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LEARNING AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 8th July, 2021

The use of Welsh by participants is welcomed. If you wish to use Welsh please inform us by noon, two working days before the meeting

S U P P L E M E N T A R Y P A C K

1.	CASTLE CAEREINION
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To receive and consider the report of the Portfolio Holder for Education and Property and to make recommendations and observations to the Cabinet for consideration.

(Pages 3 - 354)

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CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.**CABINET EXECUTIVE****13 July 2021**

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Phyl Davies
Portfolio Holder for Education and Property

REPORT TITLE: Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Further to the decision made by Cabinet on the 9th February 2021, the Council has carried out consultation on the following proposal:
- To close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to attend their nearest alternative schools
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet members of the responses received to the consultation and to determine whether or not to proceed with the statutory process to close the school.
- 1.3 The report is supported by the following appendices:
- **Appendix A** – Consultation Document
 - **Appendix B** – Consultation Report
 - **Appendix C** – Minutes of meetings with School Council, Governors and Staff
 - **Appendix D** – Updated Impact Assessments
 - **Appendix E** – Comments from the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee (To follow)

2. Background**Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys**

- 2.1 On the 14th April 2020, a new Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys was approved by the Leader via a delegated decision.
- 2.2 The Strategy was developed following extensive engagement with a range of stakeholders during two separate periods between October 2019 and March 2020. The Strategy sets out a new vision education in Powys, as follows:

'All children and young people in Powys will experience a high quality, inspiring education to help develop the knowledge, skills and attributes that will enable them to become healthy, personally fulfilled, economically productive, socially responsible and globally engaged citizens of 21st century Wales.'

2.3 The new strategy also sets out a number of guiding principles which will underpin the transformation of education in Powys. These are as follows:

- *A world class rural education system that has learner entitlement at its core*
- *Schools that are fully inclusive, with a culture of deep collaboration in order to improve learner outcomes and experience*
- *A broad choice and high quality of provision for 14 – 19 year old learners, that includes both academic and vocational provision, meeting the needs of all learners, communities and the Powys economy*
- *Welsh-medium provision that is accessible and provides a full curriculum in Welsh from Meithrin to age 19 and beyond*
Provision for learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN)/Additional Learning Needs (ALN) that is accessible as near to home as is practicably possible, with the appropriate specialist teaching, support and facilities that enables every learner to meet their potential
- *A digitally-rich schools sector that enables all learners and staff to enhance their teaching and learning experience*
- *Community-focused schools that are the central point for multi-agency services to support children, young people, families and the community*
- *Early years provision that is designed to meet the needs of all children, mindful of their particular circumstances, language requirements or any special or additional learning needs*
- *Financially and environmentally sustainable schools*
- *The highest priority is given to staff wellbeing and professional development*

2.4 The new strategy sets out a number of Strategic Aims and Objectives, to shape the Council's work to transform the Powys education system over the coming years. One of the Strategic Aims of the Strategy is to *'improve learner entitlement and experience'* Within this aim, the Strategy sets out a Strategic Objective to *'rationalise primary provision'*.

2.5 On the 9th February 2021, the Council's Cabinet considered an options appraisal paper in respect of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, and agreed to carry out consultation on the following:

- To close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to attend their nearest alternative schools

The Consultation Period

- 2.6 Consultation on the proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School commenced on the 14th April 2021 and ended on the 2nd June 2021.
- 2.7 The consultation document was available on the Council's website throughout the consultation period. The document was also distributed to stakeholders as required by the School Organisation Code (2018). The consultation document that was issued is attached as Appendix A.
- 2.8 Consultees were asked to respond to the consultation by either completing the online consultation form, filling in a paper copy of the form and returning it to the Transforming Education Team, or by writing to the Transforming Education Team.
- 2.9 During the consultation period, virtual meetings were also held with the following:
- Staff of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School
 - Governors of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School
 - School Council of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

The minutes of these meetings are attached as Appendix C, and the issues raised in the meetings are included in the Consultation Report (Appendix B).

Consultation Responses

- 2.10 68 respondents completed the consultation response form which was included in the consultation document. This included paper copies as well as responses submitted using the online response form. In addition, 25 written responses were received from respondents including Estyn, by e-mail or post.
- 2.11 As well as responses from parents, pupils, staff and governors at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and members of the local community, responses were received from the following organisations:
- Castle Caereinion Community Council
 - Diocese of St Asaph
 - The Bishop of St Asaph
 - St Garmon's Church, Castle Caereinion
 - Trustees of the Castle Caereinion Recreation Association
 - Accessibility Powys

- 2.12 Estyn's response to the consultation is provided on page 18 of the Consultation Report (Appendix B).
- 2.13 The consultation response form asked respondents to answer a number of questions. The findings are provided in full on pages 5 to 8 of the Consultation Report (Appendix B).

Consultation Findings

- 2.14 As part of the consultation, a consultation response form was issued, which was completed by 68 respondents. 85.3% of respondents indicated that they were associated with Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, 10.3% indicated that they were associated with another school and 4.4% of respondents indicated that they were not associated with any school.
- 2.14 The issues raised in the written responses to the consultation and those raised in the consultation meetings, are listed in the Consultation Report (Appendix B) from page 22 onwards, along with the Council's response to these issues.
- 2.15 The issues raised relate to the following headings:
1. **Comments about Castle Caereinion C. in W. School**
 2. **Comments about Church in Wales provision**
 3. **Impact on pupils**
 4. **Travel implications**
 5. **Impact on staff**
 6. **Impact on the community**
 7. **Comments about pupil numbers / surplus places**
 8. **Comments about small/rural schools**
 9. **Comments about other schools pupils might transfer to**
 10. **Impact on Protected Characteristic groups**
 11. **Issues relating to Finance**
 12. **Comments about the Council's Strategies**
 13. **Criticism of Powys County Council**
 14. **Questions about / issues with the process**
 15. **Questions about / issues with the consultation documentation**
 16. **Alternative options**
 17. **Comments about impact on the Welsh language**
 18. **Comments in support of the proposal**

3 Advice

- 3.1 Based on the findings of the consultation, and further assessment of the options in accordance with the requirements of the School

Organisation Code in terms of the Presumption Against Closure of Rural Schools, the advice of officers is that the Council should proceed with the proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School by publishing a Statutory Notice.

3.2 The reasons for this are outlined below:

- To address the issue of low pupil numbers
- To reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools
- To realise a financial saving to the Council
- To enable pupils to attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum
- To enable pupils to attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities
- To enable pupils to attend schools with better quality accommodation
- The proposal meets all the Critical Success Factors

3.3 It is anticipated that the Statutory Notice would be published in September 2021, and that a further report, summarising any objections received, will be considered by the Council's Cabinet later in the autumn term 2021.

3.4 The target date to implement the closure of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is 31st August 2022.

3.5 It must also be noted that implementation of this proposal does not preclude that school from being a part of future reorganisation proposals.

4. Resource Implications

4.1 The amount of funding provided to schools is driven by the funding formula. Any change to the formula funding provided will impact on the Council's revenue budget. Based on the current formula, it is estimated that implementation of the proposal would deliver annual revenue savings to the Council of around **£58,100**.

4.2 This overall figure comprises a potential saving on Schools' delegated funding of over £90,400 calculated by re-running the school funding formula for all the schools potentially affected should Castle Caereinion CinW School close. This takes account of any changes in funding needed to accommodate additional pupils at these schools, based on pupils attending their nearest alternative Powys school. However, the Council recognises that parents may choose any school for their children.

- 4.3 The savings from the delegated school funding is offset by estimated additional transport costs of £32,300, based on providing home to school transport for 16 pupils at £170 per school day (190 school days per annum).
- 4.2 The school had a cumulative surplus balance of £51,788 as at the 31st March 2021. The budget approved by the Governing Body for the current year shows this decreasing to £32,786 by 31st March 2022.
- 4.3 The Scheme for Financing Schools also states the following in section 3.7.2:

‘In order to ensure effective stewardship of the resources available to schools, the Authority may impose additional restrictions on a school scheduled to close, including but not limited to:

- Restriction of expenditure to agreed plans
- Removal of powers of virement’

The Council will consider the use of these powers of intervention where appropriate.

- 4.4 Implementation of the proposal would require involvement from a number of service areas, including staff from the Schools Service, HR and Finance.
- 4.5 The Council’s Schools Budget Forum responded to the consultation in respect of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. Their response included the following:

‘The School Forum wishes to comment on the financial implications of these proposals for the overall schools’ delegated budget. At our last meeting we agreed on the importance of making sure that any savings accruing from transformation proposals are retained within the overall schools’ delegated budget. This is fundamental to the overall transformation programme being taken forward by the Council. One of the main tenets of the overall programme is to reduce the overall number of schools so that the existing level of funding could be shared more equitably and resolve the existing problem of some schools having insufficient resources.

There is a common sentence in each of the reports which says “Any savings would be reinvested in the Council’s corporate budget and any reinvestment in the schools’ system would be agreed as part of the annual budget planning cycle”. This falls a long way short of guaranteeing that the savings will be retained within the overall schools’ delegated budget. Essentially this means that it will be up to the Council each year to decide on whether the funding should be retained for schools or not. This approach is very worrying as it could

lead to the overall schools' delegated budget being reduced as a result of the Council deciding that savings should be reinvested elsewhere. That runs very much against the overall plan to share the existing resources amongst a smaller number of schools and could result in the same problem we have now – not enough funding to run all the schools.

Against this background can you please, when reporting back to the Cabinet on the results of the consultations for each of these schools, report the concerns of the Schools' Forum as set out above and change the approach to how savings are to be treated, i.e. that they are ring fenced for use within the schools' delegated budget.'

- 4.6 The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) "I note the resource implications set out above and the comments submitted by the Schools Budget Forum. Education and the Transforming Education Strategy are both amongst the highest priorities for the Council and there has been significant work over the last few years to agree an appropriate level of funding in the delegated schools' budget. I acknowledge the Schools Budget Forum's desire to have a guarantee on the savings being reinvested into the schools' delegated budget. However, given that the Council's funding is only confirmed on an annual basis, it is not appropriate to ring-fence in this way. The funding allocated to all services has to be considered collectively and the Council will prioritise its resources in order to deliver its objectives. This approach has seen investment in Education over recent years."

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Legal: "The proposal can be supported from a legal point of view.
- 5.2 The Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows:

6. Comment from local member(s)

6.1

7. Integrated Impact Assessment

- 7.1 An initial impact assessment was considered by Cabinet on the 9th February 2021.
- 7.2 In addition, a range of draft impact assessments were produced as part of the consultation documentation. These included an Integrated Impact Assessment, an Equalities Impact Assessment, and a Community Impact Assessment.
- 7.3 These draft impact assessments have been updated to reflect issues raised during the consultation period, and are attached in Appendix D.

8. Recommendation

- To receive the Consultation Report in respect of closing Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.
- To approve the publication of a statutory notice to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to attend their nearest alternative schools.

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CABINET REPORT TEMPLATE VERSION X



Proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

Consultation Document



Consultation on the closure of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

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If you require a paper copy of this document, or a copy of the document in a different format, please contact the Transforming Education Team on 01597 826277, or e-mail school.organisation@powys.gov.uk.

Consultation on the closure of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

OVERVIEW

1. The Proposal

Powys County Council is consulting on a proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. The proposal is as follows:

- To close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to attend their nearest alternative schools

2. How to respond to the consultation

You can respond to this consultation by completing the online questionnaire which is available on our website:

<https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/10560/Castle-Caereinion-Church-in-Wales-School>

A paper copy of the questionnaire is also available at the back of this document. Alternatively, you can respond in writing using the contact details below.

All responses must be received by the **2nd June 2021**.

3. Contact details

All responses should be sent to the following address:

Transforming Education Team
Powys County Council
County Hall
Llandrindod Wells
Powys
LD1 5LG

E-mail: school.consultation@powys.gov.uk

Phone: 01597 826618

4. What will happen next

Once the consultation period has ended, a consultation report will be produced which will outline the feedback received. The Council's Cabinet will consider the consultation report and will consider whether or not they wish to proceed with the proposal. This is expected to happen in the summer of 2021.

If the Cabinet decide to proceed with the proposals, a statutory notice would be published, and there would be a period of 28 days for people to submit objections. The Cabinet would then need to consider another report summarising any objections received and decide whether or not to proceed with implementation.

PART A – THE CASE FOR CHANGE

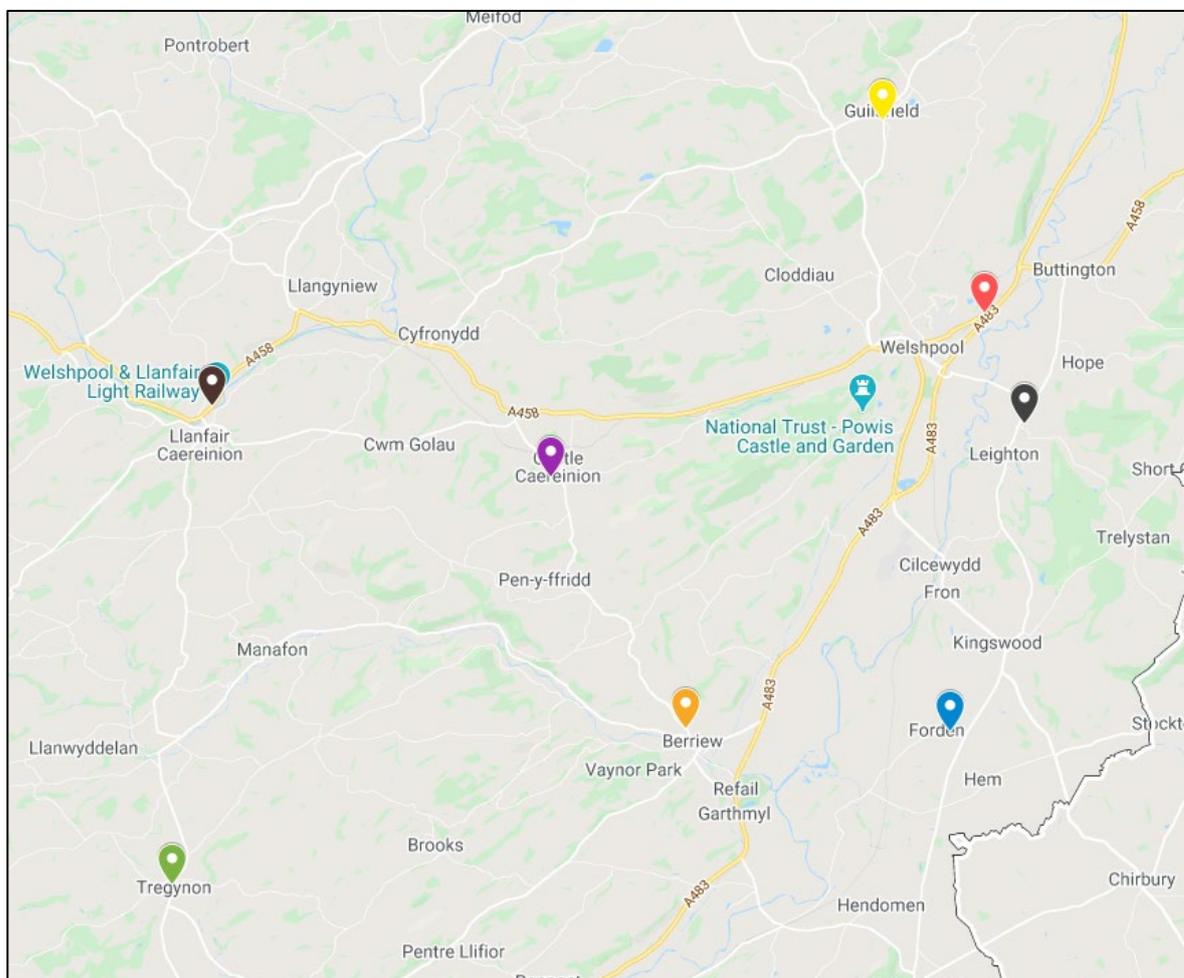
Powys County Council is consulting on the following proposal:

- **To close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools.**

1. BACKGROUND

Castle Caereinion Church in Wales School is an English-medium Voluntary Controlled Church in Wales primary school located in the village of Castle Caereinion, in the Llanfair Caereinion catchment area in North Powys.

The following map shows the location of the school, and other schools in the area:



Key: Purple – Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, Orange – Berriew C.P. School, Red – Welshpool C. in W. School, Brown – Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School, Blue – Forden C. in W. School, Grey – Leighton C.P. School, Yellow – Guilsfield C.P. School, Green – Ysgol Rhiw Bechan

The following is a summary of key data relating to the school:

School name and location	School Category	Language Category	Admission Number	Rural School ¹
Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, Castle Caereinion, Welshpool, Powys SY21 9AL	Voluntary Controlled Primary School building owned by the Diocese of St. Asaph	English-medium	8	Yes

Current pupil numbers² at the school are as follows:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Castle Caereinion C. in W. School	4	3	5	4	4	3	0	23

In April 2020, the Council approved a new Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys, which sets out a number of aims and objectives to transform the Powys education system over the next few years, in order to provide the best possible opportunities to Powys learners now and in the future. One of the objectives included in the strategy is to 'improve learner entitlement and experience' and it also includes an objective to 'rationalise primary provision'.

The Council has carried out an options appraisal exercise to identify a preferred option for Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

The following steps have been undertaken:

- Options appraisal exercise
- Recommendation considered and agreed by the Transforming Education Programme Board

On the 9th February 2021, the Council's Cabinet considered a report in respect of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, and agreed to commence consultation on the following:

'To close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools.'

¹ Annex F of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2018) (<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/school-organisation-code-second-edition-pdf>)

² Finance NOR – 2020 Pupil Count Day (6th November 2020)

2. WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN POWYS

Powys is a large, rural authority. Covering a quarter of the landmass of Wales, it contains only 4.2% of the population, making it the most sparsely populated county in Wales. Delivering services across such a large, sparsely populated area is challenging and expensive.

Whilst there has been some school reorganisation activity in Powys over recent years, the county's schools' infrastructure largely remains similar to that which was in place 20 years ago.

The Council's new Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys outlines a number of challenges facing education in Powys, which were identified following engagement with key stakeholders during the autumn term 2019 and spring term 2020.

The following is a summary of the main challenges facing the Council:

i) High proportion of small schools

Based on PLASC 2019 figures, there were 33 small primary schools in Powys – this is approximately 40% of the primary provision in the county. 21 schools had fewer than 50 pupils, and for those schools the budget share per pupil is generally higher than the Powys average for primary schools.

ii) Decreasing pupil numbers

Pupil numbers have decreased over the past decade, and are expected to decrease further over the next five years. Pupil numbers in the primary sector in Powys are expected to decrease by approximately 4% by 2025.

iii) High number of surplus places

Based on PLASC 2019 figures, there was 18% surplus capacity in Powys primary schools. With pupil numbers across Powys projected to decrease overall over the coming years, the proportion of surplus places across the county will continue to increase.

iv) Building condition

Whilst the Council has invested in its school's estate through the 21st Century Schools Programme and the Asset Management Plan, building condition remains an issue across Powys, with associated maintenance costs.

v) Financial pressures

The Council is currently facing significant financial pressures in general. This is affecting all service areas, including the schools' sector. There are significant variations in the budget share per pupil across Powys schools, ranging from £3,127 to £7,877 in the primary sector.

vi) Inequality in access to Welsh-medium education

In contrast to other areas of Wales, there has been no growth in Welsh-medium pupil numbers in Powys over recent years. Significant changes are needed to the Welsh-medium offer in Powys to reverse the trend of the last few years and ensure that all Powys learners can access comprehensive Welsh-medium provision throughout their educational careers.

vii) Limited post-14 and post-16 offer

In September 2019, the Council's Cabinet considered a report on post-16 provision, which outlined a number of challenges facing the sector, including decreasing learner numbers, financial challenges and sustainability of the curriculum offer, including Welsh-medium provision.

viii) Inequality in access to SEN provision

Within Powys, pupils with special education needs (SEN) attend a range of settings, including special schools, specialist centres, the pupil referral unit (PRU) as well as mainstream schools.

Currently, not all pupils are educated in the setting that meets their needs best, and depending on where pupils live, they have access to a different quality and type of provision.

ix) Historical lack of political decision making

Although there have been some developments in terms of the schools' infrastructure over recent years, the Council's failure to implement a number of high-profile proposals in the last few years has left a legacy in Powys, and there has been a reluctance to embark on large scale reorganisation of education provision since then.

3. THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

In the summer of 2019, Powys Education Services were inspected by Estyn. The report published by Estyn following the inspection outlined significant concerns regarding the Council's progress on school reorganisation, and includes a recommendation to 'Ensure that the organisation of provision for non-maintained, post-16, Welsh-medium education and secondary education meets the needs of children and young people of Powys.'

Following publication of the inspection report, the Council carried out a strategic review of schools during 2019-20, which led to the development of a new Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys. The strategy, which was developed following engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, was approved in April 2020.

The strategy sets out a Vision Statement and Guiding Principles which will underpin the Council's work to transform the Powys education system over the coming years.

The Vision Statement is as follows:

All children and young people in Powys will experience a high-quality, inspiring education to help develop the knowledge, skills and attributes that will enable them to become healthy, personally fulfilled, economically productive, socially responsible and globally engaged citizens of 21st century Wales.

In order to achieve the vision and guiding principles, the strategy outlines a number of aims and objectives to transform the Powys education system over the next few years, in order to provide the best possible opportunities to Powys learners now and in the future. One of these aims is to 'improve learner entitlement and experience' and this aim includes an objective to 'rationalise primary provision'.

The current proposal in respect of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is in line with these priorities.

4. WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN CASTLE CAEREINION

The following is a summary of the main challenges facing Castle Caereinion C. in W. School:

i) Low pupil numbers

Current pupil numbers³ at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School are as follows:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Caereinion C. in W. School	4	3	5	4	4	3	0	23

The Welsh Government defines a 'small school' as a school with less than 91 pupils. Pupil numbers are significantly lower than this, and are projected to remain below 30 for the foreseeable future.

The school's low pupil numbers have also resulted in a high number of surplus places at the school. Based on current pupil numbers, there is currently 68.9% surplus capacity at the school.

ii) High budget per pupil

Based on the Council's Section 52 Budget Statement for 2020-21, the school's budget share per pupil during 2020-21 was £6,919. This is significantly higher than the Powys average of £4,264. Castle Caereinion is ranked the 5th highest school in Powys by budget share per pupil.⁴

iii) Issues with the building

Whilst the school building was assessed to be in good condition by the Welsh Government's condition survey carried out in 2009, it is an old fashioned building, and there are concerns regarding its suitability to deliver education which meets the requirements of the new curriculum, and which meets the Council's vision statement, as outlined in the Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys.

The Council recently commissioned an updated condition survey of the school building. This was carried out in the autumn term 2020. The survey assessed the condition of all three blocks at the school as condition C.

iv) Combined age classes

The small pupil numbers at the school mean that pupils are taught in whole key stage classes, with Key Stage 2 in one class and Foundation Phase in another

³ Finance NOR – 2020 Pupil Count Day (6th November 2020)

⁴ Section 52 Budget Statement 2020/2021

class. Because pupil numbers in each year group are small, it is more difficult to ensure all pupils are appropriately challenged.

v) Leadership

Following a long period of instability during which leadership arrangements for the school were by other schools in the local area, the school now has its own standalone headteacher. However, the headteacher has a significant teaching commitment, which limits the time available to focus on leadership of the school.

5. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The following options have been identified for Castle Caereinion C. in W. School:

Option	Description
1	Status quo – continue as a standalone school
2	Federation with Welshpool Church in Wales School
3	Merge with Welshpool Church in Wales School to establish a new school on two sites
4	Close Castle Caereinion, but retain the site as part of Welshpool C. in W. School
5	Merge with Berriew C.P. School to establish a new school on two sites
6	Close Castle Caereinion, but retain the site as part of Berriew C.P. School
7	Merge with Berriew C.P. School to establish a new school on the Berriew site
8	Merge with Berriew C.P. School to establish a new school on the Castle Caereinion site
9	Close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools

SWOT analyses have been carried out for each of these options. In addition, the options have been assessed against a number of Critical Success Factors, and the likely impact of each option on quality and standards, the community and travelling arrangements was also considered. These can be found in Appendix B and Appendix C of this document.

6. PREFERRED OPTION

Based on the SWOT analyses, the assessment against the Critical Success Factors and the consideration of the likely impact of each option on quality and standards, the community and travelling arrangements, the preferred option is as follows:

Option 9: Close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools.

The reasons for this are:

- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Castle Caereinion
- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools
- Revenue saving to the Council
- Pupils would attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum
- Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities
- Pupils would attend schools with more suitable accommodation
- Meets all of the Critical Success Factors

This is the basis for the current proposal on which the Council is consulting. The proposal is further explored in the following section. The reasons why the other options considered have not been taken forward are summarised in Appendix D of this document.

PART B – THE PROPOSAL

7. OVERVIEW

Powys County Council is consulting on a proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. The proposal is as follows:

- To close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools.

8. REASONS FOR THE PROPOSAL

The Council is proposing to close Castle Caereinion C.in W. School for the following reasons:

- To address the issue of low pupil numbers
- To reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools
- To realise a financial saving to the Council
- To enable pupils to attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum
- To enable pupils to attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities
- To enable pupils to attend schools with better quality accommodation
- The proposal meets all of the Critical Success Factors

9. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

The advantages and disadvantages of the current proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School are summarised below:

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Castle Caereinion- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools- Revenue saving to the Council- Pupils would attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum- Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities- Pupils would attend schools with more suitable accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Additional travel for those pupils for whom Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is currently the closest school- Additional travel costs- Pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion School would have to transfer to alternative provision- Loss of provision from Castle Caereinion- Impact on the current staff of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School- Impact on the Castle Caereinion community- Reduction in C. in W. provision

10. RISKS

As with all school reorganisation proposals, there are some risks associated with the proposal to close Castle Caereinion C.W. School and transfer pupils to alternative schools.

These are outlined below, along with suggested mitigating actions:

	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Actions
Period of uncertainty for Castle Caereinion C. in W. School if a statutory process is carried out and implemented which might have a negative effect on standards at the school	Medium	Medium	The Council to provide advice and support to the school and governing body to ensure that standards and performance do not deteriorate during the transition period
Uncertainty for staff during any transition period might result in some staff leaving	Medium	Medium	Engagement with staff to take place throughout the process and staff to be kept informed of developments

11. POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION TIMESCALE

Should Cabinet decide to proceed with the proposals, potential implementation timescales are as follows:

Formal Consultation	14 th April 2021 to 2 nd June 2021
Consultation Report to be published, and considered by Cabinet	July 2021

If Cabinet decide to proceed:

Publish Statutory Notice (28 days objection period)	September 2021
Objection Report to be published and considered by Cabinet	November 2021

If Cabinet approves implementation:

School closes	31 st August 2022
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PART C – LIKELY IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

12. IMPACT ON PUPILS

i) Pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the proposal, Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would close and pupils would transfer to their nearest alternative schools. It is acknowledged that this would have an impact on pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, as they would need to transfer to an alternative school. Should the proposal be implemented, the Council would work closely with the current school and the alternative schools to ensure a smooth transition.

As Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would close and pupils would transfer to their nearest alternative provision, additional transport would be required for pupils for whom Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is currently the closest school. Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with Council's home to school transport policy, it is acknowledged that there could be an impact on pupils' ability to access after-school activities, and that there could be increased travelling times to school for some pupils.

ii) Pupils attending other nearby primary schools

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the proposal, Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would close and pupils currently attending the school would transfer to their nearest alternative schools. This would mean that pupils would transfer to other schools in the local area.

As pupils would transfer to alternative schools, the proposal could impact on pupils at the schools pupils may choose to transfer to, as those schools would receive additional pupils. However, the total number of pupils at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is currently small, therefore it is not anticipated that this would have a significant impact on pupils attending other nearby primary schools. The numbers admitted to each school would be in line with the admissions number for each school.

13. IMPACT ON STAFF

Should the proposal be implemented, Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would close. A staff redundancy process would be necessary for staff currently employed at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. This would be conducted in line with the relevant HR policies for teaching and support staff. All cleaning and catering staff that are currently employed centrally by the Council would be supported by the relevant HR policies for Council employees.

14. IMPACT ON NURSERY / EARLY YEARS PROVISION

In September 2017, the Council changed the age of admission to primary schools in Powys from “at the start of the term in which they attain their fourth birthday” to “at the start of the school year following his/her fourth birthday”. Following this change, there are no nursery aged pupils attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.

Funded early years provision is provided for pupils at a number of locations across Powys, however no funded early years education is available at Castle Caereinion.

Funded early years provision is available at a number of providers in the local area. Should the Council proceed with the proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, these providers would continue to be available, therefore it is not anticipated that the proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would impact on access to nursery / early years provision.

Information about the funded early years providers in the local area is provided below⁵:

Berriew Preschool and Toddler Group

Berriew Preschool and Toddler Group is a non-maintained community run setting which operates from the site of Berriew C.P. School. They also provide the Childcare Offer for Wales. Standards of nursery education and sufficiency of accommodation at this provider are good. The setting is very welcoming and has a popular outdoor area and sensory garden.

There are 16 ten hours early years education places available at this provider which are currently sufficient to meet the need for early years education in the area.

Happitots (Welshpool C. in W. School)

Happitots is a non-maintained school run setting which operates from the site of Welshpool C. in W. School. They also provide the Childcare Offer for Wales. Standards of nursery education and sufficiency of accommodation at this provider are good. The setting operates from within the new school building.

There are 32 ten hours early years education places available at this provider which are currently sufficient to meet the need for early years education in the area.

Park Lane Nursery

Park Lane Nursery is a non-maintained community run setting which operates from a building in the centre of Welshpool. They also provide the

⁵ All information correct as of Summer Term 2021/22

Childcare Offer for Wales. Standards of nursery education and sufficiency of accommodation at this provider are good. The setting has good access to outdoor areas.

There are 16 ten hours early years education places available at this provider which are currently sufficient to meet the need for early years education in the area.

Open Door Family Centre

Open Door Family Centre is a non-maintained community run setting which operates from the site of the former Welshpool C. in W. School. Standards of nursery education and sufficiency of accommodation at this provider are good. The setting provides an extremely welcoming, child centred and rich environment that supports children to play and learn successfully.

There are 16 ten hours early years education places available at this provider which are currently sufficient to meet the need for early years education in the area.

Little Acorns (Formerly Footsteps Day Nursery)

Little Acorns is a non-maintained community run setting which operates from the site of the former Welshpool C. in W. School. They also provide the Childcare Offer for Wales. Standards of nursery education at this provider is good, however the, sufficiency of accommodation at this provider has been rated by Estyn as adequate. The setting provides an outdoor play area providing children with opportunities.

There are 16 ten hours early years education places available at this provider which are currently sufficient to meet the need for early years education in the area.

Ysgol Feithrin Y Trallwng

Ysgol Feithrin Y Trallwng is a non-maintained community run setting which operates from the site of Ysgol Gymraeg y Trallwng. They also provide the Childcare Offer for Wales. Standards of nursery education and sufficiency of accommodation at this provider are good. The setting is welcoming, stimulating and child friendly.

There are 16 ten hours Welsh-medium early years education places available at this provider which are currently sufficient to meet the need for early years education in the area.

Cylch Meithrin Llanfair Caereinion

Cylch Meithrin Llanfair Caereinion is a non-maintained community run setting which operates from a site in Llanfair Caereinion. They also provide the Childcare Offer for Wales. Standards of nursery education and sufficiency of accommodation at this provider are good. The setting is maintained effectively with outdoor resources being used regularly.

There are 16 ten hours Welsh-medium early years education places available at this provider which are currently sufficient to meet the need for early years education in the area.

Brookfield Day Nursery

Brookfield Day Nursery is a non-maintained community run setting which operates from a site in Garthmyl. They also provide the Childcare Offer for Wales. Standards of nursery education and sufficiency of accommodation at this provider are good. The setting provides an extremely welcoming, child centred and rich environment that supports children to play and learn successfully.

There are 16 ten hours early years education places available at this provider which are currently sufficient to meet the need for early years education in the area.

15. IMPACT ON GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Implementation of the proposal would result in the closure of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and the Governing Body of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would be dissolved.

16. IMPACT ON QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN EDUCATION

i) Standards, wellbeing and attitudes to learning

Standards and progress overall, of specific groups and in skills

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Berriew C.P. School. However it is possible that pupils would choose to attend Welshpool C. in W. School as the nearest Church in Wales school, or Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School or Guilsfield C.P. School, as other nearby schools.

The Council's view is that all of these schools would provide education for pupils which is of at least equivalent quality as that provided at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on standards and progress overall. Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, Berriew C.P. School

and Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School were categorised as Amber in the latest school categorisations carried out in 2019, whilst Welshpool C. in W. School was categorised as Yellow. Guilsfield C.P. School was classified as a Green school.

This would also apply in respect of pupils belonging to specific groups, such as pupils eligible for Free School Meals, pupils for whom English is an Additional Language, Looked after Children and pupils with Additional Learning Needs. Based on PLASC 2020 information, there are no Looked after Children at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. There are a small number of pupils for whom English is an Additional Language, a small number of pupils that are eligible for Free School Meals, and a small number of pupils that have Additional Learning Needs. However, it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on the standards and progress of these pupils.

This is also the case in respect of the impact on the skills of all pupils, including literacy, numeracy and ICT. Pupils would transfer to larger schools, which would provide improved opportunities to share staff expertise and resources, and which have an improved ability to monitor pupil progress in these aspects.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

In the short term, it is possible that there would be an impact on pupils' wellbeing, as they would need to transfer from Castle Caereinion C. in W. School to alternative schools. It is possible that pupils could choose to transfer to different schools, which could have a further impact on their wellbeing. However, the receiving school(s) would provide full support to the pupils during the transition period, to minimise any negative impact on them.

For some pupils, implementation of the preferred option could result in additional travel, which could have an impact on pupil well-being. However, alternative primary provision would be available at a number of other schools located within 10 miles of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. It is not considered that the additional travel time required to alternative provision would be excessive.

In the longer term, the intention is that implementation of the preferred option would have a positive impact on pupil wellbeing and attitudes to learning as they would transfer to larger schools with larger cohorts of pupils, providing improved social and extra-curricular opportunities.

ii) Teaching and learning experiences

Quality of teaching

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Berriew C.P. School. However it is possible that pupils would choose to attend Welshpool C. in W. School as the nearest Church in Wales school, or Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School or Guilsfield C.P. School, as other nearby schools.

It is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on the quality of teaching experienced by pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.

The breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Berriew C.P. School. However it is possible that pupils would choose to attend Welshpool C. in W. School as the nearest Church in Wales school, or Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School or Guilsfield C.P. School, as other nearby schools.

The Council's view is that all of these schools would provide a curriculum which is at least equivalent to that currently provided at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. It is likely that pupils would transfer to larger schools, therefore the expectation would be that there would be an improvement in the breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum provided to pupils, and that the alternative schools would be better placed to develop provision which meets the requirements of the new curriculum.

Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is a Church in Wales school, which impacts on some aspects of the curriculum. Alternative Church in Wales provision is available at Welshpool C. in W. School, ensuring that denominational provision would continue to be available to those pupils who wished to access it.

The provision of skills

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Berriew C.P. School. However it is possible that pupils would choose to attend Welshpool C. in W. School as the nearest Church in Wales school, or Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School or Guilsfield C.P. School, as other nearby schools.

The Council has no concerns about the provision of skills at these schools, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on the provision of skills for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.

iii) Care support and guidance

Tracking, monitoring and the provision of learning support, personal development and safeguarding

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Berriew C.P. School. However it is possible that pupils would choose to attend Welshpool C. in W. School as the nearest Church in Wales school, or Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School or Guilsfield C.P. School, as other nearby schools.

It is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on tracking, monitoring and the provision of learning support, personal development and safeguarding for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. In respect of Berriew C. P. School, whilst an issue in respect of car parking arrangements at the school was identified previously, this has been addressed. In respect of Welshpool C. in W. School, the school moved into a new building in January 2021. Safeguarding is a key consideration when designing new schools, therefore the expectation is that the safeguarding arrangements here would be improved compared with the current arrangements at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.

iv) Leadership and management

Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers, self-evaluation processes and improvement planning

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Berriew C.P. School. However it is possible that pupils would choose to attend Welshpool C. in W. School as the nearest Church in Wales school, or Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School or Guilsfield C.P. School, as other nearby schools.

Permanent leadership arrangements are in place at Berriew C.P. School, Welshpool C. in W. School and Guilsfield C.P. School, therefore the Council's view is that leadership and management at the alternative schools would be at least as good as the current arrangements at Castle Caereinion, whilst there are currently temporary leadership arrangements in place at Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School.

The alternative schools which pupils may transfer to are all larger than Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, therefore the headteachers of these schools would have more time available to focus on leadership and management.

Professional learning

It is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would impact on professional learning opportunities. Staff currently employed at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would be subject to a management of change process.

Use of resources

Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is projecting to be in a cumulative surplus budget position over the coming years. Whilst there are no concerns about the use of resources within the school, there are concerns about use of resources overall within the Powys schools infrastructure. As indicated on page 8 above, one of the main challenges facing the Powys schools infrastructure is the high proportion of small schools in the county. Castle Caereinion C. in W. school is among the smallest schools in the county, and the budget share per pupil at the school is higher than the Powys average for primary schools.

Closure of the school would reduce the number of schools in Powys, and would enable the Council to use its resources more effectively for the benefit of all Powys learners.

Should the emerging preferred option be implemented pupils would transfer to larger schools, ensuring more effective use of the Council's resources.

In addition, larger schools often have more resources available in terms of number of staff and educational resources, therefore pupils would benefit from the opportunity to access these resources.

v) Impact on vulnerable groups, including children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Implementation of the preferred option would result in the closure of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. It is acknowledged that there would be an impact on any pupils belonging to vulnerable groups currently attending the school, including any pupils with SEN, and that in the short term, these pupils would need to transfer to alternative schools.

Based on January 2020 PLASC information, 16.7% of pupils at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School were on School Action, and 12.5% of pupils were on School Action Plus. There were no statemented pupils.

Whilst the preferred option would impact on these pupils, as they would be required to move to alternative schools, there is no reason to believe that the schools to which they might transfer would not be able to meet their needs.

Should the option be implemented, the Council would work with Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and the receiving schools to ensure an effective transition for any vulnerable children, including children with SEN, and their families.

vi) Impact on the school's ability to deliver the full curriculum in the foundation stage and each key stage, including the quality of curriculum delivery and the extent to which the structure or size of the school is impacting on this

Should the proposal be implemented, Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would close and pupils would transfer to alternative schools, therefore Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would no longer need to deliver the curriculum to any key stages.

As pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would transfer to alternative schools, there would be an increase in pupil numbers at the alternative schools. However current pupil numbers at Castle Caereinion school are small, and the number of pupils likely to transfer to each year group is low, therefore the impact on alternative schools is not likely to have a significant impact on their ability to deliver the full curriculum at the foundation phase and in each key stage of education.

In some schools, it is possible that an increase in pupil numbers would improve their ability to deliver the curriculum, however depending on the class structure and current breakdown of pupils, it's possible that some schools would need to make adjustments to their class structure in the short term to accommodate any additional pupils.

vii) Impact on other schools

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Berriew C.P. School. However it is possible that pupils would choose to attend Welshpool C. in W. School as the nearest Church in Wales school, or Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School or Guilsfield C.P. School, as other nearby schools.

Whilst it is possible that this could have some impact on the schools pupils may wish to transfer to, particularly in the short term when they receive additional pupils, the total number of pupils at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is small, therefore it is not anticipated that this would have a negative impact on quality and standards in education (to include standards; wellbeing

and attitudes to learning; teaching and learning experiences; care support and guidance and leadership and management) at each of the schools pupils may transfer to. In some cases, it is possible that implementation of the proposal would have a positive impact on quality and standards in education at the alternative schools, as it would lead to an increase in pupil numbers and the opportunity to provide enhanced opportunities to pupils.

17. NEED FOR PLACES AND IMPACT ON AVAILABILITY OF PLACES AND ACCESSIBILITY OF SCHOOLS

- i) **Will the alternative provision have sufficient capacity and provide accommodation of at least equivalent quality for existing and projected pupil numbers?**

The following table shows the number of spaces available and the building condition of schools providing English-medium education located within 10 miles of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School:

School	Capacity ⁶	Current pupil numbers ⁷	Available spaces	Available capacity	Building Condition	Building Suitability
Berriew C.P. School	106	85	21	19.8%	B	B
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School ⁸	195	161	34	17.4%	B/C	B
Welshpool C. in W. School	356	254	102	28.7%	A	A
Leighton C.P. School	91	71	20	22.0%	B/C	B
Guilsfield C.P. School	157	137	20	12.7%	B	B
Ysgol Meifod	77	81	-4	-5.2%	B	C
Ysgol Rhiw Bechan	146	135	11	7.5%	B	A

⁶ Welsh Government School Places Return – August 2020

⁷ Finance NOR – 2020 Pupil Count Day (6th November 2020)

⁸ The Council has recently published a Statutory Notice proposing to merge Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School with Caereinion High School to establish a new all-age school in the existing buildings from September 2022.

This suggests that there are sufficient places available within 10 miles of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School to accommodate all current and projected pupils at the school.

The condition of the nearest school, Berriew C.P. School is equivalent to the condition of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. In addition, Welshpool C. in W. School has recently moved to a brand new building, which provides access to a condition A building.

ii) Is the alternative provision sufficient to meet existing and projected demand for schools of the same language category and designated religious character?

As indicated in the table in section (i) above, there is sufficient English-medium capacity within 10 miles of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School to accommodate the school's current and projected pupil numbers.

Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is a Church in Wales school. As indicated in the table in section (i) above, there are places available at Welshpool C. in W. School, would enable pupils to access a school of the same religious character, should they wish to continue to attend a Church in Wales school.

iii) What will be the nature of journeys to alternative provision and resulting journey times for pupils including SEN pupils?

As indicated in the table in section (i) above, there are alternative primary places available at other schools within 10 miles of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. Should Castle Caereinion C. in W. School close, it is not considered that the length and nature of journeys for pupils to alternative provision would be excessive. This includes journeys for SEN pupils. One-way journeys to alternative provision would not be in excess of 45 minutes.

iv) Is there evidence of current or future need/demand in the area for additional places?

As indicated in the table in section (i) above, there is sufficient English-medium capacity within 10 miles of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School to accommodate the school's current and projected pupil numbers.

Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is a Church in Wales school. As indicated in the table in section (i) above, there are places available at Welshpool C. in W. School, which would enable pupils to access a school of the same religious character, should they wish to continue to attend a Church in Wales school.

Information about projected pupil numbers for other nearby schools is provided in Appendix A. This suggests that there is unlikely to be a need/demand for additional places in the area in the next few years.

- v) **Will the proposals improve access for disabled pupils in accordance with requirements under the Equality Act 2010?**

Implementation of the proposal would mean that pupil would attend their nearest alternative school.

The latest Welsh Government School Premises Return 2020, indicates that these schools are either compliant, or partially compliant with the Equality Act 2010 with all of the schools having statutory Accessibility Plans in place.

18. RESOURCING OF EDUCATION AND OTHER FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- i) **What effect will the proposals have on surplus places in the area?**

Implementation of the preferred option would lead to an overall reduction in surplus places in the area.

- ii) **Do the proposals form part of the local authority's 21st Century Schools Investment Programme and contribute to the delivery of sustainable schools for the 21st Century and to the better strategic management of the school estate?**

The review of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School does not form part of the local authority's 21st Century Schools Investment Programme.

However, the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys identifies a number of issues relating to the overall Powys schools' estate, including a high proportion of small schools, a high number of surplus places and issues with building condition. The Strategy includes a strategic objective to 'Reconfigure and rationalise primary provision', which aims to address these issues, to ensure better strategic management of the Powys school estate. The review of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is being carried out in order to meet this objective.

- iii) **What are the recurrent costs of proposals over a period of at least 3 years and is the necessary recurrent funding available?**

The recurrent costs of this proposal would be the increased transport costs which are currently estimated to be an additional £32,300 per annum as detailed in (iv) below. This has been included in the delegated revenue costing and is funded through savings in other areas of the formula in relation to this proposal.

- iv) **Will additional transport costs be incurred as a result of the proposal?**

It is estimated there would be additional transport costs of £32,300 per annum, this is based on pupil's current location and assuming the pupils would go to the next nearest school.

v) What are the capital costs of the proposal and is the necessary capital funding is available?

It is not anticipated that capital funding would be required in order to implement the emerging preferred option. As indicated in the table in section 17(i) above, there are sufficient places at schools located within 10 miles of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School to accommodate all current and projected pupils.

viii) What is the scale of any projected net savings (taking into account school revenue, transport and capital costs)

It is estimated that this would result in annual revenue savings to the Council of around £58,100. This overall figure comprises a potential saving on Schools' delegated funding of over £90,400 offset by estimated additional transport costs of £32,300.

vii) Without the proposals, would the schools affected face budget deficits?

Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is not currently forecasting a cumulative deficit budget.

viii) Will any savings in recurrent costs be retained in the local authority's local schools budget?

Any savings would be reinvested in the Council's corporate budget and any reinvestment in the schools' system would be agreed as part of the annual budget planning cycle.

ix) Will the proceeds of sales (capital receipts) of redundant sites be made available to meet the costs of the proposal or contribute to the costs of future proposals which will promote effective management of school places?

Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is not owned by the Council, therefore the Council would not receive any capital receipts following any sale of the site.

19. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

i) Impact on educational attainment among children from economically deprived backgrounds

Implementation of the preferred option would impact on any pupils from economically deprived backgrounds currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. All pupils currently attending the school, including any from economically deprived backgrounds, would need to transfer to alternative schools. Free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with Council's home to school transport policy, however it is acknowledged that there would be an impact on families due to the requirement to travel to school events, which could have a greater impact on children from economically deprived backgrounds.

Based on PLASC figures from January 2020, 4.2% of pupils attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School was eligible for FSM, therefore it is likely that the proportion of children from economically deprived backgrounds is minimal.

x) Land and Buildings

Comparison of the quality of accommodation at the school from which pupils would be transferred

Information about the quality of accommodation at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and other schools to which pupils may transfer is provided in Appendix A.

Information on any building works necessary to ensure that transferred children can be accommodated

No building works are necessary as there is sufficient capacity at alternative schools for existing Castle Caereinion C. in W. School pupils.

Details of any potential transfer or disposal of land or buildings that may need to occur as a result of the proposals

Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is a Church in Wales school and the building is owned by the Diocese of St Asaph. Should the Council proceed with the proposal to close the school, the buildings / land currently used by the school would be transferred back to the Diocese of St Asaph who would need to determine their future use.

Is the school / schools involved subject to any trust or charitable interests which might be affected by the proposals, for example in relation to the use or disposal of land?

Castle Caereinion C.W. School is not subject to any trust or charitable interest which might be affected in relation to the use or disposal of the land.

xi) Walking routes to school

Should the proposal be implemented, walking routes which are currently established for Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would no longer be required.

For those pupils for whom Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is currently the closest school, additional travel would be required to access alternative provision. For these pupils, it is unlikely that walking or cycling to the alternative school would be possible.

xii) School Admissions

Should the proposal be implemented, admissions to any alternative school in Powys would continue to be administered by the Council in accordance with the Council's Admissions Policy, which is available on-line at:

<https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/1158/Applying-for-a-School-Place>

xiii) Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)

The proposal is to close an English-medium primary school. The proposal is not linked to the targets in the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

The proposal would not expand or reduce the availability of Welsh language provision.

20. SPECIFIC FACTORS IN THE CONSIDERATION OF SCHOOL CLOSURES

i) Whether the establishment of multi-site schools might be considered as a means of retaining buildings, or the reasons for not pursuing this option

A range of options have been considered in respect of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, these are outlined in section 5 of this document, as well as an assessment of each option which includes a summary of the weaknesses / threats associated with each.

Pupil numbers at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School are very low, and are not projected to increase significantly over the coming years. Establishing a multi-site school would not address this issue.

ii) Whether alternatives to closure, such as clustering, collaboration or federation with other schools, might be considered or the reasons for not pursuing these as an alternative

Federation of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School with Welshpool C. in W. School is one of the options considered in section 5 of this document. An assessment of this option has been carried out, which includes a summary of the weaknesses / threats associated with this option.

Pupil numbers at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School are very low, and are not projected to increase significantly over the coming years. Becoming part of a federation with another school would not address this issue.

iii) Whether the possibility of making fuller use of the existing buildings as a community or educational resource could be explored

The Council's view is that making more use of the existing building as a community or educational resource would not address the issues identified in respect of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.

Pupil numbers at the school are low, and are not projected to increase significantly over the coming years.

iv) The overall effect of closure on the local community (including the loss of school based facilities which are used by the local community)

Implementation of the preferred option would mean that there would no longer be provision in Castle Caereinion. It is acknowledged that this would have a negative impact on the Castle Caereinion community, including the loss of primary provision from the village of Castle Caereinion, and a possible loss of any community facilities associated with the school from the village.

An initial draft community impact assessment has been carried out, with input from the school, to identify the potential impact on the community. This will be updated throughout the process to reflect any feedback received, and will be considered by the Council's Cabinet as part of the decision making process.

xiv) How parents' and pupils' engagement with the alternative school and any facilities it may offer could be supported

Should the Council proceed with the statutory process and eventually implementation of the preferred option, support would be provided to pupils and their parents as part of the transition process, to ensure full engagement with their new school. The nature of this support would depend on the needs of the parents / pupils, however this could include provision for effective transition to the receiving school by new headteacher and class teachers.

21. EQUALITY AND COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Draft impact assessments have been carried out in respect of the proposal. These will be updated following the consultation period to reflect any additional issues raised. The assessments are available on the Council's website:

<https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/10560/Castle-Caereinion-Church-in-Wales-School>

A summary of the assessments are provided below:

i) Equalities impact assessment

Should the proposal be implemented, Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would close, and pupils transfer to their nearest alternative school.

This would have a significant impact on pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, including any pupils belonging to the protected characteristic groups that attend that school, as some additional travel would be required in order to attend their nearest alternative school.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposals would impact on pupils belonging to the protected characteristic groups that attend the school, there is no reason to believe that the nearest alternative schools would be unable to meet the needs of pupils belonging to the protected characteristic groups that would be affected, including pupils with Additional Learning Needs, pupils belonging to Ethnic Groups other than White British, pupils eligible for Free School Meals and Looked After Children.

ii) Impact on the community

It is clear that a wide range of extra curricular activities are available to pupils at Castle Caereinion. Should there be no school in Castle Caereinion, pupils would transfer to alternative schools. These would be larger schools, and the expectation is that at least a similar range of activities would be available for pupils. However, it is acknowledged that pupils would need to travel to the alternative schools, which could impact on their ability to access activities, particularly where these take place after school.

Should the proposal be implemented, this would mean that there would be no school provision in the village of Castle Caereinion. The information provided above indicates that there is currently extensive community use of the Castle Caereinion building, and extensive links between the school and the local community. As a Church in Wales School, the Castle Caereinion School building is owned by the Diocese, therefore the Diocese would need to determine the building's future use, and therefore whether or not facilities would remain in Castle Caereinion. There is a village hall located in Castle Caereinion, therefore should the school no longer be available, community events and activities could take place at the hall.

It is also acknowledged that implementation of the proposal would result in additional travel to school for pupils for whom Castle Caereinion C. in W. is currently their closest school. Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the home to school transport policy which is in operation at that time, it is acknowledged that there could be an impact on some pupils' ability to access after school activities, and could impact on the ability of parents to take part in school events, meetings etc.

PART D – CONSULTATION DETAILS

Who will we consult with?

The Council will consult with a range of stakeholders as required by the School Organisation Code, which include the following:

- Parents, carers and guardians at Castle Caereinion C.W. School and other schools which may be affected by the proposal
- Governors at Castle Caereinion C.W. School and other schools which may be affected by the proposal
- Staff at Castle Caereinion C.W. School and other schools which may be affected by the proposal
- Pupils at Castle Caereinion C.W. School and other schools which may be affected by the proposal
- The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authorities
- The Welsh Minister for Education
- Local Powys Councillors
- Town and Community Councils in the local area
- The prospective candidates for Member of the Senedd for Montgomeryshire and prospective candidates for Members of the Senedd for the Mid and Wales West region
- The MP for Montgomeryshire
- Estyn
- Teaching and staff trade unions
- ERW
- The Police & Crime Commissioner for Dyfed Powys
- Nursery providers in the local area
- Mudiad Meithrin
- The Powys Children and Young People's Partnership

Consultation with pupils will take place in accordance with the Welsh children and young people's national participation standards⁹.

