

## **Appendix C – Minutes of meetings with School Councils, Staff, Governors and Parents / Community**

	<b>Page</b>
1. Notes of meeting with Pupils	2
1.1 Welsh-medium pupils at Brecon High School	2
1.2 English-medium pupils at Brecon High School	3
1.3 Ysgol y Bannau	4
1.4 Sennybridge CP School	5
2. Minutes of meeting with Staff	7
3. Minutes of meeting with Governors	16
4. Minutes of meeting with Parents / Community	27

## 1. Notes of meetings with the School Councils

### 1.1 Meeting with pupils from the Welsh-medium Stream at Brecon High School

What do you think of the proposal?

- It's worrying, it's a big thing to happen and lots of our friends have already moved to Builth Wells High School
- Work is a lot harder without Welsh, the work is harder in English
- If there was no Welsh Stream here I would move
- If the Welsh Stream closes next year, will I still be able to do subjects in Welsh until I finish school?
- Pupils have gone to Ystalyfera because Builth Wells High School is in special measures
- Speaking Welsh is harder and have difficulty remembering words because of the lack of lessons through the medium of Welsh

Pupils were asked whether they would stay at Brecon High School if the Welsh-medium stream was removed or if they would transfer to alternative schools.

- Around half of the group said they would stay in Brecon High School and go to the English Stream

What is it like in the Welsh Stream here?

- Everyone is like a community, we are the only ones who speak Welsh in Brecon High School
- If it closes it will affect the numbers going to Ysgol Y Bannau
- We're like one family
- If one goes then everyone goes like sheep, that's why the numbers decreased
- Lots of year 6 pupils from Ysgol Y Bannau are coming here if the stream stays

What's the effect this will have on you?

- If the stream closes then we would have to choose between staying with our friends or keeping the Welsh language
- It would be more difficult to attend appointments and we would have to miss more school when we have them
- If we moved to the English Stream then we would have to do Welsh Second Language
- The stream is important to the country, we should have the chance to speak and learn in Welsh
- This is happening because of money
- We would miss out on education because of the travelling
- It would be easier to close Builth Wells Welsh stream because there isn't a Welsh medium school there like there is here in Brecon
- The area is very anglicised, there's no future for Welsh here if the stream closes
- If the stream moves to Builth would we have to go to Llandrindod as well?
- Builth is in special measures and Brecon is improving

New build?

- In the booklet it suggests that the Welsh Stream won't be in the new building – it's as though you have already made the decision
- You are splitting friendships
- The ethos of the school will change
- If there isn't a Welsh stream here, then parents won't choose Welsh for their children
- What will happen to the teachers who only teach subjects through the medium of Welsh?

- How much money are you spending on transport to Builth?
- If you hadn't made it so obvious that you were going to close the Welsh stream here then parents wouldn't have moved their children

What about the effect on after school clubs?

- There are lots of revision classes after school, which would be hard to go to if we moved to Builth Wells
- It will affect our extra-curricular activities
- Would have to stop going to clubs

Anything else you would like to add?

- Apart from the size of the Welsh Stream, what is the actual problem with the stream here?
- In year 7 we had lots of lessons in Welsh but now there are only 2
- Teachers have moved because of the consultation
- Have you been to Ysgol Y Bannau to speak with them?

## 1.2 Meeting with English-medium pupils at Brecon High School

Is there anything you would like to say or ask us?

- We want to keep the Welsh Stream open, we need to keep the Welsh language local, it's important for Brecon town
- It would have a massive impact on the school if the Welsh Stream was closed. Everyone is Welsh here and Ysgol y Bannau is here
- If pupils missed the bus to Builth then their parents would have to pay for them to get there
- When Powys started these consultations the numbers in the Welsh Stream started to decrease

What will the impact be if the Welsh stream was closed?

- It would be a big impact. We have Welsh events here, like the Eisteddfod and if there was no Welsh stream then there would be less Welsh events and it would have an impact on the cultural side of the school
- Lots of Welsh stream pupils have left already, if the Welsh stream stays then we would have enough pupils for sports teams.
- If it stayed then more people would come here
- We should be able to have a choice of school
- If more Welsh students came here then they would have more choice
- You are restricting their choice

What impact would there be on pupils that had to move schools?

- They wouldn't have many friends
- It would be harder because they would have to travel and that would affect their learning

What would the impact of travel be on the pupils?

- They would have to leave early and will be tired which will affect their learning
- Some may suffer from travel sickness
- They won't have time to do after school activities
- Parents will have to pay for travel to after school clubs
- Having more subjects in Welsh won't be as good if the travelling effects their learning and study
- If the Welsh Stream goes, will Welshness go as well?

How do you feel about the New Build?

- A Welsh Stream would enhance the new build
- If the Welsh stream have to move to Builth Wells then it's like saying "You can't come here"
- All schools in Wales should have a Welsh Stream or have the opportunity to have a Welsh Stream
- If the Welsh Stream closed no one would send their children to Ysgol Y Bannau
- If the Welsh Stream remained in the new build then the Welsh Stream would appeal to more parents
- If parents wanted their children to go to Builth Wells High School then they would have sent their children to primary school in Builth Wells to start with

What do you think would happen to the pupils in the Welsh Stream now?

- They would go to a different school
- Some Welsh pupils may be forced to go into the English Stream
- They would have to choose between losing friends and losing their Welsh
- They should be able to choose between going to Brecon High School or Builth Wells High School
- It would be a big impact on our year
- If Builth Wells can have a Welsh Stream and more subjects, why can't we?
- If we get a new school, would we get new/additional teachers?
- When you learn 2 languages, it improves productivity and moving from lessons in Welsh and lessons in English helps

### **1.3 Meeting with pupils from Ysgol y Bannau**

Do you have any questions or anything you want to say about what's happening?

- You are spending millions on a new school but you are not letting Welsh come into it.
- If people play instruments, then there won't be any time for us to have lessons before going to school if we have to go to another school
- What will happen to Ysgol y Bannau? If the Welsh goes from the high school, parents will think what's the point in sending their children to Welsh education and the numbers will go down

What do you like about there being a Welsh Stream at Brecon High School?

- It's good but if it moves then we won't have Welsh next door
- People here want to still speak Welsh, they feel more clever because they are bilingual
- The teachers like the children from Ysgol y Bannau

What don't you like about there being a Welsh Stream at Brecon High School?

- Only some of the classes are in Welsh
- That there is going to be a new school but no Welsh Stream will be there
- Going into an English Stream after going to a Welsh school
- Less people in the community will speak Welsh if there's no Welsh stream at the high school
- Wouldn't like to be in a small class of 2 or 3

What would the effects be, if the Welsh Stream was to close?

- You won't hear Welsh in the corridor

Would you still go to Brecon if there was no Welsh Stream?

- One person said no, the rest said they would still go there and join the English stream
- More pupils from Ysgol y Bannau are going to Brecon High School this year

Do you worry about being split from friends?

- We grew up together and then we won't get to see each other
- It would be different
- Different because they wouldn't know the school because it would be a new place and new people
- If you are ill in school, it is really far for parents to come and get them
- Maybe parents don't want their children to travel

Do any of you go to any clubs outside of school? What time are they?

- The clubs attended are at the sports centre which are at 4:30/5 or at 7
- Year 5 and 6 went to Brecon High School to play games
- Pupils in Brecon High School go to the Welsh Stream but they have some lessons with the English Stream

How would the closure of the Welsh Stream effect you?

- We would have to get used to having lessons in English

What about if you had to go to another school?

- It would be hard to go from a Welsh school to having some lessons in English and then move to a Welsh school again

What do you think of the idea of a Welsh-medium secondary school instead of a dual stream secondary school?

- I like the Welsh model like Ystalyfera and prefer it to a dual stream school
- In a Welsh-medium school you can speak Welsh and everyone understands you, if you go to a dual stream school not everyone speaks Welsh so you have to speak English
- In a dual stream school you can help others to speak Welsh

Anything you would like to say or ask?

- Think about all the fumes because of the extra buses, in school we say "Think Global, Think Local"
- Worrying about the numbers that will attend Ysgol Y Bannau
- The consultations are making parents send their children elsewhere
- Family member has gone through Welsh education and it upsets her that she may not get to
- The number of pupils is decreasing and teachers are losing their jobs.
- Worried that Ysgol Y Bannau will have to move as well.

#### **1.4 Meeting with pupils from Sennybridge**

What is good about there being a Welsh Stream at Brecon High School?

- If you're in the English Stream then pupils in the Welsh Stream can teach you Welsh
- People can speak Welsh in school
- You can learn in 2 languages
- Speak in Welsh about the work
- Carry your education on in Welsh
- It's local, Welsh is staying local

- If you're friends with people in the English Stream in primary school then you can stay together in High School
- People in Brecon can decide to go to either stream
- If Welsh Stream closes then will probably go to the English Stream
- There will be less people speaking Welsh if the Welsh stream closes

Is there anything you don't like about there being a Welsh Stream in Brecon High School?

- There aren't many pupils in the Welsh stream
- It's a waste of classes because there are only 19 pupils there
- It's a waste of teachers and money because they are teaching small classes

If the Welsh Stream were to close, how would it affect you?

- The travelling is inconvenient to parents
- You won't hear much Welsh around Brecon
- The numbers in Welsh will go down
- It will affect the language

Would anything be better if there wasn't a Welsh Stream at Brecon High School?

- We would have more Welsh speaking friends in a Welsh school
- They would save money because there would be more students in a class
- There are more people in Builth so you would hear more Welsh
- It would boost the Welsh language in Builth Wells and Ystalyfera but there would be a negative effect on Brecon

What would be worse if there wasn't a Welsh Stream at Brecon High School?

- You would have to travel more
- May not make it back in time for extra-curricular activities
- You have to make new friends
- Friends would live miles away

Do you worry about splitting up from your friends?

- Yes but it may boost your confidence because you will have more friends
- Won't affect us because we don't learn in Welsh so our friends will be with us

How do you think it will affect pupils with disabilities?

- They will be used to one teacher and if they move then they won't have that teacher any more
- They may be happier in smaller classes like in Brecon High School
- If someone is in a wheelchair then they may find it easier to move around a smaller school

Do you have any questions or anything you want to tell us?

