

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

CABINET EXECUTIVE

18th May 2021

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

REPORT TITLE: Ysgol Bro Hyddgen Language Category

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Purpose

1.1 Further to the decision made by Cabinet on the 10th November 2020, the Council has carried out consultation on the following proposal:

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

1.2 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet members of the responses received to the consultation and to determine whether or not to proceed with the statutory process to change the school's language category.

1.3 The report is supported by the following appendices:

- Appendix A – Consultation Document
- Appendix B – Consultation Report
- Appendix C – Minutes of meetings with School Councils, Governors and Staff
- Appendix D – Updated Impact Assessments
- Appendix E – Comments from the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee (To follow)

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. The Strategy sets out a new vision education in Powys, 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 new 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 the Strategic Aims of the Strategy is to *'improve Welsh-medium provision across all key stages.'* Within this aim, the Strategy sets out a Strategic Objective to *'Move schools along the language continuum'*.

- 2.5 On the 10th November 2020, the Council's Cabinet considered an options appraisal paper in respect of Ysgol Bro Hyddgen, and agreed to carry out consultation on the following:
- 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.

The Consultation Period

- 2.6 Consultation on the proposal to change the language category of Ysgol Bro Hyddgen commenced on the 8th December 2020 and ended on the 26th January 2021.
- 2.7 The consultation document was available on the Council's website throughout the consultation period. The document was also distributed to stakeholders as required by the School Organisation Code (2018). The consultation document that was issued is attached as Appendix A.
- 2.8 Consultees were asked to respond to the consultation by either completing the online consultation form, filling in a paper copy of the form and returning it to the School Transformation Team, or by writing to the School Transformation Team.
- 2.9 During the consultation period, virtual meetings were also held with the following:
- Staff of Ysgol Bro Hyddgen
 - Governors of Ysgol Bro Hyddgen
 - School council of Ysgol Bro Hyddgen – Primary Phase
 - School council of Ysgol Bro Hyddgen – Secondary Phase

The minutes of these meetings are attached as Appendix C, and the issues raised in the meetings are included in the Consultation Report (Appendix B).

Consultation Responses

- 2.10 440 respondents completed the consultation response form which was included in the consultation document. This included paper copies as well as responses submitted using the online response form. In addition, 25 written responses were received from respondents including Estyn, by e-mail or post.
- 2.11 As well as responses from parents, pupils, staff and governors at Ysgol Bro Hyddgen and members of the local community, responses were received from the following organisations:

Cyngor Cymuned Corris
 Cyngor Cymuned Mallwyd
 Cyngor Cymuned Cadfarch
 Rhieni Dros Addysg Gymraeg - RHAG
 Mudiad Meithrin
 Machynlleth Community Children's Project

- 2.12 Estyn's response to the consultation is provided on page 20 of the Consultation Report (Appendix B).
- 2.13 The consultation response form asked respondents to answer a number of questions. The findings are provided in full on pages 5 to 8 of the Consultation Report (Appendix B).

Consultation Findings

- 2.14 As part of the consultation, a consultation response form was issued, which was completed by 440 respondents. 60.91% of respondents indicated that they were associated with Ysgol Bro Hyddgen, 22.05% indicated that they were associated with the Glantwymyn, Llanbrynmair, Carno Federation, 5.45% indicated that they were associated with another school, and 11.59% of respondents indicated that they were not associated with any school.
- 2.15 The consultation response form asked respondents whether or not they agreed with the proposal to change the language category of Ysgol Bro Hyddgen to Welsh-medium, on a year by year basis, commencing with Reception in September 2022, and whether they thought the Council should be considering any alternative options in respect of Ysgol Bro Hyddgen. The findings were as follows:

1. Do you agree with the current proposal to change the language category of Ysgol Bro Hyddgen?

Response	No.	%
Yes	269	61.14%
No	165	37.5%
Don't know	6	1.36%
Total responses	440	100.0%

2. Do you think that the Council should be considering any other options for Ysgol Bro Hyddgen instead of the proposal to change the school's language category?

Response	No.	%
Yes	102	23.18%
No	286	65%
Don't know	52	11.82%

Total responses	440	100.0%
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2.16 Written comments were also received by e-mail and post. These comments, as well as issues raised by those completing the consultation response form and those raised in the consultation meetings, are listed in the Consultation Report (Appendix B) from page 25 onwards, along with the Council's response to these issues. The issues raised relate to the following headings:

1. General support for the proposal
2. General disagreement with the proposal
3. Impact on pupils
4. Reference to the English language provision/skills
5. Reference to Post-16/Further/Higher Education
6. There is a need for choice
7. Concern about impact on pupil numbers at Bro Hyddgen
8. Additional support that would be needed to support the change of language category
9. Reference to transport arrangements
10. Comments about the current provision at Ysgol Bro Hyddgen
11. Financial impact
12. Impact on staff
13. Impact on the community
14. Impact on the Welsh language
15. Reference to Welsh-medium education delivery models
16. Reference to discrimination/inequality
17. Impact on protected characteristics groups
18. Comments about the consultation documents
19. Comments about the consultation process
20. Reference to the Council's Transforming Education Strategy
21. Criticism of the Council
22. Reference to alternative options

3 Advice

- 3.1 Based on the findings of the consultation, the advice of officers is that the Council should proceed with the proposal to change the language category of Ysgol Bro Hyddgen by publishing a Statutory Notice.
- 3.2 It is anticipated that the Statutory Notice will be published in June 2021, and that a further report, summarising any objections received, will be considered by the Council's Cabinet before the end of September 2021.
- 3.3 The target would be to implement the change on a phased basis, year by year, starting with Reception aged pupils in September 2022.

- 3.4 It must be noted that proceeding with the proposal to change the school's language category does not preclude that school from being a part of future reorganisation proposals.

4. Resource Implications

- 4.1 As indicated in the Consultation Document published in respect of this proposal, based on estimated pupil numbers for Ysgol Bro Hyddgen in September 2022 it is estimated that changing the school's language category would result in annual revenue savings to the Council of approximately £184k per annum, once the school is fully single-stream. There would be no saving in the first year, and although there would be opportunities for savings as the phasing takes place, this would be dependent on pupil numbers. The effectiveness of a single-stream school is optimised in the secondary sector.

It is not anticipated that there would be an impact on transport costs, and there would be no capital costs.

- 4.2 Implementation of the proposal would require involvement from a number of service areas, including staff from the Schools Service, HR and Finance.
- 4.3 The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) notes the content of the report and can support the recommendations.

5. Legal implications

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

6. Comment from local member(s)

- 6.1 No comments received.

7. Integrated Impact Assessment

- 7.1 An initial impact assessment was considered by Cabinet on the 10th November 2020.
- 7.2 In addition, a range of draft impact assessments were produced as part of the consultation documentation. These included an Integrated Impact Assessment, an Equalities Impact Assessment, a Community Impact Assessment and a Welsh Language Impact Assessment.

7.3 These draft impact assessments have been updated to reflect issues raised during the consultation period, and are attached in Appendix D.

8. **Recommendation**

- To receive the Consultation Report in respect of changing the language category of Ysgol Bro Hyddgen.
- To approve the publication of a statutory notice to make a regulated alteration to alter the medium of instruction at Ysgol Bro Hyddgen to Welsh-medium, on a phased basis, year-by-year, starting with Reception in September 2022.

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