

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION & CHILDREN

OBJECTION REPORT

For the proposal to change the nature of provision at

Ysgol Rhys Prichard

***Our Vision.....Carmarthenshire is a community where children are
safe and nurtured and learners of all ages are supported to
achieve their full educational potential***

October 2019

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Director of Education and Children's Services



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School Modernisation Section

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1. Executive Summary

The Consultation Process

On the 20th May 2019 Carmarthenshire County Council published proposals to change the nature of provision at Ysgol Rhys Prichard within the community of Llandovery. The County Council's proposal is to:

- Change the nature of provision of Ysgol Rhys Prichard to Welsh medium.

The consultation period commenced on the 20th May 2019 in line with the publication of the proposals and closed on 30th June 2019 with a total of 54 responses received.

Following the end of the consultation period, a Consultation Report was prepared summarising the observations received and the Local Authority's responses to these observations. The report was presented to the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee and then to the Executive Board for a decision on whether or not to publish a statutory notice. On the 23 September 2019 the Executive Board resolved to proceed to publish a statutory notice.

Publication of the Statutory Notice

Following the Executive Board's approval, Carmarthenshire County Council published the proposal by way of a statutory notice on 24 September 2019 for 29 days until 22 October 2019.

The table below notes the objections received. It must be noted that of the 2 objections received, they were received prior to the end of the consultation period.

Objections Received		
Email	Letter	Total
1	1	2

Responses Received

The responses received to the statutory notice are similar to the observations received during the consultation period.

Of the 2 respondents, they are categorised as follows:

- Parent (2)

Workshops

Following the end of the statutory notice period on the 22 October 2019, workshops were held on 24 October 2019 to analyse the objections received.

The Objection Report

The objection report summarises the submissions received in objection to the proposal and the Local Authority's responses to these submissions.

For completeness, these responses have also been included within this report and the themes for the objections received are as follows:

- Theme 1- Dual Stream – Not being implemented
- Theme 2 - Removal of Choice
- Theme 3 - Parents won't be able to help support their children
- Theme 4 – Coping with the Welsh Language
- Theme 5 – Discrimination and Exclusion
- Theme 6 – Transport and Travel to Other Schools

2. Summary of Objections received and Local Authority Responses

Point Number	Point Raised	Local Authority Response	Number of responses raising this point	% of responses raising this point
Objection Raised				
1.	<u>Dual Stream – Not being implemented</u> There are concerns that the school had not offered parents the choice of an English medium stream prior to a decision being made on the proposal.	The school will have been developing Welsh medium provision over time, as is expected of all schools under the auspices of the County Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. The current consultation is to formally endorse this development in the nature of provision at the school. English is a statutory subject which all schools must deliver. Moreover, it should be stressed that Welsh medium provision, properly expedited, is also synonymous with developing learners' bilingualism. In adhering to the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, schools are expected to ensure that as many learners as possible are equitably proficient in both English and Welsh by age 11. The degree to which this is achieved can vary according to a variety of circumstances and is subject to scrutiny by the County's School Improvement Team and external bodies such as Estyn.	2	100%