- What if parents can't travel to Builth or Ystalyfera?
- It will affect the language because you can't really speak Welsh in Brecknockshire so closing the Welsh stream will have an effect on the language
- If the Welsh Stream closes then the English Stream pupils won't have the opportunity to learn and practice their Welsh

## 2. Minutes of meeting with Staff

**Minutes of a consultation meeting with staff of Brecon High School, held on Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2016, at Brecon High School, in relation to a proposal to close the Welsh medium stream at the school from 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2017, with Brecon High School becoming an English-medium school from 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2017**

### Present

Marianne Evans, School Transformation Manager  
Jane Thomas, Professional Lead Finance  
Gareth Jones, Senior Manager, School Central Support Service  
Rachael Lingard, HR Business Partner

### Brecon High School staff

R. Broadbridge	R. Carpenter
Linda Jones	Rhian Owen
Anna Stephens	Niall Bell
Tracey Gibbs	Geraint ?
Jane MacLennan	Richard Wyatt
Donna Watson	H East
Nia Williams-Price	J Hosking
M. Humphries	Gareth Gillard
Jenny Bentley	H Davies
Alex Griffiths	L Cross
J Bryant	A Morgan
M Hirst	

Marianne Evans informed staff that consultation on the proposal to close the Welsh stream at the school from 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2017, began on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2016, and closes on 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2017. She explained why this was the third consultation on the proposal. When the report on the first consultation on the proposal to close the Welsh stream was considered by Cabinet in September 2015 Members decided that Welsh-medium education should be included in the wider review of secondary schools. Consultation on the wider proposal was carried out in April, 2016, and a report was considered by the Cabinet in September 2016, when Cabinet members decided to abandon the proposal consulted on. As the proposal to remove the Welsh medium stream from Brecon High School was part of a wider proposal, legal advice was that there should be re-consultation on the proposal to close the Welsh stream. Cabinet therefore directed officers to start a fresh consultation on removal of the Welsh stream. Legally, this is a new consultation.

Marianne Evans explained the two reasons for the proposal:

- The low number of pupils in the stream;
- the need to ensure linguistic progression for Welsh medium learners through to the end of KS4 and into KS5.

The following comments/questions were received from staff:

#### **1. How long ago was Ysgol y Bannau built?**

#### Response

About 20 years ago.

- 2. At the time Ysgol y Bannau was built there was a lot of talk about Welsh medium primary pupils being able to choose Welsh medium provision at this school but there has been a change of view.**
- 3. I have a niece who attended the Welsh stream in Sennybridge CP School and then the Welsh stream at this school. She is now employed as a Welsh speaker and she could not have done that had she not attended the Welsh stream here. The culture and ethos of Brecon High School has been strengthened by the Welsh medium learners here. The Authority has impacted on our numbers by awarding home to school transport to other schools.**

Response

In terms of home to school transport, the Authority has a duty to provide transport to the closest school to the learner's home address, which provides education through the language of choice. Transport is currently provided to Ysgol Ystalyfera following a transport appeal.

- 4. By providing transport to out of county you have undercut the Welsh medium provision at this school.**

Response

The precedent was set as a result of a transport appeal.

- 5. So you are expecting children from the Sennybridge area to travel out of county to Ystalyfera rather than to Builth?**

Response

We will be discussing with Neath Port Talbot Council whether they will extend the catchment area of Ysgol Ystalyfera to include Sennybridge, if this proposal goes through.

- 6. So Powys County Council's solution is to transport Welsh medium pupils from the Sennybridge area out of county for Welsh medium education?**

Response

There are not enough Welsh medium learners to allow a viable Welsh medium stream at Brecon High School. Numbers of Welsh medium learners have not grown significantly since Ysgol y Bannau was established 20 years ago.

Does it matter whether a parent chooses an out of county provider or not as long as the child gets appropriate provision?

- 7. The nearest Welsh medium provision to Sennybridge is at this school.**
- 8. The fact that the state of the school buildings here has not been addressed is part of the problem. I can understand why parents opt for other Secondary schools when they see the state of the school buildings here. Parents want their children to be taught in a nice environment.**

Response

The state of the school buildings at Ysgol Ystalyfera is quite tired and we understand that Neath Port Talbot Council are planning a capital investment to remodel the school. As an Authority we recognise



Brecon High School is the only secondary school in Powys that is in a very bad condition - condition D. Gwernyfed High School has a mixture of school buildings in different states of condition.

9. **Historically, the numbers in the Welsh medium stream at this school have always been high. I have been teaching here in the Welsh stream in classes of 25- 30. 20 years ago my classes always had around 24 pupils. Last year, all of a sudden, my class went to around 3-4 within 6-8 weeks because of the uncertainty about the Welsh stream. You are talking about the numbers in the Welsh stream decreasing but they have not dipped historically as they are doing now. That document is biased and does not reflect the true picture.**

Response

Welsh Government require us to provide data for 5 years within the consultation document.

10. **The context of the situation is missing. You need to explain that the Welsh stream at Brecon High School was viable until everyone panicked and there was a domino effect once it was suggested that the Welsh stream was under threat. The consultation had a massive effect on pupil numbers in the Welsh stream.**
11. **You talk about building capacity at Builth, but you fail to understand that many parents of pupils at Ysgol y Bannau are non-Welsh speakers who take a “leap of faith” when they choose Welsh medium education for their children. We are a truly bilingual school. Those parents will not take that “leap of faith” to send their children across the county for Welsh medium education. You will be losing students to Welsh medium education at a time when Welsh Government is trying increase Welsh medium provision. You seem to be listening to Rhag which is led by parents who want their children to be taught in designated Welsh medium schools. Students here benefit hugely from 1<sup>st</sup> language Welsh students being on this campus. By putting Welsh medium learners in a designated Welsh medium school you “ghetto” the language. We successfully integrate the Nepalese community and students from Eastern Europe but now you want to take the Welsh medium voice out of Brecon High School.**
12. **Rhag is a vocal group but it doesn’t necessarily represent all the Welsh speaking community.**
13. **You don’t want to listen to us. We want the best for our children but you are not listening to the views of the majority of parents.**

Response

We recognise if the proposal goes forward there may be an impact on the numbers in Welsh medium provision in the first few years but Welsh medium provision has grown in Newtown and a new Welsh medium primary school has been built. The pupils who transfer to Secondary education from the Welsh medium primary school in Newtown don’t access Secondary Welsh medium education in Newtown, they travel to Llanfair Caereinion High School for Welsh medium education.

14. **We had a meeting last night with parents of pupils at Ysgol y Bannau and most said they would not transfer their children to Builth for Welsh medium education. They want them to be educated here.**

Response

Rhag is a national organisation with local branches. Rhag is a consultee of this consultation. I would suggest, without putting words in Rhag’s mouth that their view is to support designated Welsh

medium schools. I think they would probably not support this proposal as it does not propose to replace the current provision with a designated Welsh medium school. At the end of the day, the Cabinet has to listen to what has been said and no decision has yet been made.

**15. Powys is such an enormous county. I don't think it is helpful to compare this area to Montgomeryshire. When you did earlier consultation you hoped you would create a critical mass by moving Welsh medium learners to Builth. You do not have that critical mass. Not all Welsh medium learners have transferred from this school to Builth. It has had the opposite effect because you have split the Welsh medium group. You have taken away a thriving Welsh medium provision at Brecon High School. A lot of parents are not going to move their children to Builth. It is not what they want.**

**16. When my child was in Ysgol y Bannau all her cohort transferred to Welsh medium provision at Brecon High School but, last year, the children transferred to 6 different schools**

**17. Parents of pupils in Ysgol y Bannau don't want their children to travel to Builth so they are sending their children to Gwernyfed or to Crickhowell. There is also leakage out of county and into English medium education.**

**18. I don't speak Welsh. I can't understand it. We are a school now which is on the way up. Spiritually, and linguistically, the feeling of being Welsh only happens if you are surrounded by people who speak Welsh. Brecon has always had a strong Welsh speaking community. We offer opportunities for Welsh speakers at this school. We are having new buildings here. How was it ever considered to take Welsh provision out of this school? You should be supporting us to provide for Welsh medium learners.**

**19. How central will Welsh medium provision be? What is the most southerly Welsh medium primary school?**

Response

Ysgol Dyffryn y Glowyr, which is one of the new primary schools in Ystradynlais.

**20. Where will the most southerly dedicated Welsh medium stream secondary school be?**

Response

In Powys, Builth

**21. Brecon has good links to the southern part of the county.**

**22. I attended this school and many of my friends were Welsh medium pupils. I would be devastated if those friends had gone to different schools and if there had been separate schools for English and Welsh speaking students.**

Response

If this school became an English medium school you could still deliver some subjects through the medium of Welsh. In a category 4 school it would be expected that the school promotes Welsh culture and language as it does currently.

Response

I would expect that when the new school is built the pupil retention rate will be higher than it currently is.

**23. You will have a Welsh medium primary school directly opposite a new building and you will be saying that those pupils will not be coming to Brecon High when the school has a Welsh ethos. Brecon High School is improving. Your proposal is financially, not educationally, driven.**

Response

The points you are making are valid. The school is in an improving situation and there will be a new school building. The school is in a different position to where it was in April and that will have to be reflected in the Cabinet report.

**24. In the light of an improving situation I know that parents of Welsh medium pupils in Sennybridge CP School will be moving their children to Brecon High School when the new school building is opened. The numbers in the Welsh stream at Sennybridge School are very buoyant. Are you saying that those parents can only choose a single language secondary school? There is an opportunity to extend and improve Welsh medium provision at this school.**

**25. I am not a Welsh speaker but my father was a Welsh speaker and was head of Welsh in a Swansea school. My father did not teach me Welsh. If I had been here and there had not been an opportunity to speak Welsh, I would have been disappointed. Your proposal is retrograde step which goes against Welsh Government policy of trying to promote Welsh.**

**26. The wording in the document makes it sound as if it is a “done deal” and that Welsh medium pupils will be unable to access the new building.**

**27. You said that a Category 4 school can still have some Welsh medium lessons. How does that work?**

Response

In a category 4 school pupils will be taught mainly through English but it is possible to provide one or more subjects through the medium of Welsh, which can include Welsh first language.

Response

Newtown and Welshpool High Schools deliver 1<sup>st</sup> language Welsh to a number of pupils.

**26. There are Welsh language pupils who do not want to travel. Can our Welsh language pupils still continue to do Welsh first language? They clearly could not choose Welsh second language.**

**27. What about those pupils who have completed Key Stage 3 as Welsh first language. What is going to happen to those children in year 9 who do not want to go to Builth High School because they cannot do Welsh 2<sup>nd</sup> language? You say you are going to allow pupils entering Year 11 to do Welsh first language.**

Response

If those students stay at the school we would need to look at funding the school for a first language Welsh course for 2 years to allow them to complete the GCSE.

**28. About 20 years ago when I was appointed as a head of PE, one of criteria when making appointments was to appoint a Welsh speaker. If a Welsh speaking applicant and an English**

applicant had the same qualifications and experience, priority would have been given to the Welsh speaker. When there was a change of Headteacher that policy changed and it hasn't been supported over the years. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy. If there are no teachers to deliver subjects through the medium of Welsh then Welsh provision will decrease. That should not have been allowed. There has to be a positive drive to promote Welsh medium education, led and supported by the Authority. There has to be consistency. I am concerned about the amount of support for Welsh medium provision at Brecon High School. Welsh medium provision has not been fully supported and has been undercut repeatedly and consistently. The Welsh medium stream is an essential part of this school. 20 years ago I heard children speaking Welsh at this school. It is more than just the language that is in jeopardy when you lose the Welsh medium provision.

