



Consultation Report on the Future of Builth Wells High School and Llandrindod High School



Report of Findings for



Opinion Research Services
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The Future of Builth Wells High School and Llandrindod High School



A Report of the Consultation Findings

Opinion Research Services

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Opinion Research Services (ORS) is pleased to have worked with Powys County Council (PCC) on the important consultation regarding the future of Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools.

We hope this report of the consultations will contribute to the County Council's thinking; and we hope the ORS contribution has been constructive and instrumental in ensuring that the views of the people of Powys are captured and considered as part of the overall consultation.

We are grateful to Powys County Council's managers for their helpful and positive liaison throughout the detailed preparation and management of the consultation. ORS' status as an independent social research organisation was respected throughout.

We also thank the members of the public, professionals and representatives of political, interest, voluntary and community groups who took part in the consultation; participants shared their views and took a full part in the process.

1. Background

- ^{1.1} On the 11th November 2014, Powys County Council Cabinet approved a School Transformation Policy, which set out the Council's vision and process for the transformation of primary and secondary schools in the county. The Policy includes:
- a range of criteria to be used to determine which schools would be reviewed
 - the establishment of a School Organisation Review Panel (SORP) to carry out reviews of schools
 - the establishment of a School Review Process to be used to review schools
- ^{1.2} On 24th March 2015, Cabinet approved 'the commencement of formal consultation to close Brecon High School and Gwernyfed High School by August 2017 and open a new English-medium 11 – 16 dual-sited school on the current sites of both schools by September 2017, and also the commencement of formal consultation to withdraw Welsh-medium provision from Brecon High School from September 2016'. However, following procedural errors which were challenged in a Judicial Review, the process was stopped. The School Review Process as outlined within the School Transformation Policy 2014 was restarted in September 2015. The stages of the Process are outlined below:
- An Initial Assessment of Schools in accordance with Stage 1 of the School Review Process was carried out, during which data for all schools was considered. Schools were considered against the criteria outlined in the School Transformation Policy. As a result of this Initial Assessment of Schools, SORP agreed to carry out a detailed review of the two schools.
 - Dialogue took place with the governing bodies, head teachers and local members during 2015 and 2016 in accordance with Stage 2 of the School Review Process as described in the School Transformation Policy, as follows:
 - Initial meetings held on 21st September 2015 to agree data in respect of the school and to discuss future options relating to the school;
 - An opportunity for the governing bodies to provide feedback on the options presented to them;
 - Following the initial meetings with governing bodies, head teachers and local members, the Council carried out a review of secondary education across South and Mid Powys, and developed a business case which considered the case for change in both areas, assessed and costed a range of options and included recommendations relating to the secondary schools under review.
 - The business case and its recommendations were considered by the SORP on the 20th January 2016, and the SORP agreed draft recommendations in respect of the all schools under review.
 - Feedback meetings were held with the governing bodies, local members and the head teachers on the 27th January 2016 to discuss the SORP's draft recommendations and to give the governing bodies a further opportunity to present additional evidence.

- On the 23rd February 2016, Cabinet considered the SORP's recommendations, together with the business case and additional evidence presented by the governing bodies following the feedback meeting. Cabinet resolved to commence formal consultation on the following Proposal:

To close Builth Wells High School and Llandrindod High School on the 31st August 2017, and to establish a new dual-stream 11 - 18 secondary school that will operate across the current sites of the two schools from 1st September 2017

This proposal is the first stage of a potential wider plan which aims to establish the school on a single site in the locality of Builth Wells.

- 1.3 Powys County Council set out reasons for change in the County in the consultation document which in brief are repeated below:

Falling pupil numbers year on year

Continued reductions in Welsh Government funding

Budgetary problems, leading to staff reductions and increased class sizes

Poor quality of education and learning outcomes in some schools and an unacceptable Estyn profile across the secondary sector as a whole

Too many surplus places in schools

Old school buildings which are of poor quality and an associated backlog of maintenance

Most sixth forms in Powys are small, making it difficult to provide a broad range of subjects

Year-on-year reduction in funding for Post-16 provision means that the number of subjects offered is also reducing. Pupils currently have to travel between existing school sites to access a broad range of academic and vocational (post 16) courses during the school day, with associated costs.

- 1.4 Reasons for change to Builth Wells High School and Llandrindod High School were also given:

Falling pupil numbers over the last five years at both schools although numbers are projected to increase slightly

Low numbers in some year groups making it difficult to provide the full curriculum

Too many surplus places in schools (17% in both schools) which Welsh Government believes leads to inefficiencies that impact on quality of education

Old school buildings which are of poor or bad quality and an associated backlog of maintenance. Llandrindod High School has been categorised as a Condition C building, which is defined as 'Poor'. Exhibiting major defects and/or not operating as intended'. Builth Wells High School is a Condition B school.

Small sixth forms at both schools. Year-on-year reduction in funding for Post-16 provision means that the number of subjects offered is also reducing. Pupils currently have to travel between existing school sites to access a broad range of academic and vocational courses during the school day, with associated costs;

Limited choice of subjects at post 16, meaning that some pupils travel to colleges or sixth forms outside of Powys – around 601 pupils from South and Mid Powys attend post-16 provision outside the county;

Builth Wells High School and Llandrindod High Schools were judged by Estyn to have ‘unsatisfactory performance’ and ‘unsatisfactory prospects for improvement’ in their last Estyn inspections in 2015 and 2014, respectively;

As a result, both schools were placed in ‘Special Measures’ by Estyn;

Llandrindod High School is forecasting a significant cumulative deficit budget of £312,260 by 2018/19, unless action is taken.

Limited post 16 education meaning that some pupils need to travel outside of Powys;

Difficult to provide an equitable range of subjects through the medium of Welsh at each key stage of education and the situation varies greatly between different schools;

The Consultation

- ^{1.5} Powys County Council commenced an eight week consultation period on 6 April 2016 on its proposed changes to high schools in Builth Wells and Llandrindod Wells and through engagement with members of the public and other stakeholders, including pupils, staff, Governors and community organisations. The consultation formally ended on 23 May 2016, although paper copies of the questionnaire were accepted for a further week to allow time for receipt by second class post. During this period, stakeholders were invited to provide feedback through:
- » A consultation questionnaire: paper questionnaires were widely circulated and the questionnaire was also available online;
 - » Meetings with School Governors
 - » Meetings with School Staff
 - » Workshops with Secondary School Pupils
 - » Workshops with Primary School Pupils
 - » Public meetings
 - » Written submissions: stakeholders had the opportunity to provide their views by writing to Powys County Council or directly to ORS
- ^{1.6} Comprehensive notes were taken by ORS for each of these meetings and workshops. These notes form the basis of the findings in this report.
- ^{1.7} In addition, social media sites were reviewed by ORS for comments on the proposal.
- ^{1.8} Opinion Research Services (ORS), a spin-out company from Swansea University with a UK-wide reputation for social research and major statutory consultations, was appointed by Powys County Council to facilitate aspects of the consultation process and to provide an independent report of the formal consultation programme.

¹ Includes all six schools in the South Powys Post-16 Partnership

Nature of Consultation

Accountability

- ^{1.9} Consultation should promote accountability and assist decision making: public bodies should give an account of their plans or proposals and they should ensure that all responses are taken into account in order to:
- » Be informed of any issues, viewpoints, implications or options that might have been overlooked;
 - » Re-evaluate matters already known; and
 - » Review priorities and principles.
- ^{1.10} Nevertheless, a consultation is not a vote; and influencing public policy through consultation is not simply a ‘numbers game’ in which the loudest voices or the greatest numbers automatically determine the outcome, since all of the various consultation methods have to be assessed.
- ^{1.11} All types of consultation responses are important: as part of Powys County Council’s consultation on secondary school transformation we received a range of responses from individuals and organisations as a result of the following activities:
- » The open consultation questionnaire;
 - » School Governors’ Meetings;
 - » School Staff Meetings;
 - » Secondary School Pupils Meetings;
 - » Primary School Pupils Meetings;
 - » Focus Groups with Special Needs
 - » Public Meeting
 - » Public meeting;
 - » Written responses and submissions;
 - » Responses via Social Media.
- ^{1.12} This report identifies where strength of feeling may be particularly intense while recognising that interpreting consultation is not simply a matter of counting responses.

Interpreting Outcomes

- ^{1.13} Importantly, the different consultation methods cannot just be combined to yield a single course of action that reconciles everyone’s differences and is acceptable to the whole of the local population – for two main reasons:
- » First, the various consultation methods differ in their nature and their outcomes cannot be just aggregated into a single result
 - » Second, the populations in different areas will inevitably have different perspectives on the reconfiguration options and in our experience there is no formula in any consultation process that can reconcile everyone’s differences in a single way forward.

- ^{1.14} It is also important to recognise that the outcomes of the consultation process will need to be considered alongside other information available about the likely impact of the proposed option. Whilst the consultation process highlights aspects of this information that stakeholders consider to be important, Powys County Council will need to consider the appropriate emphasis to be placed on each element. In this sense there can be no single ‘right’ interpretation of all the consultation elements and other information available to Powys County Council in its decision-making process. ORS is clear that its role is to analyse and explain the opinions and arguments of those who have responded to the consultation, but not to recommend any option or variant.
- ^{1.15} Whilst this report brings together a wide range of evidence for Powys County Council to consider, it does not provide a single answer for the future (whether short- or long-term) of secondary education in South Powys. It is for the Cabinet to take high-level policy decisions based on their understanding of the services for which they are responsible and other relevant considerations, including equalities. In their deliberations, the members of Powys County Council will review the evidence and considerations that have emerged during consultation while also taking account of all the other relevant evidence.

Report of Consultation Outcomes

- ^{1.16} This full report of the consultation outcomes considers the feedback received through each of the different elements of the consultation process and provides a comprehensive evidence base to help inform the decision-making process for the Council. The report traverses public, professional and stakeholder opinions and feelings in considerable detail to achieve a comprehensive understanding – and it is the journey, as well as the destination, that will matter to those wishing to understand the assumptions, arguments, conclusions and feelings about current and future secondary education provision in Powys. Verbatim quotations are used not because we agree or disagree with them – but for their vividness in capturing recurrent points of view. ORS does not endorse the statements made, but seeks only to portray them accurately and clearly.
- ^{1.17} We recognise that considering the feedback from each element of the consultation in turn can at times be repetitive given that similar issues often emerged across the different strands – but it is important that this full report provides an accurate reflection of all of the feedback received. However, the executive summary concisely reviews the full range of feedback received, and brings together the overall perspectives and the common themes that have emerged fairly quickly. We trust that the summary is a sound guide to the consultation outcomes and how they might be interpreted, and that both the summary and full reports will be helpful to all concerned.

2. Executive Summary

Summary of Main Findings

^{2.1} We trust that this executive summary is a sound guide to the consultation outcomes and how they might be interpreted, but readers are encouraged to read the full document for detailed insights. The full report traverses public, professional and stakeholder opinions and feelings in considerable detail to achieve a comprehensive understanding and it is the journey, as well as the destination, that will matter to those wishing to understand the assumptions, arguments, conclusions and feelings about changes to secondary schools in South Powys. We trust that the summary and full report will be helpful to all concerned.

Consultation Process

^{2.2} The consultation comprised a number of elements intended to provide several opportunities for residents and stakeholders to become involved and to share their opinions on the proposals. These elements are outlined below.

The Open Consultation Questionnaires

^{2.3} A consultation document covering the proposed changes was made publicly available on the Council's dedicated website. The website also included links to other detailed information including the communities, equalities and Welsh language impact assessments.

^{2.4} The Main, Young Persons' and Primary consultation questionnaires included relevant summaries of background information on the Council's Case for Change and each of the main proposals for English and Welsh medium education, including post-16 education. The following key topics were covered in the consultation questionnaires:

- » English Medium Education – Case For Change
- » The Proposal For English Medium Education
- » Welsh Medium Education – Case For Change
- » The Proposal For Welsh Medium Education
- » Considering Equalities
- » Information About Respondents

^{2.5} The questionnaires were available online through the Council's dedicated website and the URL was also printed on the paper copies. Paper copies were made available in local libraries, leisure facilities, County Hall and all affected Primary and Secondary schools. Respondents had the option to submit their completed questionnaire directly to ORS via a freepost mailing address or to the Council.

Questionnaire responses

- ^{2.6} All questionnaire responses in which at least one of the consultation questions was answered and received by ORS by the close of the consultation period were included in the analysis. One additional week was given for submissions sent by second class post or returned directly to PCC contact points.
- ^{2.7} A total of 996 questionnaires were analysed, of which 182 were responses to the main consultation questionnaire, 735 to the Young Persons' questionnaire, and 79 to the primary school consultation questionnaire.
- ^{2.8} Of the total number of questionnaires received, 4 indicated that they were representing organisations or groups.

Meetings and Workshops

- ^{2.9} Each meeting or workshop received a standard presentation from Powys County Council on the proposed changes, which was followed by a question and answer session between participants and a panel of PCC officers.
- **Governors Meetings** at Builth Wells High School and Llandrindod High School involved around 20 Governors over the two sessions
 - **Meetings of School Staff** at Builth Wells High School and Llandrindod High School involved around 56 staff over the two sessions
 - **Secondary School Pupil Workshops:** Both secondary schools were invited to select a number of children aged 11 to 18 years to participate in deliberative workshops. Three sessions were held in each school for groups of pupils from key stages 3, 4 and 5. Around 126 pupils attended over the six sessions.
 - **Primary School Pupil Workshops:** All feeder primary schools to Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools were invited to select a number of children aged between six and 11 to attend deliberative workshops – one workshop for each High School. About 100 children participated.
 - **Public Meetings** were held at the Sports Hall, Leisure Centre, Builth Wells and at The Pavilion, Llandrindod Wells. Around 275 people attended over the two sessions.

Submissions and Social Media

- During the consultation period 21 **written submissions** were received concerning the proposals for Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools. These were from individual residents and from professional, political interest and community groups.
- Three **social media** (Facebook) pages contained updates, comments or tweets referring to PCC's proposal and/or its perceived impacts, and this report presents content posted during the consultation period.

Main Issues Raised

The Case for Change

The Consultation Questionnaire

- 2.10 When asked to agree or disagree with the Council's case for change, more than two thirds of respondents who represent an organisation based in or covering Powys (81% [9/11]), respondents who are parents, carers or guardians of Builth Wells High School or Builth Wells feeder primary school pupils (71%), those who work for Powys County Council (not in the education system) (71%), and governors of Powys schools (68%) agreed that the Council is right to make changes to respond to these issues. More than half of respondents who are parents, carers or guardians of Llandrindod High School or Llandrindod feeder primary school pupils (52%) or of other/unknown schools (56%) also agreed with this.
- 2.11 However, just less than half of members of staff at a school or within the education system in Powys (48%) and 'other residents' not covered by other stakeholder groups (48%) agreed that the Council is right to make changes.
- 2.12 Support for the proposal was generally lower. The highest levels of support were from those who work for Powys County Council (not in the education system) (44%), and parents, carers or guardians of Llandrindod High School/associated feeder school pupils (43%), while a third of parents, carers or guardians of Builth Wells High School/feeder school pupils (33%) and members of staff in a school or within the education system in Powys (33%) agreed. Just less than a third of other residents (32%), school governors in Powys (30%), and those who represent an organisation based in or covering Powys (30% [3/10]) agreed with the proposal.
- 2.13 Less than a fifth (18%) of pupils and parents of pupils of other/unknown schools agreed with the proposal.
- 2.14 Main reasons given for disagreeing with the proposals were a desire to maintain the schools as they are; that the savings would be insufficient to justify the negative impacts on children's education and wellbeing and that standards would not be improved.

The Young Person's Consultation Questionnaire

- 2.15 Respondents were asked to agree or disagree that their education was suffering in relation to a number of factors.
- 2.16 Not having enough different subjects available at KS4 and post 16: Two thirds (66%) of respondents who attend Builth Wells High School agreed with this statement and 4 in 10 (39%) of Llandrindod High School/feeder school students.
- 2.17 Education is suffering because class sizes are either too big or too small: Nearly 4 in 10 (38%) students that attend Builth Wells High School agreed with this statement compared with a quarter (26%) of Llandrindod High School/feeder school students.
- 2.18 Education is suffering because of problems due to the quality of school buildings. Less than two fifths (37%) of respondents from Builth Wells High School agreed. By comparison, less than a fifth (17%) of Llandrindod High School/feeder school students agreed.

- 2.19 Education is suffering because of disruption caused by having to travel between sites for lessons during the day. Around 3 in 10 (28%) Builth Wells High School students agreed and around a fifth (18%) of students from Llandrindod High School/feeder schools agreed.
- 2.20 Education is suffering from not having enough up-to-date IT equipment. Three fifths (58%) of Builth Wells High School students agreed compared with around 3 in 10 (31%) Llandrindod High School/feeder school students.
- 2.21 Education is suffering due to not having enough school equipment such as text books, laboratory or PE equipment. Half of Builth Wells High School students (50%) agreed with this statement and only a quarter (26%) of Llandrindod High School/feeder school students.
- 2.22 Respondents were asked to agree or disagree that the Council is right to make changes to respond to a number of issues in relation to English medium education. Half (51%) of Builth Wells High School respondents and, conversely, over half (55%) of those at Llandrindod High School/feeder schools disagreed.
- 2.23 Respondents were asked: 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Proposal to establish a new dual-stream secondary school for pupils aged 11-18 to replace Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools from August 2017, that would continue to operate from the two existing sites?'
- 2.24 Nearly 4 in 10 (37%) respondents from Builth Wells High School agree with the proposal, while 70% of those in Llandrindod High Schools/feeder schools disagree; 49% disagree strongly.

Primary Consultation Questionnaire

- 2.25 Around half (55%) of respondents from Llandrindod feeder schools and half (50%) of respondents from Builth Wells feeder schools agreed that the Council is right to make changes to respond to the issues it has identified in English medium education.
- 2.26 Almost two thirds (64%) of respondents Llandrindod feeder schools disagree with the proposed change, while nearly three fifths (57%) disagreed from Builth Wells feeder schools.

Quality of Education

Governors

- 2.27 Both sets of Governors suggested how the proposals should change to bring tangible improvements in teaching and learning whilst at the same time resolving the underlying funding issues. Governors at Builth suggested a single school on a single site as soon as possible whilst Governors at Llandrindod want to see each site maintained as a distinct language centre with Llandrindod designated as the dedicated English medium 11-16 site and Builth as the centre for Welsh Medium and sixth form provision.
- 2.28 Governors also highlighted the need for more specialist teachers at KS3 and KS4 and raised concerns over the implications for educational standards without Estyn inspections for two years if the current proposals are implemented.

Staff

- 2.29 Staff called for evidence to support the case for a larger school; pointed out that curriculum managers would have a higher workload in monitoring standards on two sites; queried the feasibility of running a

broader curriculum without co-locating courses and highlighted the need for a skills audit to determine appropriate staffing levels.

Secondary School Pupils

^{2.30} Pupils from both Builth Wells and Llandrindod recognised that the teaching quality in their respective schools needed to be improved and a high proportion of Builth Wells pupils accepted the proposals, mainly because they hoped it would improve the quality of teaching and range of subjects available. Pupils at Llandrindod were concerned about overreliance on supply teachers and a lack of specialist teachers in certain core subjects at KS3 and KS4. There was, however, more concern and opposition among the Llandrindod groups.

Primary School Pupils

^{2.31} Although some pupils identified with Powys County Council's objective of improving education, many rejected the case for change because they felt the main focus was upon saving money, along with the belief that there is little wrong with either school. However, a minority of pupils felt that the two schools would be 'stronger' together, provide a better quality of education and make savings from having fewer staff.

Public Meetings

^{2.32} Participants believed that the current proposals are driven by money saving and the removal of special measures rather than by a drive to solve the underlying quality issues and raise standards at the schools. Some suggested that the proposals would actually exacerbate the pressure on the schools since in their current form they are not deliverable or sustainable but simply a precursor to a single site new build school. Moreover, they believed that the proposed savings would be insufficient to invest in additional staff.

Submissions

^{2.33} Nearly all respondents opposed the current proposal. They questioned how it would make a positive change to current teaching and learning and how it would lead to the recruitment of more specialist teaching staff and create a 'critical mass' of students with the same school buildings and class sizes. They were also concerned over the continuing arrangements with Estyn.

^{2.34} However, respondents were more concerned with the longer term 'aspiration' by PCC for a single site school in Builth Wells and there were many submissions in support of the model proposed by the Governors of Llandrindod High School for one dual stream 11-18 Secondary School operating from two sites: the Builth Wells site to accommodate the Welsh Medium provision and a Sixth Form Centre and the Llandrindod Wells site to accommodate English medium students age 11-16. Respondents believed this would enable an increase in the GCSE offer, strengthen provision overall and deploy subject specialists.

^{2.35} Estyn's response stated that the consultation document does not offer enough evidence to support PCC's conclusion that the proposal would improve educational quality and standards. They are also of the view that neither the possibility of the new school failing to improve standards, nor the risks involved with opening a single site school have been considered appropriately.

Social Media

- ^{2.36} Many social media users suggested that Llandrindod High School has improved its standards and provides a good education, referring to good GCSE and A level results and a high level of university acceptances. A minority, though, argued that standards at the school are relatively poor and that its 'special measures' status is deserved for reasons other than examination pass rates.
- ^{2.37} Some commented on the positive impact on educational standards of being placed in Estyn special measures and that their removal would compromise current educational quality. Furthermore – and in relation to the longer term aspiration of PCC - a 'shiny' new school building would not tackle the root causes of problems at the two schools that led to their being placed in special measures.

Transport and Travel

Governors

- ^{2.38} Governors wanted to know whether PCC would pay for transport costs for students and staff between school sites and if potential additional travel for teachers and pupils had been costed and factored into the savings cited in The Case for Change. They asked why, according to PCC estimates, transport to Builth would cost less than to Llandrindod and generally wanted more detailed information and evidence about travel and its costs to support the claims made by PCC.

Staff

- ^{2.39} Teachers at Builth were concerned over how any possible travel between school sites would impact on their preparation and management time.

Secondary School Pupils

- ^{2.40} Llandrindod pupils were concerned about the proposal being a precursor to closing their High School in the future and the additional daily travel that this would involve.

Primary School Pupils

- ^{2.41} Pupils in Llandrindod were concerned about an increase in travel should their school be closed and a new single site school be built in Builth Wells.

Public Meetings

- ^{2.42} Concerns were raised around the potential negative impacts on educational standards if pupils are taught across two sites and have to travel between sites during the school day – particularly at key stages 3 and 4. Travel between the sites by teaching staff was also considered to risk the current quality of education and likely to demotivate teachers.

Submissions

- ^{2.43} Respondents were concerned over the impact on educational standards of teachers travelling between sites.
- ^{2.44} They were also concerned over the length of time that students would travel and the increased travel costs from the County's budget should the one site, one school model be implemented.

Social Media

- 2.45 Increased travel times and travel costs for Llandrindod pupils were concerns for the longer term aspiration of PCC for one school, one site.

Finance and Funding

Governors

- 2.46 Governors at both meetings wanted to know the source for additional funding to enable the new school to offer a broader curriculum, particularly around growth in Welsh Medium subjects and A-levels. In particular, where would the additional and specialist staff come from and how would the current recruiting difficulties be overcome? They asserted that any savings made from the closures would not meet the cost of addressing these issues and would instead put additional pressure on existing staff.
- 2.47 Llandrindod Governors wanted clarification around the impacts of protected salaries on the specific cost savings assumptions set out in the consultation document. They also argued that in their preferred model the costs would be reduced through the better deployment of staff and a reduced senior leadership team.

Staff

- 2.48 Teaching staff argued that without additional funding the proposals would do nothing to tackle the underlying funding challenges and were concerned that in their current form the proposals might put jobs, pay and conditions at risk.
- 2.49 Staff in Llandrindod criticised the inaccurate, misleading and out of date budget figures for Llandrindod High School which were used to cast the school in a poor light and to support the current proposal.

Public Meetings

- 2.50 Attendees at both meetings argued that any potential savings would not be a lasting solution to the underlying financial issues affecting the schools. Some concluded that the new school would not be financially sustainable, thus demonstrating that this is an interim step before a new school is built using capital funds.

Submissions

- 2.51 Respondents expressed doubt and confusion over the financial reasoning underlying the proposals and some highlighted what they considered to be oversights or inaccuracies in PCC's financial statistics and arguments. They asked for clarity on budget forecasts and current facts and figures in relation to the two existing schools. They also criticised PCC for prioritising financial considerations over education and asked whether a change in Government would affect the availability of funding for a new one sited school.
- 2.52 Estyn stated that the impact of the new school's reduced budget had not been considered or addressed, given that Llandrindod is projecting a significant budget deficit over the next three years.

Buildings and Estates

Governors

2.53 Governors said that the proposals leave the school buildings in a state of limbo and queried whether new money would be available to address the current poor conditions and maintenance backlog.

Public Meetings

2.54 Attendees wanted to know how Powys County Council aims to sustain the current buildings on both sites if there are no funds currently available. On the other hand, if funds are available why they have not been spent so far on maintaining the school buildings. Attendees also asked whether the rumours were true that a site had been found in Builth Wells for a new school.

Submissions

2.55 Questions were raised over a new site in Builth Wells mainly concerning how the funds would be found; how the site would be identified and when the plans would proceed. Respondents also suggested that the existing buildings at Llandrindod High School were ideally suited for expansion without incurring the congestion and costs involved in building a new school on a green field site in Builth Wells.

Governance and Staffing of a New School

Governors

2.56 Governors asked whether new contracts would be offered to teachers and if negotiations had started with the unions. They highlighted that the proposal and continuing uncertainty about the future of the schools exacerbates the current challenges around the recruitment and retention of teachers.

2.57 They wanted to know the process for selecting a new Governing Body and for PCC to recognise the challenges faced by any new set of Governors in implementing the far-reaching changes within a tight timeframe.

Staff

2.58 Staff wanted greater clarity about the constituency and timeframe for establishing the Shadow Governing Body.

Secondary School Pupils

2.59 Pupils from both schools were sceptical about whether just one head teacher and senior leadership team would be either practical or beneficial. They felt that the uncertainty and potential changes would be harmful to staff retention and the recruitment drive.

Public Meetings

2.60 Attendees wanted greater clarity around the staff and governance structure of the new school and to know how a new Governing Body would be supported by Powys County Council to deliver better outcomes for pupils across the two sites.

Submissions

2.61 Respondents were concerned over the impacts of the proposal on Governors, school leaders and teachers. They felt that the extra workload would affect individual wellbeing and questioned whether

the Council would take a proper duty of care over staff. They also asked how the head teacher would be appointed.

- 2.62 Respondents felt that the period of uncertainty over whether or not a new school would be created would impact negatively on teachers and pupils and would make it more difficult to recruit teachers to the area.

Post-16 Education

Governors

- 2.63 The Llandrindod Governors wanted clarification that the Governing Body would be free to choose the structure of post 16 provision at the proposed new school.
- 2.64 Governors in Builth were more certain that locating A- level provision on a single site would create a viable critical mass to improve subject choice; attract students who presently travel to England; be more cost effective and eliminate the cost of student transport between the two sites.
- 2.65 Most agreed that continued uncertainty around the future of post-16 education would lead to increased migration of learners out of mid-Powys to schools and colleges elsewhere.

Staff

- 2.66 Participants recognised the challenge of delivering the Learning Skills Measure in rural Wales with a backdrop of reducing budgets and relatively small numbers of learners. Llandrindod staff challenged the assumptions within the Measure that greater choice of A-levels is desirable and argued for a narrower range of A level subjects in rural areas to achieve quality outcomes for students.

Secondary School Students

- 2.67 Pupils in both of the schools generally supported the potential for a single-site sixth form centre, citing the benefits as wider subject choice, better facilities and a greater potential to attract good quality teachers. However, Llandrindod pupils raised some concerns over travel.

Public Meetings

- 2.68 Attendees suggested that sixth form provision should be a priority and sought clarity over whether it would be delivered in both schools or at a sixth form centre at one of them. Some suggested that a single site would create a critical mass of students and might be the most viable option if Powys is to meet the Welsh Government's Learning and Skills Measure.

Submissions

- 2.69 Estyn did not consider that adequate evidence had been provided to support the claim that an eight mile travel distance between the two schools for sixth form pupils (if the decision is taken to retain the sixth forms on both of the sites) was acceptable.

Welsh Medium Education

The Consultation Questionnaire

- 2.70 When asked if they agree or disagree that changes are needed to Welsh medium education, more than half of respondents (55%) who work for Powys County Council (not in education system) agreed along

with 4 in 10 Governors of schools in Powys (43%); 38% of parents/carers/guardians of pupils in Powys and a third of members of staff in Powys school/education system (34%).

- 2.71 7 in 10 parents/carers and guardians of Builth Wells HS/feeder school pupils (71%) agreed and over half (54%) of those in Llandrindod.
- 2.72 Around half or more of other residents in Powys (53%), representatives of organisations based in or covering Powys (49%) and members of staff in Powys school/education system (49%) disagreed. 4 in 10 pupils/parents/carers/guardians of Powys pupils (40%) and Governors of schools in Powys (39%) also disagreed.
- 2.73 Respondents were asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with the proposal to consolidate Welsh medium education and deliver it from a single Welsh medium stream.
- 2.74 Almost half of respondents who work for Powys County Council (not in education system) (48%) and around 4 in 10 Governors of schools in Powys (43%) agreed with the proposal. More than a third (35%) of pupils, parents, carers or guardians of Powys pupils also agreed.
- 2.75 Around three fifths of parents, carers and guardians of Llandrindod HS/feeder (62%) and Builth Wells (57%) HS/feeder school pupils agree with the proposal to deliver Welsh medium education from a single Welsh stream.
- 2.76 At least two fifths of each respondent group disagreed: three fifths of other residents in Powys (59%), and representatives of organisations based in or covering Powys (58%), while around half of members of staff in Powys school/education system (50%) disagreed.
- 2.77 Respondents were asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with the proposal to provide Welsh medium education as part of a Bilingual Category 2B/C (dual-stream) school.
- 2.78 More than half of Governors of schools in Powys (54%) agreed with the proposal. Almost half of respondents who work for Powys County Council (not in education system) (49%) and members of staff in the Powys school/education system (46%) also agreed.
- 2.79 At least a quarter of respondents in 8 of 9 sub-groups disagreed with this proposal. Those particularly likely to disagree were other residents (45%), representatives of organisations based in or covering Powys (39%) and employees of Powys County Council (not in education system) (36%).
- 2.80 Three fifths of parents/carers/guardians of Builth Wells HS/feeder school pupils (60%) agreed with this element of the proposal compared to over two fifths of those with children in Llandrindod HS/feeder schools (44%).
- 2.81 Respondents were asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with the proposal to locate the Welsh medium stream at Builth Wells.
- 2.82 Around a third of employees of Powys County Council (not in education system) (35%), members of staff in the Powys schools/education system (30%) and Governors of schools in Powys (30%) agreed with this element of the proposal.
- 2.83 Other residents (62%), representatives of organisations based in or covering Powys (60%) and Governors of schools in Powys (57%) were particularly likely to disagree.
- 2.84 Over three fifths (64%) of parents, carers and guardians of Builth Wells HS/feeder school pupils agreed with the proposal, while two fifths (40%) of those with children in Llandrindod HS/feeder agreed.

- 2.85 Respondents were asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with the proposal to increase provision of post-16 subjects via the medium of Welsh.
- 2.86 More than half of Governors of schools in Powys (57%), employees of Powys County Council (not in education) (56%) and representatives of organisations based in or covering Powys (51%) agreed with this element of the proposal. Nearly half of members of staff in the Powys school/education system (46%) and pupils/parents/carers/guardians of Powys pupils (45%) also agreed.
- 2.87 Nearly two thirds (65%) of parents, carers and guardians of Builth Wells HS/feeder school pupils agreed, as did around half (47%) of those in Llandrindod.
- 2.88 A third (35%) of other residents disagreed. Around a quarter of members of staff in the Powys school/education system (28%) and pupils/parents/carers or guardians of Powys pupils (25%) also disagreed.

Young Person's Consultation Questionnaire

- 2.89 Respondents were asked if they agree or disagree that the Council is right to respond to issues raised about Welsh medium education. Over half (52%) of young people in Builth Wells High School agreed compared with less than a quarter (22%) of Llandrindod High School/feeder school students.
- 2.90 They were then asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with elements of the proposal.
- 2.91 Over half (56%) of young people in Builth Wells High School agreed with the proposal to consolidate Welsh medium education and deliver it from a single stream in South/Mid Powys. 3 in 10 (29%) of those in Llandrindod High School/feeder school agreed.
- 2.92 Nearly two thirds (63%) of respondents in Builth Wells High School agreed with the proposal to provide Welsh medium education as part of a Bilingual Category 2B/C (dual-stream) school; 3 in 10 (30%) young people in Llandrindod High School/feeder school agreed.
- 2.93 Three fifths (60%) of respondents in Builth Wells High School agreed with the proposal to locate the Welsh medium stream at the Builth Wells site of the proposed new secondary school. Only a quarter (26%) of those at Llandrindod High School/feeder school agreed with this proposal.
- 2.94 More than half (55%) of respondents attending Builth Wells High School agreed with the proposal to increase provision of post-16 subjects via the medium of Welsh compared with less than a quarter (23%) attending Llandrindod High School/feeder school.

Primary Consultation Questionnaire

- 2.95 Half (50%) of respondents from Builth Wells feeder schools agreed that the Council is right to make changes to Welsh medium education compared with less than a third (28%) of respondents from Llandrindod feeder schools
- 2.96 More than two fifths of respondents from Builth Wells (43%) and Llandrindod (45%) feeder schools agreed with the proposal to situate a new Welsh medium school in Builth Wells due to its central location and wider range of subjects available.
- 2.97 Just over half (54%) of respondents from Builth Wells feeder schools and three fifths (60%) from Llandrindod feeder schools agreed with the proposed change to increase the number of different subjects available to pupils 16+ taught in Welsh.

Governors

- 2.98 Governors at Builth were concerned that the proposals for a dual stream site might diminish the long-term aspiration for a fully bilingual 2A school at Builth Wells. Governors at Llandrindod would also prefer establishing single language centres at each site (Welsh at Builth and English at Llandrindod). Both sets of Governors called for a more realistic assessment of the likely numbers of pupils, costs and resources needed to make Builth Wells a viable option for a bilingual school.
- 2.99 Governors argued that a separate unit for the Welsh medium would lead to more use of Welsh between lessons and improve the uptake of Welsh medium secondary provision in Mid Powys.

Staff

- 2.100 Builth Wells High School staff sought clarity about the linguistic status of the proposed new school, specifically around a bilingual curriculum on both sites and whether offering Welsh medium only at a single site would be open to legal challenge.

Secondary School Pupils

- 2.101 Pupils at Builth Wells felt that their High School was the most appropriate site at which to improve Welsh provision in the area.

Primary School Pupils

- 2.102 A few pupils in the Builth catchment workshop were concerned over the travel distance to Builth for pupils transferring from Brecon and that there would be too many pupils in the school if Welsh medium pupils transfer from Brecon High School.

Public Meetings

- 2.103 There was some support for strengthening Welsh provision at Builth but doubts were raised around the predicted numbers of Welsh medium pupils for 2017. Assurances over the number of Welsh medium courses available is needed soon to enable parents - particularly those in South Powys –to make informed decisions about schools for their children.

Submissions

- 2.104 Estyn accepted that increasing the number of pupils at Builth would allow the school to offer a more comprehensive curriculum to Welsh medium pupils. However, it also held the view that there is insufficient evidence that 'setting' pupils would improve Welsh medium educational standards. In addition, it claimed that PCC had not adequately explained how they intended to address access issues to after school activities for Brecon pupils travelling to Builth.

Other Pupil Impacts

Governors

- 2.105 Governors underlined the potentially negative impacts on pupil attainment caused by changed teacher/pupil relationships; travelling between sites and the upheavals of transition.

Secondary School Pupils

- 2.106 Many Llandrindod pupils felt unsettled by the uncertain future for their school and suspicious that the current proposal was leading to one large school in the future which they strongly opposed in favour of a permanent new school across the two existing sites.

2.107 Some participants were concerned over the impact of these changes on special needs students.

Primary School Pupils

2.108 Some of the pupils said they felt stressed and unsettled about the consultation and the associated uncertainty around high school provision.

2.109 Pupils from both catchment areas felt the class sizes would be too big and that bullying would increase in a large, single site school.

Public Meetings

2.110 Attendees at the Builth Wells meeting were concerned about the impact of any changes on pupils taking GCSE and A level examinations in terms of subject choice and wanted reassurances that there would be smooth transitions for affected pupils.

Submissions

2.111 Respondents were concerned that access to out-of-school activities would be adversely affected, particularly for disadvantaged children living in the north ward of Llandrindod Wells, should the single site school model be implemented.

Social Media

2.112 There was significant concern about the potential for disruption and uncertainty for pupils and their families in the current proposal.

2.113 For the longer term, users of social media felt that a new larger school would not provide the current standards of pastoral care to pupils.

Other Staff Impacts

Governors

2.114 Governors highlighted that any improvements in quality rely on addressing the excessive workloads faced by teaching staff.

Staff

2.115 Teachers at Builth were concerned about job security, retention and recruitment of staff as well as how any possible travel between school sites would impact on their preparation and management time. In Llandrindod staff contracts and the ring-fencing of teaching posts were the main areas of concern.

Public Meetings

2.116 Attendees at Llandrindod Wells said that the consultation process and uncertainty around the future of the schools was already negatively impacting on staff retention and recruitment and ultimately, therefore, the quality of children's education.

Community Impacts

Secondary School Pupils

^{2.117} Llandrindod pupils were concerned for their community should their school be closed and highlighted some unwelcome consequences including social and business impacts; families not moving to the area and an uncertain future for the leisure centre.

Public Meetings

^{2.118} Participants in the Llandrindod Wells meeting were highly concerned over the long term economic future of the town should the high school close. Concerns were raised over a potential downturn in economic development and investment; demographic change in favour of older residents and the loss of a school which attracts business interests to the area. The proposal for a single school over two sites has done little to reassure the community about the long-term future of the school and the aspiration of Powys County Council for a new build school at Builth to serve both communities. Attendees also criticised the Council for the lingering uncertainties over future plans. They also asked if PCC had considered the option to co-locate language streams and/or sixth form as proposed by the Governors of the two schools.

Submissions

^{2.119} By far the largest number of comments and issues were raised by respondents concerned over the longer term quality of life for residents of Llandrindod Wells without its secondary school. General comments highlighted the negative social, economic, business and educational impacts. Respondents were concerned that without a secondary school families and businesses would be discouraged from locating in the town. The closure of the sports centre, which is part of the school, would also negatively impact on community groups and local residents more generally.

^{2.120} Estyn also criticised the consultation document for not including a community impact assessment based on its longer-term vision of a one site school at Builth.

Social Media

^{2.121} Llandrindod Wells was described by social media users as a 'ghost town' and a 'dying town', a decline people felt would be exacerbated if Llandrindod High School were to close in future. They raised particular concerns around the potential impacts on local businesses as people would be deterred from moving to the area.

The Consultation

Governors

^{2.122} The Llandrindod Governors raised a number of objections to specific evidence and assumptions underpinning the case for change. They criticised a general lack of detail in the consultation document; pupil number projections and capacity and estimated cost savings from the proposals.

Staff

^{2.123} A number of apparent inaccuracies in the consultation document were identified by staff at Llandrindod leading to accusations of predetermination. They criticised, in particular, that the scoring system was in error leading to the wrong overall priority being identified.

2.124 Staff noted an apparent shift in position by PCC around their proposals for a single site school in the Builth Wells area: that a new-build site has become an 'aspiration' and not an intention. Attendees suggested that the consultation document sends mixed messages to parents and the community about the long term future for the schools.

Secondary School Pupils

2.125 There was no strong opposition to the aspiration for a single site school in Builth Wells from Builth pupils, a minority of Llandrindod pupils and KS3 pupils. However, many Llandrindod pupils felt unsettled by the uncertain future for their school and suspicious that the current proposal was leading to one large school in the future which they strongly opposed in favour of a permanent new school across the two existing sites.

Primary School Pupils

2.126 The main concern for pupils in both catchment areas was the possible future plans for a single school in the Builth Wells area.

Public Meetings

2.127 Attendees highlighted a need for clarity and better evidence concerning pupil numbers and surplus places in the case for change.

2.128 Attendees wanted the decision making process to be opened up to the wider elected members and were concerned that the future of the community was being put in the hands of Cabinet members who do not live in the communities affected by these proposals.

Submissions

2.129 A few respondents outlined their frustration with the whole process and were especially critical that only one option had been offered for consultation.

2.130 The consultation document was also criticised for inaccuracies, misleading statements and insufficient explanations.

2.131 Respondents criticised some aspects of the actual process of consultation including the lack of response from cabinet members at the Llandrindod Wells meeting and the primary school consultation at Cefnlllys School which did not allow sufficient time for children's questions. The youth and public questionnaires were also considered to restrict or to lead responses.

2.132 Respondents also suggested that the final decision over the proposal should be made by the full Council rather than the Cabinet alone but in any case suspected that the Council had decided that the proposal would be implemented regardless of the outcomes of the consultation process.

2.133 The Governors of Llandrindod High School criticised the options evaluation procedure for erroneously allocating scores between the original options for change. This had led to the selection of the current proposal over one preferred by Llandrindod High School Governors (outlined earlier in this summary).

2.134 Respondents were more concerned about the longer term prospect of closing Llandrindod High School altogether and transporting pupils to a new 'super school' in Builth Wells. The Governors of Llandrindod High School questioned the underlying statistics and information used to justify this model. They also highlighted the fact that not all pupils from Llandrindod High School would necessarily transfer to a new school in Builth owing to the relative proximity of other schools and that this would adversely affect the

viability of this new school. Some also felt that in this context the future of Llanidloes High School should have been considered at the same time as these proposals.

Social Media

- ^{2.135} Social media users described the decision as a ‘fait accompli’, a ‘done deal’ and the consultation as a ‘tick-box exercise’. They criticised the fact that the ultimate decision to approve or reject the proposal would be taken by the PCC Cabinet instead of the whole Council and considered this to be undemocratic.
- ^{2.136} The consultation document was criticised for being poorly written, confusing and biased; the main questionnaire for being leading; the young persons’ questionnaire for being inaccessible and the Community Impact Assessment for being biased. Some were unhappy with the conduct of the Llandrindod Wells Public Meeting and particularly with the answers (or perceived lack thereof) provided by the panel to questions from the floor.

Overall Comments

- ^{2.1} While there was some recognition that change was necessary many were sceptical over whether the current proposal would deliver the improvements in quality and cost savings presented in the consultation document. There was some concern that teachers, the leadership team and the new Governing Body would have higher workloads affecting their wellbeing and ultimately impacting negatively on quality and pastoral support for students, particularly if they have to travel between sites for lessons.
- ^{2.2} There was some support for a single sixth form centre and for increased Welsh medium provision in Builth. However, very many people involved in the consultation would prefer the model for secondary school education which would see Welsh medium provision and a sixth form centre in Builth and English medium education in Llandrindod.
- ^{2.3} By far the highest level of concern was raised in relation to the longer term aspiration for a single site school on a new site in Builth Wells and the closure of the High School in Llandrindod Wells. Many felt that the current proposal was merely a precursor to this happening and were deeply concerned over the negative social, economic and demographic impacts on Llandrindod Wells. Meanwhile, uncertainties over the future of the schools were considered to be impacting on the ability to retain and recruit quality specialist teaching staff to the area.
- ^{2.4} The reasons underpinning these views have been fully recorded both in the summary of findings above and in the detailed chapters that follow.
- ^{2.5} Moving forward, interpreting the overall ‘meaning’ of the consultation outcomes is neither straightforward nor just ‘numerical’ - for the different methods, groups and outcomes have to be respected and cannot be simply ‘summed’ into an unambiguous consensus.
- ^{2.6} It is also worth reiterating that consultation is not a ‘numbers game’ - and that the key issue is not whether most people agree or disagree with the proposals but whether the reasons for their popularity or unpopularity are rational and convincing. People’s reasoning has been well documented throughout this report, and it is this that the PCC Cabinet will primarily wish to consider when making its judgements.

- ^{2.7} In this context, it is not the role of ORS to make policy recommendations or to go beyond the fact-based interpretation above. In the light of the evidence presented, the PCC Cabinet will consider all the consultation outcomes, alongside all the other evidence, in order to make its decisions. Ultimately, an overall interpretation of the consultation will depend upon the Cabinet itself: its members will consider all elements and determine which seem the most telling, by considering the relative merits of the various opinions as the basis for public policy.

3. The Open Consultation Questionnaires

Foreword

3.1 This chapter concerns the Main, Young Persons' and Primary School Consultation Questionnaires. These were designed by ORS in partnership with the Council and were available for completion by any interested stakeholders through paper copies as well as online.

Overview

3.2 A consultation document covering the proposed changes was produced and made publicly available on the Council's dedicated website. The website also included links to detailed information about the processes undertaken by the Council so far, including communities, equalities and Welsh language impact assessments.

3.3 The Main, Young Persons' and Primary consultation questionnaires were developed to include relevant summaries of background information on the Council's Case for Change and each of the main proposals for English and Welsh medium education, including post-16 education. The following key topics were covered in the consultation questionnaires:

- » English Medium Education – Case For Change
- » The Proposal For English Medium Education
- » Welsh Medium Education – Case For Change
- » The Proposal For Welsh Medium Education
- » Considering Equalities
- » Information About Respondents

3.4 The questionnaires were available online through the Council's dedicated website and the URL was also printed on the paper copies. Paper copies were made available in locations identified as relevant, including local libraries, leisure facilities, County Hall and all affected Primary and Secondary schools. Respondents had the option to submit their completed questionnaire directly to ORS via a freepost mailing address or to the Council.

3.5 This chapter details the methodologies and responses to all the consultation questionnaires. Questionnaires can provide considerable information about the views of particular groups and individuals at local levels. However, it is important to note that it was open to any interested stakeholders, individuals or organisations both within and outside of Powys regardless of their affiliation with, or usage of education services.

3.6 The results, therefore, are not representative of any particular population, including that of the Council's authority area. However, within the context of the consultation it provides an appropriate and important opportunity for the public to provide their opinions.

3.7 Of course, it is for Powys County Council to determine what appropriate emphasis to be given to different elements within the consultation, while bearing in mind that the outcome of the consultation

should not be just a 'numbers' game. In other words, the question is not '*Which findings should determine our decision?*' but '*What evidence or considerations have emerged that should influence our deliberations about the future reorganisation of schools in mid and south Powys?*'

Questionnaire responses

- ^{3.8} All questionnaire responses in which at least one of the consultation questions was answered and received by ORS by the close of the consultation period were included in the analysis. One additional week was given for submissions sent by second class post or returned directly to PCC contact points.
- ^{3.9} A total of 996 questionnaires were analysed, of which 182 were responses to the main consultation questionnaire, 735 to the Young Persons' questionnaire, and 79 to the primary school consultation questionnaire.
- ^{3.10} Of the total number of questionnaires received, 4 indicated that they were representing organisations or groups.

Findings of the Main Consultation Questionnaire

Respondent Profile of Consultation Questionnaire

- 3.11 Table 1 below provides a breakdown of the respondent profile from the 178 individuals who responded either online or by post to the main open consultation questionnaire. Figures for Powys's population are also outlined for comparison.
- 3.12 Figures for Powys's population are based on ONS 2015 Mid-Year Population Estimates (for age and gender) and Census 2011 data (for ethnicity and disability). ORS prefers to report ONS Mid-Year population estimates (over Census 2011 data) where possible as we believe this more accurately reflects the current state of the population. Where this is not possible due to data being unavailable (e.g. for ethnicity and disability data), Census 2011 data has been used as an alternative. As a result, the total number of occurrences in the population across the two data sources will not match exactly.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics for the main consultation questionnaire and Powys's population
(Note: Percentages may not sum due to rounding)

Characteristic	All Responses		Powys population 16+		
	Number of Responses	% of Valid Responses	Number of occurrences	% of population	
BY AGE	Under 25	3	2.2%	12,372	11.1%
	25 to 34	20	14.9%	12,230	11.0%
	35 to 44	52	38.8%	13,538	12.2%
	45 to 54	48	35.8%	19,506	17.6%
	55 to 64	9	6.7%	19,238	17.3%
	65 to 84	1	0.7%	29,611	26.7%
	85+	1	0.7%	4,547	4.1%
	Total valid responses	134	100.0%	111,042	100.0%
<i>Not known</i>	44	-	-	-	
BY GENDER	Male	29	20.7%	54,573	49.1%
	Female	111	79.3%	56,469	50.9%
	Total valid responses	140	100.0%	111,042	100.0%
	<i>Not known</i>	38	-	-	-
BY ETHNIC GROUP	White	135	98.5%	108,539	98.6%
	Mixed or multiple ethnic	1	0.7%	453	0.4%
	Asian or Asian British	0	0.0%	890	0.8%
	Black, African, Caribbean, Black British	1	0.7%	109	0.1%
	Any other ethnic group	0	0.0%	92	0.1%
	Total valid responses	137	100%	110,083	100.0%
<i>Not known</i>	41	-	-	-	
BY DISABILITY	With disability	6	4.4%	26,357	24.3%
	No disability	131	95.6%	81,971	75.7%
	Total valid responses	137	100.0%	108,328	100.0%
	<i>Not known</i>	38	-	-	-

Characteristic	All Responses		
	Number of Responses	% of Valid Responses	
BY CHILDREN CURRENTLY IN SCHOOL, NURSERY OR COLLEGE IN POWYS	Has children currently in school, nursery or college in Powys	124	86.1%
	No children currently in school, nursery or college in Powys	20	13.9%
	Total valid responses	144	100.0%
	<i>Not known</i>	34	-
BY CHILDREN ENTITLED TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS	Has children entitled to free school meals	7	6.1%
	No children entitled to free school meals	108	93.9%
	Total valid responses	115	100.0%
	<i>Not applicable</i>	20	-
	<i>Not known</i>	43	-
BY CHILDREN HAVING BEEN IDENTIFIED AS HAVING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS	Has children with SEN	14	12.1%
	No children with SEN	102	87.9%
	Total valid responses	116	100.0%
	<i>Not applicable</i>	20	-
	<i>Not known</i>	42	-
BY CHILDREN CURRENTLY RECEIVING A WELSH MEDIUM EDUCATION	Has children receiving Welsh medium education	27	22.9%
	No children receiving Welsh medium education	91	77.1%
	Total valid responses	118	100.0%
	<i>Not applicable</i>	20	-
	<i>Not known</i>	40	-
BY WELSH SPEAKER	Speaks Welsh	46	34.3%
	Does not speak Welsh	88	65.7%
	Total valid responses	134	100.0%
	<i>Not known</i>	44	-

Interpretation of the Data

- 3.13 The results for the Consultation Questionnaire are presented in a largely graphical format. The pie charts and other graphics show the proportions (percentages) of respondents making relevant responses.
- 3.14 Where possible, the colours of the charts have been standardised with a ‘traffic light’ system in which green shades represent positive responses, red shades represent negative responses, and beige and purple shades represent neither positive nor negative responses. The bolder shades are used to highlight responses at the ‘extremes’, for example, strongly agree or strongly disagree.
- 3.15 Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of “don’t know” categories, or multiple answers. Throughout the volume an asterisk (*) denotes any value less than half of one per cent. In some cases figures of 2% or below have been excluded from graphs to avoid potential identification of individual responses.