The consultation period

The consultation period will commence on the 14th April 2021 and end on 2nd June 2021.

The statutory process

Consultation on this proposal will follow the guidelines set out by the Welsh Government in the revised School Organisation Code which became operational on the 1st November 2018. The process is summarised below:

i) Consultation

⁹ <https://gov.wales/children-and-young-peoples-national-participation-standards>

Consultation will start on the 14th April 2021 and end on the 2nd June 2021. Feedback from the consultation will be collated and summarised, and a consultation report will be produced and shared with stakeholders.

It is important to note that responses made to the consultation will not be counted as objections to the proposal, and that only objections can be registered following publication of a statutory notice.

The Council's Cabinet will consider the consultation report and the feedback received during the consultation period, and will decide whether to proceed with the proposal, to make changes to the proposal, or to not proceed with the proposal. If the Cabinet decides not to proceed, that will be the end of this proposal.

It is anticipated that the Consultation Report will be considered by the Cabinet in the summer of 2021.

ii) Statutory notice

If the Cabinet decides to proceed with the proposal, statutory notices would be published after the Cabinet meeting. There would then be a period of 28 days for people to submit written objections.

If there were objections, the Council would publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and the Council's response to them before the end of 7 days beginning with the day of the local authority's determination. Only written objections submitted during the statutory notice period will be considered as objections and included in this report. Comments submitted as part of the consultation period would not be counted as objections. Should stakeholders wish their consultation responses to be considered as objections, they would need to be re-submitted in writing during the statutory notice period.

A further report would be presented to the Council's Cabinet, which they would consider alongside the objection report, in order to decide whether or not to approve the proposal.

It is anticipated that a final decision would be made by the end of 2021.

iii) Implementation

If the Council's Cabinet were to approve the proposal, it would be implemented in accordance with the date given in the statutory notice or any subsequently modified date.

How to respond to the consultation

A consultation response form is attached to this document. An online version is also available on the Council's website:

<https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/10560/Castle-Caereinion-Church-in-Wales-School>

Alternatively, you can respond in writing.

Completed forms and other written responses should be sent to the following address:

*Transforming Education Team, Powys County Council, County Hall, Llandrindod Wells,
LD1 5LG*

E-mail: school.consultation@powys.gov.uk

All correspondence should be received by the **2nd June 2021**.

If you have any further questions about this proposal, you can contact the Transforming Education Team using the above contact details, or by phoning (01597) 826618.

APPENDIX A – KEY DATA

Key data about the affected schools is provided below:

1. Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

General information

	School Type	Language Category	Admission Number	Rural School? ¹⁰
Castle Caereinion C. in W. School	Voluntary Controlled Church in Wales School building owned by the Diocese of St Asaph	English-medium	8	Yes

Pupil Numbers

i) Current pupil numbers¹¹

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Castle Caereinion C. in W. School	4	3	5	4	4	3	0	23

ii) Historical pupil numbers¹²

	Jan. 2014	Jan. 2015	Jan. 2016	Jan. 2017	Jan. 2018	Jan. 2019	Jan. 2020
Castle Caereinion C. in W. School	42	47	44	40	31	30	24

iii) Projected pupil numbers (Birth rate)¹³

	Jan. 2021	Jan. 2022	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025
Castle Caereinion C. in W. School	20	21	19	19	19

¹⁰ Annex F of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2018) (<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/school-organisation-code-second-edition.pdf>) includes a list of 'rural schools', to which the 'Presumption against the closure of rural schools' applies.

¹¹ Finance NOR – 2020 Pupil Count Day (6th November 2020)

¹² PLASC 2020

¹³ Powys Schools Service Projections (R – Yr6) based on PLASC 2020 & Birth Rates. These are the projected figures based on PLASC 2020 information, therefore include a projection for January 2021. PLASC 2021 information and projected pupil numbers based on PLASC 2021 are not yet available.

iv) **Projected pupil numbers (Finance projections)¹⁴**

	Jan. 2021	Jan. 2022	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025
Castle Caereion C. in W. School	23	24	22	N/A	N/A

Building Capacity and Condition

i) **Capacity**

The following table provides information about the current capacities of school and the capacity:

	Current Capacity ¹⁵	Currently Filled	Surplus Capacity
Castle Caereion C. in W. School	74	23 (31.1%)	51 (68.9%)

ii) **Building condition¹⁶**

In 2009, Welsh Government carried out condition and suitability assessments of the school.

	Condition	Suitability	Access to hall on site
Castle Caereion C. in W. School	B Good	B Good	Yes – Community Centre

Quality and Standards of Education

i) **Estyn**

	Castle Caereion C. in W. School
Date of Inspection	November 2016
Standards	Adequate, needs improvement

¹⁴ Powys Finance Projections based on actual pupil numbers – November 2020

¹⁵ Welsh Government School Places Return – August 2020

¹⁶ Premises Data Return to Welsh Government – 2020

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Adequate, needs improvement
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Adequate, needs improvement
Follow up activity	School to draw up action plan, Estyn to review progress. Update on the 27 th June 2018. The schools is judged to have made sufficient progress in addressing the recommendations from the Section 28 inspection. The school has been removed from requiring Estyn review. There will be no further monitoring activity in relation to this inspection.

ii) School Categorisation

	Standards Group	Improvement Capacity	Support Capacity
Castle Caereinion C. in W. School	N/A	C	Amber

Financial information

i) Cost per pupil (Section 52 Budget Statement, 2020/2021)

	Budget share per school	Budget share per pupil	Notional SEN budget	Non ISB funds devolved to the school
Castle Caereinion C. in W. School	£173,000	£6,919	£9,000	£0
Powys average (Primary)	N/A	£4,264	N/A	N/A

Equalities Information

i) National identity (Pupils aged 5 or over on the 31st August 2019)

	British	English	Irish	Scottish	Welsh	Other	Not supplied	Refused
Castle Caereinion C. in W. School	20.8%	41.7%	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	8.3%	12.5%	0.0%

ii) **Ethnic Group**
(Pupils aged 5 or over on the 31st August 2019)

	White British	Other known ethnicity	Information not yet obtained
Castle Caereinion C. in W. School	79.2%	8.3%	12.5%

iii) **English as an Additional Language**

	% EAL	% EAL A/B/C
Castle Caereinion C. in W. School	8.3%	4.2%

iv) **Free School Meals¹⁷**

	Number of pupils who had a free school meal on Census day
Castle Caereinion C. in W. School	4.2%

v) **Pupils in care¹⁸**

	Number of pupils in care
Castle Caereinion C. in W. School	0%

vi) **SEN/ALN¹⁹**

¹⁷ PLASC 2020

¹⁸ PLASC 2020

¹⁹ PLASC 2020

	School Action	School Action Plus	Statement
Castle Caereinion C. in W. School	16.7%	12.5%	0%

2. Other schools that could be affected

Should the proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School be implemented, pupils would transfer to their nearest alternative school.

The expectation is that the number of pupils transferring to each school would be small, and therefore the impact on these schools would not be significant. However, information about schools to which pupils may transfer is provided below:

	School Type	Language Category	Admission Number
Berriew C.P. School	Community Primary	English Medium	15
Welshpool C. in W. School	Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled	English Medium	51
Guilsfield C.P. School	Community Primary	English Medium	22
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School²⁰	Community Primary	Dual Stream	27

Pupil Numbers

i) Current pupil numbers²¹

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Berriew C.P. School	13	14	13	6	13	11	15	85
Welshpool C. in W. School	32	32	39	42	31	33	45	254

²⁰ The Council has recently published a Statutory Notice proposing to merge Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School with Caereinion High School to establish a new all-age school in the existing buildings from September 2022.

²¹ Finance NOR – 2020 Pupil Count Day (6th November 2020)

Guilfield C.P. School	24	9	23	24	21	24	12	137
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	13	21	17	27	23	31	29	161

ii) **Historical pupil numbers²²**

	Jan. 2014	Jan. 2015	Jan. 2016	Jan. 2017	Jan. 2018	Jan. 2019	Jan. 2020
Berriew C.P. School	84	89	79	83	74	84	88
Welshpool C. in W. School	112	121	137	136	137	130	116
Guilfield C.P. School	164	143	146	145	151	139	147
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	202	209	195	185	174	173	166

iii) **Projected pupil numbers (Birth rate)²³**

	Jan. 2021	Jan. 2022	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025
Berriew C.P. School	90	90	93	91	100
Welshpool C. in W. School	256	242	236	240	235
Guilfield C.P. School	133	143	139	142	137
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	159	153	144	139	133

iv) **Projected pupil numbers (Finance projections)²⁴**

²² PLASC 2020

²³ Powys Schools Service Projections (R – Yr6) based on PLASC 2020 & Birth Rates

²⁴ Powys Finance Projections based on data provided by the school – November 2020

	Jan. 2021	Jan. 2022	Jan. 2023
Berriew C.P. School	85	84	87
Welshpool C. in W. School	254	248	254
Guilfield C.P. School	137	137	125
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	161	147	131

Building Capacity and Condition

i) Capacity

The following table provides information about the school's current capacity:

	Current Capacity	Currently Filled	Surplus Capacity
Berriew C.P. School	106	85 (80.2%)	21 (19.8%)
Welshpool C. in W. School	356	254 (71.3%)	102 (28.7%)
Guilfield C.P. School	157	137 (87.3%)	20 (12.7%)
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	195	161 (82.6%)	34 (17.4%)

ii) Building condition

In 2009, Welsh Government carried out condition and suitability assessments of all schools.

	Condition	Suitability	Access to hall on site
Berriew C.P. School	B	B	Yes
Welshpool C. in W. School	A	A	Yes
Guilfield C.P. School	B	B	Yes

Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	B/C	B	Yes
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Standards of Education

i) Estyn

	Berriew C.P. School
Date of Inspection	September 2019
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning Experiences	Good
Care, Support and Guidance	Adequate and Needs Improvement
Leadership and Management	Adequate and Needs Improvement
Outcome	<p>School to draw up action plan, Estyn to review progress.</p> <p>Update on the 15th February 2021. The schools is judged to have made sufficient progress in addressing the recommendations from the Section 28 inspection. The school has been removed from requiring Estyn review. There will be no further monitoring activity in relation to this inspection.</p>

	Welshpool C.I.W School
Date of Inspection	N/A
	Estyn have not completed an inspection since the school opened.

	Guilsfield C.P School
Date of Inspection	May 2015
Standards	Adequate
Wellbeing	Good

Learning Experiences	Adequate
Teaching	Adequate
Care, Support and Guidance	Good
Learning Environment	Adequate
Leadership	Adequate
Improving Quality	Adequate
Partnership Working	Good
Resource Management	Adequate
Outcome	<p>School to draw up action plan, Estyn to review progress.</p> <p>Update on the 7th October 2017. The schools is judged to have made sufficient progress in addressing the recommendations from the Section 28 inspection. The school has been removed from requiring Estyn review. There will be no further monitoring activity in relation to this inspection.</p>

	Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School
Date of Inspection	January 2018
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning Experiences	Good
Care, Support and Guidance	Good
Leadership and Management	Good
Outcome	The School will produce and action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

ii) **School Categorisation²⁵**

²⁵National Categorisation Model 2019

	Standards Group	Support Capacity
Berriew C.P. School	C	Amber
Welshpool C. in W. School	B	Yellow
Guilsfield C.P. School	A	Green
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	C	Amber

Financial information

i) Cost per pupil²⁶ (Section 52 Budget Statement, 2020/2021)

	Budget share per school	Budget share per pupil	Notional SEN budget	Non ISB funds devolved to the school
Berriew C.P. School	£335,000	£3,806	£19,000	£8,000
Welshpool C. in W. School	£1,126,000	£4,504	£220,000	£1,000
Guilsfield C.P. School	£523,000	£4,117	£29,000	£12,000
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	£629,000	£3,790	£42,000	£22,000
Powys average (Primary)	N/A	£4,264	N/A	N/A

Equalities Information

i) National identity (Pupils aged 5 or over on the 31st August 2019)

	British	English	Irish	Scottish	Welsh	Other	Not supplied / Refused
Berriew C.P. School	47.7%	15.9%	0.0%	0.0%	15.9%	3.4%	17.0%

²⁶ Section 52 Budget Statement 2020/2021

Welshpool C. in W. School	28.7%	28.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%	17.5%	18.2%
Guilsfield C.P. School	28.6%	21.8%	0.7%	0.0%	27.2%	1.4%	20.4%
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	23.5%	16.9%	0.0%	0.0%	47.0%	0.6%	12.0%

ii) Ethnic Group

(Pupils aged 5 or over on the 31st August 2019)

	White British	Other known ethnicity	Information not yet obtained
Berriew C.P. School	79.5%	3.4%	17.0%
Welshpool C. in W. School	61.5%	20.3%	18.2%
Guilsfield C.P. School	75.5%	3.4%	21.1%
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	84.3%	4.2%	11.4%

iii) English as an Additional Language

	% EAL	% EAL A/B/C
Berriew C.P. School	1.1%	0.0%
Welshpool C. in W. School	21.7%	19.2%
Guilsfield C.P. School	1.4%	0.0%
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	0.0%	0.0%

iv) Free School Meals²⁷

²⁷ PLASC 2020

	Number of pupils who had a free school meal on Census day
Berriew C.P. School	10.2%
Welshpool C. in W. School	26.6%
Guilsfield C.P. School	6.1%
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	14.5%

v) **Pupils in care²⁸**

	Number of pupils in care
Berriew C.P. School	0.0%
Welshpool C. in W. School	1.4%
Guilsfield C.P. School	0.7%
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	0.0%

vi) **SEN/ALN²⁹**

	School Action	School Action Plus	Statement
Berriew C.P. School	18.2%	4.5%	0%
Welshpool C. in W. School	14.7%	19.2%	2.1%
Guilsfield C.P. School	4.1%	4.8%	0%
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	15.1%	6.0%	0%

²⁸ PLASC 2020

²⁹ PLASC 2020

APPENDIX B – SWOT AND CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

1. SWOT ANALYSES

SWOT analyses for each of the four options are provided below.

Option 1: Status quo – continue as a standalone school

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Castle Caereinion - There would be no additional transport costs - Would continue to provide access to Church in Wales provision - No requirement for a reorganisation process - No change for staff - No impact on pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Castle Caereinion would continue to be low - Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision - Would still need to maintain the Castle Caereinion building - Would not reduce surplus places - Would not lead to a financial saving - Would not address issues with the Castle Caereinion school building - Would not address the high budget per pupil
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunities for further collaboration with other neighbouring schools to provide increased opportunities for pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of the new curriculum – would be difficult to provide educational opportunities which meet the requirements of the new curriculum

Option 2: Federation with Welshpool Church in Wales School

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Castle Caereinion - Would continue to provide access to Church in Wales provision - There would be no additional transport costs - More opportunities could be provided to pupils and staff - Castle Caereinion pupils would continue to attend school in the same location - Pupils would continue to attend school at the same location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Castle Caereinion would continue to be low - Castle Caereinion pupils would still be taught separately - Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision - Would still be required to maintain the Castle Caereinion building - Would not reduce surplus places - Would not lead to a financial saving - Would not address issues with the Castle Caereinion school building - Would not address the high budget per pupil

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant difference in the size of the two schools
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity for further collaboration across the sites - More opportunities for networking and sharing good practice - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of the new curriculum – would be difficult to provide educational opportunities which meet the requirements of the new curriculum on the Castle Caereinion site - Threat to Welshpool C. in W. School, who have been operating over 3 sites over several years pending the move to their new building

Option 3: Merge with Welshpool Church in Wales School to establish a new school on two sites

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Castle Caereinion - Would continue to provide access to Church in Wales provision - There would be no additional home to school transport costs - More opportunities could be provided to pupils and staff - Could provide a financial saving to the Council - Pupils would continue to attend school at the same location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small numbers would remain at Castle Caereinion - Castle Caereinion pupils would still be taught separately - Would still need to maintain the Castle Caereinion building - Would not reduce surplus places - Would not address issues with the Castle Caereinion school building - Both schools would lose their identity - Would impact on staff at Welshpool C. in W. School, who have already been through a reorganisation process in the last few years. - Significant difference in the size of the two schools – would have a disproportionate impact on Welshpool C. in W. School
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunities for further collaboration across the sites - More opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of the new curriculum – would be difficult to provide educational opportunities which meet the requirements of the new curriculum on the Castle Caereinion site

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Threat to Welshpool C. in W. School, who have been operating over 3 sites over several years pending the move to their new building
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Option 4: Close Castle Caereinion, but retain the site as part of Welshpool C. in W. School

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Castle Caereinion - Would continue to provide access to Church in Wales provision - There would be no additional home to school transport costs - Could provide a financial saving to the Council - Minimal impact on staff at Welshpool C. in W. School - Welshpool C. in W. School would retain its identity - Pupils would continue to attend school at the same location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small numbers would remain at Castle Caereinion - Castle Caereinion pupils would still be taught separately - Would still need to maintain the Castle Caereinion building - Would not reduce surplus places - Would not address issues with the Castle Caereinion school building - Castle Caereinion school would lose its identity
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunities for further collaboration across the sites - More opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of the new curriculum – would be difficult to provide educational opportunities which meet the requirements of the new curriculum - Threat to Welshpool C. in W. School, who have been operating over 3 sites over several years pending the move to their new building

Option 5: Merge with Berriew C.P. School to establish a new school on two sites

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Castle Caereinion - More opportunities could be provided to pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small numbers would remain at the Castle Caereinion site - Castle Caereinion pupils would still be taught separately - Would not reduce surplus places

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There would be no additional home to school transport costs - Could provide a financial saving to the Council - Opportunity for all staff to secure positions in the new school - Pupils would continue to attend school at the same location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would not address issues with the Castle Caereinion school building - Would also impact on the staff of Berriew C.P. School - Both schools would lose their current identities
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunities for further collaboration across the sites - More opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of the new curriculum – would be difficult to provide educational opportunities which meet the requirements of the new curriculum on the Castle Caereinion site - Possible tension between Church in Wales provision and C.P. status - May not be acceptable to the Berriew community due to previous shared headteacher arrangements.

Option 6: Close Castle Caereinion, but retain the site as part of Berriew C.P. School

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Castle Caereinion - More opportunities could be provided to the pupils - There would be no additional home to school transport costs - Could provide a financial saving to the Council - Berriew C.P. School would retain its identity - Potentially would not impact on staff at Berriew C.P. School - Pupils would continue to attend school at the same location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small numbers would remain at the Castle Caereinion site - Castle Caereinion pupils would still be taught separately - Would not reduce surplus places - Would not address issues with the Castle Caereinion school building - Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would lose its identity - Would be no access to C. in W. School provision locally
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunities for further collaboration across the sites - More opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of the new curriculum – would be difficult to provide educational opportunities which meet the requirements of the new curriculum

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - May not be acceptable to the Berriew community due to previous shared headteacher arrangements.
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Option 7: Merge with Berriew C.P. School to establish a new school on the Berriew site

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More opportunities could be provided to the pupils - Could provide a financial saving to the Council - Would reduce surplus places - All staff would have the opportunity to apply for positions at the new school - Improved opportunities for staff from working in a larger school - Pupils would all be taught in one location - Would address the issues with the Castle Caereinion school building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional travel for those pupils for whom Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is currently the closest school - Additional transport costs - Pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion School would have to transfer to a new location - Loss of provision from Castle Caereinion - Impact on the Castle Caereinion community - Would impact on Berriew staff as well as Castle Caereinion staff - Potential reduction in staffing requirements - Current capacity of Berriew school may not be able to accommodate all pupils - Both schools would lose their identities - There would be no access to C. in W. School provision locally should the new school be a C.P. School
Opportunities	Threats
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would need to review the capacity of the current Berriew C.P. School – additional capacity may be required - Possible tension between C.P. and C. in W. provision

Option 8: Merge with Berriew C.P. School to establish a new school on the Castle Caereinion site

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More opportunities could be provided to the pupils - Could provide a financial saving to the Council - Would reduce surplus places - All staff would have the opportunity to apply for positions at the new school - Improved opportunities for staff from working in a larger school - Pupils would all be taught in one location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional travel for those pupils for whom Berriew C.P. School is currently the closest school - Additional transport costs - Pupils currently attending Berriew School would have to transfer to a new location - Less convenient location for the majority of pupils - Current Berriew pupils may live closer to other schools - Loss of provision from Berriew - Impact on the Berriew community - Would not address issues with the Castle Caereinion building - Would impact on Berriew staff as well as Castle Caereinion staff - Potential reduction in staffing requirements - Both schools would lose their identities - Castle Caereinion School is too small to accommodate the merged school - Significant investment would be needed in the Castle Caereinion site to accommodate Berriew pupils.
Opportunities	Threats
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant investment would be needed in Castle Caereinion to accommodate Berriew pupils - Unlikely that the Castle Caereinion site would be large enough to accommodate a school of the size required – a new site may be required - Possible tension between C.P. and C. in W. provision

Option 9: Close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Castle Caereinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional travel for those pupils for whom Castle Caereinion C. in W.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools - Revenue saving to the Council - Pupils would attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum - Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities - Pupils would attend schools with more suitable accommodation 	<p>School is currently the closest school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion School would have to transfer to alternative provision - Loss of provision from Castle Caereinion - Impact on the current staff of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School - Impact on the Castle Caereinion community - Reduction in C. in W. provision
Opportunities	Threats
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Likely to be the least popular option locally - Possibility of referral of the decision to WG by the Diocese

2. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

The options have also been assessed against the following Critical Success Factors:

Critical Success Factor	Description
1 – Strategic fit and business needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The option must align with the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-2030, to include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address the challenges facing education in Powys, as outlined in the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-2030 - Align with the Vision and Guiding Principles outlined in the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-2030 - Align with the Strategic Aims and Objectives outlined in the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-2030 • The option must optimise the benefits of the Council's Transforming Education Programme
2 – Value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The option must optimise the resources available for the delivery of learning • The option must provide value for money in the delivery of learning

3 – Potential achievability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The option must be achievable within current legislation • The option must be operationally achievable • The option must be physically achievable
4 – Potential affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the option is affordable within the Council’s forecasted revenue • The extent to which the option is affordable within the forecasted capital funding available to the Council

Each option has been assessed against the Critical Success Factors based on the following criteria:

✓ – Meets ? – Could meet x – Does not meet

The assessment for each option is as follows:

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Option 9
1 – Strategic fit and business needs	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓
2 – Value for money	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓
3 – Potential achievability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	x	✓
4 – Potential affordability	x	x	x	x	x	x	?	x	✓
Total ✓	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	4
Total x	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	2	0
Outcome	Discount	Discount	Discount	Discount	Discount	Discount	Possible option	Discount	Preferred option

APPENDIX C – IMPACT OF EACH OPTION ON RURAL SCHOOLS CRITERIA

The likely impact of each option on quality and standards, the community and travelling arrangements is considered below:

Option	Likely impact on quality and standards	Likely impact on the community	Likely impact of different travelling arrangements
Option 1: Status Quo – continue as a standalone school	There would be no impact on quality and standards – pupils would continue to attend the current provision at Castle Caereinion.	There would be no impact on the community – provision would continue to be available in Castle Caereinion.	There would be no impact on travel arrangements – pupils would continue to attend Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.
Option 2: Federation with Welshpool C. in W. School	<p>The impact on quality and standards would be minimal. Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would continue to operate as a stand alone school, however the school would be federated with Welshpool C. in W. school, meaning that one joint governing body would be responsible for both schools. There would also be the potential for shared leadership across the two schools.</p> <p>Establishment of the federation could lead to opportunities to share staff / resources across the federation, which would have a positive impact on quality and standards.</p>	<p>The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Castle Caereinion.</p> <p>However, one joint governing body would be responsible for both schools, therefore there could be a perceived reduction in community involvement in management of the school, depending on the make up of the federated governing body.</p>	There would be no impact on travel arrangements – pupils would continue to attend Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.

<p>Option 3: Merge with Welshpool C. in W. School to establish a new school on two sites</p>	<p>Welshpool C. in W. School was established in 2017 following the amalgamation of 4 nursery and infant schools in Welshpool. The school is currently operating across three sites, pending a move to a new building in 2021.</p> <p>Merging Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and Welshpool C. in W School would mean that Welshpool C. in W School would need to undergo a further management of change process, having already undergone numerous changes over the last few years. The Council’s view is that this would threaten the quality of provision at Welshpool C. in W. School.</p>	<p>The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Castle Caereinion.</p> <p>However, one new governing body would be responsible for both sites, therefore there could be a perceived reduction in community involvement in management of the school, depending on the make up of the new governing body.</p> <p>In addition, it is possible that joint school activities would take place on the Welshpool site as the much larger site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Castle Caereinion site.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current site of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>
<p>Option 4: Close Castle Caereinion, but retain the site as part of Welshpool C. in W. School</p>	<p>Welshpool C. in W. School was established in 2017 following the amalgamation of 4 nursery and infant schools in Welshpool. The school is currently operating across three sites, pending a move to a new building in 2021.</p> <p>Retaining the Castle Caereinion site as part of Welshpool C. in W School would lead to further change for the Welshpool C. in W. School community, which has already undergone numerous</p>	<p>Provision would continue to be available in Castle Caereinion. However, the site would be managed by the current governing body of Welshpool C. in W. School, therefore there could be a perceived reduction in community involvement in management of the school.</p> <p>In addition, it is possible that joint school activities would take place on the Welshpool site as the much larger site, which could lead to a</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current site of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>

	changes over the last few years. The Council's view is that this would threaten the quality of provision at Welshpool C. in W. School.	reduction in activity on the Castle Caereinion site.	
Option 5: Merge with Berriew C.P. School to establish a new school on two sites	<p>It is anticipated that this option would have a positive impact on quality and standards through the establishment of one larger school, with a larger number of pupils and a larger team of staff.</p> <p>Whilst pupils would continue to attend separate sites, therefore would not benefit from all being taught together, this option would provide additional opportunities for staff expertise and resources to be shared across both sites. Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and Berriew C.P. School are both in the amber support category based on the 2019 categorisations, therefore it is not anticipated that the impact on quality and standards would be negative.</p>	<p>The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Castle Caereinion.</p> <p>However, one new governing body would be responsible for both sites, therefore there could be a perceived reduction in community involvement in management of the school, depending on the make up of the federated governing body.</p> <p>In addition, it is possible that joint school activities would take place on the Berriew site as the larger site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Castle Caereinion site.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current site of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>
Option 6: Close Castle Caereinion, but retain the site as part of Berriew C.P. School	Implementation of this option would result in closure of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, however provision would continue on the current site. Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and	Provision would continue to be available in Castle Caereinion. However, the site would be managed by the current governing body of Berriew C.P. School, therefore there could be a	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current site of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools</p>

	<p>Berriew C.P. School are both in the amber support category based on the 2019 categorisations, therefore it is not anticipated that the impact on quality and standards would be negative.</p> <p>The school would be a larger school, with a larger number of pupils and a larger team of staff, which could have a positive impact on the opportunities available for pupils and staff.</p> <p>Whilst pupils would continue to attend separate sites, therefore would not benefit from all being taught together, this option would provide additional opportunities for staff expertise and resources to be shared across both sites.</p>	<p>perceived reduction in community involvement in management of the school.</p> <p>In addition, it is possible that joint school activities would take place on the Berriew site as the larger site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Castle Caereinion site.</p>	<p>in order to access activities and events.</p>
<p>Option 7: Merge with Berriew C.P. School to establish a new school on the Berriew site</p>	<p>It is anticipated that this option would have a positive impact on quality and standards through the establishment of one larger school, with a larger number of pupils and a larger team of staff.</p> <p>All pupils would attend one site, which would provide further benefits to pupils from being part of larger cohorts of pupils, and</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Castle Caereinion as there would be no provision in Castle Caereinion.</p> <p>However, merging with Berriew C.P. School to establish a new school would provide opportunities for the Castle Caereinion community to be involved in the process of establishing the new</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.</p> <p>Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, there would also be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities / events.</p>

	<p>improved opportunities to share staff expertise.</p> <p>Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and Berriew C.P. School are both in the amber support category based on the 2019 categorisations, therefore it is not anticipated that the impact on quality and standards would be negative.</p>	<p>school, would aid community involvement in the new school.</p>	
<p>Option 8: Merge with Berriew C.P. School to establish a new school on the Castle Caereinion site</p>	<p>In general, it is anticipated that this option would have a positive impact on quality and standards through the establishment of one larger school, with a larger number of pupils and a larger team of staff. All pupils would attend one site, which would provide further benefits to pupils from being part of larger cohorts of pupils, and improved opportunities to share staff expertise.</p> <p>However, it is unlikely that the Castle Caereinion site would be able to accommodate all pupils, therefore there would be a negative impact on the quality of provision should all pupils be taught in the current Castle Caereinion building.</p>	<p>There would be a positive impact on the Castle Caereinion community as this option would retain provision in Castle Caereinion and would lead to an increase in pupil numbers, safeguarding provision in the village for the future.</p> <p>However, there would be a negative impact on the Berriew community as there would no longer be provision in Berriew. Whilst merging the two schools to establish a new school would provide opportunities for the Berriew community to be involved in the process of establishing the new school to aid community involvement in the new school, however as Berriew is the larger village with a larger school, it is likely that the Berriew community</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Berriew C.P. School.</p> <p>Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, there would also be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities / events.</p>

		would consider this option to be disproportionate.	
<p>Option 9: Close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools</p>	<p>Implementation of this option would mean that pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would transfer to their nearest alternative schools. For the majority of pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, the closest alternative schools would be Berriew C.P. School. The nearest alternative Church in Wales provision would be Welshpool C. in W. School. Some pupils may also choose to attend Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School or Guilsfield C.P. School as other nearby schools.</p> <p>The Council's view is that all of these schools would provide education for pupils which is of at least equivalent quality as that provided at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on standards and progress overall. The overall aim of the proposal is to improve learning opportunities for pupils. Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, Berriew C.P. School and Llanfair</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Castle Caereinion as there would be no provision in Castle Caereinion.</p> <p>As a Church in Wales School, The Castle Caereinion School building is owned by the Diocese, therefore the Diocese would need to determine the building's future use, and therefore whether or not facilities would remain in Castle Caereinion.</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.</p> <p>Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, there would also be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities / events.</p>

	Caereinion C.P. School were categorised as Amber in the latest school categorisations carried out in 2019, whilst Welshpool C. in W. School was categorised as Yellow. Guilsfield C.P. School was classified as a Green school.		
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APPENDIX D – REASONS WHY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS HAVE NOT BEEN TAKEN FORWARD

Option	Description	Reason for discounting
1	Status Quo – continue as a standalone school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Castle Caereinion would continue to be low - Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision - Would still need to maintain the Castle Caereinion building - Would not reduce surplus places - Would not lead to a financial saving - Would not address issues with the Castle Caereinion school building - Would not address the high budget per pupil
2	Federation with Welshpool C. in W. School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Castle Caereinion would continue to be low - Castle Caereinion pupils would still be taught separately - Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision - Would still be required to maintain the Castle Caereinion building - Would not reduce surplus places - Would not lead to a financial saving - Would not address issues with the Castle Caereinion school building - Would not address the high budget per pupil - Significant difference in the size of the two schools
3	Merge with Welshpool Church in Wales School to establish a new school on two sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small numbers would remain at Castle Caereinion - Castle Caereinion pupils would still be taught separately - Would still need to maintain the Castle Caereinion building - Would not reduce surplus places - Would not address issues with the Castle Caereinion school building - Both schools would lose their identity - Would impact on staff at Welshpool C. in W. School, who have already been through a reorganisation process in the last few years. - May not be attractive to Welshpool C. in W. School - Significant difference in the size of the two schools – would have a disproportionate impact on Welshpool C. in W. School

4	Close Castle Caereinion, but retain the site as part of Welshpool C. in W. School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small numbers would remain at Castle Caereinion - Castle Caereinion pupils would still be taught separately - Would still need to maintain the Castle Caereinion building - Would not reduce surplus places - Would not address issues with the Castle Caereinion school building - Castle Caereinion school would lose its identity - May not be attractive to Welshpool C. in W. School
5	Merge with Berriew C.P. School to establish a new school on two sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small numbers would remain at the Castle Caereinion site - Castle Caereinion pupils would still be taught separately - Would not reduce surplus places - Would not address issues with the Castle Caereinion school building - Would also impact on the staff of Berriew C.P. School - Both schools would lose their current identities - May not be attractive to Berriew C.P. School
6	Close Castle Caereinion, but retain the site as part of Berriew C.P. School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small numbers would remain at the Castle Caereinion site - Castle Caereinion pupils would still be taught separately - Would not reduce surplus places - Would not address issues with the Castle Caereinion school building - Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would lose its identity - Would be no access to C. in W. School provision locally - May not be attractive to Berriew C.P. School
7	Merge with Berriew C.P. School to establish a new school on the Castle Caereinion site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional travel for those pupils for whom Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is currently the closest school - Additional transport costs - Pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion School would have to transfer to a new location - Loss of provision from Castle Caereinion - Impact on the Castle Caereinion community - Would impact on Berriew staff as well as Castle Caereinion staff - Potential reduction in staffing requirements - Current capacity of Berriew school may not be able to accommodate all pupils - May not be acceptable to Berriew school

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both schools would lose their identities
8	Merge with Berriew C.P. School to establish a new school on the Castle Caereinion site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional travel for those pupils for whom Berriew C.P. School is currently the closest school - Additional transport costs - Pupils currently attending Berriew School would have to transfer to a new location - Less convenient location for the majority of pupils - Current Berriew pupils may live closer to other schools - Loss of provision from Berriew - Impact on the Berriew community - Would not address issues with the Castle Caereinion building - Significant investment would be needed in Castle Caereinion to accommodate all pupils - Would impact on Berriew staff as well as Castle Caereinion staff - Potential reduction in staffing requirements - May not be acceptable to Berriew school - Both schools would lose their identities

APPENDIX E – RESPONSE FORM

PROPOSAL TO CLOSE CASTLE CAEREINION C. IN W. SCHOOL

Powys County Council is consulting on the following proposal:

- To close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools.

A consultation document which provides more information about the proposals is available on the Council's website at <http://www.powys.gov.uk/transformingeducation>. This consultation response form gives you the opportunity to let us know your view on the Council's proposal. The response form can also be completed online – a link to the online form is available by following the link above.

The closing date for this consultation is the **2nd June 2021**. All responses must be received by this date.

For information on how the Transforming Education Team protects and uses personal information collected during consultation processes, please see the Transforming Education privacy notice, which is available via the following link:

<https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/9803/Transforming-Education-Privacy-Notice>

Part 1 – About You

1. Please indicate how you are associated with the schools affected by this consultation:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Parent, carer or guardian | <input type="checkbox"/> | Prospective parent, carer or guardian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Governor | <input type="checkbox"/> | Member of staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Member of the community | <input type="checkbox"/> | Organisation e.g. Community Council |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | No association | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other |

If you said 'Other' or are responding on behalf of an organisation, please specify:

2. Please specify which school you are associated with:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Castle Caereinion C. in W. School | <input type="checkbox"/> | Another school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | No association | | |

If you are associated with another school, please specify which school: _____

3. Please provide your postcode: _____

Impact on the Welsh language

7. In your opinion, what positive or adverse effects would the proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School have on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

8. How do you think the proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School could be formulated or revised so that it would have positive / more positive effects, or so that it would not have adverse effects / less adverse effects on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

Copy of Consultation Report

9. At the end of the Consultation Period, the Council will publish a Consultation Report, summarising the issues raised in the consultation responses received and providing the Council's response to these issues.

Would you like to be informed of the publication of the consultation report?

Yes

No

If you answered 'Yes', please provide an e-mail address or postal address:

Part 3 – Equalities Information (Optional)

We want to ensure that we include all sectors of the community in our consultation, and are requesting that you provide this information to enable us to identify whether the consultation has been inclusive. However, these questions are optional.

10. How old are you?

<input type="checkbox"/> Under 16	<input type="checkbox"/> 16-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 25-35
<input type="checkbox"/> 45-54	<input type="checkbox"/> 55-64	<input type="checkbox"/> 65-74
<input type="checkbox"/> 75-84	<input type="checkbox"/> 85+	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say

11. What is your gender?

<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender Fluid
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Binary	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender neutral	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say

12. Can you understand, speak or write Welsh?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
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13. If you have school-aged children, are they entitled to receive free school meals?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
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14. If you have school-aged children, do they have any additional learning needs?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
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15. Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
------------------------------	-----------------------------	--

16. What is your ethnic group?

<input type="checkbox"/> White	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian	<input type="checkbox"/> Black, African or Caribbean
<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed	<input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy/Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say		

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

Completed questionnaires should be sent to the following address, to arrive **no later than the 2nd June 2021.**

Transforming Education Team, Powys County Council, County Hall, Llandrindod Wells, LD1 5LG

E-mail: school.consultation@powys.gov.uk



Closure of Castle Caereinion C. in W.
School
Consultation Report



Consultation on the closure of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

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If you require a copy of the document in a different format, please contact the Transforming Education Team on 01597 826618, or e-mail school.organisation@powys.gov.uk.

Consultation on the closure of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

1. OVERVIEW OF THE CONSULTATION

Powys County Council consulted on a proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. The proposal is as follows:

- To close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to attend their nearest alternative schools

The consultation took place from the 14th April 2021 to the 2nd June 2021.

i) Consultation methods

The consultation documentation was available on the Council's website throughout the consultation period, and was distributed to stakeholders, as required by the School Organisation Code (2018). A separate version for pupils was also available on the Council's website throughout the consultation period.

Consultees were invited to respond to the consultation by either completing an online consultation form, filling in a paper copy of the form and returning it to the Transforming Education Team at County Hall, or by e-mailing / writing to the Transforming Education Team.

Meetings were held virtually with the following:

- Staff of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School – 27th April 2021
- Governors of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School – 27th April 2021
- Castle Caereinion C. in W. School Council – 19th May 2021

ii) Responses received

A total of 68 respondents completed the consultation response form which was included in the consultation document. This included paper copies as well as responses submitted using the online response form.

In addition, 25 written responses were received from respondents, including Estyn. The response received from Estyn is provided on page 22, in-line with the requirements of the School Organisation Code.

The written responses included an online petition to 'Save Castle Caereinion CiW primary school', which was signed by 676 people.

As well as responses from parents, prospective parents, members of staff and members of the community, responses were received from the following organisations:

- Castle Caereinion Community Council
- The Diocese of St Asaph
- The Bishop of St Asaph
- St Garmon's Church, Castle Caereinion
- Trustees of the Castle Caereinion Recreation Association
- Accessibility Powys

iii) Summary of issues raised

The issues raised in the consultation responses are listed in detail in section 6 on page 22. This includes the Council's response to each issue. The following is a summary of the issues raised:

1. Comments about Castle Caereinion C. in W. School
2. Comments about Church in Wales provision
3. Impact on pupils
4. Travel implications
5. Impact on staff
6. Impact on the community
7. Comments about pupil numbers / surplus places
8. Comments about small/rural schools
9. Comments about other schools pupils might transfer to
10. Impact on Protected Characteristic groups
11. Issues relating to Finance
12. Comments about the Council's Strategies
13. Criticism of Powys County Council
14. Questions about / issues with the process
15. Questions about / issues with the consultation documentation
16. Alternative options
17. Comments about impact on the Welsh language
18. Comments in support of the proposal

2. CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

63 respondents completed the English language consultation response form, which was available online, and 0 respondents completed the Welsh language consultation response form which was available online. 5 respondents sent the consultation response form by email in English, and 0 respondent sent the consultation response form by email in Welsh.

The quantitative findings of the questionnaire are summarised below. Written comments were also provided in the consultation response forms. The issues raised in these comments are included in Section 6 of this report.

Part 1 – About you

1. Please indicate how you are associated with the schools affected by this consultation:

Response	No.	%
Parent, carer or guardian	11	16.2%
Prospective parent, carer or guardian	3	4.4%
Governor	0	0.0%
Member of staff	4	5.9%
Member of the community	17	25.0%
Organisation	1	1.5%
Pupil	24	35.3%
No association	5	7.4%
Other	3	4.4%
Not Answered	0	0.0%
Total responses	68	100.0%

2. Please specify which school you are associated with:

Response	No.	%
Castle Caereinion C. in W. School	58	85.3%
Another school	7	10.3%
No association with any school	3	4.4%
Not Answered	0	0.0%
Total responses	68	100.0%

3. Please provide your postcode:

Response	No.	%
Llanfair Caereinion / Welshpool	61	89.7%
Llandrindod Wells	2	2.9%
Shropshire / Minsterly	2	2.9%
Montgomery	2	2.9%

Llanfyllin	1	1.5%
Not answered	0	0.0%
Total responses	68	100.0%

Part 3 – About you

12. How old are you?

Response	No.	%
Under 16	24	35.3%
16-23	2	2.9%
25-34	5	7.4%
35-44	18	26.5%
45-54	7	10.3%
55-64	0	0.0%
65-74	8	11.8%
75-84	0	0.0%
85+	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	4	5.9%
Not answered	0	0.0%
Total responses	68	100.0%

13. What is your gender?

Response	No.	%
Male	27	39.7%
Female	39	57.4%
Gender Fluid	0	0.0%
Non-Binary	0	0.0%
Gender neutral	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	1	1.5%
Not answered	1	1.5%
Total responses	68	100.0%

14. Can you understand, speak or write Welsh?

Response	No.	%
Yes	18	26.5%
No	28	41.2%
Prefer not to say	10	14.7%
Not answered	12	17.6%
Total responses	68	100.0%

15. If you have school-aged children, are they entitled to receive free school meals?

Response	No.	%
Yes	4	5.9%

No	32	47.1%
Prefer not to say	5	7.4%
Not answered	27	39.7%
Total responses	68	100.0%

16. If you have school-aged children, do they have any additional learning needs?

Response	No.	%
Yes	6	8.8%
No	31	45.6%
Prefer not to say	4	5.9%
Not answered	27	39.7%
Total responses	68	100.0%

17. Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

Response	No.	%
Yes	3	4.4%
No	61	89.7%
Prefer not to say	1	1.5%
Not answered	3	4.4%
Total responses	68	100.0%

18. What is your ethnic group?

Response	No.	%
White	64	94.1%
Asian	0	0.0%
Black, African or Caribbean	0	0.0%
Mixed	2	2.9%
Gypsy/Traveller	0	0.0%
Other	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	2	2.9%
Not Answered	0	0.0%
Total	68	100.0%

3. CONSULTATION WITH PUPILS

Comments received from pupils are outlined below. This includes the notes of a meeting held with pupils at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, as well as a summary of the written responses received from pupils to the consultation exercise.

i) Meeting with the School Council of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

19th May 2021 – Held virtually on Microsoft Teams

Present: Marianne Evans, Sarah Astley, Huw Rowlands – Powys County Council

Sarah Brian, Headteacher – Castle Caereinion Church in Wales School

Officers from Powys County Council met virtually via Microsoft Teams with representatives from the School Council of Castle Caereinion Church in Wales school to discuss the consultation to close Castle Caereinion Church in Wales school from 31 August 2022 with pupils to attend their nearest alternative schools.

The School Council group consisted of 8 pupils.

Pupils gave a short presentation about Castle Caereinion School, which is transcribed below:

'We would like you to save our school because we are happy here. The lessons that we do are fun, we are learning new things all of the time! We have large classrooms that have lots of space to move around and to do lots of team work! We are excited about the new curriculum and think our school is going to be a great place to learn in this fun new learning style, with the four purposes.

As part of our new curriculum learning we are doing a whole school topic of green which is great as we get to chose what we want to learn about! We are also learning to speak a new language, Polish! We can say words like, Tak, Nie, Czesc, Dovidenia and Dziękuję Ci. We don't mind practising and getting it a bit wrong because we are all friends and no body laughs at you. We all help each other to learn and to get better.

We are like a family in Castle Caereinion CiW School. Everybody knows each other really well and we all look after each other. We are all friends but if we have to move to different schools we will lose our friendships as we will all be split up.

We have great outdoor areas that allow us to take our learning outdoors! We have our own pond to do pond dipping, seated areas and an outdoor classroom. We have raised beds where we can plant lots of different things. All of the garden areas are kept locked so that we can be kept safe inside them! We also have Forest Schools starting here and we are really excited about it!

When Covid goes away we will be able to go back to having lots of after school clubs, like craft club, coding club and sports club. We always do Christmas crafts too but couldn't last year because of Covid. If we go to another school we might not be able to stay to do after school clubs because our mummies and daddies would have to pick us up as we would miss the bus. This wouldn't be fair, because we would never get to do the fun clubs that we can here in Castle school.

We will also be able to do school trips again, they are always great fun. We have been to the Senedd in Cardiff to learn about our capital city. We also went to the zoo!

Our school is great because we have so many great resources. We have our very own ICT suite with PCs. We also have laptops, ipads and chrome books that we can use in class! Each classroom has an interactive whiteboard and these have been great at helping us to join in live assemblies with Google, a range of famous authors on World Book Day and more recently with Keep Wales Tidy for our Climate Change week.

Our school is special because we have nice teachers who care about us and know us all really well.

Its better being taught in a smaller school because there are less children so we get to have more help from the teachers. The children are all really friendly too, in bigger schools not everyone is nice to you all of the time.

Our school is close to our Church which is really good because we can walk to our Church for services. We go there to learn about God and for special events like Christingle, Harvest and Easter. We also go there for RE lessons where we have role play sessions and act out Baptisms and weddings. Our vicar, Rev. Steve is able to come to our school lots and is able to teach us all about Jesus and God. He might not be able to come to us if we go to another school.

We also have the Impact teams come to visit us with their big bus. This won't happen if we don't go to a Church school. We all love it when the Impact bus comes! The people from the Church link in with us a lot, they hold messy Church clubs where we all get to do lots of really fun craft activities with the people from the community and the church.

Most of us live in the village so at the moment we can walk to our school. If our school closes we may not be able to walk to our school and that will mean putting more cars on the roads. That causes more pollution and that is not good for the environment.

Our village is growing too, we have more houses being built and people might not move here if there is no school. If you leave our school open then the new families will be able to send their children here and we can make even more friends. It's really good living in the same village as our school because we are able to meet up after school and play in the park. If we go to other schools our friends might live in different places so we would need to have lifts to go and meet them. This would be bad for the environment.

Our school is next door to the community centre. This is great because we get to have cake stalls, Christmas and Summer Fayres, school plays and tea mornings. All of the people from the village can get to come to these, so it helps us to work together as a Community. It is also a great chance for the older members of the community to get out of the house and to do something fun with us, the youngest members of the community.

In school we have Committees, like the School Council, Healthy Schools, Eco Schools and Criw Cymraeg. Because we are a small school we get to be in more than one of these clubs which is great! We work in our committees to make positive changes. The School Council organise fundraising events for things like Young Minds, Red Nose Day and World Book Day. We have a Healthy Schools Week coming up where we will learn all about being healthy and we will have a healthy tuck shop! Our Criw Cymraeg are really good and they are teaching us new words and phrases all of the time. We have got our Bronze Award and we meet with Mrs Andrew a lot as she is helping us to work towards our Silver Award for the Siarter Iaith.

We have lots of great sports equipment and we have fun in our PE lessons using it! We are really looking forward to Covid going away so we can compete against other schools in sporting competitions!

Thank you for listening!

Following the presentation, the pupils were asked several questions and their responses are summarised below.

It was explained that the first question would have been **'What do you like about Castle Caereinion school'**, however pupils have already answered that question in their presentation. Officers moved on to the second question:

Is there anything you don't like about the school? Is there anything that could be better?

- No

It was explained that from time-to-time Powys County Council had to look at the schools in Powys, and sometimes some changes have to be made to some of the school. The Council has been reviewing Castle Caereinion School, and is wondering whether the school should close.

The consultation process was explained and the fact that no final decision had been made yet, it was still an idea and there was now an opportunity for people to say what they think. It was explained that the Council especially wants to hear what pupils think about this idea.

Do you all understand what we are here to speak to you about?

- Yes

If there was no school in Castle Caereinion, what would change for you as pupils?

- We would lose friends as they would be moving to a different school, so we would have to split from some of them.
- We wouldn't be able to meet together after school.
- We couldn't walk to school and we would have to drive to a different school and cause more pollution.

How many of you live in the village and walk to school now?

- 5 pupils put their hands up
- Many of us live in the village.

If the school was to close which other school would you go to?

- Llanfair, Welshpool, Welshpool, Llanfair, Llanfair, Llanfair, Llanfair, Guilsfield

So a lot of you think you would go to Llanfair, but nobody would go to Berriew? Does nobody live closer to Berriew?

- Some live closer to Berriew but parental choice means that they would go elsewhere.

Is there anything else you can think of that would be different, or worse for you if there was no school in Castle Caereinion?

- If there was no school here, people would not want to move to this village
- You wouldn't be able to meet up with people in the village.

I'm getting the feeling that Castle Caereinion school is very important to you as a community, it's wider than just the school. Do you think you would feel part of the community if you move to a different school?

- No.

Why would that be?

- You would have to meet new children in a new school. Some could be mean to you. Here everyone is kind.
- If we don't go to the school we're not supporting the community.

A lot of you have mentioned going to Llanfair school if Castle Caereinion school closes. It's much bigger than Castle Caereinion school. Is there anything you think would be good about being in a bigger school?

- I would see my cousin
- More friends
- A wider group of friends
- Lots of friends

Is there anything that would be worse about going to a bigger school?

- We could get lost
- Difficult to make friends as other children will already have their friends
- More people could/might bully you
- You might get lost
- Being shy
- Feel like the odd one out

At the moment you're in 2 classes in Castle Caereinion school and there are a number of year group in each class. In a bigger school there would be less year groups in each class, maybe Reception and year 1 together, years 1 and 2 together, years 2 and 3 together, 4 and 5 together. Would that be a good or bad thing?

- It would be bad because I would be separated from my friend
- You wouldn't be able to see your friends

How would you feel things would change for your teachers if Castle Caereinion school closes?

- It would be hard for them to find a job
- People would lose their jobs
- Sad
- I would like them to try for work at Llanfair school

Do you have any other questions? Is there anything else you would like to add? Is there anything worrying you about the plans?

- Why do you need to close our school?

Officers explained that the Council has to look at all its schools. At the moment there are lots of schools across the whole of Powys. Some schools are very small and it's difficult to keep them going if they are small. We think pupils would have more friends and opportunities in larger schools.

- Why does it have to be our school? I've been to bigger schools and children were not kind to me, but they are here.

Officers explained that the Council is looking at other schools in Powys as well as Castle Caereinion – it's not only Castle Caereinion.

- What would you do with the school – sell it, knock it down, it wouldn't be suitable for houses as it's close to the community centre?

The school is owned by the Church in Wales, so they would decide what to do with the building.

- Are you closing the school just to save money?

No, the Council feels that there are more opportunities for pupils in larger schools as they have more opportunities to make more friends.

- I do have a friend who's in Welshpool and we don't talk and she is mean to me sometimes so I'm a bit concerned about that
- Would you be able to see year 1 and Reception kids at playtime at bigger schools?

Yes, you would see them at breaktime.

Officers asked the pupils how they feel about what the Council is doing? Are they happy, sad, worried?

- Worried and sad

- Sad

Officers explained what happens next, which is that this is a consultation period where everyone's views are being asked. Pupils were encouraged to send any further comments or views to the Council by 2 June 2021, when the consultation closes, and to ask their teachers if they need any help to do this.

After the 2nd June, a report summarising everything people and pupils have said during the consultation period will be prepared. It was explained that this would include all of the things pupils have said in today's meeting, as well as what governors and staff have said in meetings held with them, and what other people have said.

The report will then be considered by the Council's Cabinet. It was explained that they are the people who make the decisions in the Council, and they will look at all the comments made and decide if they want to close the school or not. If they decide not to carry on then that would be the end of this plan. If they decide to carry on, then what's known as a Statutory Notice would be published, formally saying that the Council wants to close the school, and then there would be a 28-day period for people to respond, and to say if they don't agree. Another report would then need to be prepared and considered by the Cabinet.

There's still quite a way to go in the process, and no decision has been made yet, and if the process proceeds, no final decision will be made until just before Christmas. If Cabinet does decide in the end to close the school, that would be in September 2022.

