

# EXECUTIVE BOARD

THURSDAY, 22<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER, 2016

**PRESENT:** Councillor E. Dole [Chair]

**Councillors:**

H.A.L. Evans, L.D. Evans, D.M. Jenkins, G.O. Jones, T.J. Jones, P.A. Palmer, L.M. Stephens and J. Tremlett

**Present as Observers:**

Councillors D.J.R. Bartlett, C.A. Campbell, D.M. Cundy, T. Devichand, J.S. Edmunds, W.G. Hopkins, I.J. Jackson, G. Thomas and J.E. Williams.

**The following officers were in attendance:**

Mr M. James	-	Chief Executive
Mr C. Moore	-	Director of Corporate Services
Mr J. Morgan	-	Director of Community Services
Ms R. Mullen	-	Director of Environment
Mr G. Morgans	-	Acting Director of Education & Children
Mr P. Thomas	-	Assistant Chief Executive
Ms W. Walters	-	Assistant Chief Executive
Ms L. Rees Jones	-	Head of Administration & Law
Mr J. Fearn	-	Head of Property
Mr S. Davies	-	School Modernisation Manager
Mrs D. Williams	-	Assistant Media & Marketing Manager
Miss S. Griffiths	-	Graduate Trainee Project Officer (MEP)
Mrs M. Evans Thomas	-	Principal Democratic Services Officer

**Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen: 10.00 a.m. - 12.00 p.m.**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor M. Gravell.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST.**

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
H.A.L. Evans	10 – Prevention, Early Intervention and Promoting Independent Living	Her mother receives care services.

**3. MINUTES - 21ST NOVEMBER, 2016**

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Board held on the 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2016 be signed as a correct record.

#### 4. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE BY MEMBERS

The Chair advised that no questions on notice had been submitted by members. However, he had received notification from Councillors D.M. Cundy and J.S. Edmunds that they would like to ask questions in relation to agenda item 6 and these would be addressed under the appropriate item later in the meeting

#### 5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

##### 5.1. QUESTION BY MR ROBERT WILLOCK TO COUNCILLOR GARETH JONES, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CHILDREN:-

“In our first meeting with you last year, you stated that 30% Welsh lessons were too much for the English Children. As an educationalist how have you come to the conclusion that fully immersing children in their weaker language will be more beneficial to the child than learning Welsh second language?”

##### **Response by Councillor Gareth Jones, Executive Board Member for Education & Children:-**

“The final decision will be based on educational merits and the best interests of learners.”

##### **Mr Willock asked the following supplementary question:-**

“I would like to point out to you that the Unesco Save the Children report Language and Education - The Missing Link 2016 states the exact opposite of the full immersion process. The home language, which in Llangennech 70% of the homes are English speaking, is known as the mother tongue. And if the most important language is usurped by a second language it is detrimental to the child's long term education. We are here today to give our children the best education. If you have not read this report could you please suspend this Board until you have opened your minds and can have a balanced view.”

##### **Councillor Jones responded as follows:-**

“Yes, it has been brought to my attention during the last few weeks. International evidence cited by the Welsh Government confirms that the most effective way of developing bilingual children is to immerse them in the less common language whilst also developing their skills in the most common language. The Welsh Government also promotes that for children who are from non-Welsh speaking families that immersion in Welsh in school is particularly important in embedding the language.”

##### 5.2. QUESTION BY MS NIKKI LLOYD TO COUNCILLOR GARETH JONES, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CHILDREN:-

The Chair advised that Ms Lloyd was unable to attend today's meeting and had requested that he ask the question on her behalf.

“A pilot was carried out by the School to look into Welsh immersion in the reception classes. We have requested the results from this pilot from the School and the County Council under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. However, we are still waiting for these results. At the time of the pilot only parents who attended the meeting at the School were made aware about it and no follow up letters were issued. The evidence found from this pilot should have been collated and presented with the proposal. The only time we were told about the pilot was when we were provided with the information through an FOI and it has never been made public. The evidence and results have not been presented with the proposal and it is unknown whether there is an actual demand for Change. According to the School Organisation Code the demand for additional provision of any type in an area should be assessed and evidenced. When looking at the current position within the Llangennech Schools there are currently 121 children from outside of catchment coming into Llangennech School and at the same time 111 Children leave the village to seek education (20 of these pupils have left in recent months as a result of this proposal and uncertainty). These factors have clearly been overlooked. Why has there not been an adequate assessment for demand carried out?”

**Response by Councillor Gareth Jones, Executive Board Member for Education & Children:-**

“The consultation document and the consultation process have been conducted in compliance with the statutory School Organisation Code. Part 4 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 requires Local Authorities to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan setting out how they will carry out their education functions with a view to improving the planning of the provision of education through the medium of Welsh and improving the standards of Welsh medium education and the teaching of Welsh. Section 86 of the Act provides that the Welsh Ministers may require a Local Authority, in accordance with regulations, to carry out an assessment of the demand among parents in its area for Welsh medium education for their children. The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and Assessing Demand for Welsh Medium Education (Wales) Regulations 2013 set out how a Local Authority should go about conducting a Welsh medium education assessment, should this be required by the Welsh Ministers. To date, the Welsh Ministers have not required Carmarthenshire County Council to undertake a Welsh medium education assessment. As we have a high percentage of learners accessing Welsh medium education we are not required by law to measure the demand. Carmarthenshire’s Welsh in Education Strategic Plan has been formally approved by the Welsh Ministers. The progressive increase in the number of pupils attending the Welsh stream and the decrease in the number of pupils attending the English stream in the Llangennech schools over recent years clearly shows that there is an increasing demand for Welsh medium education within the area.

**5.3. QUESTION BY MRS MICHAELA BEDDOWS TO COUNCILLOR GARETH JONES, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CHILDREN:-**

The Chair advised that Mrs Beddows was unable to attend today’s meeting and had requested that he ask the question on her behalf.

