

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

**CABINET EXECUTIVE
10th November 2020**

**REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Phyl Davies
Portfolio Holder for Education and Property**

REPORT TITLE: Ysgol Bro Hyddgen

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Purpose

1.1 This report requests Cabinet approval to commence the statutory process on the following proposal, in order to move Ysgol Bro Hyddgen along the language continuum:

- To make a regulated alteration to alter the medium of instruction at Ysgol Bro Hyddgen from Bilingual (dual-stream) to Welsh-medium
- This would be introduced on a phased basis, year-by-year, starting with Reception in September 2022.

1.2 This would mean that:

- English-medium provision would be phased out gradually year by year, starting with Reception in September 2022 – pupils would be taught in Welsh-medium classes and become fully bilingual i.e. fluent in both Welsh and English
- Additional Welsh language support would be introduced alongside the change in language category for latecomers and those pupils needing the additional support. This would include immersion provision which has been very successful in other authorities.

1.3 The report is supported by the following appendices:

Appendix A – Options Appraisal
Appendix B – Impact Assessment

2. Background

Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys

2.1 On the 14th April 2020, a new Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys was approved by the Leader via a delegated decision.

2.2 The Strategy was developed following extensive engagement with a range of stakeholders during two separate periods between October 2019 and March 2020.

2.3 The Strategy sets out a new vision for education in Powys, which is as follows:

'All children and young people in Powys will experience a high quality, inspiring education to help develop the knowledge, skills and attributes that will enable them to become healthy, personally fulfilled, economically productive, socially responsible and globally engaged citizens of 21st century Wales.'

2.3 The Strategy also sets out a number of guiding principles which will underpin the transformation of education in Powys. These are as follows:

- *A world class rural education system that has learner entitlement at its core*
- *Schools that are fully inclusive, with a culture of deep collaboration in order to improve learner outcomes and experience*
- *A broad choice and high quality of provision for 14 – 19-year-old learners, that includes both academic and vocational provision, meeting the needs of all learners, communities and the Powys economy*
- *Welsh-medium provision that is accessible and provides a full curriculum in Welsh from Meithrin to age 19 and beyond Provision for learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN)/Additional Learning Needs (ALN) that is accessible as near to home as is practicably possible, with the appropriate specialist teaching, support and facilities that enables every learner to meet their potential*
- *A digitally rich schools' sector that enables all learners and staff to enhance their teaching and learning experience*
- *Community-focused schools that are the central point for multi-agency services to support children, young people, families and the community*
- *Early years provision that is designed to meet the needs of all children, mindful of their particular circumstances, language requirements or any special or additional learning needs*
- *Financially and environmentally sustainable schools*
- *The highest priority is given to staff wellbeing and professional development*

2.4 The new Strategy sets out a number of Strategic Aims and Objectives, to shape the Council's work to transform the Powys education system over the coming years. One of these Aims is to '*improve access to Welsh-medium provision across all key stages*', and a commitment '*to move schools along the language continuum.*'

3. The Case for Change

3.1 The transformation of education in the Dyfi Valley has been underway for several years, in order to address many historical challenges and issues. This has been carried out in stages:

- **Establishment of Ysgol Bro Hyddgen:** Ysgol Bro Hyddgen was established in September 2014 following the merger of Machynlleth C.P. School and Ysgol Bro Ddyfi. The purpose of this merger process was to address many of the identified challenges facing education in the town. This has been a success for the Council. Since the school's establishment, permanent leadership arrangements have been in place, and the quality of provision has improved.
- **Plans to develop a new community campus on a single site, to replace the two current sites:** The Council has been developing plans to provide a replacement building for Ysgol Bro Hyddgen for several years. Moving to a new building will address some of the remaining issues facing the school, such as the current poor accommodation at the secondary campus in particular, and will provide additional benefits to the school from being located on one campus.

3.2 Whilst education has undergone significant changes in the town of Machynlleth over recent years, these have not addressed the school's dual stream status, which was actually highlighted in the Cabinet report of 2013 which recommended the establishment of an all-age school in Machynlleth.

3.3 The school is located in a traditionally Welsh speaking area, and Ysgol Bro Hyddgen's English-medium stream is the only English-medium feeder primary provider in the catchment area. The number of English-medium pupils attending primary provision in Machynlleth has decreased over recent years, which means that the number of primary aged pupils accessing English-medium provision in the catchment is low.