Pupils were reminded once again of the opportunity to send in any further comments and were thanked for attending the meeting and giving their views.

ii) **Summary of other comments made by pupils**

In addition to the meeting with the School Council, 24 online responses and 1 written response was received from pupils.

The comments raised in these responses are included in the 'issues raised' in section 6 of this report. However, they are also summarised below:

1. Positive comments about Castle Caereinion School

- All the pupils at the school are friends
- The teachers know all the pupils
- There is a lot of ICT equipment at the school
- The school has a good outdoor area, including Forest Schools, a large playground, a pond

- There are good indoor facilities, including a library, big classrooms
- There is a community hall on the site
- There are a lot of committees and clubs at the school
- 'Wellbeing Wednesdays'
- Before Covid, the pupils went on lots of school trips
- The school holds community events
- There are close links between the school and the church
- The school is suitable for people with disabilities
- Pupils can have breakfast at the school
- There isn't a lot of noise at the school
- The pupils are in small classes which means that they can have more help from the teachers

2. Impact on pupils

- Pupils enjoy going to the school, they feel safe there
- Concern that pupils will be split up from their friends
- Concern that pupils in other schools won't be as kind
- Concern about bullying in other schools
- Pupils won't be able to walk/cycle to school
- Pupils would have to travel further to school, and would have to travel on a bus

3. Comments about the community

- New houses are being built in Castle Caereinion but no one will want to live in the village if there's no school

4. Other options

- The Council should delay to give time for new houses to be built.
- They could posters up to try to get more pupils to come to the school.

4. CONSULTATION MEETINGS WITH STAFF AND GOVERNORS

Consultation meetings were held with the staff and governors of the school.

The issues raised at these meetings are summarised below:

i) Consultation meeting with Staff of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

- In terms of the timings, obviously we have up until the 2nd of June to respond to the consultation, and then are we right in thinking there is a 28-day period for it to be discussed in Cabinet, does that take us to the 8th of July?
- If they decide initially to proceed, and there are no objections, when can we expect to have a decision? There is anxiety from staff with regards to different time scales, and when exactly they will know.
- With it being fluid around the dates, it is difficult then to advise parents as some parents are thinking that if the school is going to close, they might move their children earlier.
- If we cannot make parents aware until the end of the year, does that then affect the actual closing date if we were to close? Is it 12 months from the notice?

ii) Consultation meeting with Governors of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

- I was under the impression that because Castle Caereinion is a church school, that the final decision would not necessarily rest with the Powys Cabinet, but with Welsh Government?
- What are the circumstances in which the decision would get taken out of Powys' hands?
- Is there a reason why this was just dropped on us only yesterday, and we haven't under the circumstances had a lot of time to prepare?
- We have spotted errors in the consultation report, is that still then a fair consultation and would it still go forward?
- In your initial comments, you spoke about the nearest suitable school. The nearest council-maintained school is in Berriew, but this is in a different catchment area to Castle Caereinion school. Will the fact that it is in a different catchment, affect its suitability as a receiving school?
- I have a difficulty here because traditionally the children from Castle Caereinion School went to Llanfair High School, but of late there has been a quite a move going to Welshpool High School. What will happen with that, will children still be able to go to Welshpool High School, and will they still get free home to school transport to Welshpool?
- So they would get free transport to Berriew school, presuming that Castle Caereinion closed, and from Berriew they would get free school

transport to Welshpool School, even though they still live in Castle Caereinion?

- Have you looked at the area that children come from to Castle school?
- How many schools do we have the opportunity to go to and will pupils be guaranteed free transport to those schools?
- Will they still be able to go to Llanfair High School like the normal catchment they have now?
- You are talking about the transport, is there going to be a big additional cost to the education department to transport these children to other schools rather than Castle?
- Just going back to the numbers and transport, are there going to be enough places in our nearest school if there are lots of schools facing closure?
- Are you splitting the school up at all? For example, if the nearest school only has 21 places, how are we going to then fit in?
- What about those pupils that don't want to go to Berriew, are there places for everybody anywhere else? Have people been asked where they would like to go? Would transport be provided to the alternative school of their choice?
- Have you done a survey to find the numbers available across the schools for children? Meifod, Guilsfield and Llanfair primary?
- It was always the policy, that look at schools on a catchment basis, you look at all the primary schools within a given catchment. Why did the policy change to a policy of opportunism, or cherry picking, as now, as obviously there was a change. When did that come in and why?
- There is now a presumption that the very last thing you do with a rural school, is to close it. Can you tell us the options that you have considered in Castle Caereinion, which is a rural school, and why you have decided that the only option is to close it?
- You mentioned federation, were there others?
- I would like you to go through them and explain to me why you rejected each one of them.
- Following on from that, in the assessment for each option, you've got option 7 and you have 2 question marks, "could be met", and option 9 is obviously 4. If those question marks, "could be met", then surely they should be ticked and that would be 4 and 4? Yet the only option seems to be to close and therefore option 7 should still be available to us.

5. ESTYN

Estyn's response to the consultation is provided below:

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.

Summary/Conclusion

The proposal seems to include a balanced and proportionate range of options, nine in total, which look in detail at a wide range of possibilities. It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the standard of education provision in the area.

Description and benefits

The consultation document provides all stakeholders and interested parties with a clear rationale for the proposal to close Castle Caereinion Church in Wales School. The document sets out clearly the local authority's plans and rationale for change, based on their 'strategy for transforming education in Powys.' A key element of this vision is to 'improve learner entitlement and experience', and to 'rationalise primary provision.' The proposal gives detailed background of why the local authority consider change to be needed in Powys. The challenges include a high proportion of small schools, decreasing pupil numbers and high surplus places.

The proposal sets out a wide range of options, outlining their expected benefits and disadvantages when compared with the status quo. There are a number of options which include merging or federating with other schools within the area, with a range of possible management structures. The options considered within the consultation document relate to establishing federations or merging with Berriew CP school or Welshpool CIW school.

The advantages and potential risks for each option are given clear consideration within the consultation document and provide clear information

for all interested parties and stakeholders who may wish to respond during the consultation process. The document outlines a clear rationale as to why closing Castle Caereinion Church in Wales school is the local authority's preferred option, and that the 23 pupils currently on roll are accommodated in other local primary schools in the area.

The proposal, outlining the preferred option was agreed based on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis, assessing the nine options against the impact of each option on quality and standards, the community and travel arrangements. The local authority have also assessed the options according to critical success factors. These include strategic and business needs, value for money, potential achievability and potential affordability. This information provides stakeholders with a wide range of useful information when taking part in the consultation process.

The proposer notes the following to support their preferred option:

- Option addresses the issue of low pupil numbers at Castle Caereinion CIW primary.
- Option would reduce the council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools. Option saves revenue for the council.
- Pupils would attend schools with more suitable accommodation.
- Pupils would attend larger schools, which they feel are better equipped to meet the requirements of the curriculum for Wales.
- Pupils would attend larger schools which the proposer feels could a wider range of academic and extra-curricular activities.

The proposal clearly sets out the financial impact of the closure of Castle Caereinion Church in Wales school. There is a potential saving per annum of £90,000. When likely travel costs are included, the annual saving is projected as £58,000.

Educational aspects of the proposal

The proposal gives due consideration to the standard of education provision within schools in this part of Montgomeryshire. The proposal provides summary information about standards in local schools likely to be affected by the closure of Castle Caereinion CIW school. It considers information about pupils' wellbeing and attitudes to learning, and the quality of teaching and the breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum, and the provision for skills. It considers the quality of care, support and guidance within local schools, and also the quality of leadership and management within schools which may be affected by Castle Caereinion's closure.

The local authority has given due consideration to the most recent Estyn inspection reports for the schools in the vicinity which are likely to be impacted

by the closure of Castle Caereinion. They have also given appropriate consideration to the impact of the closure of Castle Caereinion on the standard of provision at foundation phase and key stage 2 across the other schools in the area to which pupils may transfer. The local authority has also provided information about church schools within the area which provide similar provision.

The proposal provides summary information about provision for pupils with special educational needs within the schools to which the pupils may transfer. Other vulnerable groups, such as pupils entitled to free school meals, have also received appropriate consideration within the proposals. The local authority has acknowledged the potential disruptive impact of closing a school in a rural community but has also noted elements designed to mitigate the risks.

Presumption against the closure of rural schools:

The 'school reorganisation code' notes that the proposer must consider additional factors if the school, as in the case of Castle Caereinion CIW school, meets the criteria for rural schools. The proposal appears to give due consideration to the three criteria which relate to rural schools as outlined in the code (likely impact on quality and standards, likely impact on the community, likely impact of different travel arrangements). The proposer has paid appropriate consideration to these criteria and how they relate to, and impact upon the nine options, including the preferred option of closing Castle Caereinion CIW school.

The proposal provides detail as to how each option was assessed according to the three criteria in the presumption against the closure of rural schools. For example, in relation to the likely impact on quality and standards, the proposer concludes that the impact is likely to be limited as provision is 'of at least equivalent quality,' in the other schools affected.

The proposal acknowledges the likely impact on the community as there would be no school in the community. The Castle Caereinion CIW school building is owned by the Diocese of St Asaph, and it would be their decision whether a community facility would remain.

The proposal acknowledges a range of travelling implications for pupils and parents. It identifies that there could be increased travelling times to school for some pupils, that there could be an impact on pupils' ability to access after-school activities, and the proposal could affect the ability of parents to take part in school events. It further identifies that this may have an impact on pupil wellbeing. When considering the impact on children from vulnerable groups, the local authority notes that there would be an impact on families due to the requirement to travel to school events, which could have a greater impact on

children from economically deprived backgrounds. In mitigation, the proposal does set out that there would be free travel to and from school for pupils in accordance with the local authority's home/school transport policy. However, the proposal does not identify how the local authority will deal with wider issues.

6. ISSUES RAISED DURING THE CONSULTATION PERIOD

The following tables list the issues raised during the consultation period and provide the local authority's response to these issues.

1. Comments about Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

1.1 Positive comments about the provision at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

Ref.	Issue raised	Local authority response
1.1.1	Castle Caereinion is an excellent school, and very much at the heart of the village.	The Council notes these positive comments regarding the current provision at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.
1.1.2	I recently joined a Zoom presentation of what the school is doing and achieving, also the resources available. I was impressed with what I saw.	As above.
1.1.3	This school has always been a happy place where children have had a good education preparing them for high school.	As above.
1.1.4	Just very happy children... and as the Head has already described a tangible improvement in writing, reading, IT and other essential skills.	As above.
1.1.5	Castle is a friendly school.	As above.
1.1.6	This school is a gem in our small community.	As above.
1.1.7	I think our school should stay open because it is a wonderful place.	As above.

1.1.8	The school is an excellent school and part of the village community.	As above.
1.1.9	The school has a fine reputation.	As above.
1.1.10	Castle Caereinion School is a wonderful village school in a beautiful rural setting which supports local families and children in the community.	As above.
1.1.11	The school provides an essential local educational service within a rural setting, supporting local families.	As above.
1.1.12	Teaching is catered to the needs of individual pupils.	As above.
1.1.13	My school is super fun and I like to learn.	As above.
1.1.14	They are doing a jolly good job in teaching the Welsh language as your recent report has shown.	As above.
1.1.15	I think it's a bad idea to close this school. Pupils have moved here as their previous school could not meet their needs, this school has helped them no end, has met every requirement needed and more even through this pandemic they teachers have been amazing.	As above.
1.1.16	We would like you to save our school because we are happy here. The lessons that we do are fun, we are learning new things all of the time! We have large classrooms that have lots of space to move around and to do lots of team work! We are excited about the new curriculum and think our school is going to be a great place to learn in this fun new learning style, with the four	As above.

	<p>purposes. As part of our new curriculum learning we are doing a whole school topic of green which is great as we get to choose what we want to learn about! We are also learning to speak a new language, Polish! We can say words like, Tak, Nie, Czesc, Dovidenia and Dziękuję Ci. We don't mind practising and getting it a bit wrong because we are all friends, and no body laughs at you. We all help each other to learn and to get better.</p>	
1.1.17	<p>The pupils who attend the school are a happy, confident and polite group. They look out for each other and realise how lucky they are to attend the village school where they live.</p>	As above.
1.1.18	<p>Our school is much more than a school it's my family. Please don't break my family up.</p>	As above.
1.1.19	<p>I love Castle Caereinion School because I have lots of friends here.</p>	As above.
1.1.20	<p>I don't believe the education that is being taught in Castle CIW primary is none less than any other school in Powys.</p>	<p>Comment noted. The quality of provision at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is not one of the reasons why the Council is proposing to close the school.</p>

1.2 Positive comments regarding the size of the school

1.2.1	<p>Our school is small so we don't have to share things around</p>	<p>The Council notes these comments about the size of the school. However, the Council has a duty to manage the whole education system across the whole of the county. The Strategy for Transforming Education outlines the challenges facing education in Powys, which was developed following extensive stakeholder engagement in 2019/2020. These</p>
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		challenges are outlined in the Consultation Document and include concerns about the number of small schools in the county, which comes with a higher cost per pupil, and therefore there is a need to reorganise schools to provide equity across the whole system.
1.2.2	It's much better having a smaller school because you get to have lots of friends. I am friends with everyone in my school and it's great. We also get to have more help with our schoolwork because the teachers have more time for us and understand exactly how to help us.	All schools, regardless of size, enable pupils to make friendship groups. All schools, regardless of size, need to ensure that all pupils are supported and challenged to achieve their full potential.
1.2.3	Small class sizes enable the children to have quality time and support from the teachers and teaching assistants.	As above.
1.2.4	Because we are a small school the teachers can help each and every one of us the second we get stuck.	As above.
1.2.5	We have small class sizes, thus benefitting the pupils accessibility to teacher support.	As above.
1.2.6	Castle Caereinion CiW School may be small but this does not mean that it needs to close.	Comment noted.
1.2.7	Our school is like a family, where everyone knows each other and understands each other's interests and needs. This allows the teachers to have excellent relationships with the children and therefore a reduction in poor behaviour incidents as seen in larger schools.	Teachers in all schools, regardless of size of the school, nurture good relationships with children – there is no evidence that larger schools experience poor behaviour more so than smaller schools.

1.2.8	The dedication of the staff and small class numbers provides a key to each child's needs. with individuals supported one to one. Children are better able to help one another.	All schools, regardless of size, are able to provide for the needs of their pupils. Smaller class sizes would not necessarily mean that pupils receive a more individual education as there are a number of year groups and a wider age range of pupils in the class.
1.2.9	Whilst it is a little school, it is still a nice school.	Comment noted.
1.2.10	Outside we can ride on the bikes, scooters and tractors and if I went to a bigger school they won't have these and I will be really sad.	Larger schools also have external teaching and recreational spaces and equipment.
1.2.11	There are not many students so the teachers can help more	All schools, regardless of size, are able to provide for the needs of their pupils. Smaller class sizes would not necessarily mean that pupils receive a more individual education as there are a number of year groups and a wider age range of pupils in the class.
1.2.12	Please don't close our school. Please give us a chance. Just because we are small doesn't mean we aren't good. I get teased because I'm small, does that mean I should give up too?	Comment noted.
1.2.13	It's good that there aren't many children here because in a bigger school there will be more children falling out.	There is no evidence that larger schools experience poor behaviour more so than smaller schools.
1.2.14	It's really good to come here because it's smaller than my old school, so we get more chance to do things. Here everyone knows me and we have lots of fun when doing our work.	Comment noted.

	In school we have Committees, like the School Council, Healthy Schools, Eco Schools and Criw Cymraeg. Because we are a small school we get to be in more than one of these clubs which is great!	It is acknowledged that there would be more opportunity for pupils in a smaller school to participate in different activities due to the pupil ratio within the school. However, all schools, regardless of size, have a range of committees and schools are expected to ensure that pupils can participate fully with these.
1.2.15	It is easy to assume that because we are a small school that the children are not having the same learning experiences as those in a bigger school, this is true. Our children are having BETTER experiences because they have greater access to technology, larger classrooms to aid collaborative learning and a greater individual opportunity to participate in activities. In Castle Caereinion CiW School each child is a member of at least one school committee, in larger schools this is not the case; only a handful of children are selected. To close our school would reduce their opportunity to participate in pupil voice activities.	As above.
1.2.16	The small class sizes can be a real positive for learning Welsh at Castle Caereinion. You could teach them in small groups each day and you have the time to help the children who might need extra support.	All schools regardless of size are expected to teach Welsh and groupwork in larger schools is also effective.
1.2.17	Although this is a small school it is better for the children the teachers know them individually and can meet there needs much better this is from a parent who has had her children go through the bigger schools and watched them fail her children if you close this school you're failing the children that go to this school.	Whilst the Council acknowledges this person's experience in a larger school, it is not possible to comment without knowing further detail. However, all schools, regardless of size, are expected to nurture, support and challenge all pupils to achieve their full potential.

	The reason I do not want this school to close is because I'm in a small class and there are only 12 of us, so that means I can have more help from the teachers.	The Council's view is that a class of 12 pupils is neither cost-effective nor sustainable.
1.2.18	The size of the school means that each child is treated as an individual with their own needs met rather than being treated as a number within a larger school setting.	All schools, regardless of size, are expected to treat each pupil as an individual and provide a pupil-centred teaching and learning experience.
1.2.19	Castle Caereinion Primary School is a brilliant little school and large schools aren't always for everyone. I've seen myself the transformation from a large school to a child coming here to Castle. The large schools don't always work for the timid child or the shy ones who need one to one emotional support or the disabled child who wants to go to a mainstream school. It's also the same for low class numbers. I appreciate they may be seen as a negative for you but they are honestly good for the children that need the additional help and time.	The Council expects all schools, regardless of size, to ensure that all pupils are nurtured, supported and challenged, and that their needs are met.
1.2.20	It's a lovely small village school where smaller classes benefit the children. They are able to get the attention of their teachers and support staff that most students wouldn't get in a bigger village or town school. Children thrive here!	As above.
1.2.21	Not only is it a small school so students get a better chance of getting more one on one but some students need that in order to go on through mainstream high school. If it wasn't for Castle some past pupils wouldn't have been able to get through high school because they wouldn't have been ready. Being a small school helped them to be able to achieve.	All high schools have a transition plan for pupils transferring into their school from primary schools. This would mean that all children will have the same experiences when transition from their primary school to their secondary school.

1.2.22	Because it's a little school, pupils who are autistic and struggle with things like reading and writing can get the help they need – they wouldn't have the same help in a bigger primary as there would have been too many other students.	All schools, regardless of size, are expected to provide support for all pupils including those with Additional Learning Needs (ALN).
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1.3 Comments regarding extra-curricular provision at the school

1.3.1	With a small school we get to choose more than one committee. When Covid is over we will go to tournaments for sports.	<p>The Council notes these comments regarding the extra-curricular provision available at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, and the opportunities for pupils to take part in a range of clubs, committees and other activities.</p> <p>All schools offer a range of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils, and should Castle Caereinion C. in W. School close, the alternative schools pupils could choose to transfer to would also offer a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, and there would be opportunities for pupils to take part in activities, committees and trips.</p> <p>The alternative schools would be larger schools, and in many cases, larger schools are able to offer wider range of activities, as there are larger groups of pupils who would be able to take part in activities such as sports teams, choirs etc, as well as a larger team of staff to offer such activities.</p>
1.3.2	We are really looking forward to Covid going away so we can compete against other schools in sporting competitions!	As above.

	KS2 pupils take part in any sporting events and all children are part of a committee which will allow their voices to be heard regarding school decisions.	As above.
1.3.3	The school currently has four committees: The School Council; Criw Cymraeg; Healthy/Eco Schools and Digi Wizards. Every pupil in the school is a member of at least one of these committees, allowing their voices to be heard. In a larger school the children may not get this opportunity as there will be too many pupils to allow each to be on a committee. This will also be the same for sporting events, when competing against other schools. Our children have the benefit from being able to participate in a wide range of activities, whereas in a larger school this opportunity may not be available as the teams are smaller than the pupil numbers allow for.	As above.
1.3.4	We work in our committees to make positive changes. The School Council organise fundraising events for things like Young Minds, Red Nose Day and World Book Day. We have a Healthy Schools Week coming up where we will learn all about being healthy and we will have a healthy tuck shop! Our Criw Cymraeg are really good and they are teaching us new words and phrases all of the time. We have got our Bronze Award and we meet with Mrs Andrew a lot as she is helping us to work towards our Silver Award for the Siartr Iaithe.	As above.
1.3.5	We also have Committees like Digi-wizards, Criw Cymraeg, School Council and Healthy Schools. Before Covid-19 we did Summer Fayres, clubs like craft club, sports club, messy church, coding club. We also went on school trips to zoos, Cardiff and other fun things too! We have had cake stalls in the community centre for all of the villagers to come and buy cakes. This is great	As above.

	as I love baking. We have been to Condover two times, that's another of the good things of a small school. We get to go to Condover more than once! If we go to another school we won't be able to have these same opportunities.	
1.3.6	We also get to go on lots of awesome school trips, before Covid-19, Class Two got to go to Cardiff!	As above.
1.3.7	We will also be able to do school trips again, they are always great fun. We have been to the Senedd in Cardiff to learn about our capital city. We also went to the zoo!	As above.
1.3.8	We have wellbeing Wednesdays, where we get to play games. We go on lots of school trips.	As above.
1.3.9	When Covid goes away we will be able to go back to having lots of after school clubs, like craft club, coding club and sports club. We always do Christmas crafts too but couldn't last year because of Covid.	As above.
1.3.10	We have our own clothes day, red nose day, after school clubs, an amazing reading corner, lots of art and crafts things.	As above.
1.3.11	We have after school clubs, pre-Covid, including messy church and PE club. We have committees and we get to be in more than one of them.	As above.
1.3.12	They are all able to take part in school activities and both their Christmas concert and leavers assembly are whole school affairs supported by good audiences. If the school was closed and the children sent to another school that would be lost.	As above.

1.3.13	I have my breakfast here too.	Many Powys schools offer the opportunity for pupils to attend Breakfast Club.
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1.4 Comments about the staff at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

1.4.1	The teachers here are amazing.	<p>The Council is pleased to note these comments regarding the staff at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.</p> <p>However, the Council would expect staff at all schools to provide the best possible educational opportunities to pupils, therefore there is no reason to believe that these statements would not also apply to staff at alternative schools which pupils may choose to transfer to.</p>
1.4.2	We have the best staff.	As above.
1.4.3	Our school is special because we have nice teachers who care about us and know us all really well.	As above.
1.4.4	The headteacher and staff are working with the children to achieve their full potential.	As above.
1.4.5	I cannot speak more highly of the staff who have already had to educate the children in the most awful of situations while also putting themselves at risk to teach those with key worker and essential parents. We have had all the support and more from all the teachers especially during a difficult time for our family. During the period after, the staff made extra contact with us to offer us as a family any help or support that we needed.	As above.

1.4.6	Our teachers make us work really hard and are always letting us have a say in what we want to learn.	As above.
1.4.7	We have amazing teachers here who are teaching us the new curriculum, which is lots of fun.	As above.
1.4.8	This school has the best teachers in the world in it. My teachers are special because they give us fun tasks and work to do.	As above.
1.4.9	The teachers are very nice and kind.	As above.
1.4.10	I like it that my teachers know lots about me and they help us to learn and to write and with our spellings. They help us to be whatever job we want to do like fire officers, headteachers, police officers. They are kind and they know us very well. They protect us.	As above.

1.5 Comments about leadership at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

1.5.1	The current Leadership is proving the right basis on which the school can now develop and encourage new pupils.	The Council is pleased to note these positive comments regarding Leadership at the school. Whilst the Council has no concerns about the quality of Leadership at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, it remains the case that Headteachers in smaller schools have a higher teaching commitment, and therefore have less time available to focus on leadership. In addition, as there are less staff in the school, there are less opportunities to develop leadership across the school.
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		There are permanent leadership arrangements in place in most other schools pupils may wish to transfer to should Castle Caereinion C. in W. School close, and the Council is satisfied that pupils would continue to benefit from good quality leadership in the alternative schools.
1.5.2	This school is going in leaps and strengths since getting a full-time head teacher and I fell you are giving up on us before you can see what we are really capable of.	As above.
1.5.3	There is strong leadership there now and it would be entirely wrong if the council decided to close this vital school.	As above.
1.5.4	The school is in a much-improved position, having recently returned to having a Teaching Head and we have seen great improvement in the learning and standards for our children and overall behaviour and morale.	As above.
1.5.5	The current Head Teacher has worked extremely hard, no doubt with Council support, to improve the whole learning experience. We have noticed these efforts in the behaviour of the students outside school hours, increased politeness and sociability, no noticeable bad behaviour.	As above.
1.5.6	The school undertook a period of restructuring in 2019 when it was found the current shared headship arrangement was not effective and we took the step to return to a Teaching Head model, a process which was fully supported and facilitated by the management at PCC Education. The return to this model and introduction of a New Headteacher has rejuvenated the school and considerably improved standards, behaviour and morale.	As above.

	Unfortunately, it has been difficult to fully develop and demonstrate these benefits due to the constraints of the pandemic, with the school being closed for nearly 8 months of this period and further time should be afforded to the school to embed and build on this.	
1.5.7	The current Head has laid the foundations for a very successful school moving forward, working hard to implement the changes that needed to be made. Recent review reports from the school's challenge adviser have confirmed that the school is making good progress. Both teacher and pupil expectations have improved over the past 18 months. Whilst the existing Head is moving to a new post, there is no reason why a successor Head could not continue to strengthen and develop the school even further, building on what has already been achieved.	As above.
1.5.8	Evidence shows that the new leadership structure, that was only implemented in September 2019, has had a huge impact on expectations, standards and attitudes to learning. The children are thriving. However, having only had 18 months since this new leadership model has been put in place there has not been sufficient time to grow the school. Particularly as we have been amidst a pandemic for the past 12 months.	As above.
1.5.9	The Headteacher has built up strong collaborative networks with other schools within the Llanfair, Welshpool and Newtown clusters. The new model of leadership needs longer to demonstrate the improvements it has made.	As above.
1.5.10	Whilst the current Headteacher is moving on to a new position in the Autumn term, we have already appointed a replacement acting Headteacher who will continue with the good work that has	The Council is pleased to note that the school has appointed a replacement acting Headteacher for the school and will continue to work with the new acting

	been done. Her teaching commitment will be in line with the current head and she will continue to lead forward with the stand-alone head teacher model that has proved so successful for the school.	Headteacher to ensure that the provision at Castle Caereinion continues to improve.
1.5.11	The Headteacher of Castle Caereinion CiW School is also the Chairperson of the Caereinion ALN Cluster. This is a position that she was put forward for by the Challenge Advisor. If there were concerns over the Headteacher being unable to fulfil her leadership role she would not have been asked to carry out this additional role by the Local Authority.	The Council has no concerns about the quality of leadership at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, and if pleased that the school's Headteacher was able to take on the role of Chair of the Caereinion ALN Cluster.

1.6 Comments about the school buildings

1.6.1 General comments about the buildings / facilities

1.6.1.1	Whilst the building is not modern, it has good facilities.	<p>The Council notes these comments about the facilities available at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. However, issues with the building is one factor why change is required:</p> <p>Whilst the school building was assessed to be in good condition by the Welsh Government's condition survey carried out in 2009, it is an old-fashioned building, and there are concerns regarding its suitability to deliver education which meets the requirements of the new curriculum, and which meets the Council's vision statement, as outlined in the Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys.</p>
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		<p>The Council recently commissioned an updated condition survey of the school building. This was carried out in the autumn term 2020. The survey assessed the condition of all three blocks at the school as condition C.</p> <p>There are also significant number of surplus places at the school.</p>
1.6.1.2	We have our own hall to do assemblies and our own library.	As above.
1.6.1.3	We have lots of space my classroom is massive and I love it.	As above.
1.6.1.4	Whilst the building is old, this offers a rich historical element to the school and the facilities available to our children are on par with other school buildings I have visited in the area.	As above.
1.6.1.5	The school has the benefit of recent adaptations to accommodate children with disabilities including full disabled bathroom and treatment facilities and disabled access to all parts of the building, which I understand is not available in all schools in the area.	As above.
1.6.1.6	The school also has the benefit of breakfast club facilities, a designated fully equipped IT suite, use of a large hall provision.	As above.
1.6.1.7	Inside the building we have large spacious classrooms that are more than suitable and equipped to deliver the new curriculum. The fixtures and fittings of the building are all deemed to be in reasonable condition and in Category B. This is the same status as the alternative provision in the nearest local school of Berriew.	As above.

1.6.1.8	We have a big community centre so we can have assemblies, cake stalls and school plays on the vast stage.	As above.
1.6.1.9	Within the building itself, the pupils benefit from large classrooms that are ideal for collaborative learning.	As above.
1.6.1.10	We have big classrooms that are not cramped.	As above.
1.6.1.11	The school boasts large classroom areas that will be more than able to encompass the new curriculum.	As above.
1.6.1.12	With the shared use of the adjacent Community Hall (and nearby church) the school is sufficiently well managed and facilitates excellent learning for all abilities, up to Year 6 (some of whom need the one-to-one attention that our school can offer). Money spent here will benefit students and community alike and will be much better suited to encouraging a "green" life with no increase in official or parental transport costs.	As above.
1.6.1.13	We have good PE equipment to do PE lessons with the equipment and we have a big cupboard to store it in.	As above.
1.6.1.14	We have lots of great sports equipment and we have fun in our PE lessons using it!	As above.
1.6.1.15	The school is fortunate to have strong support from the parent group and local community to help with the upkeep of the school and grounds and if the school were given the opportunity to explore some of the points raised in the building report, many of which were cosmetic, there may be more low-cost solutions available, including utilising this community support.	As above.

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1.6.2 Comments about building condition

1.6.2.1	The Local Authority conducted a building survey on a rainy day in October half term. The subsequent survey report, which resulted in the building being labelled Condition C is riddled with factual inaccuracies and also includes elements that were weather dependent and can easily be rectified.	The condition survey carried out in the autumn term 2020 was carried out by external professional building surveyors and the condition grading was their professional judgment. As this was an external, impartial report, the Council had not control over the content of the report. It is acknowledged that many of the issues identified could be rectified and this would come with an associated cost.
1.6.2.2	Page 11 of the survey: <i>'There doesn't appear to be a designated car park area for staff within the grounds of the school.'</i> There is a staff carpark right in front of the school, with ample parking for 7 cars. In addition to this there is a carpark to the rear of the school (less than a 1-minute walk) that can be accessed by staff, parents and members of the Community Centre.	As above.
1.6.2.3	Page 13 of the survey: <i>'The gutter were noted to be blocked.'</i> It was late October on a rainy day. This is an issue that can easily be remedied and as such should not feature in the survey.	As above.
1.6.2.4	Page 13 of the survey: <i>'Some slates were missing or cracked.'</i> In comparison to the whole roof the number of slates that need to be repaired/replaced is minimal. It is not causing leaks nor any damage to the internal property. Again, we feel this is a situation that is easily remedied.	As above.

1.6.2.5	Page 13 of the survey: <i>'Some of the carpet 'are beginning to show signs of age and display evidence of general wear and tear.'</i> This is an internal matter and does not affect nor impact on the condition of the 'building'. The carpets can be cleaned or replaced.	As above.
1.6.2.6	Page 13 of the survey: <i>'A combination of plasterboard and skim, and vaulted plasterboard with exposed timber joists. <u>It is unclear if the timber joists are painted with an intumescent paint.</u> Paint timbers and make good. The majority of ceiling finishes appear to be in reasonable condition with isolated areas of outstanding repair.'</i> Ire the highlighted section - if this is unclear, surely further investigation should be undertaken before downgrading this section to a C category purely based on this. The rest of this section highlights that the majority of the ceiling is in reasonable condition.	As above.
1.6.2.7	Page 13 of the survey: <i>'In relation to the doors: They are unlikely to meet current fire safety standards and need to be replaced. Replace all fire door sets throughout the block.'</i> This is a hyperbolic statement. We have had a recent fire safety inspection where all fire doors were deemed to be safe and met fire safety standards.	Comment noted.
1.6.2.8	Page 13 of the survey: <i>'Cyclical redecoration required.'</i> Redecoration has taken place in both demountable classrooms within the past two years.	As above.
1.6.2.9	Page 21 of the survey: <i>'Undertake fire risk assessment (with a quote attached of £1500).'</i> All of our fire risk assessments have been carried out with the fire safety inspectorate and our building has passed. Reports can be provided on request.	As above.

1.6.2.10	Page 21 of the survey: ' <i>Undertake an asbestos survey (with a quote attached of £1000).</i> ' We have had an asbestos inspection within the last two years, and all is deemed to be well. Reports can be provided on request.	As above.
1.6.2.11	Based on the contents of this Condition Survey and for the above reasons we do not agree with the downgrading from the previous B condition to the current C condition. We do not feel that a categorisation of C can be used as a reason for closure when we believe it is clear to see from the above that many of the reasons that have attributed to the report are either factually inaccurate or minor remedial works that can be easily rectified. We are not the only school that would have had drains blocked with leaves on a rainy and windy autumnal day.	Comment noted. Issues with the building is only one of the challenges facing Castle Caereinion school, as outlined in the Consultation Document.
1.6.2.12	Building inspection was carried out in Autumn 2020 which has not been addressed due to the current pandemic, the diocese owns the building so would be of interest to understand the issues and when they will be addressed. PCC doesn't own the building so have no extra costing to correct the building work that needs to be carried out, to bring it to a grade B which I believe we are at grade C currently with minor issues.	Whilst the Diocese owns the building, the responsibility for maintenance of the school lies with the Council. The Council prioritises maintenance/remedial works for schools by using a prioritisation methodology as part of the Schools Major Improvements Programme.

1.6.3 Reference to disabled facilities

1.6.3.1	The building had been adapted to suit the needs of our people with physical difficulties to allow access to the site independently and confidently.	Comment noted.
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1.6.3.2	My friend needs a ramp to help him get outside and we have a ramp and it makes him happy.	Comment noted.
1.6.3.3	Within FP we have a pupil with physical difficulties and therefore require additional equipment such as a K Walker, standing frame and corner seat to enable participation with the rest of the children. Even though these pieces of equipment are extremely large, we can accommodate them with no issues as we have plenty of space.	Comment noted.
1.6.3.4	As I also live in the village I have watched the school change and develop with many new resources and most importantly disabled resources to make it a very diverse school which cannot be said for all schools in Powys. The decision to on this school needs to be made wisely and I would say it has far more positives than negatives to keep it open.	Comment noted.
1.6.3.5	It has a dedicated body of staff and a school building with numerous adaptations for those pupils with additional learning needs, all of which will be lost if the school is allowed to close.	Comment noted.
1.6.3.6	We have ramped access to each external door and wide corridors to allow ease of access. We also have a large disabled toilet with hoists, changing facilities and drop arm rests for the disabled toilet. We currently have a year two pupil with significant physical needs and despite not living in the village his parents sent him to Castle because of the adaptations we have in place. This pupil needs to use a large standing frame to complete aspects of his work, as well as walking with a frame and using a straight-backed seat for carpet time. In our large classrooms it is easy to facilitate his use of this large equipment.	Comment noted.

1.6.3.7	The school has received considerable investment in terms of the specialised facilities it can now provide to meet the needs of a disabled child. This includes a dedicated disabled toilet area, with changing facilities, a hoist and drop-down toilet support rails. One of the school's pupils with physical disabilities chose this school specifically because of these facilities. The school was also specially adapted to ensure that each entry to the building has a ramp that is wheelchair and walking frame friendly and the school has wide corridors and door frames that allow the pupil to move around the building freely in his frame. To require this child to move to a larger school and at a greater distance, will be disruptive emotionally and physically. The question must also be asked whether the alternative schools will be able to match the quality of the facilities available at Castle Caereinion school.	The Council has a duty to ensure that school buildings are compliant with DDA legislation. It is acknowledged that the school has received investment to make adaptations. Should the school close, the Council would ensure that the requirements for pupils with additional needs are met at whichever school they may choose to attend.
1.6.3.8	We have ramps in our school and wider corridors and bathrooms suitable for people with disabilities	Comment noted.
1.6.3.9	This school is good for people who are disabled because it has ramps to help them.	Comment noted.
1.6.3.10	There are lots of ramps to help the disabled.	Comment noted.
1.6.3.11	We have ramps and a big toilet for people with wheelchairs.	Comment noted.
1.6.3.12	Castle Caereinion CiW School is specially adapted to meet the needs of children with physical disabilities. We have ramp access to every entry point to the building. We have a large disabled toilet area, with hoists, changing facilities, disabled toilet with lowering arms. The building corridors are wide to allow ease of movement for wheelchair users and children with walking frames.	Comment noted.

1.6.3.13	It has many disabled resources and this is a big plus for a village school.	Comment noted.
1.6.3.14	The school has recently undergone infrastructure improvements for disabled access. The potential closure of the school will add to the anxiety of students that require use of such facilities.	Comment noted. Should the school close, the Council would ensure that the requirements for pupils with additional needs are met at whichever school they may choose to attend.
1.6.3.15	We have no stairs because it is good for people in wheelchairs.	Comment noted.
1.6.3.16	The school has got a specially adapted changing toilet for anyone with disabilities as well as ramped access into the building. The school is also wheelchair friendly inside.	Comment noted.

1.7 Comments about the school's outdoor facilities

1.7.1	Our extensive outdoor grounds are perfect for outdoor learning. To the rear of the building we have our own pond for pond dipping, a willow tunnel, a covered outdoor classroom area for the Foundation Phase. We have a Forest Schools area where the children take part in outdoor activities to promote collaborative learning in line with the principles of the four core purposes. We have a large area with raised beds where the children do planting. We have large, grassed areas for both Foundation Phase and Key Stage Two pupils to play and learn within a safe fenced area. To the front of the school, we have a large paved playground along with a grassed area with climbing play equipment. This is all securely fenced in.	The Council notes these comments about the outdoor facilities available at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.
1.7.2	Lots of safe outdoor learning space. Hands on gardening, nature study and outdoor activities. Two big sports fields, a playground, a garden, fenced pond and wild area. Safe local nature walks.	As above.

1.7.3	We have a fun outdoor area with fun equipment to play on.	As above.
1.7.4	We have a large play area and even our own pond.	As above.
1.7.5	We have an outdoor seating area where we can sit down and do fun things like colouring and talking on the benches.	As above.
1.7.6	The school has well-developed gardens and grounds.	As above.
1.7.7	We have a great outdoors area for increased learning and forest learning, which is maintained by the parents.	As above.
1.7.8	In the school grounds there are random park equipment that are for the students to play on.	As above.
1.7.9	Our school has lots of space. In the back portion of the school there is a garden for class one to grow plants such as strawberries. Near to the garden there is a pond which is used to catch animals such as newts or unborn animals like frog spawn to show the life cycle of a frog. So the animals would be put in a fishbowl if the school were closed. We sometimes go on school trips and have an amazing time there.	As above.
1.7.10	We have a big playground. We make dens for action figures.	As above.
1.7.11	We have a nice outdoor area with seating, sheds, flowerbeds and a pond to do pond dipping. We have Forest Schools starting here and we are really excited for it.	As above.

1.7.12	I've been in this school since playgroup and I loved being in the outdoor are a, we've got bikes, a mud kitchen, bug houses, a pond, and outdoor classrooms for our forest schools now that I am older.	As above.
1.7.13	We also have a garden with a pond and seated parts and out the front we have the yard with equipment on the grass.	As above.
1.7.14	In our school we have big outdoor areas, a pond, forest schools, playing equipment and flowerbeds.	As above.
1.7.15	We have extensive outdoor grounds that are ideal for the new curriculum learning. We have our own Forest Schools area, outdoor learning space and pond to enable real-life authentic learning experiences.	As above.
1.7.16	We have great outdoor areas that allow us to take our learning outdoors! We have our own pond to do pond dipping, seated areas and an outdoor classroom. We have raised beds where we can plant lots of different things. All of the garden areas are kept locked so that we can be kept safe inside them! We also have Forest Schools starting here and we are really excited about it!	As above.
1.7.17	The school enjoys a peaceful setting with stimulating outdoor learning areas including a pond and forest area to develop interests in nature and the environment.	As above
1.7.18	The school benefits from large outdoor areas with a pond, forest school area, and two outdoor learning environments for each classroom.	As above.
1.7.19	We have substantial outdoor space, including a pond for pond dipping, forest school area, large outdoor classrooms for FP and	As above.

	KS2, large playground and access to an additional 'top pitch' where the children enjoy practising sports and participating on sports day. We have three raised beds for planting vegetables which we then cook with. Within short walking distance of the school is the church, a play park, a brook and many country paths for wonderful seasonal walks. Inside the building we have large spacious rooms. In FP we have two large classrooms linked to an adjoining door outdoor which allows for challenge areas and encourages independent learning. The classroom leads straight onto the outdoor learning area to the back of the classroom and the playground from the front.	
1.7.20	I like riding the bikes with my friends outside on the playground because I feel safe there. I like to help water the sunflowers that we are growing. We have lots of toys and fun activities to do when we have finished our work too.	As above.
1.7.21	In the back of class one we have a planting area. We have slides and a mud kitchen.	As above.
1.7.22	I really love coming to this school because we have lots of outside space to do climbing on our Adventure playground, a lovely field to run around in and outside our classroom we can get to our school pond and ride our tractors.	As above.

1.8 Reference to ICT equipment

1.8.1	We have many tablets and updated white boards that provides equivalent education for the new curriculum.	Comment noted
1.8.2	We have a big ICT suite and laptops. The teachers have their own laptops	Comment noted

1.8.3	We have a large ICT room full of computers, and there are also laptops and chrome books.	Comment noted
1.8.4	We have a vast range of 21st Century technology to enable our pupils to not only be 21st century learners, but lifelong learners. We have an ICT suite which houses 12 PCs, we have 8 laptops and 5 Chrome books along with 16 iPads. This technology enables our pupils to have excellent access to apps, websites, virtual learning experiences that enrich their learning experiences. They have participated in live assemblies with a range of famous authors, Keep Wales tidy and Google.	Comment noted
1.8.5	We have our very own Computer suite, laptops and chrome books. We have enough equipment for everyone!	Comment noted
1.8.6	In the classrooms we have laptops, chrome books, electronic spellers, an ICT room, a mini library, iPads, clevertouch boards and lots of amazing really helpful learning equipment.	Comment noted
1.8.7	Each classroom has an interactive whiteboard which use clever touch technology, allowing children to be involved in hands on learning experiences. This year despite lockdown the whole school have taken part in live lessons with organisers such as Google for internet smart sessions, where the children were joined with Craig Williams, MP. They also took part in a 'meet the author' experience where they listened to three famous authors and could ask them questions, this was alongside 500 other schools in the UK. More recently as part of Climate Change Week the children were joined by the Keep Wales Tidy team for daily live lessons where they were faced with a series of challenges around improving our planet. These experiences were in real time, they were current and the technologies within our school	The Council is pleased that ICT provision has enabled children at the school to successfully continue with their education and extra-curricular activities during the pandemic.

	were more than adequate to support them. As well as the interactive whiteboard the children benefit from having our very own computer suite with 12 PCs as well as a large number of laptops, chrome books and iPads. This wealth of technology allows children to complete their tasks on Hwb seamlessly with access for enough technology for one per pupil. The children would not have this 1:1 access to ICT in a larger school.	
1.8.8	Our school is great because we have so many great resources. We have our very own ICT suite with PCs. We also have laptops, iPads and chrome books that we can use in class! Each classroom has an interactive whiteboard and these have been great at helping us to join in live assemblies with Google, a range of famous authors on World Book Day and more recently with Keep Wales Tidy for our Climate Change week.	Comment noted
1.8.9	There are interactive whiteboards in each classroom, enabling collaboration and virtual learning experiences. The school has its own computer suite, enabling each pupil access to a computer for their work. There are also sufficient iPads in school to allow pupils to carry out tasks with the use of this technology too. This provision is, in our opinion, significantly better than many other schools in Powys.	There has been significant investment in digital equipment in all schools over the last two years as part of the Welsh Government Education Technology Programme. Most Powys primary schools now have a better ratio of devices than one device per pair of children.

2. Comments about Church in Wales provision

2.1 Links between the Church and the school

2.1.1	This school has strong links to the local church, St Carmon Church, and I understand that the Christian ethos is important to the school.	The Council notes these comments regarding the links between Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and the local church.
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2.1.2	Our village school has strong links with St Garmon Church, Castle Caereinion and we are proud that the Church is at the heart of the school and its Christian Ethos.	As above.
2.1.3	As the local vicar I greatly value St Garmon's church's close links with Castle Caereinion Church in Wales school.	As above.
2.1.4	The school is a safe, two-minute walk from our Church and we are delighted to welcome the children to the church on a regular basis.	As above.
2.1.5	Being a CIW school we also spend time celebrating religious festivals within the church which is a stone's throw away from the school and again the community enjoy seeing the children in this environment.	As above.
2.1.6	We have also periodically provided a Messy-Church after-school club which has been extremely popular with nearly all the children (approximately 90% take up rate amongst the pupils).	As above.
2.1.7	The school is a two-minute walk from the local church, enabling pupils to have a hands-on learning experience about their Faith and the importance of both the church and the school in this village.	As above.
2.1.8	This allows pupils to have hands on learning experiences of their faith and enables them to see faith in action through various services too. The children not only participate in, but also lead important liturgical events such as Harvest, Easter and Christingle. This provides them with authentic real-life learning	As above

	experiences of engaging with an audience and delivering readings to the parishioners.	
2.1.9	We can walk to our Church, it's only 45 seconds away.	As above.
2.1.10	We get to go to the Church to do weddings and baptisms and Harvest and Easter, they are fun.	As above.
2.1.11	Our school is close to our Church which is really good because we can walk to our Church for services. We go there to learn about God and for special events like Christingle, Harvest and Easter. We also go there for RE lessons where we have role play sessions and act out Baptisms and weddings. Our vicar, Rev. Steve is able to come to our school lots and is able to teach us all about Jesus and God. He might not be able to come to us if we go to another school.	As above.
2.1.12	Castle Caereinion school is a Church in Wales school not just in name but in ethos too. The children are taught to behave in a Christian way. They learn to treat others as they wish to be treated. They are taught the meaning of the symbols they can see displayed in school. Rev. Steve Willson is a regular attender at school, is a member of the governing body and takes the pupils in church for "Messy Church".	As above.
2.1.13	As a Church in Wales school, the school is actively involved with the local church for key services such as Harvest, Easter, Christingle etc. where the children take a leading role in delivering the service and singing hymns with the parishioners. The Church is also used for some RE lessons and other related activities. This close relationship and involvement with the church will be denied	The Council notes these comments regarding the links between Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and the local church, and the potential impact on pupils' involvement with the church should they transfer to alternative provision.

	to many pupils if they are required to attend their next nearest school, which in this case is Berriew.	
2.1.14	We are really close to our Church here and we get to do Collective Worship and our vicar comes into school to lead us in this too. We love getting to go to Church to do Harvest, Christingle and also doing role-plays for R E like weddings and christenings. We do Zoom meetings with the vicar now which are really fun! If we go to another school they may not teach us about religion or the Church as much and the parishioners will miss us.	The Council notes these comments regarding the links between Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and the local church, and the concerns regarding the potential impact on the community should there be no school in Castle Caereinion. All schools are required to teach religious education, therefore should the Council proceed with the proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, pupils would continue to be taught about religion at the alternative schools they transfer to, whether they transfer to alternative C. in W. provision or an alternative C.P. school.
2.1.15	Despite Covid and lockdown restrictions we have continued to participate in half-termly assemblies which I have led via zoom when I have been unable to come into the school in person. The school assures me that this is something that the children always very much look forward to and this is evident from their excited reaction whenever I come into the building. To remove this Church school provision would result in the loss of some of the children's links with their faith.	As above.
2.1.16	Castle Caereinion is a Church in Wales school and therefore the church is the heart of the school. The vicar does assemblies at the school, whilst the children do harvests, plays and messy church at the church. The concern is that the school keeps the church going and the church stays at the centre of the school especially for those parents who want their children to go to a Church in Wales	The Council notes these comments regarding the links between Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and the local church, and the concerns regarding the potential impact on the church should there be no school in Castle Caereinion.

	<p>school. Without the school the church would struggle to get the numbers it does I know this from our vicar.</p>	<p>As indicated in the Consultation Document published in respect of the proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, there is alternative Church in Wales provision within a few miles of Castle Caereinion at Welshpool C. in W. School. Any pupils wishing to continue to access Church in Wales provision would be able to apply for a place at this school.</p>
2.1.17	<p>For many years the school has taken pride in being the only English stream Church in Wales school within the Llanfair Cluster. The school has strong links with the local church, working closely with Reverend Willson and the Diocese and embedding the values of a Christian education and ethos throughout the school and developing strong links with the local community around the Church, all of which would be lost and have a detrimental effect on the Church community of Castle Caereinion should the school close.</p>	<p>The Council notes these comments regarding the links between Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and the local church, and the concerns regarding the potential impact on the church community should there be no school in Castle Caereinion.</p> <p>The Council also notes the comments regarding Castle Caereinion C. in W. School being the only English-medium Church in Wales school within the Llanfair Cluster. Whilst this is the case, Welsh-medium Church in Wales provision is available at Ysgol Cwm Banwy which is within the Llanfair Caereinion cluster, and alternative English-medium Church in Wales provision is available a few miles away from Castle Caereinion at Welshpool C. in W. School.</p>
2.1.18	<p>I am also one of the Churchwardens at St Garmon's Church in Wales (CiW), the centre of Anglican worship within the village, and have personally witnessed the working links between the school and church. Restrictions with Covid19 have currently removed that physical activity from within the church premises but work to continue the link has continued from clergy, church</p>	<p>The Council notes these comments regarding the links between Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and the local church, and the concerns regarding the potential impact on the church, the community and the pupils should there be no school in Castle Caereinion.</p>

<p>members, teachers, and governors. One of the strengths of the link between church and school has been the ongoing support from parents, neighbours, and other community members in attending various school events in the church; Christmas Carol Concerts, Christingle services, Harvest, Easter, Leavers services and the like.</p> <p>Additionally, the school regularly visits the church to learn about the history of the building and the graveyard, the types of service and how the church is vital to small communities. Interaction between church and school provides a wider cultural, social and community “belonging”. Experience shows the value of this to the community.</p> <p>Due to the close proximity of church and school, there have been regular Messy Church activities at St Garmon’s as part of after school activities. These have included, making the Advent Wreath, building a “Prayer Tree”, constructing insect hotels in both the school garden and churchyard, craft and other handiwork, much of which is normally on display within the church. Given that the church is normally open to visitors daily, this work has been seen by others and enabled friends and neighbours to visit and admire their children’s efforts. St Garmon’s church has a small regular senior congregation which is regularly bolstered by the community for special services, including Remembrance. Many of those who support the congregation at these times are past pupils and parents, their families and neighbours. Closing the school will remove these vital links between much of the community and the church which is needed for its survival. Should the closure proceed, pupils who no longer attend the school in Castle Caereinion will find their link to the local church non-existent, will no longer find the impetus and regular opportunity to enter the</p>	
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	building and will not be inviting family and others along to support them and their school. There is a grave risk that removing this essential and important aspect of community life will in the longer term be responsible for causing the closure and loss of the church in this community.	
2.1.19	We are the only Church in Wales School that is just a 2 minute walk from the local Church. This not only allows the children to embrace their Faith but also in a meaningful and real-life manner. They learn about their Faith and it's importance in their life, by actually attending the Church, meeting the Parishioners, leading services. In a small school these opportunities are open for ALL pupils. In a larger school this is not the case. Welshpool Church in Wales School has too many pupils to fit in the Church in one Service, resulting in a loss of authenticity of the Community that is Church and Christianity. To close Castle Caereinion CiW School would most certainly see a reduction in Faith children in the County, and in my opinion this would be truly awful.	The Council notes the comment about the proximity of the local Church to the school and how this benefits the children.
2.1.20	We also have the Impact teams come to visit us with their big bus. This won't happen if we don't go to a Church school. We all love it when the Impact bus comes! The people from the Church link in with us a lot, they hold messy Church clubs.	The Impact team visit schools across Powys, including Church in Wales schools and Community Primary Schools.

