

Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Venue

By Zoom

Meeting Date

Wednesday, 22 September 2021

Meeting Time

1.00 pm

For further information please contact
**Wyn Richards, Scrutiny Manager and
Head of Democratic Services**
wyn.richards@powys.gov.uk



County Hall
Llandrindod Wells
Powys
LD1 5LG

16-09-2021

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

AGENDA

1.	APOLOGIES
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To receive apologies for absence.

2.	DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST
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To receive any disclosures of interest by Members relating to items to be considered at the meeting.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP
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To receive disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

(NB: Members are reminded that under Section 78 Members having been given a prohibited party whip cannot vote on a matter before the Committee.)

4.	LLANFIHANGEL RHYDITHON CP SCHOOL
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To receive and consider the report of the Portfolio Holder for Education and Property and to make observations / recommendations to the Cabinet for consideration.

(Pages 3 - 578)

Committee Reflection

Following the close of the meeting, the Committee is asked to spend 5 to 10 minutes reflecting on today's meeting.

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

CABINET EXECUTIVE

21 September 2021

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

REPORT TITLE: Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 (to follow)
 - **Appendix E** – Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School Impact Assessment (Prepared by the Dolau School Action Group)
 - **Appendix F** – 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, and agreed to carry out consultation on the following:

- To close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to attend their nearest alternative schools

Background

- 2.6 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is an English-medium primary school situated within the catchment area of Ysgol Calon Cymru (Llandrindod area). It currently has 36 pupils on roll, taught in two classes of mixed aged groups. There is a shared headship arrangement with Llanelwedd C.i.W Primary School that has been in place for over 6 years. Standards of education at the school are good, and the Council has no concerns about the quality of leadership at the school.
- 2.7 The challenges facing the school as outlined in the Consultation Document are:

i) Low pupil numbers

Current pupil numbers¹ at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School are as follows:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	4	7	10	2	8	5	0	36

The Welsh Government defines a ‘small school’ as a school with less than 91 pupils. Pupil numbers are significantly lower than this. Whilst an increase is projected over the next couple of years based on information held by the Council’s Finance Team, they are expected to remain low for the foreseeable future.

ii) High budget share 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 £6,304. This is significantly higher than the Powys average of £4,264. Llanfihangel Rhydithon is ranked the 8th highest school in Powys by budget share per pupil².

iii) Temporary leadership arrangements

¹ Teachers Centre 03/09/2021

² Section 52 Budget Statement 2020/2021

Leadership at the school is provided by the headteacher of Llanelwedd C. in W. School, as part of a long term temporary arrangement. This is a part time arrangement, with a teacher in charge responsible for the school whilst the acting headteacher is not on the site. This limits the time available to focus on leadership of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.

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

2.8 The nearest school for pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is as follows:

- Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School – 53%
- Crossgates C.P. School – 28%
- Ysgol Cefnlllys – 11%
- Knighton C. in W. School – 5%
- Rhayader C. in W. School – 3%

2.9 If there was no school in Llanfihangel Rhydithon, the nearest alternative schools for pupils would be as follows

- Crossgates C.P. School – 67%
- Llanbister C.P. School – 14%
- Ysgol Cefnlllys – 11%
- Knighton C. in W. School – 5%
- Rhayader C. in W. School – 3%

The Consultation Period

2.9 Consultation on the proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School commenced on the 14th April 2021 and ended on the 2nd June 2021.

2.10 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.

2.11 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.

2.12 During the consultation period, virtual meetings were also held with the following:

- Staff of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School
- Governors of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School
- School Council of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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

2.13 290 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, 130 written responses were received from respondents including Estyn, by e-mail or post.

2.14 As well as responses from parents, pupils, staff and governors at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and members of the local community, responses were received from the following organisations:

- Governing Body of Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School
- Llanfihangel Rhydithon Community Council
- Old Radnor Community Council
- Penybont & District Community Council
- Fay Jones MP and James Evans MS (Joint submission)
- Mudiad Meithrin
- Diocese of Swansea and Brecon
- Governing Body of Llanelwedd C.i.W Primary School
- Dolau School Action Group
- Friends of Dolau School Committee
- Cllr Hywel Lewis
- Cllr Martin Weale
- Dolau Youth Club
- Cylch Meithrin Dolau
- Dolau Parent and Toddler (Ti a Fi)
- Chair of Governors, Llanbister C.P. School
- Chair, Dolau Recreation Association
- Powys Radnor Federation WI
- Dolau WI
- Teme Valley Hunt Pony Club

- 2.15 Estyn's response to the consultation is provided on page 16 of the Consultation Report (Appendix B).
- 2.16 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 290 respondents. 77.6% of respondents indicated that they were associated with Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, 6.9% indicated that they were associated with another school and 15.2% of respondents indicated that they were not associated with any school.
- 2.17 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 20 onwards, along with the Council's response to these issues.
- 2.18 The issues raised relate to the following headings:
1. Comments about Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School
 2. Comments about small/rural schools
 3. Impact on pupils
 4. Comments relating to other schools
 5. Impact on the community
 6. Comments about pupil numbers
 7. Travel implications
 8. Impact on staff
 9. Comments about early years provision
 10. Reference to previous consultations
 11. Financial implications
 12. Criticism of Powys County Council
 13. Comments about Council strategies
 14. Comments about the consultation documentation
 15. Comments about the consultation process
 16. Comments about impact on protected characteristic groups
 17. Comments about impact on the Welsh Language
 18. Alternative options

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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School by publishing a Statutory Notice.

3.2 The reasons for this are outlined below:

- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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
- Pupils would attend schools with permanent leadership arrangements
- Meets all of 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 result in annual revenue savings to the Council of around **£59,000** per annum. This overall figure comprises a potential saving on schools' delegated funding of over £52,000 and savings on catering costs of around £6,600. It is anticipated that any additional transport requirements would be managed within the current arrangements.

4.2 The school had a cumulative surplus balance of £40,972 as at the 31st March 2021. The budget approved by the Governing Body for the current year shows this decreasing to £38,999 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 Comments received from the Council's Schools Budget Forum state:

'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 **XXX**

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.
- 7.4 In addition, an impact assessment prepared by the Dolau School Action Group was submitted as a consultation response. This is attached as Appendix E.

8. Recommendation

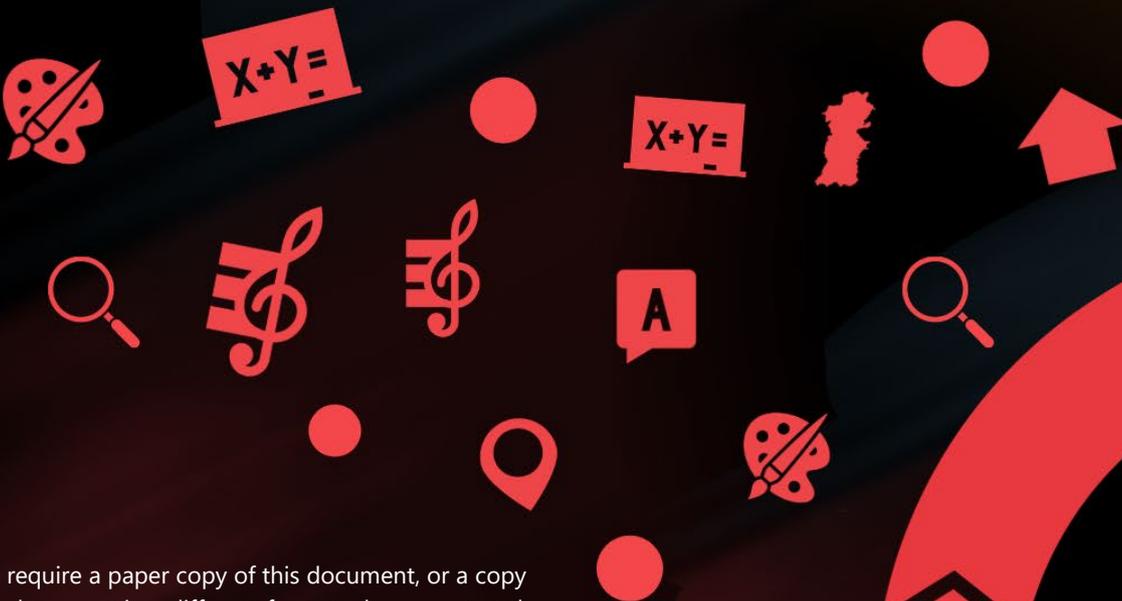
- To receive the Consultation Report in respect of closing Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.
- To approve the publication of a statutory notice to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to attend their nearest alternative schools.

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Head of Service:	Emma Palmer – Head of Transformation & Communications Lynette Lovell – Interim Chief Education Officer
Corporate Director:	Dr Caroline Turner

CABINET REPORT TEMPLATE VERSION X



**Proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon
C.P. School**
Consultation Document



Consultation on the closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 826618, or e-mail school.organisation@powys.gov.uk.

Consultation on the closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

OVERVIEW

1. The Proposal

Powys County Council is consulting on a proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. The proposal is as follows:

- To close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to transfer to 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/10580/Llanfihangel-Rhydithon-C.P.-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 outlined in the consultation document. This is expected to happen in the summer of 2021.

If the Cabinet decide to proceed with the proposal, 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

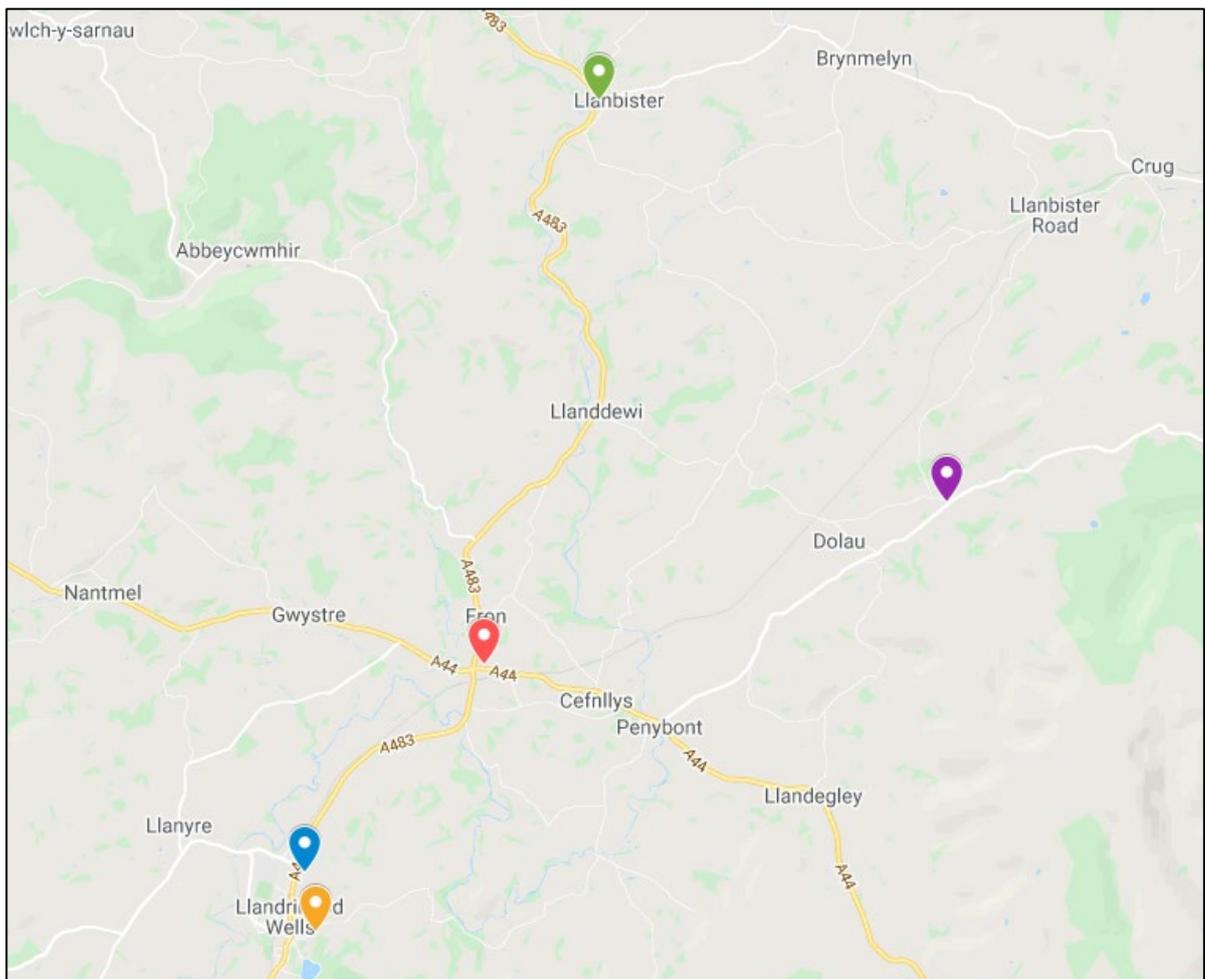
Powys County Council is consulting on the following proposal:

- To close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools

1. BACKGROUND

Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is an English-medium community primary school located in the village of Dolau in the Llandrindod Wells catchment area in Mid Powys. The school primarily serves the village of Dolau and the surrounding area.

The following map shows the location of schools in the area:



Key: Purple – Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, Green – Llanbister C.P. School, Red – Crossgates C.P. School, Blue – Ysgol Trefonnen C. in W. Community School, Orange – Ysgol Cefynlllys

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

	School Type	Language Category	Admission Number	Rural School ¹
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, Dolau, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 5TW	Community Primary School building owned by Powys County Council	English medium	5	Yes

Current pupil numbers² at the school are as follows:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	7	10	2	8	5	0	5	37

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 these aims 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, and agreed to commence consultation on the following:

‘To close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is in line with these priorities.

4. WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN DOLAU

The following is a summary of the main challenges facing Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School:

i) Low pupil numbers

Current pupil numbers³ at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School are as follows:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	7	10	2	8	5	0	5	37

The Welsh Government defines a 'small school' as a school with less than 91 pupils. Pupil numbers are significantly lower than this. Whilst an increase is projected over the next couple of years based on information held by the Council's Finance Team, they are expected to remain low for the foreseeable future.

ii) High budget share 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 £6,304. This is significantly higher than the Powys average of £4,264. Llanfihangel Rhydithon is ranked the 8th highest school in Powys by budget share per pupil⁴.

iii) Temporary leadership arrangements

Leadership at the school is provided by the headteacher of Llanelwedd C. in W. School, as part of a long term temporary arrangement. This is a part time arrangement, with a teacher in charge responsible for the school whilst the acting headteacher is not on the site. This limits the time available to focus on leadership of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.

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

5. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The following options have been identified for Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School:

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

⁴ Section 52 Budget Statement 2020/2021

Option	Description
1	Status quo – continue as a standalone school
2	Federation with Crossgates C.P. School
3	Federation with Llanbister C.P. School
4	Merge with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school on two sites
5	Merge with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school on two sites
6	Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, retain the site as part of Crossgates C.P. School
7	Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, retain the site as part of Llanbister C.P. School
8	Merge with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school on the Crossgates site
9	Merge with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school on the Dolau site
10	Merge with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school on the Llanbister site
11	Merge with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school on the Dolau site
12	Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 12: Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools

The reasons for this are:

- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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
- Pupils would attend schools with permanent leadership arrangements
- 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. The proposal is as follows:

- To close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School for the following reasons:

- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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
- Pupils would attend schools with permanent leadership arrangements

9. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

The advantages and disadvantages of the current proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School are summarised below:

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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- Pupils would attend schools with permanent leadership arrangements- Opportunity to realise a capital receipt from sale of the Dolau site	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Additional travel for those pupils for whom Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is currently the closest school- Additional travel costs- Pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would have to transfer to alternative provision- Loss of provision from Dolau- Impact on the current staff of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School- Impact on the Dolau community

10. RISKS

As with all school reorganisation proposals, there are some risks associated with the proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.

These are outlined below, along with suggested mitigating actions:

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Actions
Period of uncertainty for Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 whilst the process is ongoing	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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the proposal, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would close and pupils would transfer to their nearest alternative provision in Powys, the move to any alternative school would require additional transport for pupils for whom Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would close. A staff redundancy process would be necessary for staff currently employed at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 Dolau. Cylch Meithrin Dolau meets on the site of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, however no funded provision is available here. This provision is currently not registered with Care Inspectorate Wales.

Funded early years provision is available in the local area at Little Acorns, which is located at Crossgates C.P. School. Should the Council proceed with the proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, this provider would continue to be available, therefore it is not anticipated that the proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would impact on access to funded early years provision.

Information about Little Acorns is provided below⁵:

Little Acorns (Crossgates)

Little Acorns is a non-maintained community run setting which operates from the site of Crossgates 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 has a caring and nurturing ethos. The setting is currently in the process of building new accommodation.

There are 24 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and the Governing Body of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would close, and pupils would transfer to

⁵ All information correct as of Summer Term 2021/22

alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Crossgates C.P. School.

Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School is currently in the green support category based on the 2019 categorisations whilst Crossgates C.P. School is in the yellow support category. However, there are no concerns in relation to quality and standards at Crossgates C.P. School, and it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on standards and progress overall.

Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, a small number of pupils would live closer to other schools, in particular Llanbister C.P. School, Knighton C. in W. School and Ysgol Cefnlllys. These schools are all in the yellow support category based on the 2019 categorisations, therefore there are no concerns about the provision pupils would receive should they transfer to these schools.

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 pupils eligible for Free School Meals, Looked after Children or pupils for whom English is an Additional Language at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. There are a number of pupils with Additional Learning Needs, however the number of pupils belonging to this group is small. 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Crossgates C.P. School, however a small number of pupils would live closer to other schools, in particular Llanbister C.P. School, Knighton C. in W. School and Ysgol Cefnlllys.

The Council has no concerns about the quality of teaching at Crossgates C.P. School or the other schools named above, therefore 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.

The breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Crossgates C.P. School, however a small number of pupils would live closer to other schools, in particular Llanbister C.P. School, Knighton C. in W. School and Ysgol Cefnlllys.

The Council's view is that Crossgates C.P. School and the other schools named above would provide a curriculum which is at least equivalent to that currently provided at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. Crossgates and the other schools are 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.

The provision of skills

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Crossgates C.P. School, however a small number of pupils would live closer to other schools, in particular Llanbister C.P. School, Knighton C. in W. School and Ysgol Cefnlllys.

The Council has no concerns about the provision of skills at Crossgates C.P. School or the other schools named above, 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Crossgates C.P. School, however a small number of pupils would live closer to other schools, in particular Llanbister C.P. School, Knighton C. in W. School and Ysgol Cefnlllys.

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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. It is anticipated that the arrangements at Crossgates C.P. School and the other schools named above would be at least equivalent to the arrangements at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Crossgates C.P. School, however a small number of pupils would live closer to other schools, in particular Llanbister C.P. School, Knighton C. in W. School and Ysgol Cefnlllys.

Crossgates C.P. School has a permanent headteacher, whilst Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. has a long term shared temporary headteacher arrangement. Whilst Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School was categorised as Green in the latest categorisations carried out in 2019 and Crossgates C.P. School was categorised as Yellow, both have been categorised as having an improvement capacity of B. In addition, Crossgates C.P. School is larger than Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, therefore it is expected that the headteacher would have more time available to focus on leadership and management.

The Council's view is that should the preferred option be implemented, leadership and management at the alternative school would be at least as good as the current arrangements at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.

This would also be the case for any pupils transferring to the other schools named above, all of which were categorised as Yellow in the latest categorisations carried out in 2019.

Professional learning

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

Use of resources

Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 5 above, one of the main challenges facing the Powys schools infrastructure is the high proportion of small schools in the county. Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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, 3.0% of pupils at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School was on School Action, and 3.0% 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 schools' ability to deliver the full curriculum in the foundation stage and each key stage

Should the preferred option be implemented, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would close and pupils would transfer to alternative schools, therefore Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would no longer need to deliver the curriculum to any key stages.

As pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would transfer to alternative schools, there would be an increase in pupil numbers at the alternative schools. However current pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School are small, and therefore 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, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Crossgates C.P. School, however a small number of pupils would live closer to other schools, in particular Llanbister C.P. School, Knighton C. in W. School and Ysgol Cefnlllys.

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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is relatively small, therefore it is not anticipated that this would have a

negative impact on the 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School:

School	Capacity ⁶	Current pupil numbers ⁷	Available spaces	Filled capacity	Building Condition	Building Suitability
Crossgates C.P. School	210	131	79	62.4%	B	A
Llanbister C.P. School	45	61	-16	135.6%	C	B
Ysgol Trefonnen C. in W. Community School	189	208	-19	110.1%	A	A
Ysgol Cefnlllys	258	218	40	84.5%	B	B
Franksbridge C.P. School	44	42	2	95.5%	B	B

This suggests that there are sufficient places at Crossgates C.P. School to accommodate all current and projected pupils at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School although a number of the other nearby schools are at or over capacity.

⁶ Welsh Government School Places Return – August 2020

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

The condition of the Crossgates building is assessed as condition B. This is the same as the condition of the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building, therefore pupils would be able to continue to access accommodation which is of at least equivalent quality as the current accommodation at Llanfihangel Rhydithon.

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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School to accommodate the school's current and projected pupil numbers.

Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is a community primary. As indicated in the table in section 11.1 above, the majority of the other schools in the area are also community primary schools, ensuring that pupils could continue to access community primary provision should there be no school in Dolau.

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

Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is the closest school for only 48.5% of current pupils. As indicated in the table in section 10.1 above, there are alternative primary places available at other schools within 10 miles of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, it is not considered that the length and nature of journeys for pupils for whom Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is currently the closest school 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.

Should there be no school in Dolau, there would be a reduction in travel time / distance for pupils attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School for whom this isn't currently the closest school should they transfer to their closest school.

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

Information about projected pupil numbers for other nearby schools is provided in Appendix A. This suggests that total pupil numbers at Crossgates C.P. School, Ysgol Cefnlllys and Knighton C. in W. School are not expected to increase over the coming years. Pupil numbers at Llanbister C.P. School are expected to increase over the coming 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 pupils would attend their nearest alternative school. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Crossgates C.P. School, however a small number of pupils would live closer to other schools, in particular Llanbister C.P. School, Knighton C. in W. School and Ysgol Cefnlllys.

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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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?

There are no recurrent costs associated with this proposal.

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

It is not anticipated that additional transport costs would be incurred as a result of the change, it is assumed that the current bus would be used at no additional cost to the Authority.

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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School to accommodate all current and projected pupils.

vi) 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 £59,000 per annum. This overall figure comprises a potential saving on schools' delegated funding of over £52,000 and savings on catering costs of around £7,000.

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

Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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?

Any capital receipts received from sale of the Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School site would be reinvested into the Schools Transformation programme in order to improve the educational provision across Powys.

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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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, no pupils attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School were eligible for FSM, therefore it is likely that the proportion of children from economically deprived backgrounds is minimal.

ii) 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School pupils.

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

Any sites which are surplus following implementation of the proposal would be disposed of in accordance with the Council's asset management policy.

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?

Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is not subject to any trust or charitable interests which might be affected by the proposals.

iii) Walking routes to school

Should the proposal be implemented, walking routes which are currently established for Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would no longer be required.

For those pupils for whom Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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.

iv) School Admissions

Should the proposal be implemented, admissions to nearest alternative schools 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>.

v) 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, these are outlined in Appendix C 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School are 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School with Crossgates C.P. School and Llanbister C.P. School are two of the options considered in section 4 of this document. An assessment of these options has been carried out, which includes a summary of the weaknesses / threats associated with this option.

Pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School are 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 Dolau. It is acknowledged that this would have a negative impact on the Dolau community, including the loss of primary provision from the village of Dolau, 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.

v) 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 meetings with new headteacher and receiving schools to ease transition into their new school.

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/10580/Llanfihangel-Rhydithon-C.P.-School>

A summary of the assessments are provided below:

i) Equalities impact assessment

Should the proposal be implemented, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would close, and pupils transfer to their nearest alternative school.