“In a previous Scrutiny Committee meeting Mr Sully stated that his intention is to change all Dual Stream Schools to Welsh Medium and all English Medium to Dual Stream and so on... This will eventually eradicate all English medium schools in

Carmarthenshire. Can you confirm if this is also the Authorities long term Education plan?”

**Councillor Gareth Jones, Executive Board Member for Education & Children responded as follows:-**

“Carmarthenshire County Council has a statutory responsibility under Part 4 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for its area with the explicit aim of improving planning of the provision of education through the medium of Welsh, for improving the standards of that education and of the teaching of Welsh. Carmarthenshire’s last two WESPs have been accepted by Welsh Government Ministers and Carmarthenshire County Council. WESP requires all primary schools in Carmarthenshire, including English medium schools, to move along the language continuum, progressively expanding the proportion of education that is delivered through the medium of Welsh, with a view to ensuring that in time all children leaving primary school are fully bilingual with access to at least two languages.

**5.4. QUESTION BY MR STEVE HATTO TO COUNCILLOR GARETH JONES, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CHILDREN:-**

“According to the latest Pisa report, Wales is still lagging behind the rest of the UK in Maths, Science and English. This could be a direct result of children not being educated in their native tongue. Children who are not quite so bright academically would not reach their full potential if they don’t fully understand the lesson being taught and parents not being able to support them at home. Does CCC feel that by pushing the Welsh language so aggressively is worth the sacrifice of the standard of our education?”

**Councillor Gareth Jones, Executive Board Member for Education & Children, responded as follows:-**

“There is a national priority in Wales, shared by Carmarthenshire County Council, to increase the number of people in our communities who are able to speak Welsh and use it in their everyday lives. Schools are regarded to be a critically important component in developing children so that they are fully bilingual by the time they leave primary school. We do not accept that education through the medium of Welsh results in lower standards and outcomes. Pisa tests test a range of skills and aptitudes and is administered in the language the child is studying in. There are no Carmarthenshire County Council level results unfortunately or individual level results and therefore it is impossible to ascertain how Carmarthenshire pupils performed in these tests.”

**Mr Hatto asked the following supplementary question:-**

“Research has proven that children taught in Welsh who come from Welsh speaking homes are more likely to meet their potential. Children from English speaking homes are not meeting their full potential when they are taught all in Welsh. Professor Angelina Kioko in a study from Africa states that using the child’s home language is more beneficial to their education than using a second language. After working for 20 years in colleges in Swansea and Llanelli, every year we asked the students who came from Welsh comprehensive schools if they wanted to be taught

in Welsh, they were never ever taken up. Does the Council agree that the case as stated by Professor Kioko is true?"

**Councillor Jones responded as follows:-**

"I am not familiar with that research myself but I will look it up by the next meeting and have a better answer for you then."

**5.5. QUESTION BY MRS JULIA REES TO COUNCILLOR GARETH JONES, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CHILDREN:-**

"As a parent of a child with additional learning requirements I obviously feel very strongly about what is going on here today. My son was placed by Carmarthenshire County Council into a short term assessment centre, one of only 3 within Carmarthenshire. He was placed there to assess his requirements before release to mainstream education like many other children each year. All 3 of these assessment centres educate via English medium and there is no Welsh medium equivalent in Carmarthenshire. As stated previously it has been communicated to us that the aim of the council is to discontinue all English medium education by 2022 and that Llangennech School is simply part of this long term plan. How can the council discontinue English medium Education within the County when there are numerous children placed by the County specialists each year into these English medium Assessment centres but no English medium schools to be released to after assessment?"

**Councillor Gareth Jones, Executive Board Member for Education & Children, responded as follows:-**

"Carmarthenshire County Council provides for learners with additional learning needs in both Welsh and English languages. The questioner correctly identifies that there are three Observation and Assessment Centres within the county. However, whilst two of these centres educate through the medium of English, the centre located at Ysgol Bro Banw educates bilingually. We also have a Welsh medium unit at Ysgol Nantgaredig. The Welsh in Education policy requires all primary schools in Carmarthenshire, including English medium schools, to move along the language continuum, progressively expanding the proportion of education that is delivered through the medium of Welsh, with a view to ensuring that in time all children leaving primary school are fully bilingual. Expectation for progress applies to all schools, however, the pace at which schools will be able to extend bilingualism and Welsh medium education will depend upon local circumstances. While the WESP requires all primary schools to move along the language continuum, it is not Carmarthenshire County Council's aim to discontinue English medium education by 2022."

**Mrs Rees asked the following supplementary question:-**

"You said that there is bilingual education in Bro Banw but when I spoke to them they said that it is not immersion Welsh and it is simply sort of a sandwich so there is no immersion at the school. I also spoke to Nantgaredig School and they said that because it is part of their main primary it only gives access to children within the locality and not wider areas. So children like my son who was placed in a Welsh medium school but was taken out by the Council to be placed in an assessment centre which was only English, he has got no chance. What are you going to do about that sort of situation in the future?"

**Councillor Jones responded as follows:-**

“We have spoken previously about this. The answer will be provided within the letter we discussed at that previous meeting. The centre at Nantgaredig caters for a large area. It is not limited to which areas the children travel from.”

**5.6. QUESTION BY MR DEAN BOLGIANI TO COUNCILLOR GARETH JONES, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CHILDREN:-**

“Recent information obtained under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 advised us that Bryn and Bynea Schools have already refused admission requests at the schools despite in previous meetings we were told the Schools were not oversubscribed. The next nearest English Medium School is Hendy which does not have a safe route to school. You have informed us throughout this consultation that it is not the Authorities intention for any child to leave Llangennech School but it is obvious that you have already driven some away and the welcome mat has been pulled up by the chair of Governors openly stated that English Speaking children are detrimental to the Welsh speaking children’s Education. If English Medium is removed from Llangennech the freedom of choice for parents is also being removed. Could you please answer this question this time as to where you are going to cater for pupils who seek English Medium Education as it will no longer be available at Llangennech for those who seek it?”