3.4 Current pupil numbers at Ysgol Bro Hyddgen are as follows:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total
Welsh-medium	11	19	17	13	16	25	12	43	28	39	29	35	17	28	332
English-medium	5	6	6	6	10	7	12	8	17	15	17	18	6	12	145
Total	16	25	23	19	26	32	24	51	45	54	46	53	23	40	477

3.5 The low number of English-medium pupils causes a challenge to Ysgol Bro Hyddgen in providing appropriate provision for these learners:

- In the primary sector, English-medium pupils are taught in small classes, with a high number of year groups in each class.
- In the secondary sector, in order to be able to accommodate both Welsh-medium and English-medium pupils, many classes are taught bilingually, with teaching taking place in both Welsh and English in the same class. This is not a desirable model for Welsh-medium or English-medium pupils.

3.5 The Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys includes an aim to 'improve access to Welsh-medium provision across all key stages', as well as an objective to 'move schools along the language continuum'.

3.6 In order to meet these aims and objectives, the Council is keen to move Ysgol Bro Hyddgen along the language continuum. This would ensure that all pupils attending the school have the opportunity to become fully bilingual, fluent in both Welsh and English, therefore contributing to the Welsh Government's aspiration to achieve a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

4. Information about Ysgol Bro Hyddgen

4.1 Ysgol Bro Hyddgen is an all-through school located in the town of Machynlleth in North Powys. It was established in September 2014 following the amalgamation of Machynlleth C.P. School and Ysgol Bro Ddyfi.

4.2 The school's primary phase primarily serves the town of Machynlleth, whilst the secondary phase serves a wider catchment area. Apart from Ysgol Bro Hyddgen itself, there are only three other primary schools in the school's catchment area. These are three Welsh-medium primary schools, which operate under one headteacher as part of a federation.

4.3 The following is a summary of key data relating to Ysgol Bro Hyddgen:

	School Type	Language Category	Admission Number	Rural School? ¹
Ysgol Bro Hyddgen	Community Middle School (All-through) School building owned by Powys County Council	Bilingual (Type B)	31 ²	No

Pupil Numbers

i) Current pupil numbers³

Current pupil numbers at Ysgol Bro Hyddgen are as follows:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total
Welsh-medium	11	19	17	13	16	25	12	43	28	39	29	35	17	28	332
English-medium	5	6	6	6	10	7	12	8	17	15	17	18	6	12	145
Total	16	25	23	19	26	32	24	51	45	54	46	53	23	40	477

ii) Historical pupil numbers⁴

	Jan. 2014	Jan. 2015	Jan. 2016	Jan. 2017	Jan. 2018	Jan. 2019	Jan. 2020
Ysgol Bro Hyddgen	560	564	520	486	488	483	474

¹ Annex F of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2018) (<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/school-organisation-code-second-edition.pdf>) includes a list of 'rural schools', to which the 'Presumption against the closure of rural schools' applies.

² This number increases to 73 in Year 7 when pupils from other schools in the catchment join the school

³ Finance Figures – NOR 2020 count day

⁴ PLASC

iii) **Projected pupil numbers (Birth rate)⁵**

	Jan. 2021	Jan. 2022	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025
Ysgol Bro Hyddgen	464	469	477	465	463

iv) **Projected pupil numbers (Finance projections)⁶**

	Jan. 2021	Jan. 2022	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025
Ysgol Bro Hyddgen	472	486	488	N/A	N/A

Building Capacity and Condition

i) **Capacity**

The following table provides information about the school's current capacity:

	Current Capacity	Currently Filled	Surplus Capacity
Ysgol Bro Hyddgen – Primary Campus	213	166 (77.9%)	47 (22.1%)
Ysgol Bro Hyddgen – Secondary Campus	442	296 (66.9%)	146 (33.1%)

ii) **Building condition**

In 2009, Welsh Government carried out condition and suitability assessments of the school.

	Condition	Suitability	Access to hall on site
Ysgol Bro Hyddgen – Primary	C Poor	B Good	Yes

⁵ Powys Schools Service Projections based on PLASC & Birth Rates

⁶ Powys Finance Projections based on data provided by the school

Campus			
Ysgol Bro Hyddgen – Secondary Campus	C Poor	C Poor	Yes

A replacement building is planned for Ysgol Bro Hyddgen, it is anticipated that this will open in September 2023.

