

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

CABINET EXECUTIVE

27th September 2016

**REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Arwel Jones
Portfolio Holder for Education**

**SUBJECT: Secondary School Reorganisation Programme
- Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools**

REPORT FOR: Decision

Summary

1. Further to the decision made by Cabinet on the 23rd February 2016, the Authority has carried out formal consultation on the following proposal:
 - **To close Builth Wells High School and Llandrindod High School on the 31st August 2017, and to establish a new dual-stream 11 - 18 secondary school that will operate across the current sites of the two schools from 1st September 2017 (“the New School”)**
2. The purpose of this report is for Cabinet to consider the Consultation Report and Responses, and to receive the Portfolio Holder’s recommendations.
3. At a meeting of the full County Council that was held on the 8th September 2016, all members had an opportunity to discuss the Portfolio Holder’s draft recommendations – the relevant extract from the minutes of the meeting are attached as Appendix E.
4. The report is supported by the following appendices:
 - Appendix A – Consultation Report
 - Appendix B – Consultation Report – Responses
 - Appendix C – Impact Assessments
 - Appendix D – Final Welsh Language Impact Assessment South & Mid Powys
 - Appendix E – Copy from Minutes of Council meeting on 8.9.16
 - Appendix F – Copy of further Estyn comments received 20.9.16

Background

5. On the 23rd February 2016, Cabinet approved the commencement of consultation on the proposal outlined above. The consultation period commenced on the 6th April 2016, and ended on the 1st June 2016.
6. The Consultation Document was available on the Council’s website throughout the consultation period. The Document was also distributed to stakeholders as required by the School Organisation Code (2013).

7. 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.
8. A total of 996 questionnaires were analysed, of which 182 were responses to the main consultation questionnaire, 735 to the Young Persons' questionnaire, and 79 to the primary school consultation questionnaire.
9. 21 written submissions were received concerning the proposals for Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools. These were from professional, political, interest and community groups as well as from individual residents.
10. During the consultation period, meetings were also held with the following:
 - School Councils and other pupils of Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools
 - School Councils and other pupils of all primary schools in both catchment areas
 - Staff of Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools
 - Governors of Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools
 - Parents / community of both schools
 - Protected Characteristics Group
11. ORS have prepared a Consultation Report, attached as Appendix A, which outlines all the issues raised, along with the Authority's response (Appendix B) to these issues.
12. On the 8th September 2016, the draft proposals were considered by full Council and the relevant extract from the minutes of that meeting are found at Appendix E. At that meeting, an alternative proposal as follows:

‘To recommend to the Cabinet that the proposals for Builth Wells High School and Llandrindod High school be abandoned for a period of up to 2 years to allow the leadership teams of both schools to work together on joint proposals to raise standards’

That proposal was passed by 32 votes to 9, with 3 abstentions.

Recommendations

13. Having considered the issues raised in the Consultation Report, the Authority's response to those issues, and the alternative proposal put forward at Council on the 8th September, the following is recommended:
 - To publish a statutory notice for:
 - i) the closure of Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools on the 31st August 2018;and

- ii) to establish a new dual-sited dual-stream 11 - 18 school that will operate on the current campuses of Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools with effect from 1st September 2018;

Options Considered/Available

14. The options available were
- To publish the Proposal as consulted on with any appropriate modifications;
 - To abandon the Proposal;
 - To significantly recast the Proposals and re-consult
 - 'For the current Proposal for Builth Wells High School and Llandrindod High to be abandoned for a period of up to 2 years to allow the leadership teams of both schools to work together on joint proposals to raise standards' (Full Council 8.9.16).

Preferred Choice and Reasons

15. The preferred choice is to publish a statutory notice to establish a new dual-sited school that will operate on the current sites of Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools but to change the implementation date to **September 2018**.
16. The alternative proposal put forward by Council has not been taken forward because it doesn't address the issues facing both schools which are outlined in the consultation document:
- Impact of falling pupil numbers over the last few years;
 - Reductions in funding;
 - Impact on curriculum choice and standards;
 - Limited choice of subjects at post-16;
17. As stated in the Consultation Document, collaboration (formal or informal), clustering or federation were not considered practicable as they did not provide a solution to the challenges outlined above, and there is already a degree of collaboration between the schools for the last five years at 14 – 19 but these issues still remain.
18. The Portfolio Holder is of the view that this Proposal outlined in paragraph it would lead to an improvement in the quality of education – both schools are currently in Special Measures. The Proposal aims to establish a sustainable model of secondary provision, which can deliver high-quality education.