This would have a significant impact on pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 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. The number of pupils belonging to the protected characteristic groups currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is very small.

ii) Impact on the community

It is clear that a wide range of extra curricular activities are available to pupils at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. Should there be no school in Dolau, 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 for pupils for whom Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is currently the closest school, additional travel would be required to enable pupils to access their closest school. This could impact on their ability to access activities, particularly where these take place after school.

The information received by the school suggests that there are extensive links between the school and the local community, and that many community activities are arranged in the school which are accessed by the community. It is therefore acknowledged that closure of the school could have an impact on the community in terms of the services and activities available.

Should the Council proceed with the proposal, it is anticipated that facilities and services would be provided in the community hall should there be no school in Dolau. However, the school has indicated that the loss of income provided by the school to the community hall could have a significant impact on the ability for the hall to continue to run.

It is also acknowledged that implementation of the proposal would result in additional travel to school for pupils for whom Dolau 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and other schools which may be affected by the proposal
- Governors at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and other schools which may be affected by the proposal
- Staff at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and other schools which may be affected by the proposal
- Pupils at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 Brecon and Radnorshire and the prospective candidates for Members of the Senedd for the Mid & West Wales region.
- The MP for Brecon and Radnorshire
- Estyn
- Teaching and staff trade unions
- ERW
- The prospective candidates for 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 standards⁸.

The consultation period

The consultation period will commence on the 14th April 2021 and end on the 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:

⁸ <https://gov.wales/children-and-young-peoples-national-participation-standards>

i) Consultation

Consultation will start on the 14th April 2021 and end on 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 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/10580/Llanfihangel-Rhydithon-C.P.-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 school is provided below:

1. Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

General information

	School Type	Language Category	Admission Number ⁹	Rural School? ¹⁰
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	Community Primary School building owned by Powys County Council	English medium	5	Yes

Pupil numbers

i) Current pupil numbers¹¹

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	7	10	2	8	5	0	5	37

ii) Historical pupil numbers¹²

	Jan. 2014	Jan. 2015	Jan. 2016	Jan. 2017	Jan. 2018	Jan. 2019	Jan. 2020
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	38	29	31	35	35	29	33

iii) Projected pupil numbers¹³

	Jan. 2021	Jan. 2022	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P.	34	32	36	34	33

⁹ Powys Admissions Information and Arrangements 2021-22

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

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.

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

	Jan. 2021	Jan. 2022	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	37	38	44	N/A	N/A

Building Capacity and Condition

i) **Capacity**

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

	Current Capacity ¹⁵	Currently Filled	Surplus Capacity
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	36	37 (102.8%)	-1 (-2.8%)

ii) **Building condition**

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

	Condition	Suitability	Access to hall on site
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	B Good	B Good	Yes – community hall

Quality and standards of education

i) **Estyn**

The following table summarises the last Estyn inspections of the school:

	Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School
Date of Inspection	March 2019

¹⁴ Powys Finance Projections based on data provided by the schools – November 2020

¹⁵ Welsh Government School Places Return – August 2020

Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Follow up activity	School will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations.

ii) School Categorisation

The latest categorisations of the three schools in accordance with the National School Categorisation System for 2019 are as follows:

	Standards Group	Improvement Capacity	Support Capacity
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	N/A	B	Green

Financial information

Cost per pupil¹⁶

	Budget share per school	Budget share per pupil	Notional SEN budget	Non ISB funds devolved to the school
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	£208,000	£6,304	£7,000	£0
Powys average (Primary)	N/A	£4,264	N/A	N/A

¹⁶ Section 52 Budget Statement, 2020/21

Equalities information¹⁷

i) National identity

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

	British	English	Irish	Scottish	Welsh	Other	Not supplied	Refused
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	21.2%	15.2%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	3.0%	27.3%	0.0%

ii) Ethnic Group

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

	White British	Other known ethnicity	Information not yet obtained
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	72.7%	0.0%	27.3%

iii) English as an Additional Language

	% EAL	% EAL A/B/C
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	0.0%	0.0%

iv) Free School Meals

	Not eligible for FSM	Eligible for FSM
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	100.0%	0.0%

v) Looked after children

	Looked after children
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	0.0%

¹⁷ PLASC 2020

vi) **Additional Learning Needs (ALN)**

	None	School Action	School Action Plus	Statement	% ALN
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	93.9%	3.0%	3.0%	0.0%	6.1%

2. Other schools that could be affected

Should the proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 ¹⁸
Crossgates C.P. School	Community Primary School building owned by Powys County Council	English medium	30
Llanbister C.P. School	Community Primary School building owned by Powys County Council	English medium	7
Ysgol Cefnlllys	Community Primary School building owned by Powys County Council	English medium	37
Ysgol Trefonnen C. in W. Community School	Voluntary Controlled Primary School building owned by the Diocese of Swansea and Brecon	Dual stream	27
Knighton C. in W. School	Voluntary Controlled Primary School building owned by the Diocese of Swansea and Brecon	English medium	38

Pupil Numbers

¹⁸ Powys Schools – Powys County Council Admission Arrangements and Information 2021/22

i) Current pupil numbers¹⁹

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Crossgates C.P. School	13	18	18	22	17	18	25	131
Llanbister C.P. School	5	13	10	9	13	5	6	61
Ysgol Cefnlllys	25	29	31	28	34	41	30	218
Ysgol Trefonnen C. in W. Community School	30	27	36	29	30	32	24	208
Knighton C. in W. School	21	22	28	32	25	32	28	188

ii) Historical pupil numbers²⁰

	Jan. 2014	Jan. 2015	Jan. 2016	Jan. 2017	Jan. 2018	Jan. 2019	Jan. 2020
Crossgates C.P. School	152	157	150	167	149	150	143
Llanbister C.P. School	37	36	31	38	41	51	61
Ysgol Cefnlllys	250	275	300	280	251	242	232
Ysgol Trefonnen C. in W. Community School	211	203	195	196	207	201	209
Knighton C. in W.	231	242	242	240	226	225	207

¹⁹ Powys Schools - Finance NOR – 2020 Pupil Count Day (6th November 2020)

²⁰ PLASC 2020

School							
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iii) Projected pupil numbers (Birth rate)²¹

	Jan. 2021	Jan. 2022	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025
Crossgates C.P. School	141	135	136	134	130
Llanbister C.P. School	73	80	89	88	92
Ysgol Cefnlllys	209	200	180	171	167
Ysgol Trefonnen C. in W. Community School	210	215	207	203	201
Knighton C. in W. School	198	192	189	193	189

iv) Projected pupil numbers (Finance projections)²²

	Jan. 2021	Jan. 2022	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025
Crossgates C.P. School	131	122	120	N/A	N/A
Llanbister C.P. School	61	60	60	N/A	N/A
Ysgol Cefnlllys	218	216	203	N/A	N/A
Ysgol Trefonnen C. in W. Community School	208	207	198	N/A	N/A
Knighton C. in W. School	188	181	170	N/A	N/A

Building Capacity and Condition

i) Capacity

²¹ 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.

²² Powys Finance Projections based on data provided by the school – November 2020

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

	Current Capacity²³	Currently Filled	Surplus Capacity
Crossgates C.P. School	210	131 (62.4%)	79 (37.6%)
Llanbister C.P. School	45	61 (135.6%)	-16 (-35.6%)
Ysgol Cefnlllys	258	218 (84.5%)	40 (15.6%)
Ysgol Trefonnen C. in W. Community School	189	208 (110.1%)	-19 (-10.1%)
Knighton C. in W. School	264	188 (71.2%)	76 (28.8%)

ii) **Building condition**

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

	Condition	Suitability	Access to hall on site
Crossgates C.P. School	B	A	Yes
Llanbister C.P. School	C	B	Yes
Ysgol Cefnlllys	B	B	Yes
Ysgol Trefonnen C. in W. Community School	A	A	Yes
Knighton C. in W. School	B	B	Yes

²³ Welsh Government School Places Return – August 2020

Standards of Education

i) Estyn

	Crossgates C.P. School
Date of Inspection	November 2016
Standards	Adequate
Wellbeing	Adequate
Learning Experiences	Adequate
Teaching	Adequate
Care, Support and Guidance	Good
Learning Environment	Good
Leadership	Adequate
Improving Quality	Adequate
Partnership Working	Good
Resource Management	Adequate
Outcome	School to draw up action plan to address recommendations. Estyn to review the school's progress. Removed from Estyn Monitoring in June 2018.

	Llanbister C.P. School
Date of Inspection	November 2019
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership	Good
Outcome	School to draw up action plan to address recommendations.

	Ysgol Cefnlllys
Date of Inspection	October 2016
Standards	Adequate
Wellbeing	Adequate
Learning Experiences	Adequate
Teaching	Unsatisfactory
Care, Support and Guidance	Good
Learning Environment	Good
Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Improving Quality	Unsatisfactory
Partnership Working	Good
Resource Management	Adequate

Outcome	School placed into special measures. School will draw up an action plan, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn to monitor progress each term. Removed from Special Measures in February 2018.
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Ysgol Trefonnen C. in W. Community School	
Date of Inspection	October 2013
Standards	Adequate
Wellbeing	Good
Learning Experiences	Adequate
Teaching	Good
Care, Support and Guidance	Good
Learning Environment	Good
Leadership	Adequate
Improving Quality	Good
Partnership Working	Good
Resource Management	Adequate
Outcome	School to draw up action plan to address recommendations. Estyn to monitor progress. Removed from Estyn Monitoring in November 2014.

Knighton C. in W. School	
Date of Inspection	November 2019
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership	Good
Outcome	School to draw up action plan to address recommendations.

ii) **School Categorisation²⁴**

	Standards Group	Support Capacity
Crossgates C.P. School	N/A	Yellow

²⁴ 2019

Llanbister C.P. School	N/A	Yellow
Ysgol Cefnlllys	N/A	Yellow
Ysgol Trefonnen C. in W. Community School	N/A	Green
Knighton C. in W. School	N/A	Yellow

Financial information

i) Cost per pupil²⁵ (Section 52 Budget Statement, 2020/2021)

	Budget share per school	Budget share per pupil	Notional SEN budget	Non ISB funds devolved to the school
Crossgates C.P. School	£584,000	£4,057	£39,000	£21,000
Llanbister C.P. School	£288,000	£4,717	£12,000	£0
Ysgol Cefnlllys	£798,000	£3,872	£104,000	£52,000
Ysgol Trefonnen C. in W. Community School	£855,000	£4,130	£73,000	£49,000
Knighton C. in W. School	£751,000	£4,082	£43,000	£10,000
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
Crossgates C.P. School	26.6%	22.4%	0.0%	2.1%	31.5%	2.1%	14.5%

²⁵ Section 52 Budget Statement 2020/2021

Llanbister C.P. School	36.1%	6.6%	0.0%	0.0%	36.1%	0.0%	21.3%
Ysgol Cefnlllys	66.8%	19.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.5%	7.8%	0.0%
Ysgol Trefonnen C. in W. Community School	23.0%	30.1%	0.0%	0.0%	30.1%	3.3%	13.4%
Knighton C. in W. School	28.0%	29.5%	0.0%	0.0%	19.3%	2.9%	20.3%

ii) Ethnic Group

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

	White British	Other known ethnicity	Information not yet obtained
Crossgates C.P. School	82.5%	2.1%	15.4%
Llanbister C.P. School	78.7%	0.0%	21.3%
Ysgol Cefnlllys	90.1%	9.9%	0.0%
Ysgol Trefonnen C. in W. Community School	80.4%	6.2%	13.4%
Knighton C. in W. School	77.8%	3.9%	18.4%

iii) English as an Additional Language

	% EAL	% EAL A/B/C
Crossgates C.P. School	2.1%	0.7%
Llanbister C.P. School	0.0%	0.0%
Ysgol Cefnlllys	8.6%	5.6%

Ysgol Trefonnen C. in W. Community School	0.0%	0.0%
Knighton C. in W. School	3.9%	2.9%

iv) **Free School Meals²⁶**

	Number of pupils who had a free school meal on Census day
Crossgates C.P. School	15.4%
Llanbister C.P. School	1.6%
Ysgol Cefnlllys	24.6%
Ysgol Trefonnen C. in W. Community School	26.3%
Knighton C. in W. School	6.3%

v) **Pupils in care²⁷**

	Number of pupils in care
Crossgates C.P. School	3.5%
Llanbister C.P. School	3.3%
Ysgol Cefnlllys	2.2%
Ysgol Trefonnen C. in W. Community School	0.5%
Knighton C. in W. School	0.0%

vi) **SEN/ALN²⁸**

	School Action	School Action Plus	Statement
Crossgates C.P. School	9.8%	3.5%	0.0%

²⁶ PLASC 2020

²⁷ PLASC 2020

²⁸ PLASC 2020

Llanbister C.P. School	6.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Ysgol Cefnlllys	17.7%	8.2%	3.0%
Ysgol Trefonnen C. in W. Community School	23.0%	3.3%	0.5%
Knighton C. in W. School	12.1%	5.8%	0.5%

APPENDIX B – SWOT AND CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR ANALYSIS

1. SWOT ANALYSES

SWOT analyses for each of the options identified in section 5 are provided below:

Option 1: Status quo – continue as a standalone school

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Dolau - There would be no additional transport costs - No requirement for a reorganisation process - No change for staff - No impact on pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to be low, according to projections - Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision - Would still need to maintain the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building - Would not reduce surplus places - Would not lead to a financial saving - Would not address the high budget per pupil - Would not provide permanent leadership arrangements
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 - Ability to recruit/secure new headteacher in small school

Option 2: Federation with Crossgates C.P. School

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Dolau - There would be no additional transport costs - More opportunities could be provided to pupils and staff - Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils would continue to attend school in the same location - Would provide permanent leadership at Llanfihangel Rhydithon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to be low, according to projections - Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils would still be taught separately - Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision - Would still be required to maintain the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building - Would not reduce surplus places

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupils would continue to attend school at the same location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would not lead to a financial saving - Would not address the high budget per pupil - 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 - Opportunity to secure permanent leadership through shared leadership across the federation 	<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 Dolau site - May not be attractive to Crossgates C.P. School

Option 3: Federation with Llanbister C.P. School

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Dolau - There would be no additional transport costs - More opportunities could be provided to pupils and staff - Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils would continue to attend school in the same location - Would provide permanent leadership at Llanfihangel Rhydithon - Pupils would continue to attend school at the same location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to be low, according to projections - Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils would still be taught separately - Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision - Would still be required to maintain the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building - Would not lead to a financial saving - Would not address the high budget per pupil
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity for further collaboration across the sites - More opportunities for networking and sharing good practice - Opportunity to secure permanent leadership through shared leadership across the federation 	<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 Dolau site

Option 4: Merge with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school on two sites

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Dolau - 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 - Would provide permanent leadership arrangements on the Dolau site - Pupils would continue to attend school at the same location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small numbers would remain at Llanfihangel Rhydithon - Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils would still be taught separately - Would still need to maintain the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building - Both schools would lose their identity - Would also impact on staff at Crossgates C.P. School - Significant difference in the size of the two schools – would have a disproportionate impact on Crossgates C.P. 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon site

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

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Dolau - 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 - Would provide permanent leadership arrangements on the Dolau site - Pupils would continue to attend school at the same location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to be low, according to projections - Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils would still be taught separately - Would still need to maintain the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building - Both schools would lose their identity - Would also impact on staff at Llanbister C.P. School
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunities for further collaboration across the sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of the new curriculum – would be difficult to provide educational opportunities which

- More opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff	meet the requirements of the new curriculum on the Llanfihangel Rhydithon site
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Option 6: Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, retain the site as part of Crossgates C.P. School

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Dolau - 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 - Would provide permanent leadership arrangements on the Dolau site - Pupils would continue to attend school at the same location - Minimal impact on staff at Crossgates C.P. School - Crossgates C.P. School would retain its identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to be low, according to projections - Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils would still be taught separately - Would still need to maintain the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building - Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would lose its identity - Significant difference in the size of the two schools
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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon site

Option 7: Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, retain the site as part of Llanbister C.P. School

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Dolau - 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 - Would provide permanent leadership arrangements on the Dolau site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to be low, according to projections - Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils would still be taught separately - Would still need to maintain the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building - Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would lose its identity

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupils would continue to attend school at the same location - Minimal impact on staff at Llanbister C.P. School - Llanbister C.P. School would retain 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 on the Llanfihangel Rhydithon site

Option 8: Merge with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school on the Crossgates 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is currently the closest school - Additional transport costs - Pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would have to transfer to a new location - Loss of provision from Dolau - Impact on the Dolau community - Would impact on Crossgates staff as well as Llanfihangel Rhydithon staff - Potential reduction in staffing requirements - Both schools would lose their identities
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to realise a capital receipt from sale of the Dolau site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Possible reduction in staffing requirements at the new school

Option 9: Merge with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school on the Dolau 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 Crossgates C.P. School is currently the closest school - Additional transport costs - Pupils currently attending Crossgates C.P. School would have to transfer to a new location - Less convenient for the majority of pupils - Current Crossgates pupils may live closer to other schools - Loss of provision from Crossgates - Impact on the Crossgates community - Would impact on Crossgates staff as well as Llanfihangel Rhydithon staff - Potential reduction in staffing requirements - Would not be acceptable to Crossgates school - Both schools would lose their identities - Dolau school is too small to accommodate the merged school - Significant investment would be needed in the Dolau site to accommodate Crossgates pupils
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to realise a capital receipt from sale of the Crossgates site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant investment would be needed in the Dolau site to accommodate Crossgates pupils - Unlikely that the Dolau site would be large enough to accommodate a school of the size required – a new site may be required

Option 10: Merge with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school on the Llanbister 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional travel for those pupils for whom Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is currently the closest school - Additional transport costs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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"> - Pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would have to transfer to a new location - Pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School may live closer to other schools - Loss of provision from Dolau - Impact on the Dolau community - Would impact on Llanbister staff as well as Llanfihangel Rhydithon staff - Potential reduction in staffing requirements - Both schools would lose their identities - Investment would be needed in the Llanbister site in order to accommodate Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to realise a capital receipt from sale of the Dolau site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investment would be needed to the Llanbister site to accommodate Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils. - The Llanbister site may not be large enough to accommodate a school of the size required

Option 11: Merge with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school on the Dolau 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 Llanbister C.P. School is currently the closest school - Additional transport costs - Pupils currently attending Llanbister C.P. School would have to transfer to a new location - Less convenient for the majority of pupils - Current Llanbister pupils may live closer to other schools - Loss of provision from Llanbister - Impact on the Llanbister community - Would impact on Llanbister staff as well as Llanfihangel Rhydithon staff - Potential reduction in staffing requirements

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would not be acceptable to Llanbister school - Both schools would lose their identities - Investment would be needed in the Dolau site to accommodate Llanbister pupils
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to realise a capital receipt from sale of the Llanbister site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investment would be needed to the Llanfihangel Rhydithon site to accommodate Llanbister pupils. - The Llanfihangel Rhydithon site may not be large enough to accommodate a school of the size required.

Option 12: Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 - Pupils would attend schools with permanent leadership arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional travel for those pupils for whom Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is currently the closest school - Additional travel costs - Pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would have to transfer to alternative provision - Loss of provision from Dolau - Impact on the current staff of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School - Impact on the Dolau community
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to realise a capital receipt from sale of the Dolau site 	

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	Option 10	Option 11	Option 12
1 – Strategic fit and business needs	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2 – Value for money	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	?	x	✓	✓	✓
3 – Potential achievability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓
4 – Potential affordability	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x	✓
Total ✓	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	2	4
Total x	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	3	2	2	0
Outcome	Discount	Possible	Discount	Discount	Discount	Preferred						

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 Dolau.	There would be no impact on the community – provision would continue to be available in Dolau.	There would be no impact on travel arrangements – pupils would continue to attend school in Dolau.
Option 2: Federation with Crossgates C.P. School	<p>The impact on quality and standards would be minimal. Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to operate as a stand alone school, however the school would be federated with Crossgates C.P. 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 Dolau.</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> <p>In addition, it is possible that joint activities would take place on the Crossgates site as the larger site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Dolau site.</p>	<p>There would be no impact on travel arrangements – pupils would continue to attend school in Dolau.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>

<p>Option 3: Federation with Llanbister C.P. School</p>	<p>The impact on quality and standards would be minimal. Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to operate as a stand alone school, however the school would be federated with Llanbister C.P. 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 Dolau.</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 Dolau site.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>
<p>Option 4: Merge with Crossgates 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 shared across both sites.</p>	<p>The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Dolau.</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 governing body.</p> <p>In addition, it is possible that joint school activities would take place</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current Dolau site.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>

		on the Crossgates site as more pupils attend this site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Dolau site.	
Option 5: Merge with Llanbister 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.</p>	<p>The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Dolau.</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 governing body.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current Dolau site.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>
Option 6: Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, retain the site as part of Crossgates C.P. School	<p>Implementation of this option would result in closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, however provision would continue on the current site.</p> <p>Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School is currently in the green support category based on the 2019 categorisations whilst Crossgates C.P. School is in the yellow support category. However, there are no concerns in relation to quality and standards at</p>	<p>Provision would continue to be available in Dolau. However, the site would be managed by the current governing body of Crossgates 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 Crossgates site as more pupils attend this site, which could</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current Dolau site.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>

	<p>Crossgates C.P. School, and the Council's view is that provision for pupils would be at least equivalent to the current provision.</p> <p>In addition, 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. 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>lead to a reduction in activity on the Dolau site.</p>	
<p>Option 7: Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, retain the site as part of Llanbister C.P. School</p>	<p>Implementation of this option would result in closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, however provision would continue on the current site.</p> <p>Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School is currently in the green support category based on the 2019 categorisations whilst Llanbister C.P. School is in the yellow support category. However, there are no concerns in relation to quality and standards at Llanbister C.P. School, and the Council's</p>	<p>Provision would continue to be available in Dolau. However, the site would be managed by the current governing body of Llanbister 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 Llanbister, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Dolau site.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current Dolau site.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>

	<p>view is that provision for pupils would be at least equivalent to the current provision.</p> <p>In addition, 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. 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>Option 8: Merge with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school on the Crossgates 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 improved opportunities to share staff expertise.</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Dolau as there would be no provision in the village.</p> <p>However, merging with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school would provide opportunities for the Dolau community to be involved in the process of establishing the new school, and would aid community involvement in the new school.</p> <p>Should the school close, the Council would need to determine</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School for whom this is currently the closest 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>the future use of the building. Should the Council declare the building to be surplus to requirements and seek to sell the building, this would mean that the school's facilities would no longer be available to the community.</p> <p>The school is co-located with a community hall. Should the school close, the community hall would continue to be available for community activities. Whilst the proposal would not impact on the community hall, it is acknowledged that the potential loss of income to the hall from school activities no longer needing to take place could impact on the community hall.</p>	
<p>Option 9: Merge with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school on the Dolau 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>There would be a positive impact on the Dolau community as this option would retain provision in Dolau and would lead to a significant increase in pupil numbers, safeguarding provision in the village for the future.</p> <p>However, there would be a negative impact on the Crossgates community as there would no longer be provision in Crossgates. Whilst merging the two schools to establish a new school would</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Crossgates 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>

	<p>However, it is unlikely that the Dolau 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 Dolau building.</p>	<p>provide opportunities for the Crossgates community to be involved in the process of establishing the new school to aid community involvement in the new school, however as Crossgates is the larger village with a significantly larger school, it is likely that the Crossgates community would consider this option to be disproportionate.</p>	
<p>Option 10: Merge with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school on the Llanbister 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 Llanbister 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 Llanbister building.</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Dolau as there would be no provision in the village.</p> <p>However, merging with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school would provide opportunities for the Dolau community to be involved in the process of establishing the new school, and would aid community involvement in the new school.</p> <p>Should the school close, the Council would need to determine the future use of the building. Should the Council declare the building to be surplus to requirements and seek to sell the building, this would mean that the</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School for whom this is currently the closest 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>school's facilities would no longer be available to the community.</p> <p>The school is co-located with a community hall. Should the school close, the community hall would continue to be available for community activities. Whilst the proposal would not impact on the community hall, it is acknowledged that the potential loss of income to the hall from school activities no longer needing to take place could impact on the community hall.</p>	
<p>Option 11: Merge with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school on the Dolau 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 Dolau site would be able to accommodate all pupils, therefore there would be a negative impact on the quality of provision should</p>	<p>There would be a positive impact on the Dolau community as this option would retain provision in Dolau 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 Llanbister community as there would no longer be provision in Llanbister. Whilst merging the two schools to establish a new school would provide opportunities for the Llanbister community to be involved in the process of establishing the new school to aid community involvement in the new</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llanbister C.P. School. As the school already serves a very large, rural catchment area, it is likely that this would result in very long journeys to school for pupils.</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>

	all pupils be taught in the current Dolau building.	school, however as Llanbister School is larger, it is likely that the Llanbister community would consider this option to be disproportionate.	
Option 12: Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools	<p>Implementation of this option would mean that pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would transfer to their nearest alternative schools. For the majority of pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, the closest alternative school would be Crossgates C.P. School.</p> <p>Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School is currently in the green support category based on the 2019 categorisations whilst Crossgates C.P. School is in the yellow support category. However, there are no concerns in relation to quality and standards at Crossgates C.P. School, and the Council's view is that provision for pupils would be at least equivalent to the current provision.</p> <p>In addition, Crossgates C.P. School is a larger school, with a larger number of pupils and a larger team of staff, which could</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Dolau as there would be no primary provision in Dolau.</p> <p>Should the school close, the Council would need to determine the future use of the building. Should the Council declare the building to be surplus to requirements and seek to sell the building, this would mean that the school's facilities would no longer be available to the community.</p> <p>The school is co-located with a community hall. Should the school close, the community hall would continue to be available for community activities. Whilst the proposal would not impact on the community hall, it is acknowledged that the potential loss of income to the hall from school activities no longer needing to take place could impact on the community hall.</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C. in W. School for whom it is currently the closest school. However, the analysis of pupil travel distances carried out suggests that Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is the closest school for only 48.5% of current pupils.</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. This would impact on pupils for whom Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is currently the closest school.</p>

	<p>have a positive impact on the opportunities available for pupils and staff.</p> <p>Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, a small number of pupils would live closer to other schools, in particular Llanbister C.P. School, Knighton C. in W. School and Ysgol Cefnlllys. These schools are all in the yellow support category based on the 2019 categorisations, therefore there are no concerns about the provision pupils would receive should they transfer to these schools.</p>		
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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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to be low, according to projections - Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision - Would still need to maintain the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building - Would not reduce surplus places - Would not lead to a financial saving - Would not address the high budget per pupil - Would not provide permanent leadership arrangements - Does not meet the Critical Success Factors
2	Federation with Crossgates C.P. School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to be low, according to projections - Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils would still be taught separately - Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision - Would still be required to maintain the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building - Would not reduce surplus places - Would not lead to a financial saving - Would not address the high budget per pupil - Significant difference in the size of the two schools - Does not meet the Critical Success Factors
3	Federation with Llanbister C.P. School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to be low, according to projections - Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils would still be taught separately - Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision - Would still be required to maintain the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building - Would not lead to a financial saving - Would not address the high budget per pupil - Does not meet the Critical Success Factors
4	Merge with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school on two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small numbers would remain at Llanfihangel Rhydithon

	sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils would still be taught separately - Would still need to maintain the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building - Both schools would lose their identity - Would also impact on staff at Crossgates C.P. School - Significant difference in the size of the two schools – would have a disproportionate impact on Crossgates C.P. School - Does not meet the Critical Success Factors
5	Merge with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school on two sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to be low, according to projections - Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils would still be taught separately - Would still need to maintain the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building - Both schools would lose their identity - Would also impact on staff at Llanbister C.P. School - Does not meet the Critical Success Factors
6	Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, retain the site as part of Crossgates C.P. School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to be low, according to projections - Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils would still be taught separately - Would still need to maintain the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building - Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would lose its identity - Significant difference in the size of the two schools - Does not meet the Critical Success Factors
7	Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, retain the site as part of Llanbister C.P. School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to be low, according to projections - Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils would still be taught separately - Would still need to maintain the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building - Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would lose its identity - Does not meet the Critical Success Factors

8	Merge with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school on the Crossgates site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional travel for those pupils for whom Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is currently the closest school - Additional transport costs - Pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would have to transfer to a new location - Loss of provision from Dolau - Impact on the Dolau community - Would impact on Crossgates staff as well as Llanfihangel Rhydithon staff - Potential reduction in staffing requirements - Both schools would lose their identities - Does not meet the Critical Success Factors
9	Merge with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school on the Dolau site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional travel for those pupils for whom Crossgates C.P. School is currently the closest school - Additional transport costs - Pupils currently attending Crossgates C.P. School would have to transfer to a new location - Less convenient for the majority of pupils - Current Crossgates pupils may live closer to other schools - Loss of provision from Crossgates - Impact on the Crossgates community - Would impact on Crossgates staff as well as Llanfihangel Rhydithon staff - Potential reduction in staffing requirements - Would not be acceptable to Crossgates school - Both schools would lose their identities - Dolau school is too small to accommodate the merged school - Significant investment would be needed in the Dolau site to accommodate Crossgates pupils - Does not meet the Critical Success Factors
10	Merge with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school on the Llanbister site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional travel for those pupils for whom Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is currently the closest school - Additional transport costs - Pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would have to transfer to a new location - Pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School may live closer to other schools - Loss of provision from Dolau - Impact on the Dolau community - Would impact on Llanbister staff as well as Llanfihangel Rhydithon staff - Potential reduction in staffing requirements - Both schools would lose their identities

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investment would be needed in the Llanbister site in order to accommodate Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils - Does not meet the Critical Success Factors
11	Merge with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school on the Dolau site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional travel for those pupils for whom Llanbister C.P. School is currently the closest school - Additional transport costs - Pupils currently attending Llanbister C.P. School would have to transfer to a new location - Less convenient for the majority of pupils - Current Llanbister pupils may live closer to other schools - Loss of provision from Llanbister - Impact on the Llanbister community - Would impact on Llanbister staff as well as Llanfihangel Rhydithon staff - Potential reduction in staffing requirements - Would not be acceptable to Llanbister school - Both schools would lose their identities - Investment would be needed in the Dolau site to accommodate Llanbister pupils - Does not meet the Critical Success Factors

APPENDIX E – RESPONSE FORM

PROPOSAL TO CLOSE LLANFIHANGEL RHYDITHON C.P. SCHOOL

Powys County Council is consulting on a proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. The proposal is as follows:

- To close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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"/> | Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School | <input type="checkbox"/> | Another school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | No association | | |

If you are associated 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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"/> 25-34
<input type="checkbox"/> 35-44	<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
------------------------------	-----------------------------	--

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.**

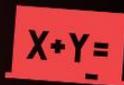
Transforming Education Team, Powys County Council, County Hall, Llandrindod Wells, LD1 5LG

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

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Closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School Consultation Report



Consultation on the closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

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Consultation on the closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

1. OVERVIEW OF THE CONSULTATION

Powys County Council consulted on a proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. The proposal is as follows:

- To close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School – 4th May 2021
- Governors of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School – 4th May 2021
- Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School Council – 19th May 2021

ii) Responses received

A total of 290 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, 130 written responses were received from respondents, including Estyn. The response received from Estyn is provided on page 29, in-line with the requirements of the School Organisation Code.

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

- Governing Body of Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School
- Llanfihangel Rhydithon Community Council
- Old Radnor Community Council
- Penybont & District Community Council
- Joint submission from Fay Jones MP and James Evans MS
- Mudiad Meithrin
- Diocese of Swansea and Brecon
- Dolau School Action Group
- Friends of Dolau School Committee
- Dolau Youth Club
- Cylch Meithrin Dolau
- Dolau Parent and Toddler (Ti a Fi)
- Governing Body of Llanelwedd C. in W. School
- Chair of Governors, Llanbister C.P. School
- Chair, Dolau Recreation Association
- Powys Radnor Federation WI
- Dolau WI
- Teme Valley Hunt Pony Club

iii) Summary of issues raised

The issues raised in the consultation responses are listed in detail in section 6 on page 33. This includes the Council's response to each issue. The following is a summary of the issues raised:

1. Comments about Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

1. General positive comments about the school
2. Comments about the quality of provision at the school
3. Comments about the size of the school
4. Everyone is friends at the school
5. Support for ALN pupils
6. Comments about the school buildings / grounds
7. Comments about equipment available at the school
8. Comments about extra-curricular provision at the school
9. Comments about school staff
10. Comments about leadership at the school
11. Comments about the attainment of current pupils
12. Comments about former pupils
13. Reference to Friends of Dolau School (FODS)
14. Parents drive past other schools to bring their children to Dolau school
15. Links between the school and the community
16. Reference to attendance

17. Other comments

2. Comments about small/rural schools

1. Positive comments about small schools
2. Positive comments about rural schools
3. Parents should be able to choose a small / rural school
4. Reference to Welsh Government policy
5. Comments about the Covid-19 pandemic

3. Impact on pupils

1. General concern about the impact of the consultation on pupil well-being
2. Comments about consultation taking place during the Covid pandemic
3. Concern about the impact on pupils of having to move to a different school
4. Concern that pupils would be separated from their friends
5. Concern about the impact on the quality of education
6. Concern about access to extra-curricular provision
7. Other comments

4. Comments relating to other schools

1. Comments about Crossgates C.P. School
2. Comments about Llanbister C.P. School
3. Comments about Knighton C. in W. School
4. Comments about Llanelwedd C. in W. School
5. Comments about other schools pupils may transfer to

5. Impact on the community

1. General concern about the impact on the community/village
2. The school is the heart of the village
3. Comments about the impact on the community centre
4. Reference to other community activities / organisations
5. Closure of the school would mean that people would not want to live in Dolau
6. Reference to previous generations of families that have attended the school
7. Queries about what would happen to the school building should the school close
8. Comments about the impact of previous school closures on communities
9. Comments relating to community well-being

10. Comments about community impact beyond the village of Dolau
11. Comments about the role of the community during the Covid pandemic

6. Comments about pupil numbers

1. Comments about current pupil numbers at the school
2. Comments about future pupil numbers
3. Comments about housing developments in the area
4. Comments about a possible increase in people moving to the area following Covid
5. Comments about pupil numbers in other schools
6. Other comments

7. Travel implications

1. The proposal would lead to additional travel
2. Comments about additional transport costs
3. Concern about the impact on the environment
4. Concern about impact on pupils' access to after schools activities
5. Other comments

8. Impact on staff

9. Comments about early years provision

1. Comments relating to the Cylch Meithrin at Dolau
2. Concern about the future of the Cylch Meithrin at Dolau
3. Comments about funding of the Cylch Meithrin
4. Comments about registration
5. Comments relating to Dolau Parent and Toddlers Group
6. Comments about early years provision at other locations
7. Other comments

10. Reference to previous consultations

1. Previous Dolau consultations
2. Comments about previous school closures
3. General comments about previous school closures in Radnorshire
4. Reference to other consultations which are currently ongoing
5. Other comments

11. Financial implications

1. Comments relating to the estimated saving from closing the school
2. Comments relating to the budget share per pupil / funding formula
3. Comments relating to the financial position of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School
4. Comments relating to the possible sale of the Dolau building
5. Comments relating to the cost of consultation
6. Criticism of the Council's financial position
7. Other comments

12. Criticism of Powys County Council

1. Criticism of the support provided to the school / pupils during the consultation period
2. Criticism of the Council's approach to small / rural schools / communities
3. Criticism of the Council's treatment of Dolau school
4. Criticism of Council staff / councillors
5. Criticism of the Council's use of money
6. Other criticisms

13. Comments about Council strategies

1. Comments about the Council's Transforming Education Strategy
2. 21st Century Schools and Education Programme
3. Towards 2040 – the Powys Wellbeing Plan
4. Vision 2025
5. Other

14. Comments about the consultation documentation

1. Comments about the consultation document
2. Comments about the impact assessments
3. Children / Young People documents
4. Comments about Welsh language versions of the documents
5. Comments about consultation documentation for other proposals

15. Comments about the consultation process

1. Comments about consulting during the Covid pandemic
2. Comments about consultation meetings
3. Comments that people didn't know about the consultation
4. Comments about consultation with pupils

5. Suggestion that the Council should visit the school as part of the process
6. Comments about presumption against closing rural schools
7. Comments about other schools
8. Other comments about the process

16. Comments about impact on protected characteristic groups

1. Benefits of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School / small schools in general for pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups
2. Concern that moving to larger schools would have a negative impact on pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups
3. The proposal wouldn't impact on pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups
4. Impact on pupils with additional learning needs
5. Impact on disabled pupils
6. Impact on other protected characteristic groups
7. Other comments

17. Comments about impact on the Welsh Language

1. Comments about Welsh at Llanfihangel Rhydithon school
2. Negative impact on the Welsh language
3. The proposal would not have a negative impact on the Welsh language
4. Other comments

18. Alternative options

1. Retain the status quo
2. Pause the consultation process
3. Formalise the arrangements with Llanfihangel
4. Federation / merger with another school
5. Make changes to other schools
6. Develop Welsh-medium provision at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School
7. Develop the provision at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School
8. Clustering of schools
9. Support rural schools
10. Other

19. Comments in favour of the proposal

2. CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

258 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. 31 respondents sent the consultation response form by email in English, and 1 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	30	10.3%
Prospective parent, carer or guardian	26	9.0%
Governor	4	1.4%
Member of staff	8	2.8%
Member of the community	133	45.9%
Organisation	7	2.4%
Pupil	4	1.4%
No association	45	15.5%
Other	32	11.0%
Not Answered	1	0.3%
Total responses	290	100.0%

2. Please specify which school you are associated with:

Response	No.	%
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	225	77.6%
Another school	20	6.9%
No association with any school	44	15.2%
Not Answered	1	0.3%
Total responses	290	100.0%

3. Please provide your postcode:

Response	No.	%
Llandrindod Wells	165	56.9%
Presteigne	19	6.6%
Knighton	17	5.9%
Builth Wells	9	3.1%

Rhayader	9	3.1%
Brecon	4	1.4%
Newtown	3	1.0%
Leominster	3	1.0%
Llangammarch Wells	2	0.7%
Cardiff	2	0.7%
Llanidloes	2	0.7%
Other	34	11.7%
Not Answered	21	7.2%
Total responses	290	100.0%

Part 3 – About you

12. How old are you?

Response	No.	%
Under 16	8	2.8%
16-23	20	6.9%
25-34	62	21.4%
35-44	61	21.0%
45-54	49	16.9%
55-64	37	12.8%
65-74	25	8.6%
75-84	6	2.1%
85+	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	15	5.2%
Not answered	7	2.4%
Total responses	290	100.0%

13. What is your gender?

Response	No.	%
Male	68	23.4%
Female	203	70.0%
Gender Fluid	0	0.0%
Non-Binary	0	0.0%
Gender neutral	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	12	4.1%
Not answered	7	2.4%
Total responses	290	100.0%

14. Can you understand, speak or write Welsh?

Response	No.	%
Yes	117	40.3%
No	126	43.4%
Prefer not to say	36	12.4%
Not answered	11	3.8%

Total responses	290	100.0%
------------------------	------------	---------------

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

Response	No.	%
Yes	8	2.8%
No	173	59.7%
Prefer not to say	47	16.2%
Not answered	62	21.4%
Total responses	290	100.0%

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

Response	No.	%
Yes	9	3.1%
No	169	58.3%
Prefer not to say	38	13.1%
Not answered	74	25.5%
Total responses	290	100.0%

17. Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

Response	No.	%
Yes	14	4.8%
No	234	80.7%
Prefer not to say	25	8.6%
Not answered	17	5.9%
Total responses	290	100.0%

18. What is your ethnic group?

Response	No.	%
White	264	91.0%
Asian	0	0.0%
Black, African or Caribbean	0	0.0%
Mixed	0	0.0%
Gypsy/Traveller	0	0.0%
Other	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	17	5.9%
Not Answered	9	3.1%
Total	290	100.0%

3. CONSULTATION WITH PUPILS

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

i) Meeting with the School Council of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

Officers from Powys County Council met virtually via Microsoft Teams with representatives from the School Council of Llanfihangel Rhydithon School to discuss the consultation to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon school with pupils to attend their nearest alternative schools.

The School Council group consisted of 7 pupils, one in year 2, two in year 3, two in year 4 and two in year 6.

Officers explained that Powys County Council was reviewing the future of Llanfihangel Rhydithon school and is wondering whether or not to close the school. It was explained that there was now a period of consultation where people were being asked what they thought. It was emphasised that this was only an idea at this time, and no final decision had been made. Hearing the views of pupils at Llanfihangel Rhydithon school is a very important part of the process.

The pupils were asked several questions and their responses are summarised below:

Do you understand why we are here?

- Yes

Tell us about Dolau School. What do you like about Dolau school, what's good?

- The education is really good here and there are lots of after school clubs as well – craft clubs, football, swimming galas, cross country, hockey team, eisteddfod, lots of outside activities
- Lots of education and attention by teachers because we are a small school and there are less pupils
- Lots of people here are nice
- Everyone gets along well with other pupils
- Everyone is really friendly
- Teachers help a lot
- Quality of the work is good
- We have ALN support for children with additional needs.

Are you all friends, do you all know each other in school?

- Yes, we are all friends.

What about how the school works with the local community? Is there a good relationship between the school and the community?

- Yes

What kind of things happen between the school and the community?

- There is a good relationship between the school and the local Community Hall and Church
- We have school plays in the Community Hall and the community come to watch, PE in the hall, also carols around the tree, harvest festival, choir, and lots of events such as tractor runs, fun rides

There are lots of things you like about the school. What could be better? Is there anything you don't like?

- No, it's a perfect school

If the school would close and there was no school in Dolau, what would be different for you?

- Not all the children would go to the same school, so their friendship groups would split
- The teachers wouldn't come with us, and we would have to get used to new teachers, different teaching methods
- New students

How do you get to school? Do you go in the car or walk?

- Some of us come to school on bus, others in cars

How would you feel about going on a bus further to another school? How would it affect you?

- If we had to go to a different school, I would have to travel further. My house is closer to this school than another school
- We could be running late for our classes and would have to catch up and travel further
- We live closer to Crossgates than Dolau but mum and dad have driven us to Dolau for 10 years. We would have to go on a bus to Crossgates, and more travel

- I would probably walk because I live closer to Crossgates
- We live within half a minute to Dolau but would have to get a bus and it would take much longer to go to another school.
- It only takes 5 minutes for me to go to Dolau school
- Lots walk to school.

Crossgates is a larger school as are all other schools that could be available to you. What is good or bad being in a larger school?

- In a smaller school, teachers have time to get around all of us in a lesson. In a larger school, if there are 30 pupils in a class it is much more difficult for the teacher to get around everyone
- In a bigger school, lots of people are talking and it's more difficult to concentrate.

What are the good things about being in a larger school?

- Nothing. No

Would there be more opportunities to be part of sports clubs or not?

- No
- If they have bronze ambassadors, there would be less chance of you being picked or if there is a class football trip, you would also be less likely to be picked.
- My cousin goes to Knighton and can't go to after-school clubs as they are all full
- More attention in smaller schools, and you learn quicker and better, I think that I will struggle more in larger school as less teacher attention.

At the moment you are in mixed classes. If you were in a bigger school, the number of year groups would be smaller within a class. What do you think about that? Is that a good thing or are there problems with that?

- I would rather mix with other years so I can talk to different pupils and it's good to mix and work together with younger groups, for example if doing a class project
- Might get bored, as there wouldn't be people to help you
- Will not know everyone in school, here with a mixed age class, we know everyone in school

What would be different for the community if there was no school?

- There would not be as many events on, and less children attending community things. Not every child could attend, and there would be less knowledge of things on.

- Things such as the tractor run would not happen, as the school helps to organise them.

If there was no school at Dolau, what impact would that have on teachers and staff?

- They enjoy teaching us here. They would not know everyone in a bigger school as well, so they wouldn't enjoy as much.

Is there anything else concerning you about these plans, or do you have any other questions?

- Is there ALN in other schools?

Yes.

- Can you guarantee enough supplies and pencils and pens in different schools?

Yes, every school would have enough supplies.

- In our class we have a laptop each e.g. if playing a spelling game, but we probably wouldn't in a larger school

There would be IT equipment in a larger school, but I can't say for definite that there would be one each.

- Can you guarantee that teachers can get around all pupils in one lesson and would we be ready for high school?

All the schools around you are good schools, performing at the same level, so yes you would be ready for high school.

When the Council has to look at the future of schools and changes, it can be a very difficult time. How do you feel about all of this?

- Upsetting, angry, community won't be the same without Dolau school. Dolau school keeps families in the community. It's a family community.
- Some people live next door to the school, so it's easier to get here than other schools
- In a bigger school could we have an induction week?

If the plans did go forward, then whichever school you went to, you could go to the school and meet the teachers at the schools and your classmates.

- Do other schools have swimming lessons as well?

Yes.

- Would you have to share equipment like pens and pencils in a bigger school?

There would be enough pens and pencils for everybody.

- Would there be someone to support pupils with dyslexia?

Yes, there would be teachers and staff in the school to support pupils with dyslexia and other matters.

- In bigger schools would there be as much opportunities to do outdoor activities and trips?

There would still be opportunities in larger schools as well. The one issue that you have mentioned is that if you live further away from school, it may be more difficult to go to after-school activities. That's something we think is an issue. Do you think that's an issue?

- Yes
- In Dolau we also have sports people coming in e.g. to teach tennis and hockey. Will that happen in other schools?

That would happen in other schools as well.

- Would there be more bullies in a bigger school?

There wouldn't be more bullies. Is that something you would be worried about?

- Would you know everyone in the school and would you have as much equipment if you moved to a bigger school?

If it was a bigger school, I'm not sure that you would know everybody in the school, but you would know people in your class, your friends and people from Dolau, you would know quite a lot.

- So you're saying that we wouldn't know as much people in a different school?

It depends which school you would go to. If it's a larger school you might not know everyone, it would depend on the size of the school.

- The year 4's, if the school did close, they would have to get used to the new school and they would be year 6 by then and would have to get used to their new high school

There's a kind of double impact on them, because they will have moved once and they will have to move again? Is that what you're saying?

- Yes
- We want to go to the best school and we think that Dolau is the best school
- There are lots of lovely people in Dolau school

From what you tell us, the fact that you are in a small school gives you more of a family feel?

- If we are upset we feel that we can tell the teachers, anyone, because we are basically one big happy family

Do you feel well supported in Dolau school?

- Yes
- We also have buddies
- If we were in a bigger school, would we have a buddy?

It would depend on the school, but I would expect that there would be some kind of buddy system in every school.

Is there anything else you would like to say? What you tell us is very important. We need to listen to your views.

- If we move to a different school, not all our friends would be with us, and we would feel upset about that
- It would take us a while to make more friends
- I am concerned that if we move school we would have to move to high school again soon, and it could be overwhelming

What you're telling us is that there would be a big impact on you if you moved to a bigger school?

- Little ones would be upset and not understand what's going on, and they'd be leaving their friends
- Reception class pupils would just have settled at Dolau and will have to move again

Officers explained what happens next, and that at the moment, Powys County Council is asking what people think about Llanfihangel

Rhydithon school being closed. All of the information from parents, governors, staff and pupils would then be put in a report which would then be prepared and the Council would then consider the report and decide whether or not to carry on with the plan to close the school. There is no decision yet to close the school. If it is decided not to carry on, then that would be the end of the matter. If the Council do decide to carry on, then what's known as a Statutory Notice would have to be published. That is a notice put up outside the school telling everyone that the Council is planning to close the school. There is then another opportunity for people to say if they do not agree with that and why the school should not close. There would then be another report and the Council's Cabinet would consider this and make a final decision.

If we carry on with the process, a final decision would be made around December, and if the Council does decide to close the school it would close in September 2022.

- If we moved to a different school could our teachers come with us?

No, I don't think so. Is that something you would like to happen?

- Yes

Is there anything else you would like to say?

- I don't think it's fair that the Council want to close our school because of its size. The education is really good. The Council needs to judge on the education and not the size of the school
- The letter you sent to us to try and explain things is not child friendly and we couldn't understand it. There were some long words.

That's a document that we've always used for meetings with pupils, but the important thing is that we're here to explain to you and hear your views.

We've had lots of useful comments from you today, but if after today there is anything else you or your friends think of, you can send them to us by 2nd of June. Your teachers will be happy to arrange to pass things on.

- In a bigger school would we get the chance to get to know postcodes and would we get a chance to write a letter to our teachers.

Teachers would be able to mark all your work, yes.

- If a teacher had a baby, how long would it take to get a replacement?

That would depend on the school and the situation and a lot of things would have to be taken into account. Is that something you are worried about?

- Kind of
- We are also worried about leaving our teachers and school behind
- Even if two or three children moved school with us it wouldn't be the same because you would only know three people in the school
- The school has been under threat before, and it's almost a hundred years old
- Education here is around everybody, that's not possible in a bigger school
- Would there be enough sports equipment in a bigger school?
- We play lots of sports

Can you describe the outdoor spaces you have in Dolau school?

- Climbing frame, slide, grass, Teletubby house, a little shop, a space to play on with a basketball hoop, around the front a football pitch, a map of the UK on the floor, hopscotch, building blocks, sand pit,
- The younger class have an outdoor pen
- We have a conservation area and a pond
- A clock
- Would we have enough pegs for our bags and coats in a bigger school?

Yes, there would be enough pegs for everyone.

If you went to a larger school what do you think would be the impact on you in terms of sports activities and equipment?

- It would be worse because there would not be a chance to play on the play equipment every playtime
- Sports activities would all be full
- We have a choir and a Christmas play
- In Dolau school we have clubs such as a School Council and every single child in the school has a chance to go to each club and pick which one
- In a bigger school would there be lots of friendly people or would they be mean people?

Every school would be different. A larger school doesn't mean that everyone is mean.

- Everyone in our school gets to be on the School Council and coding club while in a larger school there wouldn't be that opportunity because of more pupils
- In a bigger school could you guarantee that we would have as good a quality education

In your area, the education in all the schools is good.

We have to be sure that all your opinions go the Council Cabinet, who make the decisions, so it's important that we tell the Cabinet what you think, and the Council will need to read your views before making a decision.

What you're telling us is that you have more opportunities in a smaller school?

- Yes
- Dolau school is the heart of our community
- In a bigger school would you have the opportunity for a whole school and class photo

Yes, you would have the opportunity of a whole school photo and a class photo.

- Would you have sibling photos?

Yes, you would have sibling photos.

- Would you have a breakfast club and after school club?

Yes, but it would depend which school you go to.

- Would you have a pom pom reward system in a larger school

Yes, a lot of schools have awards for good work and good behaviour.

- Would there be an assistant that would help everyone and could you pour water into glasses?

In all the schools there would be dinner-ladies helping children at dinner time. It will depend on the school what the actual arrangements are.

The children were thanked for their contribution, and reminded again that if they thought of anything else to send them to Powys County Council via their teachers.

ii) Summary of other comments made by pupils

In addition to the meeting with the School Council, 4 online responses and 8 written responses were received from pupils.

Here is a summary of the issues raised in these responses:

1. Positive comments about Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

- All the pupils at the school are friends
- Pupils feel safe at the school
- The teachers are helpful and friendly
- There is a lot of good equipment at the school
- There are good facilities at the school
- There are lots of communities and clubs at the school
- There are lots of school trips
- Pupils feel safe and happy at the school
- Past pupils have gone on to have successful careers
- Pupils feel proud to be a part of the school
- The pupils are in small classes which means that they can have more help from the teachers
- The school is quiet during class time, allowing pupils to work to their full potential
- Friends of Dolau School raise money for school trips and equipment
- Mixed age classes allow pupils to gain from each other's skill sets.
- Welsh is spoken frequently by pupils

2. Impact on pupils

- Concern that pupils may be split up from their friends
- Concern that pupils may feel sad having to move to another school
- Concern that pupils may not form strong bonds with children in other schools
- Dolau Youth Club may shut down if the school is closed
- Concern that children in other schools will not be as nice as those in Dolau
- Concern that there will be bullying in other schools

3. Comments about the community

- The school is the heart of the community
- Community events held at the school bring everyone together
- The community supports the school
- Everyone is friends within the community

4. Travel implications

- Pupils may have to travel further to get to school
- School buses would have to be provided reducing/nullifying cost savings

5. Comments about consultation documentation

- Documents written for the pupils were not easy to understand

6. Other options

- Close schools based on performance

7. Other comments

- The school building will look ugly if the school is closed
- Suggest that the Council should look at images of schools that have been shut down.

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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

- The main question staff have is concerning the reason for closure, considering the school is green. Estyn have deemed us as good and compared to other schools that aren't the subject of a consultation or being proposed to being closed, we are a higher standard rating than them. What therefore is the reason this consultation is hitting us? Why us, and then sending our children to schools that are not green?
- There are several small schools in Powys and we have found ourselves in this position again after only a few years since the council decided to keep us open. So, the question from the staff is why us again?
- The cost per pupil has obviously gone up because of the change to the funding formula. It would be interesting to compare the cost per pupil 2 years ago to the cost now, and I understand that is because of the funding formula that is in place but it is working against us now.
- It would be good to look at what the cost per pupil was, as we weren't heading into a deficit, we were budgeting, which means we have got ourselves a very healthy surplus and we are now being penalised if one of the issues you've looked at is finance. I think that if the funding formula wasn't changed in that way, would we still be here now is the question. If we could look at our cost per pupil before and after that change, that would be great.
- How can the authority guarantee that the children will get the same level of provision and opportunities, such as extra curriculum trips, classroom support and the extra things you can give in a small school?
- The consultation says the children will go to the nearest school, but that could see ours going to 6 or 7 different places. The concern is how will it work, what support will the children have in their move, as some will have one going to a school on their own, what provision will be put in place to support them?
- Out of all the schools in the area, there are only two that aren't over capacity, so will pupils be allowed to go to their nearest schools that are over capacity or will they need to go elsewhere?
- The feedback we are getting from quite a few of the parents is that they aren't wanting their children to go to Crossgates.
- The class sizes children will be going into will be tricky.
- Whilst Powys are working with Llanbister with them increasing their capacity which isn't that far apart, could we not work here or the two schools working together and maintaining the education across the two sites? I know the consultation document discounted that, but long-term

teaching heads is a challenging role. The third issue is we have pupils struggling with Covid at the moment, and I think we need to be careful discussing with those and the school council.

ii) Consultation meeting with Governors of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

- Why are you proposing to close a good, green school, when there are numerous schools in Powys failing, but you again are targeting a green school, with a good Estyn report which you are ignoring. Why after the last 5 years are you targeting Dolau again when you have other schools which are spiralling out of control debt wise, with hundreds of thousands of pounds of debt. Why target us and not focus on these other schools which are losing you money?
- Dolau has been in consultation twice in five years, how many other schools have been in consultation twice in five years?
- The school's 'green' classification is what we judged our school's performance on.
- Dolau's numbers are rising, our budget is healthy even without the extra load your funding formula put on our school, you can have that extra money back. We are not the eighth most expensive school in Radnor. We can run with the rest of them. I see this as a means to corner a small school by giving them more money. We can't win, can we?
- Crossgates School have a capacity of 210 and as you are all aware that they have a satellite class going into that school supporting Brecon and Newtown. That 210 capacity, does that include that satellite class, does it include the mobile that children will be taught in?
- Is it your intention that they all go to Crossgates School? The children shouldn't be split, they should go as a unit, are they all going to Crossgates School?
- Parents choose to send their children to Dolau school but you are taking that choice away from them. The alternative school will be Crossgates, is that right?
- The satellite class [In Crossgates] is running for 12 months as a trial, what happens if it is a success, are you going to extend it to make it two classes? I feel it is a really good idea with where it is situated, as we do fail for those children in that area. So, what happens if you do want to grow that satellite class? Will the 210 [Capacity at Crossgates] include the mobile classroom?
- You are taking children out of solid buildings, and putting them into mobiles?
- How many children do you transport to Dolau School? How many would need transport should they need to go to their nearest alternative school? In the worst-case scenario, how many are you anticipating will need transport? We have calculated that there will be at least 24 children, in addition to what you say is 11 that will need transport. I know

that there are buses already on those routes to other schools, however they are buses attached to secondary schools. There would therefore need to be buses that are for these children to go to their nearest alternative schools.

- In the consultation document you contradict yourself quite a few times by saying there will be transport costs, there won't be transport costs. The other thing is, because of the school transport the children will not be allowed to have the after-school activities which they have now at Dolau school. Crossgates do not offer these after school clubs and because they are on school buses, they will not be able to use them as you are taking them home on school transport.
- A lot of the time you talk about larger schools, that children are being moved from rural schools to the larger schools because they will get a better education, equipment, and use of new curriculum ideas. Does that mean you are intending on closing all rural schools?
- If combined age classes are so bad, why do Dolau pupils excel so well when going on to the high schools? 3 out of 10 members of Llandrindod High school council are from Dolau school, the pupils voice which is used for the curriculum there has 12 pupils and 3 of these are from Dolau school. Why are combined age classes so bad? Can you name a school that doesn't have a combined age classroom that is included in the alternative schools in this consultation document?
- Why does Powys say in the consultation document about the shared headship with Llanelwedd, but then option 1 is status quo? We are a single school. Last time we were in consultation, Cabinet wanted to put forward a formal agreement to be put between us. We are still wanting to become a Church in Wales school so that we can federate with Llanelwedd to make it a stronger school. You continue, in this consultation document, not even to mention that it is happening. Just the fact that there is a shared head, and he cannot manage two schools on two sites. But, in the Estyn inspection they praise the fact we do that as it gives the teachers encouragement to learn management skills. Why is that not in the consultation document, that we do have the shared head arrangement that we have had for the last 6 and a half years?
- A lot of our pupils at Dolau are in the Crossgates catchment but drive past Crossgates School to come to Dolau School. They do this for many reasons. One reason is because of the community feel, the better education, the one on one they have and the support system such as the friends of Dolau school who are very supportive providing pretty much every child with a laptop, and after school clubs.
- If people are driving past these schools to get to our school, can you really expect them to go to your named receiving school? We all know it's Crossgates. If they are driving past it now and not taking the public transport because they can't, can you expect them to want to go to a larger school if they are already driving across country to a rural school with better standards and community feel?

- Regarding there being plenty of money in the financial envelope for education. Firstly, if there is enough money there why close these schools? Secondly, you are saying this money that is proposed to be saved will help other schools develop. Are these other schools lacking?
- You said there would be money for performing arts and sports. We have had these false promises in the past. For the last 20 years we have had support at Dolau by Dolau parents and volunteers for performing arts and after school clubs, football clubs and so forth, which has saved a lot of money for Powys and has worked very well. Why change this?
- I can remember that Powys had these fantastic visions 20 years ago. What happened? 20 years is a long time. If these visions haven't happened in the last 20 years, how is it going to happen in the next 20 years? What guarantees have you got?
- You focus very much on what Estyn tell you in relation to where you need to improve. But if you are looking to improve learning entitlement and experience, why are you not looking at the Estyn inspection reports for the schools? Dolau school has a good Estyn inspection report, and all other schools are only adequate. So why move children from a good school to adequate schools. You are very focused on what Estyn is saying as part of your School Transformation Strategy, but when it comes to this consultation you ignore them.
- Is capacity and space in other schools in the area is a justifiable reason to close our good rural school, just to fill another school? We have all the facilities that we need, and no money will be saved by closing Dolau because of the transportation costs. Between Crossgates and the eastern border there is no school to provide a rural school environment. If you are going to remove these rural schools, how do you think it will affect families – will they stay or come to the area and enhance employment, and the community? There is a survey which shows the demographics of each community which have lost their rural schools over the last 20 years have changed, and there are no children in those villages and that is worth much more than the £36,000 that you are going to save. That is everybody's rural life going down the drain.
- Do you think it's justifiable to close Dolau school seeing that it's not a failing school? Is it justifiable to close it and to disrupt children and the whole community just to fill up another school?
- There will be 43 pupils in Dolau by next year. The cost of transporting children to another school is going to practically wipe out what you will save. The figures you have are not true.
- This is a rural area.
- It has been counted that 19 schools existed in the last 40 years which have now gone. If you look at the position of Dolau now, if Dolau closes it's another 6 miles to Crossgates – West. There is nothing between the border and us. Beguildy, Felindre, Bleddfa and Dolfor have all gone.
- So many of the schools in the less populated areas have gone because naturally they have the least children. You have to remember that is a

large chunk of our very rural County which constitutes the way the County is. Those villages are not community villages anymore.

- If you close schools too close to the border you will lose pupils over the border. It's already happening, and it will happen more.
- Some families' closest school already exceeds capacity. Are you therefore proposing that children move to a school that is already exceeding capacity? How can I reassure other parents that if their children move to other schools, that the children will have these additional opportunities for sport and performing arts.
- When I talk to parents of children in Dolau school, how can I specifically reassure them that when their children move to alternative schools, they will have these enhanced opportunities? To say that it is an aspiration is not good enough. For me to be able to persuade them that this is the correct thing for them to do, I have to be sure in my own mind that those opportunities are going to be there for their children when they move school. I can't do that simply on the basis of your aspiration.
- I just want to recap on the reasons why Llanfihangel Rhydithon has been brought into this consultation. Number one is the low pupil numbers, and they continue to be low, correct? Surplus capacity, so closing a small rural school to bump up the capacity of larger schools, correct? This consultation is about reducing the Council's overall surplus capacity, so closing a small rural school and putting it into a larger school.
- Revenue saving to the council – who actually defines our budget? It is defined by the local authority and the fair funding formula and that then governs our budget.
- You say that pupils would attend a larger school which would enhance their education, give them a better education.
- How can we recommend to parents which alternative schools children should go to when you don't even look at the Estyn inspections?
- In the consultation document, Powys mention the 2019 Estyn inspections lot has happened since 2019. Has anybody visited those schools now since Covid and when children have come back into school, and how they are doing and what their education levels are? We have had to rely on parents to do the digital online learning. Has anybody been monitoring that to make sure how that has been going? How has that happened in the larger schools? Have pupils had the same feedback that pupils have had in the smaller schools?
- The rural school policy says 91 is a small school, but it doesn't say that it should be discriminated and closed just because it is classified as a small rural school.
- If the children are going to have to transfer to another school and families decided to go to Crossgates, there would be large numbers in some year groups, I was just wondering how that is going to be accommodated if there are classes of 30 already. Would you be looking at two classes for one year group?

- You say that you will be implementing a new curriculum in all schools from September 2022. We have been using the new curriculum as a template for a number of years. The curriculum suits small schools I want you to know that is a reason why we have a very high standard school.
- I know of a child that wants to go to the same school to follow friendship groups to Crossgates. However, that school doesn't compare with Dolau, and the nearest alternative in terms of standards is Trefonnen which is full. What choice are they left with?
- In the consultation document it says the standards at Crossgates are 'adequate, inadequate, inadequate', so you have published something which you are now saying is incorrect. This information is all we have to go on until the next Estyn inspection.
- Powys may think differently about the standards at Crossgates, but Powys have been in special measures in the past haven't they, so what are we to go no?
- Are you happy for friendship groups to be split up as the school can't move as one group?
- During the last consultation there was a mediator or third party that came in to make sure that a fair and robust consultation was done. Will this happen this time? If not, nobody will be making sure that we are having a fair and robust consultation.

5. ESTYN

Estyn's response to the consultation is provided below:

Estyn response to the proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools

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.

Introduction

The proposal is by Powys County Council.

The proposal is to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools.

Summary

The proposal is part of Powys County Council's 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 these aims is to 'improve learner entitlement and experience' and it also includes an objective to 'rationalise primary provision'.

It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education in the area.

Description and benefits

The local authority has given a clear rationale for the proposal and explains how it aligns with the council's strategy for transforming education. The proposer identifies clearly the advantages for the proposal including addressing the low pupil numbers at the school, reducing the council's overall

surplus capacity in primary schools, making a revenue saving to the council and ensuring pupils attend schools with permanent leadership arrangements. The proposer also asserts that the proposal would allow pupils to attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum and that could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities. They acknowledge that travel arrangements could cause difficulties for a few pupils accessing extra-curricular activities.

The proposer has identified suitably the disadvantages and risks to the current proposal, which focus on the loss of provision in the village of Dolau, the impact on this community and the additional travel for those pupils for whom Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is currently the closest school.

The proposer considered appropriately a range of other options against the status quo, assessing these against critical success factors and the likely impact of each option on quality and standards, the community and travelling arrangements. However, for the preferred option, they have not outlined clearly whether parents will be able to choose another provision for their child, or whether they will only be allocated a place in their closest alternative school.

The proposer has considered suitably the impact of the proposal on pupil travel arrangements. It intends to support home to school travel in line with the council's transport policy. It further recognises that the proposal will potentially result in additional travel time for around half of pupils for whom Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is currently the closest school. However, the proposal recognises that there would be a reduction in travel time for the remaining pupils should they transfer to their nearest school. The proposer also recognises that in the event of closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, it is unlikely that there would be suitable walking routes to the alternative schools available for pupils currently attending the school.

The proposer has shown how the proposal will affect surplus places by providing pupil numbers and the capacity of each school in the area. The proposal is likely to reduce the surplus places at Crossgates C.P. School. This would be the closest school for the majority of pupils. However, a small number of pupils live closer to other schools, in particular Llanbister C.P. School, Knighton Church in Wales School and Ysgol Cefnlllys. Although there is capacity in Ysgol Cefnlllys and Knighton Church in Wales School, Llanbister C.P. School is currently oversubscribed and numbers at this school are likely to increase over the coming years. Ysgol Trefonnen Church in Wales Community is also oversubscribed. The proposer does not consider clearly enough the possible impact of future admissions to these schools or, for example, whether siblings would be able to access provision at these schools in future if this is the parental preference.

There would therefore appear to be no impact on the Welsh language arising from this proposal should pupils transfer to other schools. Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, and the alternative primary schools the proposer has identified within 10 miles of the school, are classified as English Medium Community Primary schools and do not provide education through the medium of Welsh.

The proposer has identified clearly the financial costs of the proposal including the potential savings. They note that any savings would be reinvested in the Council's corporate budget and any capital receipts received from the sale of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School site would be reinvested into the Schools Transformation programme to improve educational provision across Powys.

Educational aspects of the proposal

The proposer has considered reasonably well the quality of the standards, provision and leadership and management at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and the nearest alternative schools. As part of their assessment, the proposer acknowledges that in the short term, it is possible that there would be an impact on pupils' wellbeing, as they transfer to alternative schools and possibly different schools to their peers. However, the proposer asserts that the support available to pupils in these alternative schools should minimise this disruption.

There is no nursery provision at Llanfihangel Rhydithon, with the nearest funded nursery provision available at Little Acorns in Crossgates, the school identified as the closest alternative for the majority of pupils. It is likely that the proposal will have limited impact on access to nursery provision.

The proposer has considered the outcomes of the most recent Estyn inspection reports for all five schools in the area, along with their categorisation in relation to the National School Categorisation system on the quality of leadership and pupil outcomes.

The proposer has considered appropriately the likely impact of the proposal to ensure delivery of the full curriculum. As the number of pupils likely to transfer to each year group is low, it asserts that it not likely to have a significant impact on the alternative schools' ability to offer the full curriculum. The proposer has considered suitably the impact of the proposals on vulnerable groups, including children with Special Educational Needs. It identifies that although there will be an impact on pupils needing to transfer to an alternative school, there is no reason to believe that these schools will not be able to meet their needs and the council would work with Llanfihangel Rhydithon and all alternative schools to ensure an effective transition.

Presumption against the closure of rural schools

The proposer has considered appropriately a range of options including maintaining the status quo and the federation with a neighbouring school. The proposer has assessed the likely impact of each option appropriately, considering the quality and standards in education, impact on the community and impact of different travel arrangements. The proposer asserts that standards and provision for pupils would be at least equivalent to the current provision. The proposer acknowledges the significant impact on the community of Dolau without primary provision and acknowledges that the potential loss of income from school activities could have a possible impact on the community hall. The proposer considers suitably the impact of different travel arrangements for pupils. However, the council's analysis of pupil travel distances suggests that Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is the closest school for nearly half of the pupils, therefore locating to the nearest alternative school should reduce travel time for the remaining pupils.

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 LLANFIHANGEL RHYDITHON C.P. SCHOOL

1.1 General positive comments about the school

1.1.1	Dolau have an ethos and values that are to be admired and are a true reflection of Powys's key aim and mission statement of being a wonderful place to live, work and play.	The Council notes these comments about Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.
1.1.2	On entering Llanfihangel Rhydithon there is a feeling of warmth and welcome and one feels the close, family atmosphere of the school. The work prepared is always beautifully presented and of high quality.	As above.
1.1.3	The school provides a happy and caring environment, which nurtures our pupils and allows them to thrive.	As above.
1.1.4	Dolau school provides a platform where the children are made to feel that they are important and given the confidence to perform to the best of their abilities whatever that might be.	As above.
1.1.5	Dolau School has always supported its pupils and worked with their best interests at heart. They welcome all families with open arms. Through experience I know that Dolau School works hard to allow each individual to meet their full potential; Shy sensitive characters are nurtured and guided, bold talented energetic learners are challenged and those who have struggled at other schools, so often thrive at Dolau!	As above.
1.1.6	This is an excellent school offering a wonderful education to its students which is particular to this environment.	As above.
1.1.7	The school is a happy environment providing support and opportunities for all ages and abilities.	As above.
1.1.8	Every time I have visited the school I have been impressed by it. There is a genuine warmth and passion about the school and the pupils demonstrate a tremendous sense of pride and belonging.	As above.

1.1.9	I am well informed that the school has an excellent reputation and academia level which excels in the physical and mental health and well being of the children.	As above.
1.1.10	Llanfihangel rhydithon should be used as an example to make other schools aware of how a school should be run!!	As above.
1.1.11	It is a thriving, positive school.	As above.
1.1.12	Dolau School, and it's Community are absolutely unique. Everyone wishes they could be a "Dolau". From the farmers driving past on their tractors waving to the children in the playground; to watching the houses of their schoolfriends being built just across the road; I wanted and needed this sense of huge family belonging for my children. And they have it here in this idyllic school.	As above.
1.1.13	Whilst it is acknowledged that Llanfihangel Rhydithon School is a small rural school (as befitting a small rural community) we believe the school should be actively promoted as a Beacon or exemplar model of a CP school in Powys showing the high standards of education that can be achieved with excellent teachers, widespread use of information technology, and strong community support. The children themselves have a greater sense of belonging to, loyalty to and 'ownership' of such a successful school, and this may be, in part, also due to the financial support from the Education Authority.	As above.
1.1.14	I do not hold independent schools in higher or worse esteem than our other schools, but it is perverse that anyone would seek to remove from a community such as Dolau the kind of provision that would be privately paid for and even envied in other parts of the country.	As above.
1.1.15	Dolau's good reputation creates itself – there is little need for PR or advertising.	As above.
1.1.16	Dolau has everything and more than the larger surrounding schools – you would know that if you would allow the school to show you.	As above.
1.1.17	Llanfihangel Rhydithon primary school is one of the better things to come out of the Powys education department.	As above.
1.1.18	I cannot stress enough the importance of this school to the children in their learning, development and awareness of community in every way. The school motto "Developing Our Learning And Understanding" ~DOLAU~. Let's not lose this opportunity to make a difference, to	As above.

