

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

**CABINET EXECUTIVE
13th December 2022**

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Pete Roberts
Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys

REPORT TITLE: Ysgol y Cribarth – Proposal Paper

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Purpose

1.1. This report requests Cabinet approval to commence the statutory process to move Ysgol y Cribarth along the language continuum by establishing a Welsh-medium stream at the school. The proposal is as follows:

- To make a regulated alteration to introduce a Welsh-medium stream at Ysgol y Cribarth from September 2023.

1.2. 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. The Strategy was revised following the Council elections held in May 2022, and an updated version was launched in July 2022.

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 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*'. Within this Aim, the Strategy includes a commitment '*to move schools along the language continuum.*'

2.5 In July 2022, the Council published a work programme for Wave 2 of implementation of the Strategy, which will run from 2022-27. This outlines the activity which will be taken forward to implement each of the Strategic Aims outlined in the Strategy. This includes an action to '*Further develop Welsh-medium early years and primary provision at Ysgol y Cribarth*'.

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-32

- 2.6 The Council has recently developed a new Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for 2022-32, which sets out how it will develop Welsh-medium education in Powys over the next 10 years, with the aim of meeting the Welsh Government aspiration to increase the number of pupils accessing Welsh-medium education.
- 2.7 The Council's WESP for 2022-32 was approved by the Welsh Government and the Council's Cabinet in July 2022.
- 2.8 The WESP includes an ambitious target to increase the percentage of Year 1 pupils taught through the medium of Welsh from 22% to 36% by 2032. To achieve this, the plan includes a commitment to develop new Welsh-medium primary provision, and in particular states that:

'The authority will focus on developing more Welsh-medium provision in the following catchment areas:

- Llanfair Caereinion
- Llanfyllin
- Ystradgynlais
- Brecon
- Llandrindod Wells/Builth Wells
- Newtown
- Llanidloes'

The Case for Change

- 2.9 Ysgol y Cribarth is located in Abercraf in the Ystradgynlais catchment in South Powys, and serves the village of Abercraf and the surrounding area. The school opened in a new building in 2012 following the reorganisation of all schools in the catchment.
- 2.10 The school currently operates as a single stream English-medium school. However, since September 2021, the school has also operated a Welsh-medium Foundation Phase class on a pilot basis as part of a pilot scheme that was supported by Powys County Council. This class has continued to operate in the 2022/23 academic year. There are currently 20 pupils in the Welsh-medium class.
- 2.11 Current pupil numbers at the school are as follows¹:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Welsh-medium	9	6	5	0	0	0	0	20

¹ Teacher Centre, 21/11/22

English-medium	6	12	19	18	13	15	21	104
Total	15	18	24	18	13	15	21	124

- 2.10 To provide continuity of provision for pupils attending the pilot provision and to provide clarity for the school going forward, there is a need to explore options for the school's future language category, with the aim of ensuring that Welsh-medium provision can continue to be offered at the school. This would ensure that all pupils attending the school would have the opportunity to choose this provision, which would give them the opportunity to become fluent in Welsh and English. This would support the Council's aims and aspirations as outlined in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for 2022-32 and the Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys.
- 2.11 The Council has recently been reviewing the language categories of its schools to reflect the new definitions published by the Welsh Government in 2022. To reflect the pilot Welsh-medium provision which is currently operating at the school, Ysgol y Cribarth has been categorised as T2 – Transitional. However, the Welsh Government's guidance document² is clear that schools should not be in transitional categories permanently, so there is a need to consider the school's future language category, so that any necessary statutory processes required to achieve this can be carried out.
- 2.12 Data related to Ysgol y Cribarth is provided in the Options Appraisal paper which is attached as Appendix A.

Options Appraisal

- 2.13 An options appraisal has been undertaken to consider options for the future language category of Ysgol y Cribarth. This is attached as Appendix A.
- 2.14 The following options were considered:
- 1 Status Quo – Ysgol y Cribarth continues as an English-medium school**

Based on the new Welsh Government definitions of schools, the school would be a Category 1 English-medium school.
 - 2 Formally establish a Welsh-medium stream in the school to operate alongside the English-medium provision**

² [WG43283 \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/WG43283)

Based on the new Welsh Government definitions of schools, the Welsh-medium stream would work towards meeting the definition of a Category 3 Welsh-medium school, the English-medium stream would meet the definition of a Category English-medium school.

3 Change the language category of Ysgol y Cribarth to Dual Language

Based on the new Welsh Government definitions of schools, the school would meet the definition of a 'Dual Language' school. This is as follows: 'At least 50% of learners' school activities (both curricular and extra-curricular) will be in Welsh. This could be achieved in different ways depending on the school context. It could be by using full Welsh-medium immersion up to age 7 with choice offered in the other year groups, or that 50% of school activities are in Welsh throughout.'