2.2 Concern that pupils would not be able to access alternative Church in Wales provision

2.2.1	Castle Caereinion is a Church school. Powys is offering students/parents alternative spaces based on geography (and presumably subscription) over and above religion.	Should Castle Caereinion C. in W. School close, the Council is proposing that pupils transfer to their nearest alternative school. Should the Council proceed with the proposal, parents would be able to choose which alternative school they would prefer
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		their child to attend and could choose for their child to attend alternative Church in Wales provision should that be their choice.
2.2.2	This is a Church in Wales school, they must be represented in this village. In addition to this the Schools Organisation Code 2018 states that 'where school provision is being reduced or removed, alternative school provision of the same nature (language category or, if relevant, religious character), wherever possible, should remain available and accessible to pupils in the local area'.	Should Castle Caereinion C. in W. School close, the Council is proposing that pupils transfer to their nearest alternative school. Should the Council proceed with the proposal, parents would be able to choose which alternative school they would prefer their child to attend and could choose for their child to attend alternative Church in Wales provision should that be their choice. Alternative Church in Wales provision is available approximately 7 miles away from Castle Caereinion C. in W. School at Welshpool C. in W. School. There are sufficient places available to accommodate all pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.
2.2.3	The failure to designate an alternative CIW school as a first choice for parents is very disappointing and does, I believe, contravene the intention of the school organisation code which states that in considering alternative proposals, the local authority should be mindful of the need to consider issues of language and faith...." Where school provision is being reduced or removed, alternative school provision of the same nature (language category or, if relevant, religious character), wherever possible, should remain available an accessible to the pupils in the local area". It is difficult to see that any, or any sufficient regard, has been given to the issue of faith or religious character in these proposals.	As above.
2.2.4	We have nearly 6000 children in the diocese who attend Church in Wales schools. These are the disciples of tomorrow who will take	As above.

	with them their values and beliefs they have acquired through their early education. Hope you consider the points that I have made and at least afford the children attending castle Caereinion the opportunity to continue their primary education at a Church in Wales school.	
2.2.5	The document makes reference to accessing the Church in Wales provision in Welshpool, however I would strongly object to this point in consultation, as PCC are not meeting the obligation to provide an alternative Church in Wales English stream education setting within our cluster area.	As above.
2.2.6	The Schools Organisation Code states that children should be provided with the same if not better experiences if being made to transfer to another school. I fail to see how their closest Church in Wales School is able to offer the same religious aspects as we do, when the sheer volume of children in that school automatically reduces pupils access to the opportunities that each and every one of our children have in relation to their Faith and taking part in Services. Please do not underestimate the Faith that is so important to all that we are and do in Castle Caereinion CiW School when making this decision.	As above.
2.2.7	The school and its pupils have forged very strong links with their local church and its community, something which cannot be replaced if your proposal proceeds as presented. The next nearest school is not a Church in Wales school and children will be denied that continuity in their Christian education and less parents are able to transport their child at their own costs to Welshpool CIW primary school. This is a cost that some parents will be able to afford, and they will be obliged to abandon a faith-based education	As above.

	and send their children to a non-faith school purely through economic necessity.	
2.2.8	In the most recent Church school to be closed by Powys the receiving school was also closed and a new school opened on site as a Church in Wales school. This is not on offer to the children of Castle Caereinion.	<p>Comment noted. The most recent change to a Church school involved two Welsh-medium primary schools. There is no other Welsh-medium Church in Wales primary school in Powys, therefore the decision in that case was to merge the two existing schools, one of which was a community primary school and one of which was a Church in Wales school, to establish a new Church in Wales school, to ensure continued access to a Welsh-medium Church in Wales school.</p> <p>In the case of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, alternative English-medium Church in Wales provision is available a few miles away at Welshpool C. in W. School.</p>

2.3 Transport to alternative Church in Wales provision

2.3.1	Powys have said they will only pay for the closest school but our village is a church in Wales school and pupils should have the opportunity to attend a faith school without it causing additional expense or hardship to their parents.	Parents are able to choose any school for their child(ren), and if there's a place at the school, then they can be offered a place. However, the Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy provides transport to a pupil's nearest or catchment school and does not provide transport to denominational schools specifically. If a parent chose a school that is not their nearest school, then they would be responsible for ensuring their child(ren) are transported to that school. It is
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		recognised that if a parent didn't drive, or have access to a car, then they would have to make alternative arrangements which could include private taxi/shared transport with other parents. The Council recognises that this may potentially have an economic impact on the parent.
2.3.2	There is a concern that should this proposal be approved by Powys Council's Cabinet, that there will not be provision made available to provide pupils with free transport to the nearest faith school of choice.	As above.
2.3.3	As a Church in Wales School, I have concerns that children who would normally attend Castle Caereinion School will have to travel to Welshpool, should their families wish them to attend a faith school as both Berriew and Llanfair Caereinion schools are not faith schools.	Comment noted. It is true that Berriew and Llanfair Caereinion are both C.P. schools. As indicated in the Consultation Document published in respect of this proposal, the nearest alternative Church in Wales school would be Welshpool C. in W. School.
2.3.4	If parents are required to choose the next nearest school on the grounds of eligibility for free transport, Berriew is a County Primary and not a CiW school. This, in effect, removes parental choice for a Church in Wales school place on economic grounds.	The Council disagrees with this comment. Parents are able to choose any school for their child(ren), and if there's a place at the school, then they can be offered a place. However, the Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy provides transport to a pupil's nearest or catchment school and does not provide transport to denominational schools specifically. If a parent chose a school that is not their nearest school, then they would be responsible for ensuring their child(ren) are transported to that school. It is recognised that if a parent didn't drive, or have access to a car, then they would have to make alternative arrangements which could include

		private taxi/shared transport with other parents. The Council recognises that this may potentially have an economic impact on the parent.
2.3.5	It is important that pupils are given the opportunity to continue to be educated at their choice of faith school and that this should be a reasonable and affordable choice, taking into consideration transport costs.	Welshpool C. in W. School is the nearest C. in W. school for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. This is 4.5 miles away from Castle Caereinion therefore the Council believes that this provides a reasonable choice of a faith school. However, if this is not the child's nearest school, then transport arrangements would be the responsibility of the parent – the Council acknowledges that this may potentially have an economic impact on the parent.
2.3.6	We would want to ensure children are given the opportunity to continue with their faith school of choice, and this should not be denied on the basis of affordability of transport.	As above.
2.3.7	According to the School Organisation Code “where school provision is being reduced or removed, alternative school provision of the same nature (language category or, if relevant, religious character), wherever possible, should remain available and accessible to pupils in the local area”. Provision has not been made to provide pupils with free transport to the nearest faith school as a first option, if that is the parent's preference.	Welshpool C. in W. School is the nearest C. in W. school for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. This is 4.5 miles away from Castle Caereinion therefore the Council believes that this provides a reasonable choice of a faith school. However, if this is not the child's nearest school, then transport arrangements would be the responsibility of the parent – the Council acknowledges that this may potentially have an economic impact on the parent.
2.3.8	If the Local Authority is to follow the School Organisation Code it would be wrong to only provide transport to the children's closest	As above.

	<p>school, Berriew CP School, as this does not offer the same Church in Wales provision that Castle Caereinion CiW School does. Therefore, to avoid removing Faith education from parental choice, the LA should provide free transport to the pupil's closest Church in Wales School which is in Welshpool.</p>	
2.3.9	<p>The Local Authority have proposed free transport to the children's closest school, however this is not a Church school. Therefore unless the council is prepared to pay the transport costs to the closest Church in Wales school then the Council is in breach of the School Organisation Code as on an economic level (transport costs for parents) you will be removing parental choice in sending children to a religious provision.</p>	As above.
2.3.10	<p>Our immediate concern as a Diocese, is that in presenting the options, there is no reference to a designated alternative Church in Wales school. This would be Welshpool Church in Wales Primary, and as such, parents should have the option to choose this school without having to meet the costs of that transport.</p> <p>According to the School Organisation Code "where school provision is being reduced or removed, alternative school provision of the same nature (language category or, if relevant, religious character), wherever possible, should remain available and accessible to pupils in the local area". Provision has not been made to provide pupils with free transport to the nearest faith school as a first option, if that is the parent's preference.</p>	<p>The options considered included federation and merger with Welshpool C. in W. Primary School.</p> <p>Parents are able to choose any school for their child(ren), and if there's a place at the school, then they can be offered a place. However, the Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy provides transport to a pupil's nearest or catchment school and does not provide transport to denominational schools specifically.</p>
2.3.11	<p>If the Council does proceed with closure however, we would remind the Council that parents have positively elected for a Church in Wales school and this will be denied to them on the basis of the proposals as currently set out in the Consultation</p>	<p>Welshpool C. in W. School is the nearest C. in W. school for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. This is 4.5 miles away from Castle Caereinion therefore the Council</p>

	<p>Document. As a minimum, we would expect parents to be offered places at Welshpool Church in Wales School as a designated alternative school with free transport. If this was not offered, then the Diocese would be of the opinion that the Council have not met the provisions of the School Organisation Code 2018 which state that “where school provision is being reduced or removed, alternative school provision of the same nature (language category or, if relevant, religious character), wherever possible, should remain available and accessible to pupils in the local area”. If free transport is not provided, then the nearest Church in Wales School cannot be considered as “accessible to pupils”.</p>	<p>believes that this provides a reasonable choice of a faith school. However, if this is not the child’s nearest school, then transport arrangements would be the responsibility of the parent – the Council acknowledges that this may potentially be an additional cost for the parent. However, the provision would still be ‘accessible’.</p>
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2.4 Other

2.4.1	<p>The Christian faith is historically the foundation for many of the building blocks of our society today. Many charities and organisations were founded by Christians. Christianity teaches that we should love one another and that love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.</p> <p>Whilst in the past there is no doubt that Christianity has caused great harm to many people, that has been reform within the church so that there is very little likelihood of that now being the case. There is an increase in spirituality of all kinds in modern society and ‘mindfulness’ is helping people to cope with their mental health. Faith schools are really important in giving children a spiritual base without forcing a particular faith upon them, provided</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
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	there is good governance, which is the case in Church of Wales Schools.	
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3. Impact on pupils

3.1 Concern about the impact of closing the school on pupil well-being

3.1.1 Reference to the Covid pandemic

3.1.1.1	The children have had disruption due to Covid and I think further disruption will not be good for their overall wellbeing.	<p>The Council accepts that any school reorganisation proposal creates a period of uncertainty for the pupils involved, and that this is exacerbated this year due to the Covid pandemic.</p> <p>However, the Council would expect that pupils are fully supported by their teachers and other staff at the school during any periods of uncertainty to minimise the impact on their wellbeing.</p> <p>Should the school close, the receiving school or any other school pupils would transfer to would provide support to pupils to aid their transition, ensuring a successful transition to their new school to ensure that all pupils can achieve their potential.</p>
3.1.1.2	In addition, our children are currently in a very vulnerable position, living through unprecedented times of Covid and the fragmented education they have received as a consequence of this over the last 12 months. The further uncertainty over the future of their school and the prospect of having to leave their	As above.

	friends and move to unknown schools is causing considerable anxiety and worry, which is having a huge impact on their wellbeing.	
3.1.1.3	All the children have struggled greatly since Covid hit, particularly with the uncertainty of periods in and out of school and we have great concerns on the impact on his mental wellbeing of having to move him to a new school.	As above.
3.1.1.4	Like all children across Wales, our pupils have had an extraordinary year in terms of the impact of the pandemic on their education, routine, mental health, wellbeing and social interaction. Powys County Council should be doing everything it can to provide stability and reassurance to learners and should not be providing further uncertainty and increased anxiety with a proposed closure at this time. The subsequent upheaval of having to move schools for children will cause stress and anxiety and affect our children's health and wellbeing and provide 12 months of worry and uncertainty.	As above.
3.1.1.5	Since the start of the pandemic the majority of the children have missed a considerable amount of time from school, due to school closure and blended learning. This has resulted in time away from their friends, living their lives completely different to what they have always known, and several children have become increasingly anxious. It has been incredibly heart-warming to see them back in school, smiling and adapting to the new way of living. They are fortunate to be in small numbers, allowing our most anxious children to feel more at ease. Move them now would be detrimental to their wellbeing and of their parents.	As above.

3.1.1.6	Children are already struggling after this last year they need to be around the people they know and numbers in class being at a smaller a number.	As above.
3.1.1.7	I think after this year it would have a massive impact on children at the school and it's the wrong time to be closing it.	As above.
3.1.1.8	You are proposing to take away all of this from our children, at a particularly vulnerable time during the Covid pandemic, when you as an authority have been emphasising the health and wellbeing of our children as your top priority, yet you are letting our children down badly on this by going forward with this proposal at this time.	As above.
3.1.1.9	This would also prevent the emotional damage that will be done to the children in closing their school during the Covid pandemic, when so many have already suffered loss already. Allow the children time to adapt to the changes that the pandemic has made, whilst allowing the school time to show the growth it can make in this time.	Comment noted.
3.1.1.10	Pupils have had a traumatic time during 2020 / 2021 in dealing with all the uncertainty with the pandemic. They have done their best to cope with the circumstances, knowing there was light at the end of the tunnel, however, closing the school is pulling the rug from under their feet. The schoolchildren will be hoping they will begin to return to some normality over the next 18 months, instead Powys have taken the brutal decision to close their school and throw them into further turmoil and uncertainty. This decision is immoral and the timing is devoid of empathy.	<p>The Council accepts that any school reorganisation proposal creates a period of uncertainty for the pupils involved, and that this is exacerbated this year due to the Covid pandemic.</p> <p>However, the Council would expect that pupils are fully supported by their teachers and other staff at the school during any periods of uncertainty to minimise their wellbeing.</p>

3.1.1.11	We have just gone through a global pandemic and children have missed out on so much routine and learning, to take away a place they know and love would be forgivable and children thrive and learn in places they feel most comfortable.	As above.
3.1.1.12	The children currently in the school don't need more disruption in their school lives, after the disruption caused by the covid pandemic.	As above.
3.1.1.13	Children have been through enough upset and emotional stress over the last year with schools being closed during the pandemic. They do not need any more upheaval in their lives right now.	As above.
3.1.1.14	During lockdown I spent all year at home, doing schoolwork and being with my mum and dad as I don't have any brothers and sisters. Sometimes I felt very lonely, and I was very sad and bored as I didn't have anyone my own age to play with. The only thing I liked was a Thursday in the summer where I could go to school and see my friends and my teacher. I enjoy going to school. I feel safe there.	Comment noted.

3.1.2 General concern about pupil well-being

3.1.2.1	Don't close this school, unless you have attended or live in this community you have no idea the impact that closing will have on pupils' lives.	<p>The Council accepts that any school reorganisation proposal creates a period of uncertainty for the pupils involved, and that this is exacerbated this year due to the Covid pandemic.</p> <p>Should the school close, the receiving school or any other school pupils would transfer to would provide</p>
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		support to pupils to aid their transition, ensuring a successful transition to their new school to ensure that all pupils can achieve their potential.
3.1.2.2	Don't close our school down please because it is OUR school. I feel sad when I think about it because I will miss my school, my friends and all my teachers. I want to stay here because I love it here.	As above.
3.1.2.3	If the school closed I would be super sad and would cry because we would never ever be in here again	As above.
3.1.2.4	Please don't close any more schools because I don't want any other children to be sad.	As above.
3.1.2.5	Should this closure plan be accepted, the children will be required to learn while adjusting to new environments and will face anxiety about change; the anxiety will create difficult amounts of stress that will affect learning.	As above.
3.1.2.6	The welfare of the community and the children should be top of the council's priorities. The uncertainty of where the council propose for the children to be schooled and the manner of transportation is causing a great deal of anxiety for the children and is at best described as cruel. Instead of taking the easy option and closing the school it should instead be supported and it's strengths built upon.	As above.
3.1.2.7	The wellbeing of the children and their families seriously needs to be considered in all of this.	As above.

3.2 Concern that pupils would be separated from their friends

3.2.1	If I had to go to a bigger school I could be split from my friends and I would miss them.	<p>The Council recognises that having friendship groups is very important to pupils, but there is no evidence that pupils wouldn't be able to make friends in a larger school.</p> <p>Should the school close, the receiving school or any other school pupils would transfer to would provide support to pupils to aid their transition, ensuring that they make new friends in their new school.</p>
3.2.2	I don't want the school to close because I have a lot of friends here and if the school closes we will all be split up.	As above.
3.2.3	We are like a family in Castle Caereinion CiW School. Everybody knows each other really well and we all look after each other. We are all friends but if we have to move to different schools we will lose our friendships as we will all be split up.	As above.
3.2.4	You are forcing people to separate friendships splitting children up as they will not all be able to go to the same school any longer.	As above.
3.2.5	All my friends from school live in the village. Because of Coronavirus the only way I'm allowed to see my friends is at school. My school is where I learn things and I can be with my friends, I don't want to lose my friends that I have now.	As above.
3.2.6	When I was told that you were going to close the school I started to get worried that you are going to split me and my friends up. I hear parents talking outside school asking each other "which school are	As above.

	you going to send him too?”, no one knows, and everyone is saying different schools! That means you are going to split us all up. I am going to lose 20 friends.	
3.2.7	I have lots of friends here and I will miss them if I have to go to another school.	As above.
3.2.8	It’s really good living in the same village as our school because we are able to meet up after school and play in the park.	Comment noted.

3.3 Other

3.3.1	For those who walk to school it is good for their mental wellbeing to look and see what is around them in the village.	The Council fully acknowledges that should the proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, any pupils living in the village that currently walk to school are likely to be unable to walk to their alternative school.
3.3.2	If you choose to close the school the children will be missing out on learning from very good teaching and support staff.	Should the Council proceed with implementation of the proposal, pupils would continue to benefit from very good teaching and support staff at the alternative schools they transfer to.

4. Travel implications

4.1 The proposal would lead to additional travel

4.1.1	We live right by the school and see the children happily walking in each morning. What a shame it would be for them to have to travel miles to another school each day, twice a day!	The Council recognises that many pupils attending Castle Caereinion school are able to walk to school. However, as stated in the Consultation Document, there are alternative primary places available at other schools within 10 miles of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. Should Castle Caereinion C. in W. School close, it is not considered that the length and nature of journeys for pupils to alternative provision would be excessive.
4.1.2	Children are going to spend more time travelling to different schools.	As above.
4.1.3	Children and families will be required to travel to the next nearest school, affecting family routines and creating a longer school day for children.	As above.
4.1.4	Bussing children to a larger school is a retrograde step in my opinion will be of no benefit to the children.	As above.
4.1.5	Your "vision" will lead to increased travel time for some parents.	As above. Should the school close, free home-to-school transport would be provided to the nearest alternative school, in accordance with the Transport Policy.
4.1.6	I think it's very wrong to transport children out of a village school to a different environment all together. These children have lost so much already due to covid and will lose so much more if this goes ahead	As above.

4.1.7	Many of our pupils in the school live in the village and one concern I have is that if you close the school they will obviously have to travel further.	As above.
4.1.8	The expectation of additional travel will further add to the children's anxiety.	As above.
4.1.9	Closing this school will mean our village's children will have to be transported to another area, what will that cost if transport is provided by the authority? If transport is not provided this will mean an increase in traffic on narrow rural roads with all the inherent risks this will entail.	Should the school close, free home-to-school transport would be provided to the nearest alternative school, in accordance with the Transport Policy. The estimated cost of this transport is £32,300 per annum. A risk assessment of all school transport routes is undertaken.
4.1.10	You are talking about the transport, is there going to be a big additional cost to the education department to transport these children to other schools rather than Castle?	The estimated additional cost of transport is £32,300 per annum, as indicated in the Consultation Document.
4.1.11	I want you to keep our school open because it is really close to my house. I can get to my school on bike if I have to go to another school then I won't be able to do that. I will have to go in my car or on a bus. I don't want to go on a bus I am only 6 years old.	Comment noted. However, many children in Powys go to school on a bus from the start of their schooling, with no detrimental impact.
4.1.12	The school was one of the reasons why my husband and I chose this area to live in, as it is "on our doorstep" and will limit things like travel. I would not be happy with a young child travelling by bus everyday to and from school.	Comment noted. However, many children in Powys go to school on a bus from the start of their schooling, with no detrimental impact.
4.1.13	I can walk to school since I live in the village and the school is in that village.	Comment noted.

4.2 Concern about the impact on the environment

4.2.1	Having to put on buses to transport children to schools, forcing people into taking their cars as there is nothing left for them in their local communities, surely this is not helping the environment.	<p>In the draft Impact Assessment published with the consultation documentation, the Council states the following:</p> <p>Implementation of the proposal would require additional travel for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School for whom this is their closest school. This would have a negative environmental impact as more home to school transport would need to be provided to transport pupils to their nearest alternative school. However, the number of pupils requiring additional transport would be relatively small, and it is possible that they could be accommodated on transport which is already operating.</p>
4.2.2	With all the new houses being built they're going to want a local school and will have to use more fuel if Castle isn't there.	The Council understands that there are housing developments in the area, however, should the school close, there are primary school places available within a 10-mile radius of Castle Caereinion.
4.2.3	Pupils having to travel to a distant school is environmentally unacceptable.	As above.
4.2.4	Busing children is not green or kind.	As above. Many pupils in Powys travel to school on buses from the start of their education, with no

		detrimental impact to pupils. As stated above, the Council has recognised the negative environmental impact of the proposal due to additional transport/travel.
4.2.5	The increased carbon consumption resulting from taking our students to other schools some miles away cannot be a sound concept and must be discouraged.	As above.
4.2.6	Surely at a time when government are trying to encourage a reduction in road traffic as part of the drive towards carbon neutrality this is contradictory.	As above.
4.2.7	Issues of the environment are currently of high importance and we are all aware of the need for all decision making globally to first consider the potential for environmental damage and harm. Travelling short distances, locally, is surely preferable to asking pupils and their parents to make more numerous car journeys to get to school. When we are encouraged to walk more or use bicycles, how is it consistent to remove local services?	As above.
4.2.8	I find it duplicitous that the council talk about environmental responsibility but are happy to ignore the pollution caused by transportation of children out of the area by road transport.	As above.
4.2.9	If we go to other schools our friends might live in different places so we would need to have lifts to go and meet them. This would be bad for the environment.	Comment noted.
4.2.10	Currently 50% of our pupils live in Castle Caereinion and walk to school each day. If Castle Caereinion CiW School were to close 100% of our pupils would need to use transport to get to their new school. Data taken from www.transportdirectinfo states that a bus	As above.

	generates 1.7kg of CO2 per traveller per daily journey taken. This equates to 16150kg of CO2 emissions per year going into the atmosphere. This is considerably higher than if Castle Caereinion CiW School were to remain open.	
4.2.11	Almost all of the children here can walk to school and home, but if you close our school we will have to drive to school. That is not good for the environment.	As above.
4.2.12	Most of us live in the village so at the moment we can walk to our school. If our school closes we may not be able to walk to our school and that will mean putting more cars on the roads. That causes more pollution and that is not good for the environment.	As above.
4.2.13	We have a very high rate of local attendance with very few children coming from further away and as a result many of the pupils are within walking distance which surely suits the need for the councils plan to reduce the carbon footprint?	As above.
4.2.14	If you close our school everyone will have to drive and it's bad for the environment.	As above.
4.2.15	My school is a mile away and next year I was looking forward to riding my bike to school. I won't be able to do this if my new school is further away. The roads are too busy and my mum and dad won't let me ride all that way. They will have to drive me to my new school, all of the other kids will have to be driven too and that's not very good for the environment! I have been told that you might send a bus to take some of us to school, but I don't want to go on a bus on my own. I am only 8.	<p>The Council recognises that, should the school close, it would be more difficult for a pupil to cycle to school.</p> <p>Many pupils in Powys travel on buses to school from the start of their education, with no detrimental impact.</p>

4.2.16	What a shame to further contribute to emissions by popping yet another diesel driven bus on the road to cart our little children to a 'super school' where they will not be offered the great education a small village school can.	As above. The Council is not proposing to send children to a 'superschool' – it is proposed that children attend their nearest alternative schools.
4.2.17	It is also illogical and perverse at the very time when, in light of the climate emergency, the authority should be making every effort to reduce the carbon footprint of its residents and to limit non-essential car use.	As above.
4.2.18	NRW stated in its latest report "A systemic change is needed to how and why people travel and what is transported." It promotes the concept of a 20-minute neighbourhood - pioneered by Melbourne in Australia - where urban society is designed so residents can meet virtually all their needs a short walk from home. This is supported by Future Generations Commissioner Sophie Howe who said this was "not just about carbon emission targets - these solutions have wider benefits". "We have an obesity crisis so the last thing we want is people sitting in their cars.	As above.
4.2.19	Environmentally it is also a poor decision – clashing with the report from NRW that time was running out to "avoid a catastrophic situation for Wales and the world". The report highlighted " the concept of a 20-minute neighbourhood – pioneered by Melbourne in Australia – where urban society is designed so residents can meet virtually all their needs a short walk from home." The report also says that "A systemic change is needed to how and why people travel". Future Generations Commissioner Sophie Howe said "the last thing we want is people sitting in their cars."	As above.

4.3 Concern about impact on pupils' access to after schools activities

4.3.1	<p>If children in the future have to travel further afield for their education, they would inevitably end up losing out on some extra-curricular activities due to transport issues. This would greatly harm the education and development of the village.</p>	<p>One of the advantages of the proposal, outlined within the Consultation Document, is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities</i> <p>However, the Council has also recognised within the draft Impact Assessment that <i>'it is acknowledged that there could be an impact on some pupils' ability to access after school activities, and could impact on the ability of parents to take part in school events, meetings etc.'</i></p> <p>The majority of schools in Powys rely on some level of home-to-school transport for their pupils, and schools are usually able to work with families to provide an appropriate level of extra-curricular activities for pupils, including clubs within the school day, shared transport with other parents etc.</p>
4.3.2	<p>I am deeply concerned that if children have to be transported to school by bus, that they will miss out on very important cross curricular opportunities.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
4.3.3	<p>If pupils wish to engage in after school activities, this will be determined on the basis of whether their parents are able to collect them from school given the distances they will live from their nearest school. This assumes that parents' working hours and ownership of</p>	<p>As above.</p>

	a car makes that possible. It is likely then, that for some children, they will not be able to enjoy the same opportunities as their peers.	
4.3.4	The biggest impact on children will be the greater distances they will have to travel to and from school, and whilst they may qualify for free transport at the beginning and end of the school day, their ability to participate in extra-curricular activities may be significantly affected by parents working patterns and ownership of private vehicles. Children at Castle Caereinion currently enjoy a breadth of activities and are able to actively participate because the majority live within or very near to Castle Caereinion.	As above.
4.3.5	Every child in school would be entitled to free home to school transport. They would not get free transport from after school activities. It is pie in the sky for the consultation to suggest that there might already be Home to School transport travelling through Castle Caereinion to Berriew. Nobody goes that way.	Comment noted.
4.3.6	I know that there will be a bus to the nearest local schools. However what happens if the parents aren't happy with those schools? and they don't drive. Or if they are happy with those schools, they go on the bus and then there is childrens' after school clubs, meetings, etc. additional charges might be hard.	Parents are able to choose any school for their child(ren), and if there's a place at the school, then they can be offered a place. However, the Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy provides transport to a pupil's nearest or catchment school. If a parent chose a school that is not their nearest school, then they would be responsible for ensuring their child(ren) are transported to that school. It is recognised that if a parent didn't drive, or have access to a car, then they would have to make alternative arrangements which could include private taxi/shared transport with other parents. The Council recognises that this may potentially have an economic impact on the parent.

		In terms of after-school clubs, meetings etc, the previous comments in this section apply.
4.3.7	If we go to another school we might not be able to stay to do after school clubs because our mummies and daddies would have to pick us up as we would miss the bus. This wouldn't be fair, because we would never get to do the fun clubs that we can here in Castle school.	In terms of after-school clubs, the previous comments in this section apply.

4.4 Concern about the impact on low income families

4.4.1	We understand Powys only intends to supply transport to the nearest alternative school, therefore financial support is based on geography, and this will deny choice to families on lower incomes.	Parents are able to choose any school for their child(ren), and if there's a place at the school, then they can be offered a place. However, the Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy provides transport to a pupil's nearest or catchment school. If a parent chose a school that is not their nearest school, then they would be responsible for ensuring their child(ren) are transported to that school. It is recognised that if a parent didn't drive, or have access to a car, then they would have to make alternative arrangements which could include private taxi/shared transport with other parents. The Council recognises that this may potentially have an economic impact on the parent.
4.4.2	A number of families in the village are on lower incomes. They generally find it better and easier taking their children to the primary school because they can walk, which is not only better for the environment, but good for physical health and it saves money	Comment noted. The Council recognises that, should the school close, pupils living in the village of Castle Caereinion who are currently able to walk / cycle to school would no longer be able to do so.

	too. They would be forced to travel to other schools should the school be closed, and a mini-bus or some other provided school transport may need to be implemented if the school closes, so these families on lower incomes don't suffer. If not, then parents will not have a way to take their children to school elsewhere.	Should the school close, free home-to-school transport would be provided for eligible pupils to their nearest alternative school, in accordance with the Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy.
4.4.3	Public transport to and from Castle Caereinion is not an alternative option to support students travel to and from school. Any child from a low-income family will be disproportionately penalised which in contra to the 2018-2023 vision for Powys to be "established as an innovation base for learning, research and skills."	As above.

4.5 Other

4.5.1	Parents who are concerned about the distance younger children may need to travel, may decide to Home School. Whilst this may be satisfactory in many cases, there have been instances where Home Schooling has not been adequate and in one case was tragic. Integration of Home Schooled children into main stream can be challenging and costly. There may be a requirement in the future for inspection of Home Schooled children and that would also be costly compared to teaching children in a smaller primary school.	Comment noted. Elective Home Education for a child in a mainstream school is a choice any parent can make at any time. Electively Home Educated children are at no greater risk of harm from their parents than those that attend school: Welsh Government guidance clearly states that being Electively Home Educated is not a safeguarding risk in and of itself. Integrating children who have been Home Educated into school may be no different to integrating into school any child who has moved into the area. The Local Authority's understanding is that Welsh Government is considering a requirement for all families who Electively Home Educate to be visited once per year: this is not the same as inspecting. Welsh Government have indicated that there will be funding provided to reflect this new duty (if and when it is implemented). The cost of this duty
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		is projected to run to no more than £50 000 per annum, which is considerably less than the budget for a school.
4.5.2	Also parents will be forced into making difficult decisions as regards to where to send their children as transport to a preferred school may not be funded. They may also have other children in secondary schools which will create pick up and drop off issues and will not necessarily allow for children to attend the after-school activities that the council are saying will be more available.	The Council recognises that a number of factors affect a parents' choice of school for their child(ren), and that the availability of free home-to-school transport is an important factor. However, most parents have to manage the complications of school opening times, transport and after-school clubs, especially if they have children in different schools – the Council does not think this is an insurmountable matter, and it would be for the parent to manage these arrangements.
4.5.3	All I see is more stress on the children and parents within the week. Parents may also have to rely more on childcare or asking employers to be more flexible with hours which could mean extra costs on top of already having to pay more to transport their children to a school further away.	Comment noted.
4.5.4	I know numerous residents who don't drive and would make there live extremely difficult to the point they would probably have to leave the village in order to get their children to school.	Should the school close, free home-to-school transport would be provided to the child's nearest school, in accordance with the Home-to-School Transport Policy.
4.5.5	Transport has always traditionally been provided within the 'Llanfair Cluster' area. This has been funded transport into Castle school at Primary age and Llanfair school at Secondary age. In addition, children accessing the Welsh stream of Primary education have been transported to Llanfair primary school. Can PCC please clarify how these arrangements will now change – if	The Council recognises that should Castle Caereinion C. in W. School close, pupils would transfer to alternative primary schools, and that some of these would be in a different secondary cluster i.e. Welshpool High School. The Council also

the cluster routing for Castle Caereinion is changing, will transport now be provided to Welshpool High School from the village and funding to Llanfair High School stopped. I currently have a child in Welshpool High school who does not receive transporting funding, I would be looking to appeal this position if this closure and changes went ahead. I am aware this applies to a number of children in the village. In addition, there are also children in the village accessing Welsh language primary education in Welshpool schools who are not funded. I would again be encouraging these families to appeal their position should the cluster change take effect

agrees that this would have transport implications as outlined below:

The Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy for learners transferring or being admitted to a Powys schools in the 2021 / 2022 academic year states the following:

'Home to school transport will be provided for learners who ordinarily reside in Powys to attend their nearest suitable school or catchment school. A 'catchment' school means the nearest school within a geographic area. To be eligible for free home to school transport, the learners' nearest school or catchment school must be:

- The nearest to the learners' home address and if so,*
- They are more than 2 miles from their home address for primary school (aged 4 -11) or more than 3 miles for secondary school (age 11 to 16)'*

Pupils who attend Castle Caereinion CiW School normally transfer to Caereinion High School and free home-to-school transport is normally provided for those pupils attending Castle Caereinion CiW School to Caereinion High School.

Should Castle Caereinion CiW Primary School close, pupils living in the Castle Caereinion area would be provided with free home-to-school transport to their nearest or catchment secondary school. In the case of pupils choosing to attend Berriew CP School,

		<p>Welshpool CiW Primary School or Guilsfield CP School, they would ordinarily transfer to Welshpool High School.</p> <p>Pupils currently accessing free home-to-school transport to Caereinion High School from the Castle Caereinion area would continue to receive this service until they finish their education. However, this would not be available to pupils from Castle Caereinion if they have transferred to Berriew C.P. School, Guilsfield C. P. School or Welshpool C. in W. School unless Caereinion High School is their nearest secondary school. This would have an implication for families who may already have elder siblings being transported to Caereinion High School.</p> <p>There may also be a potential impact on transport costs as there may be additional routes required to provide transport from the Castle Caereinion area to Welshpool High School. However, it would be expected that the existing transport routes would be adjusted. The estimated range of costs for this is dependent on which school parents choose for their pupils, should Castle Caereinion close. The following outlines the range of costs, depending on how many pupils require transport:</p> <p>Minimal costs – all pupils can be accommodated within existing transport provision for secondary, albeit some routes may need to be extended – £10 - £20 per school day - £1,900 - £3,800 per annum</p>
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		<p>Need to increase size of bus – approx. £50 per day - £9,500 per annum</p> <p>Additional Taxi required – approx. £60 - £75 per day - £11,400 - £14,250 per annum</p> <p>New bus required - £170 - £230 per day - £32,300 - £43,700</p> <p>Free home-to-school transport would continue to be available for pupils wishing to access Welsh-medium provision to their nearest Welsh provision.</p> <p>The Council has an appeals process for transport applications.</p>
4.5.6	<p>Very young children having to travel on school buses with older students may see ‘role models’ whose behaviour could be less than satisfactory and could lead to a deterioration in behaviour overall. This may lead to a greater number of exclusions and a requirement for the provision of increased hubs for excluded pupils and extra counselling costs to improve behaviour which was set at a young age.</p>	<p>Primary and secondary aged pupils already share transport elsewhere in the county, and, in many cases, are siblings.</p> <p>The Council and bus operators do not tolerate bad behaviour on school transport.</p>

5. Impact on staff

5.1	Many other people will be affected by the changes than just the school children and their families. Teachers, administrators, and support staff will all be affected with potential losses of careers.	Should the school close, Staff currently employed at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would be subject to a management of change process and be supported fully throughout the process.
5.2	As well as the children losing friendships so will the staff. The staff enjoy coming to work, and are concerned about losing their income.	As above.
5.3	Right now with the global pandemic money worries are on everyone's mind and if the school closes it will add to the stress and worry even more.	As above.

6. Impact on the community

6.1 General concern about the impact on the community/village

6.1.1	Please don't close the school and kill our community!	The draft Community Impact Assessment included with the consultation documentation has identified the potential impact of the proposed closure of the school on the community. It notes the extensive community use of the Castle Caereinion school building, and extensive links between the school and the local community. This will be updated to reflect information gathered during the consultation.
6.1.2	The closure of Castle Caereinion school will have a detrimental effect on the whole community.	As above.
6.1.3	The school is a massive part of our village that brings all the community and surrounds together.	As above.

6.1.4	This school is an important part of this community.	As above.
6.1.5	The school should remain open. It is a vital part of the community.	As above.
6.1.6	Keep this small school open heart of a small community.	As above.
6.1.7	The village will lose the “heart” of this close knit community. The school plays a major role in the fabric of this beautiful village.	As above.
6.1.8	The closure will have a massive impact on our local community and this has not been properly considered.	As above.
6.1.9	We have all suffered enough, as closing our school will tear the heart out of our lovely village.	As above.
6.1.10	Losing in such a wonderful village school would be damaging for the close-knit community, it truly is the heart of the village.	As above.
6.1.11	It will be a huge loss to the community and I strongly believe that children will lose out as a result.	As above.
6.1.12	Put simply the closure of the school would have a massive negative effect on the children and the community.	As above.
6.1.13	To lose the school at this stage would lose the heart of the community and have a significant negative impact on the future of the village.	As above.
6.1.14	Very difficult to imagine how the life of our community will be without the vibrancy and involvement of our youngsters in their home school and church.	As above

6.1.15	The school is a valuable part of the community for the children, families and wider parish area and closing it would be of a great detriment to all involved.	As above.
6.1.16	It would be a massive shame for the community of Castle Caereinion to lose its beloved school.	As above.
6.1.17	I believe that closing this school would have a detrimental effect not only to the pupils of the school, but to the wider community.	As above.
6.1.18	It will be difficult for the community as a whole to adjust.	As above.
6.1.19	I believe the school is so important for the village it is the heart of the village.	As above.
6.1.20	Small schools like this are invaluable to the local communities.	As above.
6.1.21	The school is a lovely church school and is the hub of the community. It would be like ripping the heart out of it if it was closed.	As above.
6.1.22	It is my view that the proposal to close Castle Caereinion school will have a detrimental effect on our children and the wider community.	As above.
6.1.23	The school is a special place in all our hearts and to close it would be unthinkable, ripping the heart out of the community.	As above.
6.1.24	Obviously if the school closes it will massively effect everyone involved with the school but it will also hit the community hard especially the people that live in the village.	As above.

6.1.25	'Devastated' is a word often used too lightly but we genuinely believe it is entirely appropriate to say that the closure of our school would have a devastating effect on the community on the community of Castle Caereinion.	As above.
6.1.26	If you close the school we are basically just a cluster of houses with a pub that is struggling to survive.	As above.
6.1.27	School is not just a building, it's the heart of a village, it's where social bonds are formed helping the community thrive. Without it the village dies and turns into a corridor for cars speeding through.	As above.
6.1.28	It is a poor plan that proposes throwing away good working schools, hollowing our valuable communities in an already sparsely populated countryside.	As above.
6.1.29	This will also devastate our community as not only losing our local shop last year but to lose the school when we have so much potential to grow our community.	As above.
6.1.30	The whole community will suffer at the loss of our little school. Not just the pupils and parents who attend. It would be a very regrettable decision indeed and will be yet another valuable community service taken away from our little village.	As above.
6.1.31	I feel strongly that the impacts from the closure of this to the community will be devastating and that these have not been given enough weight when coming to this decision.	As above.
6.1.32	I realise that saving money is the outcome desired but what about saving our community?	A revenue saving to the Council is only one of a number of reasons for the proposal.

		<p>The proposal is intended to address the main challenges outlined in the Consultation Document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Low pupils numbers ii) High budget per pupil iii) Issues with the building iv) Combined age classes v) Leadership <p>Following consideration of a number of options, the preferred option is to close Castle Caereinion CiW School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools.</p> <p>The reasons for this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Castle Caereinion - Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools - Revenue saving to the Council - Pupils would attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum - Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities - Pupils would attend schools with more suitable accommodation - Meets all of the Critical Success Factors
6.1.33	Whilst I recognise the financial challenges that Powys County Council face and the need to review the education provision in	As above.

	Powys in line with the 21st Century Schools Programme, I do not feel that closing Castle Caereinion Church in Wales School would be a wise decision as any financial benefits are outweighed by the negative impacts on this community.	
6.1.34	I would propose that the wider impact of closure of the school needs to be explored more carefully and the whole community engaged in the consultation process by PCC, which has not been undertaken to date.	All stakeholders have had the opportunity to participate in this consultation. Information received during the consultation about the impact of the proposal on the community will be included within the final Community Impact Assessment.
6.1.35	In a questionnaire, conducted December 2018 by the Community Council, the school was ranked of significant importance to the community. Closure of the school and potentially the resultant closure of the Recreation Centre could add to the demise of the Castle Caereinion community	Comment noted.
6.1.36	The proposed closure of Castle Caereinion C in W Primary School would totally destroy the epicentre of the local community in Castle Caereinion. The school currently plays a vital role in the functioning and vitality of the local community. It's closure would leave the village without a vital service, and would leave a gaping hole within the community. It is vital that Large Villages such as Castle Caereinion (as per Policy S P5 of the adopted Powys Local Development Plan (2011-2026) retain their key services such as primary schools to serve both the current and future children of the community.	Comment noted.

6.2 Concern about impact on the community centre

6.2.1	If the school is gone what will happen to the Community centre?	According to information supplied by the school and included within the draft Community Impact
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		Assessment, the school is the main financial contributor to the Community Centre. Should the school close, the management committee of the Centre would need to consider how best to utilise the Centre so that it remains viable.
6.2.2	Community Centre has strong links to the school and is unlikely going to be financially viable on its own.	As above.
6.2.3	Losing the school will also mean losing the community centre too.	As above.
6.2.4	What happens to our community centre when you close the school? I cannot imagine without the school on the doorstep this will be something we retain.	As above.
6.2.5	The school is closely tied to the Community Centre which is an important part of the community. There is a concern that closing the school would affect the ability of the community centre to remain open and so consideration should be given to the impact of this.	As above.
6.2.6	Our school is next door to the community centre. This is great because we get to have cake stalls, Christmas and Summer Fayres, school plays and tea mornings. All of the people from the village can get to come to these, so it helps us to work together as a Community. It is also a great chance for the older members of the community to get out of the house and to do something fun with us, the youngest members of the community.	As above.
6.2.7	If the school closes this puts into question the future of our community centre. The school is a huge financial contributor to the community centre and without the school where would the	As above.

	extra money come from? The residents of the village also get involved with our fetes and school plays as well.	
6.2.8	As I live in the village I am very concerned that we might lose our village hall if the school closes. Without the funding that the school provides I know that it will be a very hard time to keep the community hall going. If it went this could have a terrible effect on the people in the village as a lot of people in the village go to the activities that are held in the hall such as yoga, singing, bowls, and painting. Some of these people that go these activities only do this and this is there social activity once a week so we have to think about the detrimental affect it might have on them.	As above.
6.2.8	The Recreation Hall is reliant on the school as it is the primary source of income.	As above.
6.2.9	The school is the primary income generator for the Recreation Committee and without the school's support would leave a significant gap in income which will be very difficult to bridge with other income sources in relation to the required outgoings.	As above.
6.2.10	Inevitably, because the school is the primary user (and therefore provides a high proportion of the Recreation Association's income) the closure of the school would likely lead to the closure of the community hall as well.	As above.
6.2.11	If the school goes the village hall will be under real threat. It relies on part of its income for the school use of the hall during the school day. Take that income away and the hall will be under threat.	As above.

6.2.12	There is a Community Centre used by a few small local organisations but without some of the school income this may suffer financially and be forced to close.	As above.
6.2.13	The school is the largest financial provider for the Community Centre and without this investment the Community Centre could be at risk of closure. This would then provide another huge loss to the Community of Castle Caereinion. For many members of the community this acts as a lifeline for them, allowing them the opportunity to meet up with other people and to have an opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities. The school also use the Community Hall to hold events, such as bake sales, Summer and Winter Fayres, Messy Church Activity Clubs, School Performances. These events are always a great chance for the pupils and members of the Community to join. We feel very strongly that the Cabinet should examine the definite impact to the village if the Community Centre were to close, but without the school funding it is a highly likely scenario.	As above.
6.2.14	As outlined in the consultation, the school building sits adjacent to the Community Hall and this facility is utilised daily by the school during school week/term time. The school are currently the principal user of this facility and should the school close, this would be hugely detrimental to the future of the hall, as it relies on the revenue from the school to operate. It is very likely that the hall would not be able to continue to run and would be yet another facility lost to the community of Castle Caereinion, which has already lost its shop in the last 12 months. The Community Hall is a key part of the community which a number of groups meeting in it each week and provides the focal point for events within the village, losing these facilities will have a significant impact on the	As above. The draft Community Impact Assessment also acknowledges the following: <i>Information received from the school suggests that the school provides a number of facilities which could be attractive to families, and which increase the attractiveness of the community to potential young families.</i>

	village as a whole to attract new people and consequently have a negative impact on house prices within the area.	<p><i>Should there be no school in Castle Caereinion, it is possible that families would leave the village in order to live in the community of any alternative school, and that young families would be discouraged from moving to the village.</i></p> <p>The Council notes the comment about negative impact on house prices but it is not clear whether implementation of the proposal would have a negative impact on house prices in the area.</p>
6.2.15	The school works closely with the community centre which helps to keep it open by having use of the hall during the day, also by holding various fundraising functions – coffee mornings, school concerts, fete’s, etc. all of which are always well attended by residents of the village and surrounding area.	As above.
6.2.16	Additionally, if PCC were to re-assess the relief offered to community centers, this could force closure without the school’s financial support.	The Council recognises that the school contributes financially to the Community Centre, and that there may be an impact on its viability should the school closed.
6.2.17	Our community centre is at the heart of our village. Our community centre is linked to the school and there is a danger the proposed school closure would lead to the closure of the community centre. We can see no thorough and comprehensive investigation on the evidence of the impact of the proposed closure on the community centre within the consultation document. The community centre is the heart of our village and is important for the health and wellbeing of everyone. There is no other alternative option for our community.	Information about the potential impact on the Community Centre should the school close will be included in the final Community Impact Assessment.

6.2.18	The Local development plan adopted by Powys County Council states the following: "...Powys citizens will be supported and empowered to lead active and healthy lives..." and "Powys' towns and larger villages will be vibrant and accessible service centres. They will be the focus for integrating housing, economic and service development to meet their own needs and those of their surrounding communities." Our community relies on our community centre for a number of activities most of which are linked to improving health and wellbeing. The closure of the school will lead to the closure of our community centre and impact on the health and wellbeing of every single member of our community	Comment noted.
6.2.19	The school also has access to many outside areas with the attachment to the community centre. These green areas are also used by many of the families who live in the village as it means their children do not have to cross the road in the middle of the village to access the other playground.	Comment noted.

6.3 Reference to housing developments in Castle Caereinion

6.3.1	We have a lot of new homes been build what about the children from these homes will family move in with no school.	Information received from the Council's housing department suggests there are approximately 40 housing developments already completed, underway or planned in the area. Some of these are affordable housing.
6.3.2	The village is growing steadily with new housing in progress or planning sought, a proportion social housing with young families in mind.	As above.

6.3.3	Houses are being built or have been built.	As above.
6.3.4	A lovely country school that needs to stay open with all the new houses being built.	As above.
6.3.5	New houses are now being built, bringing more young families to the village.	As above.
6.3.6	The village is growing, more and more new families are choosing to move into Castle Caereinion, your plans fail to take that into consideration.	As above.
6.3.7	There are a large number of houses currently being built on old farm land which will hopefully attract young families to the village, so school numbers are likely to grow.	As above. The Council's department uses a pupil-yield ratio of .45 children per new house built. This is an estimate and does not necessarily lead to an increase in pupil numbers.
6.3.8	Many new houses are being built in the village. Where will the support for these children come from?	As above. The Council's department uses a pupil-yield ratio of .45 children per new house built. This is an estimate and does not necessarily lead to an increase in pupil numbers.
6.3.9	Our village is growing too, we have more houses being built and people might not move here if there is no school. If you leave our school open then the new families will be able to send their children here and we can make even more friends.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>The draft Community Impact Assessment also acknowledges the following:</p> <p><i>Information received from the school suggests that the school provides a number of facilities which could be attractive to families, and which increase the attractiveness of the community to potential young families.</i></p>

		<i>Should there be no school in Castle Caereinion, it is possible that families would leave the village in order to live in the community of any alternative school, and that young families would be discouraged from moving to the village.</i>
6.3.10	It is also important to note the significant housing development which is both on-going and proposed within the village. The additional housing being development will largely be occupied by families who would provide increased numbers of children to attend the school, thus improving the viability of the school going into the future. It makes no sense for the school to close and for future children of the village to have to attend other schools located several miles away from Castle.	As above.
6.3.11	<p>There are builders building big new houses next to the school and I don't know where those kids are going to go to school? I am sure that if they knew that there was a school across the road that they would all go there. How are the builders going to sell houses if they don't have a school or a shop or anything?</p> <p>The village has planning permission for 31 three and four bedroom houses. School is at the heart of the community and will play a big part in attracting families to the area to access the wonderful education we offer.</p>	As above.
6.3.12	Future housing developments within the village may depend on a good local village school as I know personally someone who has decided not to purchase in that community, due to the questions hanging over the availability of that school. Parents should have the choice of where to send their children.	Comment noted.

6.3.13	The house prices will drop and I am sure building contractors will be reconsidering plans for housing developments as what do we have to offer prospective buyers.	Comment noted.
6.3.14	The decision seems to make no provision for the future of the families already in the village OR the development of housing already in the pipe-line, not to mention planning longer term.	Comment noted.

6.4 Closure of the school would mean that people would not want to live in Castle Caereinion

6.4.1	There are new people moving into the village and they would not want to move here if there is no school.	The Council notes these comments about people not wanting to live in Castle Caereinion, as outlined in the draft Community Impact Assessment that was published with the consultation documentation.
6.4.2	Why would anyone want to live in Castle Caereinion anymore?	As above.
6.4.3	No one will move to the village if there is no school.	As above.
6.4.4	How can you expect people to want to live in CC when their children can't go to a village school?	As above.
6.4.5	People may not consider moving into Castle Caereinion if there is no school, which will mean that other local amenities such as the pub, and the shop if a new one is opened, which is looking extremely likely.	As above.
6.4.6	Moving these children and closing the school will take the children out of the community and I fear will force People to move from the area also. This affects the surrounding areas as well as Castle Caereinion.	As above.

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6.5 Reference to the loss of other community facilities

6.5.1	We as a village have lost so much, the shop, a regular bus service, and now the school may close.	This information will be included in the final Community Impact Assessment, which has already identified the negative impact of the proposal on the community.
6.5.2	The village lost its post office and now has lost its shop. Only the church, school and pub remain as social focal points. there can be little doubt that the loss of the school would be a severe blow and destine Castle to become a commuter village. Every effort should be directed towards preserving active and healthy village communities.	As above.
6.5.3	Village schools are important to keep villages alive. Castle Caereinion has already lost its shop because of the sad demise of Mike Rogers, to be a village with no shop and no school is the kiss of death. Are all the villages to become dormitories for local towns?	As above.
6.5.4	We have lost the shop during the pandemic which was a major village hub, if the school were to close that's the heart of the village gone.	As above.
6.5.5	We have lost our shop, now this, what next?	As above.
6.5.6	Castle Caereinion, as a small community, has been fortunate to retain, until recently, a shop, a pub, a school, a community facility and a church. Having sadly already lost its only shop since the	As above.

	sad passing of the shopkeeper last year, the community can ill afford to lose its school as well.	
6.5.7	Castle Caereinion now has no shop, a church at risk and a pub which needs community life to support it.	As above.
6.5.8	The community recently lost its only shop due to the death of its long-term owner; the pub is working hard to keep going, the church as previously implied is attempting to gain the involvement of younger families. Losing the school will result in half of the necessary components of a thriving village becoming non-existent.	As above.
6.5.9	The village has been able to sustain a school, a village hall, a church, a pub and until the untimely death of the shopkeeper a village shop.	As above.
6.5.10	There are no shops in the village, there is only one school.	As above.
6.5.11	There isn't much left. Shops and facilities close Post offices shut down. except wealthy pensioners buying the new houses on housing projects that only benefit prospectors.	As above.
6.5.12	Closure of the school will hasten the demise of our last community assets and leave Castle Caereinion as a dormant suburb of Welshpool with nothing to give it the vibrancy and life that we hear now echoing around during the school day.	As above.
6.5.13	Even the future of the church would be impacted as, currently, the school gives us a key opportunity for engagement with the wider community which is what leads to church growth. Therefore, in a	The strong links between the Church and the school are acknowledged. However, the Council has a duty to review its school estate, to ensure that the infrastructure will enable the provision of the highest

	short space of time the community could lose nearer all its facilities.	quality education to learners across Powys in the future.
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6.6 The school brings the community together / is a focus for community activity

6.6.1	The school brings the community together, through events such as school plays, etc.	Information received from the school and included within the draft Community Impact Assessment that was published with the consultation documentation highlighted the strong links between the school and the community. The Impact Assessment will be updated to include any additional information received during the consultation.
6.6.2	Any events that happen at the school bring the community together and usually thats together in the village hall.	As above.
6.6.3	The school has acted as a vital 'keystone' in the life of the village for over 100 years. It's not only a place of education, it has also been, and continues to be, the focus for virtually every community event and celebration. Its closure would reduce Castle Caereinion to being yet one more dormitory community.	As above.
6.6.4	Villagers played a part in the school's after school activities i.e. Messy church – craft based activity. Also gardening with the children. The children welcome the villagers into their school throughout the year. The villagers have contributed a lot of money for equipment.	As above.
6.6.5	Small schools allow a community that by geographic location means that everyone and everything is spread out over a wide range to come together.	As above.