29. In the consultation document, it says Welsh medium provision will continue to be provided to years 11 and 12. Can you confirm there will be an amendment to this document? It needs to be clarified in the document. You have to make this document clear for parents and it is not.

30. There are parents of pupils in Ysgol y Bannau who want to bring their children to this school. How many it will take for you to listen and do what they want? Is there are number?

#### Response

There isn't a number. This is a stand-alone consultation which will run its course and a decision will be taken by the Cabinet. You have seen, over the last 6 months that Cabinet members have listened and changed their minds on a number of consultations. That it is the nature of the consultation process.

31. This document does rely heavily on numbers. You have to state a viable number for the Welsh medium provision to continue.

32. The numbers in Welsh medium are low because of the consultation. We are still in that situation because of the uncertainty. Parents would still be prepared to take that "leap of faith" and opt for Welsh medium education if the Welsh stream was retained at Brecon High School. People in Brecon want to keep the Welsh medium provision at this school.

33. This school is "on the up". Why would parents want their children to go to a school that is failing and is 20 miles away?

34. Have you considered how much more it is going to cost the Authority in transport costs by transporting the pupils? It is not just from one area. It will be from multiple areas and you may end up with minibuses with one pupil in. That will increase costs. What is the financial burden you will incur?

35. The reliance on home to school transport will make it more difficult for children to take part in extra-curricular activities. You will need to provide more transport for Welsh medium pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities.

#### Response

The Authority does not provide transport for extra-curricular activities but how Welsh medium pupils from the Brecon area would be able to access extra-curricular activities, if the stream closes, along with other pupils who are transported into the school, is a real issue that needs to be recognised. In terms of the cost of transport, free transport arrangements are already in place to transport Welsh

medium learners to Ystalyfera and there is already transport going to Builth High School and therefore the additional impact of this proposal is minimal.

**36. Some parents may be able to provide transport for their children to attend extra-curricular activities but some may not. Those pupils will be disadvantaged.**

**37. It is hard for parents to get their children to extra-curricular activities even when it is just a short journey. When are the children expected to do their homework with all the extra travelling?**

**38. There is a socio-economic aspect to this. There are quite a lot of pupils attending Ysgol y Bannau now who are from fairly deprived backgrounds and whose families may not have the means to provide transport to and from after school activities.**

Response

Those are key factors which will be highlighted.

**39. If implemented, the proposal will have a huge impact on pupils.**

**40. There is a bus already going to Builth. That extra bus is as a result of the last consultation when pupils transferred to Welsh medium provision in Builth. The earlier consultation has undermined the Welsh medium provision at this school.**

**41. I was at Builth High School, at the time Welsh medium pupils transferred from this school, and it was difficult to accommodate all the Welsh medium learners. There is such a rich tapestry here. Pupils from the Nepalese community hear incidental Welsh. Now they have an opportunity to integrate with children who speak Welsh as a first language. That opportunity will be taken from them.**

**42. Powys County Council was supposed to support Brecon High School to get to category 2b status and you did not support us but you say on page 9 of the consultation document that the Authority is committed to promoting the benefit of Welsh medium education.**

Response

All schools were given the same level of support in 2011 to become category 2b schools. We worked hard with those schools and other organisations as well. In 2015, the Cabinet decided to start a new consultation and recognised that the category 2b target may not be achieved.

**43. We have been financially held back and that has been used against us.**

Response

The problem with the challenge to all schools to be category 2 b schools, at that time, was that you need the staff to teach through the medium of Welsh and how to build that capacity when facing financial pressures.

**44. We showed commitment to employ Welsh speaking staff but, as a result of the consultation, pupils in the Welsh stream “jumped ship” and we had to shelve our commitment to take on Welsh medium staff. We were “stabbed in the back” by the consultation process. When pupils left the school it compounded the problem because there were financial implications.**

**45. How is greater clarity going to be given in relation to the proposal for Secondary schools in mid Powys?**

Response

The proposal for Builth and Llandrindod High Schools is currently in an objection period, i.e. a statutory notice has been published for closure of both schools and to open a new school on the two sites from September 2018. .

**46. I know parents who are moving their children to Hereford because of lack of clarity in relation to what is happening to Secondary education in Llandrindod.**

Response

I understand that uncertainty has an impact and that uncertainty has had an impact on numbers in the Welsh stream in Brecon High School.

Response

The proposal is that the Key Stage 3 and the Key Stage 4 curriculum will be delivered on both sites (in Builth and in Llandrindod) but it will be down to the governing body of the new school to decide from which site Post 16 provision will be delivered. The Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 curriculum will be delivered from both sites and the proposal is for Welsh medium education to be provided from the Builth site.

**47. I have been fascinated by listening to our staff speak with such passion. I am aghast as to why the proposal to remove Welsh medium education from Brecon High School is even being considered. People have expressed themselves with such eloquence and passion.**

**48. You can't use the same model for Brecon as that used for other areas. The geographical make-up of Brecon is different. Brecon is unique. It has employment. It has a Welsh medium primary school and good communication. It seems unbelievable that a brand new school without Welsh medium provision is being considered.**

**49. Look at the pupils who have gone through Brecon High School. The majority of the high fliers who are getting "A\*s" and "A" grades are coming from the Welsh stream. You cannot say that removal of the Welsh stream will not have an impact on the school.**

**50. Pupils in the Welsh stream are completely immersed in the life of the school. They are involved in the sports and musical life of the school.**

**51. Rob Broadbridge:**

**I wonder why there is no councillor representative here today because they were here last time. It is striking. What value is being placed on this consultation? This is the third time there has been consultation on this proposal and staff have invested in this again.**

Response

Councillor Arwel Jones was unable to attend this meeting but will be at the meeting with governors and the parents and community.

**52. Rob Broadbridge**

**The timing of this consultation is going to have an impact on our ability to design a curriculum for the next academic year. What curriculum do I put together? How can the curriculum be planned when it is not known whether or not there will be a Welsh stream**

next year? March is far too late for staff to put a curriculum together. There are some staff here who will be affected by that decision. How do I employ those staff if there is no Welsh curriculum? There is uncertainty for staff. The timing of the consultation does not help year 6/7 transition. Last year we had to extend the deadline for applications from Welsh medium pupils to July. You are talking about numbers increasing again but we don't know what our pupil numbers will be? There could be an impact on funding. £3k per pupil means "a big hit" for us.

What has the impact of creating the critical mass been? What difference has it made for Builth High School? What difference has it made post 16? The South Powys Consortium was set up so that Welsh medium "A" levels could be delivered from Builth. What difference is it going to make in terms of increasing Welsh medium provision at post 16? What difference will it make to those learners? We can see what the difference will be here.

**53. Rob Broadbridge**

**Transport costs are going to increase.**

Response

We recognise that additional costs have been incurred for school transport.

Response

There is no best timing for any school consultation and reorganisation. We know that the current timescale does not help you. This consultation finishes on 9<sup>th</sup> January. Should Cabinet give approval to proceed to a statutory notice, the notice would be published for one month. A final decision could be expected by mid-April. There is no quick way to complete the statutory process.

**54. Rob Broadbridge**

**We understand that but consultation is about understanding the impact. I could have some key members of staff choosing to leave because of this consultation.**

**51. This school has been under pressure for so many years. Yet the same staff are still here. This shows the commitment of the school's staff to keep the Welsh stream open. We will keep fighting this battle.**

**55. There is going to be more of a fight than councillors realise.**

Response

If the proposal is taken forward, discussion will be needed around timing and financial and funding matters. The minutes of this meeting will be shared with the school but they won't pick up the emotion expressed by staff.

Response

I can assure you that finance is not the main driver for the proposal. The savings from the first proposal were far more than for this proposal. Finance is a consideration but it is not the main driver.

**53. My children attended the Welsh stream in this school and they were both in small cohorts. They both live in England now but they still use the Welsh language. They did not have every subject taught through the medium of Welsh. I am proud of what they achieved thanks to this school.**

### 3. Minutes of meeting with Governors

**Minutes of a consultation meeting with governors of Brecon High School held on Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2016, at Brecon High School, in relation to a proposal to close the Welsh medium stream at the school from 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2017, with Brecon High School becoming an English-medium school from 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2017**

#### Present

Cllr Arwel Jones, Portfolio Holder for Education  
Ian Roberts, Head of Schools Service  
Marianne Evans, Senior Manager, School Transformation  
Gareth Jones, Senior Manager, School Central Support Service  
Jane Thomas, Acting Head of Financial Services  
Rachael Lingard, HR Business Partner

#### Brecon High School governors

E T Morgan N Maughan Sean O'Connor Martha Rees Helen East Jane Mackenna	Sian Drinan Gareth Gillard Alan Canning Alison Phillips David Meredith Peter Rowlands
--	--

Cllr Arwel Jones welcomed governors to the meeting. Governors were reminded that the consultation period runs from 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2016, to 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2017, and meetings with staff, governors and parents were being held as part of the consultation process. Cllr Arwel Jones reminded governors of the proposal under consultation, which is:

***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 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2017.***

The following comments/questions were received from governors:

- 1. It is a shame that the Portfolio Holder and Head of Schools Service were not present at the consultation meeting with staff to see the passion shown by members of staff on behalf of the Welsh stream. We seriously want to keep the Welsh stream open.**

#### Response

Please accept my apologies. Unfortunately I had another commitment which meant I could not attend the meeting with staff.

- 2. Are the pupils being consulted and when?**

#### Response

Yes, a meeting has been arranged to hear the pupils' views.

- 3. In the consultation document you say that 19 Welsh medium pupils is insufficient for a viable Welsh medium stream. What would be sufficient pupil numbers to keep the Welsh stream open?**



#### Response

In terms of funding, there are 2 elements – one element is pupil-led. The school also receives a dual stream uplift if the school is delivering 100% curriculum through Welsh and English medium which is equivalent to 2.5 FTE teachers, half a teacher per year group. To be viable a school would need a minimum of 12-15 Welsh medium learners per year. This would only fund a single teaching group per year.

#### Response

In terms of curriculum provision at Key Stage 4, the number of Welsh medium pupils at this school would mean it is difficult to provide breadth of choice. If there were 19 Welsh medium pupils in every year group it would be different, but there are only 19 Welsh medium pupils from Years 7-11 in the school. Viability is driven by finances and the number of pupils, and this will dictate the curriculum offer.

#### Response

You would need a year group of 35-40 pupils at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 to make the Welsh stream financially viable and allow the school to offer 2 teaching groups per year.

I think Builth High School, in two of the Key Stage 3 year groups, has 2 Welsh medium teaching groups but we can check that information.