- 3.16 The number of valid responses recorded for each question (base size), are reported throughout. As not all respondents answered every question, these base sizes vary between questions. Every response to every question has been taken into consideration.
- 3.17 Where there are low response rates among stakeholder groups for particular questions, results have been displayed as a number, rather than (or in addition to) a percentage in the text.
- 3.18 All open-ended responses have been classified using a standardised code frame. This approach helps ensure consistency when classifying different comments and the resulting codes represent themes that have been repeatedly mentioned in a more quantifiable manner. The various comments provided by a respondent to any single text question may present a number of different points or arguments, therefore in many cases the overall number of coded comments counted in a particular question can actually be higher than the number of people responding to that open-ended question.

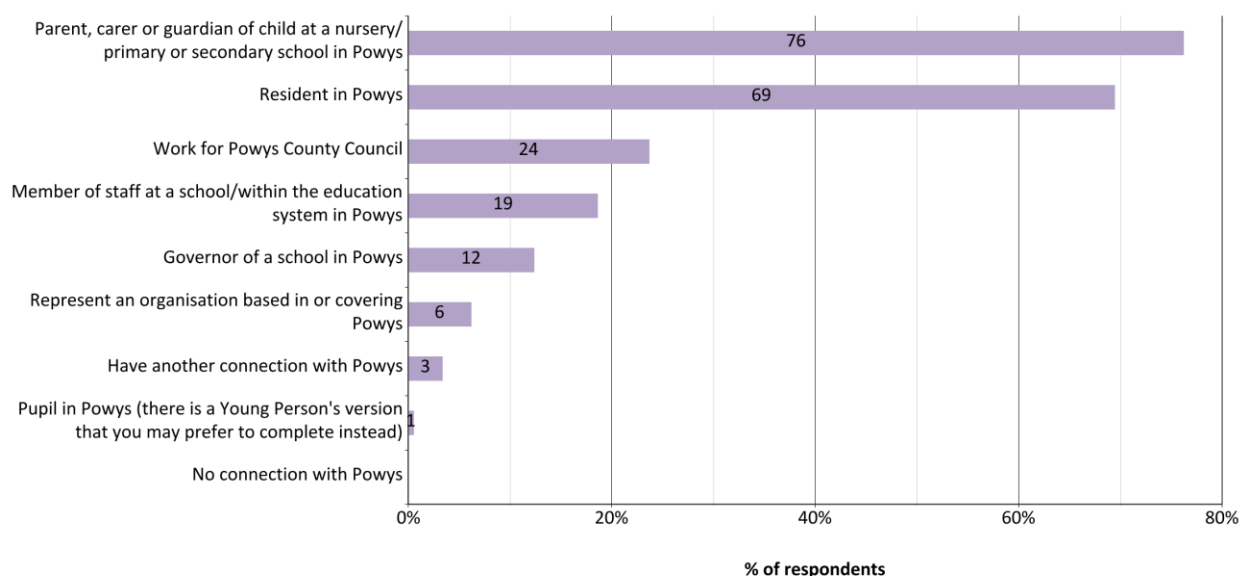
Further analysis by sub-groups

- 3.19 For some questions, further analysis revealed differences in responses by key demographic and other variables e.g. respondents' local authority. Such analysis highlights how sub-groups within key variables (e.g. within 'age', those aged 35-44) provided different answers compared to the overall average.
- 3.20 Where results are particularly higher or particularly lower for certain sub-groups, in comparison to the overall score they are further discussed in commentary text.

English Medium Education

Which of the following apply to you?

Figure 1: Types of respondent



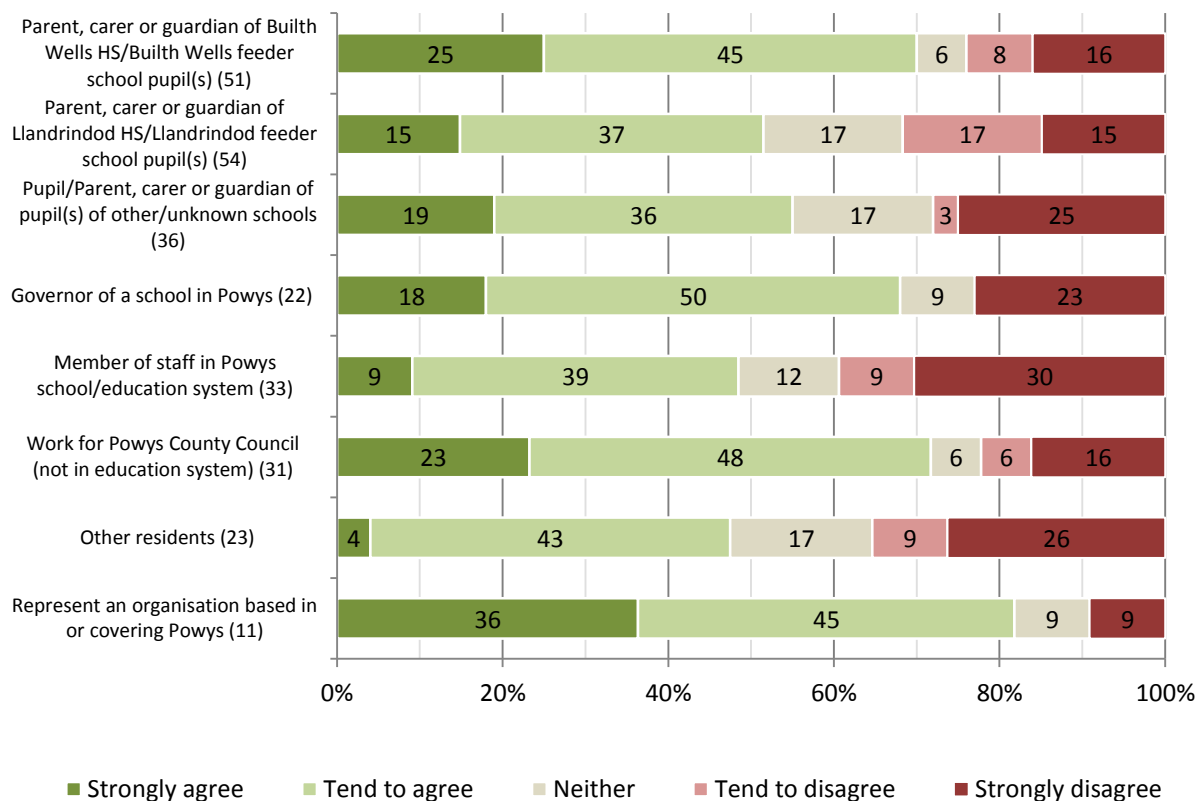
Base: All Individuals (177)

- 3.21 Around three quarters (76%) of those responding the main consultation questionnaire are parents, carers or guardians of a child or children at nurseries/primary or secondary schools in Powys. A similar proportion of respondents are residents who are living in Powys.

- 3.22 Just less than a quarter (24%) of respondents work for Powys County Council, while around a fifth (19%) are members of staff at a school or within the education system in Powys. Around 1 in 10 respondents are governors of a school in Powys (12%), while less than 1 in 10 represents an organisation based in or covering Powys (6%) or have another connection with Powys not covered by the above list (3%). Only 1 pupil in Powys (1%) chose to complete the main version of the consultation questionnaire, rather than the Young Persons' or Primary School questionnaires.
- 3.23 Because of the differences in the proportions of these stakeholder groups, results have not been combined to produce "overall" findings. It is not appropriate to report overall figures because the stakeholder groups with a greater number of responses will have a larger influence on the overall average, and potentially conceal the difference of opinions between stakeholder groups. Consequently, the results to the closed questions of the questionnaire overleaf have been reported separately by stakeholder groups.
- 3.24 It is also not appropriate to report results quantitatively where the rate of response is especially low. Consequently, where this appears and is appropriate to do so, some stakeholders have been grouped together.
- 3.25 Views from parents, carers or guardians of children vary depending on whether their child or children attend Builth Wells High School/associated feeder primary school, Llandrindod High School/associated feeder school or an 'other/unknown' school, and so these results have been displayed separately.
- 3.26 Almost all school age respondents responded to the separate Young Persons' consultation questionnaire. The single Powys school pupil who responded to the main consultation was from an unknown school, and so their responses have been grouped with parents, carers and guardians of pupils from other/unknown schools.
- 3.27 Those who reported that they were residents in Powys, and were not members of any other stakeholder group, have been combined with those who have 'no connection with Powys's and those who 'have another connection with Powys's into the group 'Other residents'.

In the context of the problems outlined above, Powys Council believes a number of changes are needed. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Council is right to make changes to respond to these issues?

Figure 2: Levels of agreement and disagreement that the Council is right to make changes to respond to the identified issues.



Base:

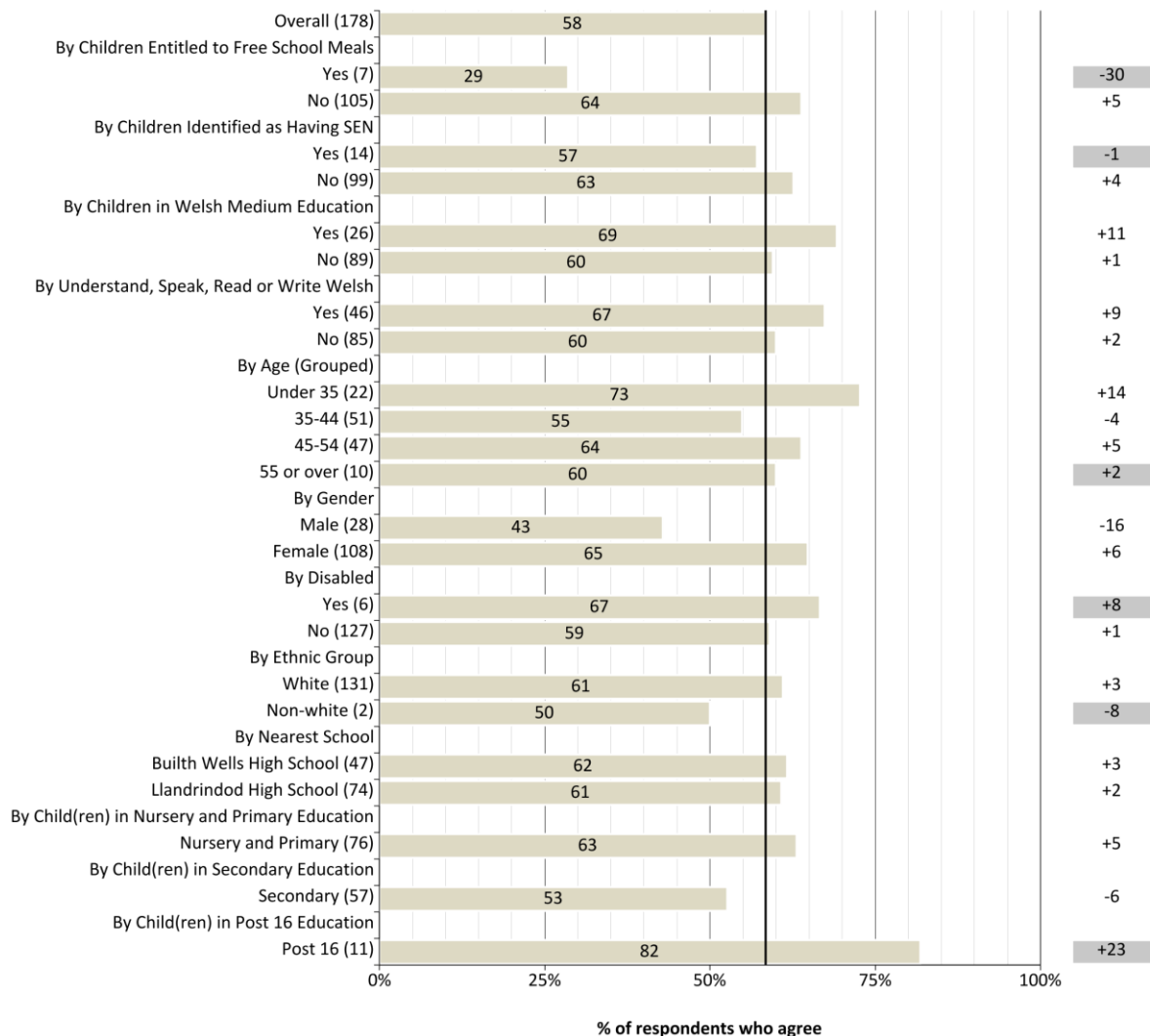
All Individuals (number of individuals shown in brackets)

- 3.28 Respondents were given a short description of the Council's case for change, including an explanation of general and post-16 specific issues that the Council had identified in Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools. These issues included falling pupil numbers, leading to empty school places in both schools; poor quality of buildings with costly maintenance at Llandrindod; quality of education and Estyn monitoring at both schools, and considerations around the financial situation of Llandrindod High School. Post-16 issues included a narrow choice of subjects in the 6th forms at both schools; learners travelling between sites during the school day to access subjects; a reduction in the Welsh Government grant funding post-16 provision and learners going outside the county for their education, providing less money to fund post-16 subjects.
- 3.29 Having been given this explanation, respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that Powys County Council is right to make changes to respond to the issues identified.
- 3.30 More than two thirds of respondents who represent an organisation based in or covering Powys (81% [9/11]), respondents who are parents, carers or guardians of Builth Wells High School or Builth Wells feeder primary school pupils (71%), those who work for Powys County Council (not in the education system) (71%), and governors of Powys schools (68%) agreed that the Council is right to make changes to respond to these issues. More than half of respondents who are parents, carers or guardians of

Llandrindod High School or Llandrindod feeder primary school pupils (52%) or of other/unknown schools (56%) also agreed with this.

3.31 However, just less than half of members of staff at a school or within the education system in Powys (48%) and 'other residents' not covered by other stakeholder groups (48%) agreed that the Council is right to make changes.

Figure 3: Levels of agreement and disagreement that the Council is right to make changes to respond to the identified issues. (Demographic sub-group analysis)



Base: All Individuals (number of individuals shown in brackets)

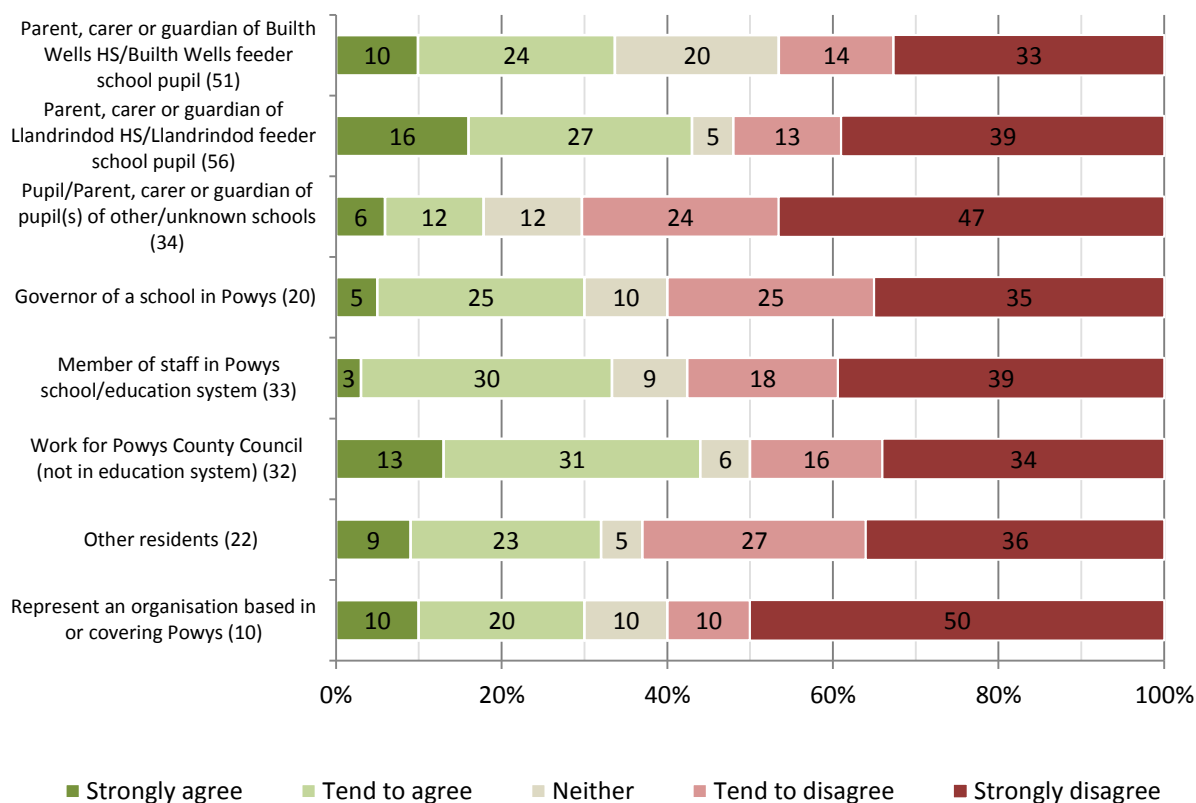
3.32 This chart shows how the responses for this score vary across different sub-groups of respondents for those who *agree*. Results highlighted in grey should be treated with caution, due to a low number of responses from that particular sub-group.

3.33 Respondents aged under 35 (73%) and parents, carers or guardians of children in Welsh medium education (69%) and those who can understand, speak, read or write Welsh (67%) are particularly likely to agree that the Council is right to make changes to respond to the identified issues in English medium education.

3.34 Male respondents (43%) are particularly less likely to agree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Proposal to establish a new dual-stream secondary school for pupils aged 11-18 to replace Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools from August 2017, that would continue to operate from the two existing sites?

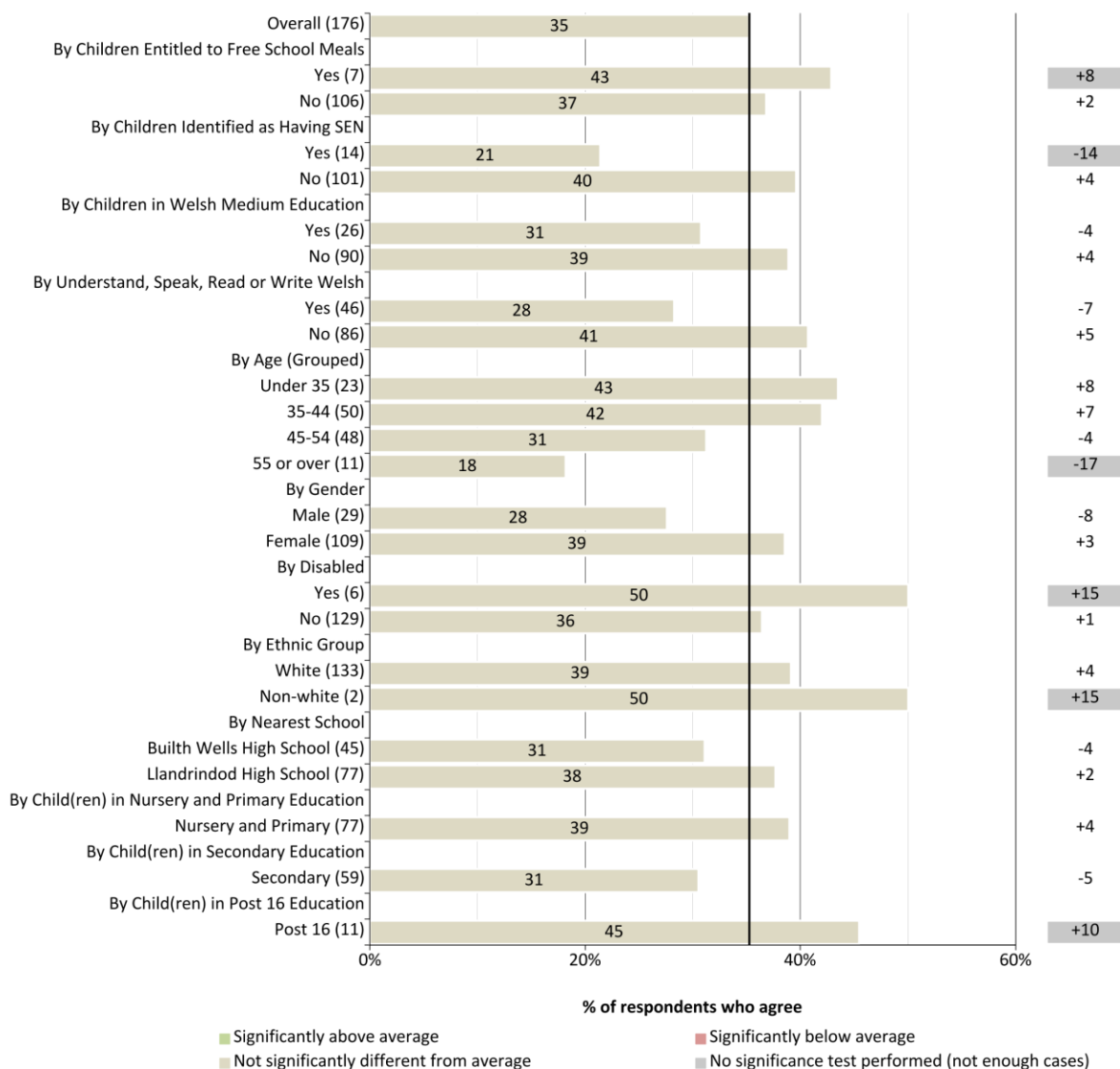
Figure 4: Support and opposition for the proposal



Base: All Individuals (number of individuals shown in brackets)

- 3.35 Respondents were then provided with a description of the Council's proposal to establish a new dual-stream secondary school for pupils aged 11-18 to replace Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools, as well as an explanation of how the Council believed the proposal would address the issues identified in the previous section.
- 3.36 Support for the specific proposal was lower generally than the level of agreement that the Council is right to make changes. The highest levels of support were found among those who work for Powys County Council (not in the education system) (44%), and parents, carers or guardians of Llandrindod High School/associated feeder school pupils (43%), while a third of parents, carers or guardians of Builth Wells High School/feeder school pupils (33%) and members of staff in a school or within the education system in Powys (33%) agreed. Just less than a third of other residents (32%), school governors in Powys (30%), and those who represent an organisation based in or covering Powys (30% [3/10]) agreed with the proposal.
- 3.37 Less than a fifth (18%) of pupils and parents of pupils of other/unknown schools agreed with the proposal to establish a new dual-stream secondary school for pupils aged 11-18 to replace Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools.

Figure 5: Support and opposition for the proposal (Demographic sub-group analysis)



Base: All Individuals (number of individuals shown in brackets)

- 3.38 Respondents aged under 35 (43%) or 35-44 (42%) are particularly likely to agree with the proposal to establish a new dual-stream secondary school for pupils aged 11-18 to replace Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools. Respondents with children entitled to free school meals (43%) are also particularly likely to agree.
- 3.39 Respondents who are closer to Builth Wells HS (31%), and those with children in Welsh Medium Education (31%) or Secondary Education (31%) are particularly less likely to agree, as well as those who understand, speak, read or write Welsh (28%) and those with children identified as having Special Education Needs (21%).
- 3.40 Respondents aged 45-54 (31%) or 55 or over (18%) are also particularly less likely to agree.

If you disagree with any elements of the Proposal, please explain why.

- 3.41 Respondents who expressed disagreement with the proposal were asked to explain why this was.
- 3.42 All responses provided to the open-ended questions have been read, and then classified (coded) using a standardised approach (code frame). This approach helps ensure consistency when classifying different comments and the resulting codes represent themes that have been repeatedly mentioned in a quantifiable manner. The responses provided by a resident to a single text question may present a number of different points or arguments, therefore in many cases the overall number of coded comments counted in a particular question can actually be higher than the number of people responding to that open-ended question (i.e. each resident may have made comments about two or more different topics).
- 3.43 Of the 79 respondents who gave a response to this question, 283 different comments have been classified, the details of which are outlined below.

Figure 6: Reasons for opposition to the various elements of the proposal

Coded comment	% of respondents	Base
Disagree with proposals/schools are fine as they are/need to maintain current provision of schools	35%	28
Proposals will not save enough money/savings will be minimal	33%	26
Proposals will not work/disagree that proposals will improve standards	30%	24
Proposals will result in a lower standard of education/learning (non-specific)	23%	18
Disagree with proposals due to increased travel times/distances	22%	17
Disagree with proposals due to increased travel costs	14%	11
Proposals will lead to too much strain/workload for one leadership team/head teacher	14%	11
Proposals will negatively impact local businesses/local economy	11%	9
Invest money into current facilities/spend the money for new sites on current school buildings	10%	8
Proposals are financially motivated/a money grab by the council	9%	7
Merging schools/staff structures will only cause confusion	9%	7
Proposal is biased/flawed/decisions already made	8%	6
Happy for the Sixth Form to be on one site	6%	5
Proposals will cost money that the council doesn't have/won't have in the future	6%	5
Disagree with proposals due to overcrowding of classes/there will be too many pupils per class	5%	4
Llandrindod is in good condition/doesn't need any changes or improvements (contrary to what the proposal says)	5%	4
Proposals will cause teachers/head teachers/staff to lose their jobs/happy with/need to maintain current provision of staff	4%	3
Proposals will lead to an increase in bullying/violence/arguments between pupils	4%	3
Proposals will lead to less new families moving to the area	4%	3
Proposals will result in less students attending Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools/pupils will switch schools/be home-schooled instead	4%	3
Llandrindod is a better site for the super school due to better land/facilities, etc.	4%	3
Proposals will result in pupils losing friends/negatively impact pupils' social lives	3%	2
Proposals will lead to reduced free time/affect pupils home lives/time for after school activities/extra-curricular activities	3%	2

Proposals will cause issues for parents/negatively affect parents (non-specific)	1%	1
Proposals will negatively affect Sixth Formers/will lead to less options for Post-16	1%	1
Concerns about a new uniform/don't want a new uniform/new uniforms will cost money	1%	1
Disagree with claims about Llandrindod's finances/Builth Wells is the school with the budget deficit	1%	1
Proposals will have a negative effect on the environment/extra travelling will be detrimental to the environment	1%	1
Other	59%	47

3.44 Of those who responded to this question, over a third (35%) made comments generally disagreeing with the proposals or expressing a desire to maintain the current provision of schools. Typical examples of such comments are below:

Best leave the two schools alone and put the money from merging them into each school itself.

What a waste of money building a brand new school.

I'm totally against any changes being made and think that Powys should leave our schools alone, give the Head teachers the money and resources to employ better teachers or train our current ones up to a better standard.

3.45 33% of respondents said that they the 'proposals will not save enough money/savings will be minimal'. Typically, respondents compared the savings unfavourably against the negative impact of making the changes to children's education and wellbeing.

The saving of £133,000 is nothing compared to the disruption this would cause to our children's education and subsequently our communities.

The amount saved hardly justifies such a major upheaval.

The saving of £133,000 from the total Powys education budget is a minimal saving, and provides no guarantee of improved standards, better teaching quality or increased choice for post 16 education.

3.46 30% of respondents said that the proposals either would not work or that they would not improve standards.

The merging of two schools is only going to make organisation more problematic and is hardly likely to lead to improvements. It makes more sense for each school to concentrate on their own pupils to improve standards.

There is no evidence that this proposal will increase the standard of education [...] How do PCC think they are helping anyone with the current disruption to education and the doubts they are giving pupils about [their] future education?

I can't actually see how improvements are going to be made.

Welsh Medium Education

- 3.1 As the proposed changes to Welsh medium education would affect stakeholders from across South/Mid Powys, respondents to the main Brecon and Gwernyfed consultation and Builth and Llandrindod consultation were asked identical questions regarding the proposals for Welsh medium education. Because of this, ORS has merged responses to questions regarding the Welsh medium proposals from both questionnaires into one all-inclusive dataset.
- 3.2 There is an additional break down by parents, carers and guardians of pupils who attend Builth Wells High School/associated feeder school, Llandrindod High School/associated feeder school, and pupils and parents, carers and guardians of pupils from other/unknown schools (not including Brecon High School/feeder schools or Gwernyfed High School/feeder schools).
- 3.3 Table 2 below provides a breakdown of the respondent profile from the 796 individuals who responded either online or by post to the main open consultation questionnaire. Figures for Powys's population are also outlined for comparison.

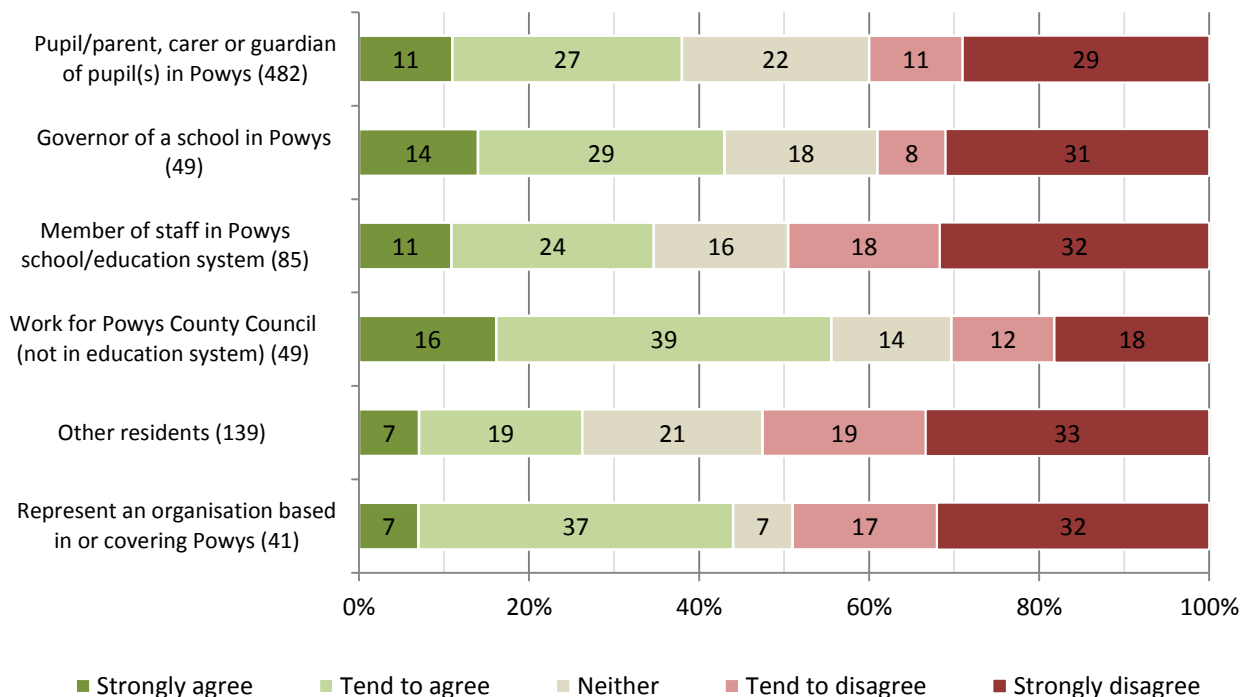
Table 2: Socio-demographic characteristics for the main consultation questionnaire and Powys's population
(Note: Percentages may not sum due to rounding)

Characteristic	All Responses		Powys population 16+		
	Number of Responses	% of Valid Responses	Number of occurrences	% of population	
BY AGE	Under 25	30	4.9%	12,372	11.1%
	25 to 34	76	12.4%	12,230	11.0%
	35 to 44	197	32.1%	13,538	12.2%
	45 to 54	207	33.7%	19,506	17.6%
	55 to 64	67	10.9%	19,238	17.3%
	65 to 84	36	5.9%	29,611	26.7%
	85+	1	0.2%	4,547	4.1%
	Total valid responses	614	100.0%	111,042	100.0%
<i>Not known</i>	182	-	-	-	
BY GENDER	Male	155	24.9%	54,573	49.1%
	Female	468	75.1%	56,469	50.9%
	Total valid responses	623	100.0%	111,042	100.0%
	<i>Not known</i>	173	-	-	-
BY ETHNIC GROUP	White	589	98.0%	108,539	98.6%
	Mixed or multiple ethnic	6	1.0%	453	0.4%
	Asian or Asian British	4	0.7%	890	0.8%
	Black, African, Caribbean, Black British	1	0.2%	109	0.1%
	Any other ethnic group	1	0.2%	92	0.1%
	Total valid responses	601	100%	110,083	100.0%
<i>Not known</i>	195	-	-	-	
BY DISABILITY	With disability	22	3.6%	26,357	24.3%
	No disability	596	96.4%	81,971	75.7%
	Total valid responses	618	100.0%	108,328	100.0%
	<i>Not known</i>	178	-	-	-

Characteristic	All Responses		
	Number of Responses	% of Valid Responses	
BY CHILDREN CURRENTLY IN SCHOOL, NURSERY OR COLLEGE IN POWYS	Has children currently in school, nursery or college in Powys	478	75.6%
	No children currently in school, nursery or college in Powys	154	24.4%
	Total valid responses	632	100.0%
	<i>Not known</i>	164	-
BY CHILDREN ENTITLED TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS	Has children entitled to free school meals	22	4.9%
	No children entitled to free school meals	426	95.1%
	Total valid responses	448	100.0%
	<i>Not applicable</i>	153	-
	<i>Not known</i>	195	-
BY CHILDREN HAVING BEEN IDENTIFIED AS HAVING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS	Has children with SEN	41	9.1%
	No children with SEN	410	90.9%
	Total valid responses	451	100.0%
	<i>Not applicable</i>	153	
	<i>Not known</i>	192	-
BY CHILDREN CURRENTLY RECEIVING A WELSH MEDIUM EDUCATION	Has children receiving Welsh medium education	72	15.9%
	No children receiving Welsh medium education	380	84.1%
	Total valid responses	452	100.0%
	<i>Not applicable</i>	153	
	<i>Not known</i>	191	-
BY WELSH SPEAKER	Speaks Welsh	210	35.5%
	Does not speak Welsh	382	64.5%
	Total valid responses	592	100.0%
	<i>Not known</i>	204	

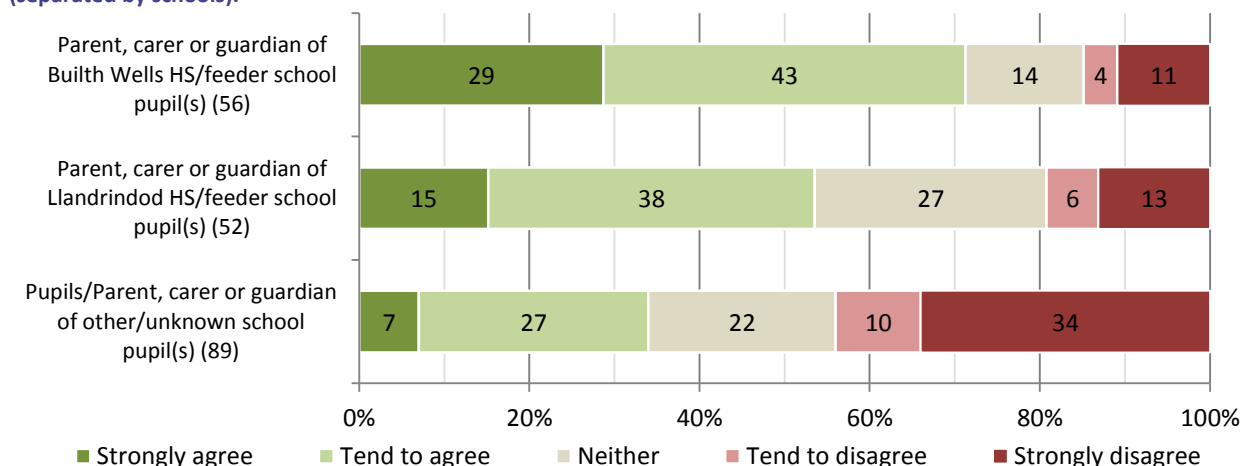
In the context of the problems outlined above, Powys Council believes a number of changes are needed. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Council is right to make changes to respond to these issues?

Figure 7: Levels of agreement and disagreement that the Council is right to make changes to respond to the identified issues.



Base: All Individuals (number of individuals shown in brackets)

Figure 8: Levels of agreement and disagreement that the Council is right to make changes to respond to the identified issues (separated by schools).

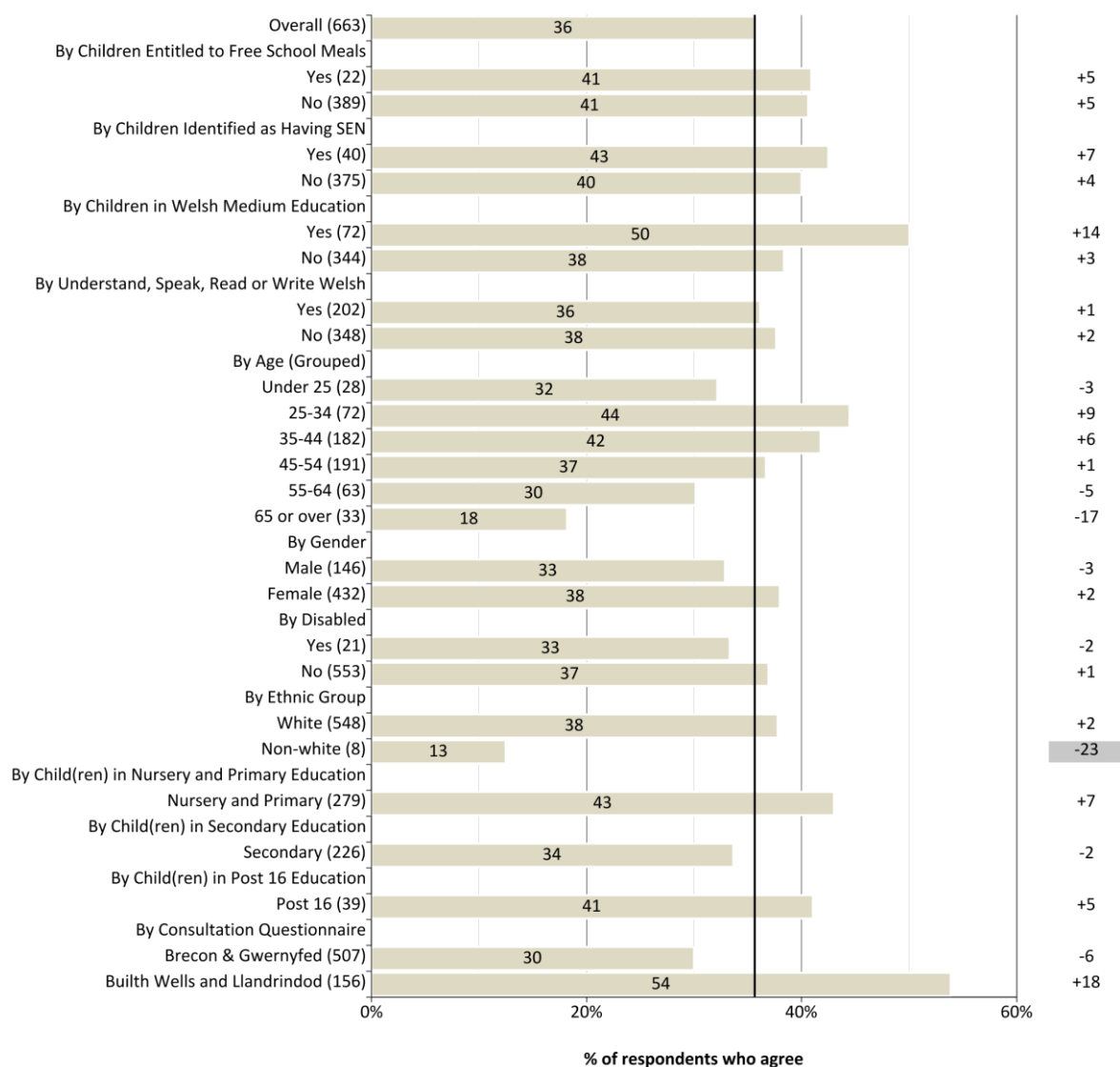


Base: All Individuals (number of individuals shown in brackets)

3.4 More than half of respondents (55%) who work for Powys County Council (not in education system) agreed that the Council is right to make changes to respond to the identified issues in Welsh education. Around 4 in 10 Governors of schools in Powys (43%) and parents/carers/guardians of pupils in Powys (38%) agreed, while around a third of members of staff in Powys school/education system agreed (34%).

- 3.5 While 38% of parents, carers and guardians of pupils in Powys agreed that the Council is right to make changes to respond to the issues identified in Welsh education overall, around 7 in 10 parents, carers and guardians of Builth Wells HS/feeder school pupils (71%) specifically agreed. Over half (54%) of parents, carers and guardians of Llandrindod HS/feeder school pupils also agreed.
- 3.6 Around half or more of other residents in Powys (53%), representatives of organisations based in or covering Powys (49%) and members of staff in Powys school/education system (49%) disagreed with this, as well as more than 4 two fifths (44%) of pupils/parents/carers and guardians of other/unknown school pupils.

Figure 9: Levels of agreement and disagreement that the Council is right to make changes to respond to the identified issues (Demographic subgroup analysis).



Base: All Individuals (number of individuals shown in brackets)

- 3.7 This chart shows how the responses for this score vary across different sub-groups of respondents for those who *agreed*. Results highlighted in grey should be treated with caution, due to a low number of responses from that particular sub-group.
- 3.8 Respondents to the Builth Wells and Llandrindod Consultation Questionnaire (54%) and respondents with children in Welsh Medium Education (50%) are particularly likely to have agreed that the Council is

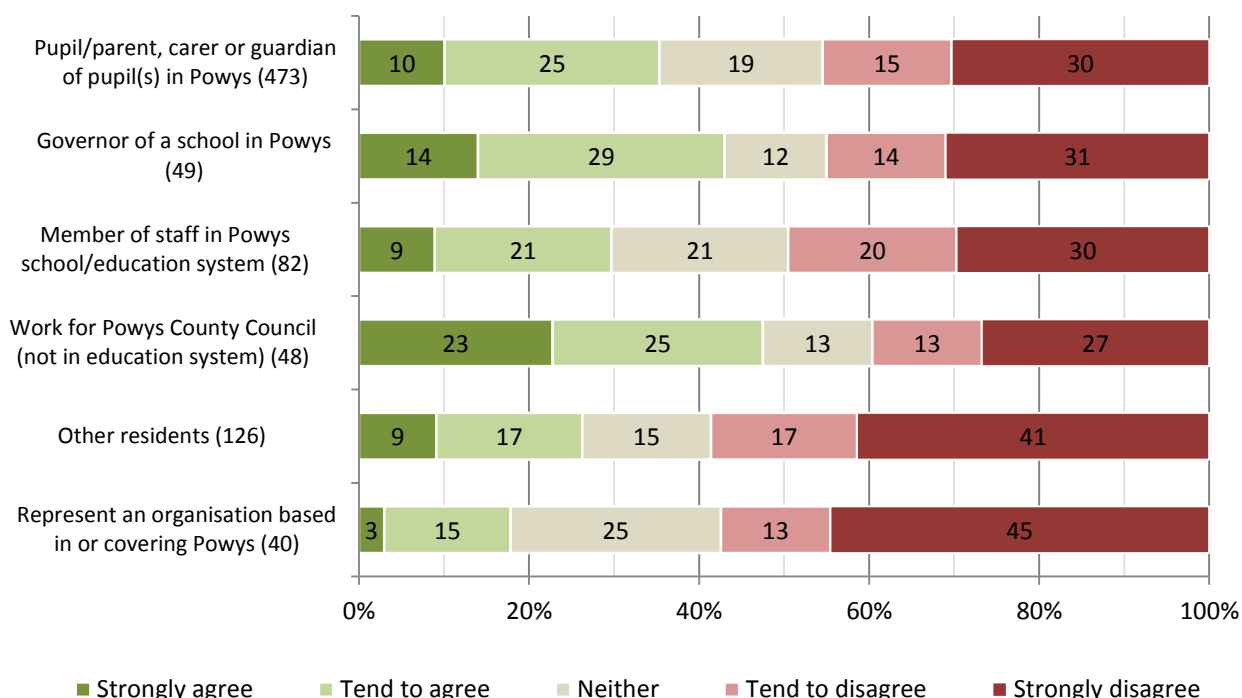
right to make changes to respond to the identified issues in Welsh education. Respondents aged 25-34 (44%), 35-44 (42%) and respondents with children in Nursery and Primary Education (43%) were also particularly likely to agree.

3.9 Respondents aged 65 or over (18%) were particularly less likely to agree, as were respondents to the Brecon & Gwernyfed Consultation Questionnaire (30%).

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following elements of the Proposal?

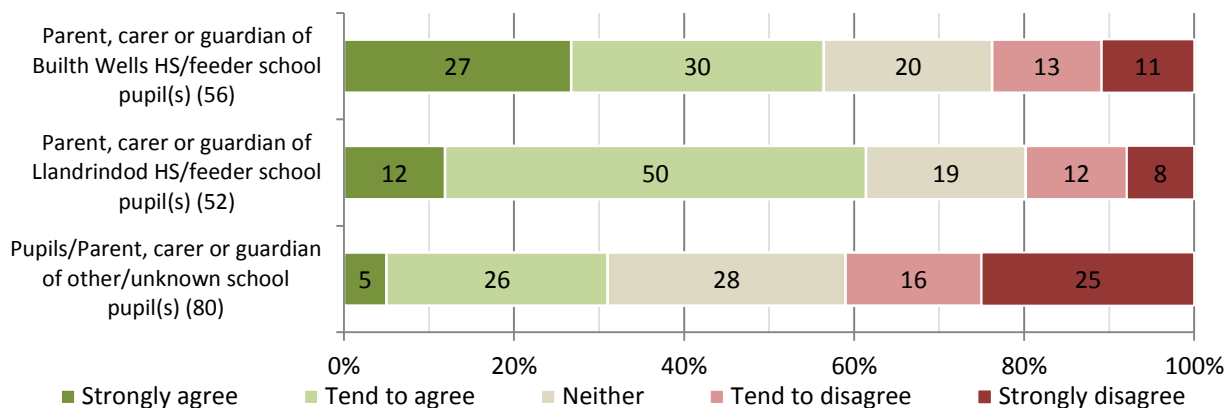
To consolidate Welsh medium education and deliver it from a single Welsh medium stream in South/Mid Powys to enable a wider range of subjects and a better learning and linguistic experience.

Figure 10: Levels of agreement and disagreement with the proposal to consolidate Welsh medium education and deliver it from a single Welsh medium stream in South/Mid Powys



Base: All Individuals (number of individuals shown in brackets)

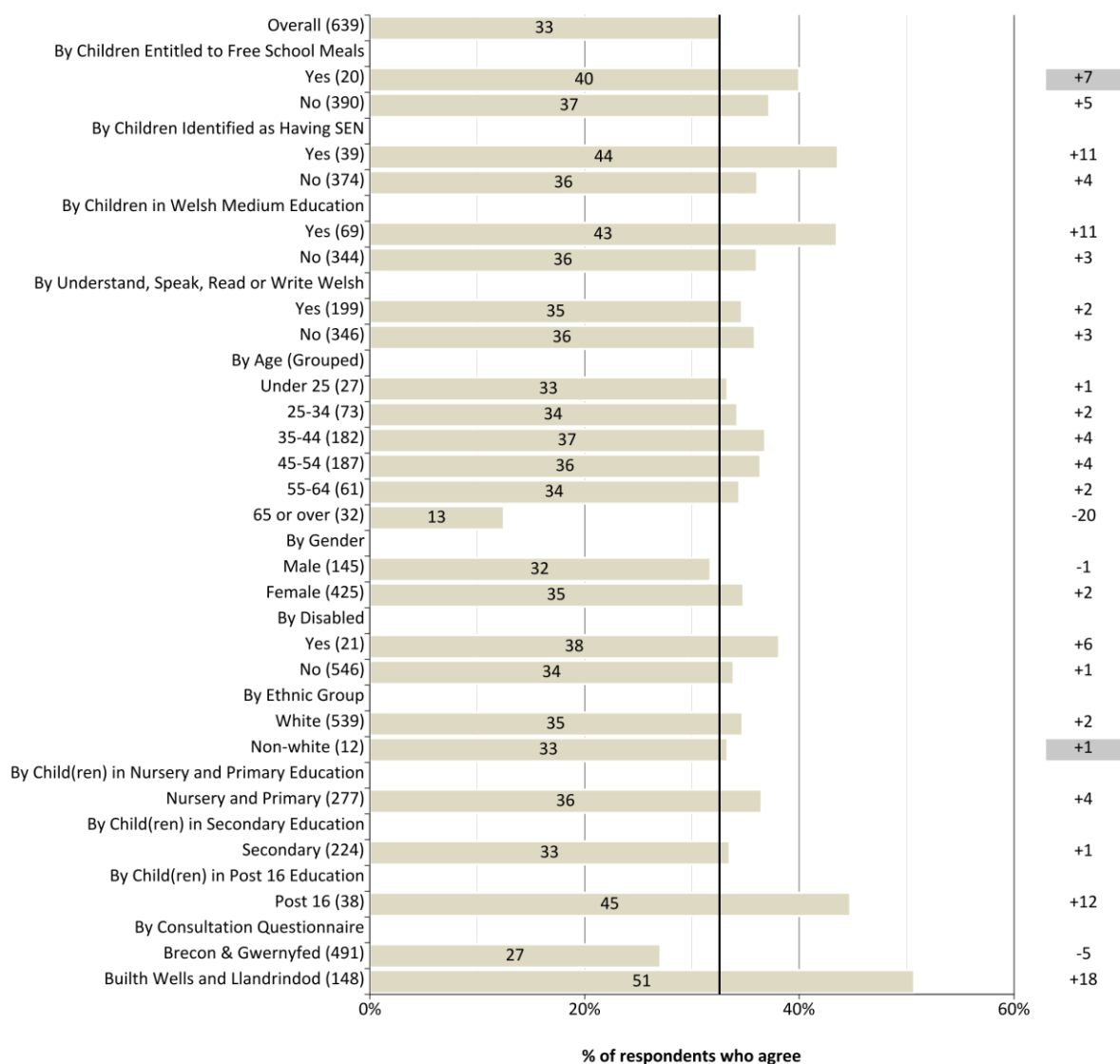
Figure 11: Levels of agreement and disagreement with the proposal to consolidate Welsh medium education and deliver it from a single Welsh medium stream in South/Mid Powys (separated by schools).