4 Change the language category of Ysgol y Cribarth to Welsh-medium on a phased basis.

Based on the new Welsh Government definitions of schools, the school would become a Category 3 Welsh-medium school on a phased basis.

- 2.15 The options appraisal exercise concluded that the preferred option was Option 2, to formally establish a Welsh-medium stream in the school to operate alongside the English-medium provision.
- 2.16 Based on the Welsh Government's new definitions of schools based on Welsh-medium provision, the expectation is that the English-medium stream at the school would meet the definition for a Category 1 English-medium school, and the Welsh-medium stream at the school would meet the definition for a Category 3 Welsh-medium school. However, it is acknowledged that it will take time for the Welsh-medium provision at the school to meet this definition. The provision would continue to be defined as 'Transitional – T3' until it meets the definition.
- 2.17 To formally establish a Welsh-medium stream at the school, the Council will need to carry out the statutory process for school organisation proposals as 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 taken into account, 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.

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.

3. Advice

3.1 Officers have carried out an options appraisal on future options for Ysgol y Cribarth's language category. This is attached to this report as Appendix A.

3.2 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 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.

- 3.3 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:

Establish a Welsh-medium stream in the school to operate alongside the English-medium provision

- 3.4 The reasons for this are:

- Would provide continuity for pupils currently accessing Welsh-medium provision at the school
- Would provide an additional opportunity for pupils in the catchment to access Welsh-medium provision
- Welsh-medium provision would be more accessible to pupils living in the north of the catchment
- Pupils at the school would have the opportunity to study through the medium of Welsh and develop full bilingual skills, if they so wished
- Potential to increase the number of pupils studying through the medium of Welsh in the locality and in Powys
- Potential to increase the pupil numbers at the school
- Would provide continued access to English-medium provision at the school alongside Welsh-medium provision
- Positive impact on the school's Welsh ethos, which could provide more opportunities for English-medium pupils
- Supports the aim in the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education to support schools to move along the language continuum
- Would contribute towards the targets in the Council's WESP
- Would contribute towards the Welsh Government's 2050 target of 1m Welsh speakers

- 3.5 Officers have been working with the school to develop this proposal. The school's Governing Body have indicated that they support the proposal to carry out consultation on introducing a Welsh-medium stream at the school.

- 3.6 It is therefore advised that Cabinet approves a recommendation to commence the statutory process on the following proposal:

- **To make a regulated alteration to introduce a Welsh-medium stream at Ysgol y Cribarth from September 2023.**

- 3.7 Should the recommendation to commence the statutory process be approved, it is anticipated that consultation would commence in December 2022.

4. Resource Implications

- 4.1 The foundation phase pilot is currently supported by Transformation funding of £95,000 in 2022-23. If a Welsh medium stream were to be formally established at the school, the school's formula-led delegated funding would increase by approximately £52,500 in 2023-24 (for the 7 months from September 2023 to March 2024) and by a further £39,600 in 2024-25 (for the 5 months from April 2024 to August 2024).
- 4.2 In the longer-term initial modelling suggests that the formula-led delegated funding for the school would potentially increase by approximately £50,000 even if the Welsh stream were not established, meaning that the estimated longer-term additional cost of establishing a Welsh stream at the school would be approximately £40,000 per annum.
- 4.3 These additional costs are shown within the current FRM for Schools delegated budgets and it is anticipated that they would be funded by savings realised as part of the Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2022-2032. It should be noted that these are estimated costs based on projected pupil numbers for future years. The actual costs of implementation will depend on the actual pupil numbers attending the school.
- 4.4 The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) notes the comments above and that the proposal will redirect funding within the overall Schools funding formula allocation.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Legal: the recommendations can be accepted from a legal point of view
- 5.2 The Head of Legal Services and the Monitoring Officer has commented as follows: "I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report".

6. Comment from local member(s)

- 6.1 Cllr David Thomas (Tawe Uchaf): 'I would fully support the establishment of a Welsh Medium Stream at Ysgol y Cribarth. This will build on the current trial provision and enhance teaching through the medium of Welsh. Consequently, this will make the provision available as an option to more parents in the Upper Swansea Valley and wider catchment area.'

7. Integrated Impact Assessment

- 7.1 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.

7.2 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 give the option for pupils attending Ysgol y Cribarth in the future to choose Welsh-medium education as well as English-medium education, building on the success of the Welsh-medium pilot class that is currently running at the school.

The proposal is to introduce the Welsh-medium on a phased basis as the current pupils move through the school, which would provide time for the school to plan to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to support the new provision. The introduction of a Welsh-medium stream at the school would provide an additional opportunity for pupils in the Aber-craf area to access Welsh-medium education, and would provide additional opportunities to promote the Welsh language in the school and within the community.

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

8. Recommendation

8.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approves commencing the statutory process on the following proposal to move Ysgol y Cribarth along the language continuum:

- To make a regulated alteration to introduce a Welsh-medium stream at Ysgol y Cribarth from September 2023.

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