



PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH AN ALL-THROUGH SCHOOL IN LLANFYLLIN

OBJECTION REPORT

1. Introduction

Powys County Council consulted on a proposal to establish an all-through school in Llanfyllin with effect from the 1st September 2020 during the period 27th November 2018 to the 31st January 2019.

On the 12th March 2019, the Council's Cabinet agreed to proceed with the proposal, and Statutory Notices were published from the 20th March 2019 to the 17th April 2019.

2. Objections received

1 objection was received during the statutory objection period. The issues raised in the objection are outlined on the following page, along with the Council's response.

3. Issues raised in Objections

Issue	Points raised	Council response
1	<p>Disappointed that the Council intends to downgrade the Welsh language within the education system – hoped that the Council’s plans to merge the two schools would strengthen the position of the Welsh language and boost the bilingual stream.</p>	<p>The Council notes these concerns regarding the impact of the proposal on the Welsh language / Welsh-medium education. The Council does not intend to downgrade the Welsh language within the education system – the Council’s view is that the proposal provides an opportunity to strengthen the Welsh medium provision in Llanfyllin, in the secondary sector in particular.</p> <p>The Council carried a Welsh language impact assessment as part of this process, which was updated following the consultation period to reflect feedback received during the consultation period. This assessment concluded that:</p> <p>‘As the proposal would see the retention of primary and secondary Welsh-medium and English-medium provision in Llanfyllin, it is not anticipated that the proposal would have a significant impact on the Welsh language. It is anticipated that implementation of the proposal would result in improved transition between key stages, which could lead to improvements in the proportion of pupils continuing to access Welsh-medium provision on transfer from the primary sector to the secondary sector.</p> <p>It is also possible that implementation of the proposal could have a positive impact on the Welsh language ethos in the secondary sector in Llanfyllin as a result of amalgamating with a primary school that has a higher percentage Welsh-medium pupils than Llanfyllin High School.</p> <p>During the consultation period, concerns were raised about the proposal’s impact on the Welsh language, in particular on the Welsh ethos of Llanfyllin C.P. School. Whilst these concerns are noted, the Council’s view is that implementation of the proposal provides an opportunity to improve and strengthen the Welsh-medium provision in Llanfyllin, and to strengthen the Welsh ethos across the primary and secondary phases.’</p>

2	<p>Proposing to keep the language category as 2C is a missed opportunity – this is the time to improve the school’s language category to 2B. Keeping the school’s language category as 2C is a backwards step, and undermines the efforts of the local community and the Welsh Government to strengthen the position of the Welsh language.</p>	<p>The consultation relating to establishing an all-through school in Llanfyllin was carried out on the basis that the secondary provision would be category 2C, as it currently is – information about the proposed language category of the new school was provided on page 17 of the consultation document.</p> <p>The Council notes the comment that the Council should be taking this opportunity to establish category 2B provision. Responsibility for subject provision within the school would rest with the governing body, and whilst the minimum level of provision offered would be expected to meet the definition for category 2C provision, the Council would fully support the governing body continuing to develop the Welsh-medium provision at the school, with the aim of providing 2B provision.</p> <p>The Council would encourage individuals who are keen to see the development of Welsh-medium provision to engage with the new school in order to encourage the further development of Welsh-medium education in the school, and to take any opportunities to be members of either the new school’s temporary governing body or permanent governing body.</p>
3	<p>The Council’s latest Welsh in Education Strategic Plan included a commitment to improve the school’s language category to 2B by 2020. Why has the Council not kept this promise?</p>	<p>It is true that the Council’s WESP for 2014-17 included a Strategic Aim to ‘provide robust linguistic continuity of Welsh-medium provision across all key phases of education’, and stated that ‘Within the current context of secondary education in the county, it is expected that all six dual-stream schools will maximise their Welsh-medium provision, with the aim that they will all become Category 2B schools by 2020 in order to ensure that Welsh-medium pupils have an equal choice of subjects as English-medium pupils.’</p> <p>However, this became increasingly challenging due to the financial pressures faced by the Council, and it became necessary to identify alternative options in order to improve the opportunities available to Welsh-medium and English-medium pupils through all stages.</p> <p>In March 2015, the Council’s Cabinet agreed a new Secondary Reorganisation Programme, which would be taken forward based on four priorities, one of which was ‘Review of Secondary Education in North Powys, with a focus on Welsh medium provision’. Initial work on this took place during the summer of 2015, and in</p>

		<p>Spetember 2015, Cabinet determined that it was 'desirable to establish a bi-lingual, category 2A school or schools in North Powys'. The Council's latest WESP, for 2017-20, reflects this aim.</p> <p>The WESP for 2017-20 was produced in accordance with Welsh Government guidelines, and was approved by Welsh Government in March 2018.</p> <p>Ultimately, responsibility for subject provision within each school rests with the governing body. Whilst the minimum level of provision offered at the new school would be expected to meet the definition for category 2C provision, the Council would fully support the governing body continuing to develop the Welsh-medium provision at the school, with the aim of providing 2B provision.</p>
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