

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LEARNING AND SKILLS SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD AT BY ZOOM ON WEDNESDAY, 12 MAY 2021**

PRESENT: County Councillor P Roberts (Chairman)
County Councillors B Davies, S C Davies, L Roberts, R G Thomas, K M Roberts-Jones
Co-Opted Members: S. Davies and M Evitts

Cabinet Portfolio Holders In Attendance: County Councillors P Davies (Portfolio Holder for Education and Property) and A W Davies (Portfolio Holder for Finance and Transport)

Officers: Wyn Richards (Scrutiny Manager and Head of Democratic Services), Sarah Astley (Strategic Programme Manager - Schools Transformation), Marianne Evans (Senior Manager - Education Services), Sarah Page (Strategic Project Manager – Transformation), Emma Palmer (Head of Transformation and Communications) and Huw Foster Evans (Education Consultant)

1.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor M Weale and from A. Davies and G. Robson (Co-Opted Members)

2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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There were no declarations of interest from Members relating to items for consideration on the agenda.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP
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The Committee did not receive any disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

4.	YSGOL BRO HYDDGEN LANGUAGE CATEGORY
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Documents Considered:

- Draft Report of the Portfolio Holder for Education and Property.

Issues Discussed:

- A number of consultation meetings had been held. There have been a significant number of responses – 440 online and 25 others by post or email, including from Estyn. 61% of respondents (online) were in favour of the proposals.
- Questions:

Question	Response
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<p>Thank you to the Service for the consultation response document. Some people have asked for public meetings to be held but that would not give any greater opportunity for them to comment that they had online.</p> <p>School council - was this a range of Welsh and English speakers – only 3 selected.</p> <p>Also in relation to the secondary school – again only a small number was selected. How were these pupils selected.</p>	<p>The school selected the pupils who took part in the consultation exercise. The pupils were very mature and able to express themselves very well. There was a mix of Welsh and English speaking pupils selected.</p>
<p>If you are going to start from the Reception year in September 2022, then it will take many years for this proposal to be fully implemented. Hopefully this process can be accelerated.</p>	<p>Immersion is key to this proposal and also more support for bilingual pupils. Immersion will also be needed for latecomers to the school.</p>
<p>Can you expand on the support for Immersion and how this will be delivered, and will this allow an acceleration of language development for year 2, 3, and 4 pupils. What support will there be for English Language parents to have access to learning Welsh.</p>	<p>In relation to Immersion – an online system has been piloted and is successful. The Council is moving to a different model from September 2021 and will be redirecting the Athrawon Bro Service who are involved in immersion in schools. The Council could also tap into the successful immersion process used in Gwynedd. Parental support is important for parents. There are a number of support packages available for parents that have already been developed. Parents have joined pupils in immersion sessions which has helped them learn the language. The methodology being proposed is to developing pupils to be multi lingual. There is also a great deal of experience in this field which will be made available to Ysgol Bro Hyddgen. The Service will work with the school on what additional support can be provided to pupils in the English Language stream.</p>
<p>With older children moving into the area and latecomers to the school they will have difficulty following GCSE courses in the medium of Welsh. Internet learning will be</p>	<p>The school is very Welsh now and will be a Welsh Medium school in future. Out of school activities will help integrate pupils into the community and will assist pupils in leaving school</p>

<p>huge in the future. Will there be precautions to stop using the internet for Welsh avoidance. - if most lessons are online, will there be support even if pupils do not use the Welsh Language in lessons.</p>	<p>with some level of bilingualism.</p>
<p>Transport to school – what if pupils do not want to attend this school.</p>	<p>If a pupil does not want to attend Ysgol Bro Hyddgen after it becomes fully bilingual, they have the choice of attending another school. However, the Council could not transport them unless they were eligible. If parents were refused transport they could appeal as part of policy.</p> <p>The proposal means that Ysgol Bro Hyddgen will not be a Welsh school but a bilingual school</p> <p>ACTION – Committee to consider this when reviewing the Transport Policy in future.</p>
<p>Saving of £184k p.a. – can this be achieved</p>	<p>It will take much time to achieve this saving. It is likely that it will take 12 years for the school to move to becoming fully bilingual. However, this proposal is not about savings but creating opportunities for pupils to become fully bilingual.</p>
<p>Immersion (Trochi) and additional Welsh Language support - what is this. Could list of resources be made available to other Welsh Medium schools.</p>	<p>This includes a range of things, including additional support for lessons, homework etc. The school is key for providing this support.</p>
<p>Can Powys publish guidelines relating to bilingual schools</p>	<p>The Council website has been updated about the benefits of Welsh Medium learning. Booklets will be published online to support that.</p>
<p>Are the numbers moving between English Medium and Welsh Medium streams accurate.</p>	<p>The figures in the documents are accurate. The numbers moving between Welsh Medium and English Medium are held by school not by the Service. Those figures are anecdotal at present.</p> <p>ACTION – the Committee suggested that the figures should be made available to Cabinet.</p>

ALN - what changes would there be in relation to ALN or is this already covered within the catchment.	<p>ALN is an area of concern for parents. It is already known that a child with ALN can be educated successfully bilingually. The school will have a provision for ALN and specific support within the new build (which is being designed in consultation with ALN team). The support provided to a child with ALN is according to their individual needs.</p> <p>Whilst parents do have valid concerns, there are also developments going on in the Council in relation to ALN service and bilingual learning. Welsh Medium education should be available to all learners whatever their needs.</p> <p>ACTION – Committee to review Trochi (Immersion) and ALN in future.</p>
In relation to teachers and their career development, if teachers are currently teaching solely through the Medium of English will this proposal be a problem	Very few teachers are currently teaching solely through the English Medium, most teach bilingually. Figures can be provided to the Committee outside the meeting.
What support can be given to teachers to help them become bilingual	Sabbatical courses already being run in Wales for anyone who wants to join them.