Base: All Individuals (number of individuals shown in brackets)

- 3.10 Almost half of respondents who work for Powys County Council (not in education system) (48%) and around 4 in 10 Governors of schools in Powys (43%) agreed with the proposal to deliver Welsh medium education from a single Welsh stream in South/Mid Powys.
- 3.11 More than a third (35%) of pupils, parents, carers or guardians of Powys pupils also agreed with this proposal. However, around three fifths of parents, carers and guardians of Llandrindod HS/feeder school pupils (62%) and Builth Wells HS/feeder school pupils (57%) agreed with the proposal to deliver Welsh medium education from a single Welsh stream.
- 3.12 Three fifths of other residents in Powys (59%), and representatives of organisations based in or covering Powys (58%), while around half of members of staff in Powys school/education system (50%) disagreed, as well as two fifths (41%) of pupils and parents, carers and guardians of other or unknown school pupils disagreed.

Figure 12: Levels of agreement and disagreement with the proposal to consolidate Welsh medium education and deliver it from a single Welsh medium stream in South/Mid Powys (Demographic subgroup analysis).



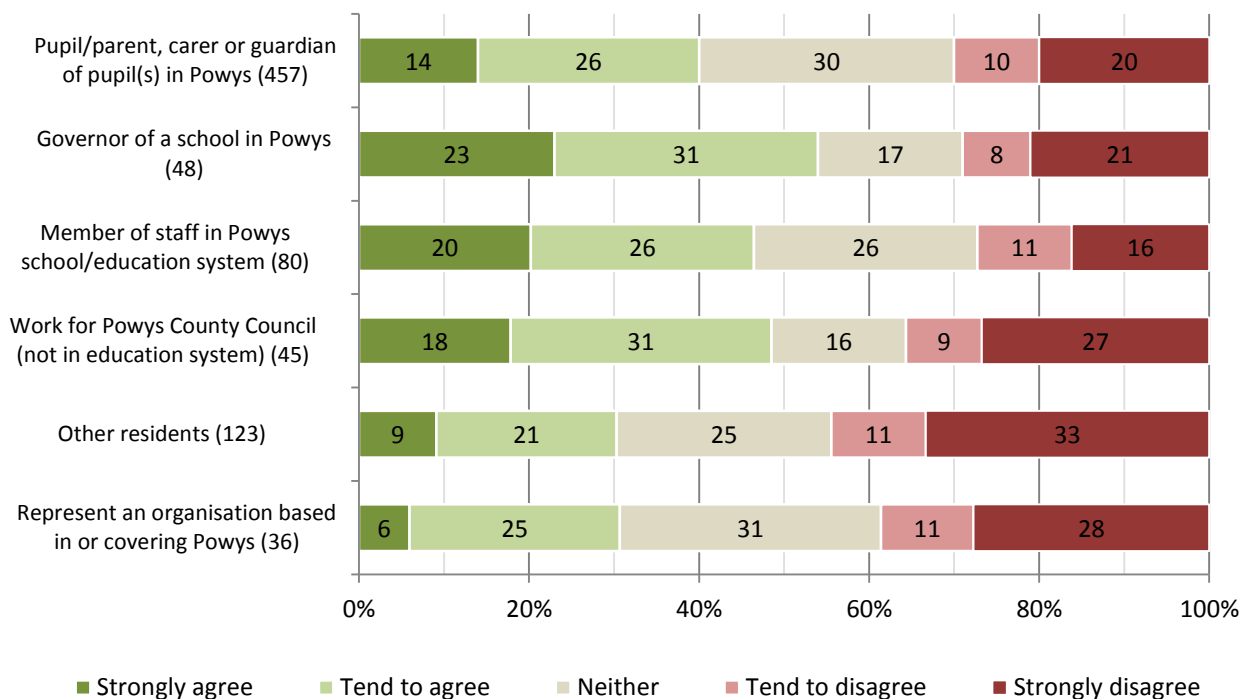
Base: All Individuals (number of individuals shown in brackets)

- 3.13 Respondents to the Builth Wells and Llandrindod Consultation Questionnaire (51%) and respondents with children in Post 16 Education (45%) were particularly likely to agree with the proposal to consolidate Welsh medium education and deliver it from a single Welsh medium stream in South/Mid Powys. Respondents with children identified as having Special Educational Needs (44%) or with children in Welsh Medium education (43%) were also particularly likely to agree.
- 3.14 Respondents aged 65 or over (13%) were particularly less likely to agree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following elements of the Proposal?

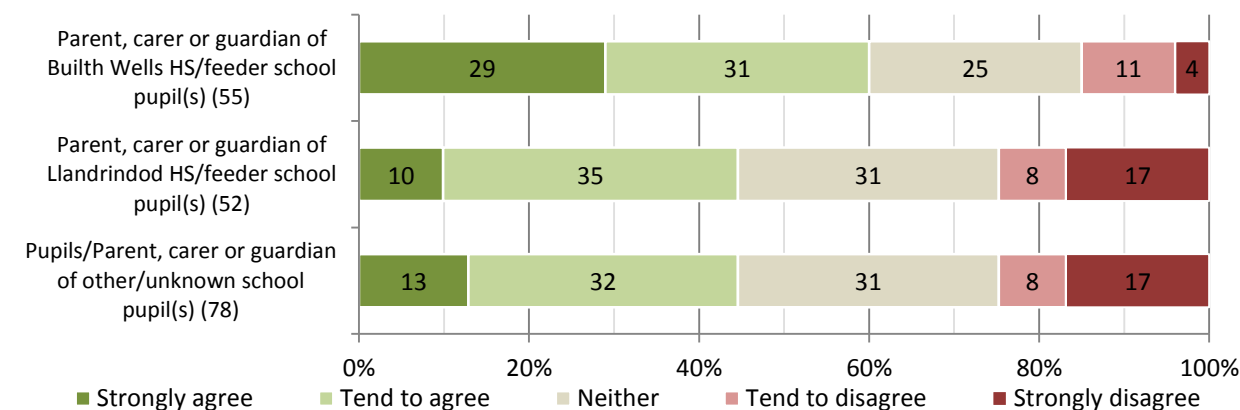
To provide Welsh medium education as part of a Bilingual Category 2B/C (dual-stream) school.

Figure 13: Levels of agreement and disagreement with the proposal to provide Welsh medium education as part of a Bilingual Category 2B/C (dual-stream) school.



Base: All Individuals (number of individuals shown in brackets)

Figure 14: Levels of agreement and disagreement with the proposal to provide Welsh medium education as part of a Bilingual Category 2B/C (dual-stream) school (separated by schools).



Base: All Individuals (number of individuals shown in brackets)

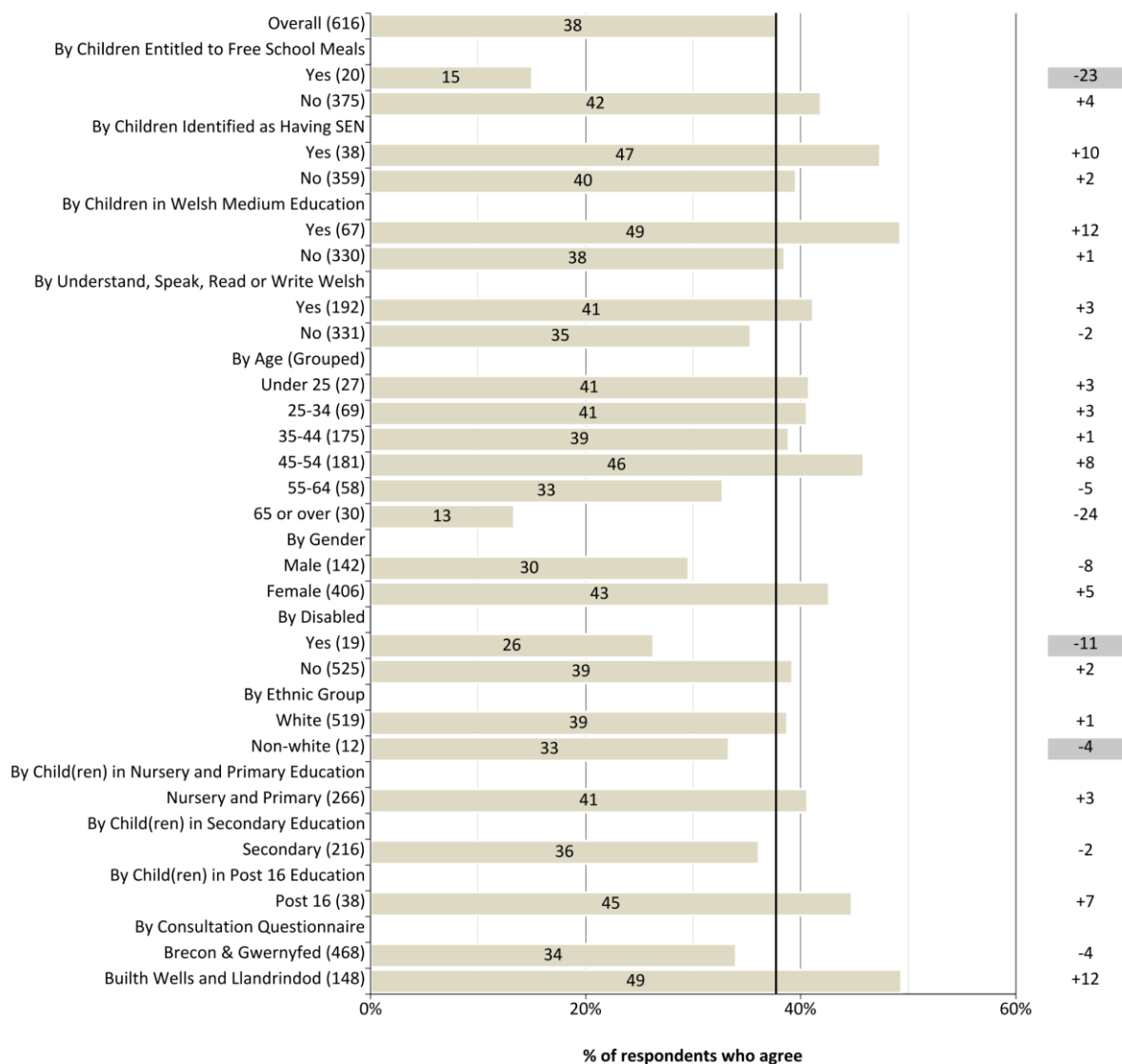
3.16 More than half of Governors of schools in Powys (54%) agreed with the proposal to provide Welsh medium education as part of a Bilingual Category 2B/C dual stream school. Almost half of respondents who work for Powys County Council (not in education system) (49%) and members of staff in the Powys school/education system (46%) also agreed.

3.17 Three fifths of parents/carers/guardians of Builth Wells HS/feeder school pupils (60%) agreed with this element of the proposal compared to over two fifths of those with children in Llandrindod HS/feeder

schools (44%) and pupils and parents, carers and guardians of pupils from other or unknown schools (45%).

- 3.18 Other residents (45%), representatives of organisations based in or covering Powys (39%), employees of Powys County Council (not in education system) (36%) were particularly likely to disagree with this element of the proposal.

Figure 15: Levels of agreement and disagreement with the proposal to provide Welsh medium education as part of a Bilingual Category 2B/C (dual-stream) school (Demographic subgroup analysis).



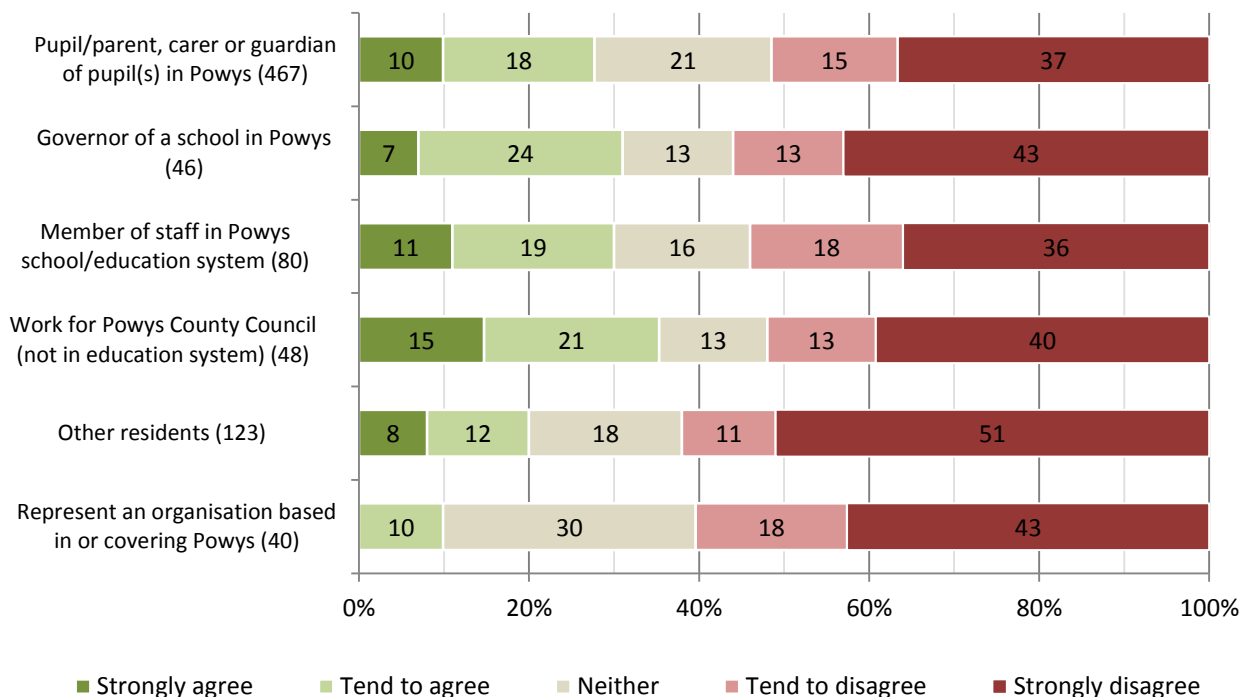
Base: All Individuals (number of individuals shown in brackets)

- 3.19 Again, respondents to the Builth Wells and Llandrindod Consultation Questionnaire (49%) were particularly likely to agree with the proposal to provide Welsh medium education as part of a Bilingual Category 2B/C (dual-stream) school. Respondents with children in Welsh Medium Education (49%) or identified as having Special Educational Needs (47%) were also particularly likely to agree, along with respondents aged 45-54 (46%) and respondents with children in Post 16 Education (45%).
- 3.20 Male respondents (30%) and respondents aged 65 or over (13%) were particularly less likely to agree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following elements of the Proposal?

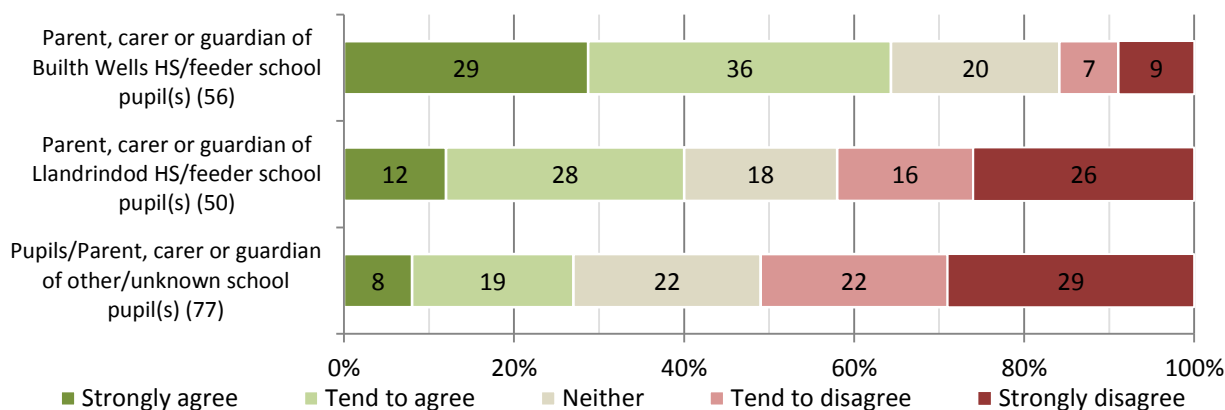
To locate the Welsh medium stream at the Builth Wells site of the proposed new secondary school due to its central location and enhanced Welsh medium provision.

Figure 16: Levels of agreement and disagreement with the proposal to locate the Welsh medium stream at the Builth Wells site of the proposed new secondary school.



Base: All Individuals (number of individuals shown in brackets)

Figure 17: Levels of agreement and disagreement with the proposal to locate the Welsh medium stream at the Builth Wells site of the proposed new secondary school (separated by school).

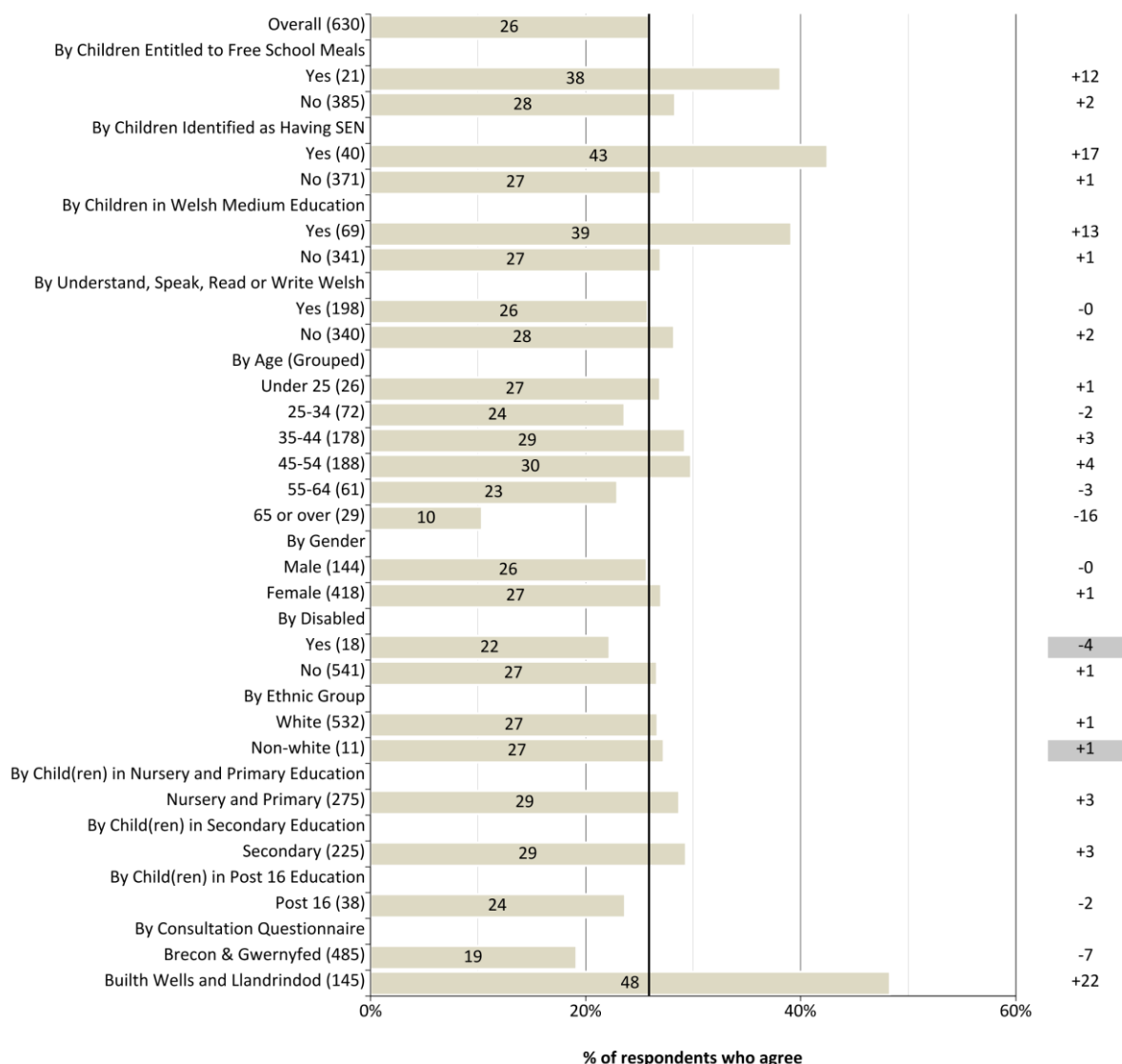


Base: All Individuals (number of individuals shown in brackets)

3.21 Around a third of employees of Powys County Council (not in education system) (35%), members of staff in the Powys schools/education system (30%) and Governors of schools in Powys (30%) agreed with the proposal to locate the Welsh medium stream at the Builth Wells site of the proposed new secondary school.

- 3.22 Over three fifths (64%) of parents, carers and guardians of Builth Wells HS/feeder school pupils agreed with the proposal. While two fifths (40%) of those with children in Llandrindod HS/feeder agreed, just over two fifths (42%) disagreed.
- 3.23 Other residents (62%), representatives of organisations based in or covering Powys (60%) and Governors of schools in Powys (57%) were particularly likely to disagree. Over half (51%) of pupils/parents/carers/guardians of other or unknown school pupils also disagreed.

Figure 18: Levels of agreement and disagreement with the proposal to locate the Welsh medium stream at the Builth Wells site of the proposed new secondary school (Demographic subgroup analysis).



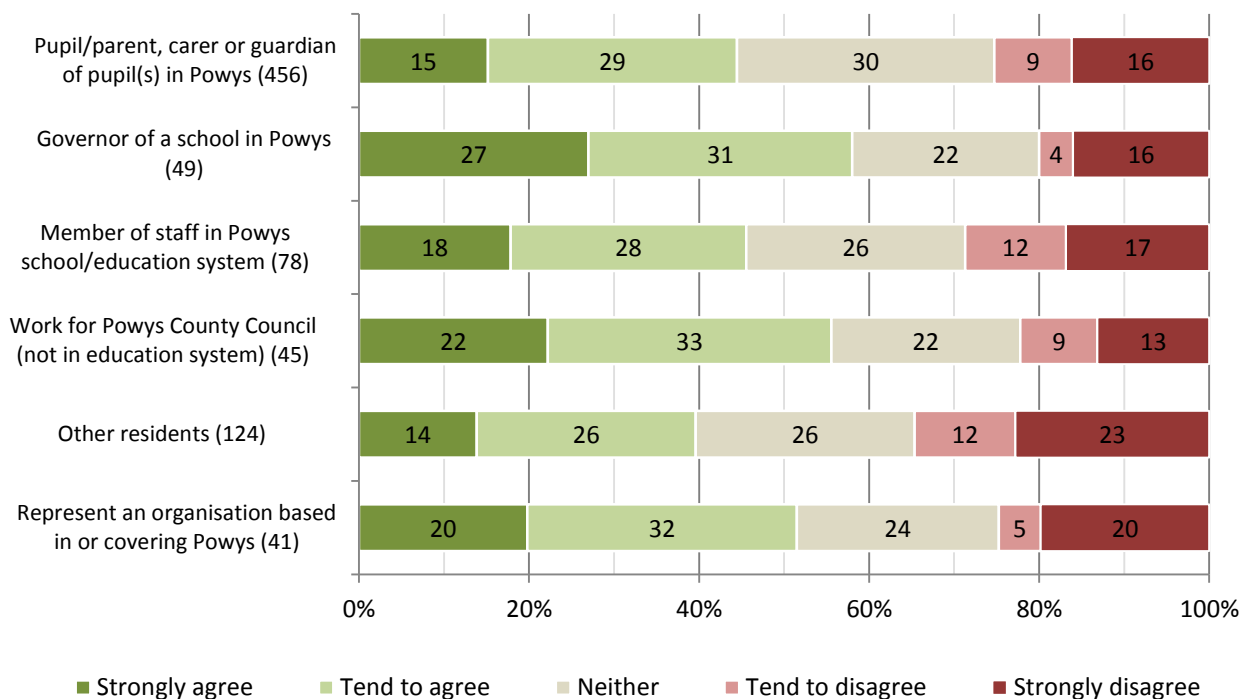
Base: All Individuals (number of individuals shown in brackets)

- 3.24 Respondents to the Builth Wells and Llandrindod Consultation Questionnaire (48%) were particularly likely to agree with the proposal to locate the Welsh medium stream at the Builth Wells site of the proposed new secondary school. Respondents with children identified as having Special Education Needs (43%), in Welsh Medium Education (39%) or entitled to free school meals (38%) were also particularly like to agree.
- 3.25 Respondents aged 65 or over (10%) and those who responded to the Brecon & Gwernyfed Consultation Questionnaire (19%) were particularly less likely to agree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following elements of the Proposal?

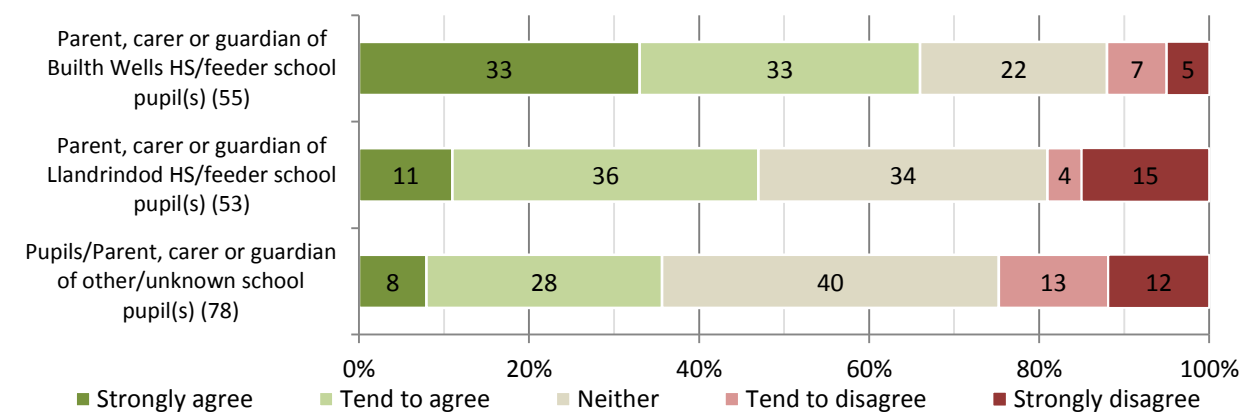
To increase provision of post-16 subjects via the medium of Welsh.

Figure 19: Levels of agreement and disagreement with the proposal to increase provision of post-16 subjects via the medium of Welsh.



Base: All Individuals (number of individuals shown in brackets)

Figure 20: Levels of agreement and disagreement with the proposal to increase provision of post-16 subjects via the medium of Welsh (separated by school).



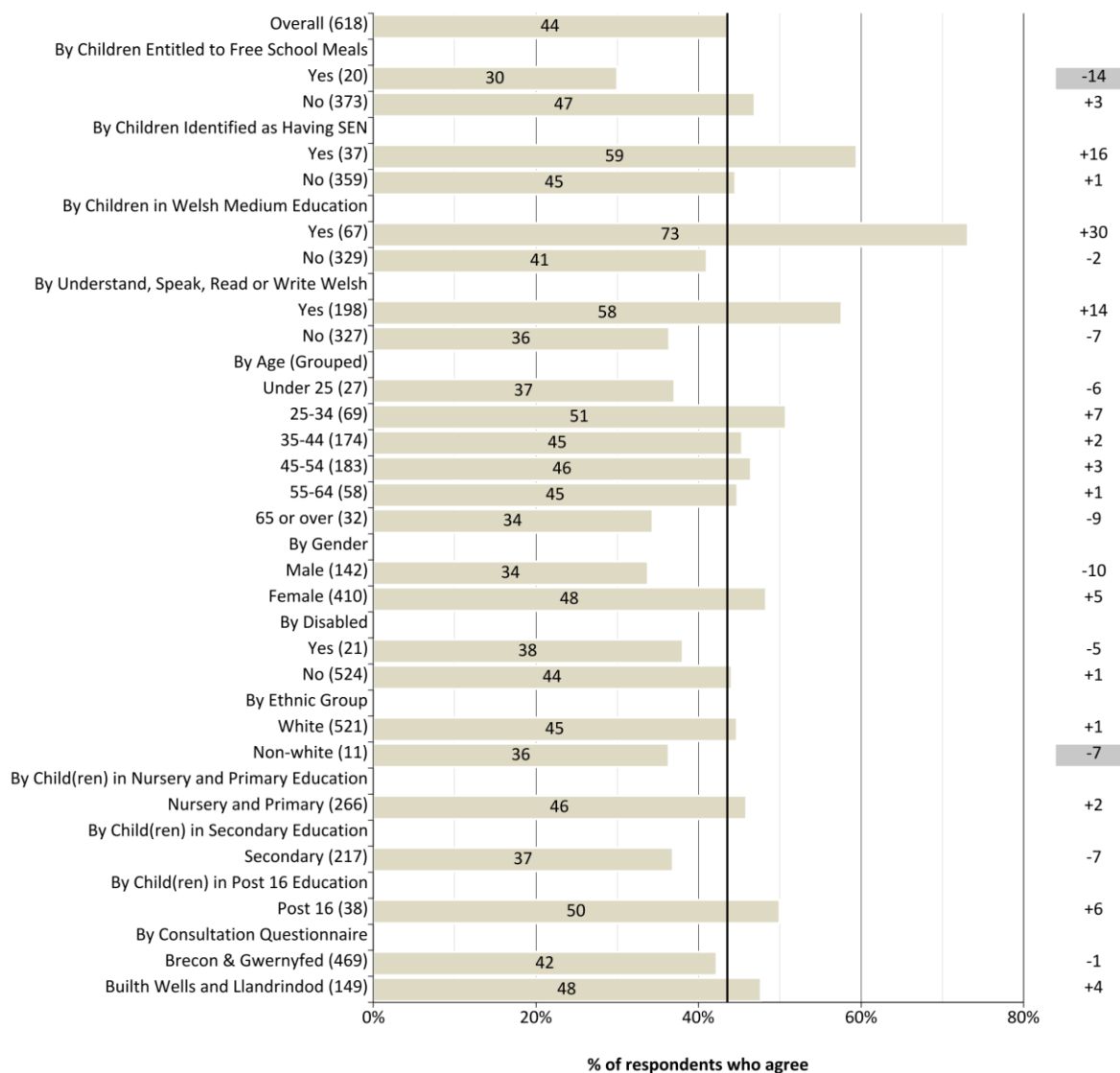
Base: All Individuals (number of individuals shown in brackets)

3.26 More than half of Governors of schools in Powys (57%), employees of Powys County Council (not in education) (56%) and representatives of organisations based in or covering Powys (51%) agreed with the proposal to increase provision of post-16 subjects via the medium of Welsh. Nearly half of members of staff in the Powys school/education system (46%) and pupils/parents/carers/guardians of Powys pupils (45%) also agreed.

3.27 Nearly two thirds (65%) of parents, carers and guardians of Builth Wells HS/feeder school pupils agreed, as did around half (47%) of parents, carers and guardians of Llandrindod HS/feeder school pupils.

3.28 A third (35%) of other residents disagreed with this element of the proposal. Around a quarter of members of staff in the Powys school/education system (28%) and pupils/parents/carers or guardians of Powys pupils (25%) also disagreed.

Figure 21: Levels of agreement and disagreement with the proposal to increase provision of post-16 subjects via the medium of Welsh (Demographic subgroup analysis).



Base: All Individuals (number of individuals shown in brackets)

3.29 Respondents with children in Welsh Medium Education (73%) were particularly likely to agree with the proposal to increase provision of post-16 subjects via the medium of Welsh. Respondents with children identified having Special Educational Needs (59%) and those who understand, speak, read or write Welsh (58%) are also particularly likely to have agreed.

3.30 Respondents with children entitled to free school meals (30%), male respondents (34%) and those aged 65 or over (34%) were least likely to agree.

If you disagree with any elements of the Proposal for Welsh medium education, please explain why.

- 3.31 Respondents who expressed disagreement with any elements of the proposal were asked to explain why this was.
- 3.32 Responses to this question have been filtered by consultation; only comments made by individuals in response to the Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools Consultation Questionnaire appear in the table below.
- 3.33 Of the 50 respondents who answered this question, 101 different comments have been classified, the details of which are outlined below.

Figure 22: Reasons for opposition to the various elements of the proposal

Coded comment	% of respondents	Base
English is most pupils' first language/most people need to speak English	22%	11
Disagree with being taught just in Welsh/don't want to be taught in Welsh	20%	10
Proposals will lead to longer travel times/increased travel costs	20%	10
Welsh should be available in all schools/to all pupils	12%	6
Proposals will negatively affect English speakers/English speakers' educations will suffer	10%	5
Maintain current provision/disagree with any school closures/disagree with proposals	8%	4
Proposals will negatively affect pupils who go on to study at University/higher levels	6%	3
Proposals will deter parents from educating their children in Welsh/Welsh as a language will suffer	4%	2
Proposals will negatively impact the friendships/social lives of students	4%	2
Proposals will negatively affect the free time of students/time for extra-curricular activities	4%	2
Welsh needs to stay in Brecon due to the Welsh Primary School/Ysgol Y Bannau will be negatively affected	2%	1
Other	90%	45

- 3.34 11 respondents disagreed because 'English is most pupils' first language/most people need to speak English'. Typical examples of these comments are as follows:

I don't see the point of providing Welsh medium education at huge cost in an almost exclusively English speaking area of Powys.

Mid Wales has lowest numbers of first language Welsh speakers in Powys - artificially creating a centre based on economics and distances travelled, not actual demand.

- 3.35 10 respondents 'disagree with being taught just in Welsh/don't want to be taught in Welsh'; for example:

I don't believe that there is beneficial for students to only learn in Welsh language. as we live in a society that becomes more and more English language oriented, students need to be able to study any subject in either Welsh or English, whatever they consider easier for them.

It is the right of every pupil to learn Welsh as a spoken language, but it is not a requirement that it becomes the only language - therefore other subjects can and should be taught in English (in order to reach the greater amount of students). Even though we live in Wales, it does not mean that we should be forced to speak Welsh.

- 3.36 A further 10 respondents disagreed with the proposals stating that 'proposals will lead to longer travel times/increased travel costs'. Typical examples of these comments are as follows:

Children shouldn't have to travel extra to receive Welsh education.

[Pupils] will have to travel (for some over 1 hour) to receive a Welsh education in our County.

- 3.37 6 of the 50 respondents argued that 'Welsh should be available in all schools/to all pupils'. Examples of these comments are as follows:

It is the right of every pupil to learn Welsh as a spoken language.

By removing the Welsh streams from Brecon, or other schools, you are effectively going against the Welsh Government of promoting the Welsh language for all.

- 3.38 A large majority (90%) of respondents made 'Other comments'. Some of these note the importance of freedom of choice, and the difficulties of studying particular subjects in Welsh. Others argued that consolidating Welsh education in Builth Wells risks more pupils travelling out of county for schooling, or note a perceived lack of demand for Welsh education in South Powys.

Freedom of choice – Brecon should retain a Welsh unit.

Depends on the subject, science for example is mainly in English – [Academic] Journals etc.

South Breconshire is more of a Welsh speaking area. By moving the Welsh stream to Builth there is a high risk that more pupils will travel out of county i.e. to Ysgol Gyfun Ystralyfera.

Lack of demand. You over estimate the demand for Welsh medium education. Pure politics and pandering to a tiny [number of Welsh speakers].

My fear is that the proposal is a gateway to have a Welsh medium school in Builth, forcing the majority of English speaking pupils to move from their hometown. Builth may well be central, but it is most definitely not a Welsh speaking area.

Equalities

*Are there any positive or negative impacts relating to equalities that you believe that the County Council should take into account in the decision making process?
If so, are you able to provide any supporting evidence and suggest any ways to reduce or remove any potential negative impact and increase any positive impact?*

- 3.39 Respondents were asked whether there were positive or negative impacts relating to equalities were then asked if they had any supporting evidence or suggestions to reduce negative impacts or increase positive impacts.
- 3.40 All 45 responses were classified using a standardised code frame, eliciting 67 separate comments. Once classified, only a small number of comments for this question were applicable to impacts relating to equalities, and codes raised from these comments have been presented below. Comments which did not relate to the question have been separated into an 'other/comments not relating to equalities' category.

Figure 23: Impacts relating to equalities

Coded comment	% of respondents	Base
Schools should be equal for English and Welsh speakers/shouldn't be biased towards English or Welsh speakers	20%	9
Proposals will segregate societies/divide communities	16%	7
Proposals will negatively impact disabled children/proposals need to take disabled children into account	9%	4
Proposals will lead to increased travel times/costs	9%	4
Children have the right to quality education in their local area i.e. in the language they wish to learn	7%	3
Generally disagree with proposals/maintain current provision	4%	2
Proposals will result in pupils losing friends/negative impact on social life	2%	1
'Other/comments not relating to equalities'	82%	37

- 3.41 9 of the 45 respondents to this question said that 'schools should be equal for English and Welsh speakers/shouldn't be biased towards English or Welsh speakers'. Typical examples of such comments are as follows:

[...] Also I think that English and Welsh pupils should be funded and treated equally, because English speaking Welsh people should be equal to Welsh speaking Welsh people. This is no less valid than discriminating on the grounds of gender, age, disability, etc.

By following this proposal Powys county council will be going against the equality act 2010 because it is only taking into account the needs of the welsh learners, of which there are less than in the English stream.

- 3.42 7 argued that the 'proposals will segregate societies/divide communities'. Typical examples of such comments are as follows:

You are creating a split in the community by giving the local Welsh speaking children priority.

[The proposal] will also be, and has, pitted town against town, school against school and before long welsh against English.

- 3.43 4 respondents stated that the 'proposals will negatively impact disabled children/proposals need to take disabled children into account'. Typical examples of such comments are as follows:

There could be some negative impact on pupils who currently access the ASD unit at Llandrindod Wells. If they were looking to stay on at sixth form, and the sixth form was at Builth Wells High School, they would be quite anxious about this, and there would need to be extra time and consideration given to their needs regarding familiarisation of the site, teachers, etc. Parents of AS pupils at Llandrindod Wells should be involved in discussions, if this were to be the case, so as to contribute to their children's needs.

Children with additional needs are not going to be able to cope with larger schools - even just the sites and travelling will be problematic. Failing them by going down the 'academy' route, via the back door.

- 3.44 A further 4 respondents were concerned that 'proposals will lead to increased travel times/costs'. Typical examples of such comments are as follows:

Children with anxieties or generally unable to travel. Children unable to do after school clubs or socialise with their friends locally. Poor parents unable to drive or have access to a car. Parents unable to support their children's school locally. Parents unable to travel to meetings or shows sports days etc. due to reduced public transport.

The extra travel time for my children would make them not want to go to school, and I will not force them to go if they are unhappy with travelling.

Further comments

Are there any further comments that you would like to make, or any alternative proposals you feel the Council should consider?

^{3.45} Those responding to the questionnaire by post had the opportunity to enclose additional comments on separate sheets of paper. However, people responding online were limited in their responses to the open textboxes in the questionnaire. In order to give those responding online the opportunity to submit any additional comments, a ‘further comments’ question was included. Additional comments received by post tended to be longer and more comprehensive than those received online and they have been included in the ‘Written Submissions’ chapter of the report. Those received online are reported below. 50 respondents gave additional comments, from which 108 separate comments were coded.

Figure 24: Further comments

Coded comment	% of respondents	Base
Disagree with proposals/schools are fine as they are/need to maintain current provision of schools	34%	17
Disagree as proposals will negatively affect the community/schools are a vital part of the community	26%	13
Proposals will lead to longer travel times/increased travel costs	16%	8
Proposal is biased/flawed/decisions already made	12%	6
Powys County Council need to support the schools more/fund the schools better	12%	6
Proposals will negatively impact local businesses/local economy	10%	5
Other	70%	35

^{3.46} 17 respondents used this opportunity to reiterate their disagreement with the proposals or their desire to maintain the current provision of schools.

There is a significant shortage of money in the public purse - these proposals are not the answer. The problems of education in Powys are deeper and lie within the dirigisme of the education dept of Powys and ERW.

There is no suitable site in Builth to build a new school. The existing school is in great condition. The newly appointed head is fantastic. Allow teachers to teach and do what they do best. The regulatory regime along with your meddling are ruining education!

Leave our education system alone, leave our schools alone, employ better headteachers and allow them to manage the schools without interference from Powys. By constantly changes things and always having the threat of losing an English school in Builth you are upsetting our kids' education and causing a lot of angst in the community.

^{3.47} 13 respondents raised the potential negative impacts the proposals could have on their respective communities, or highlighted the important role that schools play as part of the community.

I am also very concerned about the impact of the long term plan on the local communities in Builth and Llandrindod and the effect on pupils and families who live within the North ward of Llandrindod, which ignores the requirements of Welsh government in terms of considering the effect on disadvantaged groups.

I believe the past few months has been hugely damaging to the schools and wider community and what in theory should have been a once in a generation opportunity to build a positive vision of the future for education in the Builth and Llandrindod area has been poorly executed.

Where is the community impact statement on closing Llandrindod Wells High School and its effects upon the local community? As Regeneration is part of the remit of a Council do they think that closing a school in a major town in Powys meeting its objectives? The uncertainty within the school services would be a factor in determining location in Wales for individuals and businesses - please would you determine this matter quickly.

- 3.48 Similarly to other open text questions in the questionnaire, concerns over travel times also appeared in the further comments section, raised by 8 respondents.

Anyone with any intelligence knows the cost of transport and yet that is the one element that hasn't been costed! I don't want my child travelling backwards and forwards between towns when they should be in a classroom learning!

- 3.49 6 respondents indicated their dissatisfaction with the consultation itself, highlighting problems with the consultation process or information provided by the Council, or suggesting that the consultation was biased.

Although I agree with the need to make changes and the proposal to create a single dual stream school I do not agree with all of the data in the consultation document as it is flawed and incomplete. It also seems biased to justify the ultimate aim to place a new school in Builth Wells. If these figures are wrong then how much of the rest of the document is to be believed, particularly in respect of the projected costs of a new school in the vicinity of Builth Wells. As a governor of Llandrindod High School I know that our points have been well made as part of the governing body's response so I do not propose to repeat them all again here. However I do wish to reiterate that the plan we have proposed as a governing body makes more sense in terms of delivering real improvement in standards in the short and long term. I fear that the current proposal from Powys CC will do little or nothing to achieve any improvement which will be an injustice for pupils of both schools and will also then be used as justification to move to the one site plan.

In theory I see the need for change but the plans as relayed to governors are ill conceived, ill thought out and badly costed. You rely on the Estyn reports for these two schools and yet the areas where both school 'failed' was relatively small to the whole picture. It seems as if the education dept is using this to justify a badly thought out, badly costed proposal. (The figures for transport and central administration costs have been challenged and not responded to by the Education dept and therefore there are no true figures available in terms of cost. The original proposal talked of building a single school in due course but this seems to have disappeared so I assume that there is either no money to build a school or they want the governors of any new school to make the decision to build (because of the increasing costs of managing two sites against a background of reducing budgets) and thereby absolving the council of any responsibility to making that highly politically charged decision.

Findings of the Young Persons' Consultation Questionnaire

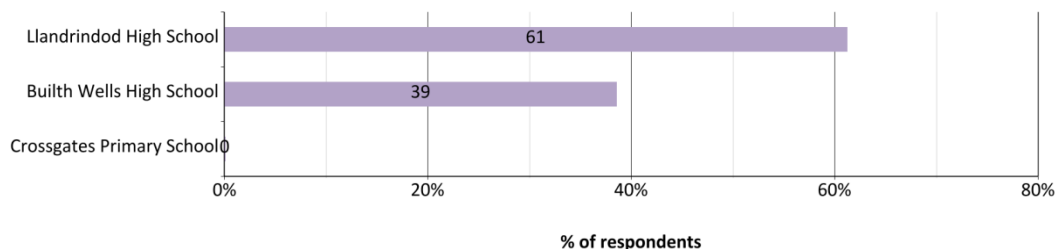
Table 3: Socio-demographic characteristics for the young persons' consultation questionnaire
(Note: Percentages may not sum due to rounding)

Characteristic	All Responses		
	Number of Responses	% of Valid Responses	
BY KEY STAGE	Key Stage 2	1	0.1%
	Key Stage 3	474	64.8%
	Key Stage 4	203	27.8%
	Key Stage 5	53	7.3%
	Total valid responses	731	100.0%
	<i>Not known</i>	4	-
BY GENDER	Male	307	47.3%
	Female	342	52.7%
	Total valid responses	649	100.0%
	<i>Not known</i>	86	-
BY ETHNIC GROUP	White	604	93.1%
	Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	17	2.6%
	Asian or Asian British	17	2.6%
	Black, African, Caribbean or Black British	9	1.4%
	Any other ethnic group	2	0.3%
	Total valid responses	649	100.0%
	<i>Not known</i>	86	-
BY DISABILITY	With disability	31	4.7%
	No disability	627	95.3%
	Total valid responses	658	100.0%
	<i>Not known</i>	77	-
BY SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS	With SEN	81	12.6%
	No SEN	564	87.4%
	Total valid responses	645	100.0%
	<i>Not known</i>	90	-
BY ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE FREE SCHOOL MEALS	Eligible to receive free school meals	64	10.0%
	Not eligible to receive free school meals	578	90.0%
	Total valid responses	642	100.0%
	<i>Not known</i>	93	-

About Your Education

Which school do you currently go to?

Figure 25: Which school do you currently go to?



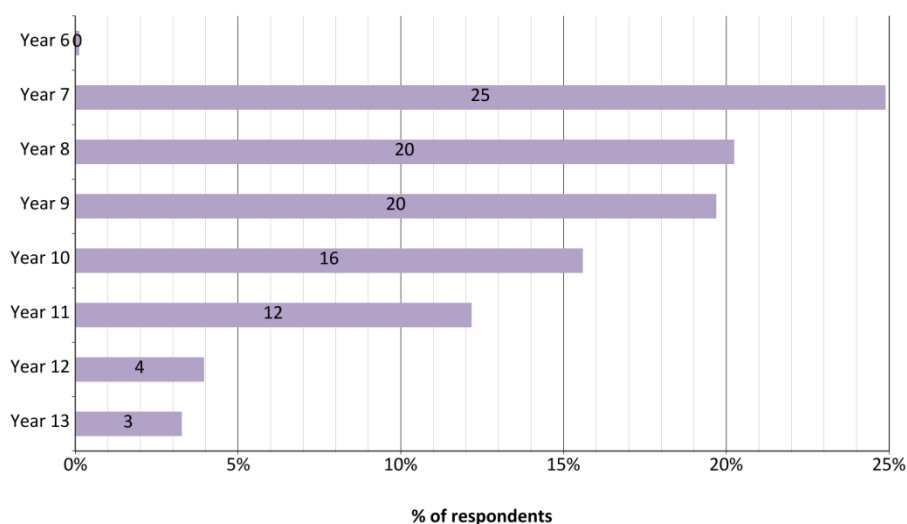
Base: All Individuals (733)

3.50 Around three fifths (61%) of respondents to the Young Persons' consultation questionnaire were attending Llandrindod High School, while around two fifths (39%) were attending Builth Wells. 1 respondent was from Crossgates Primary School, a feeder school of Llandrindod High School. As a result, this student's responses have been merged with responses from Llandrindod High School when cross-tabulating questionnaire results from the different schools.

3.51 Two individuals did not specify which school they attended, and for reporting purposes have been included in the sub-group "other/unknown" when cross-tabulating results by school.

What year group are you currently in?

Figure 26: What year group are you currently in?

