

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

PORTFOLIO HOLDER DELEGATED DECISION

by

**County Councillor Arwel Jones, Portfolio Holder for Education and
Children's Services**

REPORT AUTHOR: Sarah Astley, Welsh in Education Strategic Plan Co-ordinator

SUBJECT: Transfer of pupils from Ysgol Gymraeg Dyffryn y Glowyr to Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera

REPORT FOR: Decision

Summary

Pupils educated through the medium of Welsh in the Ystradgynlais area currently transfer out of county to receive Welsh-medium secondary education at Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera, in Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. Currently, there is no formal agreement between the two authorities to acknowledge that Ysgol Gymraeg Dyffryn y Glowyr, the Welsh-medium primary school for pupils from the Ystradgynlais area, is within the catchment area of Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera in respect of Welsh-medium progression.

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council is planning to remodel Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera, which is likely to lead to a reduction in capacity at the school. Although the number of pupils currently educated through the medium of Welsh at Ysgol Gymraeg Dyffryn y Glowyr is being considered as part of this remodelling work, there is a need to ensure that transition to Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera is formalised for Welsh-medium pupils from the Ystradgynlais area, to enable them to continue to access places at Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera.

Formalising this arrangement with Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council is included as a target in the authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for 2014-2017.

Proposal

To commence the procedures and discussions with Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council to include Ystradgynlais and the surrounding wards of Powys within the catchment area of Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera in respect of Welsh-medium secondary provision.

The affected wards within Powys are: Aber-craf, Cwm-twrch, Tawe Uchaf, Ynyscedwyn and Ystradgynlais.

Powys Change Plan

A key priority within the One Powys Plan for 2014 – 17 is **Transforming Learning and Skills**, and in the plan, the authority sets out its vision to ensure that ‘All children and young people are supported to achieve their full potential’.

Options Considered/Available

Based on the Welsh Government’s guidance document ‘*Defining Schools According to Welsh-medium Provision*’ (2007), Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera is classed as a Category 2A Bilingual Secondary School, which means that at least 80% of subjects (excluding Welsh and English) are taught through the medium of Welsh but are also taught through the medium of English. There are no Category 2A or Category 1 secondary schools in Powys. Currently, there is no other option for pupils from the Ystradgynlais area who wish to access secondary Welsh-medium provision.

The authority could decide to develop Welsh-medium provision within Powys for pupils from the Ystradgynlais area. However, this would be a costly alternative, and it is unlikely that the provision would be at the same level as that provided at Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera.

If a formal agreement is not put in place, there would be a significant risk to the authority in future years of not meeting the demand for Welsh-medium secondary provision for pupils in the Ystradgynlais area, if places were prioritised for learners living within Neath Port Talbot County Borough.

Preferred Choice and Reasons

To ensure stability with regard to Welsh-medium education transition for pupils from the Ystradgynlais area, the preferred choice is to commence procedures and discussions with Neath Port Talbot to include Ystradgynlais and the surrounding wards of Powys within the catchment area of Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera in respect of Welsh-medium secondary provision.

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

This proposal will strengthen continuity to Welsh-medium secondary provision for pupils in the Ystradgynlais area, to ensure that they can continue to develop their Welsh language skills throughout their secondary education.

Children and Young People's Impact Statement - Safeguarding and Wellbeing

This proposal will ensure stability for Welsh-medium learners from the Ystradgynlais area, as it will ensure that places will continue to be available to them at Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera.

Local Member(s)

Ysgol Gymraeg Dyffryn y Glowyr is the only Welsh-medium primary provision in the Ystradgynlais area, therefore pupils who choose Welsh-medium education attend the school from the Aber-craf, Cwm-twrch, Tawe Uchaf, Ynyscedwyn and Ystradgynlais wards.

The following comments have been received from local members:

Cllr Sandra Davies, Cwm-twrch Ward:

'I have read the paper and am fully supportive of the proposed recommendation. I sit on the governing body of both Ysgol Gymraeg Dyffryn Y Glowyr and Bro Tawe, as a LEA representative.

