

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD AT BRECON ELIM CHURCH,
CANAL ROAD, BRECON ON MONDAY, 3 JULY 2017**

PRESENT

County Councillor M R Harris (Chair)

County Councillors A W Davies, MC Alexander, P Davies, J Evans, S M Hayes,
R Powell, M Weale and J Wilkinson

In attendance: County Councillors MJ Dorrance, E Durrant, L Fitzpatrick, K Laurie-Parry, S Lewis, DW Meredith, WD Powell, E Roderick, E Vaughan and R Williams

1.	APOLOGIES
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County Councillor Liam Fitzpatrick who was not sitting as a member of the Cabinet as comments made at an earlier meeting could be construed as having predetermined the issue but who was in attendance.

2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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County Councillor Liam Fitzpatrick had declared an interest having made comments made at an earlier meeting could be construed as having predetermined the issue.

County Councillor Emily Durrant declared a personal non prejudicial interest as the parent of children at Ysgol y Bannau.

County Councillor Matthew Dorrance declared a personal non prejudicial interest as his partner was a Governor of Brecon High School.

3.	WELSH MEDIUM STREAM AT BRECON HIGH SCHOOL
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Cabinet considered the report of the Portfolio Holder for Education on objections received during the 28 day objection period to the Statutory Notice to close the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School from 31st August 2017. A total of 77 written objections had been received of which 21 were from 1 individual. In addition a petition signed by approximately 1,700 individuals and included 218 written comments.

In presenting her report the Portfolio Holder for Education outlined the reasons why she was recommending the rejection of the proposal to close the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School. She had taken into account the representations made during the statutory notice objection period and the wishes of people in the area to maintain Welsh-medium education in Brecon. This accorded with her own wish for equal provision of Welsh-medium education across the county with learners having access to a large number of subjects at GCSE which was not currently the case for pupils at Brecon High School. Her vision was for Brecon and Builth High Schools to work in partnership so that there were sustainable Welsh-medium streams in both schools. She recognised that it would take time to build up the number of subjects on offer and she

challenged the school and parents to apply the same level of commitment and enthusiasm demonstrated in campaigning for retention of the Welsh stream into making it a success.

The Portfolio Holder for Education also argued that it would be unfair for pupils educated in the medium of Welsh not to have access to the new High School being built in Brecon and in answer to questions from members confirmed that there would be sufficient space in the new school to accommodate a Welsh stream. She also confirmed that she had been mindful of the future of Ysgol y Bannau if the Welsh-medium stream had been closed in Brecon High School.

County Councillors Emily Durrant, Matthew Dorrance, Roger Williams, William Powell, David Meredith, Karen Laurie-Parry, Sarah Lewis and Edwin Roderick spoke in support of the recommendation noting that the Welsh language was integral to the culture of Brecon and its hinterland. They did express concerns whether the Council would be prepared to back the retention of Welsh-medium education in Brecon with the necessary finance. Speaking as Chair of the Governors, Councillor Meredith confirmed that the school would work with the Council and feeder schools to build up Welsh-medium education in the new school. County Councillor Elwyn Vaughan argued that without putting in resources the Council was not being serious in its commitment to the Welsh language and that pupils would continue to travel out of county for Welsh-medium education.

The Portfolio Holder for Education agreed with comments made that excellence in teaching would be key noting that the recruitment of more teachers able to deliver Welsh Medium teaching would be the quickest way of improving the offer to pupils. It would be up to the Head Teacher and Governors to agree and set the curriculum offer and they would need to work closely with the authority and primary schools in the catchment.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance reminded members that there was a £1.5m deficit in secondary school budgets bringing into question whether the current footprint of schools in the county was sustainable. He noted that the goal of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan was to concentrate Welsh learners but recognised that this in turn led to inequality on issues such as travel times. On balance he was prepared to support the recommendation.

The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care said that he felt that the report did not demonstrate how a viable Welsh-medium stream could be sustained and he would therefore abstain.

Other Cabinet members spoke in support of the recommendation emphasising that the support of the community would be needed for the Welsh-medium stream in Brecon to be a success.

By 8 votes to 0 with 1 abstention it was

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision:
i) To receive the Objection Report in respect of the proposal to close the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High	To understand the issues raised in the Objections received and the authority's response to those issues.

<p>School from the 31st August 2017.</p>	
<p>ii) To reject the proposal to close the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School from the 31st August 2017, and to retain a Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To ensure the continued provision of Welsh-medium education in Brecon. - To ensure that Welsh-medium pupils can access provision in the new school building planned for Brecon High School. - To support the Welsh Government vision to create 1 million Welsh speakers by the year 2050.

County Councillor M R Harris (Chair)