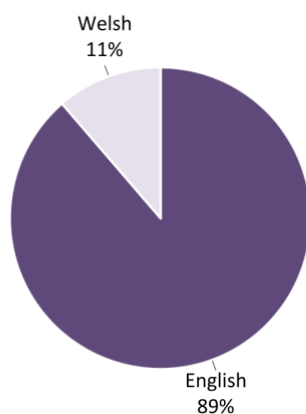


Base: All Individuals (731)

3.52 A quarter (25%) of respondents were Year 7 pupils, while a fifth of respondents were from Year 8 (20%) and Year 9 (20%). 16% of responses were from Year 10, and just over 1 in 10 (12%) were students in Year 11. Less than 1 in 20 (4%) of respondents were from Year 12 (4%) and 13 (3%), while 1 response was from a Year 6 student.

Are your lessons mainly in English or Welsh?

Figure 27: Are your lessons mainly in English or Welsh?

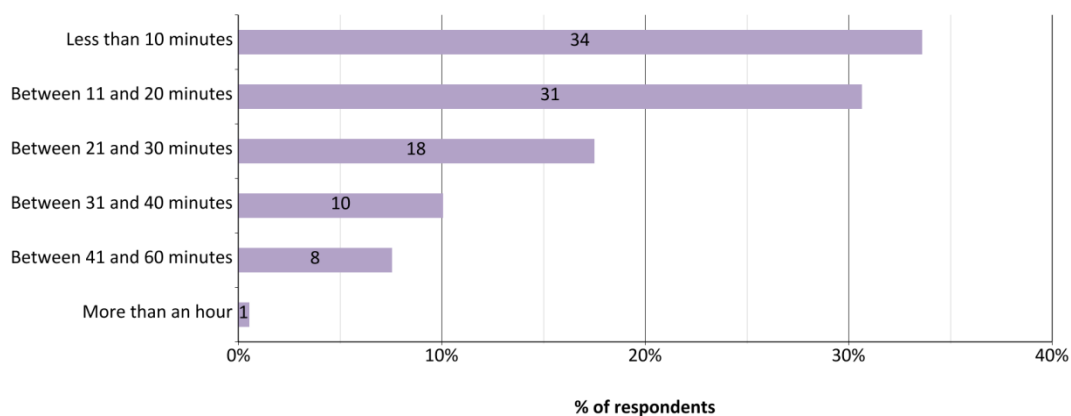


Base: All Individuals (142)

3.53 Around 1 in 10 (11%) of respondents to the Builth Wells/Llandrindod Young Persons' consultation received their lessons mainly in Welsh, while around 9 in 10 (89%) had lessons mainly in English.

How long does it normally take you to travel between school and home (one way)?

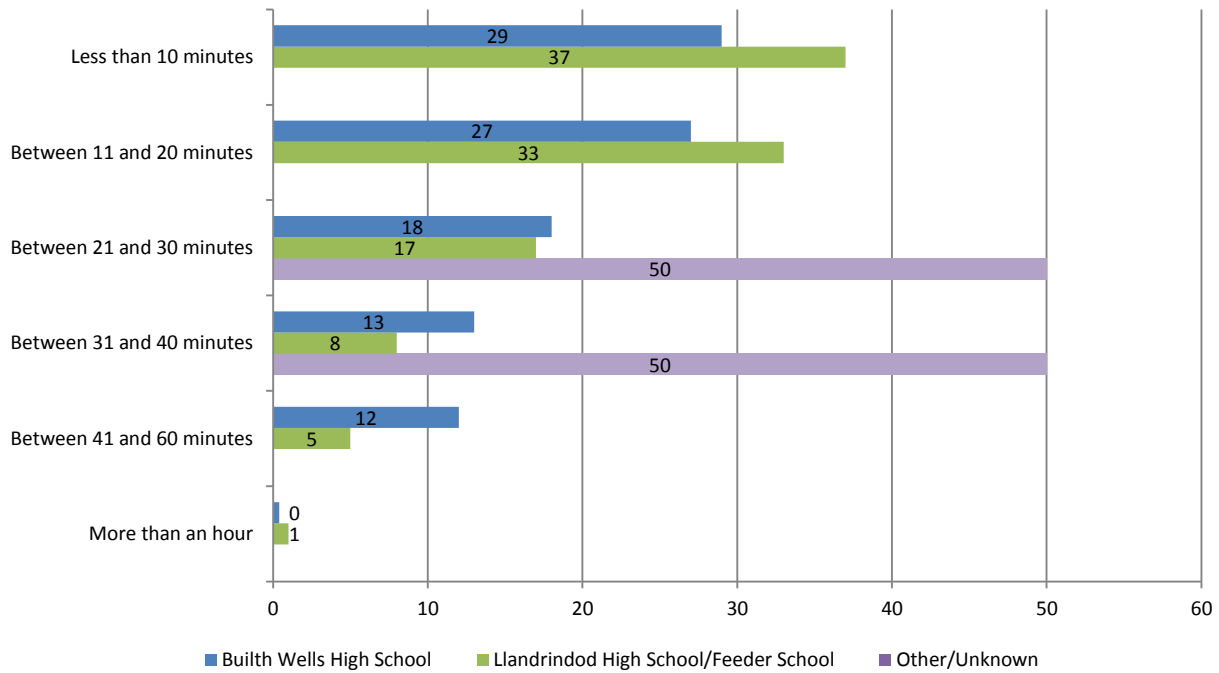
Figure 28: How long does it normally take you to travel between school and home (one way)?



Base: All Individuals (714)

3.54 Around a third (34%) of respondents' journeys between school and home are less than 10 minutes in duration, while nearly two thirds (64%) are less than 20 minutes. Around four fifths (82%) of journeys last under half an hour, while 1 in 10 (10%) are between half an hour and an hour, and 1% of respondents spend more than 1 hour going to and from school (one way).

Figure 29: How long does it normally take you to travel between school and home (one way)? Results by school

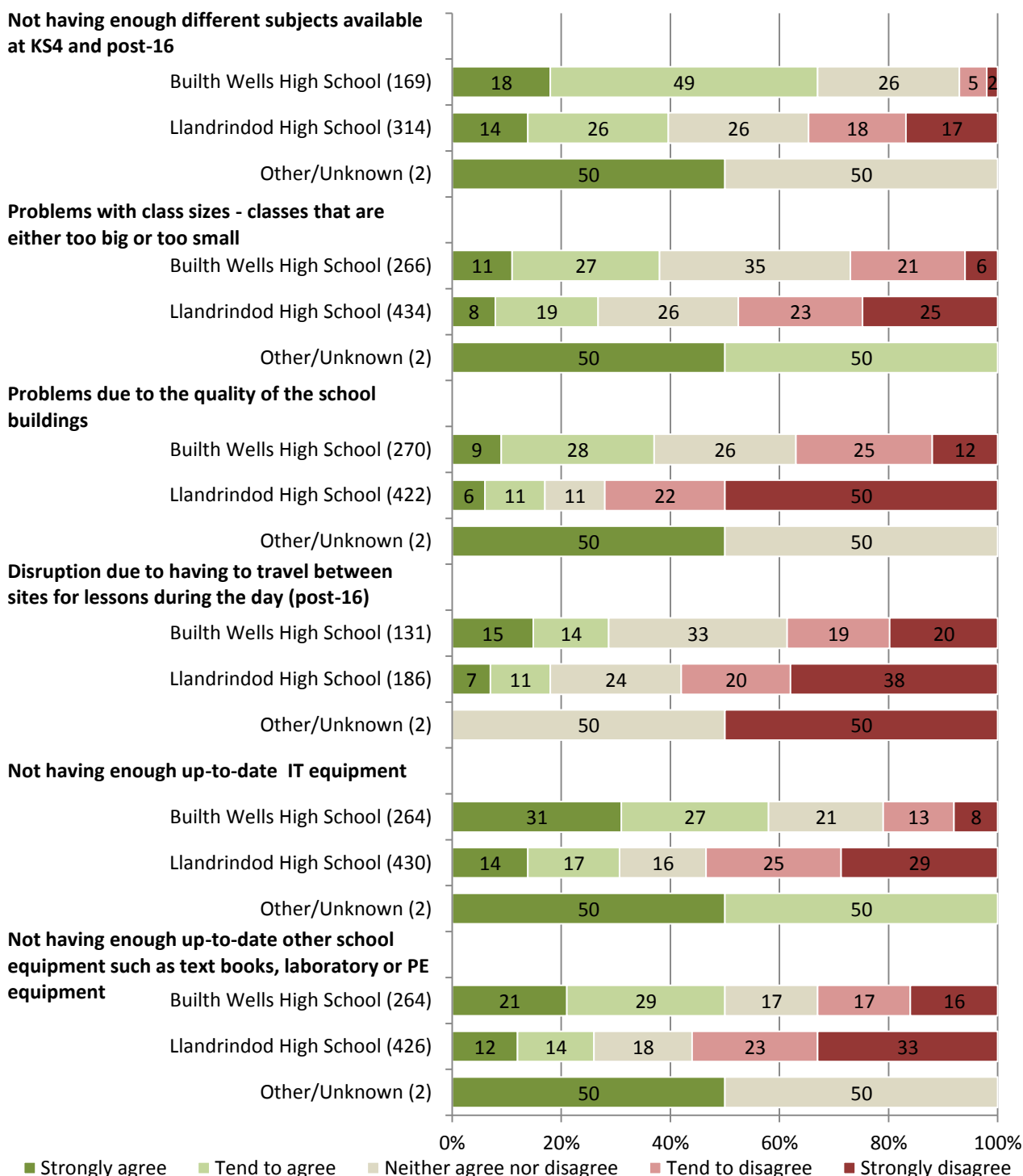


Base: All Individuals (number of respondents shown in brackets)

^{3.55} Respondents who currently go to Builth Wells are typically more likely to travel over 30 minutes to and from school (one way), while respondents attending Llandrindod High School/feeder are particularly more likely to travel for less than 20 minutes to and from school.

Do you agree or disagree that your education is suffering because of any of the following?

Figure 30: Issues affecting education



Base: All Individuals (number of respondents shown in brackets)

^{3.56} The questions above were intended to identify whether students from Builth Wells or Llandrindod High Schools felt that their education was suffering due to any of the issues identified by the Council. The one respondent that stated that they were in a Llandrindod feeder school did not answer any of these questions, and so the chart (and text below) illustrates responses from students of Builth Wells/Llandrindod High Schools or other/unknown schools only.

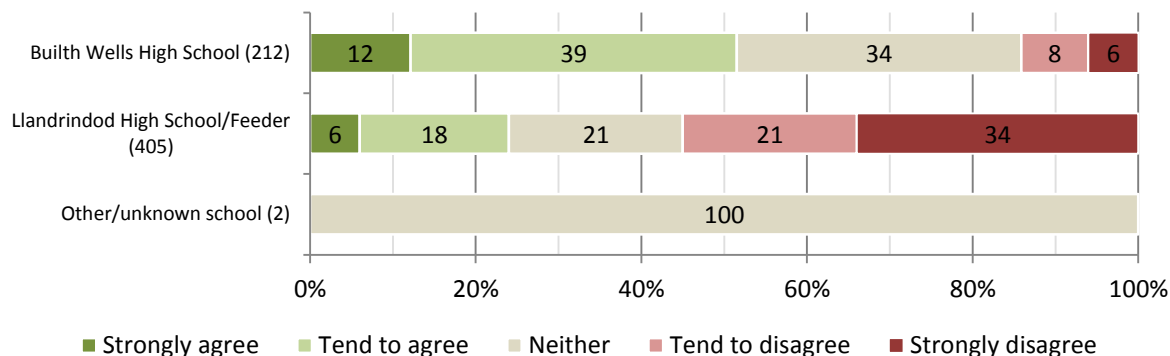
- 3.57 Two thirds (66%) of respondents who attend Builth Wells High School agreed that their education is suffering from not having enough different subjects available at KS4 and post-16, while 8% disagreed. Around 4 in 10 (39%) Llandrindod High School students agreed that their education is suffering because of a lack of different subjects available at KS4 and post-16; 35% disagreed.
- 3.58 Nearly 4 in 10 (38%) students that attend Builth Wells High School agreed that their education is suffering because class sizes are either too big or too small; more than a quarter (27%) disagreed. This compares to a quarter (26%) of Llandrindod High School students that agreed that their education suffers due to problems with class sizes, while approximately half (48%) disagree.
- 3.59 Less than two fifths (37%) of respondents from Builth Wells High School agreed that their education is suffering because of problems due to the quality of school buildings. The same proportion (37%) disagreed, while a quarter (26%) neither agreed nor disagreed. By comparison, less than a fifth (17%) of Llandrindod High School students agreed that their education is suffering because of problems due to the quality of school buildings. Nearly three quarters (72%) disagreed.
- 3.60 Around 3 in 10 (28%) Builth Wells High School students agreed that their education is suffering because of disruption caused by having to travel between sites for lessons during the day. Two fifths (39%) disagreed. Around a fifth (18%) of students from Llandrindod High School agreed that disruption due to travelling between sites for lessons during the day causes their education to suffer, while around three fifths (58%) disagreed.
- 3.61 Nearly three fifths (58%) of Builth Wells High School students agreed that their education is suffering from not having enough up-to-date IT equipment. Around 3 in 10 (31%) Llandrindod High School students agreed that their education is suffering due to a lack of up-to-date IT equipment. Over half (53%) disagreed.
- 3.62 Half of Builth Wells High School students (50%) agreed that their education is suffering due to not having enough school equipment such as text books, laboratory or PE equipment. Only around a quarter (26%) of Llandrindod High School students agreed that this is the case, while over half (56%) disagreed.

English Medium Education

In the context of the problems outlined on the previous pages, Powys Council believes a number of changes are needed.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Council is right to make changes to respond to these issues?

Figure 31: In the context of the problems outlined on the previous pages, Powys Council believes a number of changes are needed. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Council is right to make changes to respond to these issues?

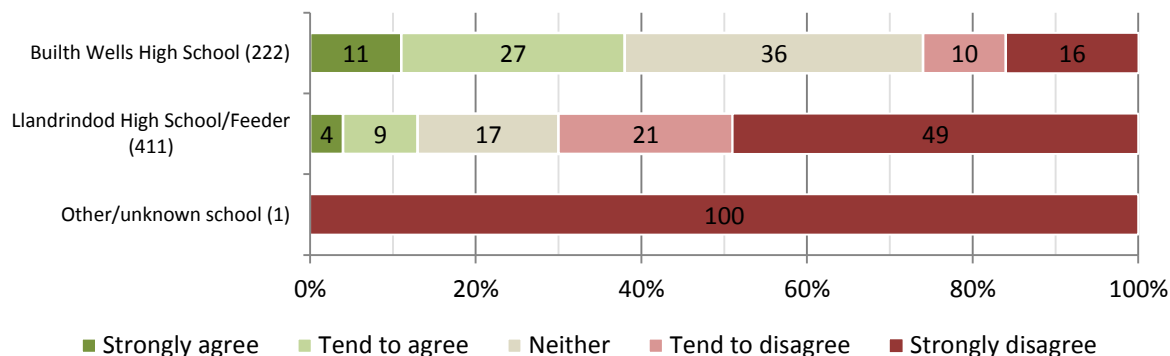


Base: All Individuals (number of respondents shown in brackets)

- ^{3.63} As in the main questionnaire, respondents to the Young Persons' questionnaire were given a short explanation of some of the general and post-16 specific issues that the Council had identified as affecting English medium secondary education in Brecon and Gwernyfed schools. Respondents were then asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that the Council is right to make changes to respond to the issues identified.
- ^{3.64} Around half (51%) of Builth Wells High School respondents felt that the Council is right to make changes in response to the issues with English medium education that it has identified. Conversely, over half (55%) of those at Llandrindod High School/feeder schools disagreed with this, with just less than a quarter (24%) agreeing that the Council is right to make changes.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Proposal to establish a new dual-stream secondary school for pupils aged 11-18 to replace Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools from August 2017, that would continue to operate from the two existing sites?

Figure 32: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Proposal to establish a new dual-stream secondary school for pupils aged 11-18 to replace Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools from August 2017, that would continue to operate from the two existing sites?



Base: All Individuals (number of respondents shown in brackets)

- 3.65 Respondents to the Young Persons' questionnaire were given a short explanation of the proposal to establish a new dual-stream secondary school for pupils aged 11-18 to replace Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools from August 2017, that would continue to operate from the two existing sites. Respondents were then asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the proposal.
- 3.66 Nearly 4 in 10 (37%) respondents from Builth Wells High School agreed with the proposal, compared to just 13% of those from Llandrindod High Schools/feeder schools. More than two thirds (70%) of those in Llandrindod High Schools/feeder school disagreed, including 49% who disagreed strongly.

If you disagree with the Proposal, please explain why.

- 3.67 Respondents who expressed disagreement with the proposal were asked to explain why this was.
- 3.68 As responses differed between those who attended Builth Wells or Llandrindod High School/feeder, these coded responses have been reported separately. The results below show the 116 coded comments from the 53 respondents attending Builth Wells High school.

Figure 33: Reasons for opposition to the various elements of the proposal – Young people who go to Builth Wells HS

Coded comment	% of respondents	Base
Disagree with proposals/schools are fine as they are/need to maintain current provision of schools	68%	36
Proposals will not save enough money/savings will be minimal	15%	8
Disagree with proposals due to increased travel times/distances	11%	6
Proposals will result in a lower standard of education/learning (non-specific)	11%	6
Proposals will not work/disagree that proposals will improve standards	11%	6
Disagree with proposals due to overcrowding of classes/there will be too many pupils per class	9%	5
Merging schools/staff structures will only cause confusion	8%	4
Concerns about a new uniform/don't want a new uniform/new uniforms will cost money	8%	4
Invest money into current facilities/spend the money for new sites on current school buildings	8%	4
Disagree with proposals due to increased travel costs	6%	3
Proposals will cause teachers/head teachers/staff to lose their jobs/happy with/need to maintain current provision of staff	6%	3
Proposals will lead to an increase in bullying/violence/arguments between pupils	6%	3
Proposals will lead to reduced free time/affect pupils home lives/time for after school activities/extra-curricular activities	6%	3
Proposals are financially motivated/a money grab by the council	4%	2
Proposals will lead to too much strain/workload for one leadership team/head teacher	4%	2
'Other'	36%	19

- 3.69 More than two thirds (68%) of young people who go to Builth Wells said that they 'disagree with proposals/schools are fine as they are/need to maintain current provision of schools'.

I don't think they should change anything because it is fine the way it is.

The move would disrupt our education during our important GCSEs and A-levels, which means we are less likely to get the grades we want, whereas I think my progress is satisfactory at the current school.

- 3.70 15% of young people in Builth Wells High School disagree with the proposals because they think the savings made would be inadequate.

The overall profit is minimum so it is not worth it (as buses cost more the profit is less)

If the amount of money saved was around £133,000 wouldn't they have to spend it on travel for the 6th form?

It would cost so much to build a new super school it would just be easier to spend on money on both to improve.

- 3.71 11% of respondents that attend Builth Wells High School 'disagree with proposals due to increased travel times/distances'.

The increased travelling of students would be disruptive to classes and would make the buses more expensive.

I disagree with the proposal because it means more money will be spent on transport.

- 3.72 A further 11% of respondents in Builth Wells High School suggest that educational standards will worsen if the proposed changes are adopted.

I don't think this is a good idea in any way because I think it will affect our education and make things more complicated by doing this. I think the problems are more aimed at [Llandrindod] High School, whereas Builth is doing better and will cause more complications. I also think you should just focus on landed to get the quality of their building better. I think it would be better to keep our schools independent, not joined.

3.73 The results below are from the 267 respondents who attend Llandrindod High school/feeder school. From these responses, 983 separate comments have been coded.

Figure 34: Reasons for opposition to the various elements of the proposal – Young people who go to Llandrindod HS/Feeder

Coded comment	% of respondents	Base
Disagree with proposals/schools are fine as they are/need to maintain current provision of schools	45%	119
Disagree with proposals due to increased travel times/distances	34%	91
Proposals will result in a lower standard of education/learning (non-specific)	27%	73
Disagree with proposals due to overcrowding of classes/there will be too many pupils per class	22%	58
Proposals will not work/disagree that proposals will improve standards	19%	50
Proposals will not save enough money/savings will be minimal	16%	42
Proposals will cause teachers/head teachers/staff to lose their jobs/happy with/need to maintain current provision of staff	15%	41
Proposals will negatively impact local businesses/local economy	14%	38
Concerns about a new uniform/don't want a new uniform/new uniforms will cost money	14%	37
Llandrindod is in good condition/doesn't need any changes or improvements (contrary to what the proposal says)	14%	37
Proposals will lead to an increase in bullying/violence/arguments between pupils	10%	27
Disagree with proposals due to increased travel costs	9%	24
Proposals are financially motivated/a money grab by the council	8%	22
Proposal is biased/flawed/decisions already made	8%	22
Proposals will result in pupils losing friends/negatively impact pupils' social lives	7%	20
Proposals will result in less students attending Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools/pupils will switch schools/be	7%	20
Proposals will lead to reduced free time/affect pupils home lives/time for after school activities/extra-curricular activities	7%	19
Disagree with being taught just in Welsh/don't want to be taught in Welsh	7%	19
Proposals will negatively affect Sixth Formers/will lead to less options for Post-16	6%	17
Disagree with claims about Llandrindod's finances/Builth Wells is the school with the budget deficit	6%	17
Proposals will lead to less new families moving to the area	6%	15
Merging schools/staff structures will only cause confusion	6%	15
Invest money into current facilities/spend the money for new sites on current school buildings	5%	14
Proposals will have a negative effect on the environment/extra travelling will be detrimental to the environment	4%	11
Proposals will cost money that the council doesn't have/won't have in the future	4%	10
Proposals cannot be trusted due to errors in the document e.g. Llandrindod High School is not called Llandrindod Wells	3%	9
Proposals will cause issues for parents/negatively affect parents (non-specific)	3%	9
Proposals will lead to too much strain/workload for one leadership team/head teacher	3%	8
Llandrindod is a better site for the super school due to better land/facilities, etc.	2%	6
Council could have saved money by not printing and issuing so many questionnaires	2%	5
Happy for the Sixth Form to be on one site	<1%	1
'Other'	27%	72

- 3.74 The most frequent comments (45%) from those who attend Llandrindod/the Llandrindod feeder school expressed a disagreement generally with the proposals or a desire for current provision to be maintained.

I disagree with the proposals because both schools are doing great, students are having/getting good grades. It would also be an average of 30 pupils per form in each year. This would make all classed cramped and loud. It would also cause a lot of problems because people have moved from Builth to Llandod for getting bullied and vice versa. This means many student will get bullied again. This will cause fights which cause distractions during lessons and throughout school.

Both schools are doing great and students are enjoying their time in High School.

- 3.75 The second most frequent response among Llandrindod High School/feeder school pupils involved concerns about increased travel times/distances. Some of these comments appear to relate to the possibility of an eventual change to a single school site.

The school should be in between both the schools because it's equal travel.

I would have to travel longer and it might affect my home lift. It is going to impact the environment.

I don't want to travel any further as it means I have to get up earlier. I already have to catch 2 buses to get to school.

Students will have to travel further to school and spend more time on a bus too, if they already have to travel a bit to get to school.

- 3.76 More than a quarter (27%) of Llandrindod HS/feeder school respondents felt that the proposals would have an impact on the standard of education.

How would having more pupils make it easier to deliver the curriculum? I always found smaller classes were better, more 1 on 1 with the teacher etc. I agree bigger classes would save money but saying it will improve outcomes is wrong in terms of results.

The proposals are not improving the conditions of the schools and having a joint school system seems like teachers and head teachers will be stretched and maybe stressed. I definitely believe this will affect the education of the pupils.

Having more students in a single school will cause the education to suffer because teaching in large groups is in general a poor concept.

If the schools merge it will mess up people's GCSEs meaning we won't get the grades we need to get into university. We may lose some of our teachers meaning we'll have to adapt to new teachers so our education will suffer.

- 3.77 Often linked to concerns about educational standards, around a fifth (22%) of respondents felt that the proposals would result in overcrowding.

There will be bigger year groups so the teachers will not know you.

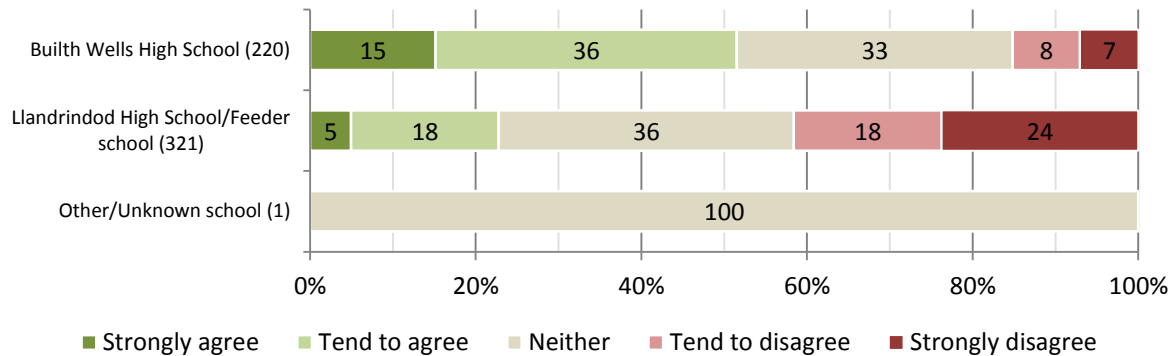
I don't want bigger classes.

Welsh Medium Education

In the context of the problems outlined on the previous page, Powys Council believes a number of changes are needed.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Council is right to make changes to respond to these issues?

Figure 35: In the context of the problems outlined on the previous page, Powys Council believes a number of changes are needed. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Council is right to make changes to respond to these issues?

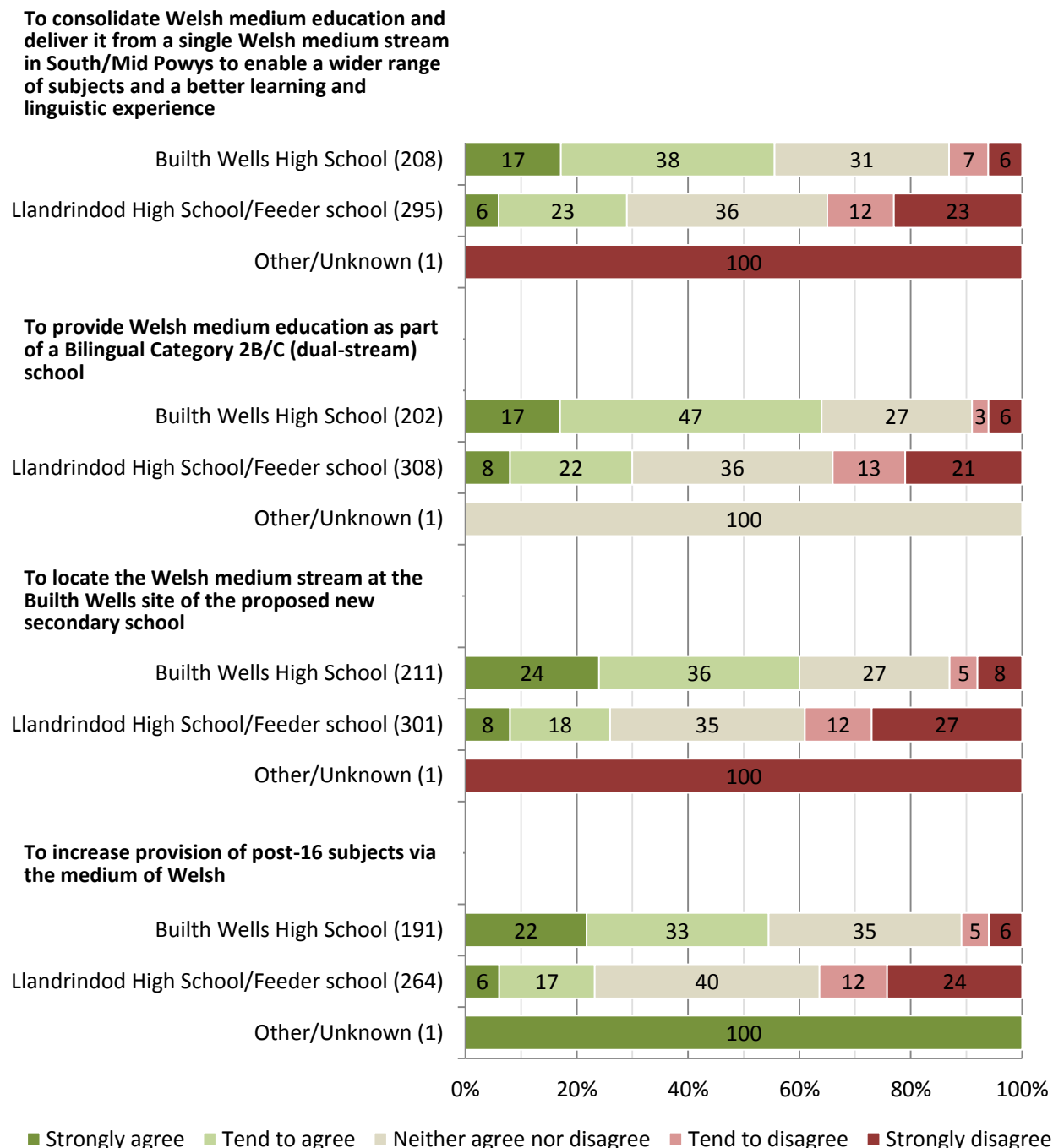


Base: All Individuals (number of respondents shown in brackets)

- 3.78 Over half (52%) of young people in Builth Wells High School agreed that Powys County Council is right to make changes to respond to the issues they have identified with Welsh medium education. Less than a quarter (22%) of Llandrindod High School/feeder school students agreed.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following elements of the Proposal?

Figure 36: Levels of agreement with various elements of the proposal



Base: All Individuals (number of respondents shown in brackets)

3.79 Over half (56%) of young people in Builth Wells High School agree with the proposal to consolidate Welsh medium education and deliver it from a single stream in South/Mid Powys. Around 3 in 10 (29%) of those in Llandrindod High School/feeder school agreed, while just more than a third (34%) disagreed.

3.80 Nearly two thirds (63%) of respondents in Builth Wells High School agree with the proposal to provide Welsh medium education as part of a Bilingual Category 2B/C (dual-stream) school; 1 in 10 (10%)

disagree. 3 in 10 (30%) young people in Llandrindod High School/feeder school agreed, while a slightly higher proportion (34%) disagreed with this proposal.

- 3.81 Three fifths (60%) of respondents currently in Builth Wells High School agreed with the proposal to locate the Welsh medium stream at the Builth Wells site of the proposed new secondary school. Only around a quarter (26%) of those at Llandrindod High School/feeder school agreed with this proposal. Around two fifths (39%) disagreed.
- 3.82 More than half (55%) of respondents attending Builth Wells High School agreed with the proposal to increase provision of post-16 subjects via the medium of Welsh. Only 1 in 10 (10%) disagreed. However, less than a quarter (23%) of respondents attending Llandrindod High School/feeder school agreed, while more than a third (36%) disagreed.

If you disagree with any elements of the Proposal for Welsh medium education, please explain why.

Figure 37: Reasons for opposition to the various elements of the proposal – Young people who go to Builth Wells HS

Coded comment	% of respondents	Base
Disagree with being taught just in Welsh/don't want to be taught in Welsh	38%	10
Maintain current provision/disagree with any school closures/disagree with proposals	23%	6
English is most pupils first language/most people need to speak English	8%	2
Proposals will negatively impact the friendships/social lives of students	8%	2
Proposals will lead to longer travel times/increased travel costs	4%	1
Proposals will negatively affect English speakers/English speaker's educations will suffer	4%	1
'Other'	46%	12

- 3.83 10 respondents from Builth Wells High School disagreed with being taught just in Welsh, or expressed that they didn't want to be taught in Welsh.

I don't think we should have to speak Welsh

There is already favouritism toward the Welsh Unit, I don't want the school to be any more Welsh.

I believe that subjects should be taught in English with the exception of the subject Welsh.

- 3.84 6 students indicated that they disagreed with any school closures, or the proposals more generally and wanted to maintain current provision.

The schools don't need to be merged to be improved.

I chose that I disagree with the Welsh medium stream in Builth because I already think that there [are] enough people in our school already.

- 3.85 However, some of these responses suggested that there were students that opposed changes who thought that the Council was proposing to have a school providing only Welsh stream education.

I think they should keep it as it is. They shouldn't have just a Welsh school. Someone might love Welsh but have best friends in English stream so they shouldn't be separated.

Figure 38: Reasons for opposition to the various elements of the proposal – Young people who go to Llandrindod HS/Feeder

Coded comment	% of respondents	Base
English is most pupils first language/most people need to speak English	26%	31
Disagree with being taught just in Welsh/don't want to be taught in Welsh	24%	28
Maintain current provision/disagree with any school closures/disagree with proposals	20%	23
Proposals will negatively affect English speakers/English speaker's educations will suffer	10%	12
Proposals will lead to longer travel times/increased travel costs	9%	10
Schools are too close to the English border/don't need to learn Welsh due to proximity to English border	9%	10
Pupils are entitled to a school within their local community	2%	2
Proposals will deter parents from educating their children in Welsh/Welsh as a language will suffer	2%	2
Welsh should be available in all schools/to all pupils	1%	1
Proposals will negatively impact the friendships/social lives of students	1%	1
'Other'	41%	47

3.86 More than a quarter of respondents (26%) said that 'English is most pupils' first language/most people need to speak English'.

English is our first language

We should focus on the English language first

It's more important to have a wide range of A level subjects in English first

3.87 Just less than a quarter (24%) expressed disagreement with the prospect of being taught just in Welsh.

Not all people want to be in a Welsh school, so Builth should carry on with the welsh unit and if people want to go to a Welsh school it's their choice to travel.

3.88 A fifth (20%) of respondents argued that current provision should be maintained, or that they otherwise disagreed with the proposals.

The streams should be should be left split. Llandrindod should have the English stream and Builth have the Welsh.

I disagree with the Welsh coming up to one school and making us go to Builth.

Equalities

*Are there any positive or negative impacts relating to equalities that you believe that the County Council should take into account in the decision making process?
If so, are you able to provide any supporting evidence and suggest any ways to reduce or remove any potential negative impact and increase any positive impact?*

- 3.89 Due to the low number of responses to this question, all coded responses to this question have been reported combined. 104 respondents to the Young Persons' questionnaire gave a response when asked whether they believe that there are any positive or negative impacts relating to equalities that the Council should take into account in the decision making process.
- 3.90 Comments which did not relate to the question have been separated into an 'other/comments not relating to equalities' category.

Figure 39: Impacts relating to equalities – All coded responses

Coded comment	% of respondents	Base
Schools should be equal for English and Welsh speakers/shouldn't be biased towards English or Welsh speakers	22%	23
Proposals will result in pupils losing friends/negative impact on social life	21%	22
Proposals will result in pupils losing time with family/negative impact on home life	18%	19
Generally disagree with proposals/maintain current provision	13%	14
Proposals will negatively impact disabled children/proposals need to take disabled children into account	13%	13
Proposals will lead to increased travel times/costs	5%	5
Children have the right to quality education in their local area i.e. in the language they wish to learn	1%	1
'Other/comments not relating to equalities'	58%	60

- 3.91 Of the 104 respondents to this question, the most frequent coded responses refer to a need for equal consideration of both English and Welsh speakers.

As previously stated the Welsh language is trumping the needs and wishes of the vast majority (a ratio of about 9:1) of English speakers (who see themselves as equally Welsh)

There should be full and equal provision for every child that wants Welsh medium education in Powys

Too much change is taking place for Welsh speakers and English speakers should be equal.

- 3.92 Similar proportions of students indicated that the proposals would have a negative impact on their social lives (21%) and home lives (e.g. spending time with their family) (18%). Many students wrote variations of the same concerns.

I disagree with merging the school because I will lose some of my friends and I would not see my family as much. There would be too much change in my life.

Further comments

^{3.93} Three students from the Young Persons' consultation made further comments about the proposals. All three comments expressed disagreement with the proposed changes or requested that current provision be maintained. Additionally, one of the respondents suggested that what they had heard was bias towards Builth High School, and reiterated the negative consequences they felt the changes would have to the community of Llandrindod Wells.

Findings of the Primary Consultation Questionnaire

^{3.94} In addition to the Main and Young Persons' consultation questionnaires, a questionnaire was developed with simplified questions and explanations that were more appropriate for Primary School children.

Table 4: Socio-demographic characteristics for the primary consultation questionnaire
(Note: Percentages may not sum due to rounding)

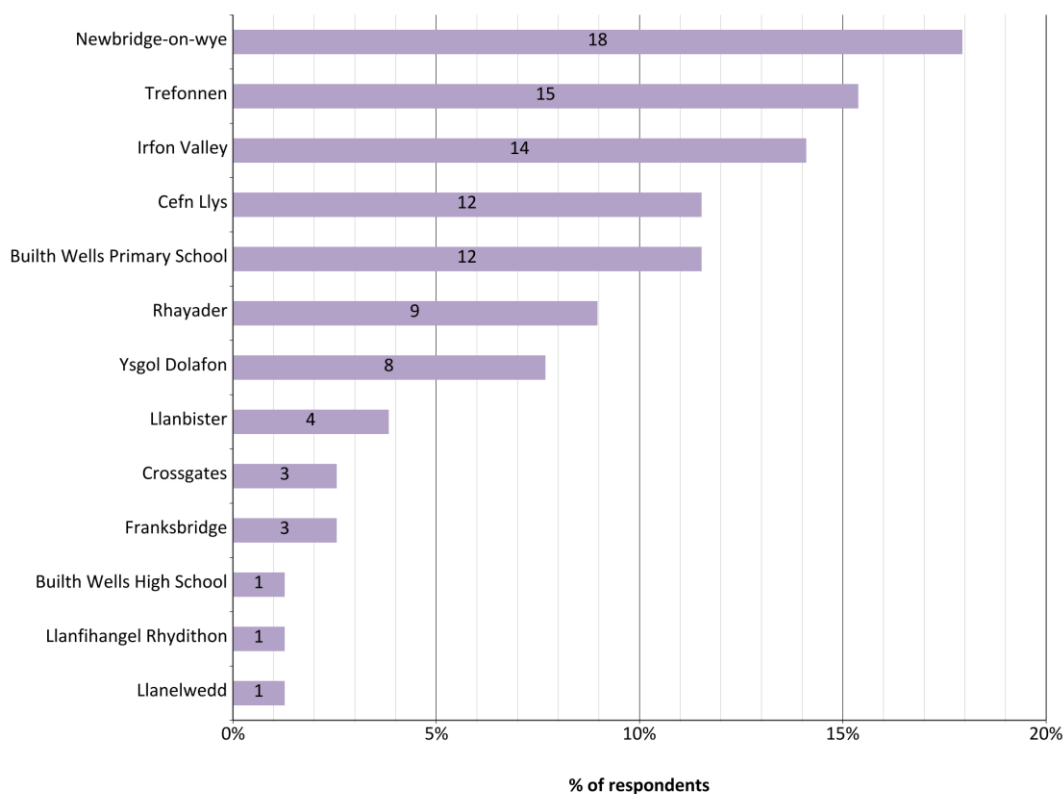
Characteristic	All Responses		
	Number of Responses	% of Valid Responses	
BY KEY STAGE	Nursery/reception	4	5.3%
	Key Stage 1	17	22.7%
	Key Stage 2	53	70.7%
	Key Stage 3	0	0.0%
	Key Stage 4	1	1.3%
	Total valid responses	75	100.0%
	<i>Not known</i>	4	-
BY GENDER	Male	37	48.6%
	Female	39	51.3%
	Total valid responses	76	100.0%
		<i>Not known</i>	3
BY ETHNIC GROUP	White	71	97.3%
	Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	1	1.4%
	Black, African, Caribbean or Black British	1	1.4%
	Total valid responses	73	100.0%
		<i>Not known</i>	6
BY DISABILITY	With disability	1	1.3%
	No disability	76	98.7%
	Total valid responses	77	100.0%
		<i>Not known</i>	2
BY SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS	With SEN	4	5.2%
	No SEN	73	94.8%
	Total valid responses	77	100.0%
		<i>Not known</i>	2
BY ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE FREE SCHOOL MEALS	Eligible to receive free school meals	6	8.0%
	Not eligible to receive free school meals	69	92.0%
	Total valid responses	75	100.0%
		<i>Not known</i>	4

^{3.95} It is worth noting that many of the responses to the primary consultation questionnaire appear to have been completed by parents of primary school children. Some of these were giving answers on behalf of their primary school age child, but others voiced their own concerns as parents. ORS identified as many as 23 responses where this appeared to be the case, although in reality this number may be higher. These responses have been included in the analysis.

About Your Education

Which school do you currently go to?

Figure 40: Which school do you currently go to?



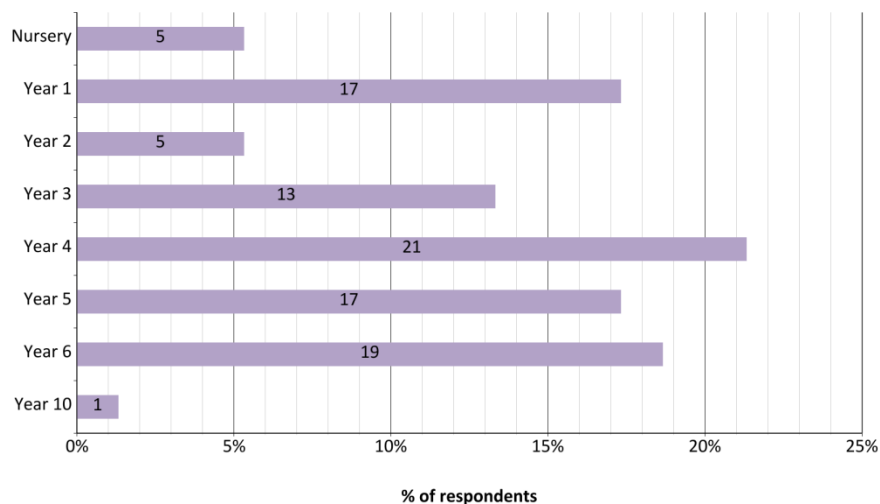
Base: All Respondents (78)

^{3.96} Around 1 in 5 (18%) of respondents to the Primary Pupil consultation questionnaire were currently attending Newbridge-on-wye, while more than 1 in 10 respondents currently attend Trefonnen (15%), Irfon Valley (14%), Builth Wells Primary (13%) and Cefn Llys (12%). Fewer than 1 in 10 respondents attend Rhayader (9%) and Ysgol Dolafon (8%). 3 respondents attend Llanbister, while 2 respondents each attend Crossgates and Franksbridge. ORS also received one response each from Llanfihangel Rhydithon, Builth Wells High School and Llanelwedd Church in Wales Primary.

^{3.97} One individual did not answer this question.

What year group are you currently in?

Figure 41: What year group are you currently in?



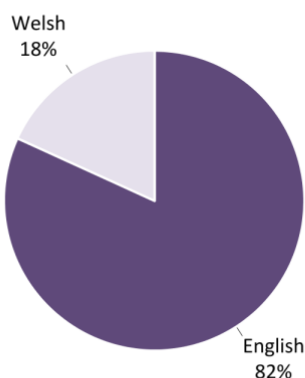
Base:

All Respondents (74)

^{3.98} Around a fifth of respondents were from Year 4 (21%), Year 6 (19%), Year 5 (17%) or Year 1 (17%). More than 1 in 10 respondents were from Year 3 (13%), while 1 in 20 respondents were from Year 2 (5%) or in Nursery (5%). ORS received one response from a Year 10 student.

Are your lessons mainly in English or Welsh?

Figure 42: Are your lessons mainly in English or Welsh?

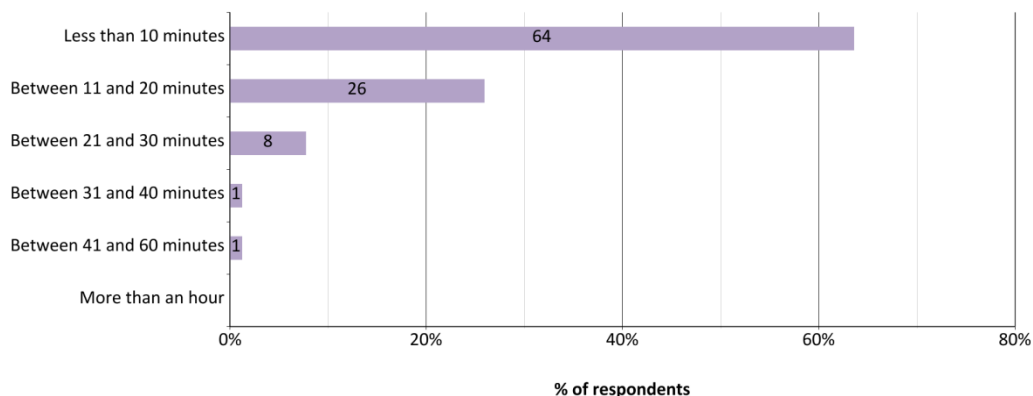


Base: All Respondents (77)

^{3.99} Over four fifths (82%) of respondents are taught mainly in English, while 18% of respondents are taught mainly in Welsh.

How long does it normally take you to travel between school and home (one way)?

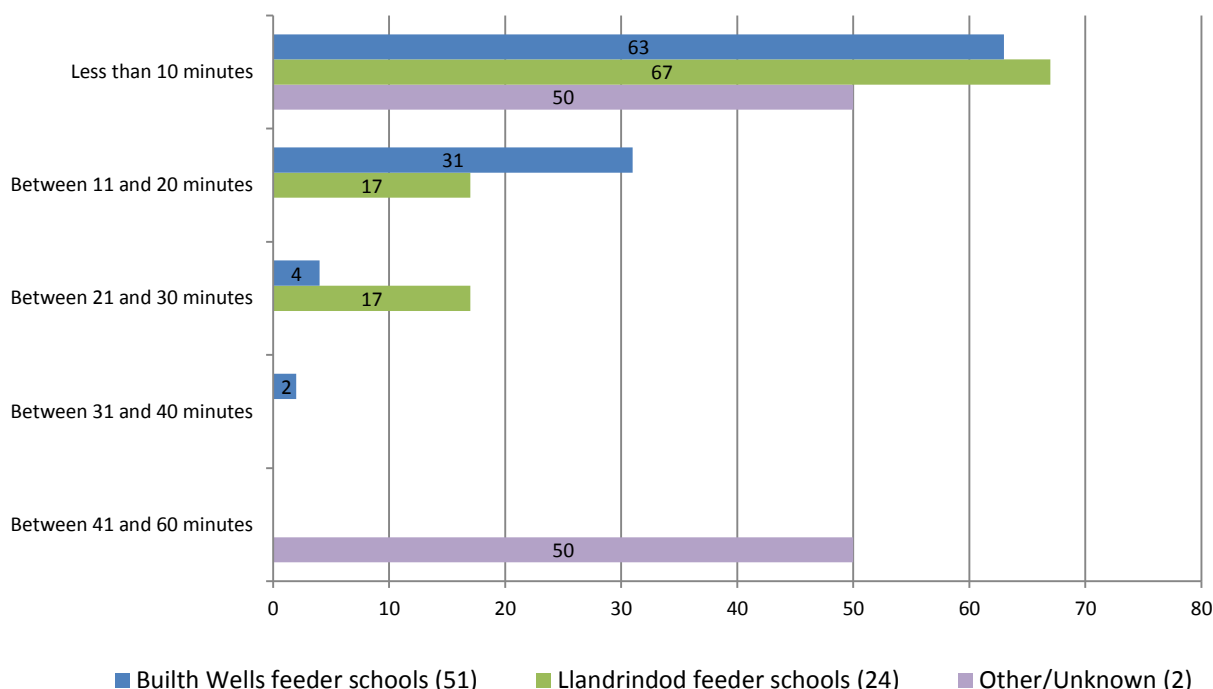
Figure 43: How long does it normally take you to travel between school and home (one way)?



Base: All Respondents (77)

^{3.100} Nearly two thirds (64%) of respondents said that it takes them less than 10 minutes to travel between school and home (one way). 9 in 10 respondents (90%) said that their journey between home and school took 20 minutes or less. Only just less than 1 in 10 (8%) said that it normally takes between 21 and 30 minutes. One respondent each said that it takes between 31 and 40 minutes and between 41 and 60 minutes. No respondents to the primary school consultation questionnaire said that they travel for over an hour between home and school.

Figure 44: How long does it normally take you to travel between school and home (one way)? Results by school



Base: All Respondents (77)

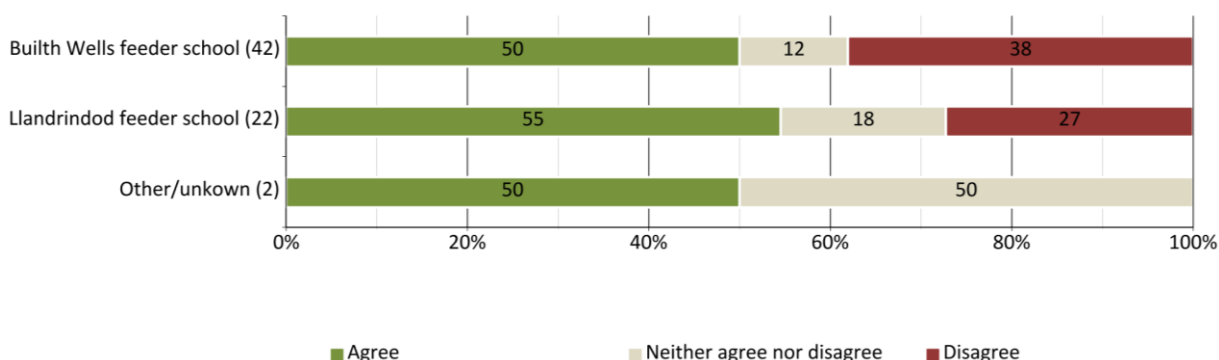
^{3.101} Around two thirds of those in Builth Wells (63%) and Llandrindod (67%) feeder schools travel less than 10 minutes to/from school (one way).

English Medium Education

Thinking about the problems on the previous page, the Council believes a number of changes are needed.