6.6.6	Castle Caereinion is a Church in Wales school and has for a very long time been the link between the younger and older generation of the village which is essential for social cohesion. It promotes understanding and tolerance between the two groups, without the school this will be lost	The strong links between the Church and the school are acknowledged.
6.6.7	This school has a great setting in a lovely rural area with great community spirit. All the community is held together by the school with its strong Church ethos.	The strong links between the Church and the school are acknowledged.
6.6.8	The school is a focal point within the village and it can be a force for community building and unity. In a rural area such as this, the local community takes on a significant role and this is undermined when an institution is removed. Centralisation of any organisation often leads to an unbalance of resource allocation. Those areas with greater population will attract the greater resources and conversely, small areas of population will receive less attention.	Comment noted.
6.6.9	Villages, like Castle Caereinion, will only thrive if all the major constituent parts of the community are enabled to come together to share, build, support and work together for the future life of all residents, young and old. The school is an important part of the community. Please do not close it.	Comment noted.

6.7 Concern that pupils would no longer feel part of the community

6.7.1	The closure of the school would lead to the children of our community being scattered to various neighbouring schools – Berriew (being the closest), Llanfair (for those with older siblings already in that high school) and Welshpool Church ion Wales Primary (for those wanting faith-based provision). This scattering of	Comment noted. This information will be included within the final Community Impact Assessment.
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	our children would have an extremely damaging effect on community cohesion.	
6.7.2	Castle school is at the heart of our community and is much more than 'just a school' for our children, it is a place of security and stability, a place to enjoy all year round and to the children it is 'their school and their community'.	As above.
6.7.3	Attending the local primary school within their own village gives the children a far superior grasp of their local community and that community's identity. It also allows children to access more services within the school and helps them to make the most out of their education.	Comment noted.
6.7.4	It takes a village to raise a child. Looking to the future, self-reliant and sustainable villages will only flourish where essential services like Castle Caereinion School are retained and cherished. The relationships made at the school between children and families from the early years represents a store of social capital, which encourages volunteering and community self-help and ultimately makes lesser demands on the public purse and the health service. Closure of the school will be a dilution and loss to the quality of life in Castle Caereinion.	Comment noted.
6.7.5	The school is a very important part of our village. The children are able to join in with village fetes and events and also attend the church. The children get to meet and see people who live in the village and we get to meet and see them. Being part of the community gives the children a sense of belonging.	Comment noted.
6.7.6	Teaching independence and to value your own community, also keeps villages together and growing. Encourages children to return	Comment noted.

	as an adult. Gives young life at the centre of the community. Creates a web of connections with local people. A statement of where we place our values. Local friendships for life give a foundation that honours and respects the village. Less distance for children to travel. Sends a message Yes you can succeed on the local scale. A microcosm of the world. It can work from tiny beginnings.	
6.7.7	Children growing up in a village and going to their local school is an important part of their lives. One of the nicest sights in Castle Caereinion is to see children of all ages playing together in the play park.	Comment noted.
6.7.8	Through its engagement with the community is fostered a sense of belonging and resilience in the children that have been fortunate to have benefited from an education at this wonderful school.	Comment noted.
6.7.9	It has long been recognised that younger children ie 5-11 year olds benefit more from the type of locally provided rounded education that a village school can provide. It is not a matter of equipment and resources, but quality of education provided at a village level.	Comment noted.

6.8 Comments relating to community well-being

6.8.1	Castle Caereinion has over 50 farms and small holdings operational in the parish. With well-being of community residents being of high significance, the decision to close the school jeopardises the viability of the hall and would conceivably cause higher expense to PCC manage social welfare.	The Council recognises that Castle Caereinion is located in a rural area with many agricultural holdings. According to information supplied by the school and included within the draft Community Impact Assessment, the school is the main financial contributor to the Community Centre. Should the school close, the management committee of the
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		Centre would need to consider how best to utilise the Centre so that it remains viable.
6.8.2	Castle Caereinion is a rural community and is built on its agricultural foundations with over 50 farms and small holdings currently operational in the ward. Agriculture has a particularly high focus on well-being due to its solitary environment and this is of paramount importance within the community of Castle Caereinion which has the school and Community Centre at its heart.	As above.

6.9 Reference to previous generations of families that have attended the school

6.9.1	The school has been part of our community for years and I attended it as a pupil 25 years ago where I grew and developed in a loving and caring environment.	<p>The Council notes these comments regarding previous generations of families that have attended Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. Whilst the Council is pleased to note that the school is well regarded within the community and by pupils that have previously attended the school, the Council's priority is to ensure that provision of the highest quality continues to be available to pupils across Powys in the future.</p> <p>The Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys outlines a number of challenges facing education in Powys, one of which is a high proportion of small schools. A number of proposals are being taken forward in order to implement the Strategy, to ensure that all pupils across Powys can</p>
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		benefit from the best possible opportunities in the future.
6.9.2	Both my children attended Castle School, where we were able to walk every day, through the churchyard, often stopping at Mike the Shop's for a pint of milk and 20pence worth of sweets. You are actively suggesting we further remove a wonderful feeling of community by closing the school.	As above.
6.9.3	I am proud to say that our children are third generation to attend the school over a period of 60 years, we have all benefited from the small village school education experience, one we have been pleased our children have had the opportunity to also experience.	As above.
6.9.4	My family has been part of the school for over 30 years. Myself and my husband both helped the school, and our 3 children went to Castle school.	As above.
6.9.5	I have had seven children go through and two grandchildren in the school, I believe in the school and what it offers.	As above.
6.9.6	This school is the heart of the community! It has been used by several members of my family - going back generations! My maternal great Grandfather, his daughter, my husband and his brothers, and our own two children!	As above.
6.9.7	My son is now the 4 th generation to attend Castle CIW primary school after my Grandfather, father and myself our have attended the school and have lived in the village all our lives, my daughter has also attended the school, who is now flourishing in Caereinion high school and doing very well,	As above.

6.9.8	I have lived in Castle Caereinion for 20 years and all my 3 children have attended the school before going on to University. The spark and enthusiasm for learning was ignited at Castle primary school where they could learn and develop in a happy and safe environment which carried them successfully through Llanfair High school and beyond. I still see the very same ethos in the school today.	As above.
6.9.9	Both myself and my daughter went to Castle Caereinion School and the education we received was second to none	As above.
6.9.10	I myself have many happy memories from going to this primary school, as I am sure many other villagers do as well.	As above.
6.9.11	I myself also attended the school as a child and loved the experience of a smaller school.	As above.
6.9.12	I myself attended the school, as did both of my children (whom thrived in a small school environment).	As above.

6.10 General comments about the closure of rural / village schools

6.10.1	These schools are often the beating heart of these rural communities and by closing them the council is having the effect of damaging the economy of the county.	<p>The Council note these comments regarding the role of rural / village schools within their communities.</p> <p>The Council has prepared an initial draft community impact assessment which was considered by Cabinet when deciding to proceed to consultation and was published as part of the consultation documentation. This assessment will be updated to</p>
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		reflect information received during the consultation period, and the updated version will be considered by Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.
6.10.2	No village should lose its school. Small schools are the heart of their communities.	As above.
6.10.3	Too many small community schools are closing. Leave them alone as they are the hub of any small community.	As above.
6.10.4	During these times, it has never been more important than to look after and to save our rural communities and amenities such as Castle Caereinion primary school.	As above.
6.10.5	I accept that the village like so many rural communities is fragile because there has not been enough opportunity for people to live and work in the rural communities and the local school being under threat makes the situation more difficult.	As above.
6.10.6	Since the lockdowns the benefits of rural life have been evident and becoming even more valued. Supporting and encouraging rural life is now being recognised as a key component to lower our carbon footprint. It's time to value our rural life and build upon it at this time of hopeful regeneration from the pandemic. Please don't destroy these essential parts of our communities.	As above.

6.10.7	Now more than ever people need to feel the benefits of being a community, of being together and supporting each other and Powys should be fighting to keep rural communities in one piece.	As above.
6.10.8	Are these small Welsh villages being left to die?	The Council disagrees that small Welsh villages are being left to die. However, the Council has a duty to review its school estate, to ensure that the infrastructure will enable the provision of the highest quality education to learners across Powys in the future.

6.11 Queries about what would happen to the school building

6.11.1	I would also be interested to know what the plans are for the building and grounds if this closure goes ahead. How will that affect our community?	The Castle Caereinion C. in W. School building is owned by the Diocese of St Asaph. Should the Council proceed with the proposal to close the school, the Diocese would need to determine the building's future use.
6.11.2	What are you going to do with the school building, sell it, knock it down. It wouldn't be suitable for houses because it's so close to the community centre.	As above.
6.11.3	Without the school it's doubtful that the buildings future and use of facilities would remain in Castle Caereinion which would be a real upset to both the school and the community.	As above.
6.11.4	Finally, I would very much like to understand your plan for our deserted schools if you have your way. What's your strategy to	As above.

	undo the damage you are planning as you pursue financial efficiency?	
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6.12 Other

6.12.1	Could you use your powers to boost these communities, really help with some positive ideas for small poorer village schools?	The Council recognises the negative impact on the community as outlined within the draft Community Impact Assessment published with the consultation documentation. However, the Council has a duty to review its school estate, to ensure that the infrastructure will enable the provision of the highest quality education to learners across Powys in the future.
6.12.2	Your consultation team is called Transforming Education, is there also a team for Transforming Villages?	No there is no team for Transforming Villages, although the Council does have an Economic Regeneration team.
6.13.3	Children who live in a rural location should not be treated the same as children whose parents live in a town.	The Council has a duty to review its school estate, to ensure that the infrastructure will enable the provision of the highest quality education to learners across Powys in the future.

7. Comments about pupil numbers / surplus places

7.1 General comments about pupil numbers at the school

7.1.1	I fully acknowledge the school is currently running on small numbers, however as outlined above, a new school model was implemented from September 2019 and this has not had sufficient	The Council acknowledges that a new school leadership has been in place since 2019, and that additional pupils have joined the school. However,
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	time to embed and develop, however there have already been additional pupils joining the school.	pupil numbers continue to be very low and are not projected to increase significantly.
7.1.2	The consultation document gives the current pupil numbers at the school as 23 and states they are projected to remain below 30 for the foreseeable future. This information is 6 months old. The current number is 25 which demonstrates that this is a growing school, even despite the challenges of the pandemic and the fact that some children seem to have left the school because of uncertainty over its future.	<p>The source of the pupil numbers included within the consultation document are clearly referenced. Current pupil numbers based on Teachers Centre data 21/06/21 are as follows:</p> <p>Reception: 4 Year 1: 3 Year 2: 4 Year 3: 4 Year 4: 4 Year 5: 3 Year 6: 1</p> <p>Total pupils: 23</p> <p>Information from the Council's Admissions Team indicates that 1 pupil is due to join the school's Reception class in September 2021.</p>
7.1.3	I understand that the school has low pupils and is expensive to run.	Comment noted.
7.1.4	Even though we are under the 30 pupils threshold we have had an additional two children attend despite the school closure and blended learning during Covid-19.	Comment noted.
7.1.5	We fought off closure in the 1960s with far fewer pupils.	Comment noted.

7.1.6	People are going to get scared that the school will close and take their children out of the school which is such a shame.	Comment noted.
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7.2 Pupil numbers will increase in the future

7.2.1	Additional children will join the school in September and there are a further 9 children under the age of 4 years old living in the village, who are likely to start at the school over the coming years.	Information received from the Council's Admissions Team indicates that only 1 pupil is due to join the school in September 2021.
7.2.2	With all the new build houses built in the village of the past few years and all the ones that will be going up in the next couple of years the amount of children attending the school will go up for sure and hence still the demand for the school.	As stated previously, even with potential housing developments, it is not anticipated that pupil numbers will increase significantly.
7.2.3	Post pandemic, working practices are changing which is leading to families seeking to move into more rural areas. This could impact positively on the numbers of children attending smaller schools and may impact on larger primaries requiring them to increase their capacity should numbers increase significantly.	Comment noted. The Council continually monitors the capacity of its schools and makes the necessary adjustments, if additional capacity is required.
7.2.4	The number of children to attend the school will no doubt increase over the next 4-5 years with new buildings being made and the more in the future taking the school numbers to over 50, which in turn decreasing the budget share per pupil. There are more houses being built and possibly more that can be built on nearby land bringing more and more young families to our village and increasing the school numbers.	Information received from the Council's housing department suggests there are approximately 40 housing developments already completed, underway or planned in the area. Some of these are affordable housing.
7.2.5	The numbers may be low at the moment but there is planning permission for further building of houses in the village and the numbers could change significantly.	As above.

7.2.6	More family houses are being built here, so surely the school numbers will increase?	As above.
7.2.7	One reason why I think the school should not close is because there will be more pupils attending the school in the near future. This is because of the number of proposed developments of housing in the village. These houses are mostly affordable houses, which means young families with children are likely to come into the village and therefore use the school. This will boost the numbers enormously.	As above.
7.2.8	I believe that if the school were allowed another two years then the pupil numbers would most certainly increase, thus reducing the high pupil finances, the surplus capacity at the school and the need for closure. Planning permission for 31 houses has already been agreed for the area, this is in addition to the new houses currently being completed. These houses will be three and four bedroom dwellings that will most certainly bring families into the village. With a thriving school as the hub of the community it is certain that pupil numbers will increase from these housing units	As above.
7.2.9	Planning permission has been given for an additional thirty-one 3 or 4-bedroom houses likely to attract young families to the village – with a local school in the village an attractive proposition for them.	As above.
7.2.10	The school website has been developed with a view to promote our school within both the local and wider community to raise pupil numbers. This Government funded piece of work was completed in March 2020. Therefore, whilst current numbers may be below 30, there is no justification for stating that pupil numbers are likely	Even if pupil numbers increased over 30 in future, the school will continue to be a very small school.

	to stay below 30 for the foreseeable future. In fact, given the current growth, the excellent work of the new Headteacher and the increasing size of the community growth above 30 is far more foreseeable.	
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8. Comments about small/rural schools

8.1 General comments about small schools

8.1.1	The smaller schools help those thrive who may struggle in bigger classes.	All schools, regardless of size, would be able to provide for the needs of their pupils.
8.1.2	Because we are a small school we have more help from the teachers.	All schools, regardless of size, would be able to provide for the needs of their pupils. Smaller class sizes would not necessarily mean that pupils receive a more individual education as there are a number of year groups and a wider age range of pupils in the class.
8.1.3	I believe that small local schools are better for young children particularly in reception and year one classes. Teachers are able to form better relationships with both children and parents in these smaller environments.	As above.
8.1.4	Small schools have huge benefits, getting to know each and every child and nurturing them, helping them to grow as strong individuals.	All schools, regardless of size, are expected to nurture, support and challenge all pupils in accordance with their ability.
8.1.5	Smaller schools can provide more intimate and one to one education where it is needed.	As above.

8.1.6	Its better being taught in a smaller school because there are less children so we get to have more help from the teachers. The children are all really friendly too, in bigger schools not everyone is nice to you all of the time.	As above. There is no evidence that children are less friendly in larger schools than in smaller schools.
8.1.7	Smaller schools are better able to support the needs of individual children regardless of their first language.	All schools, regardless of size, would be able to provide for the needs of their pupils.
8.1.8	What are the children who require a smaller school so they get more one on one supposed to do because without the support a smaller primary can give them I don't think they're going to make it through mainstream.	As above.
8.1.9	Pupils of smaller schools are generally kinder and better behaved, and as I have already mentioned, do better academically and have better connections with their teachers, which I believe is paramount.	<p>There is no evidence that pupils in smaller schools are better behaved or achieve better academically.</p> <p>As stated in the Consultation Document in reference to alternative schools, including Welshpool C. in W. Primary School:</p> <p><i>The Council's view is that all of these schools would provide education for pupils which is of at least equivalent quality as that provided at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on standards and progress overall.</i></p> <p>All schools, regardless of size, are expected to nurture, support and challenge all pupils in accordance with their ability.</p>

8.1.10	It should also be recognised that small schools bring benefits to children. They have a high level of quality first teaching, with teachers who understand and cater for their individual needs. The benefit of being in a small school is the great opportunities it brings in terms of pupil voice and sports activities.	As above. All schools are expected to provide opportunities in terms of pupils voice and sporting activities.
8.1.11	The benefits children receive at a small village school is second to none and my children have been to both village and a superschool.	As above.
8.1.12	People like villages with schools because they are generally smaller, and parents prefer sending them to a smaller school because the atmosphere there is different to that of a larger school.	As above.
8.1.13	These smaller Community Schools are worth their weight in gold and should be kept open at all costs. They are building something special and should be encouraged, not closed.	As above.
8.1.14	It costs money to have these schools but they are jolly well worth it. You have to be here to know it is true. There are millions of points need making in favour of little schools and it is too easy to knock them.	As above.
8.1.15	Whilst you state that small schools are expensive to maintain and higher costs per pupil, they provide alternatives to the large schools which is extremely essential for all children. Keeping the small schools provides a choice, which provides the best option for all children which should be a consideration. One type does not fit all.	As above.
8.1.16	Small schools are every bit as important as larger schools.	As above.

8.1.17	In a covered world, small class size and ample space should be something to celebrate.	As above.
8.1.18	As a person within the rural community I feel discriminated against with the decisions you have been making as regards to saving money by closing rural schools. They may be small however the children that attend are entitled to be educated within a rural setting without being forced into large settings which is not what a lot of parents want for their children, hence the choice of a smaller local school within the community. The school setting with mixed class ages allows the children that are thriving to excel and the children that struggle get the help and support they need to advance how they need.	As above.
8.1.19	The aim of education now is changing. Whilst in the past children could have been seen as entering the school system to be educated according to a formal pattern and then emerging prepared for a set type of adulthood of some kind, the world has changed. The aim of education now is to enable individuals to flourish as resourceful, independent and self-reliant adults who are able to make the best use of their talents. Small schools like Castle Caereinion are the best place for many children to start out on their journey to achieve this aim. The old education model of a sausage machine where children enter the education system and emerge at the end of the process in some kind of expected model and are rejected if they do not conform, is not appropriate for the future needs of Wales.	Education in Wales is certainly changing with the introduction of the new Curriculum for Wales. All schools focus on developing their learners as individuals regardless of the size of their school.

8.2 Concern about pupils having to transfer to larger schools

8.2.1	Bigger is not always better and normally means that problems are not spotted soon enough and bullying happens unnoticed due to the amount of children staff are expected to manage.	The Council disagrees with this statement. All schools, regardless of size, are expected to treat each pupil as an individual and provide a pupil-centred teaching and learning experience. All schools are required to implement an Anti- Bullying Policy.
8.2.2	Bigger schools have more children and it is scary.	Comment noted.
8.2.3	In a bigger school it will be harder to get help from the teachers and there are bullies in bigger schools.	The Council disagrees with this statement. All schools, regardless of size, are expected to treat each pupil as an individual and provide a pupil-centred teaching and learning experience. All schools are required to implement an Anti- Bullying Policy.
8.2.4	Bigger is not always better!	Comment noted.
8.2.5	I don't want to go to a bigger school because I know I won't get the same opportunities when there are so many more children.	All schools, regardless of size, are expected to treat each pupil as an individual and provide a pupil-centred teaching and learning experience.
8.2.6	If we go to a big school we may not even be able to be in one committee or club.	It is acknowledged that there would be more opportunity for pupils in a smaller school to be part of all activities due the pupil ratio within the school. However, all schools, regardless of size, have a range of committees and activities and schools are expected to ensure that all pupils can participate fully with these.
8.2.7	I've been to a bigger school and the children weren't kind to me. It's much better here.	Comment noted.

8.2.8	I go to gymnastics with other boys and girls and they go to different schools around Newtown and Welshpool. Some of them are bullies, and some are bullied, some are in classes that are massive, bigger than our whole school, and they don't have nice teachers that care about them. I don't want to get bullied I can run fast, but I am small and I am worried that people will pick on me. None of the teachers will look after me as they will have hundreds of other kids to look after too. My mum says that I am special, and I won't be anymore. My teachers know when I can't do my work and they help me. A new teacher won't do that if there's 30 other kids to teach.	All schools, regardless of size, are expected to treat each pupil as an individual and provide a pupil-centred teaching and learning experience. All schools are required to implement an Anti - Bullying Policy.
8.2.9	Moving to larger schools which means less interaction with teachers causing pupils to miss key parts of the lessons and fall behind.	As above.
8.2.10	It is a very important school for children of all abilities, who might find it immensely difficult to fit into a larger school.	As above.
8.2.11	Some children simply do not thrive in the larger schools. They might find the sheer numbers of pupils intimidating and this will not help their already fragile self-confidence. It is also the case that many of children who struggle to keep up will try to remain 'out of sight'. The small school with consistent staff may be better placed to see those who try to retreat into the background and allow them the time and encouragement to face challenges rather than avoid them.	As above.
8.2.12	To cart our little children to a 'super school' where they will not be offered the great education a small village school can. I certainly would not be choosing to send my children to such a school.	The Council is not proposing to 'cart children to a super school'. Should Castle Caereinion CiW

		Primary School close, then pupils would transfer to their nearest alternative schools.
8.2.13	In a big school there will be lot of noise from the people, cars and traffic.	The Council disagrees with this comment. All schools, regardless of size, are required to ensure that the learning environment is comfortable and safe for pupils.
8.2.14	The pupils are used to a quiet school, forcing them to go to bigger schools will be a big step for them.	Comment noted.
8.2.15	One thing we should of learned from covid is big is not always best.	Comment noted.

8.3 Reference to 'Presumption against closure of rural schools'

8.3.1	Small rural schools are protected by the Schools Organisation Code. It should not be seen as a paper exercise to reflect how the LA have met each of the criteria in there, but instead it should be genuinely looking at all possible options to prevent from closure based purely on finances and school size. What we should be looking at here is what Castle Caereinion CiW School can offer to pupils within the county that other local schools cannot.	<p>As stated in the School Organisation Code 2018:</p> <p><i>The second edition of the Code makes special arrangements in regard to rural schools establishing a procedural presumption against their closure. This requires proposers to follow a more detailed set of procedures and requirements in formulating a rural school closure proposal and in consulting on and reaching a decision as to whether to implement a rural school closure proposal.</i></p> <p><i>This does not mean that a rural school will never close but the case for closure must be strong and all viable alternatives to closure must have been</i></p>
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		<p><i>conscientiously considered by the proposer, including federation.</i></p> <p>The Council has followed these requirements in formulating this proposal. A number of options have been considered and are outlined within the consultation document.</p>
8.3.2	Welsh Government has put in place extra support for small rural schools and has placed a requirement on all Councils that closure should be the last option considered. This the authority has not done.	As above.
8.3.3	Whilst there are only 25 pupils currently in the school, and this falls within the Welsh Government definition of a 'small school', it is also listed as a 'Rural School' by Welsh Government in Annex F of the School Organisation Code. In such circumstances, "the case for closure must be strong and all viable alternatives to closure must have been conscientiously considered by the proposer". Small numbers on their own are not necessarily sufficient to justify closure.	As above. Low pupil numbers is only one factor considered in the proposal for Castle Caereinion.
8.3.4	There is now a presumption that the very last thing you do with a rural school, is to close it. Can you tell us the options that you have considered in Castle Caereinion, which is a rural school, and why you have decided that the only option is to close it? What options have you considered and why did you reject them?	As above. The Council has followed these requirements in formulating this proposal. A number of options have been considered and are outlined within the consultation document. The reasons why each option was rejected are outlined in Appendix D of the Consultation Document.

8.4 Reference to 'Small and Rural Schools Grant'

8.4.1	<p>The school received a grant this year from the Small Rural Schools Welsh Government Grant Scheme to develop the school's website. This is part of the school's vision to increase pupil numbers at the school and the school has seen some small increase in numbers since January. New affordable housing developments (31 housing commitment units in the LDP) currently taking place in Castle Caereinion, are likely to draw in young families who will be looking for a local school.</p>	<p>The Council acknowledges that the school has received funding from the Welsh Government's Small and Rural Schools Grant.</p> <p>As stated previously, even with potential housing developments, it is not anticipated that pupil numbers will increase significantly.</p>
8.4.2	<p>To close the school now would counteract the purpose of the Small and Rural Schools Grant and would thus be seen as a waste of the public purse. Kirsty Williams, the education Minister, said about the dedication of this funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Small and rural schools play an important role in our national mission to raise standards and extend opportunities for all our young people.' • 'We are taking action and providing new funding to help small and rural schools deal with the unique challenges they face, such as small pupil numbers and issues in recruiting head teachers and staff.' • 'This financial support will benefit pupils, teachers, and the wider community. I want to see rural schools working more formally together and across the country, forming federations and looking into the possibility of sharing buildings with other services to ensure school buildings remain viable.' 	<p>The Small and Rural Schools Grant has been made available to support the school. Should the school close, this would not be seen as a waste of the public purse as it has been utilised to support current pupils at Castle Caereinion.</p>
8.4.3	<p>The Schools Organisation Code was strengthened in light of the Small and Rural Schools Grant – to close the school before the benefits of this funding have had chance to materialise goes against the principles of the Schools Organisation Code and the purpose of the Small and Rural Schools Grant funding.</p>	<p>The Small and Rural Schools Grant has been made available since 2018. However, the availability of this grant does not mean that the Council cannot formulate proposals for closure of schools.</p>

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9. Comments about other schools pupils might transfer to

9.1 Comments about Welshpool C. in W. School

9.1.1	The new school in Welshpool resembles a cattle market of children in my opinion.	Comment noted.																						
9.1.2	I do not wish for the school to be closed. Class sizes are already big enough at Welshpool CIW Primary which is where the majority of the children already attending these schools will go.	<p>Comment noted. Class sizes at Welshpool CiW Primary School are currently as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Reg</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Year 1/2 B</td> <td>22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year 1/2 G</td> <td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year 1/2 J</td> <td>21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year 3/4 B</td> <td>21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year 3/4 G</td> <td>21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year 3/4 TL</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year 3/4 TP</td> <td>21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year 5/6 M</td> <td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year 5/6 P</td> <td>24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year 5/6 TJ</td> <td>24</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Reg	Total	Year 1/2 B	22	Year 1/2 G	23	Year 1/2 J	21	Year 3/4 B	21	Year 3/4 G	21	Year 3/4 TL	1	Year 3/4 TP	21	Year 5/6 M	25	Year 5/6 P	24	Year 5/6 TJ	24
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9.1.3	If I have to go to another school like Welshpool I might not get much help from the teachers because they might not be able to help me.	All schools, regardless of size, are expected to nurture, support and challenge all pupils in accordance with their ability.												
9.1.4	You would be failing my son by shutting this school his previous school was Welshpool and they could not meet his needs. Castle has helped my son no end with his learning.	Comment noted.												
9.1.5	Making the children commute to Welshpool to a much larger school has no advantages. The standard of education in our school is high, will it be the same if they have to move to a larger, more impersonal school? Or will they become children whose principal vocabulary appears to consist of "eff off!".	<p>As stated in the Consultation Document in reference to alternative schools, including Welshpool C. in W. Primary School:</p> <p><i>The Council's view is that all of these schools would provide education for pupils which is of at least equivalent quality as that provided at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on standards and progress overall.</i></p>												

		All schools, regardless of size, are expected to nurture, support and challenge all pupils in accordance with their ability.
9.1.6	We are also a faith school so where do we send our children of faith that do not want to send their children to a school the size of your Welshpool super school?	<p>The following schools are C. in W. schools: in North Powys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ysgol Cwm Banwy • Llandysilio C. in W. School • Montgomery C. in W. School • Forden C. in W. School • St.Michael's C. in W. School, Kerry • Llansanffraid C. in W. School • Llangedwyn C. in W. School • Llanfechain C. in W. School

9.2 Comments about Berriew C.P. School

9.2.1	Are you splitting the school up at all? For example, if the nearest school only has 21 places, how are we going to then fit in?	Should the Council proceed with the proposal, it is unlikely that all pupils would choose to transfer to the same school. There are sufficient places in the schools located within 10 miles of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School to accommodate all pupils currently attending the school.
9.2.2	The Council are recommending closing Castle Caereinion for pupils to go to their closest alternative school, Berriew CP School. Yet, Berriew have mixed age classes. They have three classes, Reception and Year One: Year Two-Year Four and Year Five and	All schools consider their class structure on a year-by-year basis, according to the numbers of pupils in each cohort. The current structure at Berriew is not

	Six. It could be argued that this cross-phase learning is detrimental to pupils in the Year two to four class. Whereas at least in Castle School there is a clear differentiation between Foundation Phase and Key Stage Two.	necessarily a permanent one. An increased intake could result in a completely different class structure.
9.2.3	I believe Berriew CP school where the council's is suggesting as the nearest alternative school that also has three mixed age classes consisting of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reception and Year 1 2. Year 2, Year 3 and half of year 4 3. Half of Year 4, year 5 and year 6. 	See above.
9.2.4	Interestingly the school that the Council are proposing as an alternative for our pupils is Berriew CP school, which is also an Amber school. However, this school is Amber based on standards not on having an Acting Headteacher in place. This suggests that the standard of education provision at Berriew is not equal nor better than the provision at Castle Caereinion CiW School, therefore under the school organisation code cannot be considered a viable option. The Schools Organisational Code states that, 'the alternative would deliver outcomes and offer provision at least equivalent to that which is currently available to those learners.' Whilst both Castle and Berriew schools have both been removed from Estyn monitoring, we believe it an oversight to not taken into account the colour coding of each of the schools and the reasoning for the coding. As in our view, this highlights an education provision difference that is not supported by the code.	The National Categorisation has not taken place since 2019. As stated in the Consultation Document, it is the Council's view is that all of these schools would provide education for pupils which is of at least equivalent quality as that provided at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, therefore, it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on standards and progress overall. During the last categorisation in 2019, Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, Berriew C.P. School and Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School was categorised as Amber whilst Welshpool C. in W. School was categorised as Yellow. Guilsfield C.P. School was classified as a Green school. Estyn's response to the consultation states: ,

		It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the standard of education provision in the area.'
9.2.5	<p>Castle Caereinion school has always sat within the Llanfair Caereinion cluster of schools. It has been raised and considered a number of times with PCC whether there were options to change cluster (and most recently in 2019). PCC have always maintained it is not possible to change cluster due to school transport. However, the consultation indicates the children would be routed to Berriew as their nearest school, this sits within Welshpool cluster and a different school transport route and will potentially change our children's whole future education route.</p>	<p>The Council recognises that should Castle Caereinion C. in W. School close, pupils would transfer to alternative primary schools, and that some of these would be in a different secondary cluster i.e., Welshpool High School. The Council also agrees that this would have transport implications as outlined below:</p> <p>The Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy for learners transferring or being admitted to a Powys schools in the 2021 / 2022 academic year states the following:</p> <p><i>'Home to school transport will be provided for learners who ordinarily reside in Powys to attend their nearest suitable school or catchment school. A 'catchment' school means the nearest school within a geographic area. To be eligible for free home to school transport, the learners' nearest school or catchment school must be:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• The nearest to the learners' home address and if so,</i> <i>• They are more than 2 miles from their home address for primary school (aged 4 -11) or more than 3 miles for secondary school (age 11 to 16)'</i> <p>Pupils who attend Castle Caereinion CiW School normally transfer to Caereinion High School and free home-to-school transport is normally provided for</p>

		<p>those pupils attending Castle Caereinion CiW School to Caereinion High School.</p> <p>Should Castle Caereinion CiW Primary School close, pupils living in the Castle Caereinion area would be provided with free home-to-school transport to their nearest or catchment secondary school. In the case of pupils choosing to attend Berriew CP School, Welshpool CiW Primary School or Guilsfield CP School, they would ordinarily transfer to Welshpool High School.</p> <p>Pupils currently accessing free home-to-school transport to Caereinion High School as their catchment secondary school would continue to receive this service until they finish their education. However, this would not be available to pupils from Castle Caereinion if they have transferred to Berriew C.P. School, Guilsfield C. P. School or Welshpool C. in W. School unless Caereinion High School is their nearest secondary school. This would have an implication for families who may already have elder siblings being transported to Caereinion High School.</p> <p>There may also be a potential impact on transport costs as there may be additional routes required to provide transport from the Castle Caereinion area to Welshpool High School. However, it would be expected that the existing transport routes would be adjusted. The estimated range of costs for this is dependent on which school parents choose for their</p>
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		<p>pupils, should Castle Caereinion close. The following outlines the range of costs, depending on how many pupils require transport:</p> <p>Minimal costs – all pupils can be accommodated within existing transport provision for secondary, albeit some routes may need to be extended – £10 - £20 per school day - £1,900 - £3,800 per annum</p> <p>Need to increase size of bus – approx. £50 per day - £9,500 per annum</p> <p>Additional Taxi required – approx. £60 - £75 per day - £11,400 - £14,250 per annum</p> <p>New bus required - £170 - £230 per day - £32,300 - £43,700</p> <p>Free home-to-school transport would continue to be available for pupils wishing to access Welsh-medium provision to their nearest Welsh provision.</p> <p>The Council has an appeals process for transport applications.</p>
9.2.6	The nearest council-maintained school is in Berriew, but this is in a different catchment area to Castle Caereinion school. Will the fact that it is in a different catchment, affect its suitability as a receiving school?	As above

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9.3 Comments about other schools

9.3.1	Prove to me that Llanfair will provide my son better education than Castle Caereinion, what grounds do you have to state this.	<p>As stated in the Consultation Document, <i>‘The Council’s view is that all of these schools (including Llanfair Caereinion CP School) would provide education for pupils which is of at least equivalent quality as that provided at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, therefore, it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on standards and progress overall.’</i></p> <p>This has been reiterated by Estyn in its response to the consultation: <i>‘It is Estyn’s opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the standard of education provision in the area.’</i></p>
9.3.2	I also do not think that with all the other schools proposed to close the nearest schools Berriew or Llanfair do not and will not have enough space to transfer the children from Castle Caereinion school.	The Council acknowledges that there are not enough places for the whole of Castle Caereinion C. in W. pupils at Berriew C. P. School or Guilsfield C. P School. However, there are enough places for all Castle Caereinion pupils at Welshpool C. in W. School and Llanfair Caereinion C. P. School, and there are enough places available across the four closest schools.
9.3.3	As a parent I can see the classrooms at Guilsfield seem full so I wonder about space at Guilsfield for any more children. I would think most children would go to Berriew?	Most of the pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School live closer to Berriew C. P School. There are not enough places in Guilsfield C. P School for all the children in Castle Caereinion school.

9.3.4	Have you done a survey to find the numbers available across the schools for children? Meifod, Guilsfield and Llanfair primary?	Information about the places available in each of these three schools and other schools located within 10 miles of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School was provided on page 23 of the Consultation Document.
9.3.5	What about those pupils that don't want to go to Berriew, are there places for everybody anywhere else? Have people been asked where they would like to go? Would transport be provided to the alternative school of their choice?	As above. The Council has not asked people where they would like to go, as no decision has yet been made to proceed with the proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. Should the Council proceed with the proposal, transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the home to school transport policy.
9.3.6	How many schools do we have the opportunity to go to and will pupils be guaranteed free transport to those schools?	Should the Council proceed with the proposal, parents could express a preference for their child to transfer to any school of their choice. Transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the home to school transport policy.
9.3.7	Just going back to the numbers and transport, are there going to be enough places in our nearest school if there are lots of schools facing closure?	There are no other proposals currently underway which would affect any other schools in the area around Castle Caereinion.
9.3.8	I know how this feels. We do have new houses going up in our village but our school Clyro Church in Wales primary, faces redundancy and closure by stealth. I wish you the best of luck.	Comment noted.
9.3.9	The two schools (Castle C and Berriew) are 2.5 miles apart but in the south of Powys a new school was built in Hay and Clyro school	Comment noted.

	was completely re-vamped and they are only 1.5 miles apart. Within walking distance.	
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9.4 Comments about secondary provision

9.4.1	<p>There is no information in the consultation regarding our children's future Secondary school options or change of cluster route and I would seek clarity on this. If the children are to attend Berriew, will they then be routed to Welshpool High School? Or will they revert to Llanfair High school as is the current situation?</p>	<p>The Council recognises that should Castle Caereinion C. in W. School close, pupils would transfer to alternative primary schools, and that some of these would be in a different secondary cluster i.e., Welshpool High School. The Council also agrees that this would have transport implications as outlined below:</p> <p>The Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy for learners transferring or being admitted to a Powys schools in the 2021 / 2022 academic year states the following:</p> <p><i>'Home to school transport will be provided for learners who ordinarily reside in Powys to attend their nearest suitable school or catchment school. A 'catchment' school means the nearest school within a geographic area. To be eligible for free home to school transport, the learners' nearest school or catchment school must be:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• The nearest to the learners' home address and if so,</i> <i>• They are more than 2 miles from their home address for primary school (aged 4 -11) or more than 3 miles for secondary school (age 11 to 16)'</i>
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		<p>Pupils who attend Castle Caereinion CiW School normally transfer to Caereinion High School and free home-to-school transport is normally provided for those pupils attending Castle Caereinion CiW School to Caereinion High School.</p> <p>Should Castle Caereinion CiW Primary School close, pupils living in the Castle Caereinion area would be provided with free home-to-school transport to their nearest or catchment secondary school. In the case of pupils choosing to attend Berriew CP School, Welshpool CiW Primary School or Guilsfield CP School, they would ordinarily transfer to Welshpool High School.</p> <p>Pupils currently accessing free home-to-school transport to Caereinion High School as their catchment secondary school would continue to receive this service until they finish their education. However, this would not be available to pupils from Castle Caereinion if they have transferred to Berriew C.P. School, Guilsfield C. P. School or Welshpool C. in W. School unless Caereinion High School is their nearest secondary school. This would have an implication for families who may already have elder siblings being transported to Caereinion High School.</p>
9.4.2	Traditionally the children from Castle Caereinion School went to Llanfair High School, but of late there has been a quite a move going to Welshpool High School. What will happen with that, will	As above.

	children still be able to go to Welshpool High School, and will they still get free home to school transport to Welshpool?	
9.4.3	So they would get free transport to Berriew school, presuming that Castle Caereinion closed, and from Berriew they would get free school transport to Welshpool School, even though they still live in Castle Caereinion?	As above.
9.4.4	Will they still be able to go to Llanfair High School like the normal catchment they have now?	As above. Parents from the Castle Caereinion area could still choose for their child(ren) to go Caereinion High School, but free home-to-school transport would only be available if Caereinion is this is their nearest secondary school.
9.4.5	Furthermore, I have seen statements from PCC that there are accelerated conversations being undertaken regarding the language category at Llanfair Caereinion and therefore I strongly object that the consultation is taking place without this information in place as we cannot make a fair and educated decision about our children's future education without the language category being confirmed and propose that the Castle Caereinion consultation should be paused until this is resolved.	On 18 th May 2021, Cabinet approved a recommendation to establish an all-age school in Llanfair Caereinion, by merging Caereinion CP School and Ysgol Uwchradd Caereinion. The Cabinet report also included the following statement: <i>'dialogue will continue at pace with the temporary governing body and leadership of the new school, in order to move the school along the language continuum...If the outcome of this is the need to change the school's language category, a further statutory process would be required to implement this – this will be reviewed following the establishment of the all-age school in September 2022.'</i>
9.4.6	The proposal to make the nearest school a Welsh school is very worrying.	For the majority of pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, Berriew CP School is the

		nearest alternative school, and the Council has no plans to change the language category of Berriew CP School.
9.4.7	Castle is the only English-speaking Church in Wales provision within the Caereinion Cluster. Whilst we understand the desire to increase Welsh medium provision, we must acknowledge that a vast number of our pupils choose to attend English medium schools. Our feeder Secondary school is Caereinion High School, as such our pupils' network with other pupils from the Caereinion Cluster in readiness for their transition. This does not just happen in Year 6, but throughout their time in primary through sports tournaments, young ambassador sessions etc. If children were to attend either their closest school or their closest Church in Wales school this would result in a change of secondary education provision for our pupils.	The Council recognises that should Castle Caereinion C. in W. School close, pupils would transfer to alternative primary schools which would be in a different secondary cluster i.e., Welshpool High School's catchment. However, it would be expected that Welshpool High School would have a close relationship with the primary schools in its cluster and that opportunities would be available for primary pupils to take part in activities with the High School.

9.5 Other comments

9.5.1	It will also result in larger classes in other schools, I don't think it would be good for the class sizes to increase, as the children are already struggling after impacts of covid 19.	<p>It is likely that, should the school close, pupils would attend schools where the class sizes would be bigger. However, smaller class sizes would not necessarily mean that pupils receive a more individual education as there are a number of year groups and a wider age range of pupils in the class.</p> <p>Schools cannot set class sizes above 30 in the Foundation Phase at the start of an academic year.</p>
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		<p>The size of the class does not determine how well pupils learn. The standard of teaching impacts directly on the standards of pupils' education.</p> <p>However, the Council would expect that pupils are fully supported by their teachers and other staff at the school during any periods of uncertainty to minimise the impact on their wellbeing.</p>
9.5.2	I mean, school classrooms are rather big at the moment. Shutting smaller schools will only encourage larger classrooms elsewhere and the need to employ extra teachers or ta's which seem to be more than enough!	<p>All schools receive delegated funding through the Council's funding formula, which is based largely on the number of pupils at the school. If a school's roll increases, the formula funding could change to take account of the need for additional classes.</p> <p>The financial modelling undertaken on the proposal takes the movement of Castle Caereinion pupils to other schools into account and estimates that there would be an annual revenue saving of around £58,000.</p>
9.5.3	That all the other little schools will then have to except more pupils and the numbers in class will be higher.	As above.
9.5.4	If you close Castle other schools may not have ramps and wide corridors or disabled pupils.	The Council ensures that all schools are adapted to meet the needs of any child with disabilities.
9.5.5	Wasn't one of Estyn's criticisms that the Council have not got children in schools that best meet their needs. To close this school would create a huge problem of having to adapt another school building to have the same facilities as ours (to provide for a pupil with Cerebral Palsy).	As above.

9.5.6	My fear is that if we move the children now to different schools how safe would those schools be from your cull list or are we just to expect another move in a year because they no longer suit your requirements as they are not big and shiny.	One of the Strategic Aims of the Council's Transforming Education Strategy is to improve learner entitlement and experience. In order to do this, it is necessary to continually review all schools in the county.
9.5.7	Castle Caereinion School provides the children with a safe, warm and loving environment to learn and flourish to their full potential, something that cannot at all be provided by any of the alternative schools being proposed as the 'replacements'.	The Council disagrees that the other alternative schools named within the Consultation Document will not provide a safe, warm and loving environment to learn and flourish to their full potential'. All schools, regardless of their size, are required to provide safe and appropriate learning environments, and are required to nurture, support and challenge all pupils to achieve their potential.

10. Impact on Protected Characteristic groups

10.1 Impact on pupils with additional learning needs

10.1.1	The school supports children with special needs extremely effectively. In a larger school I have little doubt that the children would be so well cared for.	The Powys SEN/ALN strategy, agreed by Cabinet in November 2021, is committed to improving the provision for all pupils with SEN/ALN. This includes pupils who can be educated in mainstream classes as well as pupils who require specialist provision. Pupils with ALN at all schools, regardless of size, would have the appropriate support to meet their needs.
10.1.2	I have seen the care with which certain youngsters from our community who have special needs have been nurtured and	Comment noted.

	encouraged. I believe that our school is adequately capable of looking after these youngsters in a much better atmosphere and caring environment than can be expected at schools with larger student numbers.	
10.1.3	The school has an excellent reputation for the service provided to ALSN children.	Comment noted.
10.1.4	Our school caters very well for children with ALN and disabilities. If you were to close us what happens to the children who rely on the facilities we can provide?	As above. Should the school close, the Council would ensure that the requirements for pupils with additional needs are met at whichever school they may choose to attend.
10.1.5	Our child is accessing the specific support he needs in his area of ALN and is thriving in his areas of strength, helped by the opportunity to learn with a mix of abilities.	Comment noted.
10.1.6	Castle School is a great fit for our son, who excels in some areas and requires SEN support in others, which through the small school and mixed aged model has been recognised and the appropriate intervention is being given.	Comment noted.
10.1.7	As a small school it provides a nurturing environment particularly for children with SEN, for which the school is particularly strong in supporting.	Comment noted.
10.1.8	Children on the ALN register can access interventions daily and all children know all members of staff well enough that they can turn to if they have any worries or concerns.	Comment noted.
10.1.9	As a parent I have an ALN child in this school that is flourishing being in small school setting. He has a few different needs but	Comment noted.

	one that he is currently being assessed on is autism. As he came from a bigger school before I know that this did not suit his needs, and was not given the time that he needs to assess things and I feel if he has to go back into a large school he will be lost and no longer get help that he so greatly needs.	
10.1.10	As you are aware we have quite a high percentage of ALN children, all who are accepted by the other children within the setting where as in a larger setting they would potentially be more targeted for bullying by other students.	There is no evidence that children with ALN are subject to bullying in larger schools.
10.1.11	Our school caters for a high proportion of ALN pupils, whose parents elect to send them here as they know that we can best meet their needs.	Comment noted.
10.1.12	We have a large number of ALN children and forcing them into large schools will greatly affect their learning. They are thriving as it is a quiet small school which is able to meet their needs.	Comment noted.
10.1.13	It is worrying to see that the Council have used 'inequality to access SEN provision' as point 8 of their rational for needing change in Powys. Stating that 'currently not all pupils are educated in the setting that meets their needs best'. Yet they are proposing to remove a school that is specially adapted to meet ALN pupils with specific disabilities needs where larger schools are unable to.	<p>The Transforming Education Strategy, approved in April 2020, includes the following Strategic Aim: 'We will improve provision for learners with SEN/ALN'. The statement on page 8 of the Consultation Document refers to one of the issues raised about education in Powys during the development of the Strategy, which included extensive engagement with schools and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Following that, the Powys SEN/ALN Strategy, agreed by Cabinet in November 2021, is committed to improving the provision for all pupils with</p>

		<p>SEN/ALN. This includes pupils who can be educated in mainstream classes as well as pupils who require specialist provision. Pupils with ALN at all schools, regardless of size, would have the appropriate support to meet their needs.</p> <p>Should the school close, the Council would ensure that the requirements for pupils with additional needs are met at whichever school they may choose to attend.</p>
10.1.14	Section 1.3 of The Schools Organisation Code states that, 'Relevant Bodies should pay particular attention to the impact of the proposals on vulnerable groups, including children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)'. None of the other schools in the ten-mile radius have the same facilities as we do in order to support this pupil's needs, so this child will be significantly disadvantaged by the closure proposal.	Should the school close, the Council would ensure that the requirements for pupils with additional needs are met at whichever school they may choose to attend.
10.1.15	Castle Caereinion CIW provides adequate ALN learning for children do other schools?	As above.

10.2 Impact on disabled pupils

10.2.1	In a bigger school there might not be any ramps or any disabled toilets, we have those things here.	Should the school close, the Council would ensure that the requirements for pupils with additional needs are met at whichever school they may choose to attend.
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10.2.2	If disabled children go to a new school they might not have the ramps like we do.	As above.
10.2.3	Small schools are very important for the disabled community.	As above.
10.2.4	A big concern for losing Castle school is your losing disabled facilities for anyone who wants to go to a mainstream school.	As above.
10.2.5	By closing small rural schools you might find that it disadvantages children with certain disabilities, like for example a slight delay in development. Quite a lot of such disabled children would do well in small rural schools, but poor in mega schools.	There is no evidence that pupils with disabilities achieve better in small rural schools.
10.2.6	We currently have a pupil with Cerebral Palsy in school who uses the disabled facilities. If the school were to close you would be removing a provision that best suits his needs.	Should the school close, the Council would ensure that the requirements for pupils with additional needs are met at whichever school they may choose to attend.
10.2.7	The school has numerous adaptations for learners with additional needs which will not be replicated if they are moved to other schools.	As above.

10.3 Other

10.3.1	A concern I have is some children can't cope in a large school or large class. They find it over bearing then come to a smaller school like Castle and it's a complete change for them in a positive way. Our existing school abides by the 2010 Equality Act. I am happy that they are continuing to in future because they are good honest hardworking staff. The children respond with an alert concern for each others well being.	Comment noted.
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10.3.2	Gender, Race, Marriage has no impact.	Comment noted.
10.3.3	Impact on no school meals and extra costing to transport would have a massive impact on my income to provide for my children if the school were to close if they are not eligible for school meals and transport.	Free School Meals are available at any school in Powys for eligible pupils. Free Home-to-School Transport would be available for eligible pupils to their nearest school.
10.3.4	I think you will be stripping lower income families of a vital lifeline.	Comment noted.
10.3.5	Closures if school always affect women as it means that mothers have to travel further to take children to school and this affects work opportunities for women.	There is no evidence that closure of a school affects women specifically. Free Home-to-School Transport would be available for eligible pupils to their nearest school.

