

Appendix D Final Welsh Language Impact Assessment

South & Mid Powys

1. Introduction

The Council published a draft Welsh Language Impact Assessment on the following Proposal, as part of a Formal Consultation that took place between the 6th April and the 1st June 2016:

- a) To close Brecon High School and Gwernyfed High School on the 31st August 2017, and to establish a new English-medium 11 – 16 secondary school that will operate across the current sites of the two schools from 1st September 2017;
- b) From the 1st September 2017, Post-16 provision (academic and vocational) to be delivered by NPTC Group of Colleges in Brecon;
- c) From the 1st September 2017, Welsh-medium secondary education to be delivered at the Builth Wells site of the proposed new school in Mid Powys (provided that the Proposal is approved by Cabinet following consultation; and
- d) To close the school sites at Gwernyfed and Brecon upon the opening of a new build campus in Brecon, in 2019/20.

This impact assessment also relates to the proposed way forward for Welsh-medium provision in Mid Powys.

2. Background information

The proportion of Welsh speakers in the communities where the two dual stream high schools – Brecon and Builth Wells - in south Powys are located are fairly similar. Information from the 2011 Census shows that 21.6% of the population of Brecon town have one or more skill in Welsh, whilst 23.3% of the population of Builth Wells town have one or more skill in Welsh. The percentage of Welsh speakers in the surrounding communities is varied.

Based on the Welsh Government's language categories, Brecon High School is currently categorised as a category 3 bilingual school, whilst Builth Wells High School is categorised as a category 2C bilingual school. The number of Welsh-medium subjects at both schools during the current academic year (2014-15) is as follows:

Welsh-medium Issues – across South and Mid Powys

- There are two Welsh-medium streams in secondary schools in Mid and South Powys – one in Brecon High School and one in Builth Wells High School. The Council is worried that there are not enough pupils to keep both streams open;
- Builth Wells High School has 129 pupils in the Welsh stream this year, but here are only 30 pupils in the Welsh stream in Brecon High School and the school is unable to provide a wide range of subjects in Welsh, especially at KS4;

- The Council is also concerned about that there aren't enough subjects available in Welsh at Post-16;
- This situation doesn't provide Welsh-medium pupils the same learning experience as pupils studying in the English-stream and doesn't help to develop their Welsh Language skills.
- The following tables show the number of pupils in the Welsh stream in both Brecon and Builth High School over the last two years:

Brecon High School	2014/15	2015/16
Year 7	14	3
Year 8	13	7
Year 9	9	4
Year 10	8	8
Year 11	13	8
Total	57	30

Builth Wells High School	2014/15	2015/16
Year 7	18	28
Year 8	23	23
Year 9	28	31
Year 10	21	27
Year 11	17	20
Total	107	129

- During the 2015/16 academic year, the Welsh-medium provision at Brecon High School and Builth Wells High School in years 7 to 11 is as follows¹:

Brecon High School	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Number of Welsh-medium subjects	7	6	6	2	2
Number of English-medium subjects	14	14	14	17	18
Number of bilingual subjects	0	0	0	0	0
Total number of subjects	14	14	14	17	18
% Welsh-	50%	43%	43%	12%	11%

¹ Information received from the schools in October 2015

medium subjects					
Language² category	2C	3	3	4	4

Builth Wells High School	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Number of Welsh-medium subjects	12	12	13	9	9
Number of English-medium subjects	16	16	16	24	20
Number of bilingual subjects	0	0	0	0	0
Total number of subjects	16	16	16	24	20
% Welsh-medium subjects	75%	75%	81%	38%	45%
Language category	2C	2C	2B	3	3

The Council is also concerned about the limited post-16 opportunities currently available to Welsh-medium learners in South and Mid Powys. Currently, there is no Welsh-medium post-16 provision at Brecon High School, and only a limited number of subjects are offered at Builth Wells High School.

One of the Strategic Aims stated in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) is 'to provide robust linguistic continuity of Welsh-medium provision across all key phases of education'. The Authority's current policy as stated in the WESP is to aim that all dual stream schools become category 2B³ bilingual schools by 2020. However, schools' progress towards achieving this aim has been limited.

As the current position at both schools does not fully meet the aspirations of the Authority's WESP for linguistic continuity, the Authority has identified the need to centralise provision in south Powys, in order to ensure that a greater level of provision can be offered to pupils.

3. Standards in Welsh

The following tables provide information about Standards in Welsh First Language at Brecon High School and Builth Wells High School for the last 3 years.

Whilst this is useful as background information, the relatively small number of pupils in each year group at each school mean that it is difficult to draw any firm

² Defining Schools According to Welsh-medium Provision – Welsh Government 2007

³ As stated in the Welsh Government document, 'Defining Schools according to Welsh-medium Provision', published in 2007.

conclusions from this information with regard to standards in Welsh at the two schools.

i) **End of Key Stage 3**

Brecon High School

	2012	2013	2014
Total number of Year 9 pupils assessed in Welsh First Language	19	13	8
Number of pupils that achieved Level 5+	19	10	8
% of pupils that achieved Level 5+	100%	76.9%	100%

Builth Wells High School

	2012	2013	2014
Total number of Year 9 pupils assessed in Welsh First Language	17	17	22
Number of pupils that achieved Level 5+	15	16	20
% of pupils that achieved Level 5+	88.2%	94.1%	90.9%

i) **End of Key Stage 4**

Brecon High School

	2012	2013	2014
Total number of GCSE Welsh First	18	12	18

Language entries			
Number of pupils that achieved grades A* - C	7	6	14
% of pupils that achieved grades A* - C	38.9%	50%	77.8%

Builth Wells High School

	2012	2013	2014
Total number of GCSE Welsh First Language entries	13	22	17
Number of pupils that achieved grades A* - C	10	13	13
% of pupils that achieved grades A* - C	76.9%	59.1%	76.5%

4. Welsh language activities provided by the schools

Brecon High School

The majority of extra-curricular activities at Brecon High School are carried out through the medium of English, however some activities take place in Welsh or bilingually, depending on which member of staff is responsible and which pupils are taking part.

