recommendations for Llanbister C.P. School and Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School in accordance with the Schools Reorganisation Policy 2015, which considers the circumstances of the two schools alongside the Authority’s aspiration for primary education, which is to have ‘headteachers with no classroom responsibilities;*
 - *It is recommended that a new report is brought back to Cabinet with draft recommendations by no later than the end of November 2016.’*
6. The Schools Reorganisation Policy 2015 outlines the process for undertaking reviews of schools. This includes the following steps:
 - *‘Reviews will include discussion with governors, local members and headteachers of all schools under review, and also with diocesan directors, in the case of faith provision. Discussion may also take place with the headteachers, governors and local members of affected schools i.e. schools that may be affected by the review of another school, as identified by the Schools Service Senior Management Team and the Portfolio Holder for Education;*
 - *On completion of a review, officers will then develop draft recommendations. These will be shared with the appropriate stakeholders who will have the opportunity to provide written comments within 14 days of receipt of the draft recommendations;*
 - *Cabinet will receive and consider a report with **draft recommendations, together with any comments received from stakeholders**, along with a draft impact assessment.’*

Proposed timescales

Brecon and Gwernyfed High Schools:

7. It is recommended that discussions begin with the governors, local members, headteachers of these schools in the summer term 2017, following the conclusion of the forthcoming formal consultation on the closure of the Welsh stream at Brecon High School. The consultation is planned to begin at the end of November, and will finish in January

2017. It is anticipated that the Consultation Report will be brought before Cabinet in March 2017, if not earlier.

8. This will ensure that discussions with stakeholders can take place with full clarity about the future provision of Welsh-medium education in the area.

Llanbister and Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP Schools:

9. Discussions have already begun with governors, local members and headteachers of both schools, and it is anticipated that new draft recommendations will be formulated and proposed to Cabinet in the spring term 2017 – this is a change from the original intended timescale of November 2016. This change is required in order to ensure appropriate opportunities for both schools to participate in dialogue.

One Powys Plan

‘Transforming Learning and Skills’ is one of the priorities within the One Powys Plan. Within this priority, the Plan states that *‘We need to re-organise schools (primary, secondary and post 16) to ensure affordability, sustainability and appropriate leadership capacity.’*

Options Considered/Available

n/a

Preferred Choice and Reasons

n/a

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

Any draft recommendations will be accompanying with an impact assessment.

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

The authority’s Schools Transformation Programme is intended to improve educational outcomes for children and young people. This aligns with the aspiration to improve safeguarding and well-being for children and young people.

Local Member(s)

Cllr John Brunt (local member for Beguildy ward):

“I fully support the discussions have already begun with governors and head teacher of Llanbister school, and await the new draft recommendations which will be proposed to Cabinet in the spring term 2017 to ensure sustainable education will be provided from the school in Llanbister.”

Cllr Gareth Ratcliffe (local member for Hay ward):

“Six years ago Powys County Council came forward with a proposal to close Gwernyfed. Since then they have repeatedly attempted to rip this essential facility from the communities it serves. At the last attempt over 1,000 local people of all ages attended the public consultation meeting to express their feelings on the matter. Estyn also commented that there was no evidence that the proposals would improve educational outcomes. Quite rightly, therefore, the cabinet decided to drop the proposal.

I cannot see what the intention of any new proposals might be. The community and Estyn have expressed their opinions and neither were in favour of the proposed changes. So what changes would any further discussion look to bring forward? It is clear that if these involved combining the management of the two schools into one or the removal of post 16 education then the community would once again express its strong opposition and once again an expensive, pointless consultation exercise would follow. Whilst we welcome the investment in the buildings you cannot buy our silence on matters that deeply concern us.

The communities served by Gwernyfed High School have suffered excessively due to the inept handling of this process. There has been a whole generation of children and their families who have only known uncertainty and instability about their future education both at primary and secondary level. The levels of stress have brought some people close to breaking point. End this now. It is ridiculous to propose to extend this uncertainty into the summer of next year and beyond.

In the six years that the future of the high school has been messed around with it has quietly got on with becoming one of the top performing secondary schools not just in Powys but in Wales. Why do you insist on continually trying to mend what clearly is not broken? I suggest that there are many other schools across the county to which your attention might be better directed. I can tell you what the communities want – you to go away and leave us alone.

It saddens me also to note that when talking about consulting on any new proposals you still insist on referring to only the head, the governors and the elected members. Those of you who were at the meeting in Gwernyfed will know that in my area you need to speak to the whole community. They are keeping an eye on you and will not let you get away with messing around with them any more.”

Other Front Line Services

N/A

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

Legal: The recommendations can be supported from a legal point of view

The Finance Business Partner comments:

'Finance will continue to support individual schools and Schools Service during the transformation process.'

HR: Any HR implications will be managed in line with the school's HR policies and in consultation with the Governing Body, staff and recognised trade unions.

Public Service Board/Partnerships/Stakeholders etc

N/A

Corporate Communications

Communications Comment: The report is of considerable public interest and requires the use of a news release and appropriate social media to publicise the decision.

Statutory Officers

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: "I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report save that the requirement to obtain the views of Full Council to any proposals should be incorporated into the timetables."

The Strategic Director Resources (S151 officer) notes the report and that the MTFS contains savings from school closures that are not going to be realised.

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.

Recommendation:	Reason for Recommendation:
1.To note the timescales for new draft recommendations to be prepared for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brecon and Gwernyfed High Schools	1.It is recommended that discussions begin with the governors, local members, headteachers of Brecon and Gwernyfed High Schools in the summer term 2017, following the

<p>2. To note the timescales for new draft recommendations to be prepared for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Llanbister and Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP Schools 	<p>conclusion of the forthcoming formal consultation on the closure of the Welsh stream at Brecon High School. The consultation is planned to begin at the end of November, and will finish in January 2017. It is anticipated that the Consultation Report will be brought before Cabinet in March 2017, if not earlier.</p> <p>This will ensure that discussions with stakeholders can take place with full clarity about the future provision of Welsh-medium education in the area.</p> <p>2. Discussions have already begun with governors, local members and headteachers of both schools, and it is anticipated that new draft recommendations will be formulated and proposed to Cabinet in the spring term 2017 – this is a change from the original intended timescale of November 2016. This change is required in order to ensure appropriate opportunities for both schools to participate in dialogue.</p>
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Relevant Policy (ies):	School Transformation Policy		
Within Policy:	Y	Within Budget:	Y

Relevant Local Member(s):	
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Person(s) To Implement Decision:	Marianne Evans
Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:	November 2016

Contact Officer Name:	Tel:	Fax:	Email:
Marianne Evans	01597 826155	N/A	Marianne.evans@powys.gov.uk

Background Papers used to prepare Report:

Cabinet reports 27th September 2016
Schools Reorganisation Policy 2015