Do you agree or disagree that the Council is right to make changes to respond to these problems?

Figure 45: Do you agree or disagree that the Council is right to make changes to respond to these problems?

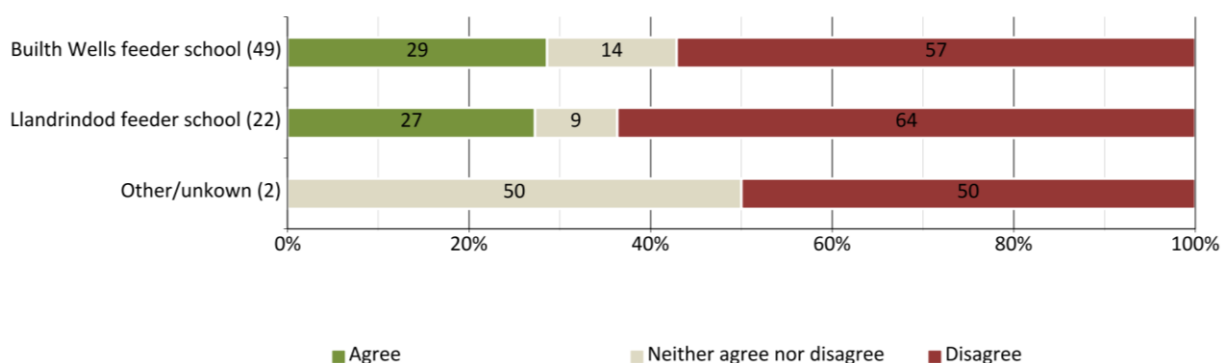


Base: All Respondents (number of respondents shown in brackets)

- 3.102 Respondents were given a short list of current problems with English medium education in Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools, and were then asked whether they agreed or disagreed that Powys County Council is right to make changes to respond to these problems.
- 3.103 Due to differences in response rates between pupils attending schools which act as feeder schools to Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools, these results have been reported separately. Two responses to the primary school consultation did not fall into these categories, and so have also been reported separately as 'other/unknown' responses. Due to the low level of response from this 'other/unknown' category, these results should be treated with caution, and these have been reported as numbers, rather than percentages, in the text.
- 3.104 Similar proportions of Builth and Llandrindod feeder school pupils agreed with the proposals. Around half (55%) of respondents from Llandrindod feeder schools and half (50%) of respondents from Builth Wells feeder schools agreed that the Council is right to make changes to respond to the issues it has identified.
- 3.105 1 pupil from an 'other/unknown' school agreed with this proposal, while 1 neither agreed nor disagreed.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed change to create a new secondary school for pupils aged 11-18 to replace Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools from August 2017, which would continue to operate from the two existing school buildings?

Figure 46: Do you agree or disagree with the proposed change to create a new secondary school for pupils aged 11-18 to replace Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools from August 2017, which would continue to operate from the two existing school buildings?



Base: All Respondents (number of respondents shown in brackets)

- 3.106 Respondents were then given a brief description of the proposed change to create a new secondary school for pupils aged 11-18 to replace Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools from August 2017, with an 'eventual' ambition to build a new school building in Builth. It was stated that, as no land has been identified yet, the school would continue to run over both Llandrindod and Builth Wells school sites.
- 3.107 Again, similar levels of agreement were found from both Builth Wells and Llandrindod feeder school pupils. More than a quarter of respondents from Builth Wells (29%) and Llandrindod feeder schools (27%) agreed with the Council's proposal to create a new secondary school operating over both sites.
- 3.108 Almost two thirds (64%) of respondents Llandrindod feeder schools disagree with this proposed change, while nearly three fifths (57%) disagreed from Builth Wells feeder schools.
- 3.109 Neither respondent from the 'other/unknown' school agreed with the proposal; 1 respondent disagreed while the other gave a neutral answer.

If you disagree with any of the proposed changes, please explain why.

- 3.110 Respondents who disagreed with the proposed changes were asked to explain why this was.
- 3.111 As in the Main and Young Persons' consultation chapters, all responses provided to the open-ended questions have been read, and then classified (coded) using a standardised approach (code frame).
- 3.112 Of the 38 respondents who were asked this question, 86 different comments have been classified, the details of which are outlined below.

Figure 47: Reasons for opposition to the proposed English medium changes

Coded comment	% of respondents	Base
Disagree with proposals/schools are fine as they are/need to maintain current provision of schools	34%	13
Disagree with proposals due to increased travel times/distances	24%	9
Proposals will lead to too much strain/workload for one leadership team/head teacher	24%	9
Proposals will not save enough money/savings will be minimal	21%	8
Disagree with proposals due to increased travel costs	18%	7
Proposals will not work/disagree that proposals will improve standards	13%	5
Proposals will cost money that the council doesn't have/won't have in the future	11%	4
Proposals are financially motivated/a money grab by the council	8%	3
Proposals will lead to less new families moving to the area	5%	2
Disagree with proposals due to overcrowding of classes/there will be too many pupils per class	3%	1
Proposals will result in a lower standard of education/learning (non-specific)	3%	1
Proposals will cause issues for parents/negatively affect parents (non-specific)	3%	1
Proposals will result in pupils losing friends/negatively impact pupils' social lives	3%	1
Proposals will lead to reduced free time/affect pupils home lives/time for after school activities/extra-curricular activities	3%	1
Proposals will have a negative effect on the environment/extra travelling will be detrimental to the environment	3%	1
Invest money into current facilities/spend the money for new sites on current school buildings	3%	1
More information needed	3%	1
'Other'	47%	18

^{3.113} 13 of the 38 respondents who gave an explanation of their reasons for disagreement expressed a preference for the current provision of school services, or more generally disagreed with changes from the status quo. Examples include:

Both schools should be left alone.

The pupils are fine with the schools.

I live in Llandrindod and my parents are local people who also attended Llandrindod High School, so I would not be expected to go to another school in a different town. I think Builth would not be appropriate to build a new school as it floods a lot and children who live outside the town would not be able to get there. [...] I think the two schools should remain as they are.

^{3.114} 9 respondents said that they disagreed with proposals due concerns surrounding increased travel times/distances. Typical examples of comments include:

How would Builth cope with the traffic in the main street?

Easier for me to get to Llandrindod

I like cycling to school and can't cycle to Builth. I don't like sitting still so wouldn't like to sit on a bus. Longer bus journeys [are] bad for the environment. Mum and Dad can't afford diesel.

^{3.115} There were 9 respondents that had concerns with the proposals for a single leadership team/head teacher, voicing considerations involving workloads, additional costs involved with a single

management team and the availability of the head teacher at both sites. Some examples include the following:

I do not think it is good to only have 1 head teacher for both schools.

A single leadership team will not cost less because the single school will be bigger and so the leadership team will have to be paid more for their time and transport costs to move between the two sites.

Why have one headteacher over 2 sites? What if he/she is need[ed] and can't be at the other site?

^{3.116} 7 respondents said that the 'Proposals will not save enough money/savings will be minimal'. As mentioned above, some of these comments over savings related to the management team, while others were concerned with the costs of running a larger school or the loss of money that has already been invested in schools no longer to be used. Typical examples of such comments include:

I don't really think it will save much money.

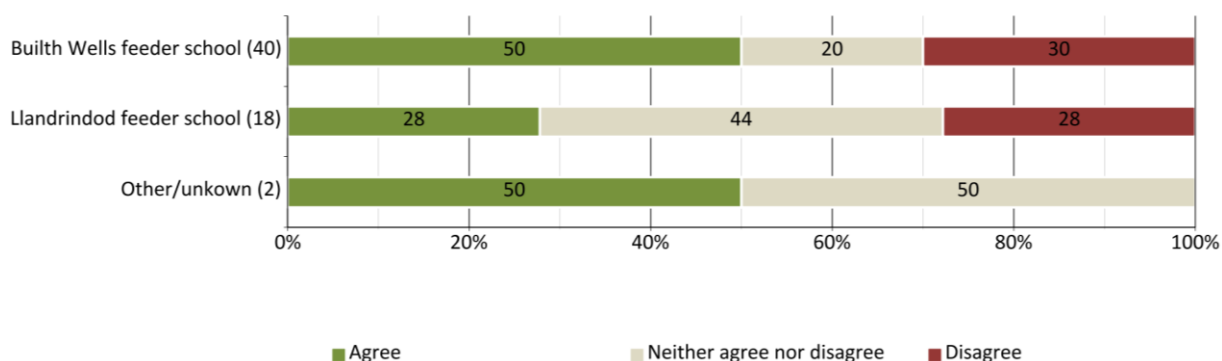
I think you shouldn't build a new school because you don't get money for the ones you knock down and it will cost more money to run one big school.

Welsh Medium Education

Thinking about the above problems, the Council believes a number of changes are needed.

Do you agree or disagree that the Council is right to make changes to respond to these problems?

Figure 48: Do you agree or disagree that the Council is right to make changes to respond to these problems?



Base: All Respondents (number of respondents shown in brackets)

^{3.117} Respondents were given a short list of current problems with Welsh education across mid and south Powys. Respondents were then asked whether they agreed or disagreed that Powys County Council is right to make changes to respond to these problems.

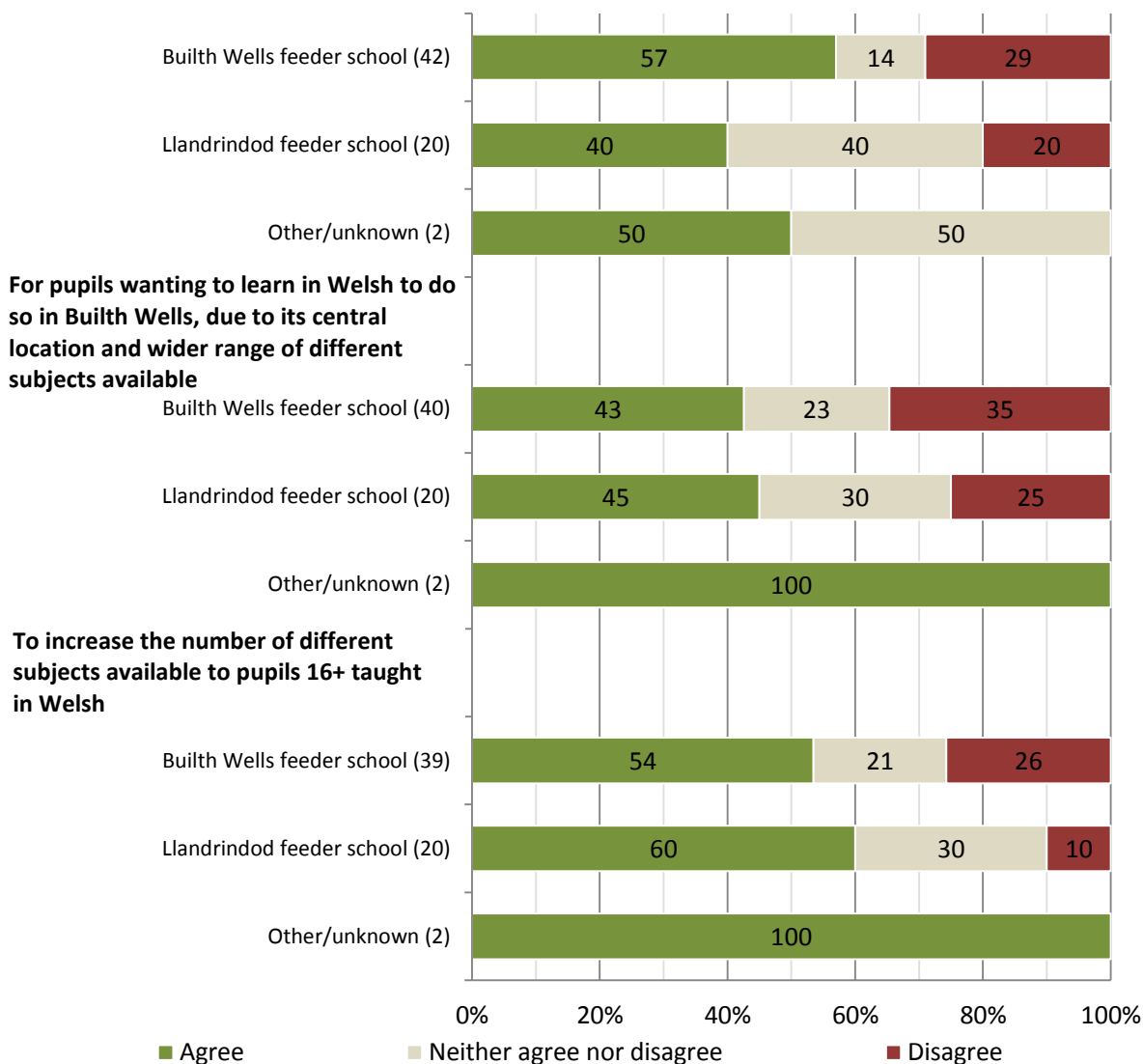
^{3.118} While half (50%) of respondents from Builth Wells feeder schools agreed, less than a third (28%) of respondents from Llandrindod feeder schools agreed that the Council is right to make changes.

^{3.119} 1 respondent from other/unknown schools agreed, while 1 respondent gave a neutral response.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following proposed changes?

Figure 49: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following proposed changes?

To teach pupils wanting to learn in Welsh from a single school to allow a wider range of difference subjects



Base: All Respondents (number of respondents shown in brackets)

^{3.120} Respondents were then given a brief description of the proposed changes to Welsh education, and were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with each proposed change.

^{3.121} Almost three fifths (57%) of respondents from Builth Wells feeder schools agreed with teaching pupils wanting to learn Welsh from a single school, compared to two fifths (40%) from Llandrindod feeder schools.

^{3.122} More than two fifths of respondents from Builth Wells (43%) and Llandrindod (45%) feeder schools agreed with the proposal to situate Welsh learners in Builth Wells due to its central location and wider range of subjects available.

- 3.123 Just over half (54%) of those from Builth Wells feeder schools and three fifths (60%) of respondents from Llandrindod feeder schools agree with the proposed change to increase the number of different subjects available to pupils 16+ taught in Welsh.
- 3.124 Of the responses from other/unknown schools, 1 respondent agreed with teaching Welsh from a single school, while the other respondent gave a neutral answer, and both respondents agreed with the proposal to situate Welsh medium education in Builth and to increase the post 16 subjects available in Welsh.

If you disagree with any elements of the proposed changes, please explain why.

- 3.125 Of the respondents who expressed disagreement with the proposed changes to Welsh medium education, 21 respondents gave an explanation as to why they disagreed. From these respondents, 43 different comments have been classified, the details of which are outlined below.

Figure 50: Reasons for opposition to the proposed Welsh medium changes

Coded comment	% of respondents	Base
Proposals will lead to longer travel times/increased travel costs	29%	6
Disagree with being taught just in Welsh/don't want to be taught in Welsh	24%	5
Pupils are entitled to a school within their local community	19%	4
Welsh should be available in all schools/to all pupils	19%	4
Maintain current provision/disagree with any school closures/disagree with proposals	14%	3
Proposals will negatively impact the friendships/social lives of students	14%	3
Proposals will negatively affect the free time of students/time for extra-curricular activities	10%	2
Proposals will negatively affect English speakers/English speaker's educations will suffer	10%	2
English is most pupils first language/most people need to speak English	5%	1
More information needed	5%	1
'Other'	57%	12

- 3.126 6 of the 21 respondents to this question said that 'proposals will lead to longer travel times/increased travel costs':

The travel time for pupils outweighs the benefits of more subjects.

Llandrindod [...] would be a journey of over an hour each day way too much and I may not go to school with people from my village and if I want to play sport how do I get back home.

- 3.127 5 respondents said that they 'disagree with being taught just in Welsh/don't want to be taught in Welsh. It is worth noting that at least two of these responses appeared to object to Welsh only education, possibly suggesting that some respondents believed that Builth Wells High School would become a category 2A school. Typical examples of comments include:

I don't want to be taught in Welsh that means that I would have to go to Llandrindod.

I agree that a certain degree of Welsh should be taught, but this can easily be done in an English stream. Extra savings could be made, and thus an enhancement of education, if Welsh was not a priority. Many choose the Welsh unit due to transport concerns.

3.128 4 respondents also said that the ‘pupils are entitled to a school within their local community’; for example:

Welsh should be available within pupils’ areas

By separating the Welsh speaking pupils and the English speaking pupils is a form of racism to me. The schools have been running for many years. Every child should have the right to be taught in their local school.

I want to go to my local school; Llandrindod High School. It is NOT a poor school, as you seem to say.

3.129 A further 4 respondents say that ‘Welsh should be available in all schools/to all pupils’. Typical examples of such comments include:

I would like to learn Welsh more in my school.

Further comments

3.130 Two primary school children gave further comments about the proposals. One pupil expressed the importance of maintaining dual stream provision to give pupils greater choice of English and Welsh subjects and to maintain friendship groups. The other pupil responding to this question queried why a proposed single new school site would have to be built in Builth.

Suggested Alternative Proposals

3.131 The open questionnaires received a number of alternative proposals to those put forward by the Council among the responses to open response questions, the details of which are outlined below.

3.132 Regarding the English medium proposals, many alternatives that were suggested by respondents from the main consultation were made with a view to maintain school provision in both Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools, many of which explicitly objecting to the possibility of Llandrindod being closed in the future.

3.133 One respondent suggested a reduction in ‘back office staff’ to increase savings, and an investment in teaching staff as an alternative method to improve standards.

This to me seems to miss the point - how will re-jigging the structure help in a way that couldn't be sorted now? SURELY if PCC pay the wages of all of these staff, then PCC could split full time posts into part time at each school to increase the number of subjects. How on earth is it going to be easier for the two heads of failing schools to merge into one management team of one larger school split between two sites? Surely that would just have a management team failing in one larger school? If these staff members aren't able to deliver good education now, how on earth is it going to be any easier between two sites, both with their distinct characteristics? To me it is very obvious - all the studies around the world have come to the same conclusion that good teaching is about good teachers - end of. If we train our teachers well and stop making them do all the monitoring etc that they tell us they hate and detracts from their teaching, then we might have good teachers. Then we will have good education for our pupils. I wish that Powys CC would stop thinking that if they restructure things then they become better. Train your staff, expect good things from them, then let them deliver. My child will start at high school in September, and I can see that this is going to dog her whole high school career - and is it

really worth doing this for a measly £130,000? We KNOW that things will go over budget as they ALWAYS do - someone will decide it's a good thing to pay a consultant for something and BANG budget gone. We do have money - we just choose to spend it on a HUGE raft of back room staff that don't actually have any link to the children - and it's NOT WORKING! We have so many failing schools - primary and high school - in Powys, and it's time that we looked at the back room staff - all the monitors, the restructures, the highly paid people who pop into schools every six weeks to "see how things are going". If my child needs to learn how to do quadratic equations, they are not going to find out from someone sat in County Hall trying to work out a way we can raise absenteeism from 90% to 90.5% or whatever. We do not have the money to tinker with minutiae, we need to spend that money on teachers and training for teachers and let them do the job they're paid to do.

- 3.134 Other proposals from the main consultation also prioritised teaching standards over other issues raised by the Council. One proposal suggested combining sixth forms to meet the Council's aim of increasing the number of subjects at a post-16 level, and working to update and reduce the size of the existing sites, while another suggested that the replacement of low quality teachers would improve standards.

I believe the 'building' does not bear on teaching standards. Yes, I agree that something needs to be done but closing schools and opening another one (at great cost!) would benefit no-one! Sort our teaching standards in existing schools, combine both 6th forms to offer varied curriculum and use the money you can obviously find (for your proposed new school) to update and make smaller the existing sites. A response from the Young Persons' consultation discussed a focus on new teaching staff could improve standards without the need for a new school.

If 'high quality' staff is expected to be employed in the new school, why not replace existing teachers not deemed to be of high quality instead. This should lead to improved teaching without the need for an entire new school to be built. 120 pupils is not a large increase on the existing approximately 100 pupils per year group in Llandrindod.

- 3.135 There were suggestions from both the Main and Young Persons' questionnaires to just create a new school on a single site instead of over both Builth and Llandrindod.

I feel strongly that the opening of the 'New School' should not take place until a NEW one site School Building is provided. Closing of the existing schools but reopening on the same site in a new name does NOT address the issues of poor facilities, poor morale, poor leadership or poor standards. All it does is remove the Estyn 'special measures status' - which takes away all the checks and support available to failing schools. A new building will help to attract quality teachers and leaders - it will give staff [and] pupils a morale boost helping to increase in pride which will be beneficial in meeting the Council's aim of increasing standards in the high Schools.

The council should build a new school, with new staff offering the best resources.

It would be better to make Builth and Llandrindod into one school on one site.

Set up a school half way between Llandrindod and Builth e.g. new bridge so then there's no complaints.

- 3.136 The creation of a dual site school was suggested for Llandrindod and Pretiegne, with collaboration with a College for post-16 provision.

Dual site school for Llandrindod/Preteigne - kept within Radnor? Work with the Coleg to restore post 16 choices for mid Powys.

- 3.137 Regarding Welsh medium provision, three respondents from the main consultation and a respondent from the Young Persons' questionnaire suggested a need for a category 2a Welsh Medium school. These respondents proposed that this would encourage greater access to Welsh education.

I feel there should be a category 2a welsh medium school in south / mid Powys. This should be based at Builth Wells. For children to be truly bilingual - all subjects should be offered through the medium of Welsh. People will feel happier sending their children further away for a completely Welsh medium school.

Welsh medium education needs to be consolidated in a dedicated school at best and a dedicated campus at worst. Any other arrangement will lead to the marginalisation of the language within a (large) majority English-speaking school and furthermore will not provide enough of a draw to pupils travelling long distances (from Brecon, North and East Radnorshire). This is the reason that the Welsh stream in Brecon has withered on the vine, and it will happen again in Builth.

Considering the financial situation it is sensible and realistic to try and centralise welsh medium provision. But in terms of the welsh language, it is terrible that Brecon is losing its high school welsh stream. In terms of location, Builth is reasonable but, in terms of expecting Brecon pupils to travel and in terms of securing the survival of Ysgol y Bannau then it has to be a welsh medium school in Builth not a bilingual school. Notwithstanding finances, equal access to welsh education in the county is a right

I feel that making Builth HS a dual stream school for pre-16 education is a poor idea, as it would still not have a critical mass of students. It would be better to have a Welsh medium school in Builth and an English medium school in Llandrindod. That way there is a critical mass of English stream students in one location, and the Welsh stream could be far more concentrated in the other location. There would be no need for staff or students to travel between the sites. The sixth form provision would be better suited to be located at one site, and that could be at Builth. This could be both English and Welsh streams.

- 3.138 There were also other suggestions among some Young Persons' consultation respondents to separate Welsh and English provision.

I think the Welsh should go in one school and English in the other.

Builth should be just a Welsh school

- 3.139 A Main consultation questionnaire respondent queried whether Welsh medium education could be delivered in Llandrindod, rather than at Builth Wells.

Welsh medium education stream could be delivered from Llandrindod wells, the site does not need to be Builth Wells.

- 3.140 Meanwhile, another respondent suggested that Welsh provision should be provided from a separate, smaller site altogether.

A bilingual schools efforts would be split across both streams (assuming the focus is equal) do it would make more sense (due to the smaller number of Welsh stream pupils) to convert a smaller school into a solely Welsh medium school in the interests of both the Welsh and English stream pupils.

- 3.141 Regarding post-16 education specifically, some suggested that a 6th form should be provided on the Llandrindod site due to its capacity and accessibility.

Any decision made by the Council should take in to consideration the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. The sixth form should be based in Llandrindod Wells. The site has the capacity to accommodate a large sixth form, and a full range of subjects will attract pupils from outside the catchment, e.g. east Radnorshire, south Montgomeryshire. Llandrindod has good travel links, which will make the educational commute easier for sixth form pupils.

Make education stream 11-16 and provide this solely in Builth wells - provide 6th form college status in Llandrindod - providing both academic and technical/apprenticeships for young people up to age of 21.

- 3.142 Another respondent suggested a continued focus on partnership working.

Continue with partnership working of schools to achieve pupil numbers post 16.

- 3.143 More generally, one respondent suggested a better use of school buildings for after school activities to make both school sites staying open financially viable.

Both schools need to consider more fully how they can use their buildings outside of school hours and promote community cohesion and raise income via things like lifelong learning opportunities (Builth does do Welsh lessons on a Tuesday night) but there must be scope for lots of other things - dance classes, yoga, lectures, family maths sessions, art after school etc. etc. If there was a small charge the school would generate income and the community would connect better and perhaps offer support re- Friends of the Schools or fundraise for equipment etc.. The bigger picture though for Powys is that we have falling pupil numbers because families are not attracted to living here. We have to tackle the economic issues and not just focus on the effect. The cause is something that can be tackled and should be tackled in my view.

- 3.144 Finally, one respondent suggested working Welsh Assembly members to improve funding and collaborating with colleges to provide more courses within Powys.

As I have already said, PCC should be working with Kirsty Williams to improve the funding arrangements for pupils in rural schools - something she has already said publicly that she agrees with. Powys should be helping all its schools and supporting them, not just trying to close them. Also, it was made clear at the meetings that the merger of Newtown and Presteigne schools was not working as well as had been hoped, so why put more schools in this position? If our schools had a better funding arrangement and PCC committed itself to working with and supporting the schools, rather than blaming everything on Governors and staff, our schools could improve. [...] Another option to be considered are colleges which teach our students the courses they need in farming, forestry and environmental skills - currently, many go to England for this training when we should offer it in Powys.

Organisation Responses

3.145 Each response from an organisation typically represents the views of many individuals, and feedback from these organisations has therefore been reported separately in this report.

Overview

3.146 Organisations that responded were informed on the questionnaire that their views may be published, and were asked to provide further details about their organisation, including what the organisation represents, the specific group or department, the area the organisation covers and how the views of members were gathered. Not all organisations supplied this information, but the names of organisations have been included in the report where provided.

3.147 Results for the closed questions have been presented below to provide a contrast between views from organisations and individuals. As it is not appropriate to report percentages where the sample size is so small, responses from organisations have been summarised to provide an outline of their views and feedback, and counts – rather than percentages – of responses to the closed questions of the consultation questionnaire are provided below.

Builth and Llandrindod Organisation Responses

3.148 Of the 182 responses to the main Builth and Llandrindod open consultation questionnaire, 4 indicated that they had been submitted on behalf of an organisation.

3.149 1 out of the 4 organisations responding to the consultations agrees that the Council is right to make changes to respond to the identified issues with English medium education.

3.150 2 of 4 agree with the proposal to establish a new dual-stream secondary school for pupils aged 11-18 to replace Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools from August 2017, that would continue to operate from the two existing sites.

3.151 Regarding the issues identified with Welsh medium education, 3 of 4 organisations agree that Powys County Council is right to make changes to respond to the problems identified.

3.152 2 of 4 organisations agree with the delivery of Welsh medium education through a single Welsh medium stream in South/Mid Powys.

3.153 The proposal to provide Welsh medium education as part of a Bilingual Category 2B/C (dual-stream) school is agreed with by all 4 of the organisations responding to the consultation.

3.154 Additionally, locating the Welsh medium stream at the Builth Wells site of the proposed new secondary school (subject to separate consultation) was also supported by all 4 organisations.

3.155 Finally, all 4 organisations agree with the proposed increased provision of post-16 subjects via the medium of Welsh.

English Medium Education

Financial savings

It was also duly noted in the consultation that buildings assets in Llandrindod Wells HS were poor which reflects the poor investment from PCC over sustained years and will impact on budgetary costs in the future if the potential of one school on two sites goes ahead.

The Friends of Builth Wells High School

The prospective financial benefits for the potential changes were stated at the consultation meetings as being approx. 130K, the friends of BWHS believe this is not a significant saving and is very minimal when considering the total cost of the education budget for PCC. The potential costings as reported to the consultation are not seen as significant cost saving when considering the negative financial, social and psychological impact these changes have to the Builth Wells community. The cost of re-branding of the schools will swallow the cost savings that has been reported by the consultation process and the financial cost to families will also have a further negative social/financial impact.

The Friends of Builth Wells High School

Welsh Medium Education

Predetermination

The friends of BWH School believe that regardless of the consultation process that PCC have already manufactured the proposed changes without consultation to the public. There seems to be an irony that this proposal should be consulted on when PCC threatened to close WM education in Brecon and therefore there has already been an on mass exodus of families having to move pupils to ensure consistency and maintenance of welsh medium education for their children.

The Friends of Builth Wells High School

Equalities

Reduced transportation costs

The proposal to set up a dual site school will have less negative impact on the pupils of both Llandrindod Wells and Builth Wells High School. This proposal would lead to a reduction in transportation costs and disruption for pupils.

Llandrindod Wells Town Council

Special Educational Needs

How will special needs education be affected?

The Friends of Builth Wells High School

Additional Comment

One school on two sites impacts on equity of fund raising by specific community groups for specific projects or equipment. The present friends of BWHS will have to be dissolved along with the funds collected.

The Friends of Builth Wells High School

4. Governors' Meetings

Main issues and themes from the Governors' meetings

Overview of the Meeting Process

- 4.1 This chapter is in two parts: the first provides an overview of the Governors' meeting process and the second is a concise review of the main issues raised by participants.
- 4.2 The Governors meetings were held at Llandrindod High School on 11 April 2016 and at Builth Wells High School on 28 April 2016. Each meeting received a standard presentation from PCC on the proposed changes, which was followed by a question and answer session between participants and a panel of PCC officers. Around 20 Governors attended over the two sessions.

Main Themes Raised at the Governors Meetings

Transport Costs

- 4.3 Participants asked questions around travel between the two school sites: whether or not potential additional travel requirements had been costed and factored into the savings cited in the case for change document; whether student travel would be funded; how teachers' transport would be funded and how this would affect their contracts and insurance arrangements:

Transport costs and savings from the proposed changes

Is the funding formula risk assessed - are the calculations based on the single school on two sites? (Llandrindod Governors)

Where does the £133,000 saving come from? Does it include transport provision costs? (Builth Governors)

Funding for students moving between sites

A new set of Governors might think it would be better that some subjects and or post 16 might be better centralised on one site and if so, would you support transporting those kids to that site? (Builth Governors)

Would Powys be willing to fund the travel for students? Which budget would this come from? (Llandrindod Governors)

It defies logic to say that to transport all pupils to Builth would cost less than to transport them to Llandrindod. Where do you get the figures? (Llandrindod Governors)

Teachers travelling between sites

Using the precedent of John Beddoes School, how many new staff were appointed and how many old staff claim travel and what is the cost? (Llandrindod Governors)

When you have a school across sites – you then have a cost of staff travel - middle managers and teachers ... This participant also asked about how this would affect their private vehicle insurance (Llandrindod Governors)

How many of the old staff will be able to claim travel and how much will that cost? (Llandrindod Governors)

Travel and teachers' contracts

If schools are going to close, have the authority looked at new contracts to be offered to the teachers; have negotiations started with unions? There may be conditions about staff having to travel (Llandrindod Governors)

Other Finance and Funding

- 4.4 Governors at both meetings wanted to know where additional funding would come from to enable the new school to offer the broader curriculum that PCC expects to see, particularly around growth in Welsh Medium subjects. They wanted to know how the additional and specialist staff would be provided and how to overcome the current recruiting difficulties. They asserted that any savings made from the closures would not be enough to meet the cost of addressing the issues and would put additional pressure on the existing staff to deliver more. Governors at Llandrindod wanted some clarification around the impacts of protected salaries on the specific cost savings assumptions set out in the consultation document:

Funding for additional teachers to deliver the wider range of courses

The class size problem does not go away – there will still be the same teachers teaching the same pupils. The savings are management costs but teaching costs will remain; projected savings will still be inadequate (Llandrindod Governors)

Surely more A levels will add pressure on our staff. We used to have a communications A level, for example, but we've been cutting back ... where will the money come from for all these teachers to run the courses? (Builth Governors)

You talked about A levels and funding not being increased across the schools, but we need to be clever how we cut the cake. We need more money if we're going to provide the staff to provide A levels in Welsh and a broader range of A levels. How will we recruit with our staff already under pressure? (Builth Governors)

Savings from staff restructuring

You won't find these savings through cutting middle management but will it fund enough to provide these extra courses and staff. Where will the money come from to expand Welsh medium provision at A level (Builth Governors)

If you keep pupils in the same location, you have the same teachers teaching the same pupils. Potential savings are management only. Agreed that management costs will be a saving. Can you make savings by structuring differently? (Llandrindod Governors)

New funding or protected budgets

Where is the money coming from for this additional funding for the proposed new school? There are no more learners. Surely you'll just still have the same pot of money to spend across the two sites ... rationalising staff and duplications of roles to save money - can this make up the shortfall to increase the breadth of courses the school can offer? (Builth Governors)

Thinking about the challenges faced by the local authority, is this the thin end of the wedge and will it be a salami slicing exercise and will it (funding) keep going down? Are these just about finance and efficiencies and not about quality? We know the challenge Powys faces and will the combined budget of the new school be enough and is the proposed £133,000 enough to go toward improving quality? (Builth Governors)

Another aspect to the funding is that education is a large budget, so once this is protected, other services suffer but it does show the council's commitment to education (Builth Governors)

Staff salary cost assumptions - protected salary arrangements

Can I return to £134k? It hasn't built in the fact that it doesn't account for people who have protected salaries. (In the consultation document it says that the) Council 'believes' rather than you 'know'. It needs to be costed more. Hasn't looked at staff losing jobs and having to reapply (Llandrindod Governors)

Bearing in mind that there will be savings, what happens if one TLR is taken away in the new structure? You are protected for three years. Will that still apply? (Llandrindod Governors)

Then there will be no saving for three years, as pay will be maintained because of cover for teachers' pay. If the proposal is that 11 to 16s in Llandrindod and Builth, timetabling and VCing will be continued, the only saving being made is the leadership team ignoring redundancy costs? (Llandrindod Governors)

Quality of Education

- ^{4.5} Both sets of Governors wanted clarification on how the current proposals would lead to tangible improvements in teaching and learning and suggested that the current proposal does not go far enough. Governors at Builth suggested that the only way to tackle the underlying funding issues impacting on quality is to form a single school on a single site as soon as possible. Governors at Llandrindod conceded that they are not against any merger per se but would like to see each site maintained as a distinct language centre with Llandrindod designated as the dedicated English medium 11-16 site and Builth as Welsh Medium. A number of additional issues were raised in relation to quality of education and these are presented below:

More evidence needed of how the proposal will lead to improving quality

How will the quality of teaching be improved? Will the same teachers and classes be in place? How is this going to improve teaching for children? (Llandrindod Governors)

Is there any other strategy than management change to improve learning in the new school? (Llandrindod Governors)

A need for specialist teachers

We need more specialists at KS3/KS4 (Builth Governors)

KS3 seem to get the raw end of the deal and we want the new proposal to tackle quality of provision 11-16 too or it feeds into poor post 16 (Builth Governors)

Inspection arrangements for the new school

When will there be another inspection from Estyn after the two schools are joined and special measures cease to exist? (Llandrindod Governors)

How is this going to improve the quality of teaching if we don't have an inspection for two years? (Llandrindod Governors)

'Interim' proposal doesn't tackle problems

The end game is to have a single site isn't it? ... Might it be better to wait until you have a firm proposal for a single school on one site rather than delivering in two phases? The risk is the second phase is left alone and forgotten about (Builth Governors)

There's so much talk about the new school that this interim proposal feels like a let-down. People feel like we're the winners in this process but I'm not sure it is unless we get a single sited school. We all agree that single site school has more benefits especially about quality of education (Builth Governors)

Desire for a dedicated English language site at Llandrindod

If this interim Governing Body is put together and decides that the only way they can deliver 11-16 English medium is on one site – what happens? (Llandrindod Governors)

As a Governing Body we are not against the merger. But we don't think your proposal goes far enough ... should split into two according to medium e.g. Welsh and English 11-16 on two separate sites (Llandrindod Governors)

Buildings and Maintenance

^{4.6} Given the challenges identified in the case for change, participants said that the proposals leave the schools buildings in a state of limbo. Governors remain unconvinced that there would be new money to address the current conditions of the buildings and the maintenance backlog:

Should it go through, will there be capital investment across both sites? What's on the maintenance backlog? (Builth Governors)

I think the one site model delivers the full benefit but one school on two sites doesn't solve surplus places or maintenance backlog issues (Builth Governors)

If we're still on two sites ... how to make the buildings fit for purpose? How will the state of buildings change? Where does the money come from? (Llandrindod Governors)

Governance of the new school

- 4.7 Governors wanted to know how the process for selecting a new Governing Body would unfold and were keen for PCC to recognise the challenges faced by any 'new' set of Governors in implementing the far-reaching changes to a challenging timeframe:

Will the Governing Body be made from the two existing Governors? We need a high quality body - how do we choose the best people to deliver and face those challenges rather than ducking them? There's a risk that it is the longest serving that are thought of as the best (Builth Governors)

I am getting worried about the Governing Body and the workload to be undertaken in the coming months (Llandrindod Governors)

The timescale is also very challenging for HR and recruitment into the new school entity. The timetable is very challenging to make this work. So my point is that the interim step doesn't bring any of the benefits PCC wants to see; a single site does (Builth Governors)

- 4.8 They also wanted to know whether the Governing Body would be responsible for appointing staff to the new school:

Will you change the middle management or is it is the Governing Body of the school that appoints middle management with the support of the local authority – through teaching and HR? (Llandrindod Governors)

Impact on Students

- 4.9 Governors again underlined the potentially negative impacts that change would have on pupil attainment and particularly in regard to pupil/staff relationships and the impacts of extra travel and upheavals implicit in the proposals:

Working the strengths of the two schools is where certain subjects and specialisms are developed but will this degrade the personal relationship with pupils? (Builth Governors)

Travel time for GCSE will be an issue if there is one site per subject. I am worried about pupils having to travel back and forth between sites (Llandrindod Governors)

Current pupils are at risk of not achieving their full potential during the upheaval (Llandrindod Governors)

Impact on Teachers

- 4.10 Attendees highlighted that any improvements in quality rely on addressing the excessive workloads faced by teaching staff. They also argued that the proposal and continuing uncertainty around the future of the school exacerbates the current challenges around recruitment and retention of teachers.

How will we recruit with our staff already under pressure? Surely more A levels will add pressure on our staff (Builth Governors)

Teachers have low morale. They're being 'being kicked in the teeth' (Llandrindod Governors)

We have the same number of class rooms and teaching staff so how does the proposal for one school on two sites help with resilience? (Llandrindod Governors)

Recruitment to a school going to close is dangerous; people are unlikely to apply to a closing school (Llandrindod Governors)

Post 16 Education

- 4.11 Governors in the Llandrindod meeting wanted clarification over whether the Governing Body would be free to choose the structure of post 16 provision at the proposed new school. Governors in Builth are more certain that co-locating A levels on a single site would create a viable critical mass for a sixth form. Most agreed, however, that continued uncertainty around the future of post 16 provision would lead to increased migration of post 16 learners out of mid-Powys:

Concerns over increased migration for post 16 education

Will this consultation drive people out of county for post 16 provision? Until we have the ultimate vision for a new school with a brilliant sixth form, are we damaging the prospects by this interim recommendation for a new school on two sites? Why can't we shoot for the stars and make a proposal for a new school? (Builth Governors)

Won't the post 16 plans for the Brecon learning campus just take post 16 learners from this area? (Builth Governors)

Comments on the range of post 16 choices

Reason for change- talks about difficulty providing a full curriculum and providing a legal minimum through post 16 collaboration- is the school barely achieving this legal minimum at present (Builth Governors)

But some of those subjects will be the same subjects. I want to know about the breadth and width of the subjects (Llandrindod Governors)

Clarity is needed on how the location of the sixth form will be decided upon

How will post 16 education be arranged across the two sites? (The consultation document) states that the new Governing Body will be encouraged to run the sixth form from one site. Does that mean that the Governing Body can also decide to run the sixth form from both sites? (Llandrindod Governors)

How long would it take for sixth form provision to be established? I know three young people who intend to travel to Hereford (Llandrindod Governors)

A single dedicated site for Post 16

The opportunity to develop the post 16 is not something that is coming out strongly enough in these proposals and maybe not being sold to the public as well as it could be. We need a clearer vision of a brand like a sixth form science or arts academy on the sites- somewhere parents and pupils would want to go (Builth Governors)

Can't we create a stand-alone sixth form institution on one site and leave the current under 11-16 provisions alone? (Builth Governors)

Part of the issue here is transport across more than one site ... so the preference is to have one sixth form site on either here or Builth ... This single sixth form on one of the sites will mitigate against people leaving the area for post 16 provision and there is support for centralising sixth form provision on one of the sites (Llandrindod Governors)

Do we attract any post 16 from other areas into mid-Powys? A central sixth form provision may be an incentive for pupils to come into this catchment to study - notwithstanding Welsh medium provision (Builth Governors)

Can't we create a stand-alone sixth form institution on one site and leave the current under 11-16 provisions alone? Can staff have dual contracts to work across two schools? We need to clarify how staff structure will work across the two schools (Builth Governors)

Welsh Medium Education

- 4.12 Governors at Builth are concerned that the proposals for a dual stream site at Builth might diminish the long-term aspiration of establishing a fully bilingual 2A school at Builth Wells. Governors at Llandrindod would also prefer the establishment of single language centres at each site (Welsh at Builth and English at Llandrindod):

I'm worried about our status as a bilingual school if we merge with an English school. What will be the effect of injecting more English medium pupils into the school by a merger? Will this diminish the vision to become a fully bilingual school in mid Wales? (Builth Governors)

It is essential to create the draw from the Brecon area by growing the Welsh ethos here; we can't risk that by marginalising the Welsh stream by merging with an English school (Builth Governors)

Class sizes and financial difficulties can be got over by ... having schools on one site - merge English medium on one site and Welsh and sixth form on the other site to minimise transport and staff (Llandrindod Governors)

- 4.13 Both sets of Governors called for a more realistic assessment of the likely numbers of pupils, costs and resources needed to make Builth Wells a viable option for a bilingual school. There were concerns about the assumptions made in the consultation document over the numbers transferring to Builth Wells High School from the Brecon area and other areas within the County or choosing in favour of an English medium education to avoid travelling to school:

Let's say that after the consultation in Brecon the Welsh medium students won't go to Builth, what change will be made to the proposals? (Llandrindod Governors)

The problem is that there's a small cohort of Welsh learners across the County and the figures are based on the South only. Surely it should be looking at the whole picture including the North ... which areas are feeding to Builth currently. Why are you not looking at Brecon and Newtown centres as they have the biggest number of learners? (Llandrindod Governors)

But you built a Welsh medium primary in Newtown. If you are saying Rhayader is one of the feeder schools why doesn't it go to Newtown? (Llandrindod Governors)

Remember Builth, Llandod and Rhayader are not Welsh speaking towns. The reason there are more learners in Builth is that they are bussed in (Llandrindod Governors)

You don't know what the effect later will be on people having to travel and wanting to do Welsh medium secondary education. Less people may be willing to learn Welsh because of travel (Llandrindod Governors)

- 4.14 One Governor pointed out that current staffing provision would not allow Welsh medium capacity to grow quickly:

Every teacher who can teach through Welsh already has a full timetable - they can't deliver more overnight. This change and expansion would have to be gradual so there won't be an overnight big increase in Welsh language provision (Builth Governors)

Lack of evidence within Consultation Document

- 4.15 Governors at Llandrindod queried many of the assumptions underpinning the case for change and asked for more evidence for statements made throughout the Consultation Document:

This document isn't very smart and doesn't give a clear understanding of what will be done and when. How will the state of buildings change? Where does the money come from? (Llandrindod Governors)

How valid and how robust is the evidence? Has it been independently evaluated? You've got correlations but you haven't got the cause. You've got no causal link. No proof to support it (Llandrindod Governors)

Coming back to 130k saving, how has this been come to? It has not been built in that some people will still have protected salaries and redundancies? 'The council believes' isn't a very strong statement and 130k is just looking at removing one set of management and not people losing jobs (Llandrindod Governors)

Other issues and sub themes

- 4.1 A number of individual sub themes and comments emerged from the Governors meetings and are listed below for brevity.

Figure 51: Summary of Other themes raised in the Governors meetings

Sub-Theme	Comments
Future funding assumptions-clarification-staffing	<i>Looking at the numbers and modelling, is their organigram for staffing structure cost modelled? (Builth Governors)</i>
Parental choice of site	<i>If it became one school, will pupils be able to choose and be transported to their preferred site? Otherwise it seems like it will be no change to how it is now (Builth Governors)</i>

Sub-Theme	Comments
Avoid children travelling between sites for lessons during a single day	<i>Children prefer only one journey a day and not travelling across different sites to access courses (Builth Governors)</i>
Process might have been sold better by not branding as 'closures'	<i>Could this be achieved without talking about closing schools? Think about the impact of this process. Could it have been achieved through, for example, federation and through contracts and management changes without talking about closing? Can't you create a new organisation through changing the contracts of teachers without closing anything? Is there a sense of brand loyalty to a school? Is it a shame that one school on one site and closing schools was ever mentioned? Closure is a negative word- the language and the terms used have set things up in a negative frame whereas a rebrand can be a positive thing (Builth Governors)</i>
Cost implications of additional lunch time activities to cater for learners from South Powys	<i>Have all these extra curriculum activities been costed into the proposals and is lunch time enough to provide all the clubs and activities kids need? [Point related to impact on after school activities offered to Welsh medium learners travelling to Builth from Brecon/Sennybridge area.] (Builth Governors)</i>

5. Staff Meetings

Main issues and themes from the Staff meetings

Overview of the Meeting Process

- 5.1 This chapter is in two parts: the first is overview of the staff meeting process and the second is a concise review of the main issues raised by participants.
- 5.2 The staff meetings were held at Builth Wells High School on 28 April 2016 and at Llandrindod High School on 14 April 2016. Each meeting received a standard presentation from PCC on the proposed changes, followed by a question and answer session between participants and a panel of Powys County Council officers. Around 56 staff attended over the two sessions.

Main Themes Raised at the Staff Meetings

Finance and Funding

- 5.3 Teaching staff argued that the proposals do nothing to tackle the underlying funding challenges facing the schools, given that the Powys budget is currently lower than elsewhere in Wales and that more funds will not be forthcoming. They are concerned that the proposals in their current form may be unworkable without reducing the timetable to five lessons and putting jobs, pay and conditions at risk:

The only way you can do all this within budget is compress the six lessons in Llandrindod to five to save the staffing costs which you can then use to fund the additional courses or free up middle managers – which then will mean that teachers will lose their jobs. Without any additional money you are hard pressed to raise standards by adding additionality or extra training – we seem to be trying to rob Peter to pay Paul (Builth Wells Staff)

But if you have 35 lessons a week instead of 30 lessons a week you need more teachers. When we went from a six to a five period timetable we lost staff (Builth Wells Staff)

Money in this area is a lot less than other areas in Wales ... Is it actually in that respect going to benefit? It's not a level playing field compared with South Wales schools (Builth Wells Staff)

Being at the chalk face and being a head of department, I'm finding it difficult to understand how we can improve those when you say your funding will go down ... This participant questioned the figure of £123 less per pupil. (Llandrindod Staff)

- 5.4 Staff pointed out that any savings through redundancies would be delayed by a number of years and questioned, therefore, whether the upheaval was justified. They also pointed out that there would be a cost of transporting pupils and staff between sites and whether this had been accounted for in the savings estimate of £133,000.

If you've got two heads of faculty which will end up being advertised as one then the person that loses their role will still be entitled to their pay for up to three years. And then all the TLR holders will get an increment because they'll have more teaching responsibilities. Everybody's wages would go up – so it seems that it will take quite a long time for savings to be made. It seems quite a lot of heartache for what will take a long time to make any savings. (Llandrindod Staff)

There may well be travelling involved for students and staff. Would that be able to be costed within the £133,000 – would that be enough and if no, what is the point of all this to save £133,000? (Llandrindod Staff)

Quality of Education

- 5.5 Participants remain to be convinced that the proposals for a larger school on two sites would improve educational standards, choice and outcomes for pupils.

