

**CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.**

**CABINET EXECUTIVE**

**3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017**

**REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Myfanwy Alexander  
Portfolio Holder for Education**

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

**OBJECTION REPORT**

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**REPORT FOR: Decision**

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**1. Summary**

- 1.1 Further to the decision made by Cabinet on the 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017, the authority published a Statutory Notice proposing closure of the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School from the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017, with Brecon High School becoming an English-medium school from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017. The Statutory Notice was published on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the Objections received during the statutory objection period, which ended on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2017, so that they can determine whether or not to close the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School from the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017.
- 1.3 The report is supported by the following appendices:
- **Appendix A** – Objection Report
  - **Appendix B** – Updated Impact Assessments

The following background documentation which was published throughout the statutory process is also attached, for information:

- **Appendix C** – Consultation Document (published November 2016)
- **Appendix D** – Consultation Report (published March 2017)
- **Appendix E** – Statutory Notice (published 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017)

**2. Background**

**2.1 The Consultation Period**

Formal consultation in relation to the proposal for the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School was carried out in accordance with the

requirements of the School Organisation Code (2013) from the 21<sup>st</sup> November 2016 to the 9<sup>th</sup> January 2017. The consultation document issued in respect of this proposal is attached, for information, as Appendix C. A Consultation Report listing the issues raised during the consultation and the authority's response to them was considered by Cabinet on the 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017. This report is attached, for information, as Appendix D.

## 2.2 Statutory Notice / Objection Period

Further to the decision made by Cabinet on the 14<sup>th</sup> March, the authority published a Statutory Notice proposing to close the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School from the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017, with Brecon High School becoming an English-medium school from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017. There followed a 28 day objection period, in accordance with the guidance within the School Organisation Code. The objection period ended on the 13<sup>th</sup> April 2017. The Statutory Notice is attached, for information, as Appendix E.

A total of 77 written objections were received during the statutory objection period. However, 21 of these were received from one individual.

In addition, a petition was received, which was signed by approximately 1700 individuals, and included 218 written comments.

The issues raised in the written objections and the petition received during the statutory objection period are listed in the Objection Report in respect of this proposal, as well as the authority's response to these issues.

## 3. **Proposal**

3.1 This report proposes that Cabinet:

- i) Receives the Objection Report in respect of the proposal to close the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School from the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017
- ii) Rejects the proposal to close the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School from the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017, and retains a Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School.

## 4. **Options Considered / Available**

4.1 A range of options have been considered throughout this process. These have been outlined in the documentation issued during each stage.

4.2 Reference was made to a number of alternative options in the Objections received to the proposal, these are listed on pages 139-142 of the Objection Report produced (Appendix A).

4.3 The School Organisation Code states the following in relation to proposals which require approval by the local authority:

*'Local authorities must decide whether to approve, reject or approve with modifications, the proposals.*

*Modifications can only include changes to matters related to implementation such as changes to admission numbers or to the timing of implementation....'*

4.4 Therefore the options currently available to Cabinet are as follows:

- i) To approve the proposal
- ii) To reject the proposal
- iii) To approve the proposal with modifications

## **5. Preferred Choice and Reasons**

5.1 The preferred choice is to reject the proposal to close the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School from the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017, and to retain a Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School.

5.2 The reasons for the recommendation are as follows:

- i) To ensure the continued provision of Welsh-medium education in Brecon
- ii) To ensure that Welsh-medium pupils can access provision in the new school building planned for Brecon High School
- iii) To support the Welsh Government vision to create 1 million Welsh speakers by the year 2050

## **6. Impact Assessment**

6.1 Is an Impact Assessment required? Yes

6.2 If yes is it attached? Yes

## **7. Corporate Improvement Plan**

7.1 One of the priorities in the council's Corporate Improvement Plan is 'Improving learner outcomes for all, minimising disadvantage'

7.2 Within this priority, the council states that we must ‘provide improved access to Welsh-medium education’.

## 8. **Local Members(s)**

8.1 County Councillor Matthew Dorrance:

“I note the Cabinet Report and supporting documents. I particularly welcome the recommendation to retain a Welsh Medium Stream in Brecon High School in line with the repeatedly expressed views of the local community and councillors.

I will make further comments when I speak as a local Member at the Cabinet Meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017.”

## 9. **Other Front Line Services**

Does the recommendation impact on other services run by the Council or on behalf of the Council? No

## 10. **Communications**

10.1 Have Communications seen a copy of this report? Yes

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

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

11.1 **Legal:** The recommendation can be supported from a legal point of view.

11.2 **Finance:** There is no financial change to the authority or school, however it should be noted that the funding per Welsh-medium pupil at Brecon as a result of the language uplift equates to £2,885 per pupil, in Builth it equates to £708 per pupil. A recent analysis of the curriculum has indicated that the estimated cost of delivering the Welsh-medium provision in Brecon exceeds the available funding by £54,000.

## 12. **Scrutiny**

12.1 Has this report been scrutinised? No

**13. Statutory Officers**

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

13.2 The **Strategic Director Resources (Section 151 Officer)** comments will be reported.

**14. 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.

Members should also consider whether or not they are predetermined.

Recommendation:	Reason for Recommendation:
i) To receive the Objection Report in respect of the proposal to close the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School from the 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2017.	To understand the issues raised in the Objections received and the authority’s response to those issues.
ii) To reject the proposal to close the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School from the 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2017, and to retain a Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To ensure the continued provision of Welsh-medium education in Brecon</li> <li>- To ensure that Welsh-medium pupils can access provision in the new school building planned for Brecon High School</li> <li>- To support the Welsh Government vision to create 1 million Welsh speakers by the year 2050</li> </ul>

Relevant Policy (ies):	School Transformation Policy, Welsh in Education Strategic Plan		
Within Policy:	Y	Within Budget:	Y

Relevant Local Member(s):	All local members serving the catchment area of the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School.
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Person(s) To Implement Decision:	Marianne Evans
Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:	Immediately

Contact Officer Name:	Tel:	Fax:	Email:
Sarah Astley	01597 826265	N/A	sarah.astley@powys.gov.uk

**Background Papers used to prepare Report:**