- 4. Can we have historical figures to see the impact this consultation has had on pupil numbers in the Welsh stream? If you look at the table which shows historical data, we had a huge drop in numbers due to pupils leaving this school to go to Builth High School because of the uncertainty over the future of the Welsh stream here.**

#### Response

The consultation report that goes to Cabinet will make it clear that the uncertainty about the future of the Welsh stream, over the last 3 years, has had a negative impact on the number of pupils in the Welsh stream at Brecon High School and has resulted in an increase in the number of Welsh medium pupils at Builth High School.

#### Response

At the staff consultation meeting, it was strongly emphasised that the consultation process has had a strong impact on pupil numbers. Another point made by staff was that the consultation document was restricted to 5 years of data but a more historical context needs to be provided.

- 5. My daughter left Brecon High School 3 years ago, and, at that time, there was uncertainty. Uncertainty has had a detrimental effect in sustaining pupil numbers in the Welsh stream because people are not sure what it is happening. In 2014, there were 19 in my daughter's Welsh medium class and by the next year it had dropped off to 13 due to uncertainty about the future of the Welsh stream. This is not just short-term. The uncertainty has been going on for a long time.**

#### Response

It is important that you respond to the consultation in writing to that effect. If you have the evidence of uncertainty beyond the consultation period, please put that into writing.

6. **If you are aiming for two classes in each cohort we would dispute that. We have not had that situation in Brecon High School. We just had one class and it provided an excellent education. We have Welsh medium pupils in classes of 2 and 3 but it is more important to them to have their education here than to have to travel to Builth. We firmly believe Welsh medium provision should be here in the community where there is a Welsh presence.**
7. **There is quite a groundswell of demand from parents of current year 6 pupils in Ysgol y Bannau who fully intend to send their children to this school for Welsh medium education when the children transfer to Secondary school. If there was no Welsh medium stream in Brecon High School, they would start taking their children out of Welsh medium completely. We know some students in the Welsh stream here who would have opted for English medium education rather than travel to Builth if there had been no Welsh stream in Brecon High School.**
8. **I would dispute the statement that, over a number of years, some pupils in Sennybridge have transferred to Welsh medium provision in Ystalyfera due to parental preference. It is because of the uncertainty about the future of the Welsh medium stream in Brecon High School that those parents chose to send their children to Ystalyfera when they would have preferred to send them to this school.**

Response

The uncertainty about the future of Welsh medium provision at Brecon High School, over last 3 years, has affected pupil numbers in the Welsh stream. I cannot deny that. It has had an impact. I accept what you say.

9. **The uncertainty about the future of the Welsh stream in Brecon High School is also affecting pupil numbers in Ysgol y Bannau. Some parents have chosen English medium over Welsh medium because of the uncertainty.**
10. **Numbers in the 3-year-old setting at Ysgol y Bannau have significantly decreased over the last two years. Before the uncertainty parents who did not speak Welsh themselves were “taking a leap of faith” and were choosing Welsh medium education for their children. English parents will take the step to send their children to Welsh medium provision if they know their children can have continuity of provision locally. A lot of the parents of pupils at Ysgol y Bannau weren’t Welsh speaking but there was a significant drop in the number of parents opting for Welsh medium education because of uncertainty about continuity of provision.**
11. **What happens to the Welsh stream at Brecon High School may have a significant impact on Ysgol y Bannau. Has there been any engagement with parents of pupils at Ysgol y Bannau?**

Response

Yes, that will be part of the consultation process.

Response

I would expect parents of pupils at Ysgol y Bannau to attend the public meeting. It is an open meeting and parents of Ysgol y Bannau and other primary schools have received information about the consultation.

Response

We are also meeting with pupils in the school.

- 12. Can we be reassured that if Welsh medium provision does not remain in Brecon High School that there will be no uncertainty about Welsh medium provision being in Builth, given the proposal to close Llandrindod and Builth High Schools and to open a new school?**

Response

A report on the outcome of the statutory notice in relation to the proposal for Llandrindod and Builth High Schools will be considered by the Cabinet. It is likely to be February or March before Cabinet takes the final decision on the proposal for Llandrindod and Builth High Schools. It would have been wrong for Cabinet to take a decision on the Welsh medium aspect as part of the Gwernyfed/Brecon proposal. The consultation on the proposal to remove the Welsh stream from Brecon High School is a totally separate consultation. This is a totally separate consultation and subject to a separate Cabinet decision.

Response

I know there has been a period of uncertainty. There is always a period of uncertainty with any school proposal. Could you envisage that, in 5 years' time when things are settled, there will be a strong relationship between Ysgol y Bannau and the school in Builth?

- 13. It does not make sense.**

Response

There is evidence in some areas of Powys, where there is breadth of curriculum offered through Welsh medium parents have taken that "leap of faith" to opt for Welsh medium education for their children. In some areas of Powys, we now have Welsh medium schools where over 50% of pupils are from non-Welsh speaking homes.

- 14. I think there are a lot of people in Brecon who would not want their children educated other than in Brecon.**
- 15. We have spoken about a more optimistic vision for Brecon, especially with the new school build. If you are a pupil in Ysgol y Bannau and you see a brand new secondary school across road and know that if you speak Welsh you have to go to a school 20 miles away, what message does that send in relation to diversity and inclusion?**
- 16. Removal of the Welsh stream at this school will mean that those parents who are quite confident in their Welsh language skills will send their children to Ysgol y Bannau and then on to Builth High School but English speaking parents will not opt for Welsh medium education for their children. You will not be growing or building Welsh medium any more. I don't think that is what we want for the Welsh language. I would have never been able to choose Welsh medium education for my children if it had been in Builth because I don't drive. The people it is going to affect are those families who do not run two cars or children with learning difficulties and medical problems. Welsh medium education is not going to be an option for them. In terms of equal opportunities, the proposal is not a good idea.**

Response

I understand there is an issue with travelling distance but there is evidence to indicate that parents will opt for Welsh medium education if they want continuity and breadth of curriculum and many

parents who opt for Welsh medium education do not necessarily have cars. It is down to parental choice. I understand the point you made about pupils in Ysgol y Bannau looking across the road at a 21<sup>st</sup> Century school which may only provide for English medium pupils.

- 17. My son has gone out of county to Merthyr College to study. My son has to travel and he is very tired by end of the week. I have a friend whose children started off going to Builth and they got too tired so came back to Brecon. Taking the Welsh medium provision from Brecon High School will also mean splitting children from their friendship groups. If children have to attend doctors or dental appointments in Brecon during the school day, it will mean taking a lot more time out of school if they are studying in Builth.**
- 18. Hopefully, on Thursday, there will be parents of pupils in Ysgol y Bannau who will say they would be prepared to accept a not so broad curriculum providing it is local. You say that the Authority is committed to increasing the number of Welsh medium pupils so why can't support be there for pupils to come to Brecon High School?**
- 19. Why are we sending pupils to Builth High School for Welsh medium education? The distance those pupils have to travel has an impact on their ability to take part in extra-curricular activities such as sporting events, revision classes after school, drama and musical events. Those pupils will be prevented from taking part in extra-curricular activities in Builth. Some of our best rugby players at this school were in the Welsh medium stream.**
- 20. No mention has been made of Welsh medium pupils from Sennybridge. It concerns me that there are over 30 children travelling daily to Ystalyfera. What is it costing the County Council education budget to educate those children in Ystalyfera? Last year, between 4 and 6 Year 6 pupils from the Welsh medium stream in Sennybridge CP School transferred to the Secondary school in Ystalyfera and 2 came out of Welsh medium education to come to the English medium stream at this school. What is it costing to transport those children to Ystalyfera day in day out? New parents feel there has been little dialogue with them and they have had little choice. If it was decided to retain Welsh medium provision in this school, parents of those pupils in Sennybridge who opted for Welsh medium education in Ystalyfera would probably decide to transfer their children to Brecon High School**
- 21. Numbers in the Welsh stream classes lower down the school at Sennybridge are buoyant.**

Response

Yes, numbers in the Welsh medium stream at Sennybridge CP School are increasing. The Cylch Meithrin Early Years setting is having a positive impact on the Welsh stream at the school. The number of pupils between the English and Welsh stream at Sennybridge CP School is now more balanced.

- 22. Can you look at the potential number of pupils going out of county or waiting to come to Welsh provision at Brecon High School if it was available?**

Response

Transport is currently provided for Welsh medium pupils to the school in Ystalyfera as a result of a successful transport appeal by parents.

There is also school transport running from the Sennybridge area into Builth.

**23. How is Brecon High School categorised according to the National Model for Categorisation of schools?**

Response

The categorisation won't be published until end of December but we will ensure documentation that goes to cabinet reflects any change of categorisation.

**24. This documentation is biased. When a former pupil of Brecon High School read the consultation document they were appalled. This document is a damning indictment on the Authority. I have never understood why this school was not supported by the Authority to become a Category 2b school. It costs the Authority £110K to transport Welsh medium pupils to Ysgol Ystalyfera and Builth High School. What would it cost to bring this school up to at 2b status? The school currently gets £58K to deliver Welsh medium education. To bring the school up to 2b status would cost £47K. It is costing the Authority a lot of money to transport Welsh medium pupils to other schools, more than it would cost to bring Brecon High School up to 2b status. Who was responsible for not supporting the school to come up to 2b standard? The Authority is throwing away £50K because of the decision to grant transport to Builth High School for Welsh medium pupils. Why are people making those decisions? The decision not to bring this school up to a 2b standard should be subject to scrutiny. Someone within the Authority has to be responsible for that decision. Parents of pupils in Ysgol y Bannau are very passionate as to why they don't want to send their children to Builth High School. Why was the decision taken to pay for transport to Builth High School? How can you justify spending that amount of extra money to transport children to Builth after all you have heard tonight?**

Response

Cllr Meredith is asking for the reason why transport was granted. Are we able to provide that information?

Response

The first appeal was held around school transport provision to Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera. That was heard by the sub-committee of the Board which included the then portfolio holder Cllr David Jones. The parents were successful in their appeal and pupils were awarded transport. When Welsh medium pupils from Brecon High School transferred to Builth High School last year, free home-to-school transport was initially refused by the authority. Parents then appealed that decision, and won their appeal. The figures you quoted are in line with the figures taken to Scrutiny around the transport costs to Builth from Brecon.

**25. The decision was taken because Builth High School is a Category 2b school. If it had been stated that the finance would be provided to bring Brecon High School up to 2b status then those pupils would have stayed. Why was that decision taken when it has cost authority a lot of money?**

Response

In 2011, the Cabinet decided to give all secondary schools with Welsh streams the challenge of getting up to 2b status. All schools were at different levels at that time in terms of their Welsh-medium provision. That was the decision taken by Cabinet following the informal consultation in relation to secondary schools in 2011. In terms of support to schools - no school received a financial incentive, other than support by officers, to achieve Category 2b status. In January, 2015, the Cabinet recognised that insufficient progress had been made and decided to start a new review of secondary schools, which included a proposal to close the Welsh-medium provision in Brecon. It is

still the Council's policy to aim for Secondary Schools to be Category 2b until the current Welsh in Education Strategic Plan runs out in March. Every school was given same target challenge. Brecon High School grasped the challenge. Looking back, I question whether it was the right strategy because, in order to expand the level of provision offered through the medium of Welsh, there needed to be investment to provide teachers who could teach subjects through the medium of Welsh, and this was at a time when the authority and schools started to face the financial challenges that are now upon them.