Standards of Education

i) Estyn

	Ysgol Bro Hyddgen
Date of Inspection	February 2017
Standards	Adequate
Well Being	Good
Learning Experiences	Adequate
Teaching	Good
Care, Support and Guidance	Good
Learning Environment	Good
Leadership	Good
Improving Quality	Adequate
Partnership Working	Good
Resource Management	Adequate
Outcome	The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will review the school's progress.

ii) School Categorisation

	Standards Group	Improvement Capacity	Support Capacity
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Ysgol Bro Hyddgen	N/A	B	Yellow

Financial information

i) Cost per pupil (Section 52 Budget Statement, 2019/2020)

	Budget share per school	Budget share per pupil	Notional SEN budget	Non ISB funds devolved to the school
Ysgol Bro Hyddgen	£2,484,000	£6,419	£78,000	£44,000
Powys average (Middle)	N/A	£6,419	N/A	N/A
Wales average (Middle)	N/A	£2,237	N/A	N/A

ii) Current budgetary position (as of 1st May submittal by full governing body)

	2019/20 Actual Cumulative Outturn	2020/21 Budget	2021/22 Budget	2022/23 Budget
Ysgol Bro Hyddgen	£162,071	£197,602	£125,798	£34,764

Equalities Information

i) Free School Meals⁷

	Number of pupils who had a free school meal on Census day
Ysgol Bro Hyddgen	25 (14.5%)

ii) Pupils in care⁸

⁷ PLASC 2020

⁸ PLASC 2020

	Number of pupils in care
Ysgol Bro Hyddgen	4

iii) **SEN/ALN⁹**

	School Action	School Action Plus	Statement
Ysgol Bro Hyddgen	27 (15.6%)	15 (8.7%)	3 (1.7%)

5. Statutory Process for School Organisation Proposals

5.1 The process for school organisation proposals is set out by the Welsh Government in the School Organisation Code (2018). The process is summarised below:

i) Consultation

Consultation would be carried out with stakeholders as required by the Code. This includes consultation with the pupils at both schools, to ensure that their views are considered, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Feedback from the consultation would be collated and summarised, and a report would be presented to the Cabinet. Cabinet will consider the report and the feedback received during the consultation period, and will decide whether to proceed with the proposal, to make changes to the proposal or to not proceed with the proposal.

If Cabinet decides not to proceed, that will be the end of this proposal.

ii) Statutory Notice

If Cabinet decides to proceed, a Statutory Notice would be published, which would give a period of 28 days for people to submit written objections.

If there were objections, the authority would publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and the authority's response to them. A further report would be presented to the Cabinet, which they would consider alongside the objection report, in order to decide whether or not to approve the proposal.

⁹ PLASC 2020

iii) Implementation

If Cabinet approves the proposal, it would be implemented in accordance with the date given in the Statutory Notice or any subsequently modified date.

6. Advice

6.1 Officers have carried out an options appraisal on the language category of Ysgol Bro Hyddgen and implementation options. This is attached to this report as Appendix A.

6.2 The options appraisal includes the following:

- Consideration of key data relating to the school
- Identification of options
- SWOT analysis of each option
- Assessment of each option against a number of critical success factors
- Identification of possible implementation options
- SWOT analysis of implementation options
- Assessment of implementation options against a number of critical success factors
- Identification of an emerging preferred option
- Further consideration of the emerging preferred option against factors listed in the School Organisation Code (2018) as factors to be taken into account when developing school organisation proposals.

