

**APPENDIX I**

**EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL HELD  
AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON  
THURSDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 2016**

**Llanbister CP School**

The Portfolio Holder for Education advised that following consultation he was proposing to abandon his recommendation to Cabinet that Llanbister CP School close and would instead come back to Cabinet with draft recommendations by November 2016. In doing so he had taken into account a projected significant rise in pupil numbers and the significant travel time for some pupils.

County Councillor John Brunt spoke as the local member to welcome the new recommendation and to pay tribute to the governors, staff and parents. He urged Council to support the recommendation.

County Councillor Gary Price asked why Opinion Research Services had not produced a consultation analysis. He was advised that they had been engaged to produce consultation analyses on the high schools as it had been anticipated that this would be where the greatest number of comments were received. He asked which school Llanbister would amalgamate or federate with and was advised that no decision had been taken yet.

County Councillor Aled Davies asked about the timescale as it was important that uncertainty was ended. He was advised that a paper would be brought to Cabinet in November 2016 but that consultation on any proposals would not start until January 2017 at the earliest.

County Councillor Gibson-Watt asked if the new proposals would come back to full Council before Cabinet and the Portfolio Holder confirmed that they would after consultation and that the status quo was amongst the options that would be considered. The Solicitor to the Council advised that the intention was not to come back to Council at every stage but before a final decision was taken.

**Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School**

The Portfolio Holder for Education advised that following consultation he was not proposing to change his recommendation to Cabinet that the school be closed with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 with Crossgates CP School named as the receiving school.

County Councillor Hywel Lewis speaking as the local member noted the comments from Estyn on how impressed they had been by the improvements made at the school. He pointed to the willingness shown by the school to work with other schools, sharing a head with Llanelwedd Church in Wales School and he argued that this model of co-operation should be encouraged. He also advised that the school had approached the diocese with a view to becoming a Church in Wales school.

County Councillor Gary Price asked if the Portfolio Holder had seen an email from the Chair of Governors and the Portfolio Holder confirmed that he had and that it would be considered along with all the other representations received.

Councillor Price asked about single year group classes and was advised that Crossgates CP School did not have single year group classes. He also asked whether mobile classrooms were used at Crossgates and was advised that they were not currently used but that no guarantees could be given whether they would be in the future. The Portfolio Holder agreed that it was good to share resources. Councillor Price asked how the closure of the school would contribute to the Council's motto of strong communities in the green heart of Wales. The Portfolio Holder noted that other communities had survived the closure of their schools. He argued that having three or four year groups in the same class was not a good learning environment.

County Councillor Gwilym Williams advised that there were currently 16 children in the playgroup and asked if the projected pupil numbers were wrong and therefore the recommendation should be changed. Officers advised that pupil numbers were projected to be 33 in January 2017 and 34 in January 2021. Councillor Williams disputed this saying that there would be 37 pupils by December. Officers said that their figures were based on the number of places that had been applied for.

County Councillor Gibson-Watt called on the Cabinet to defer a decision to wait for the Rural Schools Policy being developed by Welsh Government.

County Councillor Alexander challenged the notion that small schools were poor schools. She argued that good leadership and partnership was what was needed and that in rural areas there were never going to be large numbers of pupils.

County Councillor Graham Jones asked about the plans for the provision for places for three year olds and was advised that the schools service was confident that there would be enough capacity.

County Councillor David Evans objected to the proposed closure of both Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School and Nantmel CP School arguing that the primary schools policy had never been placed before Council so didn't have the support of Council.

County Councillor William Powell asked if the Council had been in touch with Welsh Government over their rural schools policy and was advised that whilst officers had been in discussions with Welsh Government officials there had been no information on the policy.

County Councillor Aled Davies asked how many hours provision would be made for 3 year olds and was advised that currently 10 hours were being provided and that the council was proposing increasing this to 12½ hours. The 30 hours early years pre-school provision being talked about by the government was specifically for families where both parents worked. Councillor Davies said that it was important that this provision was close to where children lived and that local primary schools helped provide the service. Officers advised that there was a mixture of provision with some in schools and some independent of schools. Officers confirmed that an exercise mapping provision was close to completion and would be shared with the Portfolio Holder.

County Councillor Huw Williams noted that when proposals to close 11 primary schools in the Ystradgynlais area and replace them with 4 new schools there had

not been this level of debate in Council. At the time he had opposed the closures but now thought the new area schools were very successful.

County Councillor Hywel Lewis advised that there were currently 33 pupils at the school with another 4 due to join in January. The nursery was currently full with a waiting list of 4. He noted that many new houses were planned for Crossgates with young couples settling in the area. He noted that the average cost per pupil was £4,410 and that with the additional pupils this would come down to £3,694 which was in line with the Council average.

Councillor Lewis moved that Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School be allowed to federate with Llanfihangel Church in Wales School or a similar school. County Councillor Garry Banks seconded the proposal.

The proposal was put to the vote. The Solicitor to the Council reminded Members that the vote would be a recommendation to the Cabinet and would not be binding on them. He also reminded Members that the Cabinet would not be voting as they did not wish to be seen to have predetermined the issue.

The proposal was passed by 27 votes to 1 with 5 abstentions.

**RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School be allowed to federate with Llanelwedd Church in Wales School or a similar school.**