**26. We have had taken decisions that have had a huge impact financially. We have chosen to continue with Welsh medium provision but there has been a huge exodus of Welsh medium pupils and that trend will continue. A Welsh-speaking Maths teacher left and it was not possible to replace him. We won't have the funding for the teachers so then we will have a financial deficit. If we can't employ the Welsh speaking staff because we can't afford to, it is not possible to provide breadth of curriculum for Welsh medium pupils. If we do employ the staff then it is seen as mismanaging our budget. There is a huge burden on both sides. Whatever decision we make we are damned. Fund us properly so we can provide local medium provision and the Welsh medium pupils are not transported elsewhere because they speak Welsh.**

**27. We could not provide 2b status on the current budget but now the Authority is spending £50K more to transport Welsh medium pupils to Builth than what it would have cost to bring this school up to 2b status. How can you justify spending an extra 50K transporting children? How can you justify that to the public? It is appalling.**

**28. I notice that there is going to be change at Ysgol Ystalyfera. There is going to be a new campus in Neath Port Talbot. How well known is that?**

Response

Neath Port Talbot CBC is planning to have a split-site school run from Ysgol Ystalyfera, with another site in the south of the borough in or close to Port Talbot.

**29. Are parents in this area aware of that proposal?**

Response

I believe the formal consultation process took place in 2015. In terms of parents from Powys. It is my understanding that the proposal will not have an impact on pupils. Key Stage 3, 4 and 5 Welsh medium provision will continue on the current Ysgol Gyfun site in Ystalyfera.

**30. When will you know what the intake from Ysgol y Bannau to Brecon High School in 2017/18 academic year will be?**

Response

The School Admissions Team is currently going through the process to allocate places.

**31. Do the projected figures have any bearing on this document? They should influence a decision about the future of the Welsh language in this school.**

Response

We can include projected numbers of Welsh medium pupils transferring from Ysgol y Bannau to Brecon High School in the consultation report that goes back to Cabinet, but we need to be aware that parents can change their minds up to the time pupils are admitted.

We can include early data that we have.

**32. Does everyone who wants to go to Builth High School have to apply for school transport?**

Response

As the officer with responsibility for entitlement to transport, I would review the level of Welsh medium provision available in the local school. There would have to be a significant change in the level of provision, either a decrease in Welsh medium provision in Builth or an increase in Brecon High School to justify a different decision.

If Brecon became a 2b school from next September then the decision would be different.

**33. I am concerned that on page 31 of the consultation document, final sentence of 8.1, it says that the saving if the proposal was implemented would be £58,475. Those figures are inaccurate. I think this consultation document should be withdrawn because the document is misleading.**

Response

Currently, there would be no additional transport cost as that transport is already in place.

**34. The consultation document is not an honest document. It is biased.**

**35. I would like to make a point about quality of provision. There has been a lot of talk about breadth of curriculum. We are forgetting about quality of provision. We are an improving school. We have committed staff. Welsh medium staff are some of the top teachers in the school. We are looking at the Welsh medium provision being transferred to a school that has just gone into "special measures".**

Response

We have to be careful how we compare the progress Builth High School may be making. It is inappropriate to bring Builth High School into the debate at this time.

Response

Estyn is a consultee and will take a view on the proposal.

**36. I would like to see data for transporting pupils from different areas. We would like to see a proper comparison of what the school transport for Welsh medium pupils is costing. We need more data about transport costs for a longer period, say 5 years.**

Response

In terms of any costs, they will increase. When we provide figures it is based on the current level of cost.

**37. We need data that will reflect the shift in parental decision of where their children are educated.**

Response

There are currently 2 school transport routes going to Builth High School from the Brecon area and these cost £91K per annum. One route starts in the Sennybridge area and the other comes from Bwlch. We are also transporting some primary aged children to Builth CP School.

- 38. There has been an increase of more than £50K in a year because of the decision taken to transport Welsh medium pupils from the Brecon area to Bwlch High School.**

Response

I would expect that transport cost to increase.

- 39. Would it not be best to invest that money into teachers rather than in school transport?**
- 40. We need information which would help us in our response. The number of buses and the number of pupils.**
- 41. We need to know where these children are coming from. Did you not mention some learners are coming from the Crickhowell area?**

Response

One route starts in Bwlch.

- 42. These are all costs to the authority. The consultation document does not state what it would cost to bring this school up to a 2b status.**
- 43. It is not just about the costs; it is also about the work life balance for the children. We are paying no attention to that for our children.**
- 44. Pupils are under increasing pressure to achieve more and more and we are asking them to do more with less time.**
- 45. I don't know how you can promote that as an ideal for everyone. You are meant to be investing in the future for the children. Your money is going on the roads of Powys. How can you promote that?**
- 46. The reference to post 16 education in the consultation document implies that it is a failing of Brecon High School that it has not offered post 16 subjects through the medium of Welsh but Brecon High school is part of the South Powys Consortium and Welsh medium pupils can choose to study Welsh medium subjects at post 16 which are offered at other schools in the Consortium. The document is misleading in that it implies that it is a failing that Brecon High School does not offer "A" levels through the medium of Welsh.**

Response

I am not sure when Brecon High School last offered "A" levels through the medium of Welsh and whether that was before collaboration.

- 47. The way the Consortium runs is that there is a quota of subjects per school. Subjects not offered in one school can be accessed via another school in the Consortium**

Response

A Welsh medium uplift has been allocated to the four Powys Secondary schools offering "A" levels through the medium of Welsh.

- 48. There are a number of subjects that could be offered through the medium of Welsh at Brecon High School, which have not been included in the table on page 14 of the**



consultation document. If there was sufficient student demand, there are a number of other subjects which could be offered through the medium of Welsh.

49. We have capacity to offer “A” level history through the medium of Welsh.
50. It would be a fairer document if it showed the capacity of the school to offer Welsh medium “A” levels.
51. My son wanted to do history through the medium of Welsh but because of budgetary restrictions, “A” level history could not be offered through the medium of Welsh.
52. Most other schools have not had the same drain of pupils while still trying to offer the same level of curriculum. The drop in the number of Welsh medium pupils at the school has had an impact on the school’s ability to offer a wider curriculum and employ more staff.  
In previous years we have offered history “A” level through the medium of Welsh. We have tried to keep as many Welsh medium pupils as possible but we are unique in that the uncertainty has led to a decrease in the number of Welsh medium pupils at the school.

Response

It is acknowledged that uncertainty has had an impact. I am not going to deny that.

**53. The decrease in the number of Welsh medium pupils has had an impact on the school finances and there has been a ripple effect across the school.**

Response

So you think it should be made clear in the document that pupils wishing to access Welsh medium subjects can do so via the Consortium?

54. Yes, context is important.
55. It should be stated at the beginning of the document that the fall in the number of Welsh medium pupils has had an impact. Contextual information should be included. It is not just a factual document.
56. When we have a new school there will be changes in what curriculum can be provided.

Response

Allocation of funding will be determined by pupil numbers. The Secondary school in Powys which offers the most subjects at Post 16 is Crickhowell High School and that school has a 6<sup>th</sup> form of around 200 pupils.

**57. Change is happening. When the new school is built, we could be looking at 150 in the 6<sup>th</sup> form and this could have a massive impact on the curriculum offer at Post 16. We could offer more Welsh medium classes at that point in time. It is important to state that things can change.**

Response

When the brand new building is ready in 3 years' time, we would expect numbers in Brecon High School to increase and we would expect the 6<sup>th</sup> form to be bigger than it is now as it is hoped that the transfer rates from feeder primary schools will increase in September, 2017, and future years.

Response

How would you define a bilingual school?

- 58. A school with a Welsh medium stream. I think there should be a Welsh stream in every school because that is the way the Welsh language will be promoted. It will become the norm and be accepted rather viewed as separate. In Powys we could do something that would be a forward step in promoting the Welsh language. Why not show the way? Why not have the vision?**
- 59. Part of ethos of Brecon High School is that it is more inclusive than some other schools. We support students across the board. We have students from Eastern Europe and Nepal at this school. Getting rid of the Welsh stream here, when Welsh is the native language would be a "crying shame".**
- 60. Losing the Welsh stream would have a big impact on Brecon High School. The cultural element would be lost and that is very important to the school. A lot of the English medium children are very proud of the Welsh medium stream in this school.**
- 61. When is the report on the outcome of consultation likely to be considered by the Cabinet?**

Response

The earliest date the report is likely to be considered by the Cabinet is in February.

- 62. Could there be a new Cabinet considering the final report?**

Response

The consultation period ends on 9<sup>th</sup> January. We would expect the report on the outcome of consultation to be considered by Cabinet on either 7<sup>th</sup> or 28<sup>th</sup> February. If Cabinet decides to proceed with the proposal, a statutory notice will be published for a period of 28 days. Potentially the final decision on the proposal could be taken by a different Cabinet.

Response

Staff raised concerns about the timing of the consultation and its impact on the ability of school to plan the curriculum. We will do our best to get an earlier resolution if we can but it is out of our hands. Timing of the final outcome will depend on the number of responses received and the Cabinet decision.

Cllr Arwel Jones thanked governors for attending. He reminded governors that the consultation period ends on 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2017. Governors were told that every issue raised during the consultation period would be responded to within the Cabinet report.

#### 4. Minutes of meeting with Parents / Community

**Minutes of a consultation meeting with parents and community of Brecon High School, held on Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2016, at Brecon High School, in relation to a proposal to close the Welsh medium stream at the school from 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2017, with Brecon High School becoming an English-medium school from 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2017**

##### **Present**

Cllr Barry Thomas, Leader of the Council  
Cllr Arwel Jones, Portfolio Holder for Education  
Marianne Evans, Senior Manager, School Transformation  
Gareth Jones, Senior Manager, School Central Support Service  
Jane Thomas, Acting Head of Financial Services

##### Parents and Community Members of Brecon High School

Attendance list attached below:



Attendance list  
public consultation

---

Cllr Arwel Jones welcomed parents and members of Brecon community to the meeting. He conveyed apologies from Ian Roberts, Head of Schools Service, who was unable to attend due to a family commitment. Panel members introduced themselves.

Marianne Evans provided a brief presentation attached below.