**Councillor Gareth Jones, Executive Board Member for Education & Children, responded as follows:-**

“The County Council is not proposing alternatives to Llangennech School for local children. We maintain that all the needs of the learners can be met at Llangennech School. It is the Local Authority’s desire that all current pupils remain at the school and that in the future local children attend their village school, receiving education principally through the medium of Welsh with English being taught as a subject in Key Stage 2 and used as a medium of instruction in some other lessons in the later years of the school. It is Carmarthenshire County Council’s aim that all children become fully bilingual by the time they leave primary school with access to further opportunities and choices when they leave the school. The County Council is obliged to facilitate parental preference only where this is consistent with the effective delivery of education and the efficient use of resources. No parent has a right to demand a place at any particular school for their child or children. School places are allocated on the basis of the Council’s published Admissions Policy which favours children attending their local or designated school. Children are admitted to a school other than their designated school upon application by parents when places are available and subject to the over-subscription criteria set out in the published Admissions Policy. As the Admissions Authority for all schools within Carmarthenshire, the Council is impartial and legally cannot advise parents on the choice of schools for their children. The Admissions for Parents booklet provides parents with all the information required to help choose the school of their choice e.g. language choice, faith schools etc. I-Local is also available to help identify the schools from the applicant’s home address and postcode. The number of places available in schools is very fluid and can change daily. There are a number of schools where demand for places exceeds the number of places available.”

**Mr Bolgiani asked the following supplementary question:-**

“During this long on-going process Mr Sully has spoken about catchment areas. Even during the last scrutiny meeting Sully raised concerns that I had delivered an objection questionnaire at the Bryn which he stated was out of area. Following a Freedom of Information it appears 456 of the pro submission questionnaires had no street names or any post codes and only 32 were actually from Llangennech. If so, could you please confirm that the pro change submission forms have been withdrawn as they are out of catchment area being LL16 Denbighshire, LL58 Anglesey, CF35 Bridgend, CG71 Pontypool, CF36 Porthcawl, SA32 and SA31 Carmarthen, SA17 Kidwelly/Ferryside, SA4 Swansea and SA18 Ammanford/Glanamman.”

**Councillor Jones responded as follows:-**

“All the letters received have to be considered because it is a personal viewpoint from these people.”

**5.7. QUESTION BY MRS KAREN HUGHES TO COUNCILLOR GARETH JONES, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CHILDREN:-**

“The KeepDualStreamCommittee are members of the Llangennech community who have voluntarily given up their time and money to ensure that the majority within Llangennech have a voice. To date, any questions have been met with responses such as ‘We must do it because it’s the WESP’ or ‘Carmarthenshire Council know what’s best for your child’s education’ or that ‘there is no demand for Dual Stream’. These are simply speculative, misleading non-factual statements and prove that real issues are not being addressed. Concerns regarding children with disabilities learning abilities, to the emergence of social divisions, increased traffic through Llangennech as children are unnecessarily being shipped in and out to pursue educational language choices, detrimental effects on the environment and promotion of healthy lifestyle are all failing to be even acknowledged. Plus we must not forget the negative impact on the Welsh language itself which most parents had embraced as Llangennech has always been supportive of its culture, heritage and language. We are astounded that none of these factors have been built into the Community Assessment despite there being a legal necessity to provide ‘due regard’. It appears it is just a tick box exercise and nobody appears to be taking it seriously or providing workable solutions but instead is using the WESP as a defence mechanism. It is ironic that the purpose of the Community Assessment is to inform the WESP and highlight risks in order to ensure that what is implemented is fit for purpose. Out of all the issues raised by the Community, none have been recorded in your risk assessments. This begs the question what is the purpose of doing this consultation when the majority opinion and concerns are being overlooked. Can you explain the logic for ignoring an informed and democratic decision making process and how can you see this as a positive?”

**Councillor Gareth Jones, Executive Board Member for Education & Children, responded as follows:-**

“The consultation document has been prepared and the consultation process and the statutory objection period have been conducted in compliance with the statutory

School Organisation Code. We have to follow that process. Carmarthenshire County Council has agreed to determine proposals in relation to school reorganisation. Prior to the beginning of the consultation period on 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2016 the consultation document was considered by the Education Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Board and permission to consult was granted. Following the end of the consultation period on 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2016 a consultation report was prepared containing all the submissions received including all supportive comments and objections in response to the consultation period. This report also contains Estyn's and the School's response to the proposal. The consultation report was presented to the Education Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Board and the contents of the report were considered. In July 2016 the Executive Board granted permission to publish the proposal via Statutory Notice. The Statutory Notice was published on 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2016. Following this an objection report has been prepared containing all objections and supportive comments received in response to the Statutory Notice and the Local Authority's responses to these submissions. The report was presented to the Education Scrutiny Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2016 and will ultimately be presented to the County Council for their determination. At each stage of the process, each report has been carefully considered by members before a decision to proceed has been made. Throughout the process, the department has accommodated requests and has shared correspondence with interested parties, demonstrating openness and transparency."

**Mrs Hughes asked the following supplementary question:-**

"I think we can agree that the objective of the consultation and the Community Impact Assessment is to ensure that the consultees can shape and influence the proposal. The expectation being that those impacted the most have the biggest voice. From a Freedom of Information request supplied by yourselves it is clear that from within Llangennech village a whopping 700+ object to these proposals whilst there are only 32 in support. This is a hugely unsupported and problematic proposal and for this consultation to be effective it needs to take account of these views. Please can you evidence how you have revised your proposals according to the responses to ensure that the 95% of objectors from the village aren't ignored. Failure to do so shows closed minds and by de facto a failed consultation process."