11. Issues relating to Finance

11.1	<p>The School Forum wishes to comment on the financial implications of these proposals for the overall schools' delegated budget. At our last meeting we agreed on the importance of making sure that any savings accruing from transformation proposals are retained within the overall schools' delegated budget. This is fundamental to the overall transformation programme being taken forward by the Council. One of the main tenets of the overall programme is to reduce the overall number of schools so that the existing level of funding could be shared more equitably and resolve the existing problem of some schools having insufficient resources.</p> <p>There is a common sentence in each of the reports which says "Any savings would be reinvested in the Council's corporate budget and any reinvestment in the schools' system would be</p>	The Council notes the comment of the School Forum.
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	<p>agreed as part of the annual budget planning cycle”. This falls a long way short of guaranteeing that the savings will be retained within the overall schools’ delegated budget. Essentially this means that it will be up to the Council each year to decide on whether the funding should be retained for schools or not. This approach is very worrying as it could lead to the overall schools’ delegated budget being reduced as a result of the Council deciding that savings should be reinvested elsewhere. That runs very much against the overall plan to share the existing resources amongst a smaller number of schools and could result in the same problem we have now – not enough funding to run all the schools.</p> <p>Against this background can you please, when reporting back to the Cabinet on the results of the consultations for each of these schools, report the concerns of the Schools’ Forum as set out above and change the approach to how savings are to be treated, i.e. that they are ring fenced for use within the schools’ delegated budget. We have no comments to make on the transformation proposals themselves as the Forum only deals with financial matters.</p>	
11.2	<p>It was noted at the last meeting of the Schools Forum that in previous change projects calculations of overall savings in individual schools have not always turned out to be accurate. This is, of course, easy to say with the benefit of hindsight and is no reflection on the professionalism of the officers making these calculations. To help stress test these calculations can they be shared with the Forum at the next meeting please?</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
11.3	<p>It goes without saying that in schools where there are low pupil numbers the budget per pupil is going to be higher. However, for all of the reasons stated above we believe this to be a short-term</p>	<p>The cost per pupil is from the S52 budget statement which does not take account of transport costs.</p>

	<p>issue that, if the school is allowed to remain open, will be addressed not only by the positive promotion of the school through the website and the networking with other schools that has increased over the past 18 months but also through the new affordable housing that is happening in the village in the very near future. The council has outlined a per pupil budget overspend of £2,655 in Castle Caereinion in comparison to the Powys average of £4,264. However, when offset against the additional transport costs that Powys will need to make to send the pupils to their nearest school, this per pupil overspend reduces significantly.</p>	<p>However, estimated transport costs have been taken into account in the financial modelling undertaken on the proposal and this suggests that there would be an annual revenue saving of around £58,000. This is a different calculation to the cost per pupil, which is based solely on the school's budget divided by the number of pupils.</p>
11.4	<p>High budget per pupil – again I acknowledge this fact however, the school has been running in a well-managed positive budget position despite low numbers. I would ask for clarification of how are the transport costs are built in/reflected in the budget per pupil across schools, as the consultation document acknowledges there will be an approximate £32,000 transport implication if the school is closed and this may change the position of cost per pupil stated for the receiving schools, hence effecting the budgetary argument of the consultation.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
11.5	<p>High budget per pupil. Inevitably, smaller schools do generate a greater per pupil share of the budget because of the fixed costs they are unable to control (staffing, premises etc). Whilst funding for schools must be spent judiciously, the cost of maintaining existing places at Castle Caereinion is not a huge amount of money given that additional transport costs need to be factored into the final solution. Based on the Council's Section 52 Budget Statement for 2020-21, the school's budget share per pupil during 2020-21 was £6,919 compared to the Powys average of £4,264. This gives an additional cost of £61,065 for 23 pupils. However, the Council would also be obliged to meet additional transport</p>	<p>The cost per pupil is from the S52 budget statement which does not take account of transport costs.</p>

	costs of £32,300 per annum if all pupils attended their next nearest school and approximately £43,067 per annum if pupils were to access a Church in Wales school place (at Welshpool). If pupil numbers do increase at Castle Caereinion as a result of housing developments, the margin of difference will be further reduced.	
11.6	I know the funding of small schools is always going to be an issue, but they should give the school a chance.	Comment noted.
11.7	We don't spend a lot of money, our families give money for any extras that the school needs and the council probably spend more on the internet than we cost. Who are we hurting? All you'll do is hurt us.	The Council recognises the contribution that families make to raise funds for the school. However, the aim of the proposal is to improve learner entitlement and experience.
11.8	Providing transport to Church in Wales provision would then have increased transport costs from those proposed in section 18 of the Consultation document. This further increase would likely negate the proposed budget per pupil saving that the Council are using as a rationale for school closure.	<p>The Council recognises that, should the school close, there would be additional transport costs to this proposal estimated at approximately £32,000. These have been based on the nearest alternative school for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. As the Council does not provide free home-to-school transport to denominational schools, then the cost of transport to Welshpool C. in W. School (other than for those children for whom this school is their nearest alternative school) have not been costed.</p> <p>It should be noted that the cost per pupil figure does not include transport costs.</p>

11.9	The cost saving for closing the school is minimal, but the impact on our community and school children is huge, the proposed closure should be stopped.	Comment noted.
11.10	Why do you need to close the school is it just to save money?	<p>The proposal is intended to address the main challenges outlined in the Consultation Document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> vi) Low pupil numbers vii) High budget per pupil viii) Issues with the building ix) Combined age classes x) Leadership <p>Following consideration of a number of options, the preferred option is to close Castle Caereinion CiW School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools.</p> <p>The reasons for this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Castle Caereinion - Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools - Revenue saving to the Council - Pupils would attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum - Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities - Pupils would attend schools with more suitable accommodation - Meets all of the Critical Success Factors

11.11	Whilst this suits the 'Pocket of Powys' you are forgetting those that really matter - the children. And they are children and not sheep and should not be 'herded' into one pen.	<p>A revenue saving to the Council is only one of a number of reasons for the proposal, as outlined above.</p> <p>The aim of the proposal is to improve learner entitlement and experience.</p>
11.12	The Council has to prioritise the well-being of the pupils over financial expediency - 'relevant bodies should place the interests of learners above all other needs' (Schools Organisational Code). That includes the financial benefits that seem to be prioritised by the closure proposal.	As above.
11.13	Please do not close our school for economic reasons – that is the least important reason. Other considerations such as quality of education, quality of life and saving villages rate much higher.	As above.
11.14	For our children and the community we need to try and keep us cool, it may cost more to keep open but it's so important to help it open.	Comment noted
11.15	With small class sizes and high staff ratios we offer pupils an excellent value for money education. Whilst the per pupil spend is higher than the Powys average, the standards are also ever increasing.	The Council acknowledges that standards at Castle Caereinion are improving. However, all schools, regardless of size, would be able to provide for the needs of their pupils. The size of the class does not

		determine how well pupils learn. The standard of teaching impacts directly on the standards of pupils' education.
11.16	I wonder whether decisions with regard to closing smaller primary schools are taking into account some factors which could in fact increase costs for the council in the longer term.	The Consultation Document considers the recurrent costs of the proposal over a period of at least three years and include estimated transport costs.

12. Comments about the Council's Strategies

12.1 Comments about the Council's Transforming Education Strategy

12.1.1	My reading of the ESTYN report tells me that the big problem facing schools in Powys is in the secondary sector not the primary. It is in the secondary sector that there is a need for transformation, modernisation and rationalisation. Picking off a few isolated primary schools will not solve the underlying problems.	The section entitled 'How well has the local authority addressed school reorganisation issues including the provision for post-16?' outlines Estyn's views around this topic and is a general reflection on the authority's progress and approach in recent years. In response to the Estyn recommendation, the Council carried out extensive engagement with schools and other stakeholders in 2019/20. One of the issues raised during this engagement exercise was the fact that Powys has too many small schools and the need to ensure a more equitable education system.
12.1.2	By undertaking a "transforming education" strategy which seeks to centralise education you are decimating communities in this county by closing their schools.	The Transforming Education Strategy is not seeking to centralise education across the county. However, the Council has a duty to manage its schools' estate to ensure equity across the system.

12.1.3	You need to understand not everyone wants your "super schools".	The Council is not proposing a 'super school'. The proposal is to close Castle Caereinion CiW Primary Schools with pupils transferring to their nearest alternative schools.
12.1.4	Stop spending money on new schools which in turn shut these smaller village schools. It is not on.	The Council has a duty to ensure that children and young people are able to attend schools that are fit-for-purpose and provide the best learning environments. Building condition was recognised as an issue during the engagement that led to the development of the Transforming Education Strategy: ' <i>Whilst the Council has invested in its schools' estate through the 21st Century Schools Programme and the Asset Management Plan, building condition remains an issue across Powys, with associated maintenance costs</i> '
12.1.5	I think that schools should not be closed one by one, year by year. There needs to be a definitive plan moving forward.	The Transforming Education Strategy sets out a ten-year programme with specific targets.
12.1.6	Whilst I fully appreciate the need to review the education provision in Powys in line with the 21st century schools programme, I do not feel that closing castle Caereinion Church in Wales school is in the best interests and wellbeing of the children, parents and staff.	Comment noted.
12.1.7	It was always the policy, that look at schools on a catchment basis, you look at all the primary schools within a given catchment. Why did the policy change to a policy of opportunism, or cherry picking, as now, as obviously there was a change. When did that come in and why?	The Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys was approved in April 2021 and includes a Strategic Aim to 'reconfigure and rationalise primary provision'. Whilst some catchment reviews have already taken place, it is recognised that the outcome of area reviews can take some time to be implemented. The Strategy states that a key challenge for the Council is that it has too many primary schools, therefore the Council is reviewing

		some small schools on a standalone basis alongside area reviews.
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12.2 Comments about other Council strategies

12.2.1	<p>The proposed closure is contra to the 2018-2023 vision for Powys sets out that PCC will provide effective learning interventions to support schools to improve and produce well-qualified individuals. Placing a school into the consultation process adds psychological stress to the teaching staff which may detract from the teaching standards being set as the school has already received commitment to increasing student numbers.</p>	<p>The Council has recognised this as a risk within the Consultation Document:</p> <p><i>'Period of uncertainty for Castle Caereinion C. in W. School if a statutory process is carried out and implemented which might have a negative effect on standards at the school'</i></p> <p>The mitigation action is stated:</p> <p><i>'The Council to provide advice and support to the school and governing body to ensure that standards and performance do not deteriorate during the transition period'</i>.</p> <p>The Challenge Advisor for the school has continued to support the school during this period. The Council recognises that all school reorganisation proposals create a period of uncertainty for staff.</p>
12.2.2	<p>Without the recreation center, well-being in the community would most likely decline and drain the resources available with health across PCC. This is counter to the 2018-2023 vision where PCC sets out:</p>	<p>According to information supplied by the school and included within the draft Community Impact Assessment, the school is the main financial contributor to the Community Centre. Should the school close, the management committee of the</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Providing effective learning interventions will support schools to improve and produce well-qualified individuals ➤ Committed to modernizing our schools to provide sustainable, low-carbon buildings with high quality educational environment ➤ Support improvement of good quality, targeted education which will allow individuals to make more informed healthy life choices ➤ Committed to ensuring our learners have equitable access to education provision regardless of their background or where they live 	Centre would need to consider how best to utilise the Centre so that it remains viable.
12.2.3	<p>PCC set out in its 2018-2023 vision for Powys to be “established as an innovation base for learning, research and skills” and it is with great disappointment that mid term with the vision PCC defined an “objective to rationalize primary provision”. The vision clearly sets out a priority to work in partnership with schools, colleges, universities and businesses to improve career opportunities and commitment and “greater focus on working in partnership with schools and the communities they serve”.</p>	<p>Since the publication of the Council’s Vision 2025 document, Estyn carried out an inspection of the education services in 2019 and identified weaknesses in the Council’s approach to school reorgansiation. The section entitled ‘How well has the local authority addressed school reorganisation issues including the provision for post-16?’ outlines Estyn’s views around this topic and is a general reflection on the authority’s progress and approach in recent years. In response to the Estyn recommendation, the Council carried out extensive engagement with schools and other stakeholders in 2019/20. One of the issues raised during this engagement exercise was the fact that Powys has too many small schools and the need to ensure a more equitable education system.</p>

13. Criticism of Powys County Council

13.1	Throughout Powys and further afield our rural communities are under threat. Only now it seems that here they are under threat from their own county council as well.	As part of the school reorganisation process, the Council is required to carry out a Community Impact Assessment. This was published in draft form as part of the consultation and will be updated to reflect issues raised during the consultation. The Cabinet will need to consider this before making a decision to proceed, or not to proceed, with the proposal.
13.2	The county council needs to realise and tell the education department that we should now be in the business of supporting sustainable communities not stripping them out of community activities. The Covid 19 pandemic has changed the world we live in. We now need to think and act local as we change to the new normal.	<p>The decision to proceed to consultation on this proposal was made by the Cabinet of the Council and not by the education department.</p> <p>As part of the school reorganisation process, the Council is required to carry out a Community Impact Assessment. This was published in draft form as part of the consultation and will be updated to reflect issues raised during the consultation. The Cabinet will need to consider this before making a decision to proceed, or not to proceed, with the proposal.</p>
13.3	The council over the past few years have cut more and more budget, making it extremely difficult to fight your plans, and I suspect that this has been the strategy since your last attempt to close the school. You have made the decision for some of our local families to choose their local school impossible, where they see a school that might shut, versus one that has a future. You have made the playing field really very unfair.	The Council is operating in a challenging financial and economic climate, whilst delivering key services within the county, and has to manage its budget within this climate. However, Estyn carried out an inspection of the education services in 2019 and identified weaknesses in the Council's approach to school reorganisation. The section entitled 'How well has the local authority addressed school reorganisation issues including the provision for post-16?' outlines Estyn's views around this topic and is a general reflection on the authority's

		progress and approach in recent years. In response to the Estyn recommendation, the Council carried out extensive engagement with schools and other stakeholders in 2019/20. One of the issues raised during this engagement exercise was the fact that Powys has too many small schools and the need to ensure a more equitable education system.
13.4	I am very disappointed at the proposals your department is pushing forward to close small rural schools. The whole affect is gutting these communities. They are quietly dying, too modest to complain as they are made to feel that you are all superior in intelligence.	<p>The decision to proceed to consultation on this proposal was made by the Cabinet of the Council and not by the education department.</p> <p>As part of the school reorganisation process, the Council is required to carry out a Community Impact Assessment. This was published in draft form as part of the consultation and will be updated to reflect issues raised during the consultation. The Cabinet will need to consider this before making a decision to proceed, or not to proceed, with the proposal.</p>
13.5	The council recognises that the county is rural yet are trying to centralise education with no regard or understanding of what a rural community is about.	The Council disagrees with this statement. The Transforming Education Strategy is not seeking to centralise education across the county. However, the Council has a duty to manage its schools' estate to ensure equity across the system.
13.6	The decision to close the school is nothing more than an accountant looking at numbers on a spreadsheet with no regard for emotional understanding of how those numbers reflect on a community and the children of the community.	<p>A revenue saving to the Council is only one of a number of reasons for the proposal.</p> <p>The proposal is intended to address the main challenges outlined in the Consultation Document:</p> <p>xi) Low pupil numbers</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> xii) High budget per pupil xiii) Issues with the building xiv) Combined age classes xv) Leadership <p>Following consideration of a number of options, the preferred option is to close Castle Caereinion CiW School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools.</p> <p>The reasons for this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Castle Caereinion - Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools - Revenue saving to the Council - Pupils would attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum - Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities - Pupils would attend schools with more suitable accommodation - Meets all of the Critical Success Factors
13.7	<p>I feel that you have not recognised in the slightest that closure of the school undermines the viability of the community. You have most certainly forgotten your remit in serving your community and putting our interests first.</p>	<p>As part of the school reorganisation process, the Council is required to carry out a Community Impact Assessment. This was published in draft form as part of the consultation and will be updated to reflect issues raised during the consultation. The Cabinet</p>

		will need to consider this before making a decision to proceed, or not to proceed, with the proposal.
13.8	Closure of the school would be an admission of failure on the part of Powys County Council's responsibility to protect and sustain its rural communities.	As above.
13.9	For a county council that is meant to serve your community for the better, your plans do nothing but to rip the heart out of our village, serving only to save money.	As above.
13.10	Shame on Powys County Council for putting their interests before children yet again. These kids have had the worst years of their lives and now you cause more disruption for them. If I could have had my time again I would have schooled my children in Shropshire Powys County Council - putting pennies before pupils yet again.	<p>The proposal is not putting the interest of Powys County Council before children. It is recognised that children's education has been disrupted during the pandemic.</p> <p>A revenue saving is only one reason for the proposal as outlined above.</p>

14. Questions about / issues with the process

14.1 Comments about consulting during the Covid pandemic

14.1.1	Already you have taken the cowards way out by announcing the decision during a lockdown where we could not physically fight to protect the one thing tat means so much to many of our community.	The Council has been developing its Strategy for Transforming Education since Estyn's inspection of Powys Education Services in 2019. Whilst acknowledging that it would have been preferable for the consultation process to have taken place at a time when there wasn't a global pandemic, the consultation has been carried out in line with Welsh Government requirements.
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		The Council does not condone physical violence as part of any consultation process.
14.1.2	I feel that it is a very poor show by the council to be putting children and their families through a threat of closure whilst they are trying to fight through a pandemic!!	As above.
14.1.3	Also, the timing you have chosen to start the consultation period during a global pandemic knowing full well door to door petitions cannot be carried out and considered.	As above.
14.1.4	I am fully aware of the need for change and that there will never be a right time for the council to consider the closure of a school, however, I do feel that with the current global pandemic this really is not the time to consider the closure of the school.	As above.
14.1.5	Announcing a proposed closure during a lockdown. The timing of the consultation of the proposed closure is poorly judged. To undertake the consultation part way through a lockdown is an inappropriate way of engaging a community. Our local discussions have taken place virtually as we have not been permitted to have community gatherings or meetings. Not all residents have access to online facilities or are not confident in using them, therefore a number of residents have been excluded from participating in the consultation process due to lack of technology. Powys County Council's decision to choose to launch the consultation during a lockdown has led to an unfair bias towards closure.	As above.
14.1.6	I feel it is morally wrong to undertake this consultation at this time. The reasons for this include: We are currently in the middle	As above.

	<p>of an unprecedented pandemic, which is having a huge effect on our children and they have suffered considerably over the past year both mentally and in terms of schooling. Their current school setting has provided a point of stability for our children – and this has been particularly true for Castle Caereinion, where an excellent standard of education was offered even through lockdown and a high level of emotional support has been given to the children. It is obvious that a return to ‘normal life’ is unlikely to happen for some time yet and this is having an ongoing impact of our children, yet in the midst of this you propose to take away this stability and displace them to unknown schools, which will have a further detrimental effect on their mental health and wellbeing.</p>	
14.1.7	<p>As I have highlighted before, I am concerned that consultations are taking place during the pandemic when public face-to-face meetings can’t take place and some people are unable to use the internet and so may not have been able to feed into this consultation.</p>	As above.
14.1.8	<p>Powys County Council are acting in an unfair and low handed way putting forward these proposals during the current Covid pandemic. The present pandemic does not allow the opportunity for the school community and wider community to meet in a conventional manner and consider the proposals fully to understand the full impact.</p>	As above.
14.1.9	<p>The consultation process can’t possibly be done thoroughly and fairly when our country is going through and dealing with a pandemic. Childrens’ education has been severely disrupted over the last 12 months and what is needed now is stability and not more uncertainty.</p>	As above.

14.1.10	I also believe that the timing of this consultation was ill considered. The prevailing restrictions relating to covid limited the opportunity for full community consultation and prevented open meetings occurring. With many people in the community unable to access digital media, this has meant that the community has not been fully consulted as they should have been.	As above.
14.1.11	It is very bad timing anyway during a pandemic – a stressful time for everyone as it is!	As above.
14.1.12	The formal consultation process should not take place during a pandemic.	As above.
14.1.13	I spoke to an elderly gentlemen last weekend who hadn't heard about the closure at all. Many elderly and vulnerable people have only just started to venture out of their homes after Covid. Surely it can't be right to exclude a whole group of society when such important local decisions are being made?	As above.

14.2 Comments about public meetings

14.2.1	I am also highly disappointed that the council or Cllr Phyl Davies as not approached the community in a public meeting, for something that is so important not only to Powys but also our Children's education and have taken the easy option to close our school which could be thriving soon.	<p>The consultation has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code, which does not require public meetings to take place.</p> <p>As indicated on page 26 of the School Organisation Code, <i>'there is no requirement for proposers to hold consultation meetings although there will be circumstances where proposers will consider that meeting with certain groups of consultees will assist</i></p>
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		<p><i>greatly in the dissemination of information and provide a suitable platform for the consultees to make their views known.'</i></p> <p>During the consultation period, on-line meetings were held with staff, governors and pupils at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.</p>
14.2.2	A wide section of the community is unlikely to access technology needed to respond to view and without the opportunity for public meetings, their voice cannot be heard.	As above.
14.2.3	We can't have a face to face meeting with the council to discuss the situation.	As above.
14.2.4	Allow us to publicly ask questions and speak to councillors to fully understand the decisions that are being made without properly speaking to the staff, students and community.	As above.
14.2.5	I was vice chair when the Powys last tried to close the school and a lot of the discussions/consultations happened in public meetings and face to face. This meant that everybody could have their say, not just people with access to internet and social media.	As above.

14.3 Other comments about the process

14.3.1	As clerk to Castle Caereinion Community Council – I can confirm I have received no such correspondence from Powys.	Information about the consultation was sent to the clerk of Castle Caereinion Community Council by e-mail on the first day of the consultation period. A consultation response has subsequently been
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		received from Castle Caereinion Community Council.
14.3.2	In order to ensure Powys has carried out a full consultation, it is vital that the council take into consideration the community view on this and in particular the views of the community council as they represent the area.	The Council has carried out a full consultation in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code. All issues raised during the consultation period will be taken into consideration when determining how to proceed.
14.3.3	The whole community needs to be engaged in the consultation process by PCC, this has not been undertaken to date.	The Council has carried out a full consultation in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code.
14.3.4	I believe the council needs to accept the opinions of all the people who do not wish it to be closed	The Cabinet will consider all issues raised during the consultation period when determining how to proceed in respect of this proposal.
14.3.5	Let's hope that financial considerations are just part of the equation and that the consultation process is not, as many fear, just a box ticking exercise.	The consultation process is not 'just a box ticking exercise'. The Cabinet will consider all issues raised during the consultation period when determining how to proceed in respect of this proposal. Whilst financial considerations are one aspect, this is not the sole consideration.
14.3.6	The consultation process should not be based on factual inaccuracies.	The consultation is not based on factual inaccuracies. The information is provided in the consultation document is the most up-to-date information that was available to the Council at the time, and all data provided is clearly referenced.
14.3.7	The Recreation Hall is reliant on the school as it is the primary source of income. PCC are legally bound to conduct an impact	

	assessment under guidelines provided by the village hall trust. Without the impact assessment being completed and made available for review within the consultation process, the validity of the consultation process is questionable.	The Council is not proposing to close the Community Centre and therefore is not required to carry out an impact assessment specifically on this issue. However, information supplied by the school and included within the draft Community Impact Assessment indicate that the school is the main financial contributor to the Community Centre. The Community Impact Assessment will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation.
14.3.8	In terms of the timings, we have up until the 2nd of June to respond to the consultation, and then are we right in thinking there is a 28-day period for it to be discussed in Cabinet, does that take us to the 8th of July?	Once the consultation period has ended, the Council will produce a consultation report, which will be considered by Cabinet. Cabinet will then decide to proceed whether or not to proceed with the process, through the publication of a statutory notice. Should the Cabinet agree to proceed with the process, a Statutory Notice would be published in the autumn term, and the 28-day objection period would start on the day the Statutory Notice was published.
14.3.9	If they decide initially to proceed, and there are no objections, when can we expect to have a decision? There is anxiety from staff with regards to different time scales, and when exactly they will know.	It is expected that Cabinet will consider the consultation report in July 2021. If they decide to proceed with the proposal, it is expected that a final decision would be made before the end of 2021.
14.3.10	With it being fluid around the dates, it is difficult then to advise parents as some parents are thinking that if the school is going to close, they might move their children earlier.	Comment noted.

14.3.11	If we cannot make parents aware until the end of the year, does that then affect the actual closing date if we were to close? Is it 12 months from the notice?	The proposed closing date would be included in any statutory notice published. Should a statutory notice be published in the autumn term 2021, it is likely that the proposed closure date would continue to be August 2022.
14.3.12	I was under the impression that because Castle Caereinion is a church school, that the final decision would not necessarily rest with the Powys Cabinet, but with Welsh Government?	<p>As indicated on page 49 of the School Organisation Code:</p> <p>‘Under section 54 of the 2013 Act where proposals have been approved or rejected by a local authority the following bodies may, before the end of 28 days beginning with the day of the decision, refer the proposals to the Welsh Minister for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Another local authority affected by the proposals; ii. The appropriate religious body for any school affected; iii. The governing body of a voluntary or foundation school subject to the proposals; iv. A trust holding property on behalf of a voluntary or foundation school subject to the proposals; and v. A further education institution affected by the proposals.’
14.3.13	What are the circumstances in which the decision would get taken out of Powys’ hands?	As indicated above, the School Organisation Code includes provision for some bodies to refer proposals to the Welsh Ministers for consideration.

		As explained on page 49 of the School Organisation Code: 'The body making the referral will need to set out in a letter why they believe that the decision reached by the local authority is wrong.'
14.3.14	Is there a reason why this (the consultation meeting) was just dropped on us only yesterday, and we haven't under the circumstances had a lot of time to prepare?	The date and time of the consultation meeting was provided to staff and governors on the first day of the consultation.

15. Questions about / issues with the consultation documentation

15.1 Comments about the consultation document

15.1.1 Data/costings

15.1.1.1	The decisions being taken are ill thought out and based on erroneous figures, with no consideration of the additional housing being constructed within the village in the next few years.	The proposal is based on an assessment of options that may address the challenges faced by Castle Caereinion CiW Primary School. Information received from the Council's housing department suggests there are approximately 40 housing developments already completed, underway or planned in the area. Some of these are affordable housing.
15.1.1.2	Turning to the case being put forward to review the future of the school in Castle Caereinion you point out the number on roll wrongly as 23. It is in fact 25. Perhaps more importantly there	The number on roll stated within the Consultation Document is 23 and the data source is stated as 'Finance NOR – 2020 Pupil Count Day (6 th

	<p>have been a number of successful planning applications in the village with some 30 permissions granted for affordable dwellings with more in the pipeline. The first tranche of new dwellings are now being advertised for sale. If the threat of closure is lifted from the school there is a good chance children in those dwellings would attend the village school.</p>	<p>November 2020) and was correct at the time of writing.</p> <p>According to Teachers Centre 21/06/21, pupil numbers are as follows;</p> <p>Reception: 4 Year 1: 3 Year 2: 4 Year 3: 4 Year 4: 4 Year 5: 3 Year 6: 1</p> <p>Total pupils: 23</p> <p>Information from the Council's Admissions Team indicates that 1 pupil is due to join the school's Reception class in September 2021.</p> <p>Whilst the Council recognises the housing developments in the area, it is not expected that pupil numbers would increase significantly, and the school would continue to be a small school.</p>
15.1.1.3	<p>Documentation assessed and presented by PCC for the consultation process is in areas inaccurate and out of date. Specifically, this relates to the pupil numbers.</p>	<p>The pupil numbers provided in the document are the most up-to-date pupil numbers which were available to the Council at the time.</p>
15.1.1.4	<p>Current pupil numbers are incorrect and does not consider pupils committed to start schooling on moving into the area.</p>	<p>As above.</p>

15.1.1.5	Future pupil numbers have been estimated, how this was done has not been explained. Certainly PCC are not aware that I have a child who will be attending school in two years time. Have they carried out a door to door survey to obtain actual numbers of pre-school age children?	<p>The School Organisation Code requires authorities to publish five-year forecasts of pupil rolls, which we base on the PLASC Jan data. The forecast calculations are based on postcode-linked live birth data and historical cohort survival rates for individual schools.</p> <p>We also include a second set of projections which provide data for the next three years – this is based on information received from schools during the annual budget setting exercise.</p>
15.1.1.6	Transport costings also where do the figures come from as I think are underestimated and the costing for transport are nearly double the figure given, would like to see a detailed estimate on transport for Berriew and Llanfair.	The transport costings are modelled with input from school transport colleagues. Based on the pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C in W School, additional transport would be required for 16 pupils is estimated at £170 per school day, totalling £32,300.
15.1.1.7	Point 4.iii). The consultation document does not make it clear what the updated survey condition refers to or the three blocks and whether this includes the community center where the hall is owned by the community to which the school contributes to annual fees.	The updated condition survey did not include the community centre.
15.1.1.8	The information provided in the consultation relates to an Estyn inspection made nearly 5 years ago and is in no way reflective of the school now and the proposals should not be progressed on this basis.	The School Organisation Code requires Councils to include 'information from the most recent Estyn reports for each school likely to be affected' in consultation documents.
15.1.1.9	I am completely against the closure of the school firstly considering mis-guided and misinformed information using out of date Estyn report.	As above.

15.1.1.10	A very poorly developed and factually wrong consultation document, containing old information such as outdated school ratings which are not a fair reflection and cannot be accurately demonstrated at the present time, as reporting was suspended due to the pandemic.	The information provided in the Consultation Document is the most up-to-date information which was available to the Council at the time. The data and information used in the document is clearly referenced to show the source and date of the data.
15.1.1.11	In addition, there are many factual inaccuracies in the Consultation document and a lack of current data due to the limitations of covid-era education.	As above.
15.1.1.12	In response to the consultation document there are a number of points which have been reported incorrectly and leads to question the validity of the consultation when out of date and/or incorrect information has been presented.	As above.

15.1.2 Reasons for the proposal

15.1.2.1	Issues with the building: The supposed issues with the school building have been identified as a weakness in the options. However, whilst the school building is not a modern building, its ability to meet the needs of the new curriculum are not a concern for us.	Comment noted.
15.1.2.2	The document seeks to put a negative spin on the state of the building. It was assessed in 2009 as being in good condition by Welsh Government. It has been assessed by Powys for this exercise and is now graded as condition C. If the building has deteriorated in the last ten years that is down to Powys. It is not clear whether the assessment is wrong or the maintenance. The	The document does not seek to put a negative spin on the condition of the school. The 2009 condition grading was B whilst a condition survey carried out in 2021 has judged the grade to be C.

	<p>staff room has recently had a complete re-vamp to make it a space that the staff could be proud of as a result of a donation from an American benefactor the father of Rev. Alexis, who was a volunteer in the school.</p>	<p>The condition survey carried out in the autumn term 2020 was carried out by external professional building surveyors and the condition grading was their professional judgment. As this was an external, impartial report, the Council had not control over the content of the report.</p>
15.1.2.3	<p>Combined Age Classes: I have two in combined age classes during university teaching placement and in all schools I've worked in prior to joining Castle Caereinion Church in Wales school and do not feel this is a justifiable reason.</p>	<p>Effective leadership and teaching impacts positively on standards across all schools. The Council recognises that there are many schools with combined age classes in Powys. This provides a challenge to teachers of mixed-age classes where they must constantly adapt their approach. As a result, a high level of flexibility and organisation in lesson planning is required to ensure that teaching caters to both age groups and all abilities within the class. This is an additional workload on teachers and leaders who have a range of other key responsibilities and roles in a small school.</p>
15.1.2.4	<p>Combined Age Classes: This is stated as a negative in the consultation, however I would strongly argue this is a positive for the school offering – as the children have the opportunity to learn by ability rather than age and to learn and develop from and be challenged by their peers in years within the class. This has certainly been true for our son, who is showing a talent in Maths and is able to be taught higher age level work and yet struggles in spelling and again is able to be taught with an appropriate cohort based on ability. I am not confident he would not be 'lost' within a bigger school.</p>	<p>As above.</p>

15.1.2.5	Having combined age classes allows for differentiation across the class, allowing children to work in their ability groups and not just age groups. Children access and education which is catered to all of their needs and even allows for children from FP to complete tasks like I did reading within the key KS two class if necessary. This can give the children such a boost with self-esteem which may not always be possible within larger school.	As above.
15.1.2.6	The Governing Body strongly contests 'combined age classes' as a reason for school closure. There are a large number of schools within Powys that are two or three class schools thus resulting in mixed age classes. Even in larger schools in Powys, many are dual year entry. This does not put the pupils at a disadvantage and does not make challenging pupils more difficult. If anything, it enriches the children's experiences as they learn and develop with and from each other. Using mantle of the expert learning, in line with the new curriculum there is a cascading of knowledge being passed throughout the classrooms. The New Curriculum is full of collaboration and shared learning experiences, what better way to do this than in mixed age classes where everyone's personal experiences and stages of learning are different. It allows for shared viewpoint learning which is learning rich. The Cabinet only need to look at names like Lynette Lovell, Glynn Davies and Russell George, who all come from small rural primary schools, to see that mixed age classes do not hold pupils back nor prevent them from doing well in life. In fact it could be readily argued that mixed age classes make it <i>easier</i> for children to be appropriately challenged, because there is a focus within that classroom on every part of the key stage, rather than it being limited to one age group.	As above.

15.1.3 SWOTs

15.1.3.1	SWOT analysis is qualitative and there is no qualitative assessment to demonstrate financial benefit including the wider community assessment on well-being and community impact with hall closure.	The financial information relating to the proposal is included within the Consultation Document and the impact on the community, including impact on the Community Centre, is included within the draft Community Impact Assessment which will be updated to reflect information gathered during consultation.
15.1.3.2	SWOT analysis does not consider a socio-economic impact to the community not implications to community center with the primary revenue stream being removed.	<p>The SWOT analysis includes the following weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on the Castle Caereion community <p>According to information supplied by the school and included within the draft Community Impact Assessment, the school is the main financial contributor to the Community Centre. This will be updated to reflect information gathered during the consultation.</p>
15.1.3.3	SWOT analysis does not consider opportunities to leverage technology and on-line learning capabilities that have been implemented during the covid-19 pandemic.	Comment noted.
15.1.3.4	SWOT analysis does not stipulate that that PCC under the transport for school policy will only provide transport to one elected school in the area.	Free home-to-school transport would be provided to eligible pupils to their nearest school.
15.1.3.5	SWOT analysis does not consider creating learning specialties in specific schools to provide learning areas of excellence for	Comment noted.

	pupils to participate with. This does not necessarily mean all learning is limited to one location to create a center of excellence.	
15.1.3.6	SWOT analysis incorrectly states community hall using refuse provision at school.	This was information received directly from the school.
15.1.3.7	SWOT analysis does not consider the financial viability of the hall should the school close and impact on community.	According to information supplied by the school and included within the draft Community Impact Assessment, the school is the main financial contributor to the Community Centre. This will be updated to reflect information gathered during the consultation.
15.1.3.8	SWOT analysis acknowledges of the impact of the community and the potential loss of community facilities - but there is no specific mention here of the community hall.	As above.
15.1.3.9	The SWOT analysis is subjective and not supported by qualitative data to make a balanced assessment.	It is recognised that SWOT analysis are usually subjective. The SWOT analysis was carried out by a number of officers including Challenge Advisors, officers from Finance and HR, as well as the Schools Transformation Team.
15.1.3.10	Nowhere in your SWOT analysis does it mention that even the talk of a review of the school has a detrimental effect on school numbers.	Comment noted.
15.1.3.11	PCC has not considered through the SWOT analysis that rural schools can develop an intimate knowledge of their children and their backgrounds, inspire enhanced teacher commitments, and	Comment noted.

	take advantage of strong community participation and responsibility.	
15.1.3.12	PCC has not considered in the SWOT analysis that smaller class have a supportive 'family' atmosphere that fostered a strong sense of belonging, helped teachers build a rapport with students over many years and respond to their individual needs, and encouraged students to take responsibility for younger students.	Comment noted.
15.1.3.13	Other options considered for the school, have not been made public from what I can gather but a SWOT analysis has been carried out by whom, and obviously decided to close the school is the best option, for who not our community or our children, who if the school closes needing to travel to school rather than walking and increasing transport which goes against the SWOT report, which the main reason is the council's financial position to save money, but in the long run will not due to extra transport that will need providing.	All the options considered are included within the Consultation Document, and all the SWOT analyses are also included.

15.1.4 Omissions from the consultation documentation

15.1.4.1	Further points which PCC have not made clear through the consultation process which would benefit on clarification: 1. Socio-economical impact to the community with the community hall primary revenue being removed.	According to information supplied by the school and included within the draft Community Impact Assessment, the school is the main financial contributor to the Community Centre. This will be updated to reflect information gathered during the consultation.
15.1.4.2	PCC does not make it clear in their consultation that transport will only be provided to a single school nominated by parents	The Consultation Document states that ' <i>Free home to school transport would be provided to</i>

	which is detailed within the prevailing PCC school transport policy.	<i>eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy,</i> which states that transport is provided to the nearest or catchment school.
15.1.4.3	PCC do not assess impact on student well-being with increased travel nor how transport is to be managed for students from lower income families can join extra curriculum activities when the family only has access to public transport.	The Consultation Document includes the following: 'However it is acknowledged that there would be an impact on families due to the requirement to travel to school events, which could have a greater impact on children from economically deprived backgrounds.'
15.1.4.4	The document does not take into true consideration the fact that the children will miss out on extra-curricular activities.	The Consultation Document states the following: 'Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with Council's home to school transport policy, it is acknowledged that there could an impact on pupils' ability to access after-school activities.' This issue is also recognised in the draft impact assessment.
15.1.4.5	PCC has not evaluated the effects of additional travel and the extended hours of the students. The effects of travel in rural areas have not been fully evaluated and made clear in the consultation process in consideration of bus routes, travel times.	The Council has included the impact of additional travel time within the impact assessments.
15.1.4.6	PCC has not considered the implications of pupil safety travelling longer distances.	There are many pupils on home-to-school transport across the county and their safety during these journeys is paramount.

15.1.4.7	PCC has not considered pupil fatigue through the consultation process with longer days.	It is not clear as to why pupils would have longer days due to the consultation process – this would not be an expectation of the Council.
15.1.4.8	Appendix A 12.3 where it states no other trusts or charitable interests are affected by the closure. Specifically to this second point, this is incorrect and the Recreation Hall which is adjoining the school and under the village hall trust must be taken into consideration. The documentation states that no trusts are affected which is incorrect and therefore miss leading information within the consultation process. The Recreation Hall is reliant on the school as it is the primary source of income. PCC are legally bound to conduct an impact assessment under guidelines provided by the village hall trust. Without the impact assessment being completed and made available for review within the consultation process, the validity of the consultation process is questionable.	<p>The Consultation Document states the following:</p> <p>Is the school / schools involved subject to any trust or charitable interests which might be affected by the proposals, for example in relation to the use or disposal of land?</p> <p>The question relates specifically to the school and not the Community Centre. Castle Caereinion C.W. School is not subject to any trust or charitable interest which might be affected in relation to the use or disposal of the land.</p>
15.1.4.9	Appendix A 12.3 states that no other trusts or charitable interests are affected by the closure. As the community hall is under a village hall trust this should be taken into account.	As above.
15.1.4.10	In Appendix A 12.3 – in the current document it says that no trusts are affected as the community centre is a trust this should be listed in the impact assessment.	As above.
15.1.4.11	Impact of community hall is not mentioned in Appendix A.	According to information supplied by the school and included within the draft Community Impact Assessment, the school is the main financial contributor to the Community Centre. This is included within the draft Community Impact

		Assessment which will be updated to reflect information gathered during the consultation.
15.1.4.12	There is no mention of the community hall in Appendix C.	As above.
15.1.4.13	There is proposed housing development in the village which could bring in more families to sustain the school, and even more development could be likely in the next ten to twenty years. However this has not taken into consideration.	Information received from the Council's housing department suggests there are approximately 40 housing developments already completed, underway or planned in the area. Some of these are affordable housing. However, even with potential housing developments, it is not anticipated that pupil numbers will increase significantly.
15.1.4.14	The consultation document does not also take into account the local development plan and large number of proposed new builds, in particular affordable housing, in the county.	As above.
15.1.4.15	I am concerned that the proposal document, in relation to the impact on the schools the pupils would transfer to, does not take into account the influx from the proposed closures of all of the other primary schools currently under threat from PCC.	The Council has been consulting on proposal related to Llanbedr CiW Primary School, Churchstoke CP School, Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School – these areas are not close to Castle Caereinion. Cabinet has also approved consultation on proposals to close schools in the Llanfyllin area, however these are not close to Castle Caereinion either.
15.1.4.16	It is also worth noting that the Consultation Document does not reference or account for the fact the school is in the Llanfair Cluster (as both Berriew and Welshpool are in the Welshpool cluster) and the subsequent implication this would have on transport requirements. There are currently former Castle pupils	The Council recognises that should Castle Caereinion C. in W. School close, pupils would transfer to alternative primary schools, and that some of these would be in a different secondary cluster i.e., Welshpool High School. The Council

	<p>who attend Welshpool High School who do not receive transportation as it is not a feeder school, and conversely, there are former pupils attending Llanfair High School who do receive transport. There clearly will be implications for future (and potentially current) transport arrangements in both directions.</p>	<p>also agrees that this would have transport implications as outlined below:</p> <p>The Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy for learners transferring or being admitted to a Powys schools in the 2021 / 2022 academic year states the following:</p> <p><i>'Home to school transport will be provided for learners who ordinarily reside in Powys to attend their nearest suitable school or catchment school. A 'catchment' school means the nearest school within a geographic area. To be eligible for free home to school transport, the learners' nearest school or catchment school must be:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• The nearest to the learners' home address and if so,</i> <i>• They are more than 2 miles from their home address for primary school (aged 4 -11) or more than 3 miles for secondary school (age 11 to 16)'</i> <p>Pupils who attend Castle Caereinion CiW School normally transfer to Caereinion High School and free home-to-school transport is normally provided for those pupils attending Castle Caereinion CiW School to Caereinion High School.</p> <p>Should Castle Caereinion CiW Primary School close, pupils living in the Castle Caereinion area would be provided with free home-to-school transport to their nearest or catchment secondary school. In the case of pupils choosing to attend</p>
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		<p>Berriew CP School, Welshpool CiW Primary School or Guilsfield CP School, they would ordinarily transfer to Welshpool High School.</p> <p>Pupils currently accessing free home-to-school transport to Caereinion High School as their catchment secondary school would continue to receive this service until they finish their education. However, this would not be available to pupils from Castle Caereinion if they have transferred to Berriew C.P. School, Guilsfield C. P. School or Welshpool C. in W. School unless Caereinion High School is their nearest secondary school. This would have an implication for families who may already have elder siblings being transported to Caereinion High School.</p> <p>There may also be a potential impact on transport costs as there may be additional routes required to provide transport from the Castle Caereinion area to Welshpool High School. However, it would be expected that the existing transport routes would be adjusted. The estimated range of costs for this is dependent on which school parents choose for their pupils, should Castle Caereinion close. The following outlines the range of costs, depending on how many pupils require transport:</p> <p>Minimal costs – all pupils can be accommodated within existing transport provision for secondary, albeit some routes may need to be extended – £10 - £20 per school day - £1,900 - £3,800 per annum</p>
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		<p>Need to increase size of bus – approx. £50 per day - £9,500 per annum</p> <p>Additional Taxi required – approx. £60 - £75 per day - £11,400 - £14,250 per annum</p> <p>New bus required - £170 - £230 per day - £32,300 - £43,700</p>
15.1.4.17	The consultation that has been put forward does not sufficiently offer a valid detailed business case to close Castle Caereinion Church in Wales school and does not give complete information to allow us as parents to make a fair, informed decision on our child's future schooling options.	<p>The Consultation Document complies with the requirements of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code.</p> <p>A detailed business case is not a requirement.</p>
15.1.4.18	PCC has not explored creating centres of excellence with rural schools and utilising on-line / remote teaching methods for other community schools to benefit from individuals area of excellence.	Comment noted.
15.1.4.19	The document does not take into true consideration the faith element of our education provision.	The Consultation Document reflects the fact that Castle Caereinion is a Church-in-Wales School.
15.1.4.20	The document does not consider the devastating impact that closure of the school would have on the community of Castle Caereinion.	The impact on the community has been included within the Consultation Document and within the draft Community Impact Assessment, which will be updated to reflect information gathered during consultation.

15.1.4.21	The Consultation document seems to have failed to consider is the school's adapted provision for pupils with ALN and physical disabilities.	<p>The Consultation Document includes a section on the potential impact on pupils with additional learning needs.</p> <p>During the consultation, many comments have been received about the fact that the school has had adaptations to support pupils with physical disabilities.</p>
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15.1.5 Other comments / queries

15.1.5.1	The schools you are proposing our children to go to are sporadic and is the council wishing to pay for travel to all school's or just One?	The Consultation Document notes the schools available within a ten-mile radius of Castle Caereinion. Free home-to-school transport would be provided to eligible pupils to their nearest or catchment school, in accordance with the Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy.
15.1.5.2	School Places – you refer in the consultation to the nearest school of Berriew having 21 places to accommodate the Castle children, however there are currently 23 children and it is not stated in the consultation year group availability to match to that of the children to be moved. Can this please be clarified, further if there are not sufficient places in the relevant year groups to accommodate our children, will transport then be funded to alternative schools with relevant places?	<p>Current pupil numbers broken down by year group are as follows:</p> <p><u>Berriew C.P School</u>¹</p> <p>Reception – 13 pupils Year 1 – 14 pupils Year 2 – 13 pupils Year 3 – 7 pupils Year 4 – 13 pupils Year 5 – 11 pupils Year 6 – 15 pupils</p>

¹ Teacher Centre – 24th June 2021

		If there is no space available at a school, then free home-to-school transport would be provided to eligible pupils to their next nearest alternative school.
15.1.5.3	The Council has identified a range of options and has put forward a number of reasons as to why it makes sense to close Castle Caereinion school. It is important to note that although the Council appears to have considered nine different options, only six of these are potentially viable options. Options 5, 7 and 9 cannot be considered as it is not legally possible to merge a VC school with a CP school.	Options 5,7 and 9 – it is possible to merge VC schools and CP schools by closing both schools, and opening as a new school, which could either be a Church in Wales school or a CP school. Recent examples of this include the establishment of Welshpool CiW Primary School from the closure of Gungrog CiW Primary School, Oldford CiW School, Ardwyn CiW School and Ysgol Maesydre (a CP School). Also, the establishment of Ysgol Cwm Banwy CiW Primary School (VA) following the closure of Ysgol Llanerfyl and Ysgol Dyffryn Banw.
15.1.5.4	<p>The consultation document states:</p> <p><i>“Free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with Council’s home to school transport policy. However, it is acknowledged that there would be an impact on families due to the requirement to travel to school events, which could have a greater impact on children from economically deprived backgrounds.....of pupils attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School it is likely that the proportion of children from economically deprived backgrounds is minimal.”</i></p> <p>However, this does not acknowledge that families could be just over the threshold for FSM and therefore not identified as being economically deprived. The parental transport costs</p>	Parents are able to choose any school for their child(ren), and if there’s a place at the school, then they can be offered a place. However, the Council’s Home-to-School Transport Policy provides transport to a pupil’s nearest or catchment school and does not provide transport to denominational schools specifically. If a parent chose a school that is not their nearest school, then they would be responsible for ensuring their child(ren) are transported to that school. It is recognised that if a parent didn’t drive, or have access to a car, then they would have to make alternative arrangements which could include private taxi/shared transport with other parents. The Council recognises that this may potentially have an economic impact on the parent.

	<p>that would need to be incurred to attend a Church in Wales school (given transport is only provided to the nearest alternative school) or indeed, to access extra-curricular activities at the “nearest alternative school”, could place undue hardship on these parents.</p>	<p>The Consultation Document includes the following: ‘However it is acknowledged that there would be an impact on families due to the requirement to travel to school events, which could have a greater impact on children from economically deprived backgrounds.’</p>
15.1.5.5	<p>After reading through the consultation document on the closure of this school, I feel that the reasons given lack serious consideration on the effects to the local community. The two key reasons that I read are to 1) reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary school and 2) to realise a financial savings to the council. Powys is in its very nature a rural county and only thrives if its communities thrive.</p>	<p>The proposal is intended to address the main challenges outlined in the Consultation Document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> xvi) Low pupils numbers xvii) High budget per pupil xviii) Issues with the building xix) Combined age classes xx) Leadership <p>Following consideration of a number of options, the preferred option is to close Castle Caereinion CiW School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools.</p> <p>The reasons for this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Castle Caereinion - Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools - Revenue saving to the Council - Pupils would attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum - Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupils would attend schools with more suitable accommodation - Meets all of the Critical Success Factors <p>The impact on the community is included within the draft Community Impact Assessment that will be updated to reflect information received during consultation.</p>
15.1.5.6	The Local Authority has continually referred to our school building as not being suitable to deliver the New Curriculum. We strongly contest this, as parts of the new curriculum are already being delivered in Castle Caereinion CiW School and very successfully too. This has been clearly demonstrated by Appendix A in the school's own response to the consultation.	<p>Castle Caereinion School has multiple entry points, with shared access to the village hall. The foundation phase class is a large space. There is access to the outdoors but with only one door, that is the only viewpoint for staff, combining indoor/outdoor activities is more difficult.</p> <p>The key stage 2 class is a portacabin-type extension.</p>
15.1.5.7	You claim the school is not able to provide the new curriculum when it has such great spaces indoors and outside which can be used for forest schools so I'm not sure where that idea has come from! It all seems to come down to saving money and not children's wellbeing and happiness which in these strange times is very sad.	See point 15.1.5.8
15.1.5.8	New curriculum – there are various references in the document that the school is not equipped to meet the needs of the new curriculum. I would strongly dispute this claim – the school has been working over the last two years to prepare for introduction of the new curriculum and is already well placed to deliver the principles with all the facilities as	With a two-teacher school it is more difficult to deliver the new curriculum. There are a limited number of teachers and support staff, the expertise for all areas of learning and experience is not as strong as a team of teachers each of whom can lead on one area. The

	outlined above including well developed outdoor spaces and a dedicated IT suite. The mixed age model also lends itself well to the principles of the curriculum, therefore I propose this is not a valid argument for closure of the school.	breadth of staff brings a larger skill set so that pupils have more opportunities. Within mixed age classes, the age range and ability range would be greater than in a smaller age range class. In a larger school, could enhance pupil wellbeing and development, for example there would be greater opportunities for friendship groups with children of the same age and greater opportunities to work collaboratively with pupils of the same age and ability.
15.1.5.9	I believe that the school and the outdoor classroom area as well as the big green fields together with a dedicated team of teachers/support staff are more than capable of providing a full and comprehensive education as outlined in the Early Years Curriculum. I do not recognise the description that speaks of inadequate IT facilities and outdoor classroom provisions.	Comment noted. In a larger school, there would be a wider range of resources available, which could include dedicated IT equipment. Within a small school, it becomes increasingly difficult to manage resources effectively.
15.1.5.10	The document fails to recognise that Castle Caereinion CiW School is more than capable of delivering the new curriculum.	See 15.1.5.8
15.1.5.11	The consultation document, whilst noting the previous long period of instability, suggest that the school finally having its own standalone headteacher limits (because of their significant teaching commitment) the time available to focus on leadership of the school. However, since this appointment the school has gone from strength to strength as evidenced in the school Support Visits from the Local Authority (fully detailed in Appendix C of the school GB's consultation response).	The Council recognises the work of the current headteacher in leading the school. It is very difficult for a headteacher, without any other senior leaders, to conduct all of the leadership and management roles whilst having a large teaching commitment. In a small teacher school, all of the responsibility for leadership rests with the headteacher. Within a larger school, distributed leadership amongst the senior leaders would support the management of the school.