I have been aware of the fact that there are proposed changes to the education system in the neighbouring authority, Neath Port Talbot and this will affect the current provision of Secondary Welsh language education. With the proposed changes in Neath Port Talbot, if talks do not progress at this early stage to ensure continuity for pupils to be taught through the medium of Welsh, we will be letting our young people down.

I am not a Welsh speaker but do fully support the Welsh language. I feel it is vital that a designated Welsh Medium Secondary School is named for young pupils to move onto. Ysgol Gyfun has been providing this opportunity for young pupils over the years, indeed some pupils of Ysgol Gymraeg Dyffryn Y Glowyr have older siblings who are already in Ysgol Gyfun. It is time to strengthen and reinforce this practice for the future of young pupils.'

Cllr David Thomas, Tawe Uchaf Ward:

'I would fully support commencement of discussions with NPT to ensure continuation of the education of Ystradgynlais and District secondary school children at Ysgol Gyfun through the medium of Welsh. I am aware that there are currently pupils of secondary age from my Ward attending Ysgol Gyfun and would expect current primary pupils from my Ward who attend our Welsh School at Dyffryn y Glowyr to want to attend Ysgol Gyfun in the future to continue their education through the medium of Welsh.'

Cllr Huw Williams, Ystradgynlais Ward:

'I declare that I am a Maesydderwen Comprehensive school LEA Governor as well as a PCC member for the Ystradgynlais ward. I've also had a child attend Ysgol Gyfun and another attend Maesydderwen. I have no problem with the overall direction of the plan as it reflects current practice. Could I, however, make the following observations:

Ystalyfera is a category 2 bilingual school which means that 80% of the curriculum is taught through the medium of the Welsh language. When procedures and discussions take place can officers encourage closer co-operation between Maesydderwen and Ystalyfera to the benefit of young people in the Ystradgynlais and wider area? This could, for example, enable more options being offered to pupils through collaboration post 16. Your summary suggests that the new build at Ystalyfera will reduce capacity at the school. Could this be an opportunity to consolidate Ystalyfera's Welsh language classification (20% currently taught in the English language) and,

consequently address predicted capacity issues through collaboration with Maesydderwen?

As part of any formal agreement can we ensure that pupils attending Ysgol Gymraeg Dyffryn y Glowyr, and others, understand that they have the option of enrolling at Maesydderwen. Whilst I fully support Welsh medium progression and the setting up of a formal agreement this should not be to the detriment of Maesydderwen.'

Other Front Line Services

Transport for pupils from the Ystradgynlais catchment is already provided to Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera, therefore it is not anticipated that any additional transport will be needed.

Support Services (Legal, Finance, Corporate Property, HR, ICT, BPU)

Legal: The recommendation can be supported from a legal perspective. Legal supports the proposal that is recommended as being the most expedient solution to the problem.

Finance: Finance have no comment to make.

Corporate Property: The Senior Manager Regeneration and Corporate Property comments that there are no implications at this time for PCC property assets.

HR: HR have no comment to make.

Local Service Board/Partnerships/Stakeholders etc

N/A

Corporate Communications

No specific communication action is required.

Statutory Officers

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) has commented: I have nothing to add to the report.

The Section 151 Officer has commented: There are no cost implications at this time.

Members' Interests

The Monitoring Officer is not aware of any specific interests that may arise in relation to this report. If the Portfolio Holder has an interest he should declare it, complete the relevant notification form and refer the matter to cabinet for decision.

Recommendation:	Reason for Recommendation:
To commence the procedures and discussions with Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council to include Ystradgynlais and the surrounding wards of Powys within the catchment area of Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera in respect of Welsh-medium secondary	To ensure that places continue to be available for Welsh-medium learners from the Ystradgynlais area.

provision.	
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Relevant Policy (ies):	Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2014-17		
Within Policy:	Y	Within Budget:	Y

Relevant Local Member(s):	Cllr Sandra Davies, Cllr Susan McNicholas, Cllr David Thomas, Cllr Huw Williams, Cllr Sarah Williams
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Person(s) To Implement Decision:	Schools Service
Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:	Discussions to start as soon as possible, with implementation from the 2015/16 academic year.

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Background Papers used to prepare Report:

CABINET REPORT TEMPLATE VERSION 3