**Councillor Jones responded as follows:-**

"As I mentioned previously we have to consider all the consultations sent in, which I know you are not happy with that situation but there is nothing I can do about that unfortunately, it is part of the process. Certainly this will be added to the evidence that has been produced and it is important that you have had a chance to air your views again this morning."

**5.8. QUESTION BY MR NIGEL HUGHES TO COUNCILLOR GARETH JONES, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CHILDREN:-**

"The elimination of dual stream in Llangennech will have a massive effect on discouraging non Welsh speaking professional people moving into the area. If they have young children who have had their education in English in their early years, then they are unlikely to move into the area. This will have an adverse effect on house prices and investments from outside the county. Carmarthenshire County



Council's long term strategy appears to be seeking to create a county of isolation and seclusion. Please explain how you are planning to attract new businesses and talent to the County when you will only teach children in one of the two recognised languages of Wales and not provide families with any choices? This appears to be another oversight by the local councillors that wrote the WESP which does not appear to have considered the longer term impacts."

**Councillor Gareth Jones, Executive Board Member for Education & Children, responded as follows:-**

"There are already many Welsh medium schools within Carmarthenshire successfully educating pupils from English/other backgrounds, with pupils succeeding. The evidence for the Llangennech schools confirm that children in the Welsh language stream from non-Welsh speaking homes achieve consistently good outcomes in all subjects, including the English language. The education at Llangennech School will be bilingual with English being taught as a subject in Key Stage 2 and used as a medium of instruction in some other lessons in the later years of the schools along with the Welsh language. It is Carmarthenshire County Council's aim that pupils will be fully bilingual in both Welsh and English languages when they leave for secondary school. Carmarthenshire County Council regard the Welsh language as an advantage and a key skill for employment in Carmarthenshire and Wales as bilingualism will increasingly over time become an employment skill. For example, all public organisations in Wales are subject to new statutory Welsh language standards and progressively over time will need to recruit increasing numbers of Welsh speakers to deliver services. Possessing Welsh language skills will increasingly over time give individuals a competitive advantage when seeking employment."

**Mr Hughes asked the following supplementary question:-**

"As I said, Wales has two recognised languages, Welsh and English. I think that you are underestimating the importance of having a good education in English. In this modern economic world English is a recognised business language of over 2 billion speakers and is vital to the economic and educational future of the children of Wales. How do you see its removal as a benefit when other countries are seeking to use it more and more?"

**Councillor Jones responded as follows:-**

"We are not seeking to remove English as a subject at Ysgol Llangennech or within the county. It is very, very important as a key employment skill, you also need your English. With being bilingual it will add to the advantage that these children have already."

**5.9. QUESTION BY MR PHILLIP WILLOCK TO COUNCILLOR GARETH JONES, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CHILDREN:-**

"We are about to discover whether you, like the open minded Mr Campbell believe in Welsh education by compulsion. You have asked for the public's opinion via the statutory consultation and we are now very interested as to whether you are going to listen to it. Given that the majority of Llangennech's responses are objections to

the change are you going to assume an authoritarian approach on this consultation?”

**Councillor Gareth Jones, Executive Board Member for Education & Children, responded as follows:-**

“I cannot speak for other members’ views regarding the proposal, however, whilst considering all of the submissions received, the decision on whether or not to proceed with the proposal must, by virtue of the law, be made on the grounds of the best interests of learners. It is, therefore, the educational merits that must be the determining factor in decision making, rather than the number of responses received in favour or against the proposal.”

**Mr Willock asked the following supplementary question:-**

“Early years children are disadvantaged if they are not taught in the main language of the household. Research by Dr. Angelina Kioko, along with Helen Pinnock’s Unesco report and the Pisa test results show this. In the Pisa results, Finnish children start school age 7 and are taught in the language of the household. Finland, who finished fifth in the Pisa results, were only a handful of marks behind the first place Singapore. Finland, like Wales, has an indigenous language of Suomi. By embracing the household language for the need of the children and not making political, ulterior motives with education, Finland are forging ahead of Wales. Have the Executive Board considered any other reports rather than Professor Donaldson and if so, who were the authors and did they pick the reports that suited their motives?”

**Councillor Jones responded as follows:-**

“We are bound by Welsh Government legislation as well as other reports. I know that officers make sure that they are up to date with all the current issues concerning bilingualism.”

**5.10. QUESTION BY MRS SALLYANN THOMAS TO COUNCILLOR GARETH JONES, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CHILDREN:-**

The Chair advised that Ms Thomas was unable to attend today’s meeting and had requested that he ask the question on her behalf.

“A recent wide ranging consultation was conducted by the Welsh Government to find out the views from myriad sources for its long term vision for the Welsh language. The aim of WAG is to create a million bilingual speakers of Welsh and English by 2050 however, the results from this consultation are still being reviewed. Undoubtedly the findings will have a major impact on how we deliver our education system in Primary Schools. What reasons do you have for not waiting for the recommendations of this independent panel Wales consultation due early in 2017 before any change is decided to any of our schools in Carmarthenshire?”