The benefits of the Proposal are as follows:

- ***Improved leadership at all levels:** When streamlining the leadership structure following the joining of two schools into one split site secondary school, the newly appointed governing body are able to place the strongest leaders in each position within the new leadership structure. This means we can have the strongest governors, senior leaders, subject leaders and pastoral leaders – those who have the best track record of securing high outcomes and delivering the highest level of care - leading school improvement across the two sites. The joining of two schools represents an opportunity for a step change improvement in the quality and capacity of leadership at all levels.*

- *Improved leadership leads to improved teaching: Professor David Reynolds has stated: ‘we know that effective leadership of a school from the Headteacher and through to other ‘middle leadership’ positions is important in its own right and important in generating...high quality classroom teaching’ (WG PDG guidance 2013-15). Leadership and teaching quality are linked. The research is clear, by securing a step change improvement in leadership, we are able to secure a step change improvement in teaching quality.*
 - *Improved coaching and mentoring support opportunities for staff: It is essential that time is allocated to enable the best teaching staff in different subject areas to travel between sites (or communicate regularly via video conferencing arrangements) in order to providementoring/coaching/resources for their colleagues on the other campus. This ongoing mentoring support and training can have a considerable impact on teaching quality. One there is a world of difference between the potential impact of loose school-to-school collaboration between separate schools, and the level of collaboration and support in a single school with split sites. The extent to which leaders are willing to invest finite time into engaging in mentoring, coaching and training of staff on the second campus of a single school is considerably higher if leaders are going to be held to account for standards and provision on both sites.*
 - *Economies of scale leads to greater investment in teaching and learning: By having a single leader of each curriculum area across the two school sites and a more streamlined senior leadership structure, savings can be generated over time. The new leadership team would be able to invest these savings in whatever way they believe would make the greatest impact on standards.*
 - *The Authority has established a school across two sites. Newtown High School now includes the John Beddoes Campus in Presteigne. Standards have improved on both sites, but in particular at the John Beddoes campus. In 2015, 62.4% of pupils at Newtown HS achieved the L2+ indicator which was a 7.6 percentage point improvement on the previous year.*
 - *Whilst it will be the decision of the new governing body how it wishes to deliver post-16 education, the Proposal does provide an opportunity to establish a critical mass of post-16 learners, should the new governing body wish to establish one sixth form centre. At KS3 and KS4, it is not expected that pupils would travel between sites. However, the new governing body would be responsible for how it structures the curriculum and timetable, and it may be possible that some subjects would be taught on one site only at KS4. This would increase the options available to those pupils.*
 - *The school would be categorised as a bilingual (dual-stream) school with the Welsh-medium provision delivered from the Builth Wells site.*
19. However, if the Proposal is implemented, there is a significant amount of work required to establish a shadow governing body, recruit a headteacher and

establish a new staffing structure. In order to give governors and staff appropriate time to engage in the process, it is recommended that the New School is established from September 2018.

20. **Revenue Savings.** The funding formula has been rerun for the 2016/17 financial year and the updated savings are £123k. This has reduced from the previous reported savings of £133k in the main due to a reduction in the small schools allowance reducing from £58k (15/16) to £47k (16/17).
21. The figures included in the report have been based on the current fair funding formula with the addition of a change to the formula that will be required to reflect the funding of a split-site school, which is based on an additional .25 FTE teachers for each year group in Years 7 – 11, and an additional assistant head on leadership scale point 12. These changes are subject to full consultation as required under the Fair Funding Formula and Scheme for Financing Schools.
22. Estyn provided a response to the Proposal – however, it is not possible to draw any conclusions from the response as it is not clear whether it is based on the Proposal that was consulted upon. . However, the School Organisation Code requires that Consultation Reports must set out Estyn’s view (as provided in the consultation response) on the overall merits of the Proposal. The following is a summary of Estyn’s original response (which can be found in the Consultation Report at Appendix 1):

‘The proposer has provided a clear rationale for the proposal to close both schools and establish a new English-medium 11-16 school, operating on a single site at Builth Wells.

Overall, many aspects of the proposal receive appropriate consideration. However, the proposal does not sufficiently consider standards currently achieved at both schools or demonstrate how the changes will lead to improved standards or provision or the impact on teaching and curricular arrangements or the leadership and management of the new school. In addition it does not consider fully all the risks involved in the proposal and the consideration of both the longer-term vision and interim solution does not aid the proposal’s clarity.

As a result, it is Estyn’s opinion that it is not possible to establish whether standards will be at least maintained by the proposal.’

23. On the 20th September 2016, the Authority received a further response from Estyn which is attached as Appendix F. The following is a summary of Estyn’s further response:

...