Brecon  
Consultation Meetir

Marianne Evans explained the context leading up to the present consultation. It was noted that consultation had taken place in June 2015. When the report on the first consultation on the proposal to close the Welsh stream was considered by Cabinet in September 2015, members decided that Welsh-medium education should be included in the wider review of secondary schools. Consultation on the wider proposal was carried out in April, 2016. When the consultation report was considered by Cabinet in September, 2016, members took the decision to abandon the proposals for Brecon and Gwernyfed High School and it was Cabinet's wish that consultation should take place again around the future of Welsh medium provision in Brecon High School. Because the proposal to remove the Welsh medium stream from Brecon High School was part of that wider proposal, legal advice was that there should be re-consultation on the proposal to close the Welsh stream. Legally, this is now a new consultation.

Attendees were reminded of the proposal which is:

***To close the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School from the 31st August 2017, with Brecon High School becoming an English-medium school from the 1st September 2017.***

It was noted that those GCSE students taking courses through the medium of Welsh would be allowed to complete their courses but from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018, it is proposed that there will be no Welsh medium provision at Brecon High School and that for those students wishing to study through the medium of Welsh transport will be offered to the nearest Welsh medium provider. Reasons for the proposal are: concerns about the future viability of the Welsh stream due to low pupil numbers and the Council's aspiration to ensure that pupils entering Welsh medium have access to a broad curriculum at each stage of their education. Those present were informed that consultation meetings with governors and staff of Brecon High School had taken place on Tuesday afternoon and evening, 29<sup>th</sup> November, when it had been acknowledged that student numbers in the Welsh stream had decreased in the last two years due, in part, to the uncertainty of ongoing consultation.

Those present were reminded that the consultation runs from 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2016, to 9th January, 2017, and that at the end of the consultation, all responses to the consultation would be collated and a report would be presented to Cabinet who will take a decision as to the next steps. Attendees were informed that the purpose of the consultation meeting was to hear their views on the proposal.

**The following Questions/comments on the proposal were received from parents and community members:**

**Parent of 3 children in Welsh medium provision at Ysgol y Bannau and Brecon High School**

**1. My children have had fantastic education in the Welsh stream at Ysgol y Bannau and Brecon High School. Has Powys County Council actually asked parents what we really want? I have never been asked. What would make the Welsh stream in Brecon High School viable? We must keep the Welsh stream in Brecon to ensure everyone has access to Welsh medium education. Are you happy with student numbers in the cohort in Builth High School now? The majority of parents of year 6 pupils in Ysgol y Bannau wish their children to transfer to Brecon High School in September 17. If the Welsh stream closes parents will still send their children here. Parents are being forced to make a choice about Welsh medium education. If the Welsh stream here closes my children will have to come out of Welsh medium education. For them to travel to Builth High School is a 51 round mile trip. There would be a cost to family of the children having to travel to Builth for schooling. They would miss out on extra-curricular activities. I would have a logistical nightmare because I would have children in schools 20 miles apart. The consultation document does not reflect the true picture in Brecon. The timing of the consultation, over the Christmas period, is at a hard time and there is insufficient time to respond. For the consultation to finish on 9<sup>th</sup> January is not acceptable and we should ask for an extension of the consultation period. Everyone must write all their letters again even if they have already responded to the previous consultation. I request you to send a letter to every parent stressing that they need to write in again to respond to this consultation.**

Response

We are required to consult for 6 weeks, or 42 days. We have already extended this consultation to seven weeks, to take account of the Christmas period. It is a balance between concluding the consultation period in order for Cabinet to take its decision so there is certainty for all, but also providing enough time for responses to be submitted, recognising that this is a particularly busy period. We will write to parents to remind them of the timescale and the fact that this is a new consultation, and they should send in new responses or resubmit the previous responses, if they so wished. This consultation is a stand-alone consultation. It does not take account of views gathered in previous consultations but this does not mean we have not recognised views expressed in the previous consultation.

You asked about the viability of the Welsh medium stream in Builth High School. For a Welsh stream to be viable you are looking at a school with two teaching classes per year group. I believe Builth High School currently has 2 year groups in years 7, 8 and 9 – a total of 150 pupils.

There are single teaching groups in Key Stage 4 and two teaching groups in years 9 & 10.

**1. Is the Welsh medium stream currently viable?**

Response

In relation to Brecon, the current number of pupils in the stream and the current funding, the stream at the school is not sustainable. In relation to Builth, the funding provided allows the stream to be viable.

In terms of Ysgol y Bannau – we are aware of the choices parents have made to date based on the current configuration and more than half of parents of Year 6 children transferring to Secondary school have chosen Brecon High School.

**2. Why don't you put that in the consultation document?**

Response

The admissions process has not yet been finalised. Places are currently being allocated. We need to reflect that in the report that goes back to cabinet.

Response

The numbers will be noted in consultation report that goes back to cabinet.

Response

We acknowledge that the travel to Builth can impact on the wellbeing of families. That is a huge issue and we can't take away from the fact that, for some learners, it will be a long journey, in terms of miles and distance, in order to access Welsh medium education.

**3. The consultation document does not reflect the true situation we have here in Brecon.**

Response

We acknowledge there are historical issues

**4. Comment from one of the founders of Welsh medium education in Brecon in 1970s - We fought "tooth and nail" to set up some form of Welsh education in Brecon and it is going "to be washed away" by Powys County Council in one jolt. We started off in the 1970s with 6 pupils, then numbers grew so we pushed for two rooms and eventually we had two subjects taught in Welsh at Brecon High School. How many subjects are going to be taught through the medium of Welsh in Brecon and in Builth? Have you consulted the pupils? How are you going to achieve the Assembly's target of £1m Welsh speakers by 2025 if the Welsh stream is closed? Are we going backwards or forwards?**

Response

Currently 6 subjects are taught through the medium of Welsh at Brecon High School at Key Stage 3. We want more options to be offered through the medium of Welsh at the end of Key Stage 3. In terms of categorisation of schools - Builth High School is a Category 2c and Brecon High School is a Category 3. In terms of post 16 provision only 2 or 3 Welsh-medium subjects are offered at Builth High School via collaboration.

Builth High School offers 12 subjects at Key Stage 3 and 9 subjects at Key Stage 4. The proposal aims to provide the choice of subjects to which Welsh medium learners are entitled. .

**5. Governor for secondary school in Brecon and parent of pupil at Ysgol y Bannau. You have spoken about numbers and critical mass. With regards to numbers what have you done to increase the number of Welsh medium learners coming into Brecon High School?**

**6. The numbers in the Welsh stream in Brecon High School have decreased and there are not enough numbers of Welsh medium learners coming to Brecon High School so what have you done, as an Authority, to increase the numbers?**

Response

It is recognised the Authority could have done more to increase the number of Welsh medium students but there has been significant growth in the number of Welsh medium learners in the primary sector in mid and north Powys but, if you refer to page 12 of the consultation document you will note that the number of Welsh medium learners in the primary sector in Brecon and Sennybridge have remained fairly constant in the last five years.

**7. With regard to the numbers in this consultation document, have you considered them and why not?**

Response

There was a Welsh medium workstream established as part of the Gwernyfed Area Review that was carried out a few years ago, which concluded that there should not be any demand for Welsh-medium primary provision in that area, although this could be reconsidered in future.

**8. We haven't got the choice here today. If Welsh medium education was compulsory in primary schools then we would increase the numbers. Have you considered the wellbeing of future generations in this consultation? By closing the Welsh stream in Brecon High School there will be increased transport on the roads? Has that been considered? If you took the pupils who currently travel to Builth and Ystalyfera for Welsh medium and you increased provision at Brecon High School the stream would be viable.**

Response

The consultation takes into account all the provision of the Wellbeing Act.

Response

What support we have given to schools here to grow Welsh medium provision? In 2011 when the Council challenged all schools to increase Welsh medium provision, the authority established a learning partnership which included all Welsh-medium providers in South and Mid Powys, Clwstwr y Ffynnon, but unfortunately that did not continue.

Response

You made the point that Welsh medium education should be compulsory, but already it is mandatory for all learners to study Welsh as a second language up to Year 11. In terms of the number of Welsh medium learners travelling to Ystalyfera, I would estimate this to be over 100 including those from the Ystradgynlais area.

**9. What is the cost to the Authority of transporting Welsh medium students to Ystalyfera? £450 pounds a day? The bus service to Ystalyfera is paid out of recharge to the Schools Service.**

**10. I would like to say due to increase in the number of children in Cylch Meithrin we have had to increase the opening hours. There is quite a high demand for Welsh language but parents do not currently have a choice. In Brecon there are 3 English medium primary schools and only one Welsh medium primary school so parents do not currently have a choice.**

Response

There is a level of surplus places in Ysgol y Bannau but your point is noted.

Response

A point was made at the consultation meeting with governors that if there was no follow-on Welsh medium provision at Brecon High School that parents would not take the “leap of faith” at the outset to opt for Welsh medium education for their children but if this proposal is approved people would see progression of Welsh medium education to Builth Wells or to another school.

**11. No. We are not willing to take chance.**

**12. Comment from Governor of Brecon High School and retired teacher**

**I have read all the documentation and attended all the meetings. We don't argue with the numbers. We know the impact of the uncertainty on the Welsh stream at Brecon High School. What I would like the cabinet to consider is the following: I would like the Welsh stream in Brecon High School to continue. I would like the teachers to teach in both schools. In that way you would increase Welsh in both schools. Also, you would not incur the extra transport costs. Teachers could go to Builth one day and Brecon another. I would like to propose that Powys County Council stops paying for transport to out of county schools. We know why parents have been moving elsewhere. We need a positive route. Councils should encourage Schools Service Senior Management to promote Brecon High School in the community as a bilingual school. There must be a more positive approach to promoting a bilingual school in the community. We have a lot of talent in the community. Why not use that talent and expertise? You have a bilingual school to be proud of.**

**13. I live at Llangorse and commute to Builth High School and back with my children. That is completely unacceptable.**

**14. Cllr Liam Fitzpatrick**

**My question is directed to the portfolio holder. Why hasn't the Council assisted Brecon High School to maintain numbers in the Welsh stream? This consultation is not a level playing field. There wasn't any assistance given to Brecon High School to maintain the numbers in the Welsh stream and I find that quite astonishing. It is unfair that other secondary schools were able to go ahead with increasing Welsh medium provision. Would you agree with me that the most sensible thing a parents can do is get children to a school where there is no threat?**

Response

This is the third consultation on the Welsh medium stream at Brecon High School. We appreciate the uncertainty will affect numbers in the Welsh stream at Brecon High School and appreciate that the numbers have decreased. Secondary schools were encouraged to achieve 2b status but that wasn't taken up.

Response

18 months ago a number of parents decided to move their children to another school for Welsh medium education. As an admission authority we cannot refuse those children a place if there are places available in the chosen school. When parents applied to Builth High School there were available

places so we could not reject their applications. In relation to the transport process, when applications were received for school transport to Ystalyfera and to Builth, they were initially refused at Stage 1 & 2. Following this the applications for transport were taken to appeal and the appeal panel took the decision to award transport.