**Councillor Gareth Jones, Executive Board Member for Education & Children, responded as follows:-**

“Prior to the publication of the “Consultation on a Welsh Government Draft Strategy: A Million Welsh Speakers by 2050”, the Welsh Government already had and continue to have legislation and requirements of Local Authorities in respect to Welsh medium education. In 2010 the Welsh Government published its national policy “Welsh Medium Education Strategy 2010” for developing Welsh medium education across the nation. The national strategy sets out the Welsh Government’s views on the importance of Welsh medium education to outcomes for learners and to the ambition to develop bilingual citizens. The Welsh Government also published the “Welsh Language Strategy 2012-2017 – A Living Language: A Language for Living”. This national policy considers the conditions that are needed to promote a greater use of the Welsh language by children and young people in all aspects of their lives and proposes a set of high level actions to secure their goal. Carmarthenshire County Council as well as other Local Authorities in Wales must continue to adhere to these legislations and requirements regardless of the consultation to create a million Welsh speakers. Part 4 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 requires Local Authorities to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan setting out how they will carry out their education functions with a view to improving the planning of the provision of education through the medium of Welsh and improving the standards of Welsh medium education and the teaching of Welsh. This places duties on Carmarthenshire County Council to enhance and expand Welsh medium education. We also have a responsibility to respond to Carmarthenshire County Council’s report that was developed following the 2011 Census which showed that the percentage of the number of Welsh speakers in Carmarthenshire had decreased and for the first time in history, fell under half. In addition, the process for any proposal must be conducted in compliance with the statutory School Organisation Code. The School Organisation Code states that “under section 53 of the 2013 Act, determination by the proposer must be made within 16 weeks (112 days) of the end of the objection period. Where the proposer fails to determine the proposal within the period of 16 weeks it is taken to have withdrawn the proposal and it is required to republish the proposals if it wishes to proceed.”

**5.11. QUESTION BY MS VICKI FREEMAN TO COUNCILLOR GARETH JONES, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CHILDREN:-**

“Many Doctors and nurses in the NHS are from a different ethnic background. A lot of nurses are Filipino and Indian, and a vast majority of Doctors are from the middle and Far East. English is already their second language. Carmarthenshire has many vacancies in both professions. There has been discussion as to why so few people apply for these jobs. Many answered that as their children already speak two languages, they feel it would be too difficult to move to this area when the Welsh language is being forced onto non Welsh speaking immigrants. This was especially a concern when children were already 8 or 9 years of age and never been exposed to the Welsh language. Is CCC aware that by heading on the path to eradicating English medium education, it is going to affect the whole infrastructure of the county and prevent professional immigration into our local NHS and other businesses?”

**Councillor Gareth Jones, Executive Board Member for Education & Children, responded as follows:-**

“The Education Department provides support to all of its pupils throughout the county including to latecomers who may come from different backgrounds/ non-

Welsh homes. All schools within the county are dedicated and committed to educating and supporting all pupils to the best of their ability and we have many success stories of learners from different backgrounds becoming very proficient Welsh speakers. I am also sure that any person, regardless of backgrounds, wishing to move to Carmarthenshire, or indeed any part of Wales, will consider all of the factors questionable, including the two national languages of the country before making their decision. When making their decision, each person will have considered the standard and the language of instruction of the education that their children may receive at their local school. It must also be remembered that Carmarthenshire County Council as well as other Local Authorities in Wales, must follow legislation and requirements provided by the Welsh Government. Policies published by Welsh Government will have been scrutinised before being approved.”

**Ms Freeman asked the following supplementary question:-**

“How do you intend to cater for children with disabilities? I have a child with disabilities who is struggling with English alone. If she is forced to now change into Welsh, she is not going to manage her education. It hasn’t been captured in your disability assessment.”

**Councillor Jones responded as follows:-**

“We have a policy that we try to cater for all possible additional learning needs within the county. I wasn’t sure if you were referring to the NHS or the Education Authority there but we will have as much support as possible for you and your family.”

**5.12. QUESTION BY MS ORLA WILLIAMS TO COUNCILLOR GARETH JONES, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CHILDREN:-**

The Chair advised that Ms Williams was unable to attend today’s meeting and chose to ask her question on her behalf.

“CCC is segregating and marginalising the current and future bilingually and English stream learners in Llangennech school by not providing a suitable pathway for those learners. In Welsh government legislation, English and Welsh have equal status. But not if you live in East Carmarthenshire. The move to Welsh only in Llangennech, where there is a high percentage of out of catchment middle class parents on their way to J48 of the M4, and insisting on Welsh only is a flawed plan by the County Council. What provision is being put in place to raise performance in Hendy Primary, Strade Comprehensive to justify this exclusionary practice and to provide an equivalent high standard of education in Llangennech for parents who wish and require their children to be educated bilingually as Bryn School does not have the same bilingual ethos, performance, outcomes or leadership to allow children to that Llangennech currently offers and why parents choose the bilingual stream. Maintaining the bilingual stream in Llangennech will help reach the government target of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. By excluding families from bilingual education will not encourage or embrace those families willing to take the first steps into fluency. This proposed policy will exclude; discourage some families from speaking Welsh and create division and an unequal, divisive education provision in East Llanelli. Surely it is better to welcome people in as proven by studies in Catalan, Finland and Lithuania where truly bilingual education is proven by success in performance, PISA and international performance. Would looking for inclusive

solutions not better serve the current intake and future generations of our community and provide a better legacy for this Council?”

**Councillor Gareth Jones, Executive Board Member for Education & Children, responded as follows:-**

“As stated previously, it is Carmarthenshire County Council’s aim to create bilingual individuals with the skills to be able to read, write and speak fluently in both Welsh and English languages. As a result of this proposal, pupils will leave Llangennech School with two first languages and proficiency in both Welsh and English. This proposal seeks to provide this opportunity to all of the pupils at the Llangennech schools. Carmarthenshire County Council have a policy of parental choice in regard to school admissions but priority is given to catchment area pupils. The County Council is obliged to facilitate parental preference only where this is consistent with the effective delivery of education and the efficient use of resources. No parent has a right to demand a place at any particular school for their child or children. School places are allocated on the basis of the Council’s published admissions policy, which favours children attending their local or “designated” school. Children are admitted to a school other than their designated school upon application by parents when places are available and subject to the over-subscription criteria set out in the published Admissions Policy.”

**5.13. QUESTION BY MR DARREN SEAWARD TO COUNCILLOR GARETH JONES, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CHILDREN:-**

“Councillor Gwyn Hopkins has stated many times that those opposing the changes are a vociferous minority and has peddled this fairy-tale in the press. Given that there are over 750 objections, probably the largest appeal in the history of Llangennech, it is unfortunate that after being a County Councillor for over 20 years that Mr Hopkins does not understand the needs and wishes of his electorate better. It also begs the question, what other poor judgements have been made during this consultation. We believe it would be fairer to all, including the new candidate that this decision be postponed until after May 2017 elections when a new candidate is appointed and confidence can possibly be restored and that the village has a representative voice. Do you agree this should be delayed?”

