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CABINET
Tuesday, 9th November, 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.	**LLANBEDR CHURCH IN WALES SCHOOL**

Comments of the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee
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Powys

Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Observations to Cabinet on:
9th November 2021

The Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee met on 04-11-2021 and considered the following documents:

- Report of the Portfolio Holder for Education and Property – Llanbedr C.I.W. School.

The Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee thank the Portfolio Holder for Education and Property and officers for attending scrutiny.

Scrutiny make the following observations:

- The Committee did not accept:
  - that the argument that having taken into account Year 5 and 6 pupils moving to secondary education and the potential numbers being accepted from nursery provision, that there were sufficient spaces in other schools to accept those pupils who wished to continue a faith based education should Llanbedr School close. In light of this the Committee felt that the "neutral" impact in the Impact Assessment was incorrect and should be amended.
  - That the financial argument was not robust due to the potential increase in the pupil numbers during the academic year as discussed at the meeting which would bring the school closer to its capacity and reduce the costs per pupil towards the Powys average cost per pupil.
- The Committee accepted that schools with small numbers of pupils and staff, presented a potential risk that elements of the new curriculum might not be deliverable and may require additional support. However, it is difficult to assess this fully as the new curriculum is not yet fully developed, and there is no definitive evidence. The Committee also suggested that as the current headteacher at Llanbedr school led the cluster in relation to the development of the curriculum the school was better placed in terms of its own curriculum development.
- The Committee was assured by the commitment given that should Llanbedr School close and a parent wishes for their children to access a faith provision, then the Council would consider using its discretionary powers to allow transport to that school, on a case by case basis, and that for siblings this could be considered by means of the appeals process.
- The Committee did not feel that as there were only four schools in the cluster that the potential for the development of a Welsh Language provision in the cluster had been fully explored. The potential for federating this school with others in the cluster was not included in the report and therefore not considered by scrutiny.
- The Committee felt on balance that there were more arguments in favour of retaining the school despite a number of arguments to support the proposed closure.
- The Community suggested that in future consultation reports where there was an impact on community facilities, that other Council services be asked to comment

on what potential support the Council might be able to provide those facilities should the school close.

Members of the Committee also commented that:

- these proposals do revolve around finance as the amount spent per pupil across Powys is not equitable. The proposals are also not about buildings, but the future of children and the Council needs to have pace in its change programme.
- the Strategy for Transformation had been agreed by the Council and that it needed to be followed. Scrutiny's questions were raising issues which were highlighted when the strategy was developed.

There were no recommendations from scrutiny to the Cabinet.

In accordance with Rule 7.27.2 the Cabinet is asked to provide a written response to the scrutiny report, including an action plan where appropriate, as soon as possible or at the latest within 2 months of the date of the Cabinet meeting i.e. by 09-01-2022

Membership of the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee on 04-11-2021:

County Councillors:
P Roberts, M Williams, D Meredith, D Jones, E Roderick, J Berriman, S Davies, B Davies, L Roberts, G Thomas.

Co-Opted Members:
A Davies, S Davies, M Evitts.