15.1.5.12	<p>The Governing Body are concerned that this statement acknowledging the loss of extra-curricular provision is contradictory to part of the Council's own rationale for closure, as stated in section 16(i) Wellbeing and attitudes to learning section on page 11, 'In the longer term, the intention is that implementation of the preferred option would have a positive impact on pupil wellbeing and attitudes to learning as they would transfer to larger schools with larger cohorts of pupils, providing improved social and extra-curricular opportunities'. Whilst these schools may be able to provide the extra-curricular activities, the council itself has acknowledged that the children will not be able to access them. Therefore, this does not address the wellbeing and attitudes to learning section of the Schools Organisation Code which states that 'relevant bodies should place the interests of the learners above all others'. We fail to see how removing the children's access to extra-curricular activities is placing their interests first.</p>	<p>The Council is not removing access to extra-curricular activities for the children. It is acknowledged that, for some pupils, it may be more difficult to access after-school activities due to reliance on home-to-school transport. However, lots of pupils across the county rely on home-to-school transport and schools are able to ensure that they have the opportunities that they need.</p>
15.1.5.13	<p>The Consultation Document states that headteacher has significant teaching commitment. See the below table to see how the leadership commitment compares to other local schools within a ten-mile radius:</p> <p>Castle Caereinion CiW NOR = 25; Leadership (days) = 2; Teaching (days) = 3</p> <p>Berriew CP School NOR = 85; Leadership (days) = 2; Teaching (days) = 3</p> <p>Ysgol Meifod NOR = 81; Leadership (days) = 1.5; Teaching (days) = 3.5</p>	<p>As part of the funding formula for schools, all schools under 90 receive funding for up to 2 days management time. Under delegation of budgets to Governing Bodies, schools may decide to how much management time to allocate to their headteacher.</p> <p>Many of the larger schools have a deputy headteacher who is able to share the leadership responsibilities with the headteacher.</p>

	<p>Leighton NOR = 91;</p> <p>Rhiw Bechan NOR = 135;</p> <p>Guilsfield NOR = 137; Leadership (days) = 2.5; Teaching (days) = 2.5</p> <p>Llanfair Caereinion CP NOR = 161; Leadership (days) = 5; Teaching (days) = 0</p> <p>Welshpool CiW NOR = 356; Leadership (days) = 5; Teaching (days) = 0</p> <p>As you can see the leadership commitment at Castle Caereinion CiW School is no greater than the other schools and in some cases it is greater. It is also identical to Berriew – the school to which many pupils are expected to go if Castle school closes!</p>	
15.1.5.14	<p>The Governing body would like to point out that whilst the school was previously graded an Amber in the Schools Categorisation system, this was due to having an Acting Headteacher in place at the time and was not due to the standards. As seen in the Support Visits (Appendix C) standards and attitudes across the school have been improving. It is worth noting that under the Schools Categorisation system any school with an Acting Headteacher cannot be graded higher than an Amber category, regardless of standards.</p>	<p>The point raised is noted. There has been no school categorisation since the autumn term 2019.</p>

15.1.5.15	<p>The Estyn inspection referred to in the Consultation document took place in 2016 when the previous shared headship model was in place. Subsequent to this, Estyn conducted a review in 2018 rated the school as 'good'. The previous amber school categorisation support capacity rating was applied because the school had an Acting Headteacher in place. Having supported the change to permanent leadership arrangements just 18 months ago, we do not feel that the Council has given the school a reasonable timescale to demonstrate improvement and grow pupil numbers, particularly with the disruption caused by Covid over the last year.</p>	See point 15.1.5.14
15.1.5.16	<p>I would like to challenge the comment that transferring pupils to a larger school would provide improved opportunities, when here at Castle Caereinion Church in Wales School the school provides an excellent broad-based education, not only do the children benefit from this they also become happy, engaged, confident and independent individuals who grow up with good communication skills, are resilient and mature well with their experiences gained at the school.</p>	See point 15.1.5.8
15.1.5.17	<p>Public transport to and from Castle Caereinion is not an alternative option to support students travel to and from school. Any child from a low income family will be disproportionately penalised which in contra to the 2018-2023 vision for Powys to be "established as an innovation base for learning, research and skills".</p>	<p>Should the school close, free home-to-school transport would be provided for eligible pupils to their nearest or catchment school, in accordance with the Council's Home-to-School Policy. If a parent chose a school that is not their nearest school, then they would be responsible for ensuring their child(ren) are transported to that school. It is recognised that if a parent didn't drive, or have access to a car, then they would have to make alternative arrangements which could include private taxi/shared transport with other</p>

		parents. The Council recognises that this may potentially have an economic impact on the parent.
15.1.5.18	I have read through your document "Proposal to close Castle Caereinion Church in Wales School" and I must say I am a bit underwhelmed by the document.	The Consultation Document is aligned with the requirements of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code.
15.1.5.19	As with the other primary schools going through this process at the moment it would appear that in order to appease ESTYN only evidence that suits your argument is being used.	The Council is required to comply with the requirements of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code in terms of the information required.
15.1.5.20	Appendix D – certain inaccuracies which have been rectified by PCC including safeguarding where there was an issue of open access to the school to which the Diocese of St Asaph have clearly stated there is separate access to the community hall and that the school has sole use of it during the day.	Comment noted.
15.1.5.21	I disagree with the statements of the lack of equipment to educate in Castle Caereinion.	Comment noted.
15.1.5.22	I would propose that the wider impact of closure of the school needs to be explored more carefully.	The Council has published draft Impact Assessments as part of the consultation documentation, and these will be updated to reflect information gathered during the consultation.
15.1.5.23	Steps were taken, fully supported by Powys County Council school's management team to reintroduce a Teaching Head model, which has been a huge positive for the school. It suggests in the consultation document that this is negative as the large teaching commitment does not allow to sufficient leadership focus. I would strongly dispute this statement. The	The role of a teaching headteacher is extremely demanding on their time to lead and manage the school while taking on a large teaching commitment. The very small staff in a two-class school means that there are very limited opportunities for shared leadership, no senior management team, and limited

	<p>teaching head is allocated leadership time, which is again fully costed in a currently positive budget and is again on par with the teaching commitment of heads in other schools in the area who are not being subjected to this process. I feel it is important to acknowledge there have been considerable increased demands on the Headteacher during the pandemic to implement the everchanging Covid requirements, which is not a true reflection of leadership requirements in a 'normal' time. However, the fact that the headteacher has been able to meet all these requirements and still deliver a high standard of education and wellbeing support is a credit to the individual and the school model.</p>	<p>resources to develop key roles, such as that of the ALNCo, in readiness for the new ALN Act.</p>
15.1.5.24	<p>We have spotted errors in the consultation report, is that still then a fair consultation and would it still go forward?</p>	<p>Comments / queries about the consultation document have been responded to in this report.</p>
15.1.5.25	<p>Following on from that, in the assessment for each option, you've got option 7 and you have 2 question marks, "could be met", and option 9 is obviously 4. If those question marks, "could be met", then surely they should be ticked and that would be 4 and 4? Yet the only option seems to be to close and therefore option 7 should still be available to us.</p>	

15.2 Comments about the consultation response form

15.2.1	<p>You ask for my gender in the next section but I don't have a "gender" I have a sex. There are only two sexes and by asking gender which can mean anything these days it is impossible to look at the data you have collected to accurately gauge whether sex based rights under the equality act have been protected. I suggest you use sex in future surveys and look at #sexmatters</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
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	The Safe Schools Alliance and Transgender Trend to look at supporting equality in education in Powys fairly to all protected characteristics.	
15.2.2	Look at some questions on this form, they are baffling to people and could be simpler.	Comment noted.

15.3 Comments about the impact assessments

15.3.1	It is the assessment of the Recreation Committee that PCC have not completed a thorough analysis leading to the release of the consultation document and without conducting a detailed impact assessment on potential implications to fund the community hall the consultation process should rescind the proposal and continue status quo. Without a formal impact assessment, the school closure could lead to the closure of the community hall which would bring significant bearing on the community and well-being on members of the agriculture community which has the highest suicide rates as a profession in the UK.	The Council is not proposing to close the Community Centre and therefore is not required to carry out an impact assessment specifically on this issue. However, information supplied by the school and included within the draft Community Impact Assessment indicate that the school is the main financial contributor to the Community Centre. The Community Impact Assessment will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation.
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16. Alternative options

16.1 Retain the status quo

16.1.1	It is our view that there is a case to retain this school given its location, the community it serves (which is growing), and the greater distances children will need to travel to a new school.	Maintaining the Status Quo is considered as an option within the Consultation Document in respect of the current proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, however the Council's view is that this would not address the challenges facing the
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		school as identified in the Consultation Document, nor would it address the challenges facing education in Powys as outlined in the Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys.
16.1.2	I think the only option is to keep the school open.	As above.
16.1.3	Remain open and continue to review	As above.
16.1.4	Instead of closing the school they could keep us open and let more children come here.	As above.
16.1.5	The only option that fits the brief of serving others, rather than yourselves, is to remain open; not just our school but all rural schools.	As above.
16.1.6	Powys County Council should be helping to keep these schools open and offering opportunities for them to thrive more and more.	As above.
16.1.7	I won't apologise for having only the option of keeping the existing school open.	As above.
16.1.8	I think that Castle Caereinion School should stay open, maybe we could do more to get more children to come to our school!	As above.
16.1.9	Keep the school open as a school and appreciate how important it is for the village.	As above.
16.1.10	I feel that Powys County Council needs to keep this school open.	As above.

16.1.11	The school needs to be kept open in order to provide an education for our children and allow them to form an integral part of the village and wider community.	As above.
16.1.12	I think they should let us stay open.	As above.
16.1.13	Yes, keep the school open. It has been a functioning school for 130 years. What will our future generation have to be proud of?	As above.
16.1.14	Keeping it open is the only option I think you should be thinking about. Trying to make bigger schools isn't going to be helpful to those who need more one to one.	As above.
16.1.15	So let's keep Castle Caereinion School OPEN for future generations	As above.
16.1.16	First and foremost, to keep the school open. If that requires greater resource-sharing and co-operation with other nearby schools (as already happens with Berriew Primary school) then so be it. It is pivotal that the school remains open within the village.	The Council encourages all schools to work in collaboration. However, this would not fully address the challenges faced by Castle Caereinion C.in W. school.
16.1.17	Stop closing our school because I like my school. You could close a different school instead.	Maintaining the Status Quo is considered as an option within the Consultation Document in respect of the current proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, however the Council's view is that this would not address the challenges facing the school as identified in the Consultation Document, nor would it address the challenges facing education in Powys as outlined in the Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys.

		The Council is currently reviewing a number of other schools as well as Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and has carried out consultation on a number of proposals relating to a number of other schools.
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16.2 Pause the consultation process

16.2.1	The school should be given further time to build on and embed the new teaching structure implemented in Autumn 2019.	Whilst the Council is pleased that the school has made good progress since establishing new leadership in 2019, the Council's view is that keeping the school open to allow time for the new teaching structure to embed won't address the challenges facing the school as outlined in the Consultation Document. In particular, pupil numbers remain very low and aren't expected to increase significantly.
16.2.2	I really hope that you can give us a few more years to show you what Castle Caereinion is capable of.	As above.
16.2.3	I do not believe that closing Castle Caereinion CiW School is the right thing to do at the current time. Allow the school an additional two years to demonstrate growth from the new leadership model. This would also prevent the emotional damage that will be done to the children in closing their school during the Covid pandemic, when so many have already suffered loss already.	As above.
16.2.4	Give them time, to plan, to fund, to educate how small schools benefit children rather than super schools.	As above.

16.2.5	Allow the school an additional two years to demonstrate growth from the new leadership model. This will allow more pupils to come to the school and more to transfer into the Caereinion Cluster high school, which is dual stream language.	As above.
16.2.6	I really hope that you can give us a few more years to show you what Castle Caereinion is capable of.	As above
16.2.7	Wait until the proposed buildings and developments are built, as then more pupils will use the school and the numbers will increase.	Whilst the Council recognises the housing developments in the area, it is not expected that pupil numbers would increase significantly, and the school would continue to be a small school.
16.2.8	Give us more time because there are more houses being built in the village so there could be more children to come yet. We are slowly growing our community but because of Covid we just need a little bit more time to help us to do this!	As above.
16.2.9	If you could wait until the new houses are built we might get new students and if we can get the school to be known more then more people will come.	As above.
16.2.10	Maybe you could give a bit more time so if when the new houses are built then they can bring their children here. That means there will be more people to come to our school and that means more friends for us.	As above
16.2.11	Please give us more time for the new houses which are being built. We will have more pupils then.	As above.
16.2.12	Please let us stay at our school. With Coronavirus shutting the school last year we want something stable, safe and secure for a	As above. The Council recognises that children's education has been disrupted due to the pandemic

	bit. The council say that this is a 10 year transformation programme. Why not leave it a few years for the houses to be built and sold to families and then go over it again.	but the challenges facing Castle Caereinion C. in W. School need to be addressed.
16.2.13	Wait for the houses to be built and to increase the pupil numbers, building work to be carried out that has been reported.	As above.
16.2.14	Give us more time for the new houses to be built because more children might come to this school.	As above.
16.2.15	Promote the school until there are more pupils.	Even with more promotion, it is not expected that pupil numbers would increase significantly. The school would continue to be a small school.
16.2.16	If we have more time we could make signs for more children to come to our school.	As above.
16.2.17	Can you give us more time and we can try to get more pupils into the school. We can put fliers up to get more pupils in. Why does this school need to shut? We can cope with less pupils.	As above. The reasons for the proposal are outlined within the Consultation Document.
16.2.18	I feel the council should withdraw the consultation, at the earliest until the Covid pandemic allows the relevant stakeholders and wider community involved in the school to meet in the conventional manner, i.e., not virtually.	All stakeholders have had the opportunity to be involved in the consultation.
16.2.19	Keep the school open, I would like to see another up-to-date Estyn report to be conducted once we are over the pandemic.	Estyn is currently not undertaking school inspections due to the pandemic.

16.2.20	Allow the children time to adapt to the changes that the pandemic has made, whilst allowing the school time to show the growth it can make in this time.	The Council recognises that children's education has been disrupted due to the pandemic but the challenges facing Castle Caereinion C. in W. School need to be addressed.
16.2.21	Maybe PCC needs to look at increasing housing in Powys and increasing the population in Wales.	The Council has an ambitious target to increase social housing throughout the county.
16.2.22	Delaying the process by a year would have allowed the Council to put together an accurate, fact-based proposal; have access to up-to-date statistics on pupil numbers, educational standards etc; give greater opportunity for the measures introduced by the new school leadership team to bear fruit; allow for proper community consultation.	<p>The Consultation Document is based on detailed consideration of a number of options and the most recent data at the time of writing. All stakeholders have had an opportunity to be involved in the consultation.</p> <p>The Council's view is that keeping the school open to allow time for the new teaching structure to embed won't address the challenges facing the school as outlined in the Consultation Document. In particular, pupil numbers remain very low and aren't expected to increase significantly.</p>

16.3 More use of technology

16.3.1	The best use should be made of digital technology to enable cost-effective delivery of distance learning in specialist and technical subjects, to share resources and reduce costs.	All schools are already expected to use technology to enhance teaching and learning. It is the Council's view that this alone won't address the challenges faced by Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.
16.3.2	The increased use of technology has been shown in recent months to enable children to develop educationally. Smaller	As above.

	schools can use technology to enable children to participate in a wider curriculum in a supportive environment.	
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16.4 Other suggestions

16.4.1	Putting in a training head or a headship of lower grade would save money.	The Council's view is that this won't address the challenges faced by Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.
16.4.2	Instead of shutting the school down, I believe it would be better practise to investigate why the school is costing more than the average and other schools.	There is a minimum level of spend required to run a school in terms of staffing and premises costs. The smaller the number of pupils, the greater the cost per pupil.
16.4.3	Joining us with another school and have a shared head.	Options for federation and merger with other schools have been considered and discounted.
16.4.4	The Council should use long-term, low interest finance to install measures making the school carbon neutral.	The Council's view is that this won't address the challenges faced by Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.
16.4.5	We should be encouraging small village schools. Let's boost money within the school systems with pta and fundraising etc.	As above.
16.4.6	Ask for more local support, we are here and willing to help, we can find raise and volunteer.	As above.
16.4.7	Do not close the school but give it as much support as possible.	As above.
16.4.8	Ask the Minister for Education for more support, while she supports rural schools to stay open.	As above.

16.4.9	Continued support for the Headteacher, staff and governors in support of their work to educate young students from our community.	The Council continue to support the headteacher, staff and governors at the school.
16.4.10	Using Castle Caereinion as a feeder school for Caereinion high school for the English-speaking as when that goes as a through school it won't be able to accommodate all pupils.	The Council's view is that this won't address the challenges faced by Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.
16.4.11	I think a school is an important part of the community so if it closes it should become an activity centre or a day centre or provide work opportunities for people or office space.	Comment noted.
16.4.12	Contact all your own meetings on zoom no more petrol expensive. Find ways cut cost at PCC not at children's expense.	The Council is operating a work from home policy currently.
16.4.13	Don't pay overtime on some services. Cut paperwork to minimum must be loads ways cut cost not our school or village hall it will not be much of saving anyway with transport and people will not want homes with zero in village. But careful thought should be given after Covid to how we live and how children should have to manage.	Comment noted.
16.4.14	The viability of the school should be linked to plan for the sustainable growth of the village's population. The planning department could allow small- scale developments of affordable housing of up to ten homes on rural exception sites adjoining its development boundary.	Comment noted.

17. Comments about impact on the Welsh language

17.1 Comments about Welsh at Castle Caereinion School

17.1.1	I myself attended the school and then went onto attend Caereinion high school. Due to the foundation of Welsh that I learned in primary school, I was taught bilingually in Llanfair.	Comment noted.
17.1.2	We do a good job of speaking Welsh here.	Comment noted.
17.1.3	They probably get taught more Welsh as there are less children and they can focus on one subject.	Comment noted.
17.1.4	We speak Welsh really well in school.	Comment noted.
17.1.5	In my opinion, smaller learning groups are a positive influence on learning languages and therefore believe that closure would have a NEGATIVE impact.	Comment noted.
17.1.6	I think we are doing well at learning Welsh!	Comment noted.
17.1.7	My son although he is English loves the Welsh language other schools do not teach it as well as this school dose it would be a shame not to carry on the Welsh language.	Comment noted. Should the Council proceed with the proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, pupils would continue to learn Welsh at the alternative schools.
17.1.8	We learn how to speak Welsh everyday. Mrs Andrew also helps us with our Welsh.	As above.
17.1.9	We learn lots of Welsh in Castle Caereinion CiW School - it is great fun! It might not be the same at another school.	As above.

17.1.10	I understand from my son that the children are encouraged to speak and use Welsh as much as they wish during the school day and I am not sure how much other schools encourage it.	As above.
17.1.11	Whilst Castle School is English stream, there are various opportunities within the school for the children to learn and be exposed to the Welsh language. Incidental Welsh is used daily within the school along with regular lessons from a peripatetic teacher. The children are also encouraged to practice their Welsh and awarded half termly Welsh Awards. If the children are moved, there is no guarantee this level of teaching and Welsh use will continue in a different school and therefore could be adversely affected.	As above.
17.1.12	The children do a lot of learning in the Welsh language which I'm not confident would be replicated in another setting.	As above.

17.2 Negative impact on the Welsh language

17.2.1	It would have a negative affect. Closing our school implies we are not good enough when the staff do a marvellous job. Teaching the Welsh language and its culture is a natural important part of that.	Comment noted. Should the Council proceed with the proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, pupils would continue to learn Welsh at the alternative schools.
17.2.2	If you close our school most of the Welsh language will be gone out of our village.	As above.
17.2.3	Welsh will go out of the community if we don't learn it at school.	As above.
17.2.4	If you close the school the Welsh will go from the village.	As above.

17.2.5	If you close our school, less people in the village will speak Welsh.	As above.
17.2.6	You would be losing Welsh from Castle.	As above.
17.2.7	If there was no school people would not know how to speak Welsh.	As above.
17.2.8	People might forget Welsh (and Polish).	As above.
17.2.9	However the positives of keeping Castle Caereinion school open and keeping the children here is not every parent wants there children in a fluent Welsh school. They do learn Welsh in the school and they do have Welsh lessons. Also when it's time to look for high schools they do have schools with Welsh and English so you don't need to be fluent Welsh to go to high school but you will still learn Welsh in high school with is obviously a positive.	As above.
17.2.10	I believe that closing Castle Caereinion CiW School would result in a loss of children's access to Welsh language provision. Currently the pupils from Castle tend to feed into Caereinion High School. This is a dual stream school, thus provides children the option to move to the Welsh stream or to complete some subjects through the medium of Welsh. If Castle were to close the children would be moved to schools in the Welshpool cluster, thus meaning that pupils will likely feed into Welshpool High School instead, Welshpool High School is an English medium secondary school. Therefore to close Castle Caereinion CiW School, would result in a loss of pupils assimilation with the Welsh language and their Welsh heritage.	Should the school close, pupils would transfer to their nearest alternative schools. For some, these could be Berriew C. P School, Guilsfield C. P. School or Welshpool C. in W. School. These schools are feeder schools to Welshpool High School. It is correct that Welshpool High School is an English-medium school. The Council acknowledges that pupils transferring to Welshpool High School would not have the same experience of the Welsh Language compared to

		Caereinion High School as that is a dual-stream school.
17.2.11	Traditionally the school has had the relationship with Caereinion high school with a higher importance placed on the Welsh language in this secondary school on comparison with Welshpool. The closure of Castle Caereinion will result in more children having to attend numerous other schools that won't have the same affiliation with a Welsh language school which will have a large impact on where they attend secondary school.	As above.
17.2.12	If you close the school 60% of Welsh users in Castle would disappear.	Comment noted.
17.2.13	Both languages should be taught equal which in a smaller school this must be easier. Give the kids a chance after Covid, I'm pretty sure it's easier to teach and stamp out bullying in smaller schools so languages must be easier.	<p>Castle Caereinion is an English-medium school, with Welsh taught as a second language.</p> <p>The Council recognises that children's education has been disrupted due to the pandemic, but the challenges faced by Castle Caereinion C. in W. school need to be addressed.</p> <p>There is no evidence of more bullying taking place in larger schools compared to smaller schools.</p>
17.2.14	As we are near the border and other primary schools locally are also under threat, and those that aren't are fully subscribed, some students may have to go into England – they will not have the option to learn Welsh.	Given the location of Castle Caereinion, it is unlikely that the alternative provision for any current pupils would be located in England.
17.2.15	It is not possible for the school to be closed without adverse effects (on the Welsh language).	Comment noted.

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17.3 No impact on the Welsh language

17.3.1	In my opinion there is no positive or negative effects for persons to use the Welsh language less favourably than the English language Castle Caereinion is an English medium school which I believe is the fault of PCC education board for not making the school in favour of a Welsh medium.	Comment noted.
17.3.2	I am Welsh but do not speak Welsh I have gone through primary school, high school college and Welsh language has not helped or hindered my life at all.	Comment noted.
17.3.3	Given that the current school is not Welsh language or bilingual, I do not see that the proposal would have any impact on the use of the Welsh language.	Comment noted.

17.4 Other comments

17.4.1	I wish I could speak Welsh but doesn't make me less of a Welsh person.	Comment noted.
17.4.2	I am not an educationist nor a Welsh speaker, but if the Welsh language is seen as such an important part of this country's heritage then investment in ensuring all paid staff and helpers are fluent in Welsh is extremely essential and will promote the regular use of Welsh as an alternative to English in outside school environments. I would strongly support this stance but along with great support for the remainder of the curriculum.	Comment noted.

17.4.3	The viability of the school should be linked to plan for the sustainable growth of the village's population. The planning department could allow small- scale developments of affordable housing of up to ten homes on rural exception sites adjoining its development boundary.	Comment noted.
17.4.4	If the school was to close and all pupils went to a Welsh language school the positives would be that they would be learning Welsh a lot more and could go on to speak fluent Welsh if that's what was wanted.	Comment noted.

18. Comments in support of the proposal

18.1	I agree with the proposal. The consultation report states that the school's budget share per pupil during 2020-21 was £6,919. This is significantly higher than the Powys average of £4,264. This level of disparity cannot be justified and is unfair to all other learners in Powys.	Comment noted.
18.2	I feel it should close as it is too small of a school now. Myself and my husband went to the school 30 years ago and the school was double the size it is now. Children need a bigger school and more opportunities than Castle currently is.	Comment noted.
18.3	We live in Castle Caereinion but chose to send our child who started school in 2020 to Berriew instead of Castle as we felt the school was too small and would benefit from a larger school. Our child is really enjoying it and feel glad we didn't send our child to a small school.	Comment noted.

7. FURTHER ASESMENT AND CONCLUSION

The School Organisation Code includes some additional steps to be undertaken in respect of the consultation report for proposals relating to the closure of rural schools. This section addresses these requirements.

7.1 Further assessment of the proposal and alternatives

Following consultation, the Council has carried out a further assessment of the proposal and the alternatives identified in the proposal paper on the likely impact on quality and standards in education, the likely impact on the community and the likely effect of different travelling arrangements.

The revised assessments, which take account of further information that has come forward through the consultation or otherwise, are provided in the table below:

Option	Likely impact on quality and standards	Likely impact on the community	Likely impact of different travelling arrangements
Option 1: Status Quo – continue as a standalone school	There would be no impact on quality and standards – pupils would continue to attend the current provision at Castle Caereinion.	There would be no impact on the community – provision would continue to be available in Castle Caereinion.	There would be no impact on travel arrangements – pupils would continue to attend Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.
Option 2: Federation with Welshpool C. in W. School	The impact on quality and standards would be minimal. Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would continue to operate as a standalone school; however, the school would be federated with Welshpool C. in W. school, meaning that one joint governing body would be	The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Castle Caereinion. However, one joint governing body would be responsible for both schools, therefore there could be a	There would be no impact on travel arrangements – pupils would continue to attend Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.

	<p>responsible for both schools. There would also be the potential for shared leadership across the two schools.</p> <p>Establishment of the federation could lead to opportunities to share staff / resources across the federation, which would have a positive impact on quality and standards.</p>	<p>perceived reduction in community involvement in management of the school, depending on the makeup of the federated governing body.</p>	
<p>Option 3: Merge with Welshpool C. in W. School to establish a new school on two sites</p>	<p>Welshpool C. in W. School was established in 2017 following the amalgamation of 4 nursery and infant schools in Welshpool. The school is currently operating across three sites, pending a move to a new building in 2021.</p> <p>Merging Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and Welshpool C. in W. School would mean that Welshpool C. in W. School would need to undergo a further management of change process, having already undergone numerous changes over the last few years. The Council's view is that this would threaten the quality of provision at Welshpool C. in W. School.</p>	<p>The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Castle Caereinion.</p> <p>However, one new governing body would be responsible for both sites, therefore there could be a perceived reduction in community involvement in management of the school, depending on the make up of the new governing body.</p> <p>In addition, it is possible that joint school activities would take place on the Welshpool site as the much larger site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Castle Caereinion site.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current site of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>

<p>Option 4: Close Castle Caereinion, but retain the site as part of Welshpool C. in W. School</p>	<p>Welshpool C. in W. School was established in 2017 following the amalgamation of 4 nursery and infant schools in Welshpool. The school is currently operating across three sites, pending a move to a new building in 2021.</p> <p>Retaining the Castle Caereinion site as part of Welshpool C. in W School would lead to further change for the Welshpool C. in W. School community, which has already undergone numerous changes over the last few years. The Council's view is that this would threaten the quality of provision at Welshpool C. in W. School.</p>	<p>Provision would continue to be available in Castle Caereinion. However, the site would be managed by the current governing body of Welshpool C. in W. School, therefore there could be a perceived reduction in community involvement in management of the school.</p> <p>In addition, it is possible that joint school activities would take place on the Welshpool site as the much larger site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Castle Caereinion site.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current site of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>
<p>Option 5: Merge with Berriew C.P. School to establish a new school on two sites</p>	<p>It is anticipated that this option would have a positive impact on quality and standards through the establishment of one larger school, with a larger number of pupils and a larger team of staff.</p> <p>Whilst pupils would continue to attend separate sites, therefore would not benefit from all being taught together, this option would provide additional opportunities for staff expertise and resources to be</p>	<p>The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Castle Caereinion.</p> <p>However, one new governing body would be responsible for both sites, therefore there could be a perceived reduction in community involvement in management of the school, depending on the make up of the federated governing body.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current site of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>

	<p>shared across both sites. Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and Berriew C.P. School are both in the amber support category based on the 2019 categorisations, therefore it is not anticipated that the impact on quality and standards would be negative.</p>	<p>In addition, it is possible that joint school activities would take place on the Berriew site as the larger site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Castle Caereinion site.</p>	
<p>Option 6: Close Castle Caereinion, but retain the site as part of Berriew C.P. School</p>	<p>Implementation of this option would result in closure of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School; however, provision would continue on the current site. Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and Berriew C.P. School are both in the amber support category based on the 2019 categorisations, therefore it is not anticipated that the impact on quality and standards would be negative.</p> <p>The school would be a larger school, with a larger number of pupils and a larger team of staff, which could have a positive impact on the opportunities available for pupils and staff.</p> <p>Whilst pupils would continue to attend separate sites, therefore would not benefit from all being taught together, this option would</p>	<p>Provision would continue to be available in Castle Caereinion. However, the site would be managed by the current governing body of Berriew C.P. School, therefore there could be a perceived reduction in community involvement in management of the school.</p> <p>In addition, it is possible that joint school activities would take place on the Berriew site as the larger site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Castle Caereinion site.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current site of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>

	provide additional opportunities for staff expertise and resources to be shared across both sites.		
Option 7: Merge with Berriew C.P. School to establish a new school on the Berriew site	<p>It is anticipated that this option would have a positive impact on quality and standards through the establishment of one larger school, with a larger number of pupils and a larger team of staff.</p> <p>All pupils would attend one site, which would provide further benefits to pupils from being part of larger cohorts of pupils, and improved opportunities to share staff expertise.</p> <p>Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and Berriew C.P. School are both in the amber support category based on the 2019 categorisations, therefore it is not anticipated that the impact on quality and standards would be negative.</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Castle Caereinion as there would be no provision in Castle Caereinion. Many comments received emphasise the importance of the school within the local community and the benefits of being part of a close community on the development of pupils. It is also recognised that there are strong links between the school, being a C. in W. school and the local church, and how this contributes to pupils' development, and that this would be lost should the school close.</p> <p>In particular, there could be an impact on the financial viability of the community centre and closure of the school could mean that people would not want to live in Castle Caereinion in the future and could lead to a reduction in community activity in the village. In addition, the village has already suffered a loss of community facilities, and there is concern that closure of the school</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.</p> <p>This would mean that pupils would need to spend more time travelling. The additional travel required would also have an environmental impact and would mean that it would be more difficult for pupils to access some extra-curricular activities where these are held before or after school.</p> <p>Pupils living in the village of Castle Caereinion who are currently able to walk / cycle to school would no longer be able to do so.</p> <p>Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, there would also be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities / events, which is likely to have a greater impact on low-income</p>

		<p>could lead to closure of other facilities in the village.</p> <p>As a Church in Wales School, the Castle Caereinion School building is owned by the Diocese, therefore the Diocese would need to determine the building's future use, and therefore whether or not facilities would remain in Castle Caereinion.</p> <p>Merging with Berriew C.P. School to establish a new school would provide opportunities for the Castle Caereinion community to be involved in the process of establishing the new school, would aid community involvement in the new school.</p>	<p>families and/or families who do not have access to their own transport.</p> <p>The Council recognises that should Castle Caereinion C. in W. School close, pupils would transfer to alternative primary schools, and that some of these would be in a different secondary cluster i.e., Welshpool High School. The Council also agrees that this would have transport implications as outlined below:</p> <p>Pupils who attend Castle Caereinion CiW School normally transfer to Caereinion High School and free home-to-school transport is normally provided for those pupils attending Castle Caereinion CiW School to Caereinion High School.</p> <p>Should Castle Caereinion CiW Primary School close, pupils living in the Castle Caereinion area would be provided with free home-to-school transport to their nearest or catchment secondary school. In the case of pupils choosing to attend Berriew CP School, Welshpool CiW Primary School or Guilsfield CP</p>
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			<p>School, they would ordinarily transfer to Welshpool High School.</p> <p>Pupils currently accessing free home-to-school transport from the Castle Caereinion area to Caereinion High School would continue to receive this service until they finish their education. However, this would not be available to pupils from Castle Caereinion if they have transferred to Berriew C.P. School, Guilsfield C. P. School or Welshpool C. in W. School unless Caereinion High School is their nearest secondary school. This would have an implication for families who may already have elder siblings being transported to Caereinion High School.</p> <p>There may also be a potential impact on transport costs as there may be additional routes required to provide transport from the Castle Caereinion area to Welshpool High School. However, it would be expected that the existing transport routes would be adjusted. The estimated range of costs for this is dependent on which school parents choose for their pupils, should Castle Caereinion</p>
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			<p>close. The following outlines the range of costs, depending on how many pupils require transport:</p> <p>Minimal costs – all pupils can be accommodated within existing transport provision for secondary, albeit some routes may need to be extended – £10 - £20 per school day - £1,900 - £3,800 per annum</p> <p>Need to increase size of bus – approx. £50 per day - £9,500 per annum</p> <p>Additional Taxi required – approx. £60 - £75 per day - £11,400 - £14,250 per annum</p> <p>New bus required - £170 - £230 per day - £32,300 - £43,700</p>
<p>Option 8: Merge with Berriew C.P. School to establish a new school on the Castle Caereinion site</p>	<p>In general, it is anticipated that this option would have a positive impact on quality and standards through the establishment of one larger school, with a larger number of pupils and a larger team of staff. All pupils would attend one site, which would provide further benefits to pupils from being part of larger cohorts of pupils, and</p>	<p>There would be a positive impact on the Castle Caereinion community as this option would retain provision in Castle Caereinion and would lead to an increase in pupil numbers, safeguarding provision in the village for the future.</p> <p>However, there would be a negative impact on the Berriew community as</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Berriew C.P. School.</p> <p>This would mean that pupils would need to spend more time travelling. The additional travel required would also have an environmental impact and would mean that it would be more difficult for pupils to access</p>

	<p>improved opportunities to share staff expertise.</p> <p>However, it is unlikely that the Castle Caereinion site would be able to accommodate all pupils, therefore there would be a negative impact on the quality of provision should all pupils be taught in the current Castle Caereinion building.</p>	<p>there would no longer be provision in Berriew. Whilst merging the two schools to establish a new school would provide opportunities for the Berriew community to be involved in the process of establishing the new school to aid community involvement in the new school, however as Berriew is the larger village with a larger school, it is likely that the Berriew community would consider this option to be disproportionate.</p>	<p>some extra-curricular activities where these are held before or after school.</p> <p>Pupils living in the village of Berriew who are currently able to walk / cycle to school would no longer be able to do so.</p> <p>Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, there would also be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities / events, which is likely to have a greater impact on low-income families and/or families who do not have access to their own transport.</p>
<p>Option 9: Close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools</p>	<p>Implementation of this option would mean that pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would transfer to their nearest alternative schools. For the majority of pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W, School, the closest alternative schools would be Berriew C.P. School. The nearest alternative Church in Wales provision would be Welshpool C. in</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Castle Caereinion as there would be no provision in Castle Caereinion. Many comments received emphasise the importance of the school within the local community and the benefits of being part of a close community on the development of pupils. It is also recognised that there are strong links between the school, being a C.</p>	<p>There may also be a potential impact on transport costs as there may be additional routes required to provide transport from the Castle Caereinion area to Welshpool High School. However, it would be expected that the existing transport routes would be adjusted. The estimated range of costs for this is dependent on which school parents choose for their pupils, should Castle Caereinion</p>

	<p>W. School. Some pupils may also choose to attend Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School or Guilsfield C.P. School as other nearby schools.</p> <p>The Council's view is that all of these schools would provide education for pupils which is of at least equivalent quality as that provided at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on standards and progress overall. The overall aim of the proposal is to improve learning opportunities for pupils. Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, Berriew C.P. School and Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School were categorised as Amber in the latest school categorisations carried out in 2019, whilst Welshpool C. in W. School was categorised as Yellow. Guilsfield C.P. School was classified as a Green school.</p>	<p>in W. school and the local church, and how this contributes to pupils' development, and that this would be lost should the school close.</p> <p>In particular, there could be an impact on the financial viability of the community centre and closure of the school could mean that people would not want to live in Castle Caereinion in the future and could lead to a reduction in community activity in the village. In addition, the village has already suffered a loss of community facilities, and there is concern that closure of the school could lead to closure of other facilities in the village.</p> <p>As a Church in Wales School, the Castle Caereinion School building is owned by the Diocese, therefore the Diocese would need to determine the building's future use, and therefore whether or not facilities would remain in Castle Caereinion.</p> <p>A Community Impact Assessment has been prepared as part of the proposal which considers the impact of the possible closure of the school on the community. This has been</p>	<p>close. The following outlines the range of costs, depending on how many pupils require transport:</p> <p>Minimal costs – all pupils can be accommodated within existing transport provision for secondary, albeit some routes may need to be extended – £10 - £20 per school day - £1,900 - £3,800 per annum</p> <p>Need to increase size of bus – approx. £50 per day - £9,500 per annum</p> <p>Additional Taxi required – approx. £60 - £75 per day - £11,400 - £14,250 per annum</p> <p>New bus required - £170 - £230 per day - £32,300 - £43,700</p>
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		<p>updated to reflect the comments received during the consultation period.</p> <p>There is also a strong link between the school and the local church</p>	
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7.2 Further reasonable alternatives

The other alternatives which were suggested in the consultation responses received are outlined in section 16 of the 'issues raised in the consultation period' section of this report, including the Council's response to these alternatives. These are as follows:

- 16.1 Retain the status quo
- 16.2 Pause the consultation process
- 16.3 More use of technology

The assessment of 16.1 and 16.2 is as per the assessment of 'Option 1 – Status Quo' in the table in section 7.1 above.

All schools are expected to make use of technology to provide enhanced learning experiences to pupils, therefore the Council's view is that 16.3 – More use of technology is not a 'reasonable alternative' in order to address the issues relating to Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.

7.3 Conclusion

It is confirmed that implementation of the proposal is the most appropriate response to the reasons identified for the proposal.

The Consultation Document published in respect of the proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School outlined the reasons why change is needed in Powys, as well as why change is needed in Castle Caereinion are as follows.

The reasons why change is needed in Powys, as outlined in the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education, are as follows:

- High proportion of small schools
- Decreasing pupil numbers
- High number of surplus places
- Building condition
- Financial pressures
- Inequality in access to Welsh-medium education
- Limited post-14 and post-16 offer
- Inequality in access to SEN provision
- Historical lack of political decision making

The reasons why change is needed in Castle Caereinion are as follows:

- Low pupil numbers
- High budget per pupil
- Issues with the building
- Combined age classes
- Leadership

Having considered the issues raised in the consultation report, having carried out a further assessment of the proposal and alternative options on the likely impact on quality and standards in education, the likely impact on the community and the likely effect of different travelling arrangements, and having considered any further reasonable alternatives suggested during the consultation period, the Council's view is that the current proposal continues to be the most appropriate response to these reasons, to ensure improved management of the Powys schools estate, and to ensure that the best possible educational opportunities can be provided to pupils living in Castle Caereinion and across Powys in the future.

As outlined in the Consultation Document, the reasons for the proposal are as follows:

- To address the issue of low pupil numbers
- To reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools

- To realise a financial saving to the Council
- To enable pupils to attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum
- To enable pupils to attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities
- To enable pupils to attend schools with better quality accommodation
- The proposal meets all of the Critical Success Factors

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Appendix C – Minutes of meetings with Staff, Governors and School Council

Contents

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1. Consultation meeting with Staff of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

27th April 2021

Present

Staff:

Sarah Brian, Headteacher
Molly Evans, Teacher
Olga Pugh, School Administrator
Julie Taylor, Cleaner
Eirlys Jones, Breakfast Club and Midday Supervisor
Christine Williams, Breakfast Club Supervisor
Helen Elaine Savage, Teaching Assistant

Officers:

Emma Palmer, Head of Transformation and Communications
Lynette Lovell, Interim Chief Education Officer
Marianne Evans, Service Manager for Schools Transformation
Eurig Towns, Service Manager for School Improvement
Mari Thomas, Interim Schools Finance Manager
Sarah Christoforou, HR Business Manager (Schools)
Sarah Astley, Strategic Programme Manager, Transforming Education

Others:

Sheridan Goodey, Schools Business Support Officer, St Asaph Diocese

Emma Palmer welcomed all to the meeting and introduced Powys County Council officers attending the meeting. The Staff of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School were also in the meeting, and Headteacher Sarah Brian introduced them.

It was explained that there would be a brief presentation with an opportunity for discussion, comments, and questions to the officers afterwards. Emma Palmer explained that the meeting would be recorded, for minuting purposes but the recording would be deleted once the minutes had been completed.

Marianne Evans gave a Powerpoint presentation and explained that in February 2021, Powys Cabinet gave approval to proceed with a proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. The consultation commenced on 14th April 2021 and will finish on 2 June 2021.

The importance of the consultation process as a way for people to make their views known was emphasised.

The specific proposal is:

- To close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School from 31st August 2022, with pupils to attend their nearest alternative schools.

Emma Palmer explained that responses received during the consultation period would be summarised and a response given to them, and they would form the substance of a report to Cabinet who would consider the responses before making a decision whether to proceed with the proposal or not. Staff were then given the opportunity to ask any questions or to make any comments in relation to the matter.

Staff: In terms of the timings, obviously we have up until the 2nd of June to respond to the consultation, and then are we right in thinking there is a 28-day period for it to be discussed in Cabinet, does that take us to the 8th of July?

Marianne Evans: The consultation period will finish on the 2nd of June, then we start analysing the responses and creating the consultation report, and then the intention is that a report goes back to cabinet in July. Cabinet at that point have a choice, to proceed with the proposal or decide not to proceed with the proposal. If they decide to proceed, we will publish a statutory notice for 28 days and during that time people can write to us with their objections. At the end of that, those objections are analysed and put into a report which goes back to Cabinet again for the final decision, and even at that stage Cabinet can decide either way.

Staff: If they decide initially to proceed, and there are no objections, when can we expect to have a decision? There is anxiety from staff with regards to different time scales, and when exactly they will know.

Marianne Evans: Without checking, I think it will be late autumn term. It all depends on the level of responses as they will dictate which Cabinet meeting we can get to. For example, a consultation we carried out recently gave us 500 responses, which took a lot of time to analyse. If there are less responses, it takes less time, and we could get to an earlier Cabinet.

Staff: With it being fluid around the dates, it is difficult then to advise parents as some parents are thinking that if the school is going to close, they might move their children earlier.

Emma Palmer: It is certainly challenging, and I think the main thing from our point is that we follow the correct process, and that we take the time that is needed to consider the consultation responses fully. We give an indicative date when we plan this programme out, but we cannot just cement those timelines as we want to do things right and give that time. I do appreciate those challenges that this then presents.

Staff: If we cannot make parents aware until the end of the year, does that then affect the actual closing date if we were to close? Is it 12 months from the notice?

Marianne Evans: There is no change to the closing date, it would still be September 2022.

Emma Palmer then gave Sheridan Goodey form the Diocese of St Asaph, the chance to share any information regarding the process as the Council have been working alongside with her.

Sheridan Goodey: Just to reiterate, I have been working with the school with regards to responding to the consultation to try and help and support as much as possible. We have been working together to understand the process, and how it can be run as smoothly as possible and to ensure that we minimise as much stress as possible. Inevitably, this is going to be very stressful either way and I think we have acknowledged that this needs to be handled carefully.

Emma Palmer: Thank you Sheridan. It is certainly never an easy time, and it is a difficult period. Certainly, with a Code that we must follow, it feels very elongated, but we must give everyone the opportunity.

Sarah Christoforou: Even though the timeline is very long, if staff have questions they want to raise in the meantime, please ask, it does not mean you are accepting a decision either way. Please contact me yourselves or through the Headteacher if you do have any questions that come up in that time. I do not want you to sit and worry about that until a final decision has been made.

Emma Palmer: I think sometimes we attend meetings, and after you wish you had asked XYZ. The door is open for questions and the support arrangements are there, so thank you for reiterating that.

Lynette Lovell: I would just like to reiterate everything everybody has been saying there. We do appreciate how difficult situations are, and the situation we are in and the year we have had. We want to reassure you that well-being and working together is at the four fronts of everything we do and working through this process, recognising the stress it can cause but working through it together. We are here to work with you, and work through this in the right way going forward.

Emma Palmer: Thank you very much Lynette, absolutely.

There were no further questions and Emma Palmer brought the meeting to an end and thanked everyone very much for their thoughtfulness and comments and reminded staff once again to respond to the consultation documents, and how to do so.

2. Consultation meeting with Governors of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

27th April 2021

Present

Governors:

Sian Owen (Chair)
Sue Oke
Cllr David Jones
C Jones
D Roberts
Gareth Davies
H Savage
L Mason

Officers:

Emma Palmer, Head of Transformation & Communications
Lynette Lovell, Interim Chief Education Officer
Marianne Evans, Service Manager for Schools Transformation
Eurig Towns, Service Manager for School Improvement
Mari Thomas, Interim Schools Finance Manager
Sarah Christoforou, HR Business Manager (Schools)
Sarah Astley, Strategic Programme Manager, Transforming Education

Others:

Sheridan Goodey, Business Support Officer, St Asaph Diocese
Cllr Phyl Davies (observing)

Emma Palmer welcomed all to the meeting and introduced Powys County Council officers attending the meeting. The Governors of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School present in the meeting introduced themselves. It was explained that there would be a brief presentation with an opportunity for discussion, comments, and questions for the officers. Emma Palmer explained that there had been a meeting with staff earlier in the afternoon, that this meeting would be recorded for minuting purposes, but the recording will be deleted once minutes were completed.

Marianne Evans gave a Powerpoint presentation and explained that in February 2021, Powys Cabinet gave approval to proceed with a proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. The consultation commenced on 14th April 2021 and will finish on 2 June 2021.

The importance of the consultation process as a way for people to make their views known was emphasised.

The specific proposal is:

- To close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School from 31st August 2022, with pupils to attend their nearest alternative schools.

Emma Palmer then gave governors the opportunity to ask any questions or to make any comments in relation to the matter.

Governor: I was under the impression that because Castle Caereinion is a church school, that the final decision would not necessarily rest with the Powys Cabinet, but with Welsh Government?

Sheridan Goodey: No, it would only go to Welsh Government if it reaches that stage. Generally, it will follow the same process as for any other school. As Marianne gave you the timeline there, that is exactly what would happen, it would only go to Welsh Government in specific circumstances beyond that.

Governor: What are the circumstances in which the decision would get taken out of Powys' hands?

Sheridan Goodey: That is at another later stage. Normally it would just follow the same process.

Governor: Can you not give us the details of that procedure now then please?

Marianne Evans: There is an opportunity for the Governing Body and the Diocese to refer the final decision to the Welsh Government, and that is an option that church schools have right at the end of the process. If that happens, the Governing Body must state why they think the proposal is wrong, and Welsh Government will consider that. That process would then be in the hands of the Welsh Government.

Emma Palmer: Does that answer your question?

Governor: Well, under pressure yes from Marianne, but I didn't get an honest answer from Sheridan I felt, sorry about that.

Sheridan: My apologies, I didn't want to misquote, so I was going onto the Code to try and find you the specifics. In the cases where it does go to Welsh Government, it must be where there is a very very specific reason for objection at that point, that hasn't already been covered as part of the process. It is not something that would happen automatically, is what I was trying to say.

Governor: Is there a reason why this was just dropped on us only yesterday, and we haven't under the circumstances had a lot of time to prepare?

Headteacher: Just to clarify, the invites to join online came out yesterday, but we were notified of the meeting beforehand.

Governor: We have spotted errors in the consultation report, is that still then a fair consultation and would it still go forward?

Marianne Evans: Any issues raised, including if there are errors, can be put forward as consultation responses, and we can respond to them in the consultation report.

Emma Palmer: As Marianne has said, you don't have to wait until the end of the consultation period, you can raise things throughout the consultation period via email, or you can respond in writing. The team will start to work through the responses, as the authority has a duty to respond in relation to every contribution that is made under the consultation. That response is in the form of a formal consultation report, as Marianne set out. The formal report goes to Cabinet, before they make their decision on whether to proceed with the process and moving to a statutory notice period. It is important for you to know that the consultation report is published and is therefore available in the public domain.

Governor: In your initial comments, you spoke about the nearest suitable school. The nearest council-maintained school is in Berriew, but this is in a different catchment area to Castle Caereinion school. Will the fact that it is in a different catchment, affect its suitability as a receiving school?

Marianne Evans: What we have to do is to look at the whole area, and because Castle Caereinion is a Church in Wales School, the code requires us to ensure there are available Church in Wales places for those parents who wish a Church education for their child. Within the area, 4 miles away, Welshpool C. in W. School have surplus places, therefore if parents wanted Church education, they would be able to go there. In terms of the catchment, should there not be a school in Castle Caereinion, the admissions team would have to redefine the catchment areas for the remaining schools. This would then mean it is quite likely that if children went to Berriew, Berriew being in the Welshpool catchment, it would affect the transport as transport is available to your follow-on secondary school from the Primary School that you go to. There might be a time for a while when transportation would be slightly challenging for some parents because some pupils might have been refused transport to Welshpool High School, but parents could appeal as well if refused transport.

Governor: I have a difficulty here because traditionally the children from Castle Caereinion School went to Llanfair High School, but of late there has been a quite a move going to Welshpool High School. What will happen with that, will children still

be able to go to Welshpool High School, and will they still get free home to school transport to Welshpool?

Marianne Evans: They get free school transport to their closest or catchment school, so in terms of Secondary provision, if they have free transport to Welshpool that would continue.

Governor: So they would get free transport to Berriew school, presuming that Castle Caereinion closed, and from Berriew they would get free school transport to Welshpool School, even though they still live in Castle Caereinion?

Marianne Evans: Yes, according to the new admission policy that will come through next year, they would get transport to the secondary school for that catchment.

Governor: Have you looked at the area that children come from to Castle school?

Marianne Evans: Yes, we have looked at where all the children currently live, and we know which school is their closest school.

Governor: Yes, how many schools do we have the opportunity to go to?

Marianne Evans: There is a significant number of schools within a 10-mile radius of Castle Caereinion, so should the parents choose any one of those schools and there is a place in that school, then they will get a place. In terms of the transport policy, it is free transport to your closest or catchment school.

Governor: And they will be guaranteed free transport to those schools?

Marianne Evans: Yes, to the closest or catchment school you will have free transport, if they are eligible for that transport.

Governor: Will they still be able to go to Llanfair High School like the normal catchment they have now?

Marianne Evans: We would have to redefine the catchments as I said earlier, so if there wasn't a school in Castle we would be looking at the catchment areas for the remaining schools.

Governor: You are talking about the transport, is there going to be a big additional cost to the education department to transport these children to other schools rather than Castle?

Marianne Evans: Yes, the costs have been calculated and are in the consultation document. The estimated transport costs are around £32,300.

Emma Palmer: Just to confirm that as we move forward with the transformation programme, the transport policy will continually be reviewed. We reviewed it last year and there were a few decisions made by the Cabinet, and we have said it will continue to be reviewed, which we will do.

Governor: Just going back to the numbers and transport, are there going to be enough places in our nearest school if there are lots of schools facing closure?

Marianne Evans: Currently, we are only looking at Castle Caereinion in this catchment area. We know that there are enough places within other schools in this area for the pupils of this school.

Governor: Are you splitting the school up at all? For example, if the nearest school only has 21 places, how are we going to then fit in?

Marianne Evans: We know that the majority of pupils are closest to Berriew, and there are also some pupils that are closer to other schools. At this point in time, we expect there will be enough spaces Berriew for those closer to Berriew should they want to go there.

Governor: Yes, but what about those pupils that don't want to go to Berriew, are there places for everybody anywhere else? Have people been asked where they would like to go?

Marianne Evans: Nobody has been asked where they want to go yet, as we have to go through this process first before any decisions are made, but there are sufficient places in all of the other schools that would be closest.

Governor: And if not, transport would be provided to the alternative school of their choice?

Marianne Evans: Yes, if there is no room in their nearest alternative school then we will provide transport to the next nearest school. All schools have places in them.

Governor: They do not at the moment.

Marianne Evans: According to our data, there are enough places, but we will respond to that once we get to the consultation report.

Governor: Have you done a survey to find the numbers available across the schools for children? Meifod, Guilsfield and Llanfair primary?

Marianne Evans: Information on the number of places available in schools is on page 23 of the consultation document, and it is based on our PLASC 2020 data. We haven't had 2021 data yet, but we will be updating that as we take the process forward.

Governor: It was always the policy, that look at schools on a catchment basis, you look at all the primary schools within a given catchment. Why did the policy change to a policy of opportunism, or cherry picking, as now, as obviously there was a change. When did that come in and why?

Emma Palmer: I do not think it is a policy change, it is a change of approach. In terms of the transformation programme in the County when we look at things, we split it into 13 localities, and there won't be a locality untouched when we move through the transformation programme. What we found, is when you work on purely a catchment area basis, sometimes it can take a significant number of years before you see the change. With the requirements that we have in place to meet the recommendations that were set out by Estyn, we do not have the opportunity of several years before we see change, we needed to look at the strategy and what we are trying to achieve as a result of that. We have got change happening in several different places in the County, and the priorities are not the same for every area.

In the mid part of the County for instance, one school we had to prioritise is around condition, which is a different requirement compared to yourselves as such. We are fully aware of the infrastructure that we have in place across the county, and that it is not sustainable as it stands. We also have requirements of delivering the new curriculum and the ability to meet those requirements swiftly. Having done the extensive engagement we did, not last year, the year before because we have had the period of Covid, there was extensive engagement undertaken with a range of stakeholders and we took on board those comments when we pulled together the strategy approved by Cabinet last April. We then set out our intentions to meet the requirements of things raised during the engagements. It was therefore never a policy decision to do a catchment area, it was an approach. In some areas you have to look at a whole catchment or you won't be able to unlock the change. You have to do some things in a certain order to unlock the change elsewhere. It's very complex across the County.

Governor: There is now a presumption that the very last thing you do with a rural school, is to close it. Can you tell us the options that you have considered in Castle Caereinion, which is a rural school, and why you have decided that the only option is to close it?

Marianne Evans: There are several options in the consultation document that we looked at, which included federation, mergers and closure. We have assessed these very thoroughly and carried out SWOT analyses and assessed the factors against the School Organisation Code. The presumption against the closure of rural schools means that we have additional steps to follow in order to come to a preferred option and those steps were carried out as part of this process.

Governor: You mentioned federation, were there others?

Marianne Evans: There is a whole range of options that we have included, and I can share these on the screen. Would you like me to go through them?

Governor: I would like you to go through them and explain to me why you rejected each one of them.

Marianne Evans: The information is in the report, in the consultation document, page 46 and 47 onwards and the weaknesses and strengths of each are there. These include status-quo, which is go on as you are, Federation with Welshpool C. in W. School, the reasons are also there. There was also an option to merge with Welshpool C. in W. School, establishing a new school on two sites. The link with Welshpool Church in W. School is there because of the need to ensure sufficient Church provision is available. Close Castle Caereinion but retain the site as part of Welshpool C. in W. School. Merge with Berriew to establish a new school on two sites. Close Castle Caereinion but retain the site as part of Berriew. Merge with Berriew to establish a new school on the Berriew site. Option 8 merge with Berriew to establish a new school on the Castle Caereinion site. Close Castle Caereinion, pupils to attend their nearest alternative schools, and you can see from the consultation document that we have taken those through a SWOT analysis and assessed them against the Critical Success Factors and the School Organisation Code. There's a lengthy part of the consultation document which shows how we have reached the preferred option which we are consulting on.