**Councillor Gareth Jones, Executive Board Member for Education & Children, responded as follows:-**

“It is not my place to comment about Councillor Hopkins’ views, however, I’m aware that he is the local member for Llangennech and he will have local information regarding the area. The process for any proposal must be conducted in compliance with the statutory School Organisation Code and that is the process.”

**5.14. QUESTION BY MRS JACQUELINE SEWARD TO COUNCILLOR GARETH JONES, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CHILDREN:-**

“It really saddens us to see how much our once close knit community has been divided by this proposal. We seem to have overlooked what is important here which is infact we have an extremely successful dual stream school that caters for all. Llangennech School has an excellent reputation and is sought after by many who

are even willing to travel from outside of area to be educated at Llangennech. Many of the children in the Welsh Stream would not have tried it if the school was a Welsh only School and this is what we must recognise. The Welsh Government wants one million speakers by 2050. The Welsh language should be desired not forced and by taking parents choices away we will only end up diluting the welsh language not increasing it. Llangennech is already contributing to increasing the number of Welsh speakers and will continue to do so as a dual stream. Other Schools need to follow our example. Let's look at the impact this proposal has had on Llangennech community who have embraced the Welsh language for years. It does make us wonder how would other Schools especially all English Medium School would react if faced with the same proposal as per the wishes of Mr Sully to make every school in Carmarthenshire Welsh medium. This will create resent and end up damaging the Welsh Language which is certainly not what we want. We want our children to continue learning Welsh as they are able to do now in the dual steam but at their own pace and parents choice. From our last exercise we have hard proof of 750 people against the proposal. There were 698 support comments submitted but following an FOI request we have been made aware that a large majority who commented were not even from the village or even county. We have asked again under an FOI for a further breakdown of streets so a true analysis can be made. But unfortunately as usual this is not readily available. For a number of years before this proposal, figures and people have been manipulated to present a false picture of the demand in the village. The people of Llangennech have spoken and it's about time they were finally listened to. Can you honestly make such an important decision about our children's future and education when so many questions are still unanswered?"

**Councillor Gareth Jones, Executive Board Member for Education & Children, responded as follows:-**

"We have confidence that Llangennech schools' reputation and standards will not change as a result of this proposal. The proposal seeks to improve even further the opportunity for children attending the schools to secure continually improving outcomes. As stated previously, children at Key Stage 2 will receive a bilingual education, with English being taught as a core subject and used as a medium for instruction in some other lessons in the later years of the school. It must also be remembered that current pupils at the school will not be affected by this proposal. We are aware that objections and supportive comments were received from outside the area of Llangennech, however, each person has a right to voice their personal opinion. The decision on whether or not to proceed with the proposal must, by virtue of the law, be made on the grounds of the best interests of learners. It is, therefore, the educational merits that must be the determining factor in decision making, rather than the number of responses received in favour or against the proposal."

**Mrs Seward asked the following supplementary question:-**

"None of the questions have really been answered here today and as usual the same pre-printed answers are passed on to each Chair or Councillor on the day to read. They don't address the questions at all. Llangennech has just over 1600 houses. We had 757 objections and that proves that 4.5% only supported the change and 95% were against the change. Even though everyone is entitled to an opinion, we were told at the beginning that we were a minority and that the village didn't want it but obviously now we have proved that we are not a minority. 95% of the village do not want this change. Surely it should be the parents' choice what

they want their children to be educated in and not the Council's beliefs to make that decision. We know you may have made up your mind already before coming here today but we do urge you to look at the facts and now listen to the people. Are you going to now listen to the 95% of the village and respect their wishes?"

**Councillor Jones responded as follows:-**

"Certainly, we are listening to you this morning. It is all part of the process and I am listening very, very carefully to what you are saying."

The Chair thanked the questioners for their attendance at the meeting.

## **6. ADJOURNMENT**

At 11.00 a.m. the meeting was adjourned for a short break.

## **7. RECONVENED MEETING**

The meeting reconvened at 11.15 a.m.

## **8. MODERNISING EDUCATION PROGRAMME - PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE LLANGENNECH INFANT SCHOOL AND LLANGENNECH JUNIOR SCHOOL AND ESTABLISH LLANGENNECH COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The Board considered a detailed report on the proposal to discontinue Llangennech Infant School and Llangennech Junior School and establish Llangennech Community Primary School.

Following the retirement of the headteacher of Llangennech Infant School at the end of the summer term 2013 a soft federation was established with the headteacher of Llangennech Junior School. On 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2014 the Governing Bodies of both school resolved to pursue a formal federation as from April, 2015.

The Local Authority currently offered full time learning provision for 4-11 year old through the medium of Welsh and English at the federated Llangennech Infants and Junior Schools. As part of the new 3-11 primary school which would include nursery provision, it was proposed to change the current linguistic categories of Llangennech Infant School (Dual Stream (DS)) and Llangennech Junior School (Dual Stream (DS)) to a new Welsh Medium (WM) language category school which would increase the provision of Welsh medium education in Carmarthenshire and would ensure that bilingualism was increased in the Llangennech area. It would ensure linguistic continuity from the nursery sector along the key stages to the secondary sector so that every pupil would become fluent and confident in Welsh and English, as detailed in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2014-17.

As a result of a small extension to the consultation period, the pre-election period and the high number of responses received during the consultation period, the dates for the proposal had changed. This was in order to ensure that sufficient time was allowed for people to express their views and that the school holiday period did not impede on the process. It was therefore proposed:-

- (i) to discontinue Llangennech Infant School on 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2017;
- (ii) to discontinue Llangennech Junior School on 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2017;
- (iii) as from 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2017, to establish a new 3-11 Welsh Medium (WM) language category Community Primary School with nursery provision (hereinafter called the “New School”) on the existing sites and buildings of the current Llangennech Infants and Junior Schools. The current capacity of both schools would remain unchanged but would be reviewed and adjusted accordingly should the demand arise in the future.