My son's 11 – he isn't going to know that the head of department or the teaching is different. How is his education going to be different from his older brother? How is he going to get more GCSE choice? (Llandrindod Staff)

The aim of this evening was to convince me that the new proposals would improve standards. I'm afraid you have failed miserably. It seems to me it's a financial exercise (Llandrindod Staff)

I understand the financial pressures and I understand that Estyn aren't terribly happy with us – I don't understand how saving £133,000 and a massive upheaval improves the experience of our pupils (Llandrindod Staff)

Apart from increasing subjects, how will it increase quality of education? (Builth Wells Staff)

- 5.6 They also called for evidence that larger schools create better outcomes for pupils or that having non-specialists affects standards:

Where is the evidence that an average year group of 120 pupils would lead to better outcomes than a group of 100 which is roughly what we have ... the council believes a new school with a minimum of 600 pupils in KS3 and KS4 would help to maximise the curriculum benefits. But there's no evidence that would lead to better outcomes is there? If you could say to me that ... if you get to 120 in a year group they statistically do better than kids with 100 in a year group, I would shut up (Llandrindod Staff)

I would also argue that having non-specialists ... it hasn't affected our standards at KS3 (Llandrindod Staff)

- 5.7 Staff were also somewhat sceptical over the feasibility of running a broader curriculum without co-locating courses:

I want to query how having one school over two sites will benefit up to KS4 with a mind to increasing the number of options. Unless you have students and staff travelling between two sites, you are not going to be able to offer additional GCSEs. It's likely we can offer the GCSEs on this site and similar GCSEs on the other site but if you want to include more GCSEs and you only

have a take-up of three on one site and four on the other, that's not going to be feasible
(Llandrindod Staff)

Going back to the question of efficiencies for A level – you said that music, for example – there are small numbers at Llandod. What number would be considered to be efficient? What would the average five year value of pupils in a lesson be? (Builth Wells Staff)

- 5.8 A skills audit was also suggested as a way of rationalising the subject specialisms of the two schools:

I understand the theory and I even accept that we have non-specialists teaching subjects. Knowing our school and Builth – I know a lot of the staff there. I don't know how having more of the same ... has a skills audit been carried out? It might improve that KS3. I'm not convinced you'll have the specialist subjects at post 16. So it might cause a little bit of improvement in some places (Llandrindod Staff)

Impact on Teachers

- 5.9 Teachers at Builth are concerned about job security, retention and recruitment of staff as well as how any possible travel between sites would impact on their preparation and management time; whether they would have to sacrifice their lunchtimes for travel and how the travel costs would be covered. In Llandrindod, the implications for staff contracts and ring fencing of teaching posts dominated the discussions, with some suggesting that the post of head teacher should be subject to open recruitment if standards in the combined school are to be improved:

Contracts and travel time

Would our place of employment change? If A level goes up to Llandod (the two full time teachers here) would have significant gaps in our timetable. However, Llandod has two [subject] teachers as well so if the Governors decided that four is too many there would be one redundancy but then there would be a gap in Llandod to be filled. Where would our place of employment be? Would we be expected to travel and how would that be reflected in the cost for staff? Where would we stand in terms of time for travel? (Builth Wells Staff)

Extra management demands, logistical management challenges and impact on quality

At the moment I have two hours management a fortnight to oversee the department which is easy enough to do. However, timetable-wise it's easy enough to see when you'd need to be in Builth or Llandod but in that management time to try to oversee colleagues on the other campus could be a logistical nightmare (Builth Wells Staff)

When you're looking at curriculum managers' quality assuring the departments and monitoring what's going on, on two sites, this is going to increase their workload and make life extremely challenging for them (Llandrindod Staff)

Myself and a lot of people in my department are currently teaching eight different subjects. If we were on a new school site, I can see how we could have new teachers for one subject but I don't see it improving the quality ... Would I be just the textile teacher for Builth or would I be travelling back and forth? My friends, back where I live, have to do that and travel in their dinner hours ... my concern is not having the time to do all that travelling (Builth Wells Staff)

Job insecurity, retention and recruitment

If the School Governing Body isn't going to let us know until next April then we might be out of a job by then ... it's going to be a problem for a lot of staff who are set up here to then go looking for jobs elsewhere ... You could end up with people deciding to jump ship and leave and that means it's going to be a problem for the area. It would be my worry that I'm not going to have a job full stop. Most of us have got mortgages and families (Builth Wells Staff)

If your post 16 budget is going to be reduced how are you going to offer so many more A levels and where are you going to get the staff from to teach them – and also you're going to have to pay those staff (Builth Wells Staff)

Ring-fencing posts

Going back to the ring fencing, can you elaborate? If there are two heads of a subject – there will be one in the new school. What exactly is ring fenced? There will be 'a job' but not 'the job' or salary as now? (Llandrindod Staff)

So it's the new Governing Body that does the ring-fencing and the ring-fencing is about all the jobs and not the individual roles. Would a maths teacher be able to go for a science job if they weren't qualified or only the type of job they had before? (Llandrindod Staff)

Why is there an option to ring fence the head teacher post? It seems obvious to put out an open advertisement if you want to improve standards (Llandrindod Staff)

Changes in contractual terms and conditions

You said that there will be new contracts. I had my permanent contract 20 years ago. Does my contract differ from somebody who was given a contract last year regards retirement age and if this is so, would my new contract under a new school change my terms and conditions, for example on things like retirement date? (Llandrindod Staff)

Governance

- 5.10 The constituency and timeframe for establishing a Shadow Governing Body was something staff wanted greater clarity about.

I would like to know if we do go ahead, how would the interim Governing Body be put together. Can we guarantee that there will be equal numbers across the two schools? (Builth Wells Staff)

Is there any guideline for the Governing Body and the new structure? (Builth Wells Staff)

Single site - mixed Messages

- 5.11 Participants cited an apparent shift in position by PCC around their proposals for a single site school in the Builth Wells area; namely that a new build site has become an 'aspiration' and not an intention. They suggested that the consultation document now sends mixed messages to parents and the community about the long term future of the schools.

The word 'objective' implies something we'd like to happen. It says parents in Llandrindod may choose their children to attend other schools due to the long-term 'objective' to establish a new school in the Builth Wells area (Llandrindod Staff)

Mixed messages are being given ... What I would like to happen now is that any reference to a single site be removed from this document. If it's not part of the consultation now, it shouldn't be in the documentation (Llandrindod Staff)

I really want to get behind the process for change but it's very hard for us to get behind the process for change when you're giving us mixed messages. I think you need to work with the community – if you'd like us to get on board with change, you have to meet us half way (Llandrindod Staff)

Inaccuracies in Consultation Document

- ^{5.12} A number of apparent inaccuracies in the consultation document were raised by staff at Llandrindod, leading to accusations of predetermination in relation to the one school, one site 'aspiration' since they appear to unfairly cast Llandrindod High School in a bad light compared with Builth Wells High School. In particular, they highlighted unfair and inaccurate reporting of the Llandrindod budget and inaccurate scoring which led to the current option being selected over an option preferred by the Governors and staff of Llandrindod School:

Inaccuracies and predetermination

My blood was boiling at the things that are wrong; that were stated about our school that weren't true. If you want us to get involved and be part of it, it has to be right or you get our backs up because it makes us feel you have already made your decision. And it says that your preferred option is the one for the single school – and that made me feel very angry and I'm sure it made others very angry and that there is a hidden agenda –the decision's already been made (Llandrindod Staff)

It's not that we're against change. We want the best for our pupils but we want something presented to us that is factually correct, balanced ... That is really important (Llandrindod Staff)

I have got concerns – this is a document that parents and staff are having and you are asking for a consultation and this has to be accurate. It is not fair on staff, pupils, parents, community. I only sat there for a couple of hours and immediately spotted inaccuracies (Llandrindod Staff)

Out of date, inaccurate, unfair budget figures are misleading

To write in there a statement that makes it look like we are rubbish at managing our budget and to put nothing about the fact that they (another school in the consultation process) have had to have a loan to get out of their problem really, really angers me (Llandrindod Staff)

That budget that I sent out was the first draft and I was asked for it by the Governing Body ... In fact we have saved money in the last year - we are in surplus for this year. Next year we'll be in surplus. For the following year we'll be in surplus ... It's another example of inaccuracies. Why is there no mention of the budget deficit that has been in Builth Wells High School for several years? Many other schools in Powys are operating on deficit ... I also manage the buildings. I

don't know where the figure of £3.6m comes from. We've maintained those buildings. We have not been told there is anything insufficient in it ... Builth recently had £2m spent on their new canteen ... Our buildings are a lot older. Nobody has come to me and said we think this needs doing – to work with us on it. I think it's very unfair (Llandrindod Staff)

I think it's very unfair ... We weren't at any time told that that first draft would be used for this consultation ... I think it was very unfair to use the work in progress rather than the final budget and not do the same for Builth Wells. Why not admit that Builth has been in financial difficulties. By implication it is saying that this school is not able to manage its financial affairs (Llandrindod Staff)

Option appraisal process was flawed

The overall conclusion says that following this assessment it is clear that the option that scores highest is Option 3A. Well, that scores 14. Option 5 scores 15. That is important because Option 5 is a strong argument for English medium education remaining in Llandrindod High School ... that is factually incorrect and you make a conclusion that is incorrect (Llandrindod Staff)

Post 16 Education

- 5.13 Participants recognise the challenge of delivering the Learning Skills Measure in rural Wales with a backdrop of reducing budgets and relatively small numbers of learners. Those at Llandrindod challenged the assumption that greater choice of A-levels is necessarily better, and argued that improved quality in a narrower range of A level subjects is a more realistic ambition in rural areas:

What really should be happening is that local authorities should be in a position to turn round to Welsh Government and say because of the rurality of our situation, we do not have the money to provide the best education service for our pupils ... the financial side is driving the proposal ... the original aims of improving standards and getting the best education gets pushed aside by the need to save money (Llandrindod Staff)

There are people in Welsh Government possibly starting to question the Skills Measure ... The Russell Group identifies (in their document 'Informed Choices') a list of facilitating subjects – 'choosing these at advanced level leaves open a wide range of options for university studies' They list eight or nine core 'facilitating subjects'... It says 'if you don't know what you want to study at University by taking two facilitating subjects will leave a wide range of degree subjects open to you'. It asks students, 'if you are not taking the core subjects, are you avoiding the challenge?' So my question to you is are we trying to avoid the challenge by not supporting small schools, small sixth forms ... For A levels we have the second best average for A to B and we're third best in the County for A* to C. We have plenty of students going through to the best universities. I think there is a huge flaw in the argument about size of sixth form ... our concern is that this is based on a policy that is going to be overturned in the future (Llandrindod Staff)*

- 5.14 A participant highlighted a particular difficulty regarding current science facilities in Builth Wells High School that would be too small for the numbers in a larger, merged sixth form as suggested under the current proposals:

I teach biology A level and if I have, say, doubling up to 25 I haven't sufficient equipment here – I can see that could be quite difficult with teaching allocations (Builth Wells Staff)

Welsh Medium Education

- 5.15 Builth Wells High School staff wanted clarity about the linguistic status of the proposed new school; specifically around duplication of the bilingual curriculum on both sites and whether offering Welsh medium only at a single site is open to legal challenge:

So it won't be that it will be all Welsh in Builth, so, for instance every single English lesson will be taught in Llandrindod? It will still be like it is now – English and Welsh? (Builth Wells Staff)

Is Powys open to a legal challenge if parents want to send their children to the Llandrindod site for full Welsh medium teaching? Some don't come to Builth because of siblings and peer pressure and staying locally is more important (Builth Wells Staff)

Other comments/sub themes

- 5.16 A number of individual sub themes and comments emerged from the staff meetings and are listed below for brevity. They cover a range of issues raised by individual members of staff including negative impacts of closing Llandrindod High School on the local community; details of travel arrangements and paying for pupil travel; whether the Estyn FSM league for Builth Wells is appropriate; the negative impact of a harmonised timetable between schools on staff numbers; whether lessons from the merger of John Beddoes and Newtown High Schools have been considered in this proposal and whether the new head teacher would be a Welsh speaker.

Figure 52: Summary of Other themes raised in the School Staff meetings

Sub-Theme	Comments
Long term aspiration for single site would damage Llandrindod Community	<i>The fifth proposal down says no negative impact on community but there is an objective, something to aim for, which is a new school. As a member of the community that is a huge concern (Llandrindod Staff)</i>
Travel for out of catchment pupils to the new, two site high school	<i>My daughter is coming up to high school in September – lives out of catchment, so obviously because I work here she's coming here – she'll travel down with me. However, if we become one school does she then become liable to be transported and if so, to which campus? (Llandrindod Staff)</i> <i>From Rhyader the Welsh medium obviously get bussed down to Builth, but the English medium don't. But what if we were one school? (Llandrindod Staff)</i>
Quality and Estyn inspection cross-school comparators – are they fair/valid?	<i>If we are comparing like with like as regards schools in South Powys, then we are a bilingual school. We are also in a different FSM league compared with other schools in South Powys. Therefore, you could compare Swansea FC or Chelsea with Macclesfield Town. Would that be a valid comparison? ... We could go down the road of how we got into that league - no point about rurality and that is how Powys is disadvantaged in many ways (Builth Wells Staff)</i>
Harmonised timetable across two sites will lead to redundancies	<i>We'd have to have synchronisation of timetables. At the moment they (LHS) have six lessons; we currently have five – presumably there will have to be parity between the two sites. Obviously if we go to the 50 minute timetable ... somewhere there's going to be an increase in redundancies (Builth Wells Staff)</i>
A Welsh speaker as head teacher?	<i>Will that person (new head teacher) be a Welsh speaker (has heard anecdotally that assurance has been given about this)? (Llandrindod Staff)</i>

Sub-Theme	Comments
Welsh medium pupil numbers are growing	<i>I wouldn't say cohorts are small. There are smaller cohorts in Powys. Our cohort here is growing. I heard from Builth Wells Primary School this morning and they're almost 50:50 there in regards to who's in English medium and Welsh medium. To say small cohorts; I would say 'smaller' would be better (Builth Wells Staff)</i>
Lack of confidence in PCC to deliver change	<i>Some years ago Powys put money into consultation reorganisation and nothing has happened. Is this the same on this occasion? (Builth Wells Staff)</i>
Definition of 'interim' period	<i>I'd like some clarification with some of the terminology. An 'interim period' means something else will happen? (Llandrindod Staff)</i>
Migration of pupils out of county as a consequence of proposal	<i>There is evidence for pupils leaving merged schools in Powys ... Some go over the border into other counties (Llandrindod Staff)</i>
Evidence of good practice and lessons learned from John Beddoes/Newtown school merger?	<i>A precedent has been set of merging schools in Powys ... Have you gone into speak with middle managers there to see if that has led to an improved range of subjects? If so are there any documents so we can read that please? Because it seems obvious that you would do that first before presenting that model to us (Llandrindod Staff)</i>

6. Secondary School Workshops

Main issues and themes from secondary school pupils

Introduction

Overview of Workshops

6.1 ORS facilitated and reported discussion sessions with Builth Wells High School and Llandrindod High School pupils aged between 11 and 18 (key stages 3 to 5; year groups 7 to 13). All year groups were invited to nominate a number of pupils to attend. The point or purpose of these workshops was to allow PCC to engage with, and listen to, existing pupils - and to elicit their opinions, queries and concerns on the proposed changes. They also offered the pupils an opportunity to become more informed about the consultation process, the case for change and the proposals themselves.

6.2 The workshops were held and attended as follows:

Figure 53: Details of the Secondary School pupil workshops

Location	Date	Approx. no. of attendees
Builth Wells High School	Friday 8th April 2016	66
Llandrindod High School	Monday 18th April 2016	60

1.1 ORS worked in collaboration with PCC to agree a suitable agenda and informative stimulus material for the meeting, which covered the following topics:

- Awareness of the consultation;
- Opinion on the case for change;
- Views on proposals; and
- Alternative options

1.2 The participants were encouraged to ask questions throughout.

Reporting

1.3 This section of the report presents the main themes and key points arising from the workshops held at Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools. The opinions expressed were not always unanimous and we have endeavoured to reflect the range of views expressed. Some important common themes emerged from discussions across the workshops and these are reported below; but issues relating to a particular school or key stage have been highlighted. Many quotations have been used, not because we wish to endorse any views, but in order to illustrate some of the more common and important themes and issues.

Awareness of Consultation and Proposals

1.4 The majority of the pupils across all of the workshops were aware of at least some of the proposals - particularly the plans to establish a new dual-stream secondary school operating across the two sites, including the appointment of a new head teacher, senior leadership team and a new Governing Body. There was also knowledge of possible changes for Welsh medium education, although some pupils were not entirely sure of the details of the proposal, or had made/heard incorrect assumptions such as: *'Builth will become a totally Welsh school and this one would be the English school for the area'* (KS3, Llandrindod High School).

1.5 Furthermore, there was confusion and uncertainty more generally among a few of the pupils:

There has been a lot of discussion and debate over the years; one minute there's this and one minute there's that ... it's confusing (KS5, Builth Wells High School)

We're not 100% on anything, it's all very uncertain and we're worried (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

1.6 There was a lack of trust in PCC among some Llandrindod High School pupils, who accused the Council of being biased, mainly due to the alleged inaccuracies within the consultation document. They also criticised the fact that the cabinet would make the final decision rather than the whole county:

There are errors in the consultation document in terms of numbers not adding up ... it does feel very biased towards a school at Builth (School Council, Llandrindod High School)

There are so many mistakes in the document that it seems not much effort has been put into something really important. This is our education we're talking about (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

Who makes the ultimate decision – is it Cabinet or the Council members? All of the Council members are elected and are in good spread, they are not all from Montgomeryshire as the Cabinet seem to be. Also, the Cabinet all seem to be for these proposals anyway, which doesn't seem fair (KS5, Llandrindod High School)

Main Findings

Views on the Case for Change

1.7 The participating pupils at Builth Wells High School, especially those in the Key Stage 3 workshop, generally accepted that changes to the delivery of secondary school education were necessary; they especially recognised the issues within their own school as well as the need to improve the quality of education across Powys:

At the moment we have two teachers sharing a room (KS5, Builth Wells High School)

We need to change something to get good teaching quality provided to everyone (KS5, Builth Wells High School)

1.8 Opinion was more mixed among the Llandrindod High School workshops. Those who rejected the case for change argued that their school was *'fine as it is'* and delivered *'some of the best A Level and GCSE results around'*. Others questioned whether the school's unsatisfactory performance was due to *'a blip*

with certain pupils' or 'a small minority of children who don't strive to learn' rather than long-term issues. PCC was also accused of focussing on money rather than education.

- 1.9 Others were sceptical that the proposals would have any positive impact on education or saving money, and felt that they were merely a means for PCC to appear to be proactive:

It feels like we're being messed around just so that PCC can 'do something'. People in the school and the community can't really see how it will change anything or save money, but feel that it's just change for the sake of change (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

How many pupils' education will have to be played with before we get a genuine outcome that makes a genuine difference? (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

- 1.10 The consultation itself was blamed creating uncertainty and thereby exacerbating the issues with teaching quality by discouraging new teachers to the school:

People thinking that this school is under threat is actually affecting the teaching here and puts teachers off coming here (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

- 1.11 Nevertheless, a large proportion of pupils identified and discussed the poor quality of education and teaching within their school which they felt needed to be improved, such as:

The shortage of permanent teachers and the over-reliance on supply staff

The supply teachers are different each time and it's not really their subject. They do their best but they don't really know how we've been learning (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

We've had six ICT teachers this year because they keep leaving (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

The SEN (Special Educational Needs) provision at Llandrindod is short staffed (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

The lack of specialist teachers

The school needs to change slightly ... teachers are teaching outside of their specialisms which is an issue (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

We had a science lesson where we knew more than the teacher because it wasn't her subject! (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

There's a pretty poor standard of teaching here. In maths we don't learn anything because the teacher is pretty bad because she's not a specialist maths teacher (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

The lack of subject choices for GCSE and A Level

We would like more choice at GCSE (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

One of my friends wanted to do music at GCSE but because there wasn't much demand they had to merge it with drama to make 'performing arts' which is not good for her (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

They (both schools) can't offer people the choices they would have at a bigger school; at GCSE and A Level people are stuck with qualifications they don't want (KS5, Llandrindod High School)

1.12 Issues with the school's facilities were also mentioned:

Our sixth form common room is tiny; we can't study there because it is too small and there is no ICT that works (KS5, Llandrindod High School)

The toilets need improving (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

We've got no rugby pitch although we have a rugby team; there are no posts or proper white lines or anything (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

There are a few places in the school that need a bit of structural work; in our form water drips on us from the skylight if it's raining heavily (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

1.13 A member of the school council supported the need to change by reasoning, *'If we don't change anything how will it improve?'*

Proposal for a new dual-stream medium secondary school

Questions and queries

1.14 Students asked many questions about the proposal to establish a new dual-stream secondary school across the current two sites, which were focused around the following:

How the new school would be funded; the amount of savings that would arise from the merger; how the savings would be made and how they would be re-invested;

The benefits for pupils of one school over two sites compared with the current set-up;

Whether the schools would be brought out of special measures;

How the changes might affect education and the curriculum;

Whether teachers would lose their jobs, have to re-apply, or be required to travel between the two schools;

Who the new head teacher would be and what would happen if no one applied for job. A Builth pupil also suggested that a *'professional business manager'* would be better suited to the role than someone from a teaching background;

Whether the timetables of the two sites would be synchronised in terms of the start/finish times and number of lessons per day;

Whether the schools' current name, uniform and number of pupils would be change;

Whether the current school rules would change, for example: *'In Llandrindod we can't have phones on site but in Builth they are on allowed on break and at lunch; would rules like that change?'* (KS3, Llandrindod High School);

Whether the current school councils would remain separate or be required to merge; and

How sports events would be handled, such as competitions and sports days.

Concerns

- 1.15 Pupils in both schools were sceptical as to whether one head teacher and senior leadership team across two sites would benefit pupils or teachers. Concerns included:

The additional work the teachers would be required to take on might increase stress levels and reduce the amount of time, support and guidance for pupils; larger workloads would warrant larger salaries, this impacting on the aspirations to save money from the proposals

The heads of departments and specialist teachers will have more to do because they have more pupils and thus they will have more stress. This could result in sickness and people leaving which again will mean less consistency for pupils (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

One head teacher spread between two sites doesn't really sound better to me; they will be spread too thinly and won't be able to dedicate enough time either (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

Wouldn't that be cause for an increase in their salaries because of the increased stress? (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

In a school of 1,000 plus pupils, how will you make sure they have access to adequate and through support at all levels? (KS4, Builth Wells High School)

The head teacher and leadership team not being at a school site when needed

If you needed to go and see the head teacher with your parents, they may need to take time off work to go to the Builth site as it would be further away (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

If there is a head of department shared between sites, pupils won't as easily be able to go and see them. That could affect standards of education if you need help there and then (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

What would happen if something kicked off on site and the senior staff were all at the other? (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

Whether heads of department on the senior leadership team would spend more time on management and administration than teaching – this is considered to be waste of specialist teachers.

- 1.16 The additional travel which might be required between the two sites and the negative impact this would have on recruitment, current staff and pupils were discussed. Concerns included:

Travelling between sites would lessen the time for learning or require a longer school day.

Travelling takes time away from lessons, will more travelling happen? (KS4, Builth Wells High School)

How would transportation between the two sites be arranged and would it detract from lessons in any way? Would you have to lengthen the school day to make sure this doesn't have an effect? (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

Students would further suffer if staff - especially specialist teachers - spent more time travelling and less time in the classroom.

If specialist teachers are having to travel more between sites, aren't we taking away from people's education because they are having to wait for the teacher to arrive from the other sites? (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

You wouldn't have as close connections with teachers if they are split over two sites (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

If required to travel between sites potential new staff may be put off of coming to the school, thus hindering PCC's aim to encourage specialist, good quality teaching to the area.

Who is going to come to work in a school where staff are having to move from one site to another? (School Council, Llandrindod High School)

Families might also be discouraged from moving to the area.

What families would move to an area where pupils would have to move from one site to another? (School Council, Llandrindod High School)

The cost of travel for both pupils and staff would undermine PCC's plan to save money.

Have you taken into account the teachers' fuel to travel between sites and buses for pupils as well if there is one school? (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

Transportation of pupils between the two sites should not be put on parents – the school should be providing it but that would be the extra cost? (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

- 1.17 Another worry, identified particularly by Llandrindod pupils, was the extent to which the proposals would affect staff. While some were concerned about teachers losing their jobs and how this uncertainty in itself might affect teaching quality, others felt unsettled about having different teachers. Overall pupils argued that being taught by their current teachers, who they 'know well' was important, providing consistency that they valued:

Will our current teachers have to re-apply for their jobs? That will increase insecurity which could affect our education going forward (School Council, Llandrindod High School)

Would we have some of the teachers from Builth coming here? How would that affect our GCSEs? Because we would have to get used to the teachers we don't know (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

I think if the schools merge and we have different teachers it will be the same situation but worse because we will have to get used to a whole new set of staff who will all have different ways of teaching and won't know what we're used to (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

- 1.18 Additional, specific concerns raised about the two schools merging into one were as follows:

How having a larger school with more pupils would impact on: classroom sizes, which some felt would become too big and impact on both learning and bonding with fellow students; more children 'slipping through the net'; and too many students for the availability of places on school trips and similar opportunities;

Whether the support currently provided at Llandrindod High School for pupils with autism and additional learning needs would be impacted. Concern that special educational needs students might struggle with the changes more than others was also highlighted

Some of the SEN pupils will struggle with the change and it will be quite hard for them to deal with (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

What about autistic spectrum support? How will it be affected? The support I received has impacted hugely on me in the way that I have developed my life and I would like to know that it will not be negatively impacted on. It is also especially important to support people on the autistic spectrum through the process of change as it is very difficult for them (KS5, Llandrindod High School)

We have an additional learning needs department here – will there be one across both sites in the future? If they have to travel across both sites then you could disadvantage some of our most vulnerable pupils (School Council, Llandrindod High School)

Creating a united school may be problematic because pupils from the two schools have ‘rivalries’ and ‘do not get on well’

Whether pupils who technically live closer to one of the schools, but currently attend the other would be required to move sites;

The ‘individuality’ of the schools would be lost; and

The cost of a new uniform if parents were expected to pay for it.

- 1.19 The negative influence of the consultation and uncertain future on staff recruitment was also raised; pupils also feared that specialist and good quality teachers would not be attracted to the school:

If you’re saying you want the best staff, this will probably mean recruiting some new people. Who would want to come to a school that is going through a significant transition process and potentially going to close? (School Council, Llandrindod High School)

I read somewhere that under the proposals a shuffle of the senior leadership would enable more specialist teachers to be appointed at both sites, but how is this possible? Wouldn’t people be less likely to apply for a job here due to the instability? (KS5, Llandrindod High School)

Would the instability created by a reshuffle make the situation worse? It could cause people to leave or make it difficult to attract some good new staff (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

- 1.20 Others in the Llandrindod workshops could not understand how bringing two schools together - both of them in special measures - could possibly improve anything. Furthermore, they said that ‘Builth and Llandrindod already work closely together, so is there any point implementing these proposals?’

Considering both sites are in special measures, aren’t you just bringing two bad things together if you merge the governing bodies? You haven’t got one that’s better than the other (like Newton and John Beddoes) that can drag the other one up. And if they can’t work well in a small environment, how will you do it in a bigger place? (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

You could have the best leadership team in the world but it’s all down to the kids. There is an issue with discipline here but only with a small minority. If the schools are merged we’ll still be in special measures so what would be the point? It has to result in an improvement (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

Support

- 1.21 Pupils in the Builth Wells workshops were generally quite accepting and positive about the plans, and one student reasoned:

Personally I think it's a good idea to put the two schools together – controversial but good. If it means schooling is going to improve, surely it's a good thing? (KS5, Builth Wells High School)

- 1.22 Some in Llandrindod Wells viewed the proposals as a compromise position for not completely closing their school, whilst others (particularly in Key Stage 3) acknowledged some potential benefits of the proposal. Some discussed current issues with their education which they hoped would improve under the new school such as:

An improvement in teaching standards with staff re-applying for their jobs and ensuring teaching their specialist subjects

We've got teachers teaching subjects they're not qualified in at the moment. If we merged would specialist teachers be able to move across both sites to make sure we're taught by people who know what they're talking about? (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

The one good thing about teachers having to re-apply for their jobs again is that we would end up with the best teachers in this area (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

I think a major benefit of one school across two sites would be the process of reappointing the staff. People at the end of their teaching career who aren't performing as well as they should might be encouraged to leave (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

A better range of subject availability for GCSE and A-Level

We were wondering how GCSEs would be affected if this did happen; would we have more choice about what subjects we could take? (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

It would be nice to have another language to take; we only have French but Spanish or something would be good (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

Would we get a greater range of pre A Level college courses as well as a greater range of GCSEs if we merge, such as fashion courses etc. rather than just mechanics, business, construction and agriculture? (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

Improvements to parts of the school which were in a poor condition as well as facilities and technology

Would the money saved be spent on new facilities and on improving new buildings? We're apparently a bit behind on technology here and some parts of the school are run down (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

The possibility of a single secondary school site in the Builth Wells area

- 1.23 Pupils put various questions to PCC about their aspiration for a single school: the location; when it would be built; the costs involved and how it would be funded and what would happen to the original school sites:

Where would you get the money from for a new school? (KS3, Builth Wells High School)

What would happen to this building if it did close? (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

Is there any chance of it being built here? If not, what will happen to the Builth/Llandrindod sites? (KS5, Builth Wells High School)

If we become a 'super school', when are they thinking of building it? (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

Where is the ideal proposed site? (KS5, Llandrindod High School)

How many new pupils would be in a new school? (KS4, Builth Wells High School)

- 1.24 There was no strong opposition to this possible future outcome from pupils in Builth Wells High School; furthermore Key Stage 3 pupils thought that having a new school was a good idea. This was also the case for a minority of Llandrindod pupils:

I would prefer to go to a brand new school (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

If they did build a new school teachers would be attracted there because they know they'll have a stable job (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

- 1.25 However, many pupils in the Llandrindod workshops felt unsettled by the uncertain future for their school; that it was unfair that despite the current proposal for the school to stay open, *'the possible closure in a few years is still floating about, which is really affecting the views of the community here.'* Some believed that the proposal was *'just a precursor to one larger school in the future'*. As such, one pupil described the students as *'feeling like guinea pigs that are being tested on just to see if things work.'*

- 1.26 Unsurprisingly then, there was a strong preference among the Llandrindod sessions for a permanent new school across the two sites. The main concern about a single site school – which was also raised by a few pupils in the Builth Wells sessions – was the extra travel involved:

Other people will be travelling from all over Powys if you make it central here on one single site (KS5, Builth Wells High School)

Will some students eventually have to travel further for school? (KS4, Builth Wells High School)

I don't think closure is necessary – I wouldn't want to be going all the way to Builth every day and it would be a longer school day (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

If pupils have to go to Builth it's an extra 20 minutes on the bus and so there's less spare time (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

Wherever you put a single school would be to the detriment of some pupils from one of the areas (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

- 1.27 Pupils were also concerned that the closure of Llandrindod High School would negatively impact on the local area; they felt that families would be discouraged from moving to Llandrindod, affecting primary school numbers, businesses and the 'community feel'. Whether or not the leisure centre would continue was also questioned:

It wouldn't be very good for the area if the school was to close. Young families wouldn't come here to live and then all the primary schools would have to close because there would be less

and less pupils. It would also affect all the other community facilities in the area (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

Most people think that if the school is merged and then a new one is built on one site it will negatively affect the town (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

Will the leisure centre be able to run without the school? (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

- 1.28 Some argued that the uncertainty around the future of Llandrindod High School would further hinder the recruitment of good quality teachers or lead to the overall loss of teaching jobs in the area:

If you say you want the best staff, that will probably mean recruiting some new people; but who would want to come to a school that will potentially close in the future? (School Council, Llandrindod High School)

If they built one big school some of the teachers might not get a job there and they would have to move away (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

- 1.29 Pupils also explained that depending on where they lived, some pupils might not attend a secondary school in Builth and go to Llanbister or to other schools instead:

Would the people in Llanbister have to go to Newtown if they closed Llandrindod because that would be closer than Builth? (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

If there was only one site in Builth they wouldn't be using it to their full capacity because people to the north of Llandrindod would be going to schools in North Powys because they're closer (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

The future of post-16 education

Support for a single sixth form centre

- 1.30 Builth Wells pupils recognised the limited range of subjects and facilities available for post-16 education at their school; accepted that changes needed to be made and generally supported having a single sixth form:

The sixth form issues such as the courses and the travelling definitely need to be dealt with (KS5, Builth Wells High School)

We're quite limited with the space we have in the sixth form study room; we get kicked out if a class comes in and we only have seven computers for all of sixth form (KS5, Builth Wells High School)

I currently travel to Carmarthenshire for one subject and it takes about an hour (KS5, Builth Wells High School)

I do definitely feel it should be one sixth form (KS5, Builth Wells High School)

One of my essay subjects is not available in the county. It would definitely be an advantage to expand the number of courses; it's very important to a lot of people (KS5, Builth Wells High School)

Although I'm quite happy with the sixth form as it is, I would like to take Spanish, which I'm not sure I can take there at the moment (KS3, Builth Wells High School)

- 1.31 Furthermore, despite the general opposition to a single-site secondary school for years 7 to 11, many of the Llandrindod pupils agreed that there were potential advantages of a single-site sixth form, such as a wider choice of subjects, better facilities and more flexibility. It was hoped that these improvements would attract more pupils and good quality teachers:

There is a need to make changes within the schools like having a sixth form on one site (KS5, Llandrindod High School)

There would be a benefit to having A Levels on one site to consolidate subjects and teachers there – that would attract good teachers and pupils. But you don't need one big school for that, just use one of the existing sites (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

If you provided sixth form in one area you could provide more subjects there and have a critical mass of pupils (School Council, Llandrindod High School)

If there was a larger sixth form they could organise the option blocks so that people can do what they want (KS5, Llandrindod High School)

- 1.32 The possibility of travelling to Builth was not considered to be an issue for one pupil from Llandrindod, while another explained that the discussions between the pupils and PCC during the workshop had made them feel much more reassured about a single-site sixth form centre:

I don't think going to Builth for A Levels is much of an issue because some people are already travelling to Hereford (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

Before I came here I did strongly disagree with the idea because I thought it would be a disadvantage for sixth form, but I've changed my mind a bit (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

- 1.33 However, a current Key Stage 4 Llandrindod pupil felt frustrated that any changes would not come into effect for a few years yet, which 'won't positively benefit me going into sixth form in September this year - I won't get any of the extra options will I?'

Further Suggestions

- 1.34 Continuing their discussions about a single sixth form centre, pupils in the Llandrindod workshops debated whether a single site would be best placed within a school or college environment. Some talked about how impressed they were with Hereford College and how a college would attract more pupils from further afield:

We could offer something like Hereford around here; it would be much better and would be a completely 'sixth form atmosphere' (KS5, Llandrindod High School)

When I went to Hereford open day and it felt a lot more independent and had much more of a 'college feel' (KS5, Llandrindod High School)

It makes sense to me to build a sixth form college in the area; people from other areas like Brecon and Gwernyfed would come (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

- 1.35 On the other hand, some argued that a school-based sixth form (located at Llandrindod) would allow students to continue to be taught by teachers with whom they have built relationships over the years, which would be beneficial:

(Post 16 education) should be linked to the school because I like how my teachers at GCSE teach me now; I prefer being taught by people who have taught me throughout my education (School Council, Llandrindod High School)

College-based provision is great but there is a benefit of having some school-based sixth form provision because we can be taught by the same teachers who know us well (KS5, Llandrindod High School)

Maybe some smaller study areas around the school (based on subject area) would be best (KS5, Llandrindod High School)

Concerns about a single sixth form centre

- 1.36 Despite many of pupils being positive about a single sixth form centre, some queried or were cautious about its location and a main concern was having to travel further to study and the costs involved:

A lot of friends have to travel – is the sixth form going to be central? (KS5, Builth Wells High School)

Will we be required to travel to Llandrindod? (KS4, Builth Wells High School)

If we have to travel, it's education time on the road (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

I travel to Builth and it's much easier now I can drive, but it was hard in year 12 (KS5, Llandrindod High School)

If you had the sixth form in one place you would have to ship everyone from here to Builth; wouldn't that be a cost in terms of transporting pupils down there? (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

- 1.37 Some also stated how unsettled they felt about the uncertain future for post-16 education; one student had been so affected they had decided on Hereford College instead of Llandrindod High School:

It's really concerning because we don't know if we're going to have an education here (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

We in year 11 are concerned that we would be starting sixth form in Llandrindod and would then have to move to Builth once the proposals are implemented (KS5, Llandrindod High School)

I'm going to Hereford College. What you're doing now seems beneficial to years 7, 8 and 9, but the uncertainty for older pupils means it isn't worth staying. I am going to study something I could easily do here, but the uncertainty around where I would have to do it and who would be delivering means it just isn't worth it (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

- 1.38 In addition, a few Builth Wells pupils queried whether or not any changes would affect the entry requirements for sixth form and if class sizes would increase.

Support for retaining the sixth forms over two sites

- 1.39 One Llandrindod pupil argued that providing sixth form over two sites would offer more flexibility for students who were interested in studying a diverse range of subjects whilst another suggested that the streams could be split so that Llandrindod would provide post-16 English medium education and Builth Wells would provide the Welsh medium education:

If a student wants to take the core subjects they could be blocked together so they can take humanities in one school and the more mathematical, science-based subjects in the other (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

We have no Welsh unit here and I know a lot of the sixth form travel to Builth anyway. So you could have just A-Level Welsh subjects at Builth and all A-Level English pupils could come here; that would make both sites more sustainable (KS3, Llandrindod High School)

- 1.40 A few Llandrindod pupils did not agree that the schools were not offering a sufficient range of subjects and felt it was most important for a sixth form school to offer the 'core subjects' recognised for university entry, and for college to provide vocational subjects:

Sixth form has been so diversified and in some ways I feel it just needs to offer the core subjects. A college is there to provide the other more vocational and 'different' ones (KS5, Llandrindod High School)

The current system may not provide as wide a range of vocational studies as Powys would like, but it does provide the subjects the Russell Group universities ask for (KS4, Llandrindod High School)

Proposal for Welsh Medium Education

- 1.41 Some Builth Wells pupils in the Key Stage 3 workshop felt that there were issues with the current provision of Welsh stream education and that their high school was the most appropriate site to improve quality:

Welsh education needs to be improved and Builth is the right place to build on it (KS3, Builth Wells High School)

I came here from Brecon because there weren't many lessons available in Welsh; there weren't many of us and it was the same teacher teaching lots of things. I've seen an improvement since I came here (KS3, Builth Wells High School)

- 1.42 Furthermore, one of the pupils who moved from Brecon to Builth Wells High School for Welsh medium education said that their travel time 'was about the same' as before.

- 1.43 However, a pupil from Llandrindod High School felt that additional travel from the Brecon area would ultimately put students off continuing with their Welsh medium education, resulting in a further reduction of Welsh medium pupils, bearing in mind PCC's aim to increase numbers:

How many people do you know will be able to travel from Brecon to Builth for the Welsh-stream? It may also be a less popular option for people if it isn't offered in as many places; it seems counter-productive if you're trying to boost the numbers of Welsh-medium pupils at Powys schools (KS5, Llandrindod High School)

7. Primary School Workshops

Main issues and themes from primary school pupils

Overview of Workshops

7.1 ORS facilitated and reported on the findings of deliberative workshops with primary school children aged between six and 11 from each of the affected catchment areas (some of whom were members of their school councils). All feeder primary schools were invited to nominate a number of children to attend. The point or purpose of these workshops was to allow PCC to engage with, and listen to, children who will be beginning their secondary school education in the next one to five years – and to elicit their opinions, queries and concerns on the proposed changes. They also offered the children an opportunity to become more informed about the consultation process, the case for change and the proposals themselves.

7.2 The workshops were held and attended as follows:

Figure 54: Details of the Primary School workshops

Catchment Area	Location and Date	Schools Attended	Approx. no. of attendees
Builth	Builth Wells Primary School Thursday 12 th May 2016	Builth Wells Primary School Ysgol Dolafon Franksbridge County Primary School Irfon Valley Community Primary School Llanelwedd Church in Wales Primary School Newbridge-On-Wye Primary School	45
Llandrindod	Llandrindod Wells Primary School - Cefnlllys Monday 16 th May 2016	Llandrindod Wells Primary School – Cefnlllys Crossgates County Primary School Dolau Primary School Trefonen Church of England Primary School	50

- 1.1 Throughout this chapter, quotations have been attributed to the primary school that made the comment, as well as the catchment area of the meeting as appropriate. Some of the comments are direct quotations, while others are taken from the summarised accounts of the main issues made by ORS staff and posters created by the pupils.
- 1.2 As well as confirming that the overall workshops programme was conscientious and comprehensive, ORS can certify that the main issues were presented fairly and clearly at the four sessions we facilitated.
- 1.3 The workshops were held at convenient times during the children’s school day. The schools which held the sessions were carefully chosen to have sufficient capacity; to be accessible in every sense; and to be accessible for all primary schools within the catchment area.

Discussion agenda

- 1.4 ORS worked in collaboration with PCC to agree a suitable agenda and informative stimulus material for the meetings, which covered the following topics and activities:

- What the participants know about the consultation;
- The case for change;
- The proposals;
- Comments and questions;
- Poster making activity and presentation of views; and
- Questions and answers

- 1.5 The pupils were encouraged to ask questions throughout the sessions.

Reporting

- 1.6 This section of the report presents the main themes and key points arising from the Builth and Llandrindod catchment workshops. The opinions expressed were not always unanimous, but we have endeavoured to reflect the range of views expressed. Some important common themes emerged from discussions across both of the workshops and these are reported below; but issues relating to a particular catchment area or school have been highlighted. Many quotations have been used, not because we wish to endorse any views, but in order to illustrate some of the more common and important themes and issues.

Awareness of Consultation and Proposals

- 1.7 Most of the pupils, if not all, had heard about the consultation and had received a questionnaire to complete. They also had some knowledge about the proposals to close Builth and Llandrindod High Schools and establish a new dual-stream secondary school (over two sites) to replace them; have one head teacher over both sites and to consolidate Welsh medium education and deliver it from the Builth Wells site. They were also aware of the possible future plan for a single site school in the Builth Wells area.
- 1.8 However, a minority were unsure about the finer details of proposals and incorrectly thought that the plans included Welsh-stream education being discontinued in their primary school; Welsh-stream education being provided over two sites and splitting the year groups so that year 8 pupils go to the Builth site and Year 9 pupils to Llandrindod. In addition, a pupil felt that the questionnaire was '*too complicated for a six year old*' to complete, despite a 'primary' version being available.

Main Findings

Views on the Case for Change

- 1.9 Pupils were asked why they thought PCC was considering changes to the delivery of secondary education in Llandrindod and Builth Wells High Schools. In response, pupils across all of the workshops identified the need to save money and improve education as the main reasons. However, despite understanding some of the issues, many pupils urged PCC to keep the two schools as they are; to '*put pupils before money*' and to '*stop interfering*' with their education:

The schools are fine as they are! (Franksbridge County Primary School, Builth)

Keep it the same; we don't want it to change (Cefnlllys Primary School, Llandrindod)

It's our future you're interfering with (Builth Wells Primary School, Builth)

Proposal for a new dual-stream secondary school

1.10 Having one head teacher and senior leadership team to cover the two sites was a main issue for many of the pupils, who had specific concerns which included:

The task of managing two schools would be burdensome and extra hard work, resulting in tiredness and stress which could affect performance

It's a big responsibility for one head teacher (Ysgol Dolafon, Builth)

One person cannot be in two places at the same time – what if something happens? This will put a lot of pressure on whoever becomes head teacher (Builth Wells Primary School, Builth)

It will be tiring for the new head teacher going from one school to another. A tired head teacher will not set a good example to pupils (Newbridge-on-Wye Primary School, Builth)

Whether it is possible to manage both schools properly

If the head teacher and one of the deputies are both in a meeting how would this be managed? (Llanelwedd Church in Wales Primary School, Builth)

We could get sent to the head teacher's office and they'd be in another school! (Newbridge-on-Wye Primary School, Builth)

How would having one head teacher improve quality of education?

If the grades are falling and you say (the changes) are for education, what is one head teacher going to do to make it better? (Trefonen Church of England Primary School, Llandrindod)

How would having one head teacher for two schools benefit our learning? (Dolau Primary School, Llandrindod)

Pupils were sceptical over how much money would be saved, especially once travel costs for staff are taken into account

How much money will having just one head teacher save? I think it will save a bit, but probably not enough to make a big difference (Ysgol Dolafon, Builth)

They said that there will be two deputies but what's the point? Isn't that just more expense? (Builth Wells Primary School, Builth)

If they have two schools and one head teacher, who will be paying for the fuel traveling back and forth? (Franksbridge County Primary School, Builth)

1.11 Pupils were also concerned about the detrimental effect the consultation and proposed changes could have:

Whether primary school funding would be affected by changes to secondary schools:

Lots of money seems to be going on secondary schools. Will there be enough for primary schools as well? (Irfon Valley Community Primary School, Builth)

Sometimes Builth High School helps out the primary schools but the plans may change this (Llanelwedd Church in Wales Primary School, Builth)

Does the money that goes towards primary schools affect what's happening in the secondary schools? (Irfon Valley Community Primary School, Builth)

Many of the pupils felt unsettled and stressed about the future and lack of decision. They felt this would affect their performance

Why are there so many proposals and nothing actually happening? (Newbridge-On-Wye Primary School, Builth)

If the Council do not decide by the time I get to secondary school it will be really unsettling for the children (Crossgates County Primary School, Llandrindod)

I feel stressed, uncertain and unprepared (Trefonen Church of England Primary School, Llandrindod)

If there are children doing exams they will be worried; their grades will go down (Cefnlllys Primary School, Llandrindod)

Uncertainties around job security might affect the quality of teaching

Teachers will be worrying about the changes which may affect their performance (Llanelwedd Church in Wales Primary School, Builth)

Teachers may lose their jobs (Llanelwedd Church in Wales Primary School, Builth)

The teachers may not be teaching their best because of worrying (Llanelwedd Church in Wales Primary School, Builth)

Pupils said that parents had found the proposals 'worrying', 'confusing' and 'annoying'.

- 1.12 Pupils said that buying a new school uniform and learning new school rules were a waste of money and time. Some pupils also observed that their siblings were currently attending the secondary schools and they would no longer be able to 'give advice' if the schools were closed.
- 1.13 Specific queries about the plans included: where large school events involving both schools (such as concerts) would be located; how exactly the teachers were expected to raise standards; whether pupils would be required to travel between the two sites for different subjects; what the new school name would be and what the new badge would look like.
- 1.14 Despite the general opposition and concern about the plans, some of the pupils from Llanelwedd and Trefonnen Primary Schools believed that the two schools would be 'stronger' together, provide a better quality of education and make much needed savings from fewer staff:

One head teacher saves money (Llanelwedd Church in Wales Primary School, Builth)

We'd have better education bringing everyone together (Llanelwedd Church in Wales Primary School, Builth)

Two high schools could bring more strength (Llanelwedd Church in Wales Primary School, Builth)

Less money will be spent on less staff (Llanelwedd Church in Wales Primary School, Builth)

The possibility of a single site high school in the Builth Wells area

- 1.15 Many of the pupils in both the Builth and Llandrindod catchment areas were largely opposed to and worried about the possible future plans for a single school in the Builth Wells area, which many referred to as a ‘super school’:

Save our school! We are worried about the future of both schools and don't want a new one (Cefnlllys Primary School, Llandrindod)

They are both good schools already, so if the Council do close them down they won't save money (Cefnlllys Primary School, Llandrindod)

We don't want a 'super school' (Franksbridge County Primary School, Builth)

Stop closing smaller schools (Franksbridge County Primary School, Builth)

- 1.16 Pupils in the Llandrindod catchment area were particularly concerned about the implications of not having a local high school; they felt that a single school would have a detrimental impact on education, quality of life, local communities and relations with fellow pupils:

The increase in travel impacting on pupils' quality of life. Crossgates primary school suggested that a new school could be located somewhere between the existing two sites

People will have to travel even further than they do already (Irfon Valley Community Primary School, Builth)

We don't want to travel because it wastes our time (Dolau Primary School, Llandrindod)

If the school wasn't in Builth it would affect us – we would have to get up earlier and get the bus. Most children can walk to school (Crossgates County Primary School, Llandrindod)

You should not be getting up at 6am to get to school; it's too early and people would be really tired (Crossgates County Primary School, Llandrindod)

Not having a local high school would cause some families to leave the area and discourage new ones from moving in - impacting negatively on communities, businesses and existing school clubs

If there was no school in Llandrindod nobody would want to live there (Crossgates County Primary School, Llandrindod)

If there was a new secondary school and it wasn't in our area we wouldn't want to travel so we'd move out of the area (Crossgates County Primary School, Llandrindod)

Our sports will get ruined (Crossgates County Primary School, Llandrindod)

It will affect our clubs (Llandrindod catchment area)

A larger school may result in more bullying and conflict between children

Would bullying be worse? (Franksbridge County Primary School, Builth)

We need to go to school to get a better education but you are always scared of going to a new school – there could be more bullies at bigger schools (Crossgates County Primary School, Llandrindod)

There will be more bullies and less friendship. (Newbridge-on-Wye Primary School, Builth)

The class sizes would be too big, impacting on the quality of learning and teaching - GCSE and A-Level students would suffer most. Whether more supervision would be required was also discussed

The class sizes will be too big (Builth Wells Primary School, Builth)

There will be too many pupils for one teacher to cope with (Newbridge-On-Wye Primary School, Builth)

A 'super school' will affect those doing A Levels and GCSEs because there will be too many pupils (Newbridge-on-Wye Primary School, Builth)

Will more supervision be needed for a super school? (Franksbridge County Primary School, Builth)

We would get less help and support (Llandrindod catchment area)

There would be too many pupils to share the resources and facilities on offer

There won't be enough space, especially in the dining hall (Builth Wells Primary School, Builth)

The toilets would be an issue! (Newbridge-On-Wye Primary School, Builth)

Additional concerns about attending a larger school such as not knowing the teachers and getting lost

Recruitment could be an issue due to the lack of available teachers in one area, and many would not want to travel

There are not enough teachers in the area; some teacher won't want to travel further (Newbridge-On-Wye Primary School, Builth)

- 1.17 Pupils also asked why a new building would be an improvement, how long it would take to build and why the current buildings could not be updated instead:

How do you know that a new building would be better? How is it fair to local people? (Ysgol Dolafon, Builth)

Would a new building fix all of the issues? (Ysgol Dolafon, Builth)

How long would a new school take to build? (Ysgol Dolafon, Builth)

Why can't the current buildings be made better? (Ysgol Dolafon, Builth)

Why not just do the repairs? (Newbridge-on-Wye Primary School, Builth)

- 1.18 The cost of building a new school and how it would be funded was discussed among the Franksbridge and Ifron Valley pupils:

Where would all the money come from to carry out these changes? (Franksbridge County Primary School, Builth)

It will cost too much to build a new school (Irfon Valley Community Primary School, Builth)

Proposal for Welsh-medium education

1.19 The plans to continue Welsh-medium education in Builth Wells High school but not Brecon met with some criticism from pupils in Builth catchment area schools, the reasons for which included:

The travel distance to Builth High School for Welsh speaking pupils from Brecon was considered to be too far. Pupils were also concerned about being far from home should they become ill at school. Some were also sceptical about how much money would be saved under this plan bearing in mind the increased transport costs

The costs of the additional buses they will have to put on will be high (Builth Wells Primary School, Builth)

Pupils from Brecon will have to travel very far (Builth Wells Primary School, Builth)

There would be too many Welsh-stream pupils in Builth Wells High School, resulting in it becoming too crowded

There won't be enough room; when Brecon come in there will be issues with providing school dinners (Builth Wells Primary School)

Will there be enough space for everyone in the school yard? (Builth Wells Primary School)

There will be a lot of people in the Welsh unit (Llanelwedd Church in Wales Primary School, Builth)

It will be too busy in Builth if Brecon come (Irfon Valley Community Primary School, Builth)

English and Welsh speaking friends who had both attended Brecon High School would be separated

We are worried about splitting Welsh and English pupils (Ysgol Dolafon, Builth)

1.20 Some pupils from Newbridge-on-Wye Primary School suggested an alternative of introducing Welsh-stream education on the Llandrindod site as well and two head teachers – one for each language.