Governor: Following on from that, in the assessment for each option, you've got option 7 and you have 2 question marks, "could be met", and option 9 is obviously 4. If those question marks, "could be met", then surely they should be ticked and that would be 4 and 4? Yet the only option seems to be to close and therefore option 7 should still be available to us.

Marianne Evans: We will respond to that in the consultation report, the process we use is a technical process but the reason we proposed this closure is the reasons stated there and a reason why we discounted the other options. There is also the opportunity for you to present alternative options, anybody can present an alternative option and we would then need to look at that in the consultation report.

Lynette Lovell: I think all of the points you have brought up are important, it's important that you make them clear in the consultation process. We are aware of the time we are in and the anxiety and stress it can bring. Please make sure your voice is heard, it is what the process is all about. Just to make you aware in terms of the staff and the children at the school, the support is there and Sarah Christoforou from HR is on the call tonight. She is working solely on transformation work, and we have a big programme of change and the support is there for staff at this time. I just wanted to make you aware as Governors, that we want to work alongside the staff to make sure that they have all their questions answered and yours too. If you have anything you want to bring up in the consultation, please do. It is about you and if

you have ideas and thoughts that could be looked at, it is an open consultation so please use it.

In the process so far we have been doing a number of consultations over the past couple of months, and the responses have been really good with a high level of response, through undertaking meetings like this and the process itself. We are having a lot of information and suggestions from people throughout, which will be taken into consideration when everything is presented before Cabinet. I wanted to ensure you that it will be done the best way we can. We know we have to see change in Powys moving forward but we need to do it in a way that everyone feels their voice is heard.

Emma Palmer: Can I please just check, are there any further questions anyone would like to raise whilst we are with you tonight? Otherwise, I am going to call the meeting to a close.

Emma brought the meeting to an end and thanked everyone very much for their thoughtfulness and comments.

3. Consultation meeting with the School Council of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

19th May 2021 – Held virtually on Microsoft Teams

Present: Marianne Evans, Sarah Astley, Huw Rowlands – Powys County Council
Sarah Brian, Headteacher – Castle Caereinion Church in Wales School

Officers from Powys County Council met virtually via Microsoft Teams with representatives from the School Council of Castle Caereinion Church in Wales school to discuss the consultation to close Castle Caereinion Church in Wales school from 31 August 2022 with pupils to attend their nearest alternative schools.

The School Council group consisted of 8 pupils.

Pupils gave a short presentation about Castle Caereinion School, which is transcribed below:

'We would like you to save our school because we are happy here. The lessons that we do are fun, we are learning new things all of the time! We have large classrooms that have lots of space to move around and to do lots of team work! We are excited about the new curriculum and think our school is going to be a great place to learn in this fun new learning style, with the four purposes.

As part of our new curriculum learning we are doing a whole school topic of green which is great as we get to chose what we want to learn about! We are also learning to speak a new language, Polish! We can say words like, Tak, Nie, Czesc, Dovidenia and Dziękuję Ci. We don't mind practising and getting it a bit wrong because we are all friends and no body laughs at you. We all help each other to learn and to get better.

We are like a family in Castle Caereinion CiW School. Everybody knows each other really well and we all look after each other. We are all friends but if we have to move to different schools we will lose our friendships as we will all be split up.

We have great outdoor areas that allow us to take our learning outdoors! We have our own pond to do pond dipping, seated areas and an outdoor classroom. We have raised beds where we can plant lots of different things. All of the garden areas are kept locked so that we can be kept safe inside them! We also have Forest Schools starting here and we are really excited about it!

When Covid goes away we will be able to go back to having lots of after school clubs, like craft club, coding club and sports club. We always do Christmas crafts too but couldn't last year because of Covid. If we go to another school we might not be able to stay to do after school clubs because our mummies and daddies would have

to pick us up as we would miss the bus. This wouldn't be fair, because we would never get to do the fun clubs that we can here in Castle school.

We will also be able to do school trips again, they are always great fun. We have been to the Senedd in Cardiff to learn about our capital city. We also went to the zoo!

Our school is great because we have so many great resources. We have our very own ICT suite with PCs. We also have laptops, ipads and chrome books that we can use in class! Each classroom has an interactive whiteboard and these have been great at helping us to join in live assemblies with Google, a range of famous authors on World Book Day and more recently with Keep Wales Tidy for our Climate Change week.

Our school is special because we have nice teachers who care about us and know us all really well.

Its better being taught in a smaller school because there are less children so we get to have more help from the teachers. The children are all really friendly too, in bigger schools not everyone is nice to you all of the time.

Our school is close to our Church which is really good because we can walk to our Church for services. We go there to learn about God and for special events like Christingle, Harvest and Easter. We also go there for RE lessons where we have role play sessions and act out Baptisms and weddings. Our vicar, Rev. Steve is able to come to our school lots and is able to teach us all about Jesus and God. He might not be able to come to us if we go to another school.

We also have the Impact teams come to visit us with their big bus. This won't happen if we don't go to a Church school. We all love it when the Impact bus comes! The people from the Church link in with us a lot, they hold messy Church clubs where we all get to do lots of really fun craft activities with the people from the community and the church.

Most of us live in the village so at the moment we can walk to our school. If our school closes we may not be able to walk to our school and that will mean putting more cars on the roads. That causes more pollution and that is not good for the environment.

Our village is growing too, we have more houses being built and people might not move here if there is no school. If you leave our school open then the new families will be able to send their children here and we can make even more friends. It's really good living in the same village as our school because we are able to meet up after school and play in the park. If we go to other schools our friends might live in different places so we would need to have lifts to go and meet them. This would be bad for the environment.

Our school is next door to the community centre. This is great because we get to have cake stalls, Christmas and Summer Fayres, school plays and tea mornings. All of the people from the village can get to come to these, so it helps us to work together as a Community. It is also a great chance for the older members of the community to get out of the house and to do something fun with us, the youngest members of the community.

In school we have Committees, like the School Council, Healthy Schools, Eco Schools and Criw Cymraeg. Because we are a small school we get to be in more than one of these clubs which is great! We work in our committees to make positive changes. The School Council organise fundraising events for things like Young Minds, Red Nose Day and World Book Day. We have a Healthy Schools Week coming up where we will learn all about being healthy and we will have a healthy tuck shop! Our Criw Cymraeg are really good and they are teaching us new words and phrases all of the time. We have got our Bronze Award and we meet with Mrs Andrew a lot as she is helping us to work towards our Silver Award for the Siatr Iait.

We have lots of great sports equipment and we have fun in our PE lessons using it! We are really looking forward to Covid going away so we can compete against other schools in sporting competitions!

Thank you for listening!

Following the presentation, the pupils were asked several questions and their responses are summarised below.

It was explained that the first question would have been **'What do you like about Castle Caereinion school'**, however pupils have already answered that question in their presentation. Officers moved on to the second question:

Is there anything you don't like about the school? Is there anything that could be better?

- No

It was explained that from time to time Powys County Council had to look at the schools in Powys, and sometimes some changes have to be made to some of the school. The Council has been reviewing Castle Caereinion School, and is wondering whether the school should close.

The consultation process was explained and the fact that no final decision had been made yet, it was still an idea and there was now an opportunity for people to say what they think. It was explained that the Council especially wants to hear what pupils think about this idea.

Do you all understand what we are here to speak to you about?

- Yes

If there was no school in Castle Caereinion, what would change for you as pupils?

- We would lose friends as they would be moving to a different school, so we would have to split from some of them.
- We wouldn't be able to meet together after school.
- We couldn't walk to school and we would have to drive to a different school and cause more pollution.

How many of you live in the village and walk to school now?

- 5 pupils put their hands up
- Many of us live in the village

If the school was to close which other school would you go to?

- Llanfair, Welshpool, Welshpool, Llanfair, Llanfair, Llanfair, Llanfair, Guilsfield

So a lot of you think you would go to Llanfair, but nobody would go to Berriew? Does nobody live closer to Berriew?

- Some live closer to Berriew but parental choice means that they would go elsewhere.

Is there anything else you can think of that would be different, or worse for you if there was no school in Castle Caereinion?

- If there was no school here, people would not want to move to this village
- You wouldn't be able to meet up with people in the village.

I'm getting the feeling that Castle Caereinion school is very important to you as a community, it's wider than just the school. Do you think you would feel part of the community if you move to a different school?

- No.

Why would that be?

- You would have to meet new children in a new school. Some could be mean to you. Here everyone is kind.
- If we don't go to the school we're not supporting the community.

A lot of you have mentioned going to Llanfair school if Castle Caereinion school closes. It's much bigger than Castle Caereinion school. Is there anything you think would be good about being in a bigger school?

- I would see my cousin
- More friends
- A wider group of friends
- Lots of friends

Is there anything that would be worse about going to a bigger school?

- We could get lost
- Difficult to make friends as other children will already have their friends
- More people could/might bully you
- You might get lost
- Being shy
- Feel like the odd one out

At the moment you're in 2 classes in Castle Caereinion school and there are a number of year groups in each class. In a bigger school there would be less year groups in each class, maybe Reception and year 1 together, years 1 and 2 together, years 2 and 3 together, 4 and 5 together. Would that be a good or bad thing?

- It would be bad because I would be separated from my friend
- You wouldn't be able to see your friends

How would you feel things would change for your teachers if Castle Caereinion school closes?

- It would be hard for them to find a job
- People would lose their jobs
- Sad
- I would like them to try for work at Llanfair school

Do you have any other questions? Is there anything else you would like to add? Is there anything worrying you about the plans?

- Why do you need to close our school?

Officers explained that the Council has to look at all its schools. At the moment there are lots of schools across the whole of Powys. Some schools are very small and it's difficult to keep them going if they are small. We think pupils would have more friends and opportunities in larger schools.

- Why does it have to be our school? I've been to bigger schools and children were not kind to me, but they are here.

Officers explained that the Council is looking at other schools in Powys as well as Castle Caereinion – it's not only Castle Caereinion.

- What would you do with the school – sell it, knock it down, it wouldn't be suitable for houses as it's close to the community centre?

The school is owned by the Church in Wales, so they would decide what to do with the building.

- Are you closing the school just to save money?

No, the Council feels that there are more opportunities for pupils in larger schools as they have more opportunities to make more friends.

- I do have a friend who's in Welshpool and we don't talk and she is mean to me sometimes so I'm a bit concerned about that
- Would you be able to see year 1 and Reception kids at playtime at bigger schools?

Yes, you would see them at breaktime.

Officers asked the pupils how they feel about what the Council is doing? Are they happy, sad, worried?

- Worried and sad
- Sad

Officers explained what happens next, which is that this is a consultation period where everyone's views are being asked. Pupils were encouraged to send any further comments or views to the Council by 2 June 2021, when the consultation closes, and to ask their teachers if they need any help to do this.

After the 2nd June, a report summarising everything people and pupils have said during the consultation period will be prepared. It was explained that this would include all of the things pupils have said in today's meeting, as well as what governors and staff have said in meetings held with them, and what other people have said.

The report will then be considered by the Council's Cabinet. It was explained that they are the people who make the decisions in the Council, and they will look at all the comments made and decide if they want to close the school or not. If they decide not to carry on then that would be the end of this plan. If they decide to carry on, then what's known as a Statutory Notice would be published, formally saying that the

Council wants to close the school, and then there would be a 28 day period for people to respond, and to say if they don't agree. Another report would then need to be prepared and considered by the Cabinet.

There's still quite a way to go in the process, and no decision has been made yet, and if the process proceeds, no final decision will be made until just before Christmas. If Cabinet does decide in the end to close the school, that would be in September 2022.

Pupils were reminded once again of the opportunity to send in any further comments and were thanked for attending the meeting and giving their views.

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Proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

Final Impact Assessments

June 2021

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Proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

Final Impact Assessments

1. Introduction

Powys County Council is consulting on proposals to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. The proposal is as follows:

- To close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative school.

In line with the Council's policy, an Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out which incorporates the Welsh Language, Equalities, Well-being of Future Generations Act, Sustainable Development Principles, Communication and Engagement, Safeguarding, Corporate Parenting, Community Cohesion and Risk Management.

In addition, the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2018) requires local authorities to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment and Community Impact Assessment in relation to all school reorganisation proposals. For proposals which affect teaching through the medium of Welsh, local authorities are also required to carry out a Welsh Language Impact Assessment.

The impact assessments are provided in draft form as part of the consultation documentation. The draft Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out based on the latest PLASC information available. The draft Community Impact Assessment has been carried out with input from Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.

Following the consultation period, the impact assessments have been updated to incorporate any issues raised during the consultation period. The updated versions will be considered by the council's Cabinet when determining how to proceed in relation to this proposal.

2. Integrated Impact Assessment

The Impact Assessment (IA) below incorporates Welsh Language, Equalities, Well-being of Future Generations Act, Sustainable Development Principles, Communication and Engagement, Safeguarding, Corporate Parenting, Community Cohesion and Risk Management, supporting effective decision making and ensuring compliance with respective legislation.

Service Area	Schools Service	Head of Service	Emma Palmer/Lynette Lovell	Portfolio Holder	Cllr Phyl Davies
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Proposal
To close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools

Outline Summary / Description of Proposal
In February 2021, the Council's Cabinet approved carrying out consultation on the following proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools

1. Version Control (services should consider the impact assessment early in the development process and continually evaluate)

Version	Author	Date
1	Sarah Astley - Strategic Programme Manager – Schools Transformation	January 2021
2	Marianne Evans - Senior Manager Schools Transformation	January 2021
3	Marianne Evans – Service Manager Schools Transformation	June 2021

2. Profile of savings delivery (if applicable)

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	TOTAL
£	£	£33,891.67	£24,208.33	£	£58,100

3. Consultation requirements

Consultation Requirement	Consultation deadline/or justification for no consultation
Public consultation required	Consultation in accordance with the School Organisation Code was carried out from the 14 th April 2021 to the 2 nd June 2021.

4. Impact on Other Service Areas

Does the proposal have potential to impact on another service area? (Have you considered the implications on Health & Safety and Corporate Parenting?) PLEASE ENSURE YOU INFORM / ENGAGE ANY AFFECTED SERVICE AREAS AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY	
Adult Services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children's Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Commissioning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Highways, Transportation and Recycling	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Housing and Community Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Legal and Democratic Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Property, Planning and Public Protection	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Transformation and Communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Workforce and OD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Data Protection Impact Assessment	

Will the proposal involve processing the personal details of individuals? Yes ✓ No

Is Powys County Council the data controller? Yes ✓ No

If you have answered yes to either of the above you will be required to complete, as a minimum, the screening questions on the data protection impact assessment.

For further advice please contact the Data Compliance Team.

4a Geographical Locations

What geographical area(s) will be impacted by the proposal? (Chose all those applicable)

Powys

North

Mid

South

Brecon

Builth and Llanwrtyd

Crickhowell

Hay and Talgarth

Knighton and Presteigne

Llandrindod and Rhayader

Llanfair Caereinion

Llanfyllin

Llanidloes

Machynlleth

Newtown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welshpool and Montgomery	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ystradgynlais	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. How does your proposal impact on Vision 2025?

Council's Well-being Objective	How does the proposal impact on this Well-being Objective?	<u>IMPACT</u> Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to a more positive impact or to mitigate any negative impacts?	<u>IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION</u> Please select from drop down box below
The Economy We will develop a vibrant economy	Implementation of the proposal would have an impact on employment opportunities in Castle Caereinion as there would no longer be a school in the village. It is also possible that there would be an impact on local businesses in Castle Caereinion and the surrounding area should there be less people in the area.	Poor		Poor
Health and Care We will lead the way in providing effective, integrated health and care in a rural environment	No impact	Neutral		
Learning and skills We will strengthen learning and skills	The proposal would result in closure of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, with pupils transferring to their nearest alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative	Good		

	<p>school would be Berriew C.P. School. However it is possible that pupils may also choose to attend Welshpool C. in W. School as the nearest Church in Wales school, or Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School or Guilsfield C.P. School as other nearby schools.</p> <p>The Council's view is that all of these schools would provide education for pupils which is of at least equivalent quality as that provided at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on standards and progress overall. The overall aim of the proposal is to improve learning opportunities for pupils. Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, Berriew C.P. School and Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School were categorised as Amber in the latest school categorisations carried out in 2019, whilst Welshpool C. in W. School was categorised as Yellow. Guilsfield C.P. School was classified as a Green school.</p> <p>The alternative schools which pupils may attend are larger schools, and it is anticipated that they would provide additional opportunities for pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities.</p> <p>Welshpool C. in W. School moved to a new build in January 2021, which has further improved the educational experience provided to learners, ensuring that the school can provide education which fully meets the requirements of the new curriculum in 21st century facilities. Any current pupils at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School</p>			
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	transferring to Welshpool C. in W. School would also benefit from these improved facilities.			
<p>Residents and Communities</p> <p>We will support our residents and communities</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Castle Caereinion as there would be no provision in Castle Caereinion. Many comments received emphasise the importance of the school within the local community and the benefits of being part of a close community for the development of pupils. It is also recognised that there are strong links between the school, being a C. in W. school and the local church, and how this contributes to pupils' development, and that this would be lost should the school close.</p> <p>In particular, there could be an impact on the financial viability of the community centre and closure of the school could mean that people would not want to live in Castle Caereinion in the future, and could lead to a reduction in community activity in the village. In addition, the village has already suffered a loss of community facilities, and there is concern that closure of the school could lead to closure of other facilities in the village.</p> <p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.</p> <p>Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, there would also be an additional travel requirement</p>	Very Poor	<p>As a Church in Wales School, the Castle Caereinion School building is owned by the Diocese, therefore the Diocese would need to determine the building's future use, and therefore whether or not facilities would remain in Castle Caereinion.</p> <p>Most of the alternative schools that pupils may transfer to, should Castle Caereinion C. in W. school close, are located in rural areas. These schools would already be experienced in providing a range of extra-curricular activities for pupils including those who access home-to-school transport.</p>	Very Poor

	<p>for parents in order to access school activities / events.</p> <p>Comments received suggest closure of the school could mean that families and others aren't attracted to live in the Castle Caereinion area any more, reducing community interaction.</p> <p>A separate community impact assessment has been carried out which includes input from the school. This will be updated as required throughout the process.</p>			
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Source of Outline Evidence to support judgements

6. How does your proposal impact on the Welsh Government's well-being goals?

Well-being Goal	How does proposal contribute to this goal?	<u>IMPACT</u> Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to a more positive impact or to mitigate any negative impacts?	<u>IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION</u> Please select from drop down box below
<p>A prosperous Wales:</p> <p>An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which</p>	<p>No impact</p>	<p>Neutral</p>		

<p>generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.</p>				
<p>A resilient Wales:</p> <p>A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).</p>	<p>Implementation of the proposal would require additional travel for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School for whom this is their closest school. This would have a negative environmental impact as more home to school transport would need to be provided to transport pupils to their nearest alternative school..</p> <p>It is also recognised that there may be additional transport required for secondary aged pupils to Welshpool High School if pupils transferred to alternative schools in the Welshpool cluster area.</p>	Neutral	<p>It is expected that the number of pupils requiring additional transport would be relatively small, and it is possible that they could be accommodated on transport which is already operating.</p>	
<p>A healthier Wales:</p> <p>A society in which people’s physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.</p> <p>Public Health (Wales) Act, 2017:</p> <p>Part 6 of the Act requires for public bodies to undertake a health impact assessment to assess the likely effect of a proposed action or decision on the physical or mental health of the people of Wales.</p>	<p>Implementation of the proposal would result in closure of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, with pupils transferring to alternative schools. It is acknowledged that this could have a negative impact on the mental well-being of pupils, staff and other stakeholders associated with the school during the transition period, however the long term aim is to provide improved learning opportunities for all learners.</p> <p>Any school reorganisation proposal creates a period of uncertainty for the pupils involved, and that this is exacerbated this year due to the Covid pandemic.</p> <p>Information received during the consultation includes the potential impact of closing the school on the Community Centre, and concern</p>	Poor	<p>Support will be provided to pupils during the transition period to enable them to transfer effectively to their new schools.</p> <p>Process to be concluded as quickly as possible to minimise the period of uncertainty for pupils, staff and other stakeholders.</p> <p>The Council would expect that pupils are fully supported by their teachers and other staff at the school during any periods of uncertainty to minimise the impact on their wellbeing.</p> <p>Should the school close, the receiving school or any other school pupils would transfer to would provide support to pupils to aid their transition, ensuring a successful transition to their new school to ensure that all pupils can achieve their potential.</p>	Neutral

	around the future viability of the Centre. The Centre plays an important role to support the wellbeing of members of the community as a number of events and activities take place at the Centre.		Should the school close, the management committee of the Community Centre would need to consider how best to utilise the Centre so that it remains viable.	
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities:</p> <p>Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected Communities.</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Castle Caereinion as there would be no provision in Castle Caereinion. Many comments received emphasise the importance of the school within the local community and the benefits of being part of a close community on the development of pupils. It is also recognised that there are strong links between the school, being a C. in W. school and the local church, and how this contributes to pupils' development, and that this would be lost should the school close.</p> <p>In particular, there could be an impact on the financial viability of the community centre and closure of the school could mean that people would not want to live in Castle Caereinion in the future, and could lead to a reduction in community activity in the village. In addition, the village has already suffered a loss of community facilities, and there is concern that closure of the school could lead to closure of other facilities in the village.</p> <p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.</p>	Very Poor	As a Church in Wales School, the Castle Caereinion School building is owned by the Diocese, therefore the Diocese would need to determine the building's future use, and therefore whether or not facilities would remain in Castle Caereinion.	Very Poor

	<p>Comments received suggest closure of the school could mean that families and others aren't attracted to live in the Castle Caereinion area any more, reducing community interaction.</p> <p>Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, there would also be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities / events.</p>			
<p>A globally responsible Wales: A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.</p> <p>Human Rights - is about being proactive (see guidance)</p> <p>UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Convention gives rights to everyone under the age of 18, which include the right to be treated fairly and to be protected from discrimination; that organisations act for the best interest of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and the right to be heard.</p>	<p>The aim of implementing the proposal is to provide the best possible opportunities to learners, enabling them to reach their full potential.</p> <p>The Council has carried out consultation on the proposal, which included consultation with all pupils affected by the proposal, ensuring that all affected by the plans had the opportunity to give their views.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>		

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language: A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.

Incorporating requirements under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards

Well-being Goal	How does proposal contribute to this goal?	<u>IMPACT</u> Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to a more positive impact or to mitigate any negative impacts?	<u>IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION</u> Please select from drop down box below
<i>Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and treating the Welsh language no less favourable than the English language</i>	<p>Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is an English-medium school, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the proposal would impact on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, or on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.</p> <p>During the consultation period, comments were received which expressed concern that pupils transferring to primary schools in the Welshpool cluster would then transfer to Welshpool High School, which is an English-medium secondary school, instead of Caereinion High School, which is a dual stream secondary school, and that this would mean that they had less opportunities to use the language and less exposure to the language.</p>	Neutral	All schools of all language categories are expected to provide opportunities for pupils to use Welsh.	
<i>Opportunities to promote the Welsh language</i>	<p>Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is an English-medium school, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the proposal would impact on opportunities to promote the Welsh language.</p> <p>During the consultation period, comments were received which expressed concern that pupils</p>	Neutral	All schools of all language categories are expected to provide opportunities for pupils to use Welsh.	

	transferring to primary schools in the Welshpool cluster would then transfer to Welshpool High School, which is an English-medium secondary school, instead of Caereinion High School, which is a dual stream secondary school, and that this would mean that they had less opportunities to use the language and less exposure to the language.			
<i>People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation.</i>	<p>Implementation of the proposal would lead to the closure of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, with pupils transferring to their nearest alternative schools.</p> <p>It is likely that pupils would transfer to larger schools, and it is anticipated that being part of a larger school would result in additional opportunities for pupils to take part in sport, art and other extra-curricular activities.</p> <p>However, during the consultation period, comments were received about the extent of activities available at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and that the size of the school meant that all pupils had an opportunity to take part, which may not be the case in larger schools.</p>	Neutral	All schools, regardless of size, are expected to provide extra-curricular opportunities for pupils, including sport, art and recreation.	Neutral

A more equal Wales: A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).

Incorporating requirements under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 and the Social Economic duty (2020).

Well-being Goal	How does proposal contribute to this goal?	<u>IMPACT</u> Please select from	What will be done to better contribute to a more positive impact or to mitigate any negative impacts?	<u>IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION</u>
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		drop down box below		Please select from drop down box below
Age	The proposal would impact on primary aged pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. The proposal aims to provide improved educational opportunities for all affected pupils.	Neutral		
Disability	The proposal would impact on any pupils with disabilities currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. The proposal aims to provide improved educational opportunities for all affected pupils, including any pupils with disabilities. Comments received during the consultation refer to the fact that Castle Caereinion C. in W. School has received significant investment to make disability adaptations to the school.	Neutral	Should the school close, the Council would ensure that the requirements for pupils with additional needs are met at whichever school they may choose to attend.	Neutral
Gender reassignment	No impact			
Marriage or civil partnership	No impact			
Race	The proposal would impact on all primary aged pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, including pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups due to their race. The proposal aims to provide improved educational opportunities for all affected pupils.	Neutral		
Religion or belief	The proposal aims to provide improved educational opportunities for all pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, regardless of their religion or belief.	Neutral	The Council has an appeals process for transport applications. If transport is refused, parents could appeal the decision.	Neutral

	<p>Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is a church school. Should the school close, alternative church provision is available at Welshpool C. in W. School for pupils wishing to continue to access denominational provision, however the Council's home to school transport policy does not provide transport to denominational provision, therefore pupils would not receive transport to the school unless it was their closest school.</p> <p>Comments received during the consultation suggest that this has a negative impact on the ability of pupils/parents to access alternative denominational provision, and that this could particularly impact any parents on low incomes or without access to their own transport who wish for their children to continue to access church provision.</p>			
Sex	The proposal aims to provide improved educational opportunities for all pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.	Neutral		
Sexual Orientation	The proposal aims to provide improved educational opportunities for all pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, regardless of their sexual orientation.	Neutral		
Pregnancy and Maternity	No impact	Neutral		
Socio-economic duty	The aim of the proposal is to provide improved educational opportunities for all pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, including any eligible for Free School Meals, however based on PLASC 2020 information, no	Poor	Most of the alternative schools that pupils may transfer to, should Castle Caereinion C. in W. school close, are located in rural areas. These schools would already be experienced in providing a range of	

	<p>pupils at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School were eligible for Free School Meals.</p> <p>Should the proposal be implemented, there would be no school in Castle Caereinion. This would mean that pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would need to travel to their nearest alternative provision. Whilst home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils, it is possible that this would impact on pupils' ability to access extra-curricular / after school activities, and that this impact would be greater in respect of pupils from lower income households or pupils from homes that do not have their own transport. There would also be an impact on the parents of these pupils in terms of accessing school activities.</p>		<p>extra-curricular activities for pupils including those who access home-to-school transport.</p>	
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Source of Outline Evidence to support judgements

7. How does your proposal impact on the council's other key guiding principles?

Sustainable Development Principle (5 ways of working)

Principle	How does the proposal impact on this principle?	<u>IMPACT</u> Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to a more positive impact or to mitigate any negative impacts?	<u>IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION</u> Please select from drop down box below
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<p>Long Term: <i>Looking to the long term so that we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.</i></p>	<p>Pupil numbers at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School are low and are not expected to increase significantly over the coming years. The aim of the proposal to close the school is to ensure the best possible opportunities for learners in the area now and in the future, and to ensure better strategic management of the Powys schools estate.</p>	<p>Good</p>		
<p>Collaboration: <i>Working with others in a collaborative way to find shared sustainable solutions.</i></p>	<p>Consultation has been carried out, which has enabled all interested parties to give their views. This included an opportunity to suggest any alternative options for the school.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>		
<p>Involvement (including Communication and Engagement): <i>Involving a diversity of the population in the decisions that affect them including:</i></p> <p>Unpaid Carers:</p> <p><i>Ensuring that unpaid carers views are sought and taken into account</i></p>	<p>Full consultation has been carried out in accordance with the School Organisation Code in order to achieve this. All interested parties have had an opportunity to give their views. The findings of this exercise will be reported to Cabinet and will be taken into consideration when determining how to proceed.</p> <p>All stakeholders have had the opportunity to give their views as part of this process, this would include any unpaid carers in the area.</p>	<p>Good</p>		
<p>Prevention: <i>Understanding the root causes of issues to prevent them from occurring including:</i></p> <p>Safeguarding:</p>	<p>The aim of the proposal to close the school is to ensure the best possible opportunities for learners in the area now and in the future, and to ensure better strategic management of the Powys schools estate.</p> <p>Ensuring appropriate safeguarding arrangements is a key aspect of any school organisation</p>	<p>Good</p>		

<i>Preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children, young people and adults with health and social care needs who can't protect themselves.</i>	proposal. The intention is that the proposal would maintain or improve the safeguarding arrangements for all pupils.			
Integration: <i>Taking an integrated approach so that public bodies look at all the well-being goals in deciding on their well-being objectives.</i>	No impact	Neutral		
Powys County Council Workforce: What Impact will this change have on the Workforce?	Implementation of the proposal would impact on all current staff at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School as there would no longer be a school in Castle Caereinion, therefore staff would be subject to a Management of Change process. Full consultation has been carried out in accordance with the School Organisation Code. This process was supported by relevant LA teams (e.g. HR). This included consultation with staff, which ensured that they had an opportunity to give their views.	Neutral		
Payroll: How will this impact salary, any overtime/enhanced payments etc? Does this affect any particular group of employees? E.g. Male/Female dominated workforce. Does this proposal comply with the Councils Single Status Terms and Conditions?	Implementation of the preferred way forward could impact on salary arrangements for current staff at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. All staff at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School are female.	Neutral		

Welsh Language impact on staff	Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is an English-medium school, therefore it is not anticipated that there would be a Welsh language impact on staff.	Neutral		
Apprenticeships: Has consideration been given to whether this change impacts negatively, or positively on Apprenticeships within the service?	No impact	Neutral		

Source of Outline Evidence to support judgements

Consultation responses

8. What is the impact of this proposal on our communities?

Communities	How does the proposal impact on residents and community?	<u>IMPACT</u> See impact definitions in guidance document	What will be done to better contribute to a more positive impact or to mitigate any negative impacts?	<u>IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION</u> See impact definitions in guidance document	Source of Outline Evidence to support judgement
Castle Caereinion	There would be a significant impact on the community of Castle Caereinion as there would be no provision in Castle Caereinion. Many comments received emphasise the importance of the school within the local community and the benefits of being part of a close community on the development of pupils.	Major	As a Church in Wales School, the Castle Caereinion School building is owned by the Diocese, therefore the Diocese would need to determine the building's future use, and therefore whether or not facilities would remain in Castle Caereinion.	Major	

	<p>It is also recognised that there are strong links between the school, being a C. in W. school and the local church, and how this contributes to pupils' development, and that this would be lost should the school close.</p> <p>In particular, there could be an impact on the financial viability of the community centre and closure of the school could mean that people would not want to live in Castle Caereinion in the future, and could lead to a reduction in community activity in the village. In addition, the village has already suffered a loss of community facilities, and there is concern that closure of the school could lead to closure of other facilities in the village.</p> <p>Comments received suggest closure of the school could mean that families and others aren't attracted to live in the Castle Caereinion area any more, reducing community interaction.</p> <p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.</p> <p>Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, there would also be an additional travel requirement for</p>				
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	<p>parents in order to access school activities / events, which is likely to have a greater impact on low income families and/or families who do not have access to their own transport.</p> <p>A separate community impact assessment has been carried out. This has been updated to reflect comments received during the consultation period.</p>				
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9. What are the risks to service delivery or the council following implementation of this proposal?

Risk Identified	Inherent Risk Rating Impact X Likelihood (See Risk Matrix in guidance document)	Mitigation	Residual Risk Rating Impact X Likelihood (See Risk Matrix in guidance document)
Period of uncertainty for Castle Caereinion C. in W. School if a statutory process is carried out and implemented which might have a negative effect on standards at the school	Medium	The Council to provide advice and support to the school and governing body to ensure that standards and performance do not deteriorate during the transition period	Medium
Uncertainty for staff during any transition period might result in some staff leaving	Medium	Engagement with staff to take place throughout the process and staff to be kept informed of developments	Medium
Negative impact on pupils wellbeing which has already been affected due to the pandemic.	High	It is expected that pupils are supported through any periods of change by teachers and other staff at the school.	Medium

10. Overall Summary and Judgement of this Impact Assessment?

The aim of the proposal is to improve the educational provision for learners. However, whilst this impact assessment has identified some positive aspects, in particular relating to learning and skills and ensuring the best strategic management of the Powys schools estate, the assessment has also identified some negative aspects. These primarily relate to the impact on the community of Castle Caereinion due to loss of educational provision from the village, potential impact on the viability of the Community Centre, loss of close links with the local Church, and the associated additional travel requirements for pupils and impact on families. The wellbeing of pupils, staff and families has also been raised as a key concern, particularly as the consultation process has been carried out during a pandemic.

11. Is there additional evidence to support the Impact Assessment (IA)?

What additional evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

Consultation responses.

12. On-going monitoring arrangements?

What arrangements will be put in place to monitor the impact over time?

The Transforming Education Programme Board will continue to monitor impact over time.

Please state when this Impact Assessment will be reviewed.

This impact assessment will be reviewed at each stage of the process

13. Sign Off

Position	Name	Signature	Date
Impact Assessment Lead:	Sarah Astley		
Head of Service:	Lynette Lovell		
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Phyl Davies		

14. Governance

Decision to be made by	Cabinet	Date required	

3. Equality Impact Assessment

Powys County Council

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)



Proposal	To close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools
Service Area	Schools Service
Date of Assessment	January 2021
Lead Person undertaking the assessment	Huw Rowlands
Relevant Head of Service who has agreed this assessment	Lynette Lovell

The Equality Act 2010, requires that public sector organisations in the exercise of their functions, pay due regard to the following 'general duty':

- (a) Eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;**
- (b) Advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;**
- (c) Fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.**

The protected characteristics include: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, sex and sexual orientation. This assessment also includes a consideration of impact upon people and communities whose language of choice is Welsh.

The specific regulations for Wales [Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011] require public sector bodies to monitor relevant policy and practises and then assess and report on the impact based upon an analysis of relevant data and evidence.

1. AIM or PURPOSE

Briefly describe the aim or purpose of the change proposal being assessed.

In February 2021, the Council's Cabinet approved carrying out consultation on the following proposal:

- To close Castle Caereinion C. in W. Primary School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools

2. OBJECTIVES

Please state the current business objectives of the change proposal.

The Council is proposing to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School for the following reasons:

- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Castle Caereinion C. in W. Primary School
- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools
- Revenue saving to the Council
- Pupils would attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum
- Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities
- Meets all of the Critical Success Factors

3. BENEFITS and OUTCOMES

i) What are the intended benefits or outcomes from the change proposal?

The benefits of the proposal are:

- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Castle Caereinion C. in W. Primary School
- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools
- Revenue saving to the Council
- Pupils would attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum
- Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities

4. CORPORATE RELEVANCE

How does this change proposal relate to Vision 2025?

Learning and Skills is one of the four priorities outlined in Corporate Improvement Plan 2020-25: Vision 2025. Within this priority, the Plan includes a commitment to 'Improve our schools infrastructure'.

5. DATA USED

5.1. What data has been used to conduct this assessment?

Tick/shade boxes as appropriate.

Profiling of service users, providing a breakdown of who uses the service by the protected characteristics.	✓
Service user satisfaction rates, broken down by the protected characteristics.	
Qualitative data (analysed against the protected characteristics) which provides evidence about current services users experience accessing the service.	✓
Qualitative data gathered from those that are not currently using the service.	✓
Complaints monitoring against the protected characteristics.	
Wider research reports and findings.	
Relevant service based Equality Impact Assessment.	

5.2. Are there any gaps in the data?

No

6. DATA ANALYSIS

6.1 Quantitative Summarise the key quantitative data analysis results, providing key headline statistics.	<u>PLASC January 2020</u>
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<p>Include data that relates to existing provision and also data relating to proposal. E.g. statistics generated from a consultation questionnaire.</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <p>i) Are certain groups currently underrepresented in service user figures? Will a change affect this?</p> <p>ii) How do satisfaction levels compare across the protected characteristic groups? How will a change affect this?</p>	<p>Based on the information provided in the school's PLASC return in January 2020, the following pupils belong to the protected characteristic groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Free school meals: 4.2% of pupils are eligible for Free School Meals. - ALN: 29.2% of pupils have special educational needs. Of these, 16.7% of pupils are on School Action, 12.5% of pupils are on School Action Plus and 0.0% of pupils have statements. - Disabilities: 29.2% of pupils have additional learning needs. - English as an Additional Language: 8.3% of pupils are identified as EAL pupils. - Ethnicity: The ethnic group of 79.2% of pupils in the school is White British. 8.3% of pupils belong to ethnic groups other than White British. - Looked after Children: 0% of pupils are looked after. <p>This information shows that a proportion of pupils that belong to the protected characteristic groups will be affected by this proposal. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4.2% of pupils at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School are eligible for Free School Meals. This is lower than the Powys average for primary schools (12.7%) - 29.2% of pupils at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School have additional learning needs. This is higher than the Powys average for primary schools (18.8%) - 8.3% of pupils are identified as EAL pupils and belong to ethnic groups other than White British. <p>The proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would impact on all pupils currently attending the school, including those pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups.</p>
<p>6.2 Qualitative Summarise the key qualitative data analysis, providing key themes or patterns.</p>	<p>Full consultation will be carried out on the proposal relating to Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, which will include consultation with pupils at the affected schools. This will provide qualitative data in respect of the proposal, and any additional impact on pupils that belong to protected characteristic groups.</p>

<p>Include data that relates to existing provision and also data relating to proposal. E.g. protected characteristics focus group on the proposal.</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <p>i) Do certain groups have a different service user experience? How will a change affect this?</p> <p>ii) Have any areas for improvement been communicated by particular groups? Will a change have an impact upon these views?</p> <p>iii) What are the reasons behind some groups not using the service? How will a change affect this position?</p> <p>iv) What has consultation on your proposals revealed about impact on the protected characteristics?</p>	<p>Further detail will be added to this EqIA following the conclusion of the consultation period and the consideration of the responses received.</p>
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7. EqIA RESULT

Based on an analysis of the available qualitative and quantitative data, please tick/shade the appropriate box opposite to provide the EqIA assessment result.

<p>The proposal does not present any adverse impact on equality. [Proceed to question 10]</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>The proposal presents some adverse impact on equality. [Proceed to question 8]</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>The proposal presents significant impact on equality [Proceed to question 8]</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. AREAS for IMPROVEMENT

<p>Please provide detail of weak or sensitive areas of the proposal identified by the assessment.</p> <p>i) Which protected characteristic groups are particularly affected?</p> <p>ii) Will people on low incomes be affected?</p> <p>iii) Will Welsh speakers be affected?</p>	<p>i) The proposal will impact on pupils with additional learning needs, pupils that belong to ethnic groups other than White British and EAL pupils. The proportion of pupils with ALN at the school is higher than the Powys average.</p> <p>ii) 4.2% of pupils attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School are eligible for Free School Meals. This is lower than the Powys average.</p> <p>iii) Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is an English medium school - therefore the proposal will not directly affect Welsh speakers.</p>
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9. EQUALITY IMPROVEMENT

<p>9.1 Having identified problematic aspects to the proposal, how will this now be addressed?</p> <p><i>i.e. Are you able to involve (in some capacity) people from protected characteristic groups, Welsh Speakers, people on low incomes, to assist you in this process?</i></p> <p>i) Can the impact be mitigated, and how will this be done?</p> <p>ii) Does the proposal require modification to reduce or remove this impact?</p> <p>iii) Should the proposal be considered for removal, owing to the degree of impact it is likely to have?</p>	<p>Should the proposal be implemented, Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to their nearest alternative school.</p> <p>This would have a significant impact on pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, including any pupils belonging to the protected characteristic groups that attend that school, as some additional travel would be required in order to attend their nearest alternative school.</p> <p>Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposal would impact on pupils belonging to the protected characteristic groups that attend the school, there is no reason to believe that the nearest alternative schools would be unable to meet the needs of pupils belonging to the protected characteristic groups that would be affected, including pupils with Additional Learning Needs, pupils belonging to Ethnic Groups other than White British, pupils eligible for Free School Meals and Looked After Children. It is recognised that Castle Caereinion has received significant investment for disability adaptations, however, the Council would ensure that all schools would be able to meet the needs of learners with disabilities.</p>
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9.2 Will the management of the impact as outlined in 9.1, be included in the Service Improvement Plan?

<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Date added.....</p> <p>Reference.....</p>	<p>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If no, please explain why not: Need was not identified at time of writing Service Strategy</p>
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4. Community Impact Assessment – Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

i) Information on the proportion of pupils from the catchment area that attend the school

The closest provider for pupils attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School in January 2020 was as follows:

School	% of Pupils
Berriew C.P. School	4.2%
Castle Caereinion C. in W. School	75.0%
Guilsfield C.P. School	8.3%
Llanidloes C.P. School	4.2%
Welshpool C. in W. School	8.3%

This suggests that 75% of pupils attending the school were attending their closest primary school, whilst 25% of pupils attending the school live closer to other primary schools.

ii) After-school clubs and extra-curricular activities provided by the school

The school provides the following after-school clubs and extra-curricular activities including the following:

- Craft Club
- Coding Club
- Sports Club
- Science Club
- Breakfast Club

iii) Any other facilities or services the school accommodates or services the school provides

The school accommodates or provides the following other facilities or services:

The school works closely with Castle Caereinion Bright Sparks playgroup. The children from the playgroup benefit from the use of the school building as well as the Community Centre. This helps the children

familiarise themselves with the school in readiness for their transition. It also enables a sharing of equipment and resources between the school and the playgroup. This close working relationship allows for the youngest members of the community to attend a playgroup that is linked to their feeder primary school. The playgroup is able to take place in the hall as the school covers the hiring fee for the time that the hall is being used by Bright Sparks.

iv) Other use by the community of the school building

The school building is used by the community to provide the following activities:

- Various activities such as school plays and Summer and Winter fetes, which are very popular with members of the community.

v) Other links between the school and the community

- The school are regular attendees at the Church for Services, with children doing readings and singing at Services.
- Links with the Castle Caereinion Recreation Association.
- Members of the community are invited to all school events, which they enjoy being able to attend.
- The school have organised for a Dragon Bags clothes recycling bank to be sited in the school carpark to allow members of the community to have clothes recycling facilities in their immediate area.
- The Community Hall benefits from using the school's refuse facilities, thus saving them additional costs.
- The school contributes to the community's quarterly newsletter, Castle News.
- Community Remembrance Day activities, to include collecting money and attending a prayer service with local members of the community.
- Harvest – the school collects donations of food items to create hampers which are then donated to members of the local community who are most in need, which are delivered by the children.
- The school is the main financial contributor to the Community Centre.

vi) If accommodation, facilities or services are provided by a school, where would they be provided in the event of closure?

Should the proposal be implemented, then the intention is that all existing pupils would transfer to their nearest alternative school, and Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would close.

As a Church in Wales School, The Castle Caereinion School building is owned by the Diocese, therefore the Diocese would need to determine the building's future use, and whether or not facilities would remain in Castle Caereinion.

It is acknowledged that there would be a significant impact on the community of Castle Caereinion were the school to close. There would be a potential loss of community facilities and services provided by the school.

Comments received during the consultation suggest that the adjacent Community Centre would be unviable as the school is the main financial contributor.

vii) Distance and travelling time involved in attending an alternative school of the same language category

Should the proposal be implemented, then the intention is that all existing Castle Caereinion C.in W. pupils would transfer to their nearest alternative school. There would therefore be an impact on distance and travelling times for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School for whom this is currently their closest school.

The closest alternative school for the pupils that were attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School in January 2020 is as follows:

	Pupils' closest school should there be no school in Castle Caereinion
Berriew C.P. School	70.8%
Welshpool C. in W. School	12.5%
Guilsfield C.P. School	8.3%
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	4.2%
Llanidloes C.P. School	4.2%

An analysis of pupils attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School in January 2020 suggests that the furthest distance to the nearest alternative school for pupils for whom Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is currently the closest school would be 3.8 miles.

Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, it is also acknowledged that there could be an impact on some pupils' ability to access after school activities, and could impact on the ability of parents to take part in school events, meetings etc.

viii) How parents' and pupils' engagement with the alternative school and any facilities it may offer could be supported

Should the Council proceed with the statutory process and eventually implementation of the preferred option, support would be provided to pupils and their parents as part of the transition process, to ensure full engagement with their new schools. The nature of this support would depend on the needs of the parents / pupils, however this could include provision for effective transition to the receiving school by the headteacher and class teachers.

ix) Any wider implications e.g. impact on public transport provision, wider community safety issues

The school's grounds are used by members of the community and local children outside of school hours. Children, young people and their families sit in the gardens of the school grounds having picnics and using the frames to play on. If the school was closed, this facility may no longer be available, and there would be an impact on community safety as this forms a safe place for families and children to be when the school is closed, without requiring children to cross the road to the local playground.

Should the school close, although the Local Authority would provide transport for pupils, if a parent needed to attend the new school they would struggle to get there in a timely manner with the current public transport options.

x) Additional considerations for rural schools

The School Organisation Code includes a number of additional considerations that are likely to be relevant when carrying out a community impact assessment for a rural school closure. As Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is identified as a rural school, these factors are considered below:

- **Whether closure would encourage families with school-age children to leave the community or discourage young families from moving to the community**

Information received from the school suggests that the school provides a number of facilities which could be attractive to families, and which increase the attractiveness of the community to potential young families.

Should there be no school in Castle Caereinion, it is possible that families would leave the village in order to live in the community of any alternative school, and that young families would be discouraged from moving to the village.

- **What impact closure might have on other services provided locally, for instance if the school is the only remaining public building in a community**

Should the Council proceed with the proposal, there would be no school in Castle Caereinion. As a Church in Wales School, the school building is owned by the Diocese, therefore the Diocese would need to determine the building's future use, and therefore whether or not facilities would remain in Castle Caereinion.

- **Whether, or not, the school is a real hub of community life, used for other purpose – such as public meetings, local events, fetes surgeries, and other get togethers – which would either cease or be diminished by being required to move elsewhere**

Information received from the school suggests that there are extensive links between the school and the community, and that the school and the support and join each other's events. The school's outdoor space is available for use by the members of the community, and functions being held in the hall also use the school's outdoor areas for some of their activities, and events held by the school are attended by the whole community. There are also extensive links with the local church.

Should the Council proceed with the proposal, there would be no school in Castle Caereinion. As a Church in Wales School, the school building is owned by the Diocese, therefore the Diocese would need to determine the building's future use, and therefore whether or not facilities would remain in Castle Caereinion.

- **Whether or not the loss of the school, and potentially families, will have a detrimental effect on the wider economy of the community**

It is possible that the loss of the school could impact on the local economy. In particular, there would be a reduction in employment opportunities in the village, and an impact on local businesses in Castle Caereinion and the surrounding area. It is also noted that the school is an important funding source for the community centre, and therefore in the longer term, it is possible that closure of the school could impact on the viability of the community centre.

- **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)**

Should the Council continue with the statutory process and eventually implementation of the preferred option, support would be provided to pupils and their parents as part of the transition process, to ensure full engagement with their new schools. The nature of this support would depend on the needs of the parents / pupils, however this could include provision for effective transition to the receiving school by headteacher and class teachers.

It is acknowledged that there would be an impact on pupils' ability to participate in after school activities as there would be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities/events.

- **The overall effect of closure on the local community (including the loss of school based facilities which are used by the local community)**

The information received from the school indicates that there are extensive links between the school and the local community. It is therefore likely that the proposal to remove school provision from the village of Castle Caereinion would have a significant effect on the local community.

As a Church in Wales School, the Castle Caereinion School building is owned by the Diocese, therefore the Diocese would need to determine the building's future use, and therefore whether or not facilities would remain in Castle Caereinion.

xi) Issues raised during the consultation period

A number of comments were received during the consultation period which related to the proposal's impact on the community.

These comments are listed in full in the consultation report produced in respect of this proposal along with the Council's response to the points raised, and are also summarised below:

- **Travel implications**

- The proposal would lead to additional travel
- Concern about the impact on the environment
- Concern about impact on pupils' access to after school activities
- Concern about the impact on low income families

- **Comments about Church in Wales provision**

- Links between the church and the school
- Concern that pupils would not be able to access alternative Church in Wales provision
- Transport to alternative Church in Wales provision

- **Impact on the community**

- General concern about the impact on the community / village
- Concern about impact on the community centre
- Reference to housing developments in Castle Caereinion
- Closure of the school would mean that people would not want to live in Castle Caereinion
- Reference to the loss of other community facilities
- The school brings the community together / is a focus for community activity
- Concern that pupils would no longer feel part of the community
- Comments relating to community well-being
- Reference to previous generations of families that have attended the school
- General comments about the closure of rural / village schools
- Queries about what would happen to the school building

xii) Conclusion

The proposal would have a significant impact on the community of Castle Caereinion as there would be no provision in Castle Caereinion. Many comments received during the consultation period emphasise the importance of the school within the local community and the benefits of being part of a close community on the development of pupils. It is also recognised that there are strong links between the school, being a C. in W. school and the local church, and how this contributes to pupils' development, and that this would be lost should the school close.

In particular, there could be an impact on the financial viability of the community centre, and closure of the school could mean that people would not want to live in Castle Caereinion in the future, and could lead to a reduction in community activity in the village. In addition, the village has already suffered a loss of community facilities, and there is concern that closure of the school could lead to the closure of other facilities in the village.

It is clear that a wide range of extra curricular activities are available to pupils at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, and that as the school is a small school, all pupils are able to take part in all activities. Should the proposal be implemented, then the school would close with pupils moving to their nearest alternative school. These would be larger schools, and the expectation is that at least a similar range of activities would be available for pupils. However, it is acknowledged that pupils would need to travel to the alternative schools, which could impact on their ability to access activities, particularly where these take place after school.

Should the proposal be implemented, there would be no school provision in the village of Castle Caereinion. The information provided above indicates that there is currently extensive community use of the Castle Caereinion building, and extensive links between the school and the local community. As a Church in Wales School, the Castle Caereinion School building is owned by the Diocese, therefore the Diocese would need to determine the building's future use, and therefore whether or not facilities would remain in Castle Caereinion.

It is also acknowledged that implementation of the proposal would result in additional travel to school for pupils for whom Castle Caereinion is currently their closest school. Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the home to school transport policy which is in operation at that time, it is acknowledged that there could be an impact on some pupils' ability to access after school activities, and could impact on the ability of parents to take part in school events, meetings etc.

Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils to their nearest alternative school in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, there would also be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities / events, which is likely to have a greater impact on low income families and/or families who do not have access to their own transport. The Council recognises that should Castle Caereinion C. in W. School close, pupils would transfer to alternative primary schools, and that some of these would be in a different secondary cluster i.e Welshpool High School. The Council also agrees that this would have transport implications as outlined below:

Pupils who attend Castle Caereinion CiW School normally transfer to Caereinion High School and free home-to-school transport is normally provided for those pupils attending Castle Caereinion CiW School to Caereinion High School.

Should Castle Caereinion CiW Primary School close, pupils living in the Castle Caereinion area would be provided with free home-to-school transport to their nearest or catchment secondary school. In the case of pupils choosing to attend Berriew CP School, Welshpool CiW Primary School or Guilsfield CP School, they would ordinarily transfer to Welshpool High School.

Pupils currently accessing free home-to-school transport from the Castle Caereinion area to Caereinion High School would continue to receive this service until they finish their education. However, this would not be available to pupils from Castle Caereinion if they have transferred to Berriew C.P. School, Guilsfield C. P. School or Welshpool C. in W. School unless Caereinion High School is their nearest secondary school. This would have an implication for families who may already have older siblings being transported to Caereinion High School.

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