In accordance with the Executive Board’s instructions at the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2016 (minute no. 15 refers) a formal consultation exercise was undertaken between 25<sup>th</sup> January and 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2016, the results of which were appended to the report.

At the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2016 (minute no. 9 refers) the Executive Board approved the publication of a Statutory Notice to implement the proposal. The Statutory Notice was published on 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2016 and provided objectors with 28 days in which to forward their objections in writing to the Council. The Statutory Notice period was due to end on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2016, however, following a request from an interested party, the Director of Education & Children’s Services agreed to extend the statutory objection period by one week, until 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2016.

A total of 1,418 submissions were received to the Statutory Notice and an Objection Report which summarised the objections and the supportive comments received together with the Local Authority’s responses to these submissions was appended to the report.

Should the County Council agree to implement the proposal, Llangennech Infant and Llangennech Junior Schools would be discontinued on the 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2017 and a new 3-11 Welsh Medium Community Primary School would be established on 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2017.

Officers were satisfied that there were no other related proposals, the statutory proposal had been consulted upon and published in accordance with the School Organisation Code and contained all the relevant information and, having considered the consultation document and consultation report, the objections and any responses to the notice supporting the proposal in the objection report, recommended that the Executive Board recommend to Council the implementation of the proposal as laid out in the Statutory Notice.

In accordance with CPR 11.1 Councillor D.M. Cundy referred to the recommendations of the Welsh Language Census Working Group which were passed by County Council in April 2014. He pointed out that the public consultation was not undertaken and the responses not brought back to Council for ratification. He therefore queried whether the proposal should be held until due process had been followed. The Executive Board Member for Education & Children clarified that the recommendations of the Working Group were included in the WESP 2014-17 which was one of the drivers behind the proposal. The Chief Executive further clarified that the process was not flawed as the proposal was not dependent upon the Working Group’s recommendation in relation to consultation.



In accordance with CPR 11.1 Councillor J.S. Edmunds asked why, in view of the fact that Llangennech School is one of the best schools in the county and a successful model of community cohesion, the Council is looking to divide the community and destroy the cohesion that Llangennech has enjoyed. The Executive Board Member for Education & Children clarified that the Authority is not trying to divide the community but is following Welsh Government policies and other national drivers such as the aspiration to increase the number of Welsh speakers. Councillor Edmunds asked whether the Board was concerned over the message this decision was sending to the rest of Wales. The Executive Board Member for Education & Children stated that the Council was sending out a very positive message as the consultation process and community involvement undertaken has set an excellent example for the rest of Wales.

#### **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL**

- 8.1 that the submission received to the Statutory Notice and the Authority's responses thereto, as detailed in the Objection Report, be noted;**
- 8.2 that, being satisfied that there are no other related proposals; that the statutory proposal has been consulted upon and published in accordance with the School Organisation Code and contains all the relevant information and, having considered the consultation document and consultation report, the objections and any responses to the notice supporting the proposal in the objection report, the proposal as laid out in the Statutory Notice be implemented.**

### **9. PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD SCRUTINY**

The Executive Board was advised that Public Service Boards have replaced the former Local Service Boards and are specifically required to:-

- (a) Undertake a wellbeing assessment for the area;
- (b) Set local wellbeing objectives as part of a wellbeing plan;
- (c) Take all reasonable steps to meet those objectives.

The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires a designated overview and scrutiny committee of a Local Authority to have a key role in assuring democratic accountability of the Public Service Board via its prescribed role as outlined in the Act. The designated scrutiny committee would be specifically expected to:-

- Formally receive the Wellbeing Assessment and Wellbeing Plan from the Public Service Board;
- Act as a statutory consultee for the Wellbeing Assessment and Wellbeing Plan;
- Review the Wellbeing Plan if directed to by the Welsh Minister (who has the power of referral but not approval).

Chapter 6 of the Welsh Government Shared Purpose: Shared Future: Statutory Guidance 3 states that:-

“174. In order to assure democratic accountability there is a requirement for a designated local government scrutiny committee of the relevant local authority to scrutinise the work of the Public Service Board. It will be for each local authority to determine its own scrutiny arrangements for the Public Service Board of which it is a member. For example, existing legislative powers can be used to put in place joint arrangements, such as ‘co-opting’ persons who are not members of the authority to sit on the committee, and where appropriate to appoint joint committees across more than one local authority area.

175. While it will continue to be entirely legitimate for a subject scrutiny committee (such as a children and young people’s scrutiny committee) to scrutinise the public services board’s work in relation to a specific issue, it is important that one committee takes an overview of the overall effectiveness of the board. This is the reason one committee must be designated to undertake this work.”

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee be designated as the Authority’s Scrutiny Committee for the purposes of scrutinising the work of the Carmarthenshire Public Service Board and that this function be reflected in Article 6 of the Council’s Constitution.**

## **10. PREVENTION, EARLY INTERVENTION AND PROMOTING INDEPENDENT LIVING**

[NOTE: Councillor H.A.L. Evans, having earlier declared an interest in this item, left the meeting prior to the consideration and determination thereof.]

The Board was advised that the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act placed a statutory responsibility on Local Authorities to promote preventative services for the local population. Consultation conducted by Integrated Services with older people showed that maintaining independence and staying connected with their community was a key priority.

The strategy outlined ways in which preventative services would be embedded across the whole provision to promote independence and ensure that early intervention strategies were used to keep people as well and self-sufficient as possible. The strategy was an essential component in delivering cost savings, but these would be achieved within the context of promoting independence and providing the right support at an early stage so that crisis is avoided.

It was noted that, whilst cost savings would be delivered through initiatives such as right sizing packages of care and improved information, advice and assistance provision, extra funding had been secured through the Intermediate Care Fund to ensure that services outlined in this strategy were robust and able to deliver not only efficiencies in the long term but improve community services as a whole and promote the ethos of independence and personal responsibility for wellbeing.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy for Carmarthenshire’s Integrated Services be approved.**

## 11. SCHOOL STAFF ABSENCE SCHEME

The Board was advised that most schools currently sourced their own insurance policies through a range of providers to cover the replacement costs of teaching, learning support and other staff absent from school. The cover provided by these insurance policies vary greatly, as do the costs and the benefits. 105 schools were currently covered by insurance policies with premiums costing in excess of £1m for primary and secondary schools. Income received from claims in recent years was approximately £850k.

In order to ensure value for money, officers had undertaken a review of the external insurance provision, in consultation with schools within the county and research indicated that a Schools Staff Absence Scheme provides financial and operational benefits to schools and the Local Authority where similar schemes have been introduced.

The scheme has been designed to operate on the principles of partnership and the purpose of raising funds from its membership which can then be used to provide common shared benefits to all members of the scheme. Current insurance premiums and absence patterns within Carmarthenshire schools have been considered in developing the scheme and officers were satisfied that a well administered and structured Schools Staff Absence Scheme could operate successfully in the county, subject to sufficient membership by schools. Based on current levels, a surplus net of expenditure and administration costs would be achieved for the benefit of the members of the scheme instead of them paying insurance premiums to external providers at a net loss when compared to the reimbursements received.

In the event of the level of claims from scheme members exceeding the available funds, the deficit would be carried forward and offset against future year gains. It was therefore in both the schools' and the Authority's interest to manage attendance positively and proactively, in line with policies, to benefit from reduced premiums in future years. Based on the data available and a commitment from all interested parties to adhere to guidance and policies, the risk of a deficit was deemed to be low.

The Schools Staff Absence Scheme would operate initially for a period of two years commencing on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2017 until 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2019 and would operate as a non-profit making partnership fund for the benefit of participating members. It would be reviewed annually to ensure ongoing financial viability into subsequent financial years.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that the establishment of a Schools Staff Absence Scheme be endorsed.**

## 12. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2017-18

The Board was reminded that the Council was required to determine, on an annual basis, its Council Tax Base and the Council Tax Base of each community within its area, for the purpose of calculating the level of Council Tax for the forthcoming financial year and, under the provisions of Section 84 of the Local Government Act

2003 and the Local Authorities Executive Arrangements (Functions and Responsibilities) (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2004, the annual calculation had been delegated to the Executive Board.

The calculation of the Tax Base for the County Council for 2017-18 was detailed in Table 1a and summarised in Table 1b, which were appended to the report. The calculation for individual Town and Community Council areas for 2017-18 was summarised in Table 2 and detailed in Appendix A, which were also appended to the report.

## **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED**

**12.1. that the Council Tax Base calculations for the financial year 2017-18, as detailed within Appendix A of the report, be approved;**

**12.2. that a Council Tax Base of 71,598.56, as detailed within tables 1a and 1b of the report, be confirmed in respect of the County Council area;**

**12.3. that the relevant tax bases for the individual community and town council areas, as detailed in table 2 of the report, be confirmed.**

## **13. CORPORATE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2016-2019**

The Council undertakes a comprehensive review of its Corporate Asset Management Plan (AMP) every three years, setting out its priorities in property terms to meet the aims highlighted in the Corporate and Integrated Community Strategies.

In addition, the AMP captures the property implications of issues experienced by services, brought about by changes in local and national agendas. These service property requirements are referred to in the Service Asset Management Plans (SAMPs) evidenced by assessments of the relevant portfolio's suitability to meet such changes.

The AMP reviews the high-level performance of the corporate portfolio and highlights key challenges and priorities moving forward over the next 3-year cycle.

One of the outcomes of the recent Corporate Assessment was the requirement to strengthen links between SAMPs and the AMP, in addition to reviewing information on backlog maintenance to better inform decision making. These items, along with the challenges detailed below, had been highlighted as the key priorities for property related matters over the next 3 years:-

- Investment in strategic sites to promote economic growth;
- Sustaining community assets;
- Ensuring suitability of the retained estate;
- Exploring alternative ways of holding assets for service delivery;
- Greater collaboration with partners on property related matters;
- Generating capital receipts;
- Reducing revenue costs.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the revised Corporate Asset Management Plan 2016-2019 be approved.

**14. CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S GUIDANCE AND SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT ON CHARGEABLE PRE-APPLICATION AND POST CONSENT ADVICE IN RELATION TO DEVELOPMENTS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE (PLANNING (WALES) ACT 2015) AND NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS (PLANNING ACT 2008)**

The Board considered a report seeking approval for the Local Planning Authority to introduce charges for pre-application advice given to developers preparing Developments of National Significance (DNS) applications for submission to the Planning Inspectorate and to update existing guidance/fees relating to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs).

DNSs and NSIPs are major infrastructure developments such as proposals for power plants, large renewable energy projects, new airports and airport extensions, major road projects etc.

The Local Government Act 2003 gave Local Planning Authorities powers to recover the costs of pre-application advice in recognition of the time officers have to spend assessing and researching information in order to provide answers to prospective developers or agents. The use of a charging regime for pre-application advice was supported at a national level and was established practice with the majority of Local Planning Authorities.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL**

- 14.1 that the Council's duties and general procedures when providing the advice service to developers of NSIP and DNS projects be agreed;**
- 14.2 that the amendments to the existing guidance relating to NSIPs and the inclusion of provisions to deal with DNSs be agreed;**
- 14.3 that the details relating to charges, invoicing and payment procedures be agreed;**
- 14.4 that the details relating to developer confidentiality be agreed.**

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**CHAIR**

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**DATE**