8. Public Meetings

Main issues and themes from the public meetings

- 8.1 This chapter is in two parts: the first provides an overview of the public meeting process and the second is a concise review of the main issues raised by participants.
- 8.2 The public meetings were held at the Sports Hall, Leisure Centre, Builth Wells on 13 April 2016 and at The Pavilion, Llandrindod Wells on 14 April 2016. Each meeting received a standard presentation from PCC on the proposed changes, followed by a question and answer session between participants and a panel of PCC staff. Around 175 people attended over the two sessions.

Overview of the Meeting Process

- 8.3 Public meetings in Builth Wells and Llandrindod Wells formed an important part of the consultation arranged by PCC. Meetings were chaired by ORS as an independent of PCC.
- 8.4 In order to report the issues raised at the meetings a senior ORS staff member took detailed notes. Summary reports were then produced from these notes together with the recordings of the meetings. These reports form the basis of this combined summary chapter.
- 8.5 Throughout this chapter, quotations have been attributed to the location of the meeting. Some of the comments are direct quotations, and others are taken from the summarised accounts of the main issues recorded.
- 8.6 As well as confirming that the overall meetings programme was conscientious and comprehensive, ORS can certify that the main issues were presented fairly and clearly at the meetings we attended.
- 8.7 Public meetings were held during the evening and due to the high demand for spaces there was a pre-register so that spaces could be allocated on a first come first served basis. Where pre-registration demonstrated need, PCC organised additional spaces and locations to be linked into the main meeting space through the use of audio and visual links. The venues were carefully chosen to be local, have sufficient capacity and to be accessible in every sense.

Main Themes Raised at the Public Meetings

Community Impacts

- 8.8 The community in Llandrindod is very concerned about the long term economic future of the town if the high school were to close now or in the future. The proposals for a single school over two sites have done little to reassure the community about the long-term future of the school because of the PCC aspiration to locate a new build school at Builth. The main issues of concern are presented below:

The prospect of a downturn in economic development and investment in the town

The thing you should be getting from this meeting this evening is you cannot close Builth. You cannot close Llandrindod – you will ruin the towns. You will ruin parents’ access to the schools. Your vision is to keep those two schools open. (Public Meeting Llandrindod)

For a county town, with a county hall where all the council works – it needs a school. Because without the school you will not have jobs; without jobs the children will have no need to learn because they won’t want to live here – I have a 13 year old who wants to go abroad and work as a carpenter because the work in the area is drying up – he can go out of county and earn £10 - £15 per hour more for the same job. But if investment came into the town, that’s going to help it grow - when people look at the area and see it’s got a good school and good leisure facilities. These are all linked and all marry together. Without a school there will be no community. (Public meeting Llandrindod)

Economic challenges will be amplified and accelerated by changes to the High Schools

What has happened is you haven’t got young families in Builth, Rhayader, Llandrindod, Presteigne. We haven’t had economic development to bring them. (Public meeting Llandrindod)

One of the businesses we did bring here was ... supported by the Welsh Assembly – came over with a number of young families and brought new technology of carbon fibre cars ... One of the really strong things that encouraged them to come to Llandod was the High School ... We’ve got to make sure that Powys CC who wants to attract an awful lot of business rates appreciates the fact that in the real world money talks ... you’re chasing the money from the Welsh Assembly not necessarily what’s best for our kids’ education. (Public meeting Llandrindod)

What you need to do is try and attract some teachers to the area. But you can’t attract them here – there are no jobs. If Mr and Mrs Jones are in Birmingham and there’s a job in Llandod High School, they are not going to come for Mrs Jones to teach in Llandod because there’s no job for Mr Jones to do. So you’re just going to keep failing the children of this area. (Public meeting Llandrindod)

You are accountable. Taxpayers pay your wages. Now, the only way the schools are going to thrive and continue to develop and deliver an even standard of education across the county is by having a measured service – that we’re only going to get by attracting investment not just in terms of jobs but in terms of teaching ... when teachers come to an area the last thing they want is to come to a school which has just come out of special measures, is about to be married to another school which has just come out of special measures where the surrounding community schools you are trying to close ... I choose to run (my business) from here because it’s my home town, I was born here and it’s a lovely place to live but it’s slowly dying because of ... the decisions they (Powys CC) make for the town (Public meeting Llandrindod)

Current proposals are leading up to closing the high school in Llandrindod

The concern of this community is that this is a prerequisite to losing their high school. It is inconceivable for this town not to have this school. (Public meeting Llandrindod)

We have a business here in town and one of the big concerns we have ... it is already very difficult to get the staff ... I’m very sorry but the decision you make about closing Llandrindod

school will have no effect on your life at all but it will on everybody in this room (Public meeting Llandrindod)

Lingering uncertainty around the future

For parents with young children, you want to know if there's going to be a school. This participant questions the term 'foreseeable future'. If you're only saving £133k per year and the buildings (in the current proposal) ... it doesn't make sense. (Public meeting Llandrindod)

So that means you would be closing the Llandrindod site? I haven't been reassured tonight. How many members of the panel have children affected by these proposals? It's easy to make these decisions ... (Public meeting Llandrindod)

Quality of Education

- 8.9 The general mood at the meetings was that PCC's current proposals are driven by money saving and removing special measures status rather than providing a solution to the underlying quality issues or raising standards at the schools. Some suggested that the proposals in their current form would actually exacerbate existing pressure on the schools as they are not deliverable but simply a precursor to a single site new build school. Attendees queried how ring fencing teaching posts would raise quality; why the local authority school improvement officers had not achieved improvements in standards; how teachers having less contact time with pupils would drive an improvement in standards and generally asked for fuller explanations of how the proposal would achieve higher quality of teaching and learning. A number of key points were raised as follows:

Further explanations are needed for how the current proposals will lead to improvements in quality given that the same staff would be in post teaching the same classes:

You mentioned about providing different courses and how are we going to do that given that the staff are going to be the same? ... My question is what plans the County Council has to ensure standards continue to rise in future? ... Students travelling from place to place I don't think will improve standards; breadth of choice I don't think will improve standards; having increased class sizes I don't think will improve standards. ... I want you to tell us what difference we will see in the way our children are taught and the provision for the children – not what the organising bodies do. ... It will be the same teachers as you point at as being demotivated as a risk in this document. (Public Meeting Llandrindod)

When you open the new school in September 17 you will have an English medium site at Llandrindod; an English medium site at Builth; a Welsh medium site at Builth and a sixth form site in Builth and a sixth form site in Llandrindod – so you'll still be covering the two sites – exactly the same thing with a different teaching structure ... So how does that impact on current learners? (Public Meeting Builth Wells)

If you are ring fencing all of those staff - good and bad – you're not going to help to raise standards. And I think it's very irresponsible of Powys to have the special measures wiped out by the new school. (Public Meeting Builth Wells)

Under the proposals teachers would have less contact time with pupils

... Currently the head of maths is the best teacher and the one that parents want their children to have when they come to their GCSEs or A levels. So if they're not teaching it can only impact on the quality of the education. (Public Meeting Builth Wells)

I don't see how the proposals will improve the situation. How is education going to be magically bettered just because you have one head of two schools and how having staff travel between schools using up their precious time – travelling rather than making lesson plans and marking (Public Meeting Builth Wells)

Why would there be suddenly specialist teachers if they are still on the two sites? (Public Meeting Builth Wells)

The proposals are regarded as a diversion and will not tackle the underlying quality issues – support the schools as they are now to achieve the standards required; to get them out of special measures and continue to collaborate between schools without changing the structure. Also consider a wider, more strategic approach to improving schools:

This (proposal) is a diversion from what we should be doing and that is supporting those schools to get out of special measures as quickly as they can ... There are opportunities for greater collaboration, cooperation. That's what happens now. We don't need structural change to allow good practice to spread across the schools. And if we are looking at improving and changing our practice, may I humbly suggest that changes in the curricula focus on collaboration between the primary and secondary sectors would actually bring bigger dividends in terms of educational outcomes for our children (Public Meeting Llandrindod)

The Estyn report for both schools is not as it should be – is it not putting extra pressure on the education if reorganisation goes ahead? They are trying really hard to up the quality now (Public Meeting Builth Wells)

I think it's very irresponsible of Powys to have the special measures wiped out by the new school (Public Meeting Builth Wells)

Are the potential benefits to learning really worth this disruption? Shouldn't we have evidence of how this will improve standards? (Public Meeting Builth Wells)

Given the confusion over the current schools modernisation programme, should a line be drawn where we start afresh with a mid-Powys plan taking in Newtown, John Beddoes, Builth, Llandrindod, Gwernyfed and Brecon – looking at delivering an improved 21st century plan to inspire, improve and excite our young people for many years to come and parents, teachers, Governors can fully get behind instead of pitting communities against each other? Having worked with former heads of education at no time have their past or future ideas ever considered shutting Llandrindod – they had visionary plans for the school. It needs looking at together. (Builth Wells Public Meeting)

There will be insufficient funding to make the changes in quality and standards

I wonder if this new proposal is a poisoned chalice for the new Governing Body and they wouldn't actually be able to supply teachers to essentially speaking three different sites: a Welsh medium in Builth, an English medium in Builth and an English medium in Llandrindod to all the subjects from year 7 to 11 and having a subject specialist teacher in each of those classes.

I just don't think it would work. One of the problems now is the falling roles so it's going to get even worse... (Llandrindod Public Meeting)

Transport and Travel

- 8.10 Concerns are raised around the potential impacts on educational standards if pupils are taught across two sites – particularly at key stage 3 and 4. Moreover, attendees wanted clarification around whether or not pupils would have to travel between sites during the school day which could impact on their learning. A number of concerns were raised in relation to travel:

The case for changes is contradictory: increased travel for pupils seems to go against the intention to improve quality and there is uncertainty over whether pre-16 pupils would need to travel between sites:

So if you have a school on two sites and you want to increase the number of subjects at GCSE, we are going to have to accept that our pupils in year 10 and year 11 are going to have to travel between sites to do that. That completely contradicts your concerns. What would be the travel policy for this? Where would the money come from? Would the school pay for the transport to enable those children to access the wide range at KS4? ... So you'd be happy for KS4 pupils to travel to access their curriculum, whereas for KS5 pupils it is considered to be detrimental to their education? (Llandrindod Public meeting)

Pre 16 can you guarantee that the children won't be moved or transported to bigger size classes from each of the schools? (Builth Wells Public meeting)

You cannot move children between schools. It's impossible. (Llandrindod Public meeting)

Travel between sites by teachers will not improve the current quality of education

Having staff travel between schools using up their precious time – travelling rather than making lesson plans and marking ... you're still going to have a relatively small sixth form – so you'll still have issues with choice – so they'll have to travel (Llandrindod Public meeting)

There's no way you can talk in terms of split site school. If you wish to destroy the teachers' attitude to school and their job, get them travelling between schools (Llandrindod Public meeting)

Has the Council considered the option proposed by the Llandrindod High School Governing Body to co-locate language streams and/or sixth form?

The High School had a meeting where the Governors made a proposal to PCC to put Welsh medium and provision for 16 to 18 year olds in Builth and the 11-16 year olds in Llandod. Has this been addressed – has anyone considered that proposal? (Llandrindod Public meeting)

- 8.11 Should the Council's aspiration for a single school site come to pass, Llandrindod parents would be concerned over the time spent by their children on the daily journey to school and back:

You've made comments in your opening statements where you said you think it's unacceptable for these children to be on the road. If the proposals go ahead my children will need to travel over an hour and a half to go to High School if the proposals eventually get where they're going to be in Builth Wells (Llandrindod Public meeting)

Finance and Funding

- 8.12 A number of attendees at both meetings argued that any potential savings from the proposed reorganisation would not be a solution to the underlying financial issues affecting the schools; that the new school would not be financially sustainable, demonstrating that this is an interim proposal before a new school is built from capital funds:

So you say I will have the same staff, the pupils would stay on the same sites. But yet just from having one head and one senior leadership team, that's enough money that you will save to risk the education of 1,112 students plus the ones in the future which are growing ... Everyone keeps saying

A lot of what you've said so far seems to relate back to finances. There seems to be a current estimate of backlog maintenance costs in excess of £5.3m across both sites should things go to the proposed plan – what is the expected timeframe for that single school on two sites to be running? Is this an intermediary measure until something more permanent can get worked up and Government funding or whatever is provided to the Council to allow them to do so? (Builth Wells Public meeting)

It says about Llandrindod that their budget forecast will be in deficit in future years but it doesn't actually say about Builth, so it would be nice to know if Builth is in the same situation. And if finance is a problem how is £133k actually going to impact and actually make a difference between the two schools? (Builth Wells Public meeting)

All the disruption we've talked about in terms of the leadership, very stressed teachers – is this worth it bearing in mind that in a few years we might be going through a similar process if we're talking about closing one of the sites. So are there other reasons for doing this? If we were to remodel Llandrindod rather than close it, would we get the funding from Welsh Government? (Builth Wells Public meeting)

- 8.13 Specific questions were also asked about the budget figures in the consultation document for Llandrindod High School and the overall budget allocation for Powys:

It says in there (financial statement) that you are concerned about the financial liabilities of Llandrindod High School. Having seen their financial statements I can't quite see where you see that. Can you explain why you feel Llandrindod High School is in financial problems? (Llandrindod Public Meeting)

I know that Powys schools are the worst funded in Wales. Are Powys looking at the Funding Formula and bringing them in line with other Welsh schools? (Builth Wells Public meeting)

Building and Maintenance

- 8.14 Attendees wanted to know how PCC aims to sustain the current buildings across the two sites when there are apparently no funds available for maintenance at the moment; alternatively, if funds are available, why they have not been spent so far:

Doing what you are proposing to do may ease some of the financial pressures but there is still a significant deficit of maintenance required today – it's not even looking forward to future maintenance that may be required and I would just like to understand the timeframes to bring the schools up to a standard fabric which makes it presentable to the kids – because there are

two aspects to children's learning – the quality of the teaching and the quality of the environment in which they're learning. (Llandrindod Wells Public Meeting)

We've got buildings in this town that date back to Victorian days and they're still repairable, still manageable. These buildings only go back to the 50s and 60s so they can be maintained (Llandrindod Public Meeting)

- 8.15 Rumours that a new site had already been identified in Builth Wells were mentioned and attendees sought answers about this from the panel:

We live in a small area and rumours abound about where a new school will be built. Can I ask you please, has any landowner been asked already about the possibility of building a school on their site? (Llandrindod Wells Public Meeting)

This week on the grapevine I hear that people living in Builth Wells are hearing about a new school site on the young people's village. Can you confirm it or deny it please? (Llandrindod Wells Public Meeting)

- 8.16 A question was also asked about whether revenue funding for maintenance would be held back for the one site school:

The outstanding maintenance costs of both schools has been mentioned. The council in its capital programme has set aside a figure of £17.62 k and that money exceeds our figure for the maintenance costs of the two schools so it is my assumption that that money is available for a new school on one site. Maybe you can confirm or deny that (Llandrindod Wells Public Meeting)

Impacts on Pupils

- 8.17 Attendees at the Builth wells public meeting were concerned about the impact of any changes on pupils taking GCSE and A-level in terms of subject choice and transitional arrangements:

How is this going to affect the children's education in terms of the transition? My daughter will be studying for her GCSEs at the time (Builth Wells Public Meeting)

There is a requirement for a new head teacher and the School Governing Body to put in place a curriculum. Just by the nature of the timing of that, with it being right at the start of the academic year, will that impact the subject choice of children that have had to make the choice in advance of that time? (Builth Wells Public Meeting)

I'm going to assume that any new curriculum would not be started till the summer of 2018 because that way the children would not be impacted by any decisions to change the range of subjects (Builth Wells Public Meeting)

A number of attendees questioned how pupils would be supported through the transitional period by teaching staff who would themselves be subject to uncertainty and whether in the longer term staff would have less time to support pupils because they have more management responsibilities or need to spend time travelling between the sites:

I am confused. You said that the same teachers will be helping the children through this transition stage. Yet you also said that the teachers would have to apply for their jobs so they

will not be supplying the same level of support to the children as they normally would (Builth Wells Public Meeting)

I rely heavily on the knowledge of the senior leadership team and the information they provide me – and I just worry that having just one senior leadership team across two schools how that's going to affect their knowledge of families and the children.

Some specific issues were also raised about supporting pupils in a dual site school - whether pupils would be able to change the site at which they are based and not being able to make a fresh start by changing site:

If a young person wasn't happy in Builth, would they be able to transfer to the Llandod site with it being one school? (Builth Wells Public Meeting)

When children are having difficulties in a school and request a managed move it's quite often because they want a fresh start to try and re-invent themselves. With the teachers moving across the sites, they're not possibly getting the opportunity of that fresh start in that school (Builth Wells Public Meeting)

Impacts on Staff

- 8.18 Attendees at Llandrindod raised a number of concerns about the retention of existing staff and recruitment of new staff. They suggested the consultation process and uncertainty around the future of the schools is already affecting staff retention and recruitment and ultimately the quality of children's education:

We've spoken a lot about bringing teachers to the area. What about retaining the teachers that are here? ... What's to say if the proposal doesn't succeed; that it goes to an amended timescale - which you haven't given us - half the teachers in Llandod might leave for jobs elsewhere. Where is the policy for the retention of the existing staff to ensure the present quality of education? (Llandrindod Wells Public Meeting)

We've got teachers in these schools who deliver standards. Yes, there might be the odd teacher who might not achieve it – the problem you're going to have is that who in their right mind will come to these schools when they're failing – we need - not just as a community but the Council needs - to get behind the schools and say we are investing £x million over the next five years (Llandrindod Wells Public Meeting)

Management and Governance

- 8.19 Attendees at the meetings wanted greater clarity around the staff and governance structure of the new school and how a new Governing Body would be supported by PCC to deliver better outcomes for pupils across the two sites:

Questions around the structure of the new school

What's going to be any different – two sites, two schools. What experience for children. Travelling? More children in the school – are class sizes going to be bigger? We need more information and detail (Builth Wells Public Meeting)

I'm confused by that – still two schools running with all the subjects on both sites (Builth Wells Public Meeting)

Questions around the formation of and support for the Shadow Governing Body

How will it be formulated? Would it be better to have additional members to help the Governing Body and stop them walking away because they can't cope? (Builth Wells Public Meeting)

You haven't mentioned how you are going to formulate picking those members because I understand that the Shadow Governing Body may well have a say where the sixth form might be in the future (Llandrindod Wells Public Meeting)

Support is needed for the New Governing Body

It's taken me over four and a half years as a Governor to get anywhere near understanding the depth and the level of what's required ... we work very, very hard to try and achieve something for nothing. We don't get paid expenses for meetings. We get put on a cross if we're wrong ... I just take a little bit of personal umbrage over these statements against Governing Bodies (Llandrindod Wells Public Meeting)

The Consultation Process

^{8.20} Attendees wanted the decision making process to be opened up to the wider elected membership rather than the Cabinet members alone and some complained that the future of the community is in the hands of the Cabinet, all the members of which live in other areas of Powys. A question was also raised over whether this consultation should have started after an enquiry into spending at another Powys school had been completed:

I take an interest in other counties, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire – school reorganisation - decisions are taken by the full council not just the cabinet. Could this council move to this? (Llandrindod Wells Public Meeting)

Would it have to be a full cabinet decision; would we have the same rights of objection to the proposals or is it easier for this new school to push through that closure? For the sake of our children and the future of our town we need some clarity around this please (Public meeting Llandrindod)

In the current situation Powys is made up of 73 County Councillors – the majority of those County Councillors come from Brecon and Radnor and yet we have a Cabinet that was seven from Montgomeryshire and three from Brecon and Radnorshire – so that perception is, why hasn't Montgomeryshire had something like this (school closures)? ... It's recently been publicised in the local papers that [inaudible] High School which has something over 700 pupils has a budget of just under £3m where they have been using over £100k a year to increase their pupil numbers by 140 ... I understand that Cllr (name) is doing an investigation into that ... does he not feel he should have stopped this consultation until the outcome of this enquiry is made public? (Llandrindod Wells Public Meeting)

^{8.21} An attendee queried why the Council members present at the Llandrindod Wells meeting were not responding to questions from the floor:

Could I ask you, Chair, why the decision has been taken this evening that for the chair and the portfolio holder it is inappropriate for them to comment? I attended the meetings in Dolau and Llanbister schools at which the chair and the portfolio both commented on a number of points ... They were statutory meetings – exactly the same status as this meeting (Llandrindod Wells Public meeting)

8.22 Attendees believed that the decision about the outcome had already been made by the Council:

We didn't have a slide to show what would happen with the amended timescales; we didn't have a slide to say what would happen if the proposal was thrown out. So to me that seems quite final (Llandrindod Well Public meeting)

Post 16 Education

8.23 Participants suggested that sixth form provision should be a priority and wanted clarity concerning whether post 16 education would be delivered on both sites or a single site. Some suggested that a consolidated sixth form on a single site would create a critical mass of students and might be the most viable option if Powys (as a rural county) is going to continue to meet the Welsh Government's learning and skills measure:

It was my understanding as a locally elected representative that there would be post 16 education delivered by both sites. I wonder if that's correct (Builth Wells Public Meeting)

Llandrindod High School has put a proposal forward and that is English should be spoken in Llandrindod High School from 11 to 16 ... giving you quite a lot of numbers in the sixth form (Llandrindod Wells Public Meeting)

I can quite understand the dilemma you have with the sixth form. And I'm saddened that we need 30 subjects ... You could well cut down on the number of sixth form options (Llandrindod Wells Public Meeting)

I feel the current proposal is not urgent enough ... Could we do the sixth form process quicker if we moved ahead? Could the potential process of closing Llandrindod sixth form be done quickly – there is a real urgency – we are losing kids rapidly out of county. So yes, to the Welsh medium provision and yes to the proposals for the sixth form (Builth Wells Public Meeting)

I also support post 16 on one site – anything that can be done to reduce travel between the sites is to be welcomed (Builth Wells Public Meeting)

Welsh Medium Education

8.24 There is support for strengthening Welsh provision at Builth but some doubts were raised around the predicted numbers of Welsh medium pupils in 2017. Also reassurance that Welsh provision would be consolidated at Builth is needed quickly to enable parents of potential pupils (particularly those in South Powys) to make informed decisions around school choice:

I think the Welsh medium parents from South Powys need an absolute assurance very quickly if you want to concentrate the Welsh medium ... you need to be telling those parents distinctly that it will be consolidated in Builth and remain that way. You may lose some children out of Powys but the majority of children are not just being lost out of County – they're being lost to private schools or to English medium because people haven't got that assurance ... If you think

you're going to get those 30 children, you won't ... you need to encourage them very quickly
(Builth Wells Public Meeting)

Considering movement of Brecon to Builth. What are the plans for strengthening Welsh medium education at this site? (Builth Wells Public Meeting)

- 8.25 Attendees also wanted detail about the numbers and travel arrangements for pupils should Builth Wells become the centre for Welsh medium education :

In terms of Welsh medium education – there are 129 pupils currently in Builth Wells - should the proposals go ahead in S Powys, and all children come from the Brecon area to receive Welsh medium education here, what would be the final number of pupils receiving Welsh medium education in this school and what would be the travelling distance time for a single pupil?
(Builth Wells Public Meeting)

If you want to strengthen the Welsh school you shouldn't just dismiss the Sennybridge children and assume they're all going to go to Ystalafera. It costs you a lot more to pay for a child out of County and if over the years you haven't paid as much transport for children to go out of County it will be more finances for our schools in Powys (Builth Wells Public Meeting)

In your report p4 – you have Builth Wells currently – Welsh speakers 129 and Brecon 30 – how many children are currently being brought in by bus from Brecon area to make up the 129?
(Builth Wells Public Meeting)

- 8.26 Some also asked about the number of Welsh medium courses that would be available at sixth form and whether this would be more than at present:

Regarding post 16 education, we know Welsh Government would like 25 + 5 courses available for each child. Following merger and assuming it's important for pupils to have equality of education through the medium of Welsh, how many courses do you expect to be provided through the medium of Welsh and medium of English? (Builth Wells Public Meeting)

You'd need a sixth form of about 300 to deliver the full range. 8 or 9 Welsh medium out of 26 and the rest in English? This is not significantly more than at the moment (Builth Wells Public Meeting)

Consultation document/Facts and figures

- 8.27 Attendees highlighted a need for clarity around assumptions made about pupil numbers and surplus places in the case for change. A number of factual inaccuracies in the documentation were highlighted:

(Are there) any projections on future secondary school numbers from current cohorts coming through now? Is the decline set to continue? If the numbers increased there would be issues in the future (Builth Wells Public Meeting)

All the local schools are full so I would like to know what your estimate is for the next few years on where those numbers are going to go (Llandrindod Wells Public Meeting)

If you close two high schools and make them into one you'll still have 17% (surplus places) - so how is that 17% going to be filled? (Llandrindod Wells Public Meeting)

What does 17% of vacant classes mean to pupil numbers per class? (Llandrindod Public Meeting)

In terms of the documentation in front us here, there are a number of errors – some have been amended and corrected – but I just wanted to pick up one on p27 and it's for the estimated savings ... I just wanted to know what that number actually was (Llandrindod Wells Public Meeting)

Other Comments

- 8.28 Residents of Builth Wells in the main feel that the current proposal does not go far enough and want a new school in order to achieve quality. Llandrindod Wells residents, on the other hand, feel that the proposals could go further in keeping one school on two sites into the long term with separate roles on each of the sites (as per the Llandrindod High School Governors' proposal).
- 8.29 A number of individual sub themes and comments emerged from the public meetings and are listed below for brevity.

Figure 55: Summary of other themes raised in the public meetings

Sub-Theme	Comments
Rebranding and consultation costs	<i>The money you put to rebranding the school ... provide it to the existing schools to increase the quality of the education (Llandrindod Public Meeting)</i>
How to spend existing PTA funds	<i>Hardworking Friends of the school. There's been a lot of fundraising for BWHS. What happens to the funds that have been raised already if the two schools merge? (Builth Wells Public Meeting)</i>
Current Estyn status and quality monitoring going forward	<i>What happens to the special measures? Do they have the same teachers? How do we know if it will be same as the old school because it won't any longer be monitored by Estyn? (Llandrindod Public Meeting)</i>
Option to federate primary and secondary schools in the area	<i>Has it been considered to federate primary and secondary school? Because one of the biggest problems we have with education is that there is poor preparation at Junior school ... the standard is quite poor and the high schools in many cases have to start again (Llandrindod Public Meeting)</i>
Evidence of standards in decline?	<i>When I was a teacher in Llandrindod ... the results on average of all primary schools was well above the average of the WJEC for the whole of Wales – very often it was the first. Now, what has happened? Could you elaborate on that fact? What is the evidence from Estyn on the deterioration of standards? (Llandrindod Public Meeting)</i>
Standardised Quality measures Acknowledgement of rural deprivation	<i>...can't you appeal to Estyn? They recognise rural deprivation. Can't they, therefore, put more money on the table to make the schools more viable? Can't you appeal to them? (Llandrindod Public Meeting)</i>
Recognising improvement trajectory	<i>The Estyn reports have been given a lot of weight in this particular meeting. And I'd like it noted that both schools – Llandod and Builth – are in special measures. I've noticed a great improvement in Llandod High School in the last year or so since [head teacher] has been there. And we look forward to things happening at Builth as I understand they are advertising for a new head teacher (Llandrindod Public Meeting)</i>
Cost of the	<i>Could someone please tell me ... how much are the authority paying of taxpayers'</i>

Sub-Theme	Comments
consultation process	<i>money for the services of ORS? ... it's taxpayers money and they have a right to know (Llandrindod Wells Public meeting)</i>
Timeframe from interim proposal to long term aspirations- single site	<i>My question is by running your proposed split site schools, what period will you give before you then make a decision to either go through another consultation process to then move that school eventually to Builth Wells? (Llandrindod Wells Public meeting)</i>
Recording strength of feeling in the public meeting	<i>90% of people here will not have anything to say this evening and I hope when you are noting the points you should note when comments get widespread applause from people who are not going to say anything else. Applause is our voice (Llandrindod Wells Public meeting)</i>
Clarifying need for statutory notice	<i>You mentioned the terminology 'Statutory notice' that is obviously a legal process. Can you confirm that if the authority was to close one of the two campuses in the future we would still have the statutory notice or not (Llandrindod Well Public meeting)</i>
Reversing decisions	<i>If the cabinet decides to go ahead with the proposal and then next year at the local elections we end up with a new cabinet, could they then decide to reverse the decision? (Llandrindod Well Public meeting)</i>
Existing staff contracts	<i>Clarify what will happen about staff. Will the staff have to apply for their jobs? (Builth Wells Public Meeting)</i>
Suggested tertiary model for post 16 education	<i>I am familiar, though with what is happening in England. In the rural areas they have secondary schools 11-16 and then they have proper tertiary colleges ... My suggestion would be this ... Most schools are good enough and should be kept on their present sites. Build a proper tertiary college (which) would cater for the wide range of activities in rural areas – farming, conservation, tourism, forestry (Builth Wells Public Meeting)</i>

9. Written Submissions

Analysis of stakeholder responses

- 9.1 During the formal consultation process 21 written submissions were received concerning the proposals for Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools. These were from professional, political, interest and community groups as well as from individual residents. The table below shows the breakdown of contributors by type.

Figure 56: Sources of Written Submissions

INDIVIDUAL RESIDENTS (11)	
11 individual submissions were received from residents	
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT (1)/COUNTY COUNCILLORS (3)	
Chris Davies MP County Councillor David Evans	County Councillor Gary D Price County Councillor Hywel Lewis
OTHER POLITICAL GROUP	
Powys County Council Welsh Liberal Democrats Group	
SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES (2)	
Governing Body of Llandrindod High School	Governing Body of Llandrindod Wells County Primary School
TOWN COUNCIL	
Rhayader Town Council	
COMMUNITY ORGANISATION	
Llandrindod Wells Business Group	
STATUTORY CONSULTEE	
Her majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales-Estyn	

- 9.2 ORS has read all the written submissions and reported them in this chapter, with some detailed summaries also provided; none have been disregarded even if they are not expressed in a 'formal' way. It is a painstaking but necessary process to identify the main themes and issues raised by respondents.
- 9.3 All submissions have also been reviewed by Powys County Council; meaning that any submissions that present technical arguments that require more detailed consideration have been evaluated by appropriate members of the consultation team.
- 9.4 Submissions were initially classified on the basis of the type of individual or organisation submitting the response. They were then read in their entirety and the key themes and issues raised were collated, classified and reported using a standardised code frame.
- 9.5 Where multiple submissions present the same or very similar arguments, or refer to the same evidence or assumptions, they have been summarised collectively in the report of consultation findings without undue repetition. These summaries are presented in a thematic (tabular) format in order to identify the

range of views and issues as well as common themes. This will ensure that Powys County Council is able to consider the important issues identified.

- 9.6 In accordance with Welsh Governments' School Organisation code, her majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales' (Estyn) formal responses to this consultation is included in full in Appendix 1.
- 9.7 Finally, it is important to note that the following section is a report of the views expressed by submission contributors. In some cases, these views will not be supported by the available evidence - and while ORS has not sought to highlight or correct those that make incorrect statements or assumptions, this should be borne in mind when considering the submissions.

Main Themes Raised in Written Submissions

- 9.8 The aim of the consultation was to gather opinion and comment and to respond to questions on the proposal to close Builth Wells High School and Llandrindod High School in August 2017 and to open a single school on both sites in September 2017. It should be stated at the outset, however, that respondents were mainly concerned about the longer term prospect of the closure of Llandrindod High School. With this in mind, the findings here are presented first for the present consultation and second for the longer-term perceived intentions of the Council for a single site, single school to serve both communities.

The Current Proposal – The Case for Change

- 9.9 Although several respondents understood that change was necessary for mainly financial and staffing reasons, the general tenor of response was negative with nearly all expressing opposition to the proposal:

As recommended by the SORP the status quo cannot continue. With falling school numbers and consequently school budgets there needs to be more innovative thinking to achieve a practical solution for Mid Powys (Resident)

We fully understand that there is a need for change. Both schools are small in pupil numbers and critical mass, both schools are in special measures, both schools struggle to fund specialist teachers (Resident)

- 9.10 A few suggested other reasons for the proposal - either to withdraw both schools quickly from special measures or to complement the changes proposed for Brecon and Gwernyfed High Schools:

It ... has been done to get the two schools out of special measures quickly, swiftly and without having to address the core issues and concerns raised by Estyn (Resident)

Doing this for the sake of a saving of £133K and getting out of Estyn special measures is an insult to both our learners and our teachers (Resident)

It is perfectly clear that the proposals around Builth Wells and Llandrindod Wells High School stem from the change to the Brecon and Gwernyfed High School proposals that see the provision of Welsh Medium Education being provided in Builth Wells High School from 1st September 2017. (County Cllr Gary D Price)

- 9.11 Only one respondent offered clear support for the current proposal for a dual site school:

I believe it has the potential to deliver improvements in standards and management. The combined pupil numbers should make it easier to attract a quality head teacher and leadership team which as we have seen with the Newtown and John Beddoes experiment really uplifted standards in a very short period of time (County Cllr Hywel Lewis)

Concerns over the Current Proposals

Quality and Standards of Education

- 9.12 Some respondents were uncertain how the proposals would make a positive change to current teaching and learning. They challenged how the proposal would lead to the recruitment of more specialist teaching staff; were confused generally about the council's assertion that standards would improve and wanted more evidence to support the Council's claims:

How will the new school lift standards with less money (the funding being 2/3 teachers per year LESS than the two schools get at the moment)? It will mean fewer specialists in front of classes, less opportunities for the pupils, lowering standards (Resident)

The report says teachers will need to apply for their own posts and will result in high quality teachers - How? (Resident)

It provides no demonstrable prospect of an improvement in educational outcomes at either pre or post-16 levels in the catchment areas covered by both current schools, and in particular provides no significant prospect of an expansion of learning opportunities or improvement in standards at post-16 (PCC Welsh Liberal Democrats)

- 9.13 The Council's argument for a greater 'critical mass' of students was called into question:

For Pre-16 education the same number of children will be in the same school building for each school. Therefore, there will be no change in the "critical mass"(Resident)

Class sizes will remain the same meaning that the increase in critical mass of students to help fund more specialist teachers will not happen (Resident)

- 9.14 Estyn is unconvinced that the changes will improve educational standards and criticised the consultation document for its lack of evidence to support this claim. It also argues that the current standards have not been adequately reviewed or explained:

The proposal does not sufficiently consider standards currently achieved at both schools or demonstrate how the changes will lead to improved standards or provision...it is Estyn's opinion that it is not possible to establish whether standards will be at least maintained by the proposals (Estyn)

The proposer makes appropriate reference to the outcomes of both schools' most recent Estyn inspections. It identifies correctly that current performance and prospects for improvement at both schools were judged to be unsatisfactory at the time of the core inspections and that both schools are in special measures. The proposer also refers briefly to the schools' categorisation within the National School Categorisation System. However, it provides no explanation of the context or detail for these judgements (Estyn)

- 9.15 Moreover, Estyn is concerned that PCC have not given sufficient thought to the possibility of the new school failing to improve standards, along with the risks involved with opening a single site school:

There is insufficient consideration of the risk associated with its longer term vision of opening one school – one site in Builth, given that the proposal’s main benefits can only be materialised if this longer-term vision is in fact realised. Most significantly, however, it does not consider the possibility that the proposed new school will fail to improve standards, or identify any measure to address this (Estyn)

Impacts upon School Leaders and Governors

- 9.16 Respondents were concerned over the impacts of the proposal on Governors and school leaders. They felt that the extra workload would affect individual wellbeing and questioned the Council’s duty of care to staff:

Reducing the number of members of the Senior Management Teams will over-stretch already stressed and unhappy Senior Leaders, leading to increased disenchantment that will filter down through the staff body (Resident)

It WILL NOT improve standards and an already stretched Senior Management Team will NOT have time or resources to adequately support failing teachers or to follow correctly the Council’s performance capability procedure for teachers (Resident)

To close both schools and re-open them with all the same pupils will achieve nothing apart from giving more stress to a single senior leadership team and Governing Body who would be responsible for one school on two sites. Both schools are currently in special measures from Estyn and current workload issues for the senior leadership teams are already overwhelming (Resident)

We all want to improve (learning) outcomes. However, how do you do that if you leave the KS3 and KS4 learners where they are and reduce the combined Senior Leadership Team who have the responsibility for improving standards? (LHS Governors)

Where is the duty of care to the staff of the schools within this proposal? (Resident)

- 9.17 Estyn is also of the view that the impact on ‘the leadership and management of the new school’ has not been adequately considered.

Funding, costs and savings

- 9.18 Estyn is unconvinced about the new school’s budget, which it assumes will be impacted by Llandrindod’s deficit budget:

Significantly, the proposer does not consider sufficiently well the impact on provision and outcomes of a reduced budget given that one of the two schools is projecting a significant budget deficit over the next three years (Estyn)

- 9.19 Respondents expressed doubt and confusion over the financial reasons underlying the proposals and sought further explanations. Some highlighted what they considered to be oversights or inaccuracies underlying PCC’s financial arguments:

Realistically there will be no money saved. No money to use to improve standard (Resident)

Has the increased transport needed for teachers and senior leaders between campuses been taken into account in the proposal? The saving is negligible and will be sucked up in the cost of alterations needed and the increased cost of supporting two campuses (Resident)

Can you send a detailed breakdown of all the costs and savings used within the proposal? We can't see where this is explained. What is the £133,000 made up of? (Resident)

Having a school over two sites would save £133,000 but how? ... The only difference is one head teacher and I can't see a head teacher's salary being £133,000 (Resident)

If the PCC option for the new school is implemented we would suggest that the new school would have one head teacher and two deputy head teachers (one for each site). To improve standards at each site we would also suggest that to provide sufficient capacity within SLT you would need five assistant head teachers. This would be equal to the total number of SLT at both schools at present. We would therefore suggest that any savings are marginal (LHS Governors)

9.20 Respondents criticised PCC for prioritising financial considerations over education:

PCC say the decisions need to be made because the children's education is important but as far as I can see, education is at the bottom of the page and money is at the top. I do understand that money is in short supply but ... the education is taking a huge blow yet PCC high ranking officers are still enjoying their large wage packets and benefits (Resident)

Local politics and penny pinching by PCC should not penalise their (teachers') career opportunities, nor should it cause such uncertainties that people are dissuaded from sending their children to this school (Resident)

Process and Consultation – the current proposal

9.21 A few respondents outlined their frustration with the whole process and particularly criticised the fact that only one option was offered for consideration:

Can you explain why this is called a consultation period when there is no discussion, debate or negotiation? The only idea discussed is the proposal and no other ideas or proposals are able to be looked at during this period? Does the council not feel that the general public might have other relevant ideas to put forward? (Resident)

I am not happy with only being given one option to vote on. This is not a choice but an ultimatum ... There have been other proposals that have been drawn up but have been rejected out of hand. Why? (Resident)

9.22 There were several criticisms of the consultation document - inaccuracies and misleading statements were highlighted and respondents asked for clarity on a number of issues:

Budget inaccuracies and queries

... "Llandrindod High School is forecasting a significant cumulative deficit budget of £312,260 by 2018/19 unless action is taken." Since the consultation document was issued we reviewed the actions needed and have submitted a budget that shows a surplus in ALL years to 2019/20. Also there is no mention of the loan Builth Wells High School received to cover the deficit that they accumulated in prior years. Has this been repaid or will it have to be written off if Builth Wells High School is closed? (LHS Governors)

Queries over facts and figures for the two existing schools

The consultation is misleading in implying that Builth High School offers more A Level subjects than Llandrindod High School. Both schools offer 12 subjects through the medium of English. Builth High

School offers five subjects through the medium of Welsh and Art through the medium of English and Welsh. This accounts for the total of 17.5 shown for Builth but they are not additional subjects (LHS Governors)

The consultation document appears to use assumptions favourable to Builth Wells and detrimental to Llandrindod ... Appendix A Part A2 overstates the primary pupil numbers in the catchment area for Builth High School and understates those for Llandrindod as at January 2016 (LHS Governors)

Criticisms of linguistic style and insufficient explanations

The proposals are rushed and sloppy with mistakes throughout the document (Resident)

I found the document very hard going, not easy to understand and repetitive ... There is not enough information to show how one school over two sites will work. How many classes to a year? How the schools will come out of special measures? How this will affect the children's education and their emotional wellbeing. It doesn't take into account any additional needs of pupils (Resident)

- 9.23 Two parents criticised the primary school consultation at Cefnlllys School for not allowing time for children to have all their questions answered:

Our daughter ... was asked, as part of her School Council, to attend a consultation meeting ... She told us her class had worked out questions that they wished to have answered ... When I collected her from school the first thing she said to me was that it was a complete waste of time and they were treated like younger children who had no idea ... We were disgusted by this lack of care for their opinion (Resident)

How does this help our learners? Why do you feel that they should not know what the direct impact will be on their education? (Resident)

- 9.24 A few respondents criticised the public consultation meeting in Llandrindod Wells for the chairmanship and lack of response from the cabinet members present:

It was ridiculous to stop the two Council Members from speaking at Llandrindod when they commented and engaged in the process at Builth Wells (Resident)

Council members were able to comment and engage in the process in Builth but not in Llandrindod. The person leading the meeting in Llandrindod took up a large amount of time seemingly answering the questions on behalf of the panel and giving his opinion (Resident)

- 9.25 The youth and public questionnaires were criticised for restricting or leading responses:

Our daughter will not be completing the Youth Questionnaire. It is written in a deliberately confusing manner ... We feel that it is weighted to produce a positive outcome for the proposal (Resident)

Neither of our children ... feel able to give their honest opinion of what is best for their education on this form ... They are the future and yet they feel unheard, patronised and disenchanted with the whole education authority through this process. This lack of understanding of their needs and opinions is reprehensible (Resident)

The yellow questionnaire ... doesn't give you the full chance to answer the questions. I feel that the way it has been written is to only give you the option that PCC is putting forward (Resident)

- 9.26 Respondents queried whether the final decision should be made by the Cabinet or full Council:

This major life changing decision that will affect a large number of families should not be left to the small number of Councillors in the Cabinet but be debated and decided on by the whole Council (Chris Davies MP)

The present policies for the re-organisation of both primary and secondary schools in Powys have never been approved by the full Powys County Council. They have only been approved by the Cabinet. This would appear to be against County Council Policy whereby it is the full County Council which decides all policy matters. Why have these policies only been approved by the Cabinet? (County Cllr David Evans)

9.27 A participant asked how much ORS was being paid:

The question was dodged and not answered publicly although it was mentioned that the question would be answered by email only to Mr Price. Why should he know and I can't as a parent? My reasoning is that the consultation costs a lot (too much and you can't justify it, so keep it quiet) (Resident)

9.28 Respondents also suspected that the Council had decided that the proposal would be implemented regardless of the outcomes of the consultation process:

This whole consultation is clearly a tick box exercise and the decision is already made (Resident)

I am left feeling ... that this process ... won't make any difference at all (Resident)

Other Issues over the Current Proposals

9.29 The other issues raised are outlined in the table below. People were primarily concerned about how this change would impact on the wellbeing of staff; how the head teacher would be appointed; the impact on educational standards of teachers travelling between sites and how the proposals would affect student numbers. A range of less frequently mentioned concerns or comments are also listed.