The south Powys Urdd Eisteddfod is held in Brecon High School each year.

Builth Wells High School

A number of the school's extra-curricular activities and clubs are Welsh or bilingual, depending on which member of staff is responsible and which pupils are taking part.

In addition, the school provides a range of additional opportunities for pupils to use Welsh outside the classroom. The school choir takes part in Urdd competitions, and pupils also take part in written competitions. Workshops are arranged with Welsh speakers from speciality areas, as well as workshops with Welsh poets and Welsh bands. The school holds an annual Eisteddfod, which gives additional opportunities for pupils to use their Welsh. The school puts on a musical every two years, and this is always bilingual, with some of the songs being in Welsh.

The school also supports the local 'papur bro', 'Y Fan a'r Lle', by submitting information to be included in the paper, and also supports the local Eisteddfod held annually in Llanwrtyd Wells.

Welsh for Adults lessons are held at the school on a weekly basis.

5. Feedback from the Consultation

Opinion Research Services (ORS) were commissioned by the Authority to support the consultation. Consultees were invited to respond to the consultation by either completing a questionnaire, online and paper, or by writing to ORS.

ORS have prepared a comprehensive Consultation Report which can be found on <http://www.powys.gov.uk/en/corporate/find-out-about-consultations-in-powys/past-consultations/brecon-and-gwernyfed-high-schools/>, along with the Authority's responses to issues raised. The main themes from the consultation are summarised on pages 45 – 49 of the Report. A summary of respondents' views about the element c) of the Proposal and the impact on the Welsh Language can be found on pages 35 - 41 of the Consultation Report and pages 58 - 75 of the Consultation Report – Responses.

6. Conclusion

The Authority recognises that concerns were raised by many participants during the consultation period about the proposed removal of the Welsh-stream from the New School in Brecon. However, the Authority's intention is to provide equality of provision. Builth Wells High School provides a more equitable distribution of subjects between English-medium and Welsh-medium streams. The Authority believes that building the critical mass in one school will develop a vibrant and viable Welsh stream. The improved choice and Welsh-medium experience will enable them to be even more confident Welsh speakers who can still contribute to the development of the Welsh language in Brecon. We believe that learners will be more attracted to Welsh-medium provision in future if there are clear progression routes and continuity of provision throughout their educational life – this is currently not the case in Brecon High School.

The Welsh Government's Welsh – medium Education Strategy states 'Welsh-medium education from the early years, with robust linguistic progression through every phase of education, offers the best conditions for developing future bilingual citizens.'

'The term 'bilingual provision' is used to refer to a wide range of teaching and learning settings which include varying amounts of Welsh language in the delivery. Bilingual schools can include those where a large proportion of the curriculum is delivered through the medium of Welsh, those where there are two streams – Welsh-medium and English-medium – taught separately (sometimes called 'dual stream' schools), and those where only a few elements of the curriculum or only a small number are taught through the medium of Welsh.'

The linguistic outcomes of these different types of provision will vary significantly. Where a pupil from a Welsh-speaking background attends a bilingual school, a

balanced curriculum through the medium of Welsh and English can be effective in ensuring fluency in both languages. This is the case in some areas of Wales. However, where learners' linguistic skills in Welsh are not reinforced by family or community, they are unlikely to achieve full fluency and confidence in Welsh when learning in a bilingual setting. Bilingual provision, therefore, does not always ensure that an individual becomes a bilingual speaker.'

Whilst there are no designated Welsh-medium primary schools in the Builth Wells High School catchment, there are a greater number of primary Welsh-medium streams and a greater number of Welsh-medium pupils compared with the Brecon High School catchment.

Evidence shows that Welsh-medium provision in terms of pupil numbers and subjects available has grown over the last five years. The Authority has provided the same guidance and support to Builth Wells and Brecon High School over this time.

Whilst Welsh-medium pupils would be leaving Brecon to access Welsh-medium secondary provision, they will continue to live in the town and surrounding areas, and will continue to be able to participate in Welsh language activities in the local community. The Council's view is that the increased level of Welsh-medium provision available to them will enable all Welsh-medium pupils to become more confident Welsh speakers, who will be able to play a greater role in terms of the Welsh language in the community.

The Authority acknowledges that concerns were raised about whether Welsh-medium pupils from the Brecon area would be disadvantaged as they would find it difficult to access after-school activities at Builth due to reliance on home-to-school transport. The New School in Mid Powys would be encouraged to provide as many extra-curricular opportunities for Welsh-medium pupils from Brecon during the school day, and the Council would work with the school to explore possible transport solutions, including the use of public transport.

Another risk highlighted during the consultation was that the New School in Mid Powys would not have sufficient staff to deliver Welsh-medium provision to a larger cohort of learners. The Council would support the school in appointing the required staff in readiness for September 2017, and provide additional resource in accordance with the Fair Funding Formula arrangements.