The Committee concluded that there was nothing in the consultation response that has not been addressed, or will be addressed in the future. The concerns raised in the consultation would mean the Council could not move if the proposal was implemented in a short time period. However, as the proposal is a structured change over a long period of time, those concerns raised can be addressed as the project progresses.

Scrutiny make the following observations to Cabinet:

- The numbers of pupils moving between English Medium and Welsh Medium streams is currently anecdotal. The Cabinet should be provided with accurate figures for their consideration of the report.
- The Committee noted that there was nothing in the consultation response report which had not been addressed, or would be addressed in future. As this is a structured change to the language category at Ysgol Bro Hyddgen the Committee was satisfied that concerns raised in the consultation report would be addressed as the project progresses.

Scrutiny's Recommendation

1. **That the Cabinet be provided with accurate figures for numbers of pupils moving between English Medium and Welsh medium streams**

5.	POST 16
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Documents Considered:

- Draft Report of the Portfolio Holder for Education and Property.

Issues Discussed:

- Questions:

Question	Response
<p>The proposal is welcomed, and the methodology in reaching this stage is impressive. It has been good that headteachers have been involved in the whole process and it is hoped that this will continue in future.</p> <p>Strategic Management Board – as the overarching body, will there be role for scrutiny in overseeing the work of this group and when would scrutiny be involved.</p> <p>There is also no councillor involvement in this group – should the Portfolio Holder for Education represent the Council on the group.</p>	<p>The initial advice to officers was not to include officers and Members on the Board. However, this is now the intention, and the Service is awaiting clearance from the Legal Service before including the Portfolio Holder on the Board.</p> <p>The Strategic Management Board will be able to be scrutinised.</p> <p>ACTION – include in the Scrutiny comment that a scrutiny process needs to be built into the final process and that the Portfolio Holder should be a member of the Board.</p>
<p>Welsh Language and ALN are mentioned in document. The document also refers to 14-16 age groups. Will the proposal regarding ALN include individuals up to 25 years old.</p>	<p>The proposal has been developed in consultation with the ALN team. With ALN it is pupils in the 16 to 19 age range which are the focus of this proposal. ALN specialists will look at the 19 to 25 age group.</p>
<p>The proposals have been thought through in detail which is impressive. This could be great for pupils but there is concern about teacher development. Will post 16 teaching impact on less numbers of teachers in future. Will this impact on staff development and the turnover of staff.</p> <p>Will the Strategic Management Board commission schools or teachers.</p>	<p>The proposal is to develop post 16 teaching in Powys and to increase the offer. The development of teachers to work differently will be critical, and they have learnt to do this over the past year due to the pandemic. Learning in new ways and styles could be exciting for teachers and support and development will be available for teachers.</p> <p>The Operational Management Boards will be asked to consider the local offer to be provided. There are too many courses with small numbers at present, or courses being taught which are available on e-sgol. These recommendations will go to the Strategic Management Board for</p>

	approval. The development of Boards is being considered currently.
Is there a Welsh Government Grant for Welsh Medium for 16 to 19 pupils.	There is an uplift grant from Welsh Government which includes Welsh Medium. Post 16 has been funded on what was provided previously - this needs to grow. The Welsh Medium grant level is not large but we could make better use of this and grow the use of Welsh Medium provision.
There should be savings with the development of courses. Other courses will need funding - will these be funded from current funding or will additional funding be sought.	From the consultation it is clear that students wanted more opportunities to be developed. A high profile will need to be given to this and if we need additional funding then this will need to be considered.
This is the best solution we could have come up with for Council provided Post 16 education. However, there are other providers and there is no input from those other providers at present in the proposal. The proposal gives an opportunity to work with colleges, as well as being able to undertake joint procurement and offers. What engagement has there been with colleges. What about vocational courses. How will the colleges fit into the proposal. Should colleges be represented on the Strategic Management Board.	<p>This is a recommendation for Powys schools only at present. There was a suggestion for a broader approach but the decision was to look at the Council element first as there are enough challenges there. Discussions have been ongoing with colleges and there is ongoing work with NPTC college.</p> <p>The Strategic Management Board's work is to develop courses in Powys and also establish strategic partnerships with colleges and other partners.</p> <p>Powys will not be able to sort all of the issues itself and strategic partnerships will be needed to assist. The proposal is to deal with the Powys element first and then progress from there.</p> <p>ACTION – the Integration with others e.g. Colleges and other providers may be something scrutiny might want to look at in future.</p>
In respect of ALN an important part is the provision of vocational training such as that provided by Derwen College in North Wales. A specific offer for ALN pupils would be needed as well	This is supported and is being discussed with the ALN team for inclusion in future ALN proposals.
For colleges such as Derwen College, Wales only funds ALN pupils for 2 years whilst England fund pupils for 3 years. Is this	The funding for specific placements in such colleges is separate from the funding Powys receives for the 16 to 19 age group.