Figure 57: Summary of Other Themes Raised in the submissions

Sub-Theme	Comments
Questions about Estyn monitoring	<p><i>If the schools are combined and removed from Estyn special measures what guarantees do the pupils have that their needs will be met and the new school will action the points highlighted by Estyn as they will no longer warrant monitoring on their progress? (Resident)</i></p> <p><i>Why has Estyn put Llandrindod School into special measures? What is it doing to make the school perform better? What does 'unsatisfactory prospects for improvement' exactly mean? (Resident)</i></p>
Head teachers – questions/request	<p><i>We would also request that Llandrindod High School be allowed to undergo a formal recruitment process for a permanent head teacher as Builth Wells High School was a few months ago (and not ring-fence the current incumbent) (Resident)</i></p> <p><i>What will happen with the headship if this proposal goes through? What grade will a head over two campuses be on? Will this be higher than the current grades of each head and has this been taken into account in the financial effects of the proposal? (Resident)</i></p> <p><i>Currently Builth is the only school with a permanent head teacher. Therefore, does this mean that there will be no external competition for this post? Will Llandrindod be given the support needed by the council to gain a permanent head prior to the closure? (Resident)</i></p> <p><i>Given that neither school currently has a permanent head teacher, and the time usually taken</i></p>

Sub-Theme	Comments
	<i>in recruiting head teachers in Powys, what impact will this have on the timescales? Will an 'Acting Head' be appointed?</i> (Resident)
Impacts of teachers travelling between sites	<p><i>Teachers WILL have to travel between the two sites – taking up time when they could be supporting our children in their education</i> (Resident)</p> <p><i>Has the increased transport needed for teachers and senior leaders between campuses been taken into account in the proposal? The saving is negligible and will be sucked up in the cost of alterations needed and the increased cost of supporting two campuses</i> (Resident)</p> <p><i>Ian Roberts did suggest at one of the public meetings that specialist teachers would have to move between sites but that does not help if the class sizes are small and there is no additional funding for the extra teachers required to cover the travelling</i> (LHS Governors)</p>
Student Numbers	<p><i>The current interim proposal of keeping English key stage 3, 4 and 5 spread across both sites will result in decreasing student numbers</i> (County Cllr David Evans)</p> <p><i>“The Council believes that a school with a minimum of 600 pupils in KS3 and KS4 would have average year group of 120 pupils, which would help maximise the curriculum benefits and lead to improved outcomes”. It would be difficult to improve the curriculum benefits if you did not combine KS3 and KS4 English medium students on one site</i> (LHS Governors)</p>
Sixth form model – supporting comments	<p><i>We would much prefer her to travel to Builth Wells each day than Hereford to undertake her studies. We would support this proposal put forward by the Governing Body.</i> (Resident)</p> <p><i>I would ... support the establishment of a single sixth form centre. The additional traveling in the morning and evening would be more than compensated in that there would be very little, if any, requirement for additional travel during the school day</i> (County Cllr Hywel Lewis)</p>
Sixth form – concerns	<i>It has not provided sufficient information on current school to school or home to school travel arrangements to support its conclusion that the distance of 8 miles will pose minimal problems for sixth form travel arrangements if sixth forms are maintained on both sites</i> (Estyn)
Surplus places	<i>... the only change will be Welsh stream children moving from Brecon to Builth, if the Brecon/Gwernyfed proposal goes through. So please can you explain how this proposal will directly impact on the “surplus places”?</i> (Resident)
Negative impact of change for learners	<i>To continue with these proposals at such time will in my opinion have a negative impact for those finishing off and future learners who will become part of the proposed one school system over two sites</i> (County Cllr Gary D Price)
Subject Choice	<p><i>Given that pupil numbers are projected to continue falling, how soon will it be before you once again have to start reducing the number of subjects offered?</i> (Resident)</p> <p><i>How will running the two schools on two sites enable you to offer more subjects if neither staff nor pupils are travelling between sites?</i> (Resident)</p>
Welsh Medium Education – supporting comments	<i>It considers reasonably that as larger numbers of pupils move through the school, this will improve the school’s ability to offer a more comprehensive curriculum to Welsh medium pupils</i> (Estyn)
Welsh Medium Education – opposition/ concerns	<p><i>Parents in Brecon and Sennybridge may prefer to send their children out of county for Welsh medium education. Sennybridge is closer to Ystalyfera than Builth Wells</i> (LHS Governors)</p> <p><i>The proposer suggests that the increased number of Welsh medium pupils at the Builth Wells site...would enable the school to set pupils according to ability for some subjects. The proposer argues that this could have a positive impact...however, it does not provide evidence for its view that setting improves standards</i> (Estyn)</p>

Sub-Theme	Comments
	<p><i>There remain questions about equality of opportunities for post-16 pupils choosing to study through the medium of Welsh in terms of the range of courses available to them (Estyn)</i></p> <p><i>The proposer acknowledges the increase in travel arrangements for pupils aged 11-16 who live in the Brecon catchment and who wish to attend Welsh-medium provision in Builth. However, it does not analyse the impact of the proposal on these pupils in this consultation but in its concurrent consultation on the closure of the Welsh medium stream at Brecon (Estyn)</i></p> <p><i>It does not specify clearly how it intends to address the difficulties some pupils from the Brecon area may face with accessing after school activities due to transport constraints, other than a vague reassurance that it will look into options (Estyn)</i></p>
Ring fencing	<i>Can you confirm which jobs will be ring-fenced for current teachers? (Resident)</i>
Teaching quality	<i>My big concern is that as one school Llandrindod will be forced to appoint teachers based on their ability to speak Welsh and not on their ability to teach, as happens in other areas of the Council (Resident)</i>
Integration of pupils from both schools	<i>What will be done to integrate the pupils from Builth and Llandrindod to make them feel that they do all belong to one school? (Resident)</i>
Building maintenance	<p><i>The document states that Llandrindod High School is in poor condition. Why has the building been left to get in this state? Surely the building should be maintained to an adequate standard (Resident)</i></p> <p><i>Having established one school on two sites will you now commit to carrying out the backlog of maintenance identified in the documents? (Resident)</i></p>

Concerns over any Longer-term aspirations

- 9.30 Most respondents were more concerned about the longer term prospect of closing Llandrindod High School altogether and transporting pupils to a new ‘super school’ in Builth Wells:

The shutting of the two campuses is ill thought out and damaging to the locality of whichever town loses secondary education (Resident)

I would ask that you reject the proposal for one school on a new site in the vicinity of Builth Wells to replace both Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools (County Cllr David Evans)

Facts and Figures

- 9.31 The Governors of Llandrindod High School queried the information used to justify any longer term intentions for developing a single ‘super school’ in Builth Wells:

Appendix A Part A 1 I) says of Llandrindod High School “about half the pupils coming from the towns of Llandrindod Wells and Rhayader”. 53% of our pupils live within three miles of the school. If Rhayader was included and using ESTYN definitions, it would either be a majority (over 60%) or many (over 70%) (LHS Governors)

The Business Case showed that the potential pupils from new housing developments was three times as many in Llandrindod than in Builth. Given that there are already more pupils in the Llandrindod catchment area than the Builth catchment area this discrepancy can only increase. There would, therefore, appear to be more future transport costs if the new school were to be built

in the vicinity of Builth Wells rather than on the existing Llandrindod site which is already owned by PCC. How would building in Builth Wells meet the Welsh Government's Sustainable Development Framework? (LHS Governors)

The Impact Assessment issued at the time of the Business Case did not include all the activities at Llandrindod High School despite being provided to PCC. There are also many activities run by Llandrindod Leisure Centre using the High School premises and grounds for which the Leisure Centre receives the income (LHS Governors)

- 9.32 The Governors also criticised the options evaluation procedure outlined in the consultation document for inaccurately prioritising the current proposal:

In comparing the options of one school in either Builth (Option 3) or Llandrindod (Option 4) how can there not be equality of ticks for both options for "To maximise the curriculum benefits at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 for learners who study through the medium of Welsh or English" and "To provide robust linguistic continuity of Welsh-medium provision across all key phases of education"? This would increase the ticks for Option 4 to 14 equal to Option 3 (LHS Governors)

Impacts on the Community of Llandrindod Wells

- 9.33 By far the largest number of comments and issues were raised by respondents concerned over the longer term quality of life for residents of Llandrindod Wells. Typical comments highlighting the negative social, economic and educational impacts are as follows:

The proposal does not contain information on a community impact assessment of its longer-term vision of a single school in Builth (Estyn)

I think it would be a moral and social outrage to shut Llandrindod High School. It would impact on the whole town and not just the learners (Resident)

Any available money would be much better spent investing in the existing facilities which are important hubs for educational, economic and social development in a wider number of our communities than that proposed by Powys County Council (Rhyader Town Council)

The proposal to close Llandrindod High School presents a hugely damaging impact to the social and economic well-being of Llandrindod Wells and district, which far outweighs any possible potential improvement in learning outcomes or the very modest predicted annual revenue gains (PCC Welsh Liberal Democrats)

I object to the proposals as they are now and any future proposals that will see the ceasing of a secondary educational provision in Llandrindod Wells (County Cllr Gary D Price)

In my opinion your aim needs to be how to find a solution that keeps both towns thriving whilst offering the best educational opportunities for the pupils of both towns. Not an easy task I'm sure, but one you have to find an answer to. Certainly the closure of either school in my opinion is not an option (Resident)

- 9.34 Several other points were raised in relation to impacts of school closure upon the community and these are presented in the paragraphs that follow:

Negative economic and business impacts

Who, do you suppose, is likely to move to a town with no school or sports centre? Who is likely to open their business in the town? Businesses, who are struggling at present, will lose out the 'school run' clientele; those who drop in for a quick shop or use the post office when they pick up their children (Resident)

Research will tell you that when a school is closed the area suffers a major lack of investment, with people moving away from the area and more importantly no movement or investment into the area (Resident)

Llandrindod Wells is already struggling economically ... and it would be hard to think of Llandrindod Wells as the County Town of Powys without any provision for Secondary Education (County Cllr Gary D Price)

It is a fact that a business which relocated to Llandrindod recently only did so after meeting with the Principal of Llandrindod High School. As a business group we are working with Powys County Council and the Welsh Government towards regeneration of Llandrindod Wells. The loss of our high school would be completely opposed to these aims (LW Business Group)

The future of high schools in a rurally dispersed county like Powys goes beyond the consideration of purely education matters because a high school represents wealth and growth for the communities it serves. Therefore, decisions should be based not only on educational arguments but on the wider effect those decisions have on the community (LW Business Group)

Without a school in Llandrindod Wells, fewer families would move to the town

How could Llandrindod Wells function as a County Town for Powys without even a high school? How can we encourage families with children to live in either Builth or Llandrindod with this huge question mark hanging over our high schools? (Resident)

With the prospect of the school closing, business closing in Llandrindod, Primary Schools being shut - families will not want to move to the area with no prospects (Resident)

We only have to talk to our employees to know they question their future in a town where the education of their children is being compromised. The current direction that is being proposed to cabinet ... will also discourage any parents, or prospective parents from moving to Llandrindod Wells. This would spell economic disaster for our town (LW Business Group)

Teacher recruitment and retention would become more challenging without wider economic opportunities

How do you intend to address the problem of retaining teachers when there is little or no employment for a 'non-teaching' spouse/partner in the area? (Resident)

Closure of the Llandrindod Wells sports centre would affect members of the community and clubs

If you close the Llandrindod campus, what will happen to the town? The sports centre? I would suggest many will be adversely affected (Resident)

All premises are used by various community groups - football teams, rugby teams, sports classes, art groups ... To lose these facilities will not only impact greatly on the school but their communities too ... not only would school closures harm our local economies but we would also lose the talented teachers and fantastic facilities offered by these schools (Chris Davies MP)

There would be a loss of extra opportunities for young people living in Llandrindod Wells

The Llandrindod Wells Youth Market ...has been seen as a leading example of what can be achieved in Wales when commercial ideals are developed between the community and education ... This kind of pilot scheme, which was seen as ground breaking within Wales, will simply not happen without a high school in Llandrindod Wells (LW Business Group)

Builth Wells Site

9.35 Various comments and questions were raised over a site in Builth Wells:

Funding for the new site – where would it come from?

The idea of building a new school without any firm practical or financial backing in this current era of cutbacks is, I believe, fanciful (Resident)

Both MP Chris Davies and AM Kirsty Williams state that there aren't the funds available for the build. There will also be two elections before the funds can be applied for; what is the guarantee that the current situation will still be in place following these elections? (Resident)

The additional capital required for the new building appears not to have been considered in the assessment of potential savings through the amalgamation of the two schools. A proposal that involves substantial capital expenditure in future can only be considered financially if all costs are taken into consideration (LW Business Group)

PCC has earmarked over £17,000,000 in its capital budget for a new school in the vicinity of Builth Wells. A new school would cost at least double that and the assumption must be that the additional cost will come from Welsh Government. For £8,000,000 the backlog of repairs for both the Llandrindod Wells and Builth Wells sites could be funded and the schools physically brought up to 21st Century standards. This would be a financially better alternative given the very long payback taking the Business Case savings for a New School (LHS Governors)

Choosing the new site/suitability

How will a site for one school be identified if the Council proceeds to the next stage of building a new school on one site? (Resident)

(The) SWOT analysis for Option 3 (Single school in Builth) says “potential constraints of the current Builth Wells High School Site”. The constraints are not potential – they are manifest (Resident)

Impacts of an uncertain future

9.36 Several respondents felt that the period of uncertainty would impact negatively on teachers and pupils. It would also be more difficult to recruit teachers to the area:

With the wait for funding; land identification and all the building process we are many years off a new school but in the meantime we believe this proposal will lower the morale of the teaching body and leave both schools in a state of limbo. This will impact our children (Resident)

The uncertainty will lead to low morale in the teaching staff. It will be harder to recruit new staff thus lowering the standard of education being delivered. As I understand the new school could take up to 10 years to build as you do not have planning on a site or the funding. Are you willing to jeopardise a decade of learning? (Resident)

The prospect of the high school closing down has upset both my son and myself. He is very worried about the effects of this and how he will perform at school. He can currently walk to the high school which will help his independence. He doesn't feel that going to Builth High School will help him to excel (Resident)

The lack of information will lead to a reduction in education standards and the instability and uncertainty of proposals will make recruiting teachers to mid-Wales even harder than is currently the case (Rhyader Town Council)

The inability of the Schools' Service and Cabinet to currently identify a site for the new 11-18 school in Builth Wells presents an unacceptable degree of uncertainty in to the proposal, leaving it in a damaging 'limbo' (PCC Welsh Liberal Democrats)

As there is no funding for the project and it will be many years before Welsh Assembly funding can be applied for it will create massive uncertainty for students and staff at both schools in the interim (County Cllr David Evans)

Travel and transport implications

- ^{9.37} Respondents expressed concern over the length of time that students would travel and the costs involved from the County's budget:

The closure of a high school in Llandrindod would mean that my children would spend at least 45 minutes on a bus to reach their next nearest high school. This is unacceptable to our family (Resident)

I am also intrigued to know what the costings are for this proposal ... Has the transport of pupils been factored in? What are the proposed costs of transport for around 550 children from Llandrindod to Builth on a daily basis? (Resident)

Increases to the cost of transport for children who are transferring schools would put further pressures on Powys County Council's budget, along with the massive capital investment of building two new schools (refers to all proposals) (Chris Davies MP)

It does not seem credible that the extra cost to bring Builth students to Llandrindod is £306,318 but the cost of transporting Llandrindod students to Builth is only £238,366. The number of students who attend Llandrindod at no transport cost to PCC is 295; the number for Builth is just over 200 (LHS Governors)

- ^{9.38} The Governors of Llandrindod High School also highlighted the fact that not all pupils from Llandrindod High School would transfer to a new school in Builth owing to the relative proximity of other schools and that this would adversely affect the viability of this new school. They also provided evidence showing that a single site school in Llandrindod would be more viable in terms of pupil numbers than in Builth Wells.

The information on pupil travel patterns given to us last September based on PLASC 2014 data for years 7-11 was that if Llandrindod School was closed 116 pupils (23.5%) would be closer to a school other than Builth Wells. If they were to transfer, the impact on the New School would be substantial. The equivalent data for Builth Wells School is that 19 English medium pupils (5.2%) would be closer to a school other than Llandrindod Wells. There were also 81 Welsh medium pupils that would transfer to Llanidloes (28) or Brecon (53). If the New School were based in Llandrindod

the potential Llanidloes pupils would remain as would the larger part of the potential Brecon pupils (LHS Governors)

- 9.39 Moreover, Estyn reasons that PCC have not sufficiently explained how they plan to encourage these pupils to attend the new school instead, and would therefore like to see a clearer risk management strategy:

In a few instances, the proposer does not identify or discuss its risk management measures in sufficient detail. For example, although the proposer identifies the risk that some parents may arrange for their children to attend schools other than the new school, it does not identify sufficiently well how it will engage positively with parents to reduce the risk (Estyn)

- 9.40 Uncertainties in a wider context over school choice were also highlighted by respondents:

Pupils from the Rhayader and Upper Ithon Valley areas may in fact be closer to Llanidloes and Newtown High Schools respectively, yet the future of these schools is uncertain because the proposals for the North of the County haven't yet been proposed (County Cllr Gary D Price)

The Welsh Liberal Democrat Group considers it very unwise to contemplate changes in the Builth Wells and Llandrindod Wells High School catchments without considering the Llanidloes High School catchment at the same time (PCC Welsh Liberal Democrats)

Alternative suggestions and proposals

- 9.41 The Governors of Llandrindod High School presented their own preferred options for the future of Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools, which in summary are as follows:

- (Strong preference is) to continue to provide education for years 11-18 from the present school with sufficient funding to provide the range of subjects that are desirable in a modern secondary school ...
- If increased funding is not available then there should be
 - one dual stream 11-18 Secondary School operating from two sites
 - The Builth Wells site would accommodate the Welsh Medium provision and a Sixth Form Centre.
 - English medium students age 11-16 would be educated on the Llandrindod Wells site.
 - This arrangement could be made swiftly and with modest cost.
 - The buildings on the Llandrindod site will accommodate the increase in student numbers with a few additional classrooms.

- 9.42 The advantages of this model, as explained by the Governing Body, are that it would be possible to increase the GCSE offer, strengthen provision overall and deploy subject specialists. Costs would be reduced from the better deployment of staff and a reduced Senior Leadership Team. A separate unit for the Welsh medium stream would lead to more use of the Welsh language between lessons and improve the uptake of Welsh Medium secondary provision in Mid Powys to compensate for the loss of pupils transferring from Welsh Medium primary schools. A Sixth Form Centre would offer more subjects; attract students who presently travel to England; be more cost effective and eliminate the cost of student transport between the two sites.

9.43 There was overwhelming support for this proposal from many other respondents:

I strongly believe that the proposal put forward by the Governing Body of Llandrindod High School, is both pragmatic and logical ... Having a permanent solution to this situation would take away the uncertainty for all involved, not least of all for both towns (Resident)

This would be in the best interests of all students ... and could be actioned sooner rather than later, instead of some 'pie in the sky' plan to build a super high school we cannot afford and do not want (Resident)

I would ask that you instruct SORP to bring forward proposals for one school based on the two existing sites as a permanent solution ... This alternative proposal is practical, achievable, permanent and will help to raise educational standards (County Cllr David Evans)

(The Governors' proposal) gives certainty to secondary education in both towns, which removes a potential hurdle to attracting inward investment and minimises the economic impact on both towns. We would encourage you to reject the current proposal ... and proceed to an open consultation with all members of our community so a solution can be found ... that will be in the best interests of not only our community but most importantly our children and grandchildren (LW Business Group)

Rhayader Town Council objects to any closure of a secondary school in Llandrindod Wells. It implores Powys County Council to undertake further work on proposals for one school based on the two existing sites as a permanent solution (Rhayader Town Council)

9.44 Several respondents questioned why the Governors' proposal was not preferred over the current proposal by PCC:

This document clearly shows that the Council believes the best proposal is for the creation of an English medium school in Llandrindod and a Welsh medium school in Builth but because they think in years to come they might get a shiny new school building they are willing to sacrifice our current learners' education (Resident)

Why has this proposal been removed? (Resident)

The only reason for not doing this is economic but in every meeting we were told that this was not an economic decision. Why is this? (Resident)

9.45 Additional suggestions were made by others:

- *For through schools and split sites rather than leaving communities without a school in their towns (Resident)*
- *To stop the current proposal and work with both schools to raise standards and get them out of special measures in advance of a new combined school or implementing Option 5 (Two Residents)*

Other themes in relation to one site, one school

^{9.46} The table below outlines some additional issues, around the consultation process, funding, equalities and the benefits of continuing to occupy the existing sites:

Figure 58: Summary of Additional themes raised in relation to one site, one school

Sub-Theme	Comments
Process and Consultation –one school, one site – a done deal?	<i>How can you issue a statement about a preferred site for a new secondary school before consultation? This is divisive and I'm guessing a tactic to try and split the two communities (Resident)</i>
Funding queries	<i>How long do you envisage the 'status quo' of one school on two sites lasting? Is the Council still able to obtain funding for a new school given the change in the Assembly Government? (Resident)</i>
Equalities	<i>The School Organisation Code says PCC should take into account "what impact proposals will have on educational attainment among children from economically deprived backgrounds". Also "how parents' and pupils' engagement with the alternative school and any facilities it may offer could be supported". e.g. How pupils (particularly any less advantaged pupils) will be helped to participate in after school activities". Llandrindod Wells north ward is one of the most economically deprived areas in Wales. A New School in Builth Wells would adversely impact this group (LHS Governors)</i>
Benefits of using existing buildings	<i>Existing sites already have connections to mains services and in the case of Llandrindod room to expand the number of buildings if required at some point in the future. The costs of a green field site development would be considerable in comparison. It is difficult to see where a new build school could be accommodated within Builth and how additional traffic would not further congest the streets (LW Business Group)</i>

10. Petitions

Overview of Petitions

^{10.1} One petition was organised that makes reference to the proposals affecting Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools. The petition reviewed below is the only petition known by ORS and Powys County Council. We apologise if there have been other petitions of which we have no knowledge.

Summary of Petitions

Save our Schools

^{10.2} An online petition entitled 'Save our Schools' exists with 558 signatures as of 11th August 2016.. It has not been possible to determine how many signatures were gathered during the consultation period.

^{10.3} The petition is found at kirstywilliams.org.uk and includes the following preamble:

We the undersigned support Kirsty Williams AM petition calling for the Independent led Powys County Council to keep our local Schools open.

^{10.4} It is important to note that the petition is not specifically targeted towards this proposal, but instead makes mention of perceived impacts of *both* consultations involving Brecon, Gwernyfed, Llandrindod and Builth Wells High Schools.

11. Social Media

Main issues and themes from social media

11.1 This chapter is in two parts: the first provides an overview of the method by which various social media outlets were analysed, and displays each page that was found. The second part provides a review of arguments, discussions and themes that arose around the proposal online.

Overview

11.2 A total of three social media pages were found to contain updates, comments or tweets referring specifically to the proposal or its perceived impacts. Each update, comment or tweet on each page was then analysed and a code frame was designed to capture each unique argument or theme that was discussed.

11.3 To ensure equal treatment between users of social media and all other respondents, only content that was posted during the consultation period was considered. ORS has ignored pages that exist as a response to previous consultations. Below is a summary of each page that was found.

Figure 59 – Overview of social media pages analysed

Name of page/group	Link	Likes/ followers
Powys County Council	facebook.com/powyscc/	3,395
Save Powys Schools	facebook.com/Save-Powys-Schools-1552306661705453/	2,091
Llandrindod Solutions	facebook.com/groups/234530116634949/	1,411

11.4 It is worth noting that in addition to the above, a page named ‘Save Llandrindod High School’ exists with 985 likes on Facebook. While this does show considerable support for the school, there were no updates or comments posted during the consultation period.

Main Themes Raised on Social Media

Quality of education at Llandrindod High School

11.5 Many social media users contend that Llandrindod provides a good education, with specific reference to GCSE and A-Level results. Some users provide anecdotal evidence of high educational standards, while others argue that standards at the school are relatively poor:

Quality – good

It produced the county's best GCSE results last year I believe and all accomplished by staying within the strict budget allocation unlike others (Llandrindod Solutions)

A Level results ... 94 per cent pass rate and a superb 59 per cent achieving A to B grades [in 2015]. [The] school gained its best GCSE results in the last five years. 23 students gained five or more A* or A grades and all students left with two or more GCSEs or equivalent. (Llandrindod Solutions)*

[Llandrindod] probably wouldn't be [in special measures] if the full Estyn inspection was re-done now given the huge improvement (Llandrindod Solutions)

I have three [children]. They're all doing really well and one of them has just been accepted into three universities (Llandrindod Solutions)

I've got two (extremely capable) kids at LHS ... and stats don't tell the whole story. Very easy to throw out figures - if it was simply down to percentages the school wouldn't be in special measures (Llandrindod Solutions)

Quality – bad

It's been failing kids for far too long, why save it? (Llandrindod Solutions)

Effects of proposal on Llandrindod/Builth Wells communities

- 11.6 Users of social media state that that the removal of the school could have far-reaching effects on local society. Common themes include impacts on business and demographics as people are deterred from moving to Llandrindod:

Llandrindod needs a high school otherwise no one will bring business here or move here. We are already turning into a ghost town (Llandrindod Solutions)

This affects the whole town; the whole community and sadly even though they do not realise it in the long run it will affect Builth community too as when the school is moved to outside the town, how will it affect their town centre and sports centre and all those things? (Llandrindod Solutions)

Who will move here? We already can't get professionals here so this will not help (Llandrindod Solutions)

[Having] no school will be the end of Llandrindod (Save Powys Schools)

Removal of Estyn Special Measures

- 11.7 Users commented on the importance of Estyn Special Measures at Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools. Some of these suggest that the effective removal of Special Measures might compromise the quality of education on offer:

A new school will be exactly that ... New - so won't be in special measures or inspected for 2+ Years (Llandrindod Solutions)

Special measures has been the driver for improvement at Llandrindod (Llandrindod Solutions)

Currently both high schools are getting extra help and time to improve because of being in special measures so the new school would lose this help and have nobody in charge of working on the individual needs to improve for both campuses! (Llandrindod Solutions)

A new building will not help

- 11.8 Some users of social media argue that a new school building will not tackle the root causes of problems at Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools, while others say that a newer, larger school will be worse for pupils:

A new building is a temporary plaster that will look shiny and new but in the long term will still fail to address resource management issues, low teacher morale and educational standards. Aren't both schools currently in special measures at the moment? (Llandrindod Solutions)

The new school will be bigger, making it easier for more children to get missed. (Llandrindod Solutions)

Disruption to pupils

- 11.9 Social media users voiced their concern over the potential for disruption or uncertainty for pupils:

More disruption to the education of our young people (Llandrindod Solutions)

My daughter is [in] year 5 now, so will be one of the first to be used in this game when it merges. How many of her secondary years will be as a guinea pig, before the 'new school' consultation begins? (Llandrindod Solutions)

My concern is that where we live we are 0.1 of a mile closer to Newtown than Builth, so does that mean my children will have to go to Newtown? (Llandrindod Solutions)

Transport

- 11.10 Users of social media show concern about increased travel times and costs for pupils living in Llandrindod. One user asks whether parents will have to cover this cost:

Currently the school bus to Llandrindod from Llanddewi leaves the village at 8:30 and the Builth bus leaves at 7:45. An extra 45 mins just on the outward journey (Llandrindod Solutions)

Llandrindod is a county town and [has] double [the] population of Builth - it makes no sense to build [the] new school in Builth ... What about cost of bussing all Llandrindod pupils to Builth or will rules be changed so parents have to cover cost? (Llandrindod Solutions)

To close the school would not be cost effective and to transport ALL the kids to Builth will cost silly money (Llandrindod Solutions)

Consultation document/community impact assessment/questionnaire

- 11.11 Many users of social media are unhappy with documentation provided as part of the consultation process. Some state that information provided by the Council is inadequate, biased, incorrect or otherwise unfit for purpose:

Consultation document – inaccuracies leading to lack of confidence

A document full of punctuation errors, grammatical errors, spelling errors, incorrect wording, wording omitted in sentences, the same wording repeated in succession in sentences! And the list goes on! How confident am I that the data is therefore correct? Not very! (Llandrindod Solutions)

It's complete[ly] inaccessible gobbledegook. It's confusing, biased and obviously created for the purposes of manipulating the data (Llandrindod Solutions)

Community impact assessment – unfair bias in favour of Builth Wells

If you want to see how biased this whole process is in favour of Builth Wells I would ask you to look at the community impact assessment presented to council earlier this year. Compare the detail for Builth and Llandrindod (Llandrindod Solutions)

On reading [the draft community impact assessment], I have to say that it is highly biased towards Builth Wells (Llandrindod Solutions)

Questionnaires are leading and biased

What an appalling one sided leading/misleading questionnaire in favour of Builth Wells (Llandrindod Solutions)

I was just about to post pictures of the leading, biased and completely inappropriate questionnaire! (Llandrindod Solutions)

This questionnaire is quite obviously designed for the children to be funnelled towards certain answers. The language and content clearly inaccessible to young children. Seriously lacking in the full picture, details and a complete failure to propose other options (Llandrindod Solutions)

Llandrindod Wells public meeting

^{11.12} Some users were unhappy with the conduct of the Council and ORS at Llandrindod Wells consultation event on 14 April 2016. Others were not satisfied with the answers provided to questions from the floor:

Blaming Welsh Labour for political decisions taken in County Hall is a lame excuse and shows Powys can't even defend its own plan (Powys County Council)

In my opinion, Opinion Research Services were a little too opinionated at the Llandod HS consultation meeting answering on behalf of Powys council officers and cabinet members ... somewhat inappropriate! (Save Powys Schools)

We heard not a word from the portfolio holder (Llandrindod Solutions)

Shame more people didn't have a chance to voice their concerns, due to the time restraint. Well done all for your questions, even if you didn't get the answers you wanted from the panel (Llandrindod Solutions)

Consultation process

^{11.13} Social media users commented on the consultation process itself, with some suggesting that a decision had already been made by the Council:

This isn't consultation; it's dictatorship against the will of the communities they are supposed to serve. More Councillors need to stand up and say 'not in my name' (Llandrindod Solutions)

Some real changes are needed, but they require funding, knowledgeable leadership from county staff and training... We're not going to get any of that. I don't trust the decision not to have been made behind this charade (Llandrindod Solutions)

PCC have already forged ahead with their plans and these 'consultations' are merely a peacekeeping tick-box exercise (Llandrindod Solutions)

I believe the decision has been made, and soon after it's been actioned, proposals will be out for a new school (Llandrindod Solutions)

Support for the proposal

^{11.14} Some users offered their support for the proposal, making reference to the poor condition of Llandrindod school buildings and the quality of education on offer there. One comment notes the successful implementation of similar proposals elsewhere:

Llandrindod High has been failing many kids for far too long. The building is dilapidated and the refurb would cost more than a new build. Why does anyone want to save a failing school? A new school would probably be good for all the kids around this area; more facilities could be incorporated. Change is good - why not let it happen. The kids will feel better having something new (Llandrindod Solutions)

What's the big issue? Other counties have made bigger/better schools and merged two other schools into one ... why can't Powys? Pupils will get a chance to meet other kids from neighbouring towns that they may not have known otherwise. The facilities will be newer, better. So many people can't accept change but times are changing. We aren't stuck in the 80/90s anymore. Get with the times (Llandrindod Solutions)

Alternative ideas/proposals

^{11.15} Some users put forward other ideas or proposals that the Council should consider. One user stated that the County Hall in Llandrindod Wells would make a suitable school building/site and another suggested keeping both schools and investing in them, rather than building an altogether new school:

It was previously reported that PCC may get rid of county hall in Llandrindod Wells; it would make a great school! (Llandrindod Solutions)

I don't see how a new school is going to improve teaching standards. Would it not be better to keep both schools but spend the money on better training and facilities? This is our children's lives they are playing with (Llandrindod Solutions)

Other Comments

11.16 Other sub-themes and comments emerged on social media and are listed below for brevity.

Figure 60: Summary of Additional Themes Raised in relation to one site, one school

Sub-Theme	Comments
Alternative proposals?	<i>I've read through the Formal Consultation Document this morning ... the information I'd like now is what the viable alternative is to the merger/one site proposal? (Llandrindod Solutions)</i>
Sending children to private school	<i>Going to have to be private school I'm not sending my kids to Builth (Llandrindod Solutions)</i>
Proposals are purely financially motivated	<i>A sorry state of affairs when it all boils down to money, not a decent or fair education for our young people (Llandrindod Solutions)</i>
Comments on costs/savings	<i>How will it save 140k? Does anyone really believe that, especially as 50k or more has gone on consultants ... Offset the cost of the process, the set up costs, possible redundancies, higher salaries for management staff etc., will these be recouped for what is likely to be a short term solution? (Llandrindod Solutions)</i> <i>Just heard [ORS] are going to cost us £50k ... That's £50k that could have been spent on our High Schools (Llandrindod Solutions)</i>
Additional costs to parents	<i>Then there will be the added cost of new uniforms etc. which parents will have to buy (Llandrindod Solutions)</i>
Removal of parental choice	<i>Without [Llandrindod], parental choice [will be gone] (Llandrindod Solutions)</i>
PCC at Builth Wells public meeting	<i>Very disappointed in the vagueness of answers from the panel – still need to be convinced on justification of the proposals – very sad times for our children's education (Powys County Council)</i>
New build – why in Builth Wells?	<i>Why does the school have to be built in Builth? Why can't it be in Llandod instead? Llandod is a dying town (Llandrindod Solutions)</i>
Llandrindod site	<i>Cynical part of me thinks ground and playing field at Llandrindod is prime development land that Powys will sell off as soon as new school in Builth built – cost of land needed will be fraction of gains from selling land (Llandrindod Solutions)</i>
Proposal the result of poor planning	<i>As I understand it the reason why they want to build the new school in Builth is because Builth has to retain the Welsh school at its site, due to the fact that they have already closed Brecon Welsh stream high school and Llandod is legally too far north for them to travel. So basically as usual this is the result of incredibly poor planning and leadership in Powys! (Llandrindod Solutions)</i>
Lack of confidence in PCC	<i>As I have said time and time again PCC is not fit for purpose and itself should be put into special measures ... Why are we paying out about £165,000 per year to a CHIEF EXEC? That money is about the [same as] they would save by closing our school. Well I for one know which one I would rather save (Llandrindod Solutions)</i>
Cabinet decision is undemocratic	<i>In my opinion, the way forward here is based on a perfectly reasonable expectation of a clear and transparent democratic process ... As things stand, the decision will be made by a group of councillors on whom it will have no effect. We need to change it. We need, as our democratic right, to insist that our local elected councillors are allowed a</i>

Sub-Theme	Comments
	<i>vote on this. Anything else will be perceived as a stitch up by the council and its tame councillors from the north. If the decision of our councillors as a whole is to support the proposals then so be it. That is democracy. This is NOT (Llandrindod Solutions)</i>
Happy with Llandrindod school	<i>Don't they understand we are happy with our schools as they are? (Llandrindod Solutions)</i> <i>As a student of the School, I'm passionate about it and I love it along with 599 other students and 50 members of staff who also love and feel passionate about it (Llandrindod Solutions)</i>

Non-specific comments

^{11.17} A number of comments on the 'Save Powys Schools' Facebook page do not *specifically* reference the proposal, but are clearly made in response to secondary education re-organisation in South Powys. For example, comments might make reference to pupils generally, or to 'communities' or 'schools', rather than to a particular community or school affected by the proposals. These comments are listed below for brevity.

Figure 61: Other comments on social media (non-specific)

Sub-Theme	Comments
Pupils being home schooled	<i>My son gets so travel sick he has already asked if I can home school him rather than him travel the journey twice a day. So there must be others out there (Save Powys Schools)</i>
Pupil carers	<i>What about a young carer who would be significantly affected. There are several pupils who care for their parents for whom this will have really serious implications (Save Powys Schools)</i>
Consultation process	<i>Consultation is not a chance to do a tick box exercise so they can do what they like to our schools and our communities (Save Powys Schools)</i> <i>It sounds like a decision has already been made?! (Save Powys Schools)</i> <i>It seems to me that they just aren't listening (Save Powys Schools)</i>
Cabinet decision is undemocratic	<i>I don't see how cabinet can be challenged in policy at all now ... they'll do what they intend to anyway (Save Powys Schools)</i> <i>So this is what passes for local democracy. PCC pays our money to yet another consultancy firm ... then a small cabinet of people will make the final decision with no recourse to the whole council. And if we object to the decision it will go back to the same cabinet for another decision (Save Powys Schools)</i>
Alternative ideas/proposals – high schools old county towns	<i>I can see the economic argument for merging schools but to me it would make more sense to centre these on the old counties - Newtown to cover Montgomery, Llandrindod to cover Radnor and Brecon to cover Breconshire. This would ensure no student having to travel ridiculously long journeys (Save Powys Schools)</i>

Appendix 1

Forma Submission by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales

Estyn response to the proposal by Powys County Council to close Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools and open a single bilingual dual stream 11-18 school from September 2017

This report has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer and other additional information such as data from Welsh Government and the views of the Regional Consortia which deliver school improvement services to the schools within the proposal.

Introduction

This is a consultation proposal from Powys County Council. The proposal is to:

- Close Builth Wells High School and Llandrindod High School and establish a single bilingual category 2B/C ("dual-stream") 11-18 secondary school operating across two sites as an interim measure whilst further feasibility work is carried out to establish the viability of a new school occupying one site in Builth Wells in the future; and
- Transfer Welsh-medium education currently delivered at Brecon to the Builth Wells site of the proposed new secondary school in mid-Powys from September 2017.

Summary/Conclusion

The proposer has provided a clear rationale for the proposal to close both schools and establish a new English-medium 11-16 school, operating on a single site at Builth Wells.

Overall, many aspects of the proposal receive appropriate consideration. However, the proposal does not sufficiently consider standards currently achieved at both schools or demonstrate how the changes will lead to improved standards or provision or the impact on teaching and curricular arrangements or the leadership and management of the new school. In addition, it does not consider fully all the risks involved in the proposal and the consideration of both the longer-term vision and interim solution does not aid the proposal's clarity.

As a result, it is Estyn's opinion that it is not possible to establish whether standards will be at least maintained by the proposal.

Description and Benefits

The proposer has provided a clear rationale for its longer term proposal to establish a single dual stream school in Builth. The proposer appears to base its case for change primarily on the need to address the decline in pupil numbers at both schools, particularly when set in the context of the projected pupil numbers to 2021. It considers appropriately the impact of low pupil numbers on provision and the ability to provide a viable English and Welsh medium curriculum across the county, and sets out its view that a larger bilingual school in mid Powys would provide economies of scale that would effectively address these concerns.

The proposer identifies appropriately the need to raise standards at both schools and to improve the condition of school buildings at both schools. The proposer also identifies how the proposal would produce annual revenue savings.

The proposer sets out clearly the expected benefits and disadvantages of the proposal when compared with the current situation. The proposer sees the main benefits of the proposal accruing from a reduction in surplus places, cost effectiveness, and the ability to provide a broader curriculum range at key stage 4 and 5, with particular attention given to the potential of broadening Welsh medium provision if its plans to remove the dual stream from Brecon High School are achieved. The proposer acknowledges the disadvantages of the proposal in terms of loss of community links and increased travel times for pupils in the Llandrindod catchment area affected. However, overall, it considers that the benefits of the proposal outweigh the disadvantages it has identified.

In many respects, the proposer appears to provide a fair and balanced appraisal of the risks associated with its proposed interim solution of operating across two sites. However, in a few instances, the proposer does not identify or discuss its risk management measures in sufficient detail. For example, although the proposer identifies the risk that some parents may arrange for their children to attend schools other than the new school, it does not identify sufficiently well how it will engage positively with parents to reduce this risk.

Similarly, it does not specify clearly enough how it intends to address the difficulties some pupils from the Brecon area may face with accessing after school activities due to transport constraints, other than a vague assurance that it will look into options. Significantly, the proposer does not consider sufficiently well the impact on provision and outcomes of a reduced budget given that one of the two schools is projecting a significant budget deficit over the next three years.

Moreover, there is insufficient consideration of the risks associated with its longer term vision of opening one school – one site in Builth, given that the proposal's main benefits can only be materialised if this longer-term vision is in fact realised.

Most significantly, however, it does not consider the possibility that the proposed new school will fail to improve standards, or identify any measures to address this.

The proposer has considered in the impact of the changes on learners' travel arrangements. It correctly identifies that there will be no additional travel for pupils already at the two sites. However, it has not provided sufficient information on current school to school or home to school travel arrangements to support its conclusion that the distance of 8 miles will pose minimal problems for sixth form travel arrangements if sixth forms are maintained on both sites.

The proposer acknowledges the increase in travel arrangements for pupils aged 11-16 who live in the Brecon catchment and who wish to attend Welsh-medium provision in Builth.

However, it does not analyse the impact of the proposal on these pupils in this consultation but in its concurrent consultation on the closure of the Welsh medium stream at Brecon. Reference is made therefore to our opinion contained in our response to that proposal.

The proposer considers in suitable detail the impact of the proposal on Welsh-medium provision within mid- and south Powys. The proposer has carried out a separate Welsh Language Impact Assessment, which clearly assesses the impact of the proposal on provision for pupils at both schools and within this area of the local authority. Given the declining and very low numbers of pupils currently accessing Welsh-medium education at Brecon High School, the proposer's view that the proposal provides benefits for the provision of Welsh-medium education and progression appears reasonable.

Educational aspects of the proposal

Overall, the proposer has not sufficiently considered the impact of the proposal on the quality of outcomes, provision and leadership and management. The proposer makes appropriate reference to the outcomes of both schools' most recent Estyn inspections. It identifies correctly that current performance and prospects for improvement at both schools were judged to be unsatisfactory at the time of the core inspections and that both schools are in special measures. The proposer also refers briefly to the schools' categorisation within the National School Categorisation System. However, it provides no explanation of the context or detail for these judgements.

Significantly, the proposer provides no analysis of the standards achieved by pupils at either school in terms of attainment at key stage 3, 4 or 5.

In terms of Welsh-medium provision at key stage 3 and key stage 4, the proposer suggests that the increased number of Welsh-medium pupils at the Builth Wells site of the proposed new dual-stream school in Mid-Powys would enable the school to set pupils according to ability for some subjects. The proposer argues that this could have a positive impact in terms of outcomes for Welsh-medium pupils. However, it does not provide evidence for its view that setting improves standards.

Overall, the proposer does not demonstrate how the reorganisation would have a positive impact on the standards achieved by pupils at any key stage.

In terms of provision, the proposer sets out reasonably that the increased number of Welsh-medium pupils at the Builth Wells site of the proposed dual-stream school, will allow greater choice and access to the curriculum, particularly at key stage 3 and key stage 4. Similarly, the proposer's view that the proposal for post-16 education could lead to increased access for post-16 pupils to both academic and vocational subjects seems sound. However, the proposer does not demonstrate how the proposed reorganisation would lead to improved standards of teaching, or how these potential benefits would link to improved outcomes for pupils. Moreover, the proposer does not consider the impact that the reduction in overall funding to a single school will have on the school's ability to deliver its curriculum, given that Llandrindod High School is projecting significant budget deficits in the future.

The proposer identifies appropriately that the transition to the new school will provide substantial additional workload for the shadowing governing body and appointed leadership team, and how the council aims to support this process. However, the proposer is less clear about how the proposal will result in improvements in the quality of leadership and management once the new school is established.

With regard to the new school in mid-Powys, the proposer acknowledges that the sudden increase in Welsh-medium pupils in individual year groups may cause initial difficulties for the new school, as it may require them to introduce a second Welsh-medium class in some year groups. However, it considers reasonably that as larger numbers of pupils move through the school, this will improve the school's ability to offer a more comprehensive curriculum to Welsh-medium pupils, particularly at key stage 4 and post-16.

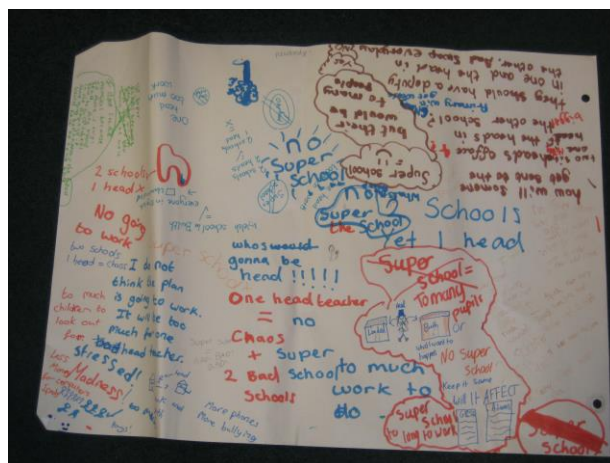
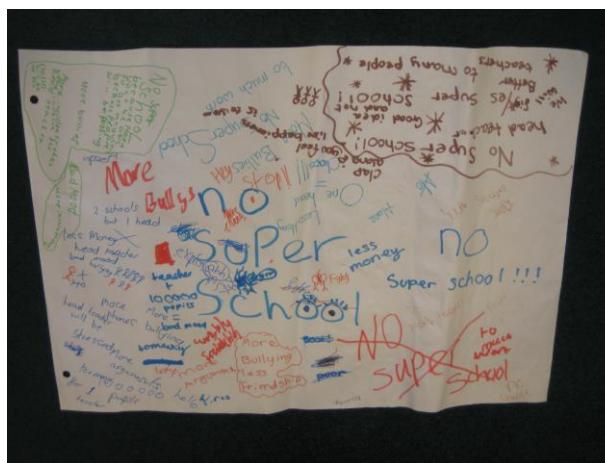
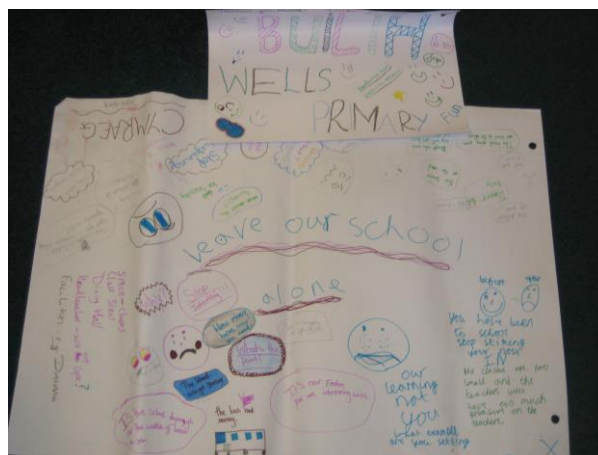
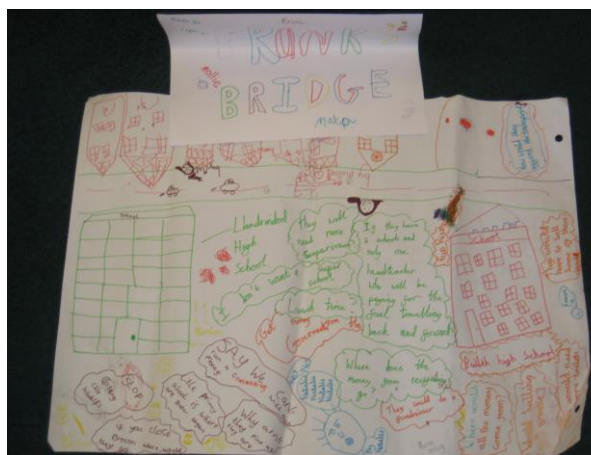
With regard to post-16 provision, the proposer asserts reasonably that the increased number of Welsh-medium pupils on the Builth Wells site of the new school in mid-Powys would lead in time to an increase in the number of available subjects at the school post-16. However, there remain questions about equality of opportunities for post-16 pupils choosing to study through the medium of Welsh in terms of the range of courses available to them.

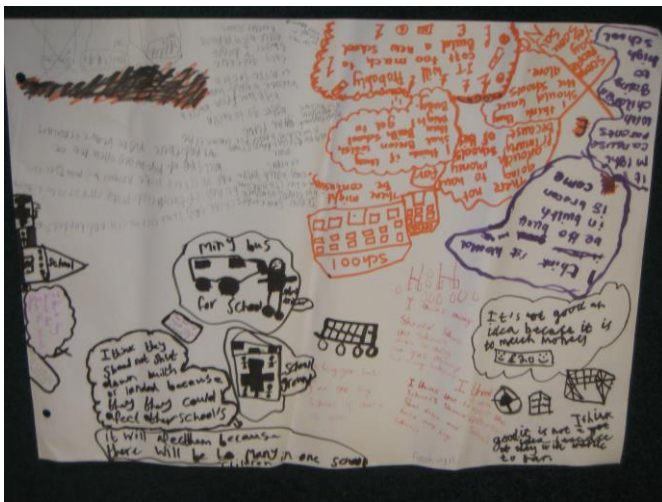
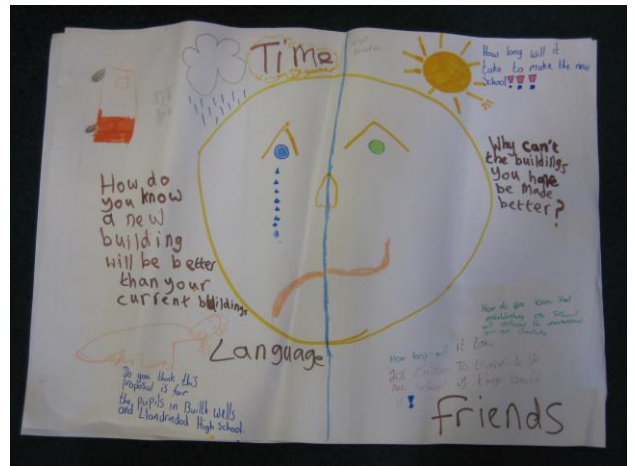
The proposer has considered fairly the likely impact of the interim proposal on a range of pupils from low-income families, Welsh-medium pupils and on the community. It identifies correctly that funding and provision to meet pupils' special educational needs will transfer to the new school and thus continue unchanged. It acknowledges appropriately that support plans will need to be put into place to support pupils to mitigate any negative impact on pupils' feelings of wellbeing. However, the proposal does not contain information on a community impact assessment of its longer term vision of a single school in Builth in this proposal.

Appendix 2

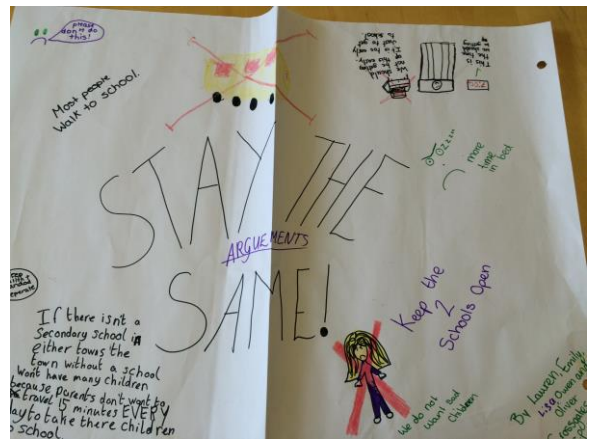
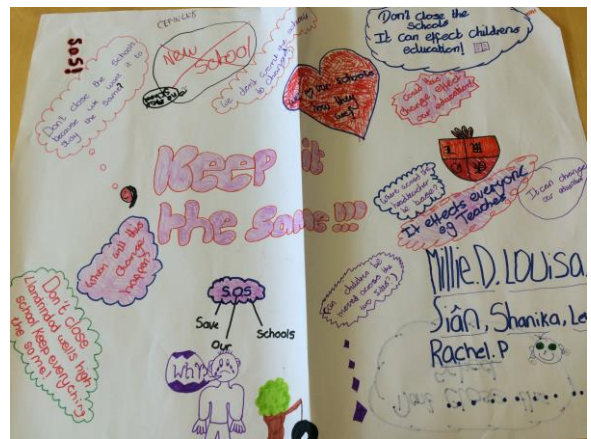
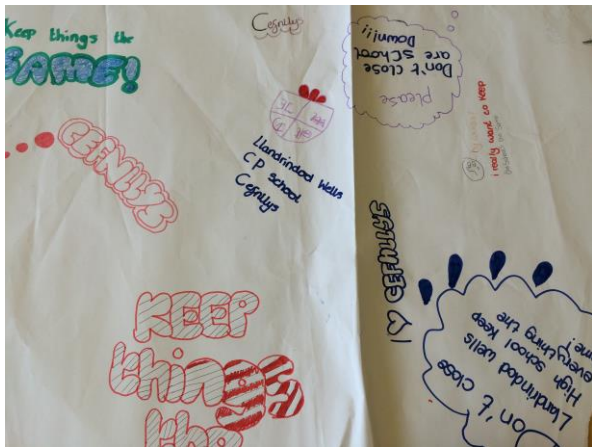
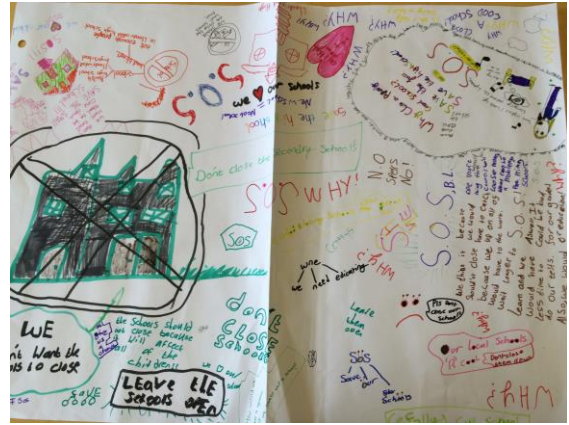
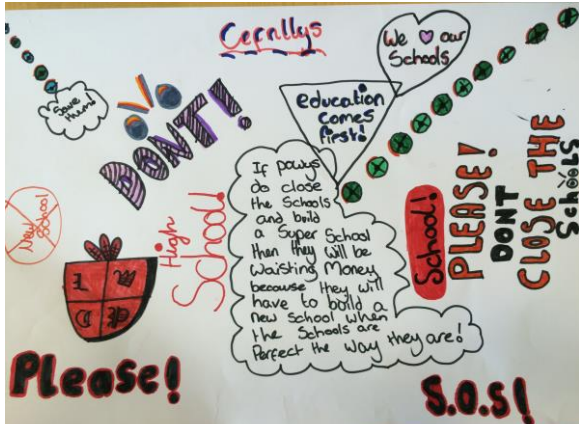
Posters by pupils involved in the primary school workshops

Builth Wells High School Catchment Schools Workshop





Llandrindod High School Catchment Schools Workshop



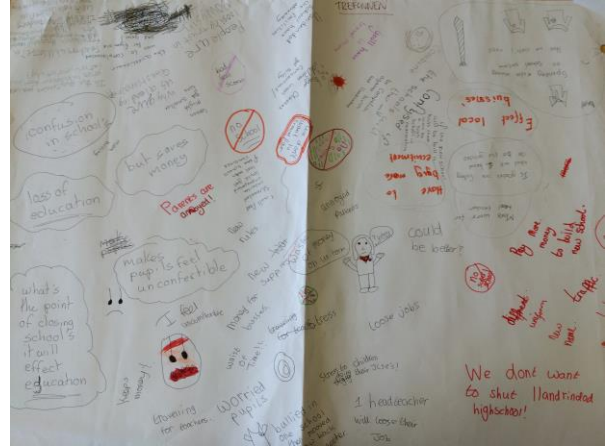


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