6.3 Based on the options appraisal carried out and further consideration against the factors outlined in the School Organisation Code, the preferred option is as follows:

To support the school to move along the Welsh language continuum over time

- Fully bilingual (Welsh-medium) provision to be phased in gradually year by year, starting with Reception in September 2022
- Eventually, all pupils at the school would attend bilingual (Welsh-medium) provision, ensuring that all pupils would be fluent in Welsh and English
- Additional Welsh language support to be introduced alongside the change in language category e.g. Trochi, additional Welsh language support

6.4 The reasons for this are:

- Minimal impact on pupils currently accessing English-medium education at the school – the provision would continue until they left school
- In the long term, would enable the school to operate more efficiently
- Would enable school leadership to make more effective use of human resources
- Would allow staff to focus on one linguistic delivery model
- Would allow time for any necessary staff development and professional learning
- More opportunities could be offered through the medium of Welsh
- Increase in pupils studying through the medium of Welsh
- Meets the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys
- Potential financial saving to the authority
- Meets all of the Critical Success Factors

6.5 It is therefore advised that Cabinet approves a recommendation to commence the statutory process on the following proposal in order to move Ysgol Bro Hyddgen along the language continuum:

- To make a regulated alteration to alter the medium of instruction at Ysgol Bro Hyddgen from Bilingual (dual-stream) to Welsh-medium
- This will be introduced on a phased basis, year-by-year, starting with Reception in September 2022.

This would mean that:

- English-medium provision would be phased out gradually year by year, starting with Reception in September 2022 – pupils would be taught in Welsh-medium classes and become fully bilingual i.e. fluent in both Welsh and English
- Additional Welsh language support would be introduced alongside the change in language category for latecomers and those pupils needing additional support. This would include immersion provision which has been very successful in other authorities.

6.6 Should the recommendation to commence the statutory process be approved, it is anticipated that consultation would commence in December 2020.

6.7 It must also be noted that implementation of this proposal does not preclude that school from being a part of future reorganisation proposals.

7. Resource Implications

- 7.1 The amount of funding provided to schools is driven by the funding formula. Any change to the formula funding provided will impact on the Council's revenue budget. Based on the current formula, the formula funding requirement will reduce as a result of these proposals and savings falling to the Council's revenue budget are estimated to be £107,000 per annum, when the whole school becomes a single-stream school by 2036. It is not anticipated that there will be any revenue implications in the first year of implementation as the pupil numbers would be absorbed within the existing class structure of the school based on current pupil projections.
- 7.2 As the new single-stream model is phased in over time, there will be some savings, dependent on pupil numbers. However, the financial benefits of a single-stream model are in Key Stages 3, 4 and beyond, as indicated in the Options Appraisal (Appendix A). This figure does not include any redundancy costs that could arise should the proposal be implemented.
- 7.3 The Council will continue to work with the school to ensure that the school budget complies with the scheme for financing schools and is within the funding envelope available.
- 7.5 The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) notes the content of the report and the resource implications above and on this basis can support the recommendation.

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 Legal: The recommendation can be supported from a legal point of view.
- 8.2 The Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: "I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report".

9. Comment from local member(s)

9.1

10. Integrated Impact Assessment

- 10.1 An initial impact assessment in respect of the recommendation is attached. The impact assessment considers the proposal's impact on the Welsh Government's well-being goals, as outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.
- 10.2 The summary of the impact assessment is as follows:

'The draft impact assessment indicates that the impact of the proposal is positive overall. The proposal would eventually provide a more

sustainable model for delivering education in Ysgol Bro Hyddgen, ensuring that all pupils are fully bilingual in Welsh and English when they leave the school. The proposal is to change the school's language category over time, which minimises the impact on pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Hyddgen, but would also ensure that, eventually, all pupils would be taught through the medium of Welsh, and would become fully bilingual in Welsh and English. This would lead to enhanced opportunities to promote the Welsh language within the school and within the community and would provide those pupils with bilingual skills to take into the workplace.'

10.3 Should Cabinet approve the commencement of the statutory process in respect of the recommendation, the impact assessment would be updated throughout the process, to take account of feedback received.

11. **Recommendation**

11.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approves that the statutory process commences on the following proposal in order to move Ysgol Bro Hyddgen along the language continuum:

- To make a regulated alteration to alter the medium of instruction at Ysgol Bro Hyddgen from Bilingual (dual-stream) to Welsh-medium
- This would be introduced on a phased basis, year-by-year, starting with Reception in September 2022.

11.2 This would mean that:

- English-medium provision would be phased out gradually year by year, starting with Reception in September 2022 – pupils would be taught in Welsh-medium classes and become fully bilingual i.e. fluent in both Welsh and English
- Additional Welsh language support would be introduced alongside the change in language category for latecomers and those pupils needing the additional support. This would include immersion provision which has been very successful in other authorities.

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