included within Powys' funding	
3 new bodies are being created and the documents are currently in English only and not in Welsh	The papers can be translated.
With regard to home bases that students are expected to attend, those bases will need to be of a standard which meets a design specification. How many of the current bases meet the specification and what plans are there to bring others up to the specification. Why is there no provision for working from home part of the time in the proposal.	The proposals does not prohibit students from working from home when appropriate. There is no capital programme attached to this proposal. If the proposal is agreed there would be a need to discuss the review of the home base provision with the capital team and a review undertaken and capital programme drawn up.
What timescale would be needed for capital works if funding was available	<p>Some work is already happening in schools. Funding for post 16 is not included in Welsh Government's Band B 21st Century funding. The Council would need to consider whether this could be included in future. It is unlikely the Council will be able to undertake much significant work before September 2022. This is likely to be a 5 year rolling programme and linked into 21st Century schools programme.</p> <p>ACTION – that a review of facilities be undertaken and a capital programme developed as soon as possible.</p>
Is there any concern that that the Council could deliver the technology required.	All year 12 pupils have to be given laptops and this is currently funded. Improved internet links to schools have also already been developed and installed.
How many home bases will there be, as it may not be feasible to have a home base in all secondary schools. Working from home may also simpler for some pupils.	The reason that pupils would be working from a home base is that the school can monitor pupils mental health, and it provides opportunities for them to mix with others and have access to other facilities. However, a blended approach is the best option. All current centres will have a home base but does not mean that they will deliver all the services available.
Where there are subjects where there is a practical element, has	This has not been considered as yet but it is expected that schools will use

there been consideration of using technical assistants to assist teachers in delivering courses.	their staff to make the best of their abilities to deliver courses
With regard to bringing schools together to discuss topics – can English Medium and Welsh Medium discussions be held on different days to allow opportunities for pupils to attend more sessions	Yes, this should be happening already to provide more opportunities for pupils to interact with others.

Scrutiny make the following observations to the Cabinet:

- The Committee welcomed the proposal and congratulated the Transformation Team on the methodology used and the involvement of headteachers in designing the final proposal.
- The Committee also welcomed the collaborative and cohesive approach across the Service and Schools towards developing this proposal.
- The Committee suggested that:
 - the Portfolio Holder for Education should be a member of the Strategic Management Board, and received confirmation that this was being pursued.
 - There was a role for scrutiny in reviewing the progress of the project and that should be built into the finalised proposal.
- The Committee welcomed that the proposal sought to resolve the issue of Post 16 education in Powys first, but would also look to developing strategic partnerships with colleges and other partners.
- The Committee noted that a review of home based facilities at Powys schools and an improvement programme drawn up would need to be undertaken and that it was anticipated that improvements would be likely to take up to 5 years to complete. As there was concern about the affordability of the Council's current capital programme, the Committee suggested that the review be undertaken at the earliest opportunity so that costs could be identified and included in the capital programme.

Scrutiny's Recommendation

- 1. That the Portfolio Holder for Education should be a member of the Strategic Management Board**
- 2. That a role for scrutiny be built into the finalised proposal.**
- 3. That the review of facilities and an improvement programme for home based facilities be undertaken at the earliest opportunity.**

6.	WORK PROGRAMME
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The Committee noted that future meetings would be held as follows:

Date	Time	Items
12-05-21	14.00 – 16.00 Zoom	Post 16 (Cabinet 18-05-21) Ysgol Bro Hyddgen language category (Cabinet 18-05-21)
09-06-21	14.00 - 16.00 Zoom	WESP pre consultation (Cabinet 22-06-21) Ysgol Dyffryn Trannon Language category (Cabinet 22-06-21)

08-07-21	14.00 - 16.00 Zoom	Castle Caereinion (Cabinet 13-07-21) Llanfihangel Rhydithon (Cabinet 13-07-21)
14-07-21	14.00 - 16.00 Zoom	School Budgets 2021-22 School Budgets out-turn 2020-21 Poverty Report
15-09-21	14.00 - 16.00 Zoom	Mount Street / Cradoc (Cabinet 21-09-21) Llanbedr (Cabinet 21-09-21) Churchstoke (Cabinet 21-09-21)
08-12-21	14.00 - 16.00 Zoom	Llangedwyn / Llanfechain / Bro Cynllaith (Cabinet 14-12-21) Llanfyllin - Phase 2 (Cabinet 14-12-21) Ysgol Calon Cymru (Cabinet 14-12-21)
12-01-22	14.00 - 16.00 Zoom	WESP - post consultation (Cabinet 18-01-22)

County Councillor P Roberts (Chairman)