Summary/ Conclusion

The proposer has provided a clear rationale for the proposal.

Overall, many aspects of the proposal receive appropriate consideration. However, the proposal does not sufficiently consider standards currently achieved at both schools or demonstrate how the changes will lead to improved standards or provision or the impact on teaching and curricular arrangements or the leadership and management of the new school. In addition it does not

consider fully all the risks involved in the proposal and the consideration of both the longer-term vision and interim solution does not aid the proposal's clarity.

As a result, it is Estyn's opinion that it is not possible to establish whether standards will be at least maintained by the proposal'

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.'*

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

A Single Integrated Impact Assessment has been produced in respect of this Proposal which concluded: *'On completion of this single integrated impact assessment, the judgement is that the Proposal has many potential benefits and does not provide a high level of risk to the Council.'*

The Equality Impact Assessment, Community Impact Assessment and Welsh Language Impact Assessment (South and Mid Powys) in respect of this proposal have been updated following the consultation period.

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. Keith Tampin: 'My specific concerns regarding the report are in relation to point 18 under Preferred Choice and Reasons and the quotes in relation to Estyn and standards in that part of the report.

With regard to Estyn and considering its view, I cannot see how the matter can be taken forward in the absence of it given that you have clearly stated that it's a requirement for the view to be provided and considered. To me this opens the Council up to challenge in relation to its processes. Perhaps it would be better to wait until the view has been confirmed so that it can be considered.

Regarding the statement 'it is Estyn's opinion that it is not possible to establish whether standards will be at least maintained by the proposal' this is the most worrying part of the report to me. Any potential for standards to drop must be of concern and not being able to establish that they will be 'at least maintained by the proposal' does not fill me with confidence. Surely we should be considering options that will look to provide a better education for

our young people and look to raise achievements. It is my opinion that we cannot take a decision to change and accept that the change might not address such an important issue for our young people.

I understand that Cabinet members recently visited the sites of Builth and Llandrindod High Schools and were of the opinion that both sites were in a good condition. I would, therefore, welcome a commitment from Cabinet that they would not enter into any agreement to commit to a new build in Builth Wells.

Finally, and this is more of a general point, I don't feel that the best interests of English and Welsh learners in Powys are being truly considered when arriving at options for organising learning across the county.'

Cllr Gary Price: 'It was clear from the recent Full Council meeting that Councillors disagreed with the draft proposals and overwhelmingly supported an alternative proposal. Whilst the recommendation goes some way by extending the implementation date to September 2018 it has no reference to the abandoning of the proposals and allowing Builth Wells and Llandrindod Wells High Schools a period of time in discussing a way that the Schools can work closely for the benefit of the pupils without the uncertainty and unnecessary disruption.

I feel the alternative proposal of Full Council should therefore be implemented in full.'

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: "The funding formula has been rerun for the 2016/17 financial year and the updated savings are £123k. This has reduced from the previous reported savings of £133k in the main due to a reduction in the small schools allowance for both schools reducing from £58k (15/16) to £47k (16/17).

The figures included in the report have been based on the current fair funding formula with the addition of a change to the formula that will be required to reflect the funding of a split-site school, which is based on an additional .25 FTE teachers for each year group in Years 7 – 11, and an additional assistant head on leadership scale point 12. These changes are subject to full consultation as required under the Fair Funding Formula and Scheme for Financing Schools.

The current forecasted financial position submitted by Builth High School for the 2018/19 financial year projects a cumulative surplus of £12k.

The current forecasted financial position submitted by Llandrindod High School for the 2018/19 financial year projects a cumulative surplus of £75k.

Finance will continue to support the schools in managing any changes required in order to comply with the Scheme for Financing schools.”

HR: ‘Any implication on staffing will be managed by school governors in line with Human Resource policies and in consultation with the recognised trade unions’

Local Service Board/Partnerships/Stakeholders etc

N/A

Corporate Communications

Communications Comment: “This issue is of significant public interest and Cabinet’s decision should be publicised widely by press release and through all the council’s social media channels.”

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

The **Strategic Director Resources (Section 151 Officer)** notes the comments of the Finance Business Partner.

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:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consider the Consultation Report and Responses Report; • To publish a statutory notice for <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the closure of Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools on the 31st August 2018;and 2. to establish a new dual-sited dual-stream 11 - 18 school that will operate on the current campuses of Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools with effect from 1st September 2018; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand the issues raised during consultation; • To establish a sustainable model of secondary education, which can deliver high-quality education. • To provide sufficient time to establish the new school.

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:	September 2016

Contact Officer Name:	Tel:	Fax:	Email:
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Background Papers used to prepare Report: