

# Public Document Pack



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Os yn galw gofynnwch am - If calling please ask for  
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**CABINET**  
**Tuesday, 5th July, 2022**

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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

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## **SUPPLEMENTARY PACK**

<b>1.</b>	<b>LLANFIHANGEL RHYDITHON CP SCHOOL</b>
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To consider the comments of the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee.  
(Pages 3 - 6)

<b>2.</b>	<b>LLANBEDR CHURCH IN WALES SCHOOL</b>
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To consider the comments of the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee.  
(Pages 7 - 8)

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## Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee

### Scrutiny Observations to Cabinet on: 05-07-2022

The Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee met on 29-06-2022 and considered the following documents:

- Llanfihangel Rhydithon School

The Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee thank the Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys and officers for attending scrutiny.

Scrutiny made the following observations:

1. The Committee received assurances that:
  - to date none of the current pupils had applied to move to other schools
  - with regard to concerns about the potential budgetary impact on other schools in the County if the proposal were agreed, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation indicated that impact on the budget for 2022-23 would be funded from the delegated school contingency fund (£76.8k) and the impact on school budgets in 2023-24 (£32.3k) would be minimal and for the summer term only.
2. The Committee received clarification that
  - the proposal was to allow time to gain an understanding of the potential to establish a Welsh Medium primary provision in the East Radnorshire area which might, or might not, be situated on the Llanfihangel Rhydithon school site, once the present school closed in August 2023.
  - of the 34 pupils that would be at the school from September, over half of these pupils lived closer to other schools.
  - the condition of the school (Category B) was not one of the reasons considered for the closure of the school.
  - the report was not revisiting the original closure proposal. The School Organisation Code allows the Council to delay implementation of the decision to close the school. However, any new proposal coming forward (such as opening a Welsh Medium school) would be subject to the processes set out in the School Organisation Code.
  - There were ongoing maintenance costs which would need to be funded, but that costs such as a replacement boiler would be funded from the capital budget and that there was sufficient in the capital budget to fund this.
3. The Committee questioned:
  - why matters such as the transfer of the building to the community could not be considered outside the school closure process.
  - the Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys's assertion that this site could become a site for a new Welsh Medium primary school. The WESP (Welsh Education Strategic Plan) states that new provision would be considered where the Council could guarantee growth in numbers of pupils. The

Committee was of the view that numbers in any new Welsh Medium provision in this area were likely to be initially extremely small, and remain so for a number of years. The Committee asked what the minimum requirement would be for a viable new Welsh Medium school, but the Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys could not provide this information until the review had been completed.

- the advantage of keeping the school open for a further year:
  - as the review of Welsh Language provision could be undertaken independently of the school closing and as the school would have to close in any case prior to any different provision (such as a Welsh Medium provision) being opened on the site so there would be a time delay between the two events.
  - particularly if the location was not deemed suitable following the review to host Welsh Medium provision for the area.

4. The Committee expressed concern:

- regarding the significant cost of delaying the closure with no additional educational outcomes for pupils.
- that use of the delegated school contingency fund is top sliced off all school delegated budgets and therefore unavailable to other schools in the county if spent in full.
- regarding the health and well-being of pupils, staff and parents at the school as the closure of the school was continuing and for any delay there needed to be a very clear communications plan to inform pupils, staff and parents.
- that support was made available for pupils and teachers to ensure an effective transition to new arrangements once the school closed.
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5. The Committee was supportive of the need to establish a Welsh Medium provision in the East Radnorshire area.

Scrutiny's Recommendation to Cabinet	Accept (plus Action and timescale)	Partially Accept (plus Rationale and Action and timescale)	Reject (plus Rationale)
1 That the Committee is supportive of the establishment of a Welsh Medium provision in the East Radnorshire area.			
2 That the Cabinet is asked to consider and respond to the Committee's questions and concerns as set out in Sections 3 and 4 of the observations			

<b>above.</b>			
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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 05-09-2022

Membership of the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee on 29-06-2022:

County Councillors:

G Thomas, GD Jones, L Roberts, M Beecham, A Davies, A Kennerley, C Kenyon-Wade, J Thorp, L Rijnbergen, B Davies, G Morgan, I McIntosh.

Co-Opted Members:

M Evitts, S Davies, K Chedgzoy

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## Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee

### Scrutiny Observations to Cabinet on: 05-07-2022

The Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee met on 29-06-2022 and considered the following documents:

- Llanbedr Church in Wales School

The Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee thank the Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys and officers for attending scrutiny.

Scrutiny made the following observations:

1. The Committee received clarification that:

- senior staffing changes in the area had provided an opportunity for a wider area review to be undertaken and therefore it was appropriate for this review (which would include Llanbedr school) to be undertaken before the decision on the school was implemented. This was already planned in Wave 2 of the transformation programme.
- there had been a delay in issuing the closure notice for the school to close on 31st August 2022, as the Council was of the understanding that the Church in Wales Diocese proposed to make an objection to the Minister, which in the event did not happen.
- in relation to staffing costs, redundancy notices had not been issued to staff.
- in relation to the budget the delay in closure of the school would require reinstating the full year budget of £59k (which can be funded from the delegated schools contingency budget) and a further budget of £39.5k for 2023-24 (to August 2023 which will need to be funded from the overall schools delegated budget).
- major improvements at the school had been identified at £111k but only £98k was likely to be required for one year.
- in relation to the maintenance costs, this had been estimated at £137k. However, £110k may not be required so the likely cost was £27k.
- in response to the Committee's concerns about possible Estyn comment regarding delays in the transformation programme, the Director of Education indicated that Estyn had endorsed that the Council was making strong progress in implementing changes, and were monitoring progress which included the transformation programme. The Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys advised that he would be reassuring Estyn that the Council was reviewing these two schools only and not delaying the overall transformation programme.
- there had been no applications from existing pupils to move schools.
- it was projected that pupil numbers in the catchment area as a whole would be reducing which included a potential impact on the High School following the building of a new High School in Abergavenny by Monmouthshire Council.

2. The Committee expressed concern regarding:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the significant costs of keeping the school open for a year with no additional educational outcomes.</li> <li>that use of the delegated school contingency fund is top sliced off all school delegated budgets and therefore unavailable to other schools in the county if spent in full.</li> <li>the capacity of the transformation team to undertake a catchment review in such a short timescale.</li> <li>the impact of the delay on the welfare of pupils, staff and parents by the delay.</li> <li>the need for effective communications of timescales for the review to stakeholders.</li> <li>the potential for further Estyn criticism of the Council for delaying the transformation programme, which had been the case previously which led to a period of Estyn monitoring of the Council's Education Service.</li> </ul>
3. The Committee commented that the only apparent advantage to keep the school open would be for the catchment review to be completed which would remove the risk of pupils moving to a school which might subsequently be earmarked for closure.

Scrutiny's Recommendation to Cabinet	Accept (plus Action and timescale)	Partially Accept (plus Rationale and Action and timescale)	Reject (plus Rationale)
<b>1 That the Cabinet considers the Committee's observations as set out above.</b>			

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 05-09-2022

Membership of the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee on 29-06-2022:

County Councillors:

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