**15. I have two children in the Welsh medium stream at Brecon High School. I think Powys County Council has behaved in a shamefully chaotic way with these consultations. My eldest son started at Brecon High School with 19 pupils in class and now there are only 3. The Welsh stream at Brecon High School has always been well regarded. Pupils have gone on to fantastic achievements Powys has really let us down. By sending my children to the Welsh stream here I saw it as supporting Welsh culture. I don't speak Welsh but my two children are competent Welsh speakers. I can't cope with all this chaos. I need security for my children's' education. You need to reassure us about the quality of education. I have a child with additional needs who does not travel well. You haven't said how you can support my child with additional needs. My child gets car sick so travelling to Builth is not going to make him a happy pupil.**

Response

There has been 2 years of discussion around this proposal and I understand the difficulty for yourselves and the school. We want to get all views and issues through the consultation. It is important for the Cabinet members to hear the views of everyone who responds to the consultation. We don't want ongoing uncertainty for years.

**16. This is a rural community and you have to be more creative in delivering services. We have four buses a day if that. The best thing about rural communities is if you treat them they will treat you. If you keep the Welsh stream here you will grow Welsh in this part of Wales.**

Response

Part of the consultation is to hear other options and Cabinet members will need to consider any other options put forward as part of the consultation.

**17. The idea of teachers travelling between schools was mentioned in previous consultations. It seems you are not taking our views on board. You keep putting us through this process and you don't seem to listen at all.**

**18. Former pupil of Ysgol y Bannau and form head boy at Brecon High School. Page 15 of the consultation document lists the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal. I would like to point out the difference in the language used to describe the advantages and disadvantages. Under advantages it says the proposal "would enable Brecon High School to run more efficiently as a single stream school" Under disadvantages it says the proposal "may have a negative impact on pupils numbers at Ysgol y Bannau" "Possible reduction in transfer rates from Welsh medium primary provision to Welsh medium secondary provision for pupils from Brecon catchment in the short term." Very vague language used when listing the disadvantages.**

**1<sup>st</sup> language Welsh students at Brecon High School contribute to the development of the Welsh language in the school and in Brecon as a community. How could they contribute without a Welsh stream in the High School?**

Response

The language skills those students would acquire as part of larger setting would benefit them.



*The respondent quoted comments from a number of former students of the Welsh stream at Brecon High School. These comments included:*

- **Is the Council proud of the Welsh language? When I was a student at Brecon High School I only heard Welsh spoken at school**
- **Fewer people choosing Welsh will mean the Welsh language will not grow in Brecon. People will not speak Welsh other than in school. Removal of the Welsh stream from Brecon High School will not encourage the Welsh language to grow.**
- **Now, more than ever, Powys should be investing in the Welsh language when it failed previously to do so.**

**My second question is about extra-curricular activities which are just as important as the curriculum. If it was not for the wider opportunities offered to me at Brecon High School, I would not have graduated from the Welsh College of Music and Drama.**

**Additional travel will mean that fewer Welsh medium learners are able to take part in extra-curricular activities. Travelling will take at least 2 hours. There will be less time spent in school and those students having to travel will have a lower attention span because they will be tired. How can you guarantee that Welsh language students will not be at a disadvantage in taking part in extra-curricular activities because of the travel implications?**

Response

It is a fact that pupils living further away from a school means it is more difficult for them to take part in extra-curricular activities. All our high schools are in rural areas and transport is ongoing issue. All we can do is to support schools in helping students to access extra-curricular activities.

**19. Schools may provide extra-curricular activities but can students access them?**

Response

Activities can be held during lunchtimes as an alternative.

**20. Additional comments received from former Welsh stream students were read out as follows:**

- **Students want to socialise at lunchtimes and lunchtimes are too short for extra-curricular activities.**
- **There are implications for 2<sup>nd</sup> language Welsh students at Brecon High School if the Welsh medium stream is removed. 2<sup>nd</sup> Welsh language students improve their language skills by speaking to 1<sup>st</sup> language students.**
- **The Welsh language environment is strengthened by the 1<sup>st</sup> language Welsh medium students.**

**21. What opportunities would you expect Brecon High School to provide to second language students to use the Welsh language if 1<sup>st</sup> language Welsh speakers were removed from the school?**

Response

Yes there would be an impact if 1<sup>st</sup> language Welsh speakers were removed from Brecon High School.

**22. Why did not you say in the consultation document that there “would” rather than there “could” be an impact?**

23. The Local Authority has failed people in not providing an environment for the Welsh language to grow. The Authority's indecision has provided a situation where people are losing faith. Brecon is a proud town steeped in Welsh culture. Will your proposal secure the future of the Welsh language in Brecon? No it won't. It denies it completely.

24. I have 3 sons - two in Ysgol y Bannau and my eldest son has been at Builth High School for a year. The guiding principles of the Welsh language standards are that the Welsh language should be treated no less favourably than English. People in Wales should be able to live their lives through the medium of Welsh if they choose to do so. This proposal is flying in face of the Welsh Language standards. There are no Welsh speaking members in the Court of Appeal. There are not enough Welsh speakers to translate the statutes of Wales into Welsh. This policy is an erosion of the language and I don't understand it. The whole point of the Welsh Language Measure is to have roles fulfilled by Welsh speakers. I went to a Welsh speaking school and we were taught in Welsh. Powys County Council is ignoring the Welsh Language Measure. If you go ahead with this proposal, I will challenge you. I will ask the Welsh Language Commissioner to get involved in this consultation. How dare you spend millions of pounds on a new Brecon High School and disenfranchise Welsh speakers! Speaking the Welsh language has never been about money. That is a fundamental error. Being able to be taught through the medium of Welsh is a statutory right for my children. You are bound in statute regardless of cost. Your desire to eradicate the Welsh language from Brecon High School is a false economy. The cost of transporting Welsh medium learners to alternative schools is astronomical. A lot has been spoken about parents moving children to Builth. In June 2015, when the stress of consultation forced my child to have a day of school, I met with the head of Brecon High School. I didn't feel there was not the quality of provision I wanted for my child. It is vital to ensure the new school maintains a Welsh medium stream for our children. You need to ensure that it is not only fit for purpose but it is the best it can possibly be and then I will move my child back to Brecon High School. I will fight every step of the way to ensure that provision and to ensure that the Welsh speaking community will continue to grow and strengthen. If we succeed in persuading you in your consultation response and report to Cabinet, I urge you to deal with the point that teachers travel between sites. There has been a personal cost to my 11 year old son. He was so stressed about the proposal to remove the Welsh medium stream from Brecon High School, he was sick. His move to Builth High School has meant a huge cost to my family. My son taking part in extra-curricular activities in Builth has meant I have been driving to Builth every night after a full day's work. Some parents will not do that. My son is getting a quality education and he is very happy at Builth High School but he is missing out due to the travelling. I implore you to work with us. We are here to strengthen the Welsh stream at Brecon High School if you allow it. Let your legacy be next Welsh speaking Lord Chief Justice and not the annihilation of the Welsh speaking community in Brecon.

25. I have been educated in the Welsh stream at Brecon High School. We are here to work with you and not fight against you. I don't feel as if you thought about our emotional feelings as well. I felt very unhappy about the pressure of moving. We go to Welsh youth club which you are about to close and that is the only place we can go to speak Welsh. If I had the opportunity to come back to Brecon High School with a strong Welsh stream, I would, because I was really happy here.

Response

There will be further consultation with pupils.

Response

In relation to the finance aspect – in terms of funding the school, we fund schools based on current pupil numbers. We do not fund schools ahead on projected numbers. We do not provide funding to

Neath Port Talbot for the Powys pupils attending Ysgol Ystalyfera unless the learner has a Statement of Special Educational Needs but we do fund the transport for qualifying pupils.

**26. 70 Welsh medium students from Powys are attending Ysgol Ystalyfera and Neath Port Talbot is getting that money when it could be here.**

Response

No the only circumstance that Powys would pay another local authority for education provision for a Powys pupil is where a pupil with special educational needs and a statement is in a specialist placement in another local authority area. Then Powys would pay to support that placement.

**27. If you take the decision to close the Welsh stream our child will be forced to go to Ystalyfera to continue with Welsh medium education. Children who are currently travelling from Sennybridge to Ystalyfera for Welsh medium education are traveling on a public service bus. The bus travels at fast speeds in the winter. If the Welsh stream at Brecon High School closes, we want to be assured that there will be a designated bus for those learners and that seat belts will be provided. We would prefer our child to come to Brecon High School. It is impossible for Powys children attending school in Ystalyfera to maintain social friendships with children from Swansea and Neath who attend that school. There are advantages of a bilingual school. In Sennybridge School, the standard of Welsh of the children in the English stream is at an extremely high level when they transfer to Secondary school. Being in a bilingual school is a huge advantage for them. It would be a disadvantage for the English medium pupils here if they lose Welsh stream in Brecon High School.**

Response

I cannot give you an assurance that there will be dedicated transport for Powys pupils travelling to Ysgol Ystalyfera because the Authority has to make the most efficient transport provision and does use public service buses where available.

**28. I have heard that there have been occasions when there has been insufficient space on the bus for all the children to have a seat and they have had to stand all the way from Sennybridge to Ystalyfera.**

**29. The children are not supervised on the public service bus. It not a safe way for them to travel.**

**30. There may be members of the public on the bus who don't want to be sharing the bus with school children.**

**31. I am a parent of children in Ysgol y Bannau and Brecon High School. I would like to revisit the question raised at the last consultation. Don't you consider that paying for transport to other schools is predetermination? How is paying for transport provision to other schools before the outcome of consultation is known not predetermination?**

Response

It is not predetermination. We did not automatically offer those parents transport. It was the decision of the Transport Appeal process to award transport. I was not prepared for other officers or myself to take a decision which would have impact on the numbers in the school so the decision was referred to the Appeals Committee. We needed to follow the process.

**32. Someone in the Council had a role in taking that decision.**

**33. You are not supporting our local area by doing that.**

**34. Are you still funding transport for new pupils to Ysgol Ystalyfera?**

Response

Appeals have been refused on the basis that there is closer provision in Builth. Appeals heard last year were for learners living in the Sennybridge area. The previous transport appeal were heard a number of years ago.

**35. So the Authority is no longer supporting transport of pupils to Ystalyfera from the Brecon area?**

**36. The Authority turned down funding for transport to Ystalyfera on the grounds that there was closer Welsh medium provision in Builth but the closest Welsh medium provision for Welsh medium learners in Sennybridge is Brecon High School.**

**37. That decision is an example of predetermination.**

**38. What were the critical elements which meant that the proposal to close the Welsh stream in Brecon High School wasn't abandoned like the other proposals?**

Response

The low numbers in the Welsh stream and lack of continuity.

**39. Can you state how you will meet Welsh Government targets of 25% of the Welsh population being Welsh speakers by 2050?**

Response

We look forward to having a strong progression so pupils can see where they can go from early years to primary, to Secondary and then to post 16 through the medium of Welsh. We feel pupils will choose to study through the medium of Welsh if they can see that progression and that numbers of Welsh medium learners will increase but we understand that that is not the view in this community.

**40. You are going to see the detriment of this decision for longer than 3 years.**

**41. You postponed consideration of the Welsh medium element because you wanted to consider it at same time as the mid Powys proposal. It is not clear where Welsh medium provision will be sited if the mid Powys proposal is approved although you state that the preference is for Welsh medium provision to be in the Builth area.**

Response

The proposal for Llandrindod and Builth is for a dual-sited Secondary school with Welsh medium provision being delivered from the site in Builth.

**42. But there are no guarantees?**

Response

The statutory objection period in respect of the proposal for Llandrindod and Builth finishes a week today. Following the end of the objection period an objection report will be submitted to the Council's Cabinet for a final decision. When Cabinet consider the objection report will depend on the number of objections received but we expect Cabinet to consider the report sometime early in the New Year.

#### **43. Cllr Gillian Thomas**

There has always been a thriving Welsh medium cohort in Brecon High School. This is the third consultation in relation to the proposal for the Welsh medium stream. You have said that the proposal is to remove the Welsh medium stream from Brecon High School and to centre Welsh medium provision in Builth but Powys County Council has a responsibility under the Welsh Language Measure to provide services through the language of choice. It has a responsibility to provide Welsh medium schooling if that is what parents want. Does it meet those requirements if you add travel time for Welsh medium learners? It is 18 miles from Sennybridge to Brecon and a further 20 miles to Builth. That is not meeting our responsibility under the Measure. We are failing the people of Brecon in providing Welsh medium education to the people of Brecon. It is the uncertainty that has created the drift of Welsh medium learners away from Brecon High School. If you don't do the consultations properly that is the problem. You need to get consultation right in the first place.

#### **44. Question from pupil**

I am dyslexic and attend extra classes after school. How could I do that if I have to rely on school transport to and from Builth? Also what would you do about wheelchair access on school transport?

#### Response

In terms of school transport the needs of individual learners will be taken into account. If there was a learner who needs specific transport arrangements, those would be made.

#### Response

It would be difficult to provide additional support after school if parents are not able to provide transport but we would expect the school to provide you with the support you need.

**45. In the consultation document it says from 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2017, there will be no Welsh medium provision for pupils in years 7, 8, 9 and 10 and that consideration will be given for Welsh medium provision for learners in Year 11 to September, 2018. When the children arrive at end of Key Stage 3 in Welsh 1<sup>st</sup> language, they are assessed and given a grade. What will happen to those children this year who get that grade? Will they have to do 2<sup>nd</sup> language Welsh?**

#### Response

As an Authority we need to ensure those pupils in year 9 can study 1<sup>st</sup> language Welsh.

#### **46. How will you deal with the next two years in years 10 and 11?**

#### Response

We will make the commitment that those learners starting in year 9 who have taken that assessment will be allowed to study Welsh first language in key stage 4 at the school.

**47. Why weren't facilitators used for this consultation as for the previous consultation on the Gwernyfed/Brecon High School proposal?**

#### Response

Minutes are being taken of tonight's meeting. We did hire facilitators last time as we were carrying out a large scale consultation that included four high schools, plus a number of primary schools. The facilitators were brought in to carry out the task of analysing responses. That is not to say that this consultation is any way less important than that consultation. ORS was brought in to support the authority in analysing the responses to the previous consultation. We were expecting a large number of responses and officers only had 13 weeks to bring back a consultation report to Cabinet but this consultation is exactly the same status as the previous consultation.

**48. When you submitted the business case for funding for the new school to Welsh Government were they aware of your proposal to remove Welsh medium provision from this site?**

Response

Welsh Government are aware that this was the proposal we were going out to consult upon.

**49. You have already decided to raise the school admission age. I cannot guarantee that Ysgol y Bannau will make the changes.**

**50. The wheel keeps turning and nothing gets done. Why aren't we more forward-thinking? Where are you going to get the Welsh teachers from? You need to have peripatetic teachers. Is it necessary to be bussing children when there could be a hub in Brecon which could be a centre of excellence? If the hub was in Brecon use could be made of modern technology to present lessons to students.**

**51. International learning is taking place. The woman who lives next door to me teaches students in Saudi Arabia and USA and has no trouble whatsoever. You are misusing the English language in saying this is a consultation.**

**52. This is a presentation and not consultation. It is a publicity stunt. You are taking Welsh medium education away from Brecon - the second biggest town in Powys. Who dreamt up this proposal? Where is the sympathy, respect and tolerance for a language that has been in existence for 2000 years? It is being treated like a football! The problem is money. What is the total budget for education in Powys?**

Response

Approximately £100m

**53. How much goes on administration? £30m at least! You should be ashamed of yourselves supporting this proposal! The people here care about the language. It is official Welsh policy and all you are trying to do is cultural cleansing in this part of Powys!**

**54. Parent of pupil in Brecon High School and governor of Ysgol y Bannau**

I think in all the talk about linguistic continuity and pupil numbers it has been forgotten that a school is part of its community. That is something which should not be forgotten. Brecon High School is an important part of community. It is the life blood of community. The Welsh stream is an important part of the Brecon High school community and is the life blood of the school. You are forgetting community. By taking Welsh stream away from the school, you don't just remove it from school, you remove it from the community. It will mean a death blow to Welsh in the community. What I am saying is we, as a Welsh community, who want to see the Welsh language survive in this community, would like you to listen to us. Please would you listen to us this time?

Response

The support for the Welsh language in Brecon has come through in these meetings.

**55. As Chair of the governing body at Brecon High School, I want it to remain a bilingual school in future when have new school. In November 2011, Powys County Council mooted the idea of the school becoming 2b status but there was no financial help. How can you expect the school to come up to 2b status without financial support? The cost of transporting Welsh medium learners to Ystalyfera and Builth is £100K. Brecon High School currently receives £58K to deliver Welsh medium education. To bring the school up to 2b status would cost £47K. It is costing the Authority more to**

transport pupils to Builth and Ystalyfera than to bring this school up to 2b status. If you gave us the funding that the Welsh stream requires then we wouldn't be here today. It is a damning indictment on the Authority as a whole. We don't want Welsh medium learners to have to travel. We want them to receive Welsh medium education here. On page 31, paragraph 8.1, it says that implementation of the proposal would save the Authority £58,475. Is this actually correct? Should you be able to do this consultation if the facts and figures in the consultation document are not right? We are going to fight to retain Welsh medium education in this school.

Response

The figures are accurate. In terms of 2b funding we don't have a formula for this. We don't provide funding ahead of provision. If the Welsh stream was moved from Brecon High School it would save £58K.

Response

The consultation report going to cabinet will include the cost of school transport including the cost of provision already being provided.

**56. It is ridiculous to expect the school to get up to 2b status without having the money to do so. It does not add up. Unless the school has the money to bring in staff to deliver the Welsh medium education we cannot bring the school up to 2b status. We needed that money to enable the school to employ teachers to bring the school up to 2b status. How did you expect us to do this? This is why Powys County Council is in a mess because of ideas like this.**

**57. Why do you budget forward the transport costs but not the education costs?**

Response

Once a decision has been made, we have to put that funding provision in place.

Response

Schools have always been funded school based on numbers prior to the start of the financial year using January PLASC data for funding. That is process that has been followed since Local Management of Schools.

**58. Rob Broadbridge – Headteacher**

- **My thanks for the commitment of parents and pupils who are still in the Welsh medium stream and who are helping to make sure it still has a future. We are trying to do as much as we can with that Welsh medium provision.**
- **One thing done in previous consultations was to criticise the school on the basis of standards. Standards are now one of the best in the whole of the county and that is down to the commitment of staff and partly due to the commitment to the Welsh medium stream.**
- **Welsh 2<sup>nd</sup> language standards have increased due to the contribution of the Welsh 1<sup>st</sup> language stream.**
- **Little has been said about Ysgol y Bannau but I am very worried about the future of Ysgol y Bannau if this proposal goes through. If the decision is taken to remove the Welsh medium stream from Brecon High School, it is one-way decision and the Welsh stream would never be reinstated.**
- **We are already talking about the new school building and we don't know if it is going to have a Welsh stream or not. How can I be expected to make a commitment to plans when we don't know whether there will be Welsh medium provision? The decision should have been made ages ago.**

- **At a meeting with parents of pupils at Ysgol y Bannau a year ago, I made a commitment to increase Welsh medium curriculum provision. The money was found to increase Welsh medium provision for that year. I hope that is an indication of my commitment to Welsh medium provision. I want you to understand the impact this whole process has had on this community, on me, and on staff, pupils, and parents. You have to make the right decision and it is clear the right decision is to continue with Welsh medium provision. Fund it so that it is viable make it and so that I can provide the curriculum, recruit staff and support their professional development. Next week, I hope to have positive news about this school and I hope to build on that. All of this is making it very hard for me to achieve the very best education and high standards so that our current students get the same opportunities in future.**
- **You have got to create an opportunity for the Welsh stream in Brecon High School to be viable in terms of numbers. How can we get the learner numbers we need to ensure viability of the Welsh stream? I would question the response you gave in relation to the minimum number of learners needed to make the Welsh stream viable.**
- **We have been criticised about breadth of Welsh medium curriculum provision as compared to Builth High School. Builth provides 12 subjects through the medium of Welsh at Key Stage 3, whereas Brecon High School provides 6. The reason Brecon High School only offers 6 subjects is down to learner numbers. I can't justify having full breadth of provision because of the number of Welsh medium learners. Give us the numbers and we will ensure the breadth of Welsh medium provision. Thank you to everyone tonight for their contributions.**

#### Response

On behalf of Ian Roberts, who cannot be here tonight, I applaud the school on its improvement journey which we all hope will continue. I think there is a slightly different context compared to previous consultations. A new school build is on its way and standards at the school are improving and this needs to be taken into account when Cabinet members taken their decision.

59. I would like to finish on a positive note. I am Chair of the Governing Body at Ysgol y Bannau. We want to work with you and we have options to offer you. We have able people in this room. We are here and ready to give of our time to keep the Welsh medium stream here and to expand Welsh medium provision here and in Builth High School. We need investment or we will be back to Ysgol y Bannau being just in one room. On behalf of Ysgol y Bannau, you haven't contacted us about the Welsh stream in in this school. There has been a decrease in the number of Welsh medium learners and we want to work with you to increase the number so please speak to us. Hopefully, a decision will be taken to retain the Welsh stream in this school. As Chair of Governors, I would like a copy of the minutes to be sent to me.

*Cllr Arwel Jones thanked all present for attending the meeting.*