

**EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL HELD
AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON
THURSDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 2016**

Brecon High School and Gwernyfed High School

The Portfolio Holder for Education advised that following consultation he was proposing to change the recommendation to Cabinet to recommend the following:

1. 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, by no later than February 2017;
2. To reconsult immediately on element c) of the Proposal i.e. the closure of the Welsh stream at Brecon from September 2017.
3. To immediately submit a revised outline business case to Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme for capital investment on both campuses. This will include a new build 11-18 campus in Brecon and improvements to the Gwernyfed campus.

County Councillor Melanie Davies welcomed the revised recommendations and added that she would like to see the Welsh stream retained in Brecon.

County Councillor Matthew Dorrance congratulated the staff, governors and pupils of the schools on the exam results achieved despite the uncertainty hanging over the schools. He asked about the proposals for Welsh medium education and was advised that consultation on Welsh medium education in Brecon couldn't begin until the Cabinet came to a decision on Builth Wells High School and Llandrindod High School as the consultation would have to include a named school where provision would transfer to. It was also confirmed that capacities could be changed between the submission of the outline business case and that the final business case and that the consultation would not impact on the business case.

County Councillor James Gibson-Watt thanked the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Education for their willingness to listen to the views of members. He felt that earlier consultation with schools, governors and communities would have identified flaws in the proposals such as the move to a tertiary system for sixth form education. He felt it was incumbent on the Council to keep Welsh medium education in Brecon High School. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that there would be consultation with stakeholders at an early stage.

County Councillor Alexander congratulated the schools on their exam results and noted that they were producing high quality results in facilitating subjects.

County Councillor Liam Fitzpatrick said the consultation proposals had created unnecessary distress and had led to some pupils moving schools. He asked for and received confirmation that there was no predetermination over the provision of Welsh medium education.

County Councillor Aled Davies asked if Welsh Government would accept the proposal as being sufficiently transformational and was advised that there was a high degree of confidence that the proposals would deliver a new build in Brecon and the refurbishment of Gwernyfed.

County Councillor Ratcliffe thanked the Portfolio Holder for Education and the Leader for changing the recommendations. He asked for the timetable for consultation to be made available and for details of the courses on offer. The Head of Schools advised that not all A Level courses were offered at every school but that every pupil had access to them through the collaborative north Powys and south Powys curriculum. He would arrange for details to be circulated to members.

County Councillor William Powell also thanked the Leader and Portfolio Holder but said that the process had damaged the reputation of the Council. He asked that lessons be learned from what had happened. He asked whether it would be appropriate or legal for proposals to be brought in February 2017 just before the Council went into purdah. The Solicitor to the Council confirmed that the Council would be legally able to proceed in February 2017.

County Councillor David Meredith whilst welcoming the recommendations said that he would continue to fight for the retention of Welsh medium education at Brecon High School. The retention of the sixth form had been warmly welcomed by the community. He noted that 74% of pupils had achieved the level 2 plus standard in GCSE results, a 9% increase on the previous year, and congratulated the Headteacher, staff and pupils on the excellent results achieved. He hoped that this would lead to Estyn taking the school out of special measures.

County Councillor John Morris argued that there had been a fundamental flaw in the piecemeal approach taken to secondary school provision in the county. The Cabinet now needed to show how the new proposals would raise standards.

County Councillor Gary Price asked if there would be an additional capital allocation and the Strategic Director Resources confirmed that the capital programme would be adjusted. Councillor Price said that whilst he was happy for investment in the schools, it shouldn't be at the expense of other schools and that additional funding would have to be found.

County Councillor David Jones noted the reasons why the original proposals had been made and asked what had changed. The Portfolio Holder for Education said that he had taken account of the strength of feeling from the public during the consultation.

County Councillor Timothy Van-Rees urged the Council to get on with the building of a new school in Brecon.

County Councillor Fitzpatrick asked the Portfolio Holder for Education if he would take the opportunity of sorting out secondary school provision in north Powys. The Portfolio Holder advised that this was not possible at the moment given the amount of work required and resources needed.

County Councillor David Price asked if the proposals would stem the flow of young people out of county to access secondary education and the Portfolio Holder said that he was hopeful that the provision of modern buildings would help in this regard.