2.	<u>Removal of Choice</u> There are concerns regarding the removal of choice of English medium education at the school. It is believed that parents should have the choice of which language their children should be educated through.	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. In April 2014 the County Council formally adopted a comprehensive strategy for the development of the Welsh language in Carmarthenshire, endorsing the recommendations of a politically balanced group of elected members that had examined in depth the status of the Welsh language in the county in the wake of the 2011 census of the population. The strategy required action on 73 points, 21 of which applied to the education service. The language strategy received cross-party support from elected members when it was adopted at a meeting of the full County Council. On 25th June 2018, the Local Authority launched Carmarthenshire's most recent Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. The WESP has been subject to public consultation during its preparation and subsequent review. Its contents have, therefore, been subject to a test of public opinion in line with statutory requirements. It has also been approved by the Welsh Government in accordance with the requirements of the Act. The plan seeks to achieve the following outcomes relevant to the proposal: • Outcome 1 - More seven year old children being taught through	2	100%
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		the medium of Welsh; • Outcome 2 - More learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer from primary to secondary school; • Outcome 5 – More students who have higher language skills in Welsh; • Outcome 6 – Welsh medium provision for learner with additional learning needs (ALN); and • Outcome 7 – Workforce planning and continuing professional development. The proposal is adhering to the recommendations as set out in Carmarthenshire's WESP. Choice is an important issue in the consideration of this proposal, with the most important aspect of choice being that which is available to children as they progress through their education and early lives. This proposal provides all pupils with the opportunity to become fully bilingual with the skills to read, write and speak in both Welsh and English languages by the time they leave primary school. The Local Authority's proposal to develop bilingual children by the time they leave primary school gives children a choice as they move along the education sector. The most effective way of developing bilingual children in the primary sector is to immerse them in Welsh medium education. It is generally accepted in the education profession that studying Welsh as a second language does not develop truly bilingual young people and the schools has been identified as having the potential to move quickly along the language continuum.		
3.	<u>Parents won't be able to help support their children</u>			

	Concerns were raised that parents will no longer be able to play an active role in their child's education.	Welsh schools set homework instruction in Welsh and in English so there will be no problem in understanding what children are being asked to do at home. Work set will be appropriate to the pupil's age and ability level and therefore should be within reach. Developing increasingly as independent learners, parents may find that children are happy to progress without extra parental guidance as they get older. The school currently offers a range of support to pupils and parents from non-Welsh speaking families and are committed to increasing provision as necessary to meet the future needs of families.	2	100%
4.	<u>Coping with the Welsh Language</u> Concerns were raised that not all children will be able to cope with learning through the medium of Welsh, especially pupils from non-Welsh backgrounds. In addition, there are concerns that non-Welsh speaking parents may find it hard to	The school will continue to provide support for current pupils through the medium of which they currently receive their education. Should the proposal be implemented, sufficient support will be provided to all new pupils in accordance with the needs of each individual. It is also important to note that staff are required to differentiate the curriculum and make reasonable adjustments when required to meet the needs of every pupil. "Athrawon Bro" who provide support to the schools around the county will also be supporting the school. Welsh Language Immersion Centres will also be available for those pupils who may need extra input linguistically. The schools currently offer a range of support to pupils and parents from non-Welsh speaking families and are committed to increasing provision as necessary to meet the future needs of individual families.	2	100%

	support and help their children with their school work and home work should the school the proposal be implemented.	Several organisations who attended the formal drop in session during the consultation period have also offered their help and support to the community with the development of the Welsh language.		
5.	<u>Discrimination and Exclusion</u> It is believed that the proposal is discriminatory and segregates non-Welsh/English speaking families who desire English medium education. Should the proposal be implemented, pupils could be forced to seek English medium education elsewhere, thus further excluding them from their local community.	This proposal does not seek to discriminate against non-Welsh/English families or to exclude any community members from their own local community in any way. On the contrary, this proposal seeks to provide all children with the opportunity to become fully bilingual with the skills to be able to read, write and speak in both Welsh and English languages by the time that they leave primary school. It is the Local Authority's intention that all current pupils remain at the school and continue to receive their education through the current language. It is important to note that there will be no change for current pupils attending the school. Similarly, it is the Local Authority's desire that in the future local children attend their local school. There is a national priority in Wales, shared by Carmarthenshire 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. This proposal seeks to	1	50%

		provide all pupils/parents and community members with the opportunity to develop their Welsh language skills.		
6.	<u>Transport and Travel to Other Schools</u> It is unfair to expect parents to transport pupils to other schools to receive English medium education. This will have time and financial impact on families.	As there will be no change for current pupils attending the schools, there is consequently, no need for any child to be moved from the school. Similarly, it is the Local Authority's desire that all future pupils will attend their local school. The Local Authority are not proposing alternative English medium schools as part of the proposal. Should parents elect to place their children in alternative schools they will do so in full consideration of all the factors that apply, including transport implications. If any parents elect to place their children in alternative schools that are neither the designated nor nearest school, these parents will assume full responsibility for transporting their children to school.	1	50%