	Learn, to Develop our Understanding of the significance of what this school dose for the children and the community,	
1.1.19	Dolau school has and continues to provide an inclusive, learning environment with exceptional resources that has provided and continues to provide for each of my children. They have all been pushed, encouraged, stretched and supported in exactly the right way for their individual needs.	As above.
1.1.20	Llanfihangel Rhydithon is a good school with a good budget and good leadership there is no surplus floor space and the new Cylch is proving to be a massive success.	As above.
1.1.21	The school is meeting all targets, good Estyn report, green school category, balancing budget, good parent support, heart of the community, why try and close this fantastic school.	As above.
1.1.22	Throughout the school, pupils have positive attitudes towards learning Welsh. In the Foundation Phase many pupils use Welsh phrases informally, without being prompted.	As above.
1.1.23	Pupil numbers are good with a healthy age range with older children looking to younger ones, there is a real sense of inclusion right from the oldest to the youngest whatever their background. This encourages a sense of responsibility in the older pupils and a feeling of security in the younger pupils making for a very happy school.	As above.

1.2 Comments about the quality of provision at the school

1.2.1	Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is a Green category school, which is the highest educational standard in Wales. It also has a recent 'good standard' rating of education from Estyn. The Minister of Education has used Llanfihangel Rhydithon school as an exemplary rural school. Powys CC should be praising Llanfihangel Rhydithon school and recognising its strengths and qualities like the Minister of Education has.	As stated in the Consultation Document, the authority recognises the strengths and qualities of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C. P. School, as it includes information relating to the latest Estyn inspection in March 2019, which judged the school to be 'good' across all areas of inspection. It is also recognised that the National School Categorisation System for 2019 (the last time that the categorisation exercise was undertaken) put the school in the 'green' support capacity, which identifies how much support a school needs. The school was also graded as B for the 'improvement capacity' category.
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		It is noted that the previous Minister for Education used Llanfihangel Rhydithon an example of a good rural school.
1.2.2	Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School is one of the best primary schools for education. In their latest Estyn report, Llanfihangel Rhydithon was rated as a 'Good' school. It's ERW rating is Green, the highest in Wales.	As above.
1.2.3	Llanfihangel Rhydithon School is currently categorised as "GREEN" under The National School Categorisation System. I know how hard leaders, staff and governors work, alongside LA challenge advisors, to reach and maintain this high standard. In March 2019, ESTYN reported that the school was GOOD across all areas and the report praises the whole school community.	As above.
1.2.4	An example of a good rural school – this is what Kirsty Williams had to say about Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School during her time as Secretary of State for Education.	As above.
1.2.5	No other school in this area provides the attention and care that children need.	The Council disagrees with this statement. All schools in the area are required to support, challenge and nurture all children in their care.
1.2.6	A pro active governing body, headmaster and staff provide the children of the village and the wider community with a quality of education that makes them the envy of many of the larger schools in the county.	All schools in the Llandrindod area are self-improving schools, and provide a high standard of education. The governors, leaders and staff of all these schools are pro-active.
1.2.7	Llanfihangel Rhydithon is the best school within minimum of 50 miles.	Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is a good school. However, there are many other good schools within a radius of 50 miles of Dolau.
1.2.8	Llanfihangel is at the forefront in implementing the new curriculum and is more than equipped to deliver the requirements of the new curriculum in the future.	All schools are preparing for the new curriculum. Llanfihangel Rhydithon are working as part of the Calon Cymru cluster of primary and secondary schools to develop their approaches to the Areas of Learning and core principles.
1.2.9	The word "individual" appears in the Successful Futures document a total of 51 times. The pupils of Llanfihangel Rhydithon school are taught and cared for as such: individual interests, individual needs, and individual voices! "...developing a curriculum which is consistent	All pupils in Powys schools are considered as individuals. The right to equality of provision for all pupils should be part of every child's education in Powys.

	with national expectations, but which is also able to reflect the needs of the children and young people in their school.” (Successful Futures, 2015)	
1.2.10	Llanfihangel Rhydithon School although a small school has an excellent reputation.	Comment noted.
1.2.11	The children in Dolau school do not receive a lesser education because they are in a small school, on the contrary they receive a well-rounded education with so many exciting opportunities.	Comment noted.
1.2.12	The Estyn Report states in its summary: <i>“The school is a happy, caring community in which pupils thrive as confident, capable learners. Their behaviour in and around the school is exemplary. Most pupils make good progress in developing their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils enjoy belonging to the school and rates of attendance are consistently high. Teachers provide pupils with valuable activities that engage them and excite their curiosity. Most pupils have positive attitudes to their learning, and they are curious and eager to gain new knowledge and skills. Leaders and managers have a clear vision for the future of the school. They set high standards and ensure that they deploy the school’s resources efficiently.”</i>	Comment noted.
1.2.13	The Estyn report also states: <i>“Almost all pupils are happy, feel safe and enjoy belonging to the school. They show care and respect for one another and to adults, and contribute strongly to the friendly and family-like ethos that characterises the school. Nearly all pupils enjoy learning, are eager to contribute during lessons and concentrate well. They are curious and eager to acquire new knowledge and skills. They co-operate successfully with others in pairs and in groups and show resilience and persevere when they find tasks challenging. The standard of pupils’ behaviour is consistently high during lessons and at other times during the school day.”</i>	Comment noted.
1.2.14	The March 2019 Estyn Report highlights a diverse and creative educational curriculum and a wide range of extra- curricular activities. The report states: “Key stage 2 pupils have a good understanding of issues related to the wider world as the result of their work on the impact of plastic pollution. Following a teacher exchange visit,	Comment noted.

	<p>pupils have supported a school in Kenya, which has raised their awareness of important issues related to children's lives in other parts of the world"; "Nearly all pupils understand the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise. Most are very active during break times, taking full advantage of the extensive supply of play equipment. Many participate in after school sports clubs, such as tag rugby and football. They show a sound understanding of how to stay safe, including when they use the internet"; "Across the school, teachers provide an imaginative curriculum that builds on pupils' prior learning well and meets the needs of pupils of all abilities. It is broad and balanced, and teachers ensure that most activities are purposeful and appropriate to pupils' age and ability. They often enable pupils to make choices about what and how they learn"; "A broad range of educational visits enriches pupils' learning experiences successfully. For example, staff arrange for pupils to experience a Victorian Christmas at the Judge's Lodgings in Presteigne and to re-enact wartime evacuation at the Severn Valley Railway. The school promotes pupils' creative development well. Staff display pupils' art work prominently around the school and encourage them to sing Welsh songs enthusiastically. Visits to orchestral performances promote their cultural development effectively"; "Teachers use the outdoor areas effectively with pupils of all ages, including the conservation area and garden, to promote their understanding and appreciation of the natural world and the locality. For example, pupils enjoy gardening and supply produce for the church's Harvest Festival";</p>	
1.2.15	<p>"The school provides pupils with a wide range of afterschool clubs that are open to all pupils and are well supported. The school also provides regular opportunities for pupils to take part in local tournaments and swimming galas"; "The school provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop as leaders, through the school council and eco-committee."</p>	Comment noted.
1.2.16	<p>In my experience, Dolau demonstrates that it is more than ready to meet the demands of the 4 main purposes of New Curriculum for Wales. One example of this is the way that they already help to form</p>	Comment noted.

<p>“ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives” (Hwb – Curriculum for Wales, 2021) as evidenced in their recent inspection. ESTYN praised for the school for being a “happy, caring community in which pupils thrive as confident, capable learners.”</p>	
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1.3 Comments about the size of the school

<p>1.3.1</p>	<p>Small schools mean smaller class sizes. This means teachers can work one to one with children, get to know every individual child inside and out. The mixed classes work well, older children can help the younger children.</p>	<p>The Council notes these comments about the benefits of small schools. However, as stated in the Council’s Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-30, the Council faces a challenge due to the high proportion of small schools in the county and the lack of equity amongst schools. Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School teaches children in two classes of mixed aged groups. With such low pupil numbers the teacher-pupil ratio is notably different to many other schools in the area, and due to the Council’s funding formula, the school’s funding per pupil is higher than the Council’s average. This does not provide equity across the education system - teachers in larger schools are required to provide the same education as smaller schools for less funding per pupil. Powys’ Strategy is intended to improve equity across the education system and to ensure an improvement for every pupil’s learning entitlement and experience.</p> <p>It is clear that the Council's expenditure on children in the smallest schools is very generous, but through all of the engagements with stakeholders and the subsequent development of the Strategy to Transform Education in Powys, it is very apparent that there needs to be a vision for a stronger entitlement for all learners in Powys and equity for learners across the county. That vision, as the education professions moves towards the realisation of the new Curriculum for Wales does require the Council to pursue a transformational vision that secures an attractive</p>
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		<p>entitlement and equity for all learners, professional learning for all staff and secure leadership across all schools.</p> <p>The Council’s primary specialists have been exploring how the authority can best support schools to deliver the new curriculum for 2022. These education professionals are of the view that this will be significantly more challenging, and will place significantly greater demands on teachers in very small two-class schools. This does not mean that it would be impossible to deliver the new curriculum in these schools but it is clear that the skills required by teachers will need to be very wide ranging to support the full and effective fulfilment of the curriculum’s high ambitions. The new Curriculum for Wales is locally influenced and often pupil-led. All schools will design the detail of their own curriculum to suit their learners based on the four purposes and the six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE). Learners’ views about their experiences and about what, how and where they learn should be taken seriously when a curriculum is being designed. The school’s curriculum needs to be co-constructed, encouraging learners, parents, carers and the local community to understand and contribute to its development. It should also draw on a wider range of experts and stakeholders who can contribute to learning.</p> <p>The curriculum needs to be innovative and creative. Teachers, with pupils, will select the content, with no prescription on how areas should be taught, but with guidance provided nationally on a wide range of widely-recognised pedagogical principles. Additionally, planning and designing the curriculum in schools is a teacher responsibility, not one for support staff.</p>
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		<p>expertise for the learners in that school than would probably be the case in a large school. In a larger school, each member of staff can lead on a specified area where they may have an appropriate background and in which they can continue to gain growing levels of expertise. Effective learning and teaching requires disciplinary-specific expertise which will become increasingly relevant in developing a curriculum as learners progress. Although the guidance promotes inter-disciplinary approaches, it also recognises the importance that disciplinary-specific expertise plays in such approaches. A significant responsibility for the Council, and others, over the coming years will be to ensure that every learner in Powys benefits from the step change that is anticipated through the changing curriculum. The Council will work with all the schools in our care, of whatever size, and will provide significant support, whilst also encouraging collaboration. However, it would be inappropriate if officers of the authority did not stress the additional demands on staff in very small schools, whilst doing all we can to facilitate the lightening of the load.</p> <p>Additionally, it is only fair that professional primary experts within the Council comment on the balance of potential risks and benefits to a child when being taught by the same person over 3 or 4 years of their primary education.</p>
1.3.2	<p>Combined age classes No evidence has been submitted to justify the statement “Because pupil numbers in each year group are small, it is more difficult to ensure all pupils are appropriately challenged.” Our twin daughters were educated in Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School and were fully challenged during their time at the school achieving level 5 at key stage 2. All the other pupils in the year group also achieved level 5 at key stage 2 resulting in Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School being identified as one of the best achieving schools in the UK.</p>	<p>It is the view of primary experts within the Council that mixed age classes of more than 2 years provide a challenge to teachers 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 for both age groups and all abilities within the class. This is an additional workload on teachers and</p>

	<p>Combined age classes do lead to challenges but these can result in excellent results rather than the poor results as implied in the consultation document.</p>	<p>leaders who have a range of other roles and responsibilities in a small school.</p> <p>Teachers in very small two-class schools need to plan, implement and assess for the needs of up to four year groups within one class, and within each of those year groups plan, implement and assess for up to several ability groups, some with complex needs, thereby ensuring that the planning is differentiated for each child's needs. Larger schools have a greater level of staffing and single year group classes or a mixed year class of no more than usually 2 years.</p> <p>Good learning and teaching challenges all learners by encouraging them to recognise the importance of sustained effort in meeting expectations that are high but achievable for them. This is one of the 12 pedagogical principles in the new curriculum and all teachers need to engage effectively with research and professional development to enable them to have high expectations of all learners and develop as 'high expectation' teachers who have more positive attitudes towards learners and more effective teaching practices. This is a priority for the Council to ensure equity for all learners.</p>
1.3.3	<p>On page 10, paragraph 4 (iv), the LA notes that, 'it is more difficult to ensure all pupils are appropriately challenged' when educated in a combined aged class. Ensuring all pupils are 'appropriately challenged' may be hard but that difficulty exists for teachers of single aged classes also - in Wales, there are single aged classes where the actual spread of ability within them mirrors that shown across an entire two-class school. When inspecting Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School in 2019, Estyn found its teachers managed to, 'provide an imaginative curriculum that builds on pupils' prior learning well and meets the needs of pupils of all abilities.' Thus, I believe it is misleading to present this as a reason to support the closure of our village school.</p>	<p>As above.</p> <p>The majority of the alternative schools named in the Consultation Document have either single year groups or mixed age groups of no more than two years, with only Franksbridge as a two-class school with four year groups in each class. Llanbister is currently adding an additional classroom to become a three-class school.</p>

	How many of the nearest alternative schools offer single year group classes only? I believe that very few single aged classes exist across all of the schools named in the consultation document. Does this mean that most of these, if you stand by reason (iv) as given on page 10, find it difficult to ensure 'appropriate challenge'? Why print this as a reason to close our school if the alternatives offer a similar classroom structure?	
1.3.4	On page 10 of your consultation document, you say 'Because pupil numbers in each year group are small, it is more difficult to ensure all pupils are appropriately challenged' but I think this is an unfair presumption to make. You then go on to say on page 12 that 'Pupils would attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum' but how can this statement be made without any hard evidence seeing as the new curriculum hasn't come into schools fully as of yet	The Council's primary specialists are of the view that delivering the new curriculum for Wales will be challenging, and will place significantly greater demands on teachers in smaller schools. It is clear that the skills required by teachers will need to be very wide ranging to support the full and effective fulfilment of the curriculum's high ambitions and to ensure that the curriculum and effective pedagogy challenges all learners.
1.3.5	A fully mixed age class allows the staff to really embed the new curriculum as we can be creative and flexible with our planning. The children love having that close relationship with the other children and enjoying getting to know each other really well.	As above.
1.3.6	The situation at Llanfihangel Rhydithon is not unique. Combined age classes are found in all the schools Powys is putting forward. E.g. Crossgates has 5 classes (Reception/Year 1, Year 1/2, Year 3/4, Year 4/5, Year 6)	Leaders agree their school structure on an annual basis with consideration to pupil numbers, the educational needs of the pupils and the available resources. Leaders also have a duty to ensure consistency in learning and teaching across the school as great teaching is the most important level schools have to improve outcomes for their pupils. Teachers and staff have different strengths and expertise and with more classes, and more members of staff, larger schools can utilise the staff's wider skill set effectively to teach key aspects of the new curriculum, such as the six Areas of Learning and Experience.
1.3.7	"Pupils would attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum." I would like to	The Council is monitoring how schools are developing on their 'Journey to 2022' through termly reporting by

	<p>challenge this statement. How are the local authority measuring which schools are most equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum? Is this an evidence-based claim? I would expect your decision and consultation report to provide a clear explanation as to how this is being measured and recorded for individual learning organisations and how Dolau School compares to their “nearest schools”.</p>	<p>Challenge Advisors. are most equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum.</p> <p>To ensure equity for learners, leaders and teachers (across Wales) need to have a shared understanding of learner progression, including expectations around what progression may look like and the pace at which learners progress. This shared understanding is developed through professional learning and as an ongoing process both within and across schools, of which professional dialogue is a fundamental aspect. Practitioners can share and learn from each other’s understanding of progression. This can be challenging in a small school with only two teachers, for example. In larger schools there might be a wider range of academic activities that further embed the four purposes and include more age appropriate activities due to larger numbers to make the offer more viable and more staff expertise.</p>
1.3.8	<p>You state that larger schools are better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum- this is in fact untrue as anybody who has read the new curriculum will clearly understand that ‘it’s going back to basics’, teaching children the foundational skills and personal attributes in a caring, compassionate, supportive environment that is based on a ‘community’ and where flexibility is key in meeting the needs of individuals to provide ‘person centred education’. Small rural schools are the ideal learning environment to deliver the new curriculum, with outdoor space, nature, small class numbers, mixed age groups classes and the time and ability to see individual children with individual identities.</p>	<p>Small schools have fewer qualified teachers in a school to design the curriculum and have the disciplinary-specific expertise for the learners in that school. Therefore, the expertise for all six areas of learning and experience may not be as strong as a team of teachers in a larger school who will lead on a specific area.</p>
1.3.9	<p>On page 12, the LA writes that should Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School close, its pupils could ‘attend larger schools which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum’, and on and pages 47 to 51, the document reads that it ‘would be difficult to provide educational opportunities which meet the requirements of the new curriculum’ on our village school site. These LA statements lack</p>	<p>As above</p>

	<p>any beneficial explanation. In what way do you believe a larger school would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum? A lack of resource cannot be an explanation behind your statement since Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School has a wide variety of excellent curriculum resources and Estyn (2019) observed its pupils using 'a range of IT devices to communicate their ideas effectively'. In 2019, Estyn also concluded that Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School teachers, 'provide pupils with valuable activities that engage them and excite their curiosity.' If the Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School staff provide such 'educational opportunities' through the current curriculum, then why does the LA feel the same cannot happen when the school is required to deliver the new curriculum? Based on the observations made by Estyn and our parent community, I fail to see how being a larger school makes you any better equipped to 'meet the requirements of the new curriculum'.</p>	
1.3.10	<p>On page 12, the LA writes were Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School to close, the 'nearest alternative schools' could 'provide a wider range of educational and extra curriculum opportunities'. What 'educational and extra curriculum opportunities' do your alternative schools offer that our pupils in Dolau do not receive? In 2019, Estyn commented that the school offers, 'A broad range of educational visits which enrich the pupils' learning experiences successfully' and 'a wide range of afterschool clubs that are open to all pupils.' My own children have thoroughly enjoyed their many valuable trips, clubs and opportunities to represent their school in several activities across the county and thus, your LA comment does ring true. How would your transport arrangements support our children should they wish to attend the 'extra curriculum opportunities' that your alternative schools offer? From my understanding of school transport arrangements where other Powys schools have been closed, the 'bus' leaves the receiving school at the end of the school day. Thus, should our children wish to attend one of the 'extra curriculum opportunities' that you say will be available to them, then it will be up to us to arrange and pay for their transport home. If we don't, then our children will be forced to miss out on taking part in 'extra curriculum opportunities'. Therefore, the</p>	As above

	proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School will have a negative impact on your strategy aim (page 9): 'to improve learner entitlement and experience'.	
1.3.11	The teacher-pupil ratio is low at 12.8, where the Powys average 20.2 (Wales average 22). It is a matter of logic: smaller schools typically have smaller classes, and low teacher-pupil ratios translate into more focus per child and their education.	As above. 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. This adds a challenge for teachers in small schools: they need to plan, implement and assess for the needs of up to four year groups within one class, and within each of those year groups plan, implement and assess for up to several ability groups, some with complex needs, thereby ensuring that the planning is differentiated for each child's needs. Larger schools have a greater level of staffing and single year group classes or a mixed year class of no more than usually 2 years.
1.3.12	Because of the size of the school all the children are well known, staff know their needs and irrespective of ability their needs are well met.	All schools, regardless of size, are required to meet the needs of all children of all abilities and to support and challenge them to fulfil their potential.
1.3.13	As Dolau is a small school the teachers get a lot of one to one with the students helping them with their work and being by their side to assist.	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.
1.3.14	The school is so small that if you put your hand up the teachers always let you say what you want to say	Comment noted.
1.3.15	We love the small class sizes, the mixed age ranges and the general feel of the school, which you don't get in a larger school.	Comment noted.
1.3.16	Having smaller class sizes than in larger schools, we know the pupils' academic skills and capabilities extremely well. Each lesson, we know exactly what each pupil has achieved and have provided feedback to each child, which is often difficult to achieve in a larger school. We can support pupils better due to smaller class sizes.	All schools, regardless of size, are required to fully understand their pupils' skills and capabilities.

1.3.17	It's a brilliant school with small classes so the teaching and learning is far much better!	The quality of teaching at any school is not based on size of school. There are examples of excellent teaching and learning across all sizes and types of schools, both within Powys and elsewhere.
1.3.18	Smaller classes result in a better education	As above.
1.3.19	due to the small numbers and shared classes, learning is enhanced as teachers have an opportunity to give each child a more focussed education based on ability rather than age.	As above.
1.3.20	due to the fact that there are low pupil numbers in each year group this should make it easier to ensure all pupils are appropriately challenged because children are taught as individuals instead of class years giving them greater autonomy over their own learning	The quality of teaching would have a significant impact on pupil outcomes rather than the size of the class.
1.3.21	The school also build confidence in pupils due to the teacher:pupil ratio, far better than larger hub primaries where children travel miles on public transport to larger classes and year group segregated teaching.	There is no evidence that a school with a lower teacher-pupil ratio build more confidence in pupils than in larger schools with single year groups.
1.3.22	Dolau school has such a family feel to it, the older children know all the younger children and are always there to look out for them, something which follows on into high school. As a past pupil myself of Crossgates school, I am not sure the same can be said for bigger schools. The confidence given to pupils of our small rural school is fantastic.	Comment noted.
1.3.23	By being in a small school the children feel they can talk to anyone and ask for support whether it be in the classroom setting or on the yard at break times. Can you really say that the children will get that family feel if they have to transfer to another school? Can you guarantee that the children will feel supported by their peers in another school the same way they do at Dolau?	All schools, regardless of size, are able to ensure that children are supported by their peers.
1.3.24	Having less pupils in the class makes participation within the class inevitable, and also less threatening. Llanfihangel's size promotes belonging, and it becomes difficult for children to slip through the cracks.	All pupils should be able to participate in class. In a class with four age groups and multiple abilities, it could be more difficult to include all pupils and cater for their needs.
1.3.25	The consultation document and the PCC are suggesting that moving happy, creative Dolau students from their small community school to a larger school such as Crossgates with larger classes yet still not a	The National Categorisation system has been suspended in 2020-2021 and will also remain suspended for the 2021-

	<p>green school would improve the breadth and balance of our children. Have they read the new curriculum? This is all about creativity and flexibility, children thinking for themselves. Dolau school has been doing this for decades, when my children were there and I know they still do, all because they have small mixed classes. Time spent outdoors learning about nature, projects about the world and history were always done in the most imaginative way allowing the children to be a part of the process of learning. The children in smaller classes are heard, even the timid ones. As a result, the children that go on from Dolau school to high school are not only high achieving academically but also, polite, caring and confident. They are our future. They are the future of Powys and Wales and historically the children from Dolau have gone on to give back and care about that future. This is surely the biggest achievement a school can ever wish to have.</p>	<p>22 academic year to help ease the burden on schools caused by the pandemic.</p> <p>All primary schools will plan and implement the new curriculum with a key focus on the 4 purposes (all children and young people will be enterprising, creative contributors who are ready to play a full part in life and work, is one of the 4 purposes), the six Areas of Learning and Experience and on the 12 pedagogical principles. Pupil voice will be at the heart of the curriculum in all schools.</p>
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1.4 Everyone is friends at the school

1.4.1	<p>We have lots of friends to play with at play time, and lots of equipment to play with too. Even though we are only small in numbers we still have lots of friends to play with. In a bigger school we may not feel that close to the children.</p>	<p>The Council notes this comment. However, it would be completely possible to feel close to other children in a larger school and create close friendship groups.</p>
1.4.2	<p>I like it here at Dolau school. I have got lots of good friends here. This is a special school where everyone looks after one another.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
1.4.3	<p>Everyone is really friendly and kind.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
1.4.4	<p>It is a very friendly school where everyone looks after one another.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
1.4.5	<p>I like my school because everyone is always kind to each other, and there are no arguments because we are all great friends</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
1.4.6	<p>If someone falls over you help them, then they will help you.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
1.4.7	<p>People are always there to help you in Dolau school</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
1.4.8	<p>In September when the reception's come to school they feel welcomed into our community that's full of friends. They all have move</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>

	up days which allow them to become comfortable with our school and to make new friends.	
1.4.9	I am proud to say I went to that school and all the friends I made there are still my friends to this day	Comment noted.
1.4.10	What struck me immediately when I started teaching at the school was the sense of belonging and family and community. I saw happy children looking out for each other in a supportive way I'd never seen before in the larger schools where I'd taught. Caring and respect is second nature to them. These are crucial life skills.	Comment noted.
1.4.11	We are like one massive family in Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School, everyone gets on so well and the children are happy in this rural school.	Comment noted.
1.4.12	The happiness and wellbeing of the children in this school is testament to the excellent education that they receive.	Comment noted.
1.4.13	The children of Dolau School, have an instinctive knowledge of how to nurture and protect those in need of a little extra help or a friend to help them up when they've fallen over. They just know. From watching and learning from previous peers, who have had the same values instilled in them. They just know.	Comment noted.
1.4.14	We all have a buddy each to do reading with, and we help them if they fall over, our buddy system is a great system that allows us to help out the younger children and let them feel supported by the older children. We play games with our buddies and teach them how to be a good friend.	Comment noted.
1.4.15	The buddy system has been in place at Dolau School for many years and it allows the older children a chance to guide and support the younger children. They are paired up at the beginning of the year and form a firm friendship over the course of the year. The older children relish the chance to support the younger children and help them where they can. We allow our children to spend as much time as possible with their buddies, including, buddy break time, buddy reading and buddy support.	Comment noted.

1.4.16	The mixed year groups doesn't seem to be a problem and my grandchild has explained that that a Buddy system is operated where the older children take on a nurturing role with a younger child. My older grandchild who is a former pupil of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School explained that their 'buddy' when they commenced at primary school was also helpful when it was time to transfer to high school.	Comment noted.
1.4.17	In Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School we are very lucky to be running a very successful 'Buddy' system. This gives each child the opportunity to work with their buddy from the other class to carry out a range of tasks. We do 'Buddy Reading' on a regular basis and take part in P.E lessons and break time games with our buddy. This gives the older children the responsibility of looking after their younger buddy and teaches the younger children lots of new skills.	Comment noted.
1.4.18	In Dolau school, there is almost no bullying.	Comment noted.
1.4.19	Behaviour in the school is excellent, as evidenced in the Estyn report. Because of this, we can spend the whole lesson teaching and engaging the pupils in fun and meaningful activities, rather than having to spend our time on discipline.	Comment noted.
1.4.20	We have strong ethics within the school and it worries me when I see other children in nearby schools and their behaviour and how it is handled, one thing that is consistently commented upon when our children are on trips/visits is their behaviour is always described as exemplary.	Comment noted.

1.5 Support for ALN pupils

1.5.1	Another great resource we have in Dolau school is a specialist teacher who comes in 4 afternoons a week to support children with additional learning needs regarding reading and phonics. She is a great resource to have and we are very appreciative of her coming in. She can focus her time on the children who need it most and they enjoy going to her. Other schools do not employ the same specialist teacher and in larger schools the resources are spread thinner due to the	Although Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P have the support of a specialist teacher, they are only able to support a limited amount of pupils as they only work part-time at the school. In larger schools there may be a designated ALNCo and learning support assistants.
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	greater number of pupils who need support, so pupils wouldn't get the same amount of time with a specialist teacher.	There is very good support across the cluster schools in the Ysgol Calon Cymru area for the support of pupils with SEN/ALN. Nearly all schools in the cluster have a designated full time ALNCo who can provide support and guidance to pupils and staff in relation to SEN/ALN. Two schools in the cluster have specialist centres for pupils with SEN/ALN and one hosts a Powys nurture cluster provision. One other school will host a satellite for pupils with complex needs from September 2021. One school in the Calon Cymru cluster provides support for pupils with SEN/ALN through the medium of Welsh. While larger schools may have a greater of number of pupils with SEN/ALN, these larger schools also have more staff that can support their needs. In addition, they may have specialist teaching facilities for pupils with SEN/ALN.
1.5.2	We have extra support in our school.. Not all schools have these teachers and support.	All the alternative schools in the area have a staff member responsible for ALN.
1.5.3	We have an excellent, experienced SEN specialist who delivers one-to-one phonics and reading sessions.	Comment noted.
1.5.4	This specialist teacher also supports the staff, as many of us attend after school sessions with her to improve our own phonics knowledge, I am unaware of this happening in any other schools on the scale it happens at Dolau. I have learnt a great deal myself since starting my own afterschool sessions with the specialist teacher that I feel more confident in my own ability to teach and foster the love of phonics in my classroom.	As above.
1.5.5	There are children in our school that struggle with dyslexia they go to the specialist support teacher and they can have someone to one support but perhaps in bigger schools they would be in a group.	Powys County Council employs a specialist teacher for dyslexia who can provide guidance and support for pupils with language and communication difficulties. In addition, all schools have access to the Powys dyslexia pathway, and this is part of the universal learning provision for all schools. Other schools in the cluster have trained specialist dyslexia teachers, for example Cefnlllys CP School.

1.5.6	Pupils with dyslexia that attended the school have succeeded thanks to the foundations set at Dolau.	Comment noted
1.5.7	In a small school such as Llanfihangel Rhydithon the Teacher pupil ratio mitigates the need for as many SEN staff and means the teachers know the pupils' needs in far greater detail and crucially, have the time to help them, which in classes of 30+ simply does not happen.	The very small pool of staff in a two-class school means that there are very limited opportunities for shared leadership, no senior management team, and limited resources to develop key roles, such as that of the ALNCo, in readiness for the new ALN Act.
1.5.8	Pupils with behavioural difficulties that are difficult to manage in larger schools have been sent to Llanfihangel Rhydithon School to be managed and educated in a small school setting. They have integrated and thrived.	Comment noted.
1.5.9	My child has additional medical needs, this has never been viewed negatively or inequitably. There has always been an inclusive approach, staff have gone above and beyond to provide for my child's needs. Additional training was required, this was provided swiftly for all staff, no barriers were ever found, only solutions due to the testament of a positive staff group and excellent leadership.	The Council welcomes these comments that the additional needs of a pupil were met swiftly.
1.5.10	Dolau school provides my children with outstanding emotional and well-being support, as each staff member knows the individual needs and personal attributes of all my children. There have been times when each one of my children have required additional emotional support, this has been addressed professionally, with great understanding and support.	The Council welcomes these comments about the support that has been provided by the school.
1.5.11	They were able to give extra support to children with varying needs, they were able to spend the necessary time with children who need extra support.	As above.

1.6 Comments about the school buildings / grounds

1.6.1	Dolau has a sound school building.	The condition and suitability of the school building is judged to be B, according to the Welsh Government condition survey 2009. However, like all ageing buildings there is a level of deterioration at the school.
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		The Council carried out a condition assessment (not a suitability assessment) of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School in autumn 2020 – this was undertaken by an external surveyor. The school was judged to be in condition category C following this assessment. However, as there has been no updated condition surveys done of the alternative schools and as the survey did not include consideration of ‘suitability’, the 2009 condition grading was used in the Consultation Document.
1.6.2	The building is good and in fact requires a lot less maintenance than many newer schools in the area including Crossgates.	Comment noted.
1.6.3	The building the school occupies is more than 80 years old, yet it is in very good repair inside and out according to Powys’ own survey.	Comment noted.
1.6.4	The building is in good repair and general running costs must be minimal.	Comment noted.
1.6.5	Our school building is solid and in need of just routine cosmetic maintenance and will still be safe and standing in 100 years time.	Comment noted.
1.6.6	The Friends of Dolau School raised funds to get the inside of the school painted in its entirety.	Comment noted.
1.6.7	It has airy classrooms with direct access to the outdoor learning environment which is an important part of the new curriculum.	Comment noted.
1.6.8	We have excellent resources and a fantastic outdoor classroom, with an eco-conservation area.	Comment noted.
1.6.9	There is a lovely outdoor area for the Foundation Phase, which is used for a variety of lessons and child led tasks. We have recently received a grant for play equipment which the children have loved playing on, and due to the smaller class size the children get to spend a good amount of time playing with the new equipment.	Comment noted.
1.6.10	The outdoor environment includes and is not limited to a nature area, a pond, an outdoor adventurous activity trail, a vegetable garden and provision to develop imagination and storytelling skills. The children are able to access these regularly, in a larger school these areas	Comment noted.

	would be timetabled therefore children would only have limited access. These are all key parts of the new curriculum.	
1.6.11	We have a fantastic conservation area where the children love maintaining and playing in, they are so engaged when we are down there and love spending time investigating what is in the conservation area.	Comment noted.
1.6.12	We have a lovely conservation area, storytelling area, raised beds for planting vegetables, a pirate ship and playhouses, a hobbit house, football and sports area, we have many tablets and computer devices, most of this is paid for by fundraising.	Comment noted.
1.6.13	Outside both sides of the school there is a lot of equipment to play with e.g. wooden play area, markings on the playground, bike for each child to play with.	Comment noted.
1.6.14	The outdoor area has a sand pit, mud kitchen and playhouse where the younger children get to be independent and learn new skills.	Comment noted.
1.6.15	The playground is big.	Comment noted.
1.6.16	There is a 90 year lease on the car park which is directly in front of the school.	Comment noted.
1.6.17	The School works closely with the local community and shares facilities making it an exemplar for best practice in Powys County Council's Asset Management Plan reducing direct costs to the Education Service. Therefore on performance and good practice criteria there are no good reasons to consider closure.	Comment noted.

1.7 Comments about equipment available at the school

1.7.1	Pupils at Llanfihangel Rhydithon school making good progress with digital devices and laptops with a ratio of almost one per pupil – how many other primary schools have got that number of computers per child?	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.
1.7.2	We have ICT resources at a near 1:1 ratio. No other school in the area can boast this level of ICT facility.	As above.

1.7.3	Everyone gets a chance to play with the equipment because there is so much equipment to play with.	As above.
1.7.4	The Friends of Dolau School raised funds to provide touchscreen whiteboards and ipads for the children.	The Council notes the comment that the Friend of Dolau School have raised funds for IT equipment.
1.7.5	Every single child has a laptop in class 1 and a I Pad for foundation phase.	Comment noted.
1.7.6	In this school we have a selection of reading books (a whole wall full) Which allows us to expand our imagination. Our reception children have recently had some new books which are helping them to become more independent learners.	The Council welcomes the reading resources available at the school.

1.8 Comments about extra-curricular provision at the school

1.8.1	Dolau pupils are currently offered Football Club, French Club, Welsh Club, Tennis Club, Piano lessons to name but a few and again PCC will discriminate against and disadvantage these children for living in a rural community	<p>The Council has acknowledged that there are a number of extra-curricular activities happening at the school, including after-school clubs. This is outlined in the Consultation Document and within the draft Community Impact Assessment, which will be updated to take account of information gathered during the consultation period.</p> <p>It is not the Council's intention to discriminate against or disadvantage children for living in a rural community. Should the school close, extra-curricular activities would be provided at all the other alternative schools,</p> <p>However, the Council has acknowledged that, should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C. P. School close, then it may be more difficult for some pupils to access after-school activities due to reliance on home-to-school transport. However, the alternative schools also have pupils that rely on home-to-school transport and they are experienced in ensuring that all pupils are able to take part in a range of extra-curricular activities to enrich their experiences at those schools.</p>
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		It must also be noted that extra-curricular activities are also available in the area which are provided by other organisations, and children would also be able to continue to access these, if Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School closed.
1.8.2	It offers a well-attended breakfast club, & a variety of after school clubs which are not offered by the likely schools they would have to attend in the event of this very good school closing.	Breakfast Clubs are also available at Crossgates C.P. School, Ysgol Trefonnen C.in W. School, Ysgol Cefnlllys, Knighton C.in W. School.
1.8.3	The school offers a wide range of activities to pupils, including Cylch Meithrin early year setting; the school Breakfast Club; after-school clubs; football, Eisteddfod Club, Friday Club, French Club, Welsh Club, tennis, Games Club, chess, dominoes, gardening, book club, piano and brass instrument lessons, weekly 'Welly Walks' and outdoor lessons for all pupils; as well as local competitions such as swimming galas, Eisteddfods and more.	As above.
1.8.4	We have a number of after school clubs here in Dolau School. Sports club, Gardening club, music club, Welsh club, eisteddfod club, book club to name just a few. We have football club every Thursday either in the hall or at Penybont football field.	Comment noted.
1.8.5	During my daughters time at Llanfihangel Rhydithon school she was able to enjoy piano lessons, brass lessons, guitar lessons, football club, gardening club Eco club and Eisteddfod/choir club, as well as all these they now also offer Welsh club, Craft club and Sports Club too.	Comment noted.
1.8.6	Our school is able to offer superbly attended afterschool clubs and breakfast club, and furthermore, our children are ABLE to attend, rather than being on buses travelling home and missing them in other schools.	Comment noted.
1.8.7	I received a multitude of extracurricular activities at Llanfihangel Rhydithon County Primary School. Trips, educational or for well-being, were available to everyone. Residential trips were run alongside other schools, giving us a chance to meet people in our year that we would meet again at secondary school. Almost everyone picked up an instrument, I picked up the cornet and still play occasionally with the town band, I have reached Grade 5 and hope to continue with these in	Comment noted.

	future. Everyone was given the opportunity to participate in swimming galas, sports fixtures, or cross country; our ability was not a limiting factor	
1.8.8	Since returning from lockdown this year we have taken part in The World's Biggest Sign Language Lesson virtually, had sessions with PC Viv and took part in a TTRockstars competition in which the KS2 class placed 28 th out of the whole of Wales which is an excellent achievement. We were the highest placed school in our local area, yet we are a school under threat of closure	Comment noted.
1.8.9	Llanfihangel Rhydithon School gives its pupils the opportunities and choices. In a normal year at the sports day every child takes part and at the Christmas concert every child had an important part and I do mean every child from 3 years to 11 years old.	Comment noted.
1.8.10	Dolau school offers several before/after school clubs and support systems in the form of breakfast clubs.	Comment noted.
1.8.11	Llanfihangel Rhydithon School offers an extremely wide and varied range of extra-curricular activities, these are accessible to all age pupils, what other school can offer equal to what is presently on offer to the children?	Comment noted.
1.8.12	The pupils enjoy being part of the school and the parents keenly support the large variety of after school clubs, which are not available at the schools the pupils would have to attend if the school were closed. The parents and grandparents of pupils go above and beyond in terms of time and money, to support the school through fund raising activities. These financially enhance the activities of the school. This level of effort is not likely to be transferred to the receiving school of the pupils.	Comment noted.
1.8.13	Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils take part in all of the performance competitions (at the Llandrindod Children's Eisteddfod) including the school choirs and the instrumental ensemble competitions. Their numbers are small but what they lack in numbers they gain in quality. They are frequently in the prizes and they perform with confidence and have a pride in representing their school.	Comment noted.
1.8.14	We are proud to be able to offer these clubs to every pupil and not be limited to certain year groups or group sizes. This make Llanfihangel	Comment noted.

	Rhydithon C.P. School very inclusive to every pupil and not be restricted on a first come first serve basis which is used in other local schools.	
1.8.15	We provide the same opportunities as larger schools however more children can participate. For example, whereas in a larger school auditions may take place for a choir, or the very best sports-players may be picked for a football competition, in Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, the children are all able to get involved due to the smaller numbers. A prime example of this is in our annual Christmas concert: each child in the school is offered the opportunity of a speaking part, with all children in Key Stage Two taking bigger parts – this simply would not be able to happen in a larger school.	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 activities and are expected to ensure that pupils can participate fully with these.
1.8.16	Your documentation states that children in a larger school have a lot more opportunities. This I believe is a very big misconception on your part. My children had a lot of opportunities to attend and take part in sports, competitions etc as the pupil numbers allowed everyone to have a chance, boys and girls mixed in predominantly one sex sports in order for the school to compete, and compete to a very high standard they did, winning football and netball competitions with a mixed team.	As above.
1.8.17	It is not always the children who are good at something who get picked for the teams, the children in Dolau get a chance to do it all, swimming galas, football teams, eisteddfod competitions, speaking parts in the nativity. In bigger schools the opportunities will be less as there are more children to choose from.	As above.
1.8.18	The children can all access anything that is needed, can all attend after school clubs and take part in sports days even all have a go on the sports teams.	As above.
1.8.19	Usually in a small school everyone has a chance to take part and be in the team. My daughter loves football and always played on the team with the boys, I know through friends in larger schools the girls never got the chance to play in the football team as it was always a boy thing!	As above.

1.8.20	The after-school clubs offered by Llanfihangel Rhydithon are open to all pupils. My child regularly attends these clubs and thoroughly enjoys them.	As above.
1.8.21	We are always joining up with other schools for sports and everyone in Dolau gets to have a go, no matter what their ability. We all get a chance. It isn't just the best people that get to take part	As above.
1.8.22	The most current Estyn inspection states: " <i>The school provides pupils with a wide range of afterschool clubs that are open to all pupils and are well supported</i> ".	Comment noted.
1.8.23	The children are always wanting to learn more about the topics we focus on and we do so through many trips throughout the year. In the year beginning 2019 we visited Caerleon Roman Lodge, Kington Sportwear, Holy Trinity Church and Chester Zoo to support our topics and learning. Most schools in the cluster go on one trip per year rather than having these immersive trips throughout the year	Information obtained from the Evolve System shows that all the alternative schools go on numerous trips each year. However, it is recognised that Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would go on more trips as a whole school compared with the larger schools.

1.9 Comments about school staff

1.9.1	The teachers and staff at this small rural school are able to spend quality time with each and every student.	Comment noted – this reflects the pupil-teacher ratio at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School
1.9.2	I think it is a good school because the teachers are kind.	Comment noted.
1.9.3	The teachers are very nice and friendly	Comment noted.
1.9.4	Please don't shut down the school because the teachers are helpful	Comment noted.
1.9.5	The teachers at my school are caring and fair to all children. They challenge us to do well and make sure we all understand the work we are given. However, if someone was stuck on a question, the teacher would be there to offer their help whereas in bigger schools the teacher may not be able to help everyone who was struggling.	In larger schools, there may be more adults in a class to support pupils.
1.9.6	First of all we have the world's best teacher's we could ever wish for, they help us learn in lots of different and very fun ways, our topic is space and we have been learning about space in fun ways, like taking in turns to read a slide of the power point about lots of different things in space, we also read a line of times that special, exciting finds and sends up in space, we created our own aliens which took lots of	Comment noted.

	planning but was very fun, then we went onto making a comic strip with a disaster happening in the story and had to write it out.	
1.9.7	The staff are amazing and ensure that the children are given every opportunity to maximise their potential.	Comment noted.
1.9.8	As a part of the teaching team, I have seen first-hand the time and effort every member of staff puts into making sure every child is happy and has their individual needs catered for. From greeting every child into school in the morning to checking in with everyone throughout the day. All members of staff play an active role in providing the best education for these pupils	Comment noted.
1.9.9	My son attends dolau and needs extra help and this was picked up by the teachers and given him all the help he required!	Comment noted.
1.9.10	The teacher put their heart and soul into every lesson with the aim to educate the pupils while having fun.	Comment noted.
1.9.11	Teaching was awarded a 'good' in our recent Estyn inspection, which speaks for itself. We work extremely hard to meet the needs of our pupils, providing a rich curriculum full of meaningful activities and real-life problem-solving tasks.	Comment noted.
1.9.12	Three members of staff (myself, the Foundation Phase teacher and a teaching assistant) have completed the Welsh sabbatical and confidently deliver Welsh lessons and incidental Welsh throughout the school.	The Council welcomes the commitment that staff have made to the Welsh language.
1.9.13	In a larger school where a teacher has a completely new class each year, it takes several weeks to discover what the pupils already know and what they can do. In Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School we know the children's abilities inside out due to teaching them for up to four years.	Whilst it is recognised that teachers in a very small two-class school teach children for a longer time period than in schools with single or two year groups. However, regardless of size of school, teachers are able to adapt their teaching to reflect the needs of their pupils. They get to know their pupils well and are able to support their development.
1.9.14	The staff at Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School are among the very few who are incredibly loyal and conscientious, hard-working and caring employees.	The Council's experience is that all schools in Powys have loyal, conscientious, hard-working and caring staff.

1.9.15	All staff provide a professional approach and a wide range of skills to provide my children with the right teaching style to suite their learning needs.	Comment noted.
1.9.16	The school staff and headteacher at Llanfihangel Rhydithon School in particular, have been a fantastic support to the children and parents, and they have been able to signpost accordingly through the correct referral pathways for support.	Comment noted.
1.9.17	Teachers provide pupils with valuable activities that engage them and excite their curiosity.	Comment noted.
1.9.18	All staff fulfil their roles and responsibilities conscientiously. They work well together as a close and effective team that supports the caring ethos of the school.	Comment noted.
1.9.19	Even when we were online learning our teachers were always there to support us and when we messaged them on HWB they always answered the questions quickly and set up good work.	Comment noted.
1.9.20	The staff at the school have excelled during the Covid-19 pandemic, and have shown commitment to each and every child, unlike other schools in the area.	The Council has no evidence to suggest that staff at other schools in the area have not excelled and shown commitment to their pupils during the pandemic.
1.9.21	During the COVID pandemic the teaching staff have gone above and beyond to engage the pupils in their online learning and then, when back in school, easing their worries and trying to keep everything as normal and safe as possible.	Comment noted.
1.9.22	During the covid pandemic I felt nervous about coming back to school, however. I felt supported from all the staff in school and continue to do so.	Comment noted.
1.9.23	The well-being of the children is always and always will be the main priority of both staff and governors and has been throughout this pandemic going above and beyond their required duties.	Comment noted.
1.9.24	I have been extremely impressed with the way the school has handled the disruptions. During home schooling, there were daily online lessons/catch ups with the class teacher and fellow pupils and appropriate work set. I have felt safe sending my child to school once face to face teaching resumed.	Comment noted.

1.9.25	The school has both male and female staff which is good for the children.	Comment noted.
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1.10 Comments about leadership at the school

1.10.1	<p>Another point raised in the consultation document is that the school is under “temporary leadership arrangements”. The current headteacher, Mr Shearman, has been in place for 6 years and it is my understanding that the governing body have requested a formal agreement regarding the headship, and this was agreed by your team via email, but has yet to be actioned by you. Regardless of whether the long-term leadership is deemed “temporary”, you cannot deny that the leadership is of a very high standard and Mr Shearman has shown devotion and skill which has led to Dolau school’s continuing success. “The executive headteacher provides effective and supportive leadership for the school.” (ESTYN, 2019). Your consultation document also states that the “part time arrangement, with a teacher in charge responsible for the school whilst the acting headteacher is not on the site. This limits the time available to focus on leadership of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.” I would strongly disagree that having a part time EXECUTIVE headteacher limits the school in any way. Mr Shearman is contactable via email throughout the school week and has never failed to return my calls or emails promptly. Your consultation report fails to mention how this arrangement has provided an invaluable opportunity for the experienced teacher at Dolau to act as teacher in charge and gain skills and understanding of leadership to enhance their future career opportunities. Small schools with shared headteachers help shape leaders of the future, IN and FOR Powys! This arrangement makes sound financial sense and offers leadership opportunities to the school’s highly experienced and proficient staff. If Dolau was to appoint a full time headteacher, this role would certainly come with a heavy teaching commitment, and in my opinion this balancing act would limit the time for leadership far more than the current provision.</p>	<p>The Council notes Estyn’s comments about the leadership of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.</p> <p>The Council also acknowledges that there are benefits to closer collaboration between schools and shared headship arrangements can work well. It is also noted that, due to the shared arrangement, the Headteacher of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School has a small teaching commitment in both schools which would be greater if he was only leading a single school.</p> <p>The Council has no concerns about the quality of leadership at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. However, it remains the case that headteachers in smaller schools have a higher teaching commitment than in larger schools, 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.</p> <p>Some schools with temporary shared arrangements do have formal agreements in place. However, these are not legally binding, and therefore the arrangement continues to be a temporary arrangement, with the headteacher employed by one school. This means that the school is at risk of instability should either of the governing bodies decide to end the shared arrangement or if the headteacher decides to leave. Therefore, it remains the case that the Council’s preferred model for headships is for permanent heads – either for standalone schools or more</p>
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		than one school – as this provides the school with stability and enables the headteacher to plan for the long-term.
1.10.2	We have a shared headteacher with Llanelwedd School. Estyn have stated that “The executive headteacher provides effective and supportive leadership for the school.” This is a cost that is being saved within the school. Teachers and parents know that he is only a phone call away if needed.	As above.
1.10.3	ESTYN, 2019 counteracts any concerns within the document around the limited time to focus on leadership and management. Distributed leadership and a Headteacher focussing solely on Leadership and management was deemed “Good” by ESTYN. The executive headteacher provides effective and supportive leadership for the school. He works collaboratively with staff, governors and parents to establish a clear vision that is strongly focused on promoting the wellbeing, happiness and achievement of all pupils. He has high expectations of all and promotes a caring and stimulating learning environment. His vision is evident throughout the school and the A report on Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. March 2019 8 core aims of ensuring that pupils enjoy learning is an integral part of the ethos. As a result, nearly all pupils are engaged in their learning and make good progress.	As above.
1.10.4	If it is not possible for a Headteacher to effectively lead and manage from two sites, is it possible for a local authority to lead and manage services from home? We consider this is possible. This is substantiated by ESTYN and in the school’s GREEN National Classification. If this is also the case why does the authority continue to allow and encourage Headteachers to be seconded to other roles? For example, the Headteacher of Ysgol Cefnlllys is seconded to the LA for ALN, the Headteacher of Ysgol Trefonnen also works for the Education Workforce Council. There are four other schools in the immediate area of our school with shared headteachers too.	<p>The Council acknowledges that it is possible for headteachers to effectively lead and manage across two or more sites and there are other examples of such arrangements in other schools in Powys.</p> <p>Generally, in Powys, shared headships are arranged when individual schools are unable to recruit a headteacher or need to address an urgent situation with leadership at a school. In other cases, headteachers have managed schools on more than one site as they transition to a new arrangement e.g. a new building, (Welshpool C.in. W Primary school is an example of this) or as a result of a</p>

		<p>formal proposal e.g Newtown & John Beddoes, Ysgol Calon Cymru.</p> <p>The three formal federations in the county – Carno, Llanbryn-mair and Glantwymyn, Ffederasiwn Dwy Afon (Llangedwyn and Llanfechain) and the Llanidloes Schools Federation were proposals put forward and agreed by the schools themselves and not by the Council, under the Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Act, although the Council was supportive.</p> <p>As part of improving education across Powys, the Council encourages headteachers with experience in specific areas to work with the Schools Service so that best practice can be shared across the county</p>
1.10.5	<p>The report is critical of the temporary leadership saying, ‘This limits the time available to focus on leadership’. ESTYN, which is the competent authority, disagrees with this view commenting, ‘The executive headteacher provides effective leadership for the school. He works collaboratively with staff, governors and parents to establish a clear vision that is strongly focused on promoting the wellbeing, happiness and achievement of all pupils’. Why in this instance is it considered undesirable while the Authority is currently advocating and working towards all through schools working on multiple sites? The federation in Carno/Caersws and Llanbryn-mair is heralded as highly successful and the Local Authority has put two more Executive Headteachers in post in the last 12 months, one of which is a permanent appointment.</p>	<p>As above.</p> <p>All Through Schools are established by merging secondary and primary schools, and are therefore large establishments which can be appropriately structured to operate across more than one site.</p>
1.10.6	<p>How many schools in this authority share a headteacher, be it a formalised arrangement or not? Are you suggesting that each one of these allows for only a limited amount of time to focus on leadership? How does our arrangement differ in terms of the</p>	<p>Powys currently has 4 executive headteachers and 2 headteachers who are managing formally federated schools. The Council acknowledges that it is possible for headteachers to effectively lead and manage across two or more sites and there are other examples of such</p>

	availability from a headteacher of a large school having to spread their time across many classes and staff?	arrangements in other schools in Powys, as mentioned previously. The opportunity for executive headships has provided dedicated leadership and management time for a few headteachers as it has reduced their teaching commitment. However, it remains the case that the authority's preferred model for headships is for permanent heads – either for standalone schools or more than one school. This provides the school with stability of leadership and enables the headteacher to plan for the long-term.
1.10.7	In Scotland, the number of Headteachers working in more than 1 school has increased by around 64% within 7 years (2010 – 2017), especially in 'accessible rural' or 'remote rural' schools. There was no evidence to suggest that shared headteacher arrangements impact negatively on the education of the children and the practice is seen by some Local Authorities as preferable to having a teaching head teacher. What evidence does the authority have that no permanent leadership arrangements are detrimental to pupils?	As above. Some schools with temporary shared arrangements do have formal agreements in place. However, these are not legally binding, and therefore the arrangement continues to be a temporary arrangement, with the headteacher employed by one school. This means that the school is at risk of instability should either of the governing bodies decide to end the shared arrangement or if the headteacher decides to leave. Therefore, it remains the case that the Council's preferred model for headships is for permanent heads – either for standalone schools or more than one school – as this provides the school with stability and enables the headteacher to plan for the long-term.
1.10.8	On page 10, the LA concludes that our part-time headship 'limits the time available to focus on leadership' at Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School. This deceptive statement does not concur with the findings of Estyn, who in 2019 graded leadership and management as good whilst noting, 'the executive headteacher provides effective and supportive leadership of the school.'	Comment noted.
1.10.9	Impact on quality and standards, page 21 section v. A full time head does not necessarily mean more focussed time for leadership and management. There is an increase in HT: staff ratio, Staff:pupil ratio,	In larger schools with a larger staffing cohort, staff at different levels show strong leadership behaviours as classroom practitioners, curriculum leaders, leaders of

	HT:pupil ratio and an increase in behaviour issues, child protection involvement, parental issues all taking the headteacher away from the focus of Leadership and management. Big is not always better.	whole-school initiatives, and as senior managers ('distributed leadership'). Schools develop the leadership skills of all their staff as part of their professional and career development.
1.10.10	We have had shared Headship with Llanelwedd for the last six years and according to Estyn The executive Headteacher provides effective leadership for the school, and has no teaching responsibilities allowing more time for leadership and management tasks. The Llanfihangel Estyn report (March 2019) stated the Leaders and managers have a clear vision for the future of the school and for the inspection area Leadership and management of the school received Good.	As above.
1.10.11	Estyn stated that 'The executive headteacher provides effective and supportive leadership for the school. He works collaboratively with staff, governors and parents to establish a clear vision that is strongly focused on promoting the wellbeing, happiness and achievement of all pupils. He has high expectations of all and promotes a caring and stimulating learning environment.' Estyn is an external verification and they could see the positives of an executive head in place, how can the council go against what Estyn have said when they believe it is a great positive for the school?	As above.
1.10.12	According to ESTYN ' <i>The executive Headteacher provides effective leadership for the school</i> ', and has no teaching responsibilities allowing more time for leadership and management tasks. The Llanfihangel ESTYN report (March 2019) stated the ' <i>Leaders and managers have a clear vision for the future of the school</i> ' and for the inspection area 'Leadership and management' of the school received 'Good'	As above.
1.10.13	The leadership arrangement should be commended as it has worked effectively for both schools for 6.5 years, it gives opportunities for staff to develop into middle leaders and subject leaders.	As above.
1.10.14	The school has continued in its active partnership for six and a half years now, improving all the way under the first-class executive headship of Adam Shearman and his excellent teams of staff and	As above.

	governors, with the running of both schools and our budgets benefitting from a non-teaching head who can concentrate on leadership and management, giving the staff all the training and experience opportunities they could wish for.	
1.10.15	When addressing leaderships, a number of policies and guidance currently provided by Powys County Council say schools must improve there sharing of knowledge and supervision and work more collaboratively with each other to share best practice, especially when it comes to supporting children's emotional wellbeing. In Dolau this is already in place and works very well, recently being demonstrated during this difficult time where Llanfihangel school have been able to offer Dolau access to their ELSA trained staff whilst Dolau staff are undertaking training. This is evidence that shared leadership has far more positives than negatives.	As above.
1.10.16	It was stated in the Llanfihangel ESTYN report in March 2019 that 'The executive headteacher and governors work closely together to provide strong financial management and ensure that the school receives good value for money in the purchases it makes'.	Comment noted.
1.10.17	The school's Estyn Inspection in March 2019 stated ' <i>The school uses its resources efficiently ... The executive headteacher and governors work closely together to provide strong financial management and ensure that the school receives good value for money in the purchases it makes.</i> '	Comment noted.
1.10.18	ESTYN reported that the executive headteacher provides effective and supportive leadership for the school. He works collaboratively with staff, governors and parents to establish a clear vision that is strongly focussed on promoting the well being, happiness and achievement of all pupils.	Comment noted.
1.10.19	The shared headship with Llanfihangel C. in W. School was praised by Estyn in March 2019.	Comment noted.
1.10.20	We have a wonderful shared Headteacher who although is not based on site, runs the school efficiently and effectively. He is available to answer queries by phone / email quickly. He has been an asset to the	Comment noted.

	school since he joined us, and we feel the arrangement works beneficially for both Llanelwedd and Dolau.	
1.10.21	The executive headteacher provides effective and supportive leadership for the school. He works collaboratively with staff, governors and parents to establish a clear vision that is strongly focused on promoting the wellbeing, happiness and achievement of all pupils. He has high expectations of all and promotes a caring and stimulating learning environment. His vision is evident throughout the school and the 8 core aims of ensuring that pupils enjoy learning is an integral part of the ethos. As a result, nearly all pupils are engaged in their learning and make good progress.	Comment noted.
1.10.22	The executive head model works effectively and helps support the budget.	Comment noted.
1.10.23	Dolau school has paved the way for shared headship ,	Comment noted.
1.10.24	The Headteacher is brilliant, and even though he isn't on site all of the time, he is fully aware of everything happening within the school and community, and very quick to respond if we need anything. Even though he's not on site, the service he provides is no different.	Comment noted.
1.10.25	The head is in constant communication with the school and he provide us with updates and support throughout the day. Staff have never felt unsupported by the head throughout my time at Dolau. In fact, it has allowed staff to build up their knowledge as the teacher in charge at the school.	Comment noted.
1.10.26	The leaders and managers have a clear vision for the future of the school. They set high standards and ensure that they deploy the school's resources efficiently. Parents fully support the management of the school	Comment noted.
1.10.27	The shared headteacher has been in role at Llanfihangel Rhydithon since 2015 demonstrating that this is not a temporary arrangement. The Governing Body has previously requested a formal agreement however this has not been finalised by Powys.	Paragraph 23 of the Cabinet report of 27 th September 2016 states: <i>'It is recommended that a new report is brought to Cabinet with draft recommendations for Llanbister C.P. School and Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School in accordance with the Schools Reorganisation Policy 2015, which considers the</i>

		<p><i>circumstances of the two schools alongside the Authority's aspiration for primary education, which is to have 'headteachers with no classroom responsibilities.'</i></p> <p>However, following the Cabinet decision, a discussion took place with the governing body of Llanelwedd C.i.W School and other in 2016 about the possibility of a formal merger between both schools, as federations are not permissible between Church and community schools. Llanelwedd C.in.W School felt that the current shared headship arrangement was working well and wished to continue with that.</p> <p>The outcome of this discussion was that officers suggested that a formal partnership agreement was the most appropriate way forward, verified in an email sent from an officer to the Head and Chair on the 21st September 2018, as follows:</p> <p><i>'As you know, we met with you earlier this year to consider options for Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School, and this included further discussions with other schools that may be willing to formally partner or federate/ merge with the school – the premise of the discussions was PCC's Cabinet's wish to maintain primary provision in Dolau to serve the local community.</i></p> <p><i>This stage has now been completed, and, following consideration of all information received, it would appear that the most appropriate way forward for the school is to formalise the current partnership with Llanelwedd, supported by the rural schools grant.</i></p> <p><i>I understand that you have a governors meeting tonight, therefore it would be good to know the views of your</i></p>
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		<p><i>governing body – I am sure that there are many questions about what a ‘formal partnership’ looks like! We would then be happy to attend a meeting with both chairs and the head to discuss this further.’</i></p> <p>This was clarified in a further email on the 28th February 2018 from an officer to the Chair of Governors which stated the following:</p> <p><i>‘We have no plans currently to federate or merge Llanfihangel Rhydithon and Llanelwedd – the outcome of discussions was that the partnership should continue as it is. However, we are in the process of finalising a Collaborative Partnership Agreement for schools in your position i.e. with shared arrangements. This isn’t a legal document, but it does set out the roles and responsibilities of each party, and helps ‘formalise’ the arrangement to some extent. If this is something both schools would wish to see in place, then I’m sure we could arrange this.’</i></p> <p>However, no further action was taken by either the Council or the two governing bodies in relation to this.</p> <p>Some schools with temporary shared arrangements do have formal agreements in place. However, these are not legally binding, and therefore the arrangement continues to be a temporary arrangement, with the headteacher employed by one school. This means that the school is at risk of instability should either of the governing bodies decide to end the shared arrangement or if the headteacher decides to leave. Therefore, it remains the case that the Council’s preferred model for headships is for permanent heads – either for standalone schools or more than one school – as this provides the school with stability and enables the headteacher to plan for the long-term.</p>
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1.10.28	As the school is also interested in becoming a church in Wales school I would argue that the leadership that they currently have is correct as the head already looks after a church in Wales school.	The Council recognises the shared arrangement is between a County Primary School and a Church in Wales Primary School. However, the Council was not aware that Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School was interested in becoming a Church in Wales school.
1.10.29	The headteacher has independently sourced an excellent intervention and resources from the 'Happiness Club' for the month of June in an attempt to support the children through a 'whole school approach.'	Comment noted.
1.10.30	Temporary leadership We understand that the Headteacher position is not a temporary arrangement but a permanent post as part of the Federation of Schools in accordance with agreements made with the Welsh Government, Governors and Diocese Education. One principal of a federated school is that Headteacher's role is shared between campuses giving economies of scale. We believe this has proved very successful over the past four years of federation. In the list of options the first option is shown as the Status Quo which should be shown as continue the existing successful federation with Llanelwedd CP School.	Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School has never been part of a formal federation with Llanelwedd C.i.W School. It is not legally possible to merge a community primary school with a faith school. The headteacher's substantive post is that of headteacher of Llanelwedd C.i.W School therefore the arrangement is temporary.

1.11 Comments about the attainment of current pupils

1.11.1	The children are all thriving because they are having such a high standard of care and attention in their formative years.	Comment noted.
1.11.2	I am in year 4, but I do year 6 work, which shows that Dolau school is a high educating school.	Comment noted.
1.11.3	Children at Dolau feel safe and leave the school with confidence and well equipped with life skills. It is a nurturing and caring environment, with pastoral support giving them an excellent start in life.	Comment noted.
1.11.4	The progress that my grandson has made whilst attending Dolau School is outstanding. He is reading at a level well exceeding his age expectations, he appears to be an able mathematician and most importantly, he has developed a love of learning and a love of attending school! He speaks confidently and happily about his schooling and is obviously well supported by the adults there.	Comment noted.

1.11.5	The standard of education is absolutely second to none at Dolau, both older children reading properly aged of five. This is not due to natural ability or the extra effort we as parents have made, but due to the dedication and special effort the teachers and staff make with each child, not just the gifted or struggling, but all in between. Our eldest child is now in High School and although not naturally academic is up to her targets of 7 by year 9. This is fantastic and more than we could ever have hoped for our children. This is due to the exceptional education she had at Dolau. The teachers have a fantastic way of choosing term topics that spark the children's interest, all lessons including maths, English, science, humanities, sport, movement and outdoor education are all tailored to this topic.	Comment noted.
1.11.6	Two of our grandchildren attend Llanfihangel Rhydithon School or Dolau as everyone calls it. One is in Year 3 and one in Year 6. They have done exceptionally well during their time at the school and we cannot believe their standard of reading, maths and English in the short space of time that they have been in school. Both reading well aged five and a half. Our grandson 3 and is undertaking Maths two age groups above him are studying because the teacher believes he is ready for it and his interest and ability should be expanded	Comment noted.
1.11.7	On leaving Dolau, pupils are confident, independent and self-assured young people. They possess excellent social skills which contribute to their outstanding behaviour and positive attitudes to others.	Comment noted.

1.12 Comments about former pupils

1.12.1	Children that attend Dolau school always 'do' better in later years than those attending Crossgates, this is historical, if you were able to see the numbers going on to sixth form, to be head boy or girl and those going on to University, you would see that this is correct.	The local authority has no concerns about the standards of education provided at Crossgates. The local authority would expect all schools to provide a quality of education which would allow each pupil to reach their potential.
1.12.2	Llanfihangel Rhydithon School produces year 7 pupils that are ready and prepared to learn at high school and they are well-rounded young people who are an asset to their new school and a credit to their community.	Comment noted.

1.12.3	Ex pupils go on to produce wonderful results at GCSE and at AS and A levels, many going on to universities.	Comment noted
1.12.4	I am sure that if I had not had the start that I enjoyed at Llanfihangel Rhydithon School, I would have entered Llandrindod High School unable to keep up with the work. In the first few years, I would have fallen behind and never would have succeeded in my GCSE's or even been able to study at A level let alone find myself where I am now.	Comment noted
1.12.5	The children when progressing to high school have always been commended on their behaviour, academic ability and ability to achieve. Please look at the number of children from Dolau school that have been part of Ysgol Calon Cymru School Council.	Comment noted.
1.12.6	I became aware that there had been 5 different pupils from the Dolau community who, in my time of knowing them, had gone on to be head girls and boys at Llandrindod Secondary School.	Comment noted.
1.12.7	I believe the school gave me a solid foundation for my future career. It gave me the confidence and opportunities to express myself in a comfortable environment to get the best out of my education and my personality.	Comment noted.
1.12.8	The children from Dolau were always high achievers, always, they were always in the higher sets in High school, they still are. This set a precedent for me. My wife and I wanted this type of education for our children. If you watch the videos circulating on social media about past pupils you will see how well some have done. This video only shows just some of them. There are countless past head and deputy head boy and girls and a larger proportion of ex pupils have attended University of have good, well-paying jobs.	Comment noted.
1.12.9	My daughter has now moved on to high school at Ysgol Calon Cymru where she is in the girls football team, she is part of the school orchestra and is a member of the school council (in fact out of the 10 children on the school council 3 of them are from Llanfihangel Rhydithon), she also on the new committee the "Pupils Voice "to discuss the new curriculum (again out of the 15 pupils chosen from the Llandrindod campus 3 of them are from Llanfihangel Rhydithon).	Comment noted.

1.12.10	I don't think that we have appreciated the quality of the education we have received at Dolau until I moved on to High School. I have been extremely fortunate in the quality of education I have received. So much so that in Year 7 at High school, my friends and I were bored as we had already covered most of the topics and were very up to speed and more than ready for the challenges that High school was supposed to present. Even those not naturally able are brought up to standard in Dolau, no one is left behind. Everyone has the chance to flourish and be the best that they can be.	Comment noted.
1.12.11	Dolau school was fundamental in starting my sporting career at a young age, I believe that the skills I learnt from older pupils at the school were invaluable for my progression and leadership skills which lead to be me eventually becoming Builth wells rugby captain for three consecutive years and currently I am Builth wells RFC senior head coach. Not an easy job, but many qualities that are required, I feel were ingrained in me from an early age due to my schooling at Dolau.	Comment noted.
1.12.12	Being in Dolau school gave me the foundation academic ability to eventually progress to Aberystwyth university to study agriculture, which provided me with the skills to become and partner running the family farm with my parents and progressing with future projects, challenges and sustainability within the sector.	Comment noted.
1.12.13	Many of my fellow students of my time and before and since, have gone on to achieve very successful careers all over the world and also locally. It would be a travesty to deny the next generation such a good solid start in life.	Comment noted.
1.12.14	Some of the greatest skills I feel I developed however, were likely not academic. I fully credit my primary school years with skills that I continue to apply in my career every day. Within this small school, everybody had a turn, everyone stepped up, and everyone had a chance to shine.	Comment noted.
1.12.15	Dolau School has churned out the most impressive calibre of person imaginable. Its nurtured and shaped leaders and high achievers in industry and in community prominent, moral and well-grounded people. Our alumni have gone onto be leaders in Google, architects in top firms in London, solicitors, actuaries, the MD of one of	Comments noted.

	Radnorshire's biggest private employers, Captains of Builth Wells and Llandrindod Wells Rugby and more importantly it's cultivated people who care about others, people who do great things in their community groups in Dolau and beyond, people with integrity and a strong sense of right and wrong. That is not an accident. It's because Dolau school is an excellent school that is tightly woven into the fabric of a strong, vibrant and tightly knit community. That blend, that spirit and that community trust all comes together to create quality individuals and that should be recognised, cherished and protected.	
1.12.16	I am proud to say that both of my children, have succeeded in life and work hard to support their families and give back to the community that helped raise them. They have stable careers, one a business owner, and have both chosen to raise their own families in the local area. We owe this success and sense of belonging in large part to Llanfihangel Rhydithon School.	Comment noted.
1.12.17	A lot of its former pupils have gone on to be upstanding members of the communities that they live in, whether that's Radnorshire or many different corners of the British Isles! This all stems from the upbringing and they had in this fine school and local community.	Comment noted.
1.12.18	I myself received an excellent start at this school and have gone on to own my own thriving business with a number of staff.	Comment noted.
1.12.19	I attended Llanfihangel Rhydithon school from 1989 to 1996. The school provided me with an excellent start to my education which has led me on to be successful in my GCSE's, A levels and gain a 2:1 in my BA (Hons). The school provided an excellent hub within the community which led to me finding my passion of horse riding which has led me into a very successful career as I am now the yard manager at Wellington Riding which is one of the top equestrian centres in the UK. Without Llanfihangel Rhydithon School I may never have had the opportunity to start riding as the first time I rode was at a fund-raising event for the school. The school the provided me with a great education both supporting with curricular and extracurricular activities. In secondary school I was able to be in the top sets and leave secondary school with 11 GCSE's including 8 A grades. If I did not have such a good start to my education I may well not have	Comment noted.

	achieved these grades and got to where I am today. The education it delivers is well above average and sets the local children up for life.	
1.12.20	The school is well performing and has prepared many children for successful careers, many of which benefit the local and national population, e.g. Nurses, doctors teachers and engineers.	Comment noted.
1.12.21	The children who have been educated here have the majority been a very successful group of well employed individuals. Seven children left Llanfihangel School the same time as my daughter there are now one engineering designer one lawyer, two teachers, one police officer a carpenter, and one who joined the forces. This to me is the true facts of a good school, and over all the previous school leaving years children have entered the world with a good understanding, good education, and determination and drive to do well.	Comment noted.
1.12.22	Llanfihangel Rhydithon school has past pupils working throughout Powys as Entrepreneurs running their own businesses and employing local people supporting the local economy. There are Civil Engineers, Solicitors, Architects, Police Officers, Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors working within the Public and Private sectors in the County. Past pupils volunteer in many varied roles across the County and some have also undertaken socially responsible roles within Powys's political structure at a Local and County level. Alumni of Llanfihangel School had an education which was solid, inspiring and enjoyable foundation to build on and have returned to the county and produce a high percentage of professional, economically productive, and socially responsible members of the Powys population, in comparison with other rural areas where their school has been forced to close.	Comment noted.
1.12.23	Many pupils from Dolau have gone on to higher education and have had high powered roles within society. This is due to their excellent foundation in primary education and smaller class sizes, therefore giving more opportunities for children who might be overlooked in a larger class or setting. Children here achieve well and consider themselves as one big happy family. The older ones help the younger ones with their transition into school life.	Comment noted.

1.13 Reference to Friends of Dolau School (FODS)

1.13.1	Our Friends of Dolau School fundraising committee raise more money in one year than a nearby big primary school that is four times the size of Dolau. That kind of community support would not transfer with the children should you close the school.	The Council recognises that the Friends of Dolau School fundraising committee are very active and raise a significant amount of money to support the school.
1.13.2	Regular fundraising occurs supported by PTA, Friends of Dolau School (FODS), Cylch Meithrin, the community and the school. FODS work tirelessly to raise funds for the school to support buying resources to enable a full and stimulating 21st Century curriculum.	Comment noted.
1.13.3	FODS raise money to support the school, indirectly helping Powys with the funding of our school. The last normal years' figure I believe was just shy of £14,000! A lot of financial support from a sleepy unimportant locality isn't it?	Comment noted
1.13.4	The PTA (FODS) are very proactive – as an indication they raise circa twice as much as Crossgates school that is four times the size – no mean feat.	Comment noted
1.13.5	F.O.D.S. pay for trips and outside educators to attend the school to enhance learning.	Comment noted.
1.13.6	Look at the charity commissions for details of Dolau's fundraising activities in comparison to other schools. All other schools listed as nearest, have no profit. Anything that the school need is provided by the Friends of Dolau School (FODS), who along with the community have raised £8000 in the last month! This just shows the depth of feeling for this school in the community. The support was incredible. Not only is fundraising integral to the success of the school, it is a community! It is vital for the wellbeing of us mums, which have made lifelong friends. You do not get that in a larger school – less of a community feel.	Comment noted.
1.13.7	There are groups of parents, carers and other members of the community that support the school and provide additional resources including finances on a voluntary basis that perfectly support the children in Dolau. When you look at the figures on how much PTA groups have raised for Dolau school for example and then compare it	As above.

	to the alternative schools being used in the consultation document you'll know (I'm sure) that Dolau raises far more than any of these schools, even the schools that are much bigger and have more 'resource'. We have held two events recently to raise money for the school fund and we've raised at least £6000 at time of writing. This figure is likely to be far higher. That is how much our school means to us in Dolau can any of the other alternative schools offer this level of community support?	
1.13.8	The parents and grandparents of pupils go above and beyond in terms of time and money, to support the school through fund raising activities. These financially supplement the activities of the school. The leaders and managers have a clear vision for the future of the school. They set high standards and ensure that they deploy the school's resources efficiently. Parents fully support the management of the school.	Comment noted.
1.13.9	Vast amounts of money are raised each year by the hugely successful Friends of Dolau School committee. Their fund raising provides many extras in addition to the budget you offer. The Friends of Dolau School pay for the buses used to take our children to their weekly swimming sessions and trips away from the village, all of which benefit the pupils enormously.	Comment noted.
1.13.10	The school also has an extremely supportive PTA which tirelessly fundraises to provide the school with extras, including IT equipment, an outside learning shelter, playtime toys and funding trips and experiences to support the children's educational needs.	Comment noted.
1.13.11	The parents and grandparents of pupils go above and beyond in terms of time and money, to support the school through fund raising activities. These financially supplement the activities of the school. The leaders and managers have a clear vision for the future of the school. They set high standards and ensure that they deploy the school's resources efficiently. Parents fully support the management of the school	Comment noted.
1.13.12	We have our parent fundraising committee (FODS) which raises money regularly to support our children. We have recently bought	Comment noted.

	new laptops for the children, a new whiteboard in each class, new books, repainted the whole of the inside of the school, pirate ship play equipment to name just a few things. We raise money for the cost of a bus for our children to go swimming each week, also school trips and treats etc. They would not have this in a bigger school.	
1.13.13	The school is very well supported by the PTA (FoDS - Friends of Dolau School). FoDS provide financial support that is not replicated in other receiving schools.	Comment noted.
1.13.14	The support that FoDS provide ensures that; every child is able to take part in all activities, the school has additional resources and equipment; the school environment is rich in equipment and my children have always enjoyed and engaged well with all children across the different ages.	Comment noted.

1.14 Parents drive past other schools to bring their children to Dolau school

1.14.1	Dolau school is the focus of the village, people travel from other villages and Llandrindod to attend the school.	The nearest school for pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School – 53% • Crossgates C.P. School – 28% • Ysgol Cefnlllys – 11% • Knighton C. in W. School – 5% • Rhayader C. in W. School – 3%
1.14.2	Dolau was not our nearest school, but we chose to transport our children ourselves, to what we feel was the best school for them. As of today there are quite a few children that pass a couple of schools to attend Dolau school. I think that must say a lot about the quality of the school itself.	The Council recognises that parents are able to choose any school they wish their child(ren) to attend.
1.14.3	I drive past 3 schools each day to ensure that our parental choice is being met with what we and many others consider, the best school.	Comment noted.

1.14.4	There is no bullying in our lovely Dolau School, which is one of the reasons we chose to bypass our nearest school (Crossgates) for our children and transport them daily to Dolau,	The Council does not tolerate bullying in any school and all schools have a bullying policy.
1.14.5	although we live in the Crossgates catchment area and could have had transport provided we had no hesitation in sending our child to Llanfihangel Rhydithon. The high quality of education and the friendly learning environment the children thrive in, in the school made it a no brainer!!	The Council recognises that parents are able to choose any school they wish their child(ren) to attend.
1.14.6	Although we live in Llandegley when it came time for her to start school we had no hesitation what so ever about sending her to Llanfihangel Rhydithon (although we were in the Crossgates catchment area), as the standard of education and facilities was far above the other schools in our area, and was such a happy and caring environment in which the pupils could develop and thrive.	As above.
1.14.7	We travel an additional ten miles per day to ensure that our children receive the very best of the best in all areas and that is exactly what they are getting in Dolau, we have put careers on hold to ensure we can transport them to the best. We have spent the money transporting them to ensure they have the best	Comment noted.

1.15 Links between the school and the community

1.15.1	The school accommodates or provides the following other facilities or services: Dolau Ti a Fi Club, Cylch Meithrin, Community Library Bus, Young Sports Ambassador Scheme, Youth Club, an amenity area (the village has no communal play space).	The Council has recognised, in both the Consultation Document and the draft Community Impact Assessment, the activities provided at the school and the important role that the school plays in the community. The CIA will be updated to reflect any information gathered during the consultation.
1.15.2	Other community activities that the school is involved in includes: local YFC use the school grounds and community hall, community hall use the school grounds and car park, Youth Club use the school grounds, the community hall uses the school as a 'green room' for local shows and entertainment, the school's conservation area is used by all user groups and members of the community, the local	As above.

	WI, Cylch Meithrin and Ti a Fi use the grounds to learn about wildlife and the environment	
1.15.3	Other links between the school and the community: harvest festival is held in the community hall, the hall uses the grass at the back of the hall for functions so is part of the 'village scene', Christmas Carols around the Christmas Tree is held in the school playground, Dolau Christmas Fayre is held in the community hall, annual Christmas Concert is held by the school in the community hall, Dolau Summer Fayre, annual Sport Day which is held in a local farm field, the school participates in DRA events throughout the year e.g., games evenings quizzes, cinema, links with the local church magazine, links with the local vicar who leads collective worship at the school, Liaisons with Dyfed Powys Police through the School Community Police Officer, liaisons with Mid & West Wales Fire Service through visits from local firefighters, links with the local Eisteddfod in Llandrindod Wells, FODS Friends of Dolau School, links with local concerts including singing, poetry, instrumental etc, links with local History Group and arts projects, Dolau YFC & Dolau Youth club, Llandrindod Junior Silver Band consists of 14 members, a majority of those band members have been taught in Dolau School.	As above.
1.15.4	With the closure of the village shop some years ago, and no pub in the village for many years, the School and Community Hall are the main social focus of the village.	As above.
1.15.5	There is a sense of belonging living in a community like Dolau which leads to an increase in self-esteem.	As above.
1.15.6	There are not many schools that are so well supported by the whole community as Dolau is.	There are a number of schools in Powys that are well supported by their communities – this is a point that is coming through strongly in all the current school consultations.
1.15.7	It is a highly valued member of its local community, of which there are excellent links benefiting pupils.	The Council has recognised, in both the Consultation Document and the draft Community Impact Assessment, the activities provided at the school and the important role that the school plays in the community. The CIA will be

		updated to reflect any information gathered during the consultation.
1.15.8	It provides our pupils with strong links to the community which enable them to grow into kind, caring and well-rounded individuals. The school and community link is so strong in fact, that I have never come across one like it in any other school in all my years of teaching. It is truly special, and something that should be treasured, celebrated and allowed to continue.	As above.
1.15.9	Its place in the community brings people together as a family, and I do not say that lightly, many of the children's parents and grandparents attended the school and this really comes to the fore when community and school come together.	As above.
1.15.10	Dolau school has a very positive, pro-active, engaged, resourceful, responsible and multi-skilled, mutually supportive and mutually enhancing reciprocal relationship with its resilient and resourceful rural Radnorshire community. This is something that is exceptional – it has been consistent, valued, celebrated and invested in, in an ever-interweaving and evolving process for all the thirty years since I first met and came to know more of this community and its school, as the years went by. It is a socially rich and enriching structure actively and joyously linking generations.	As above.
1.15.11	It is the embodiment of a community school	As above.
1.15.12	It has a strong Governor/staff/community relationship – all current and ex-staff will be keenly aware of this	As above.
1.15.13	It is part of a community that supports the school and has long lasting bonds with the school	As above.
1.15.14	Recently the DRA (The hall committee) brought us each an ice cream because we worked hard and they were proud of us. That would not happen if we moved to a different school because there would not be enough money to pay for all the kids.	Comment noted.
1.15.15	We are very lucky in this school to not only have excellent resources but also lots of support from others and therefore able to offer our children a wide range of experiences. Only last week the community surprised the children with an end of half term treat which all children	Comment noted.

	thoroughly enjoyed. In larger schools you don't always get these treats as the numbers of pupils are just too high.	
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1.16 Reference to attendance

1.16.1	Our pupils are incredibly proud to belong to Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School, and this is clearly demonstrated through the consistently high rates of attendance.	<p>The Council notes this comment and recognises that attendance rates at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School are high. According to the last set of attendance data in 2019, the school had an attendance rate of 96%¹.</p> <p>The attendance figures for the alternative schools are, however, very similar:</p> <p>Crossgates C.P. School – 95.2% Llanbister C.P. School – 95.8% Franksbridge C.P. School – 95.4% Knighton C.i.W School – 95.3% Trefonnen C.i.W School – 94.7% Cefnlllys C.P. School – 94.2%</p>
1.16.2	Attendance figures – why should children have to go to a school with poorer attendance figures? Do Dolau schools attendance figures not speak for themselves, some of the highest in the county. The children want to go to school! How many schools can say that? Our children are distraught if they have to miss a day through illness.	As above.
1.16.3	Rates of attendance are very high.	As above.
1.16.4	Pupils enjoy belonging to the small rural school and rates of attendance are consistently high because of this.	As above.

1.17 Other comments

¹ PLASC 2019, My Local School

1.17.1	In 2018, a mother of former pupils of Dolau school, and my close friend, was murdered by her husband. The huge impact this had on everyone at the school, community and especially myself and my children was devastating. This terrible tragedy brought out the most wonderful kindness and support by the pupils, teachers and parents. This school means so much more than words could say. The close nature of the school is so cherished by us, and I know we would be lost without it	The Council recognised the tremendous support that was provided by Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School during a difficult time for the whole community.
1.17.2	The school budget is in a surplus position	Comment noted. Llanfihangel Rhydithon has an anticipated cumulative carry forward balance of £38,999
1.17.3	Llanfihangel School has a very competent Governing Body, that work closely with the Authority, consistently producing a surplus budget that provides a good environment and education for the pupils	As above. The Council recognises that the governing body works closely with the Authority.
1.17.4	The governors have a reputation for being forward thinking and proactive	Comment noted.
1.17.5	You can build a 21 st century school with shiny new windows and up to date IT equipment but it's down to the teaching and nurturing that creates well educated children and the children at Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School get this.	The Council recognises that, in order to obtain the highest standards of education, excellent teaching and learning is required. However, the Council also needs to invest in its schools estate to ensure that learning environments are fit-for-purpose.

2. COMMENTS ABOUT SMALL / RURAL SCHOOLS

2.1 Positive comments about small schools

2.1.1	These small schools need to stay open they are far better than cramming all children into a larger one where the teachers do not have the time or patience to listen to them they are happy.	The Council notes these comments about the benefits of small schools. However, as stated in the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-30, the Council faces a challenge due to the high proportion of small schools in the county and the lack of equity amongst schools. Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School teaches children in two classes of mixed aged groups. With such low pupil numbers the teacher-pupil ratio is notably
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		<p>different to many other schools in the area, and due to the Council's funding formula, the school the funding per pupil is higher than the Council's average. This does not provide equity across the education system - teachers in larger schools are required to provide the same education as smaller schools for less funding per pupil. Powys' Strategy is intended to improve equity across the education system and to ensure an improvement for every pupil's learning entitlement and experience.</p> <p>The Council's primary specialists have been exploring how the authority can best support schools to deliver the new curriculum for 2022. These education professionals are of the view that this will be significantly more challenging, and will place significantly greater demands on teachers in very small two-class schools. This does not mean that it would be impossible to deliver the new curriculum in these schools but it is clear that the skills required by teachers will need to be very wide ranging to support the full and effective fulfilment of the curriculum's high ambitions. The new Curriculum for Wales is locally influenced and often pupil-led. All schools will design the detail of their own curriculum to suit their learners based on the four purposes and the six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE). Learners' views about their experiences and about what, how and where they learn should be taken seriously when a curriculum is being designed. The school's curriculum needs to be co-constructed, encouraging learners, parents, carers and the local community to understand and contribute to its development. It should also draw on a wider range of experts and stakeholders who can contribute to learning.</p>
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		<p>The curriculum needs to be innovative and creative. Teachers, with pupils, will select the content, with no prescription on how areas should be taught, but with guidance provided nationally on a wide range of widely recognised pedagogical principles. Additionally, planning and designing the curriculum in schools is a teacher responsibility, not one for support staff.</p> <p>Teachers in two class schools would need to plan for a mixed age range for all Areas of Learning and Experience. In some cases this could involve preparing for and delivering for up to four different year groups for all six AoLEs. To ensure equity for learners, leaders and teachers across Wales, there needs to be a shared understanding of learner progression, including expectations around what progression may look like and the pace at which learners progress. This shared understanding is being developed through professional learning and dialogue, as an ongoing process both within and across schools. Practitioners can share and learn from each other's understanding of progression and adapt their teaching in the light of what is learned. This will be particularly challenging in a very small school with only two teachers, for example. If a member of staff is linking up with practitioners from other schools for all 6 AoLEs and across a wide age range they would need to be away from their class for a far greater amount of time than a teacher teaching a single year group or two year groups in a class, and who also leads on behalf of the whole school on a single AoLE such as Humanities. High levels of flexibility and organisation are needed in lesson planning to ensure that teaching caters for both age groups and all abilities within the class. This additional workload is a risk that the education profession needs to</p>
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		<p>manage together, given the limited numbers of teachers to carry the additional roles and responsibilities in a very small school. Two-class schools not only have fewer qualified teachers in school to design the curriculum, but generally the limited numbers of staff will in all probability between them have a narrower range of disciplinary-specific expertise for the learners in that school than would probably be the case in a large school. In a larger school, each member of staff can lead on a specified area where they may have an appropriate background and in which they can continue to gain growing levels of expertise. Effective learning and teaching requires disciplinary-specific expertise which will become increasingly relevant in developing a curriculum as learners progress. Although the guidance promotes inter-disciplinary approaches, it also recognises the importance that disciplinary-specific expertise plays in such approaches. A significant responsibility for the Council, and others, over the coming years will be to ensure that every learner in Powys benefits from the step change that is anticipated through the changing curriculum. The Council will work with all the schools in our care, of whatever size, and will provide significant support, whilst also encouraging collaboration. However, it would be inappropriate if officers of the authority did not stress the additional demands on staff in very small schools, whilst doing all we can to facilitate the lightening of the load.</p> <p>Additionally, it is only fair that professional primary experts within the Council comment on the balance of potential risks and benefits to a child when being taught by the same person over 3 or 4 years of their primary education.</p>
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2.1.2	Smaller schools will typically have a smaller child to teacher ratio – the relationship formed in this is the basis for life. Why would anyone want to send their child further away to a larger school where they aren't going to receive that level of attention?	As above. All schools, regardless of size, are required to support, challenge and nurture all pupils to achieve their full potential, and 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.
2.1.3	According to your consultation document: "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 class. Because pupil numbers in each year group are small, it is more difficult to ensure all pupils are appropriately challenged." In recent years, it has come to the forefront of educational research that young people should be taught in accordance with their "stage not age". Donaldson's report focuses on the need to lose age related attainment targets, and rather to focus on the potential of individuals and the progress each pupil makes over time. "Progression Steps should be reference points, providing a 'road map' for each individual child and young person's progress in their learning and not universal expectations of the performance of all children and young people at fixed points." (Successful Futures, 2015)	Good learning and teaching challenges all learners by encouraging them to recognise the importance of sustained effort in meeting expectations that are high but achievable for them. This is one of the 12 pedagogical principles in the new curriculum and all teachers need to engage effectively with research and professional development to enable them to have high expectations of all learners and develop as 'high expectation' teachers who have more positive attitudes towards learners and more effective teaching practices. This is a priority for the LA to ensure equity for all learners.
2.1.4	Smaller class number means teachers get to know the children better and are able to give them more attention and time paying more attention to the children's mental health and wellbeing	As above.
2.1.5	Pupils thrive and do better with smaller classes, low pupil-to-teacher ratios and closer relationships with other year groups, as in small primaries.	As above.
2.1.6	Children thrive in small schools and the teachers provide 1:1 guidance.	As above.
2.1.7	Children listen carefully in smaller school and classes are quieter which allows all the learners to reach their full potential and achieve the best in their work.	As above.

2.1.8	Smaller rural community schools give the environment for everyone to flourish. They give everyone the room to grow and the opportunity for the education they deserve. By putting these children in to bigger schools which are cramped and overcrowded you are taking away these children's maximum opportunities.	As above.
2.1.9	As we are a small school, the teachers get to know us really well at a personal level.	As above.
2.1.10	Small schools and class sizes better allow teachers to be aware of their students, which helps reduce learning and behavioural issues. It also allows teachers to be more aware of the students family and community situation, which obviously impact students wellbeing and helps a teacher better support their students.	As above.
2.1.11	Surely small classes are better for a pupil learning than large classes of 30 plus pupils. Each child attending the school would have far more help due to small numbers.	As above.
2.1.12	If we were in a bigger class we may not have the same attention from the teachers as there are many more children in a class, this would have a negative impact on our work.	As above.
2.1.13	Teachers can help everyone in each lesson because of small class sizes and they explain work well and clearly.	As above.
2.1.14	In a small school the teacher:pupil ratio mitigates the need for as many SEN staff and means the teachers know the pupils' needs in far greater detail and crucially, have the time to help them, which in classes of 30+ simply does not happen.	As above.
2.1.15	My children attended a small country primary school when they were younger. The smaller school class setting enabled them to feel happy and settled, with the right amount of attention and encouragement to be the best they can, instead of battling against the masses.	As above.
2.1.16	Local small village schools not only hold the community together but provide individualised attentions to each pupil. Small class sizes allow for personal approaches and also continuity throughout the whole school life beyond each teacher's individual class.	As above.
2.1.17	One of the most important factors in education is the access to one-on-one teacher/pupil time. The opportunity for the needs of an individual to be recognised and catered for in a small school	As above.

	environment is invaluable. This opportunity is greatly reduced in a larger school setting.	
2.1.18	In a small school pupils know all their peers, and can go to anyone in the school if they have a problem.	As above.
2.1.19	I believe that children in smaller schools are bullied less and actually build more tolerance, empathy and caring toward their fellow children and the wider community.	There is no evidence of more bullying taking place in larger schools compared to smaller schools and all schools have anti-bullying policies.
2.1.20	These small intimate schools keep the children supported and educated whilst allowing them to stay local and mix with their own friends in a small school setting that can give them more of an individual experience. This allows them a higher standard of support and care and this allows them to adapt at their own pace to the changes of the school environment.	All schools, regardless of size, are expected to treat each pupil as an individual and provide a pupil-centred teaching and learning experience.
2.1.21	Small environments are proven to be better for most children... Facilities are not important.	As above.
2.1.22	In smaller schools the chance for student participation is recurrently higher because students are required rather than redundant; as a result, children in smaller schools/clubs and their families have more of a stake in their school/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 activities and schools are expected to ensure that all pupils can participate fully with these.
2.1.23	Due to the lower numbers than a more urban based school, every child gets an opportunity to represent a school team in a sports or academic competition and I believe a child's confidence builds from being able to express their idea's and opinions to a smaller number of pupils rather than being intimidated by larger numbers.	As above.
2.1.24	Small primary schools provide a strong and effective base for students at the commencement of their education enabling future education prospects to be improved.	There is no evidence that pupil outcomes are better amongst pupils from smaller schools than those from larger schools.
2.1.25	Small schools build confidence far better than larger hub primaries where children travel miles on public transport to larger classes and year group segregated teaching. It is my firm opinion that even the data will prove soon that these schools provide a far better service than is currently acknowledged, and there will be a drive back towards	There is no evidence that smaller schools build confidence better than larger schools.

	smaller, more local educational policies. But by that time it will be too late.	
2.1.26	There has been mention of the transition to high school with smaller schools but there is no evidence to suggest that any child who has attended a small rural school has been at any disadvantage.	The Council agrees with this comment.
2.1.27	Smaller schools operate more like a community than a corporation. We have a greater sense of unity and belongingness, shared by the parents and staff/committee members/governors alike. Kids do not go unnoticed. This close-knit feel enables more opportunities for kids to participate.	Larger schools also operate like communities, with a sense of unit and belongingness, and all schools, regardless of size, are expected to treat each pupil as an individual and provide a pupil-centred teaching and learning experience.
2.1.28	Being educated in a small school isn't just about the education, it stretches far beyond that to the heart of an traditional community where children and families grow up together, whether it's raising money for a sponsored walk and a giant picnic or a tractor run where everybody's dad, uncle, brother, mum and sister are involved and happy children wave as the familiar faces as tractors drive by.	The Council has recognised the importance of the school to the local community in the draft community impact assessment which will be updated to take account of information gathered during consultation. However, it must be noted that all schools, regardless of size, or whether rural or urban, are part of their unique community. It must also be noted that 47% of pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School live closer to other schools and, as such, live in other communities.
2.1.29	It is through these small schools that rural communities come together and that people with diverse challenges begin to feel included and become members of this community. This starts with the children who begin to understand and accept difference and this leads to an investment in the heritage of their own community. This is in contrast to larger schools where the management of bullying that can become the main preoccupation. Valuing difference needs to start with the young and it is much easier to encourage this within a small school environment.	As above. There is no evidence that there is more bullying in larger schools than in smaller schools.
2.1.30	Small local schools are a vital part of any community and are the centre of the community in many cases. That sense of belonging to a village community is very important, particularly in rural areas.	The Council has recognised the importance of the school to the local community in the draft community impact assessment which will be updated to take account of information gathered during consultation.
2.1.31	Small schools are so important for the children and the whole village community.	As above.

2.1.32	Small schools in villages keep the villages' young generation alive. They are the beating heart of the community and fire the future.	As above.
2.1.33	Small schools are vital to the cohesion of rural areas and are a valuable part of the national identity of Wales.	As above.
2.1.34	Being part of a small school that relies upon community support gives you a unique sense of pride and obligation to give back to that community later in life as an adult and potentially a parent yourself.	As above.
2.1.35	As a parent in a small school you are very much a part of the school as that is what is expected of you, You support that school, not just physically but financially, you are very much noticed if you are not part of the school support network. You have a lot closer connections with you child's teacher as you see them most days as at most small schools parent transport the children to school during some of the week.	As above.
2.1.36	Small schools have a positive ethos that creates a family atmosphere and essential close links with parents in the village. Small schools and safer, national statistics support this fact.	As above.
2.1.37	I am a teacher and have taught in the UK and internationally. I have seen first-hand the benefits of small community schools on the students and their community. Students who have been taught in small community schools, more often than not have a better ability to self-regulate and are far more able to communicate with not just their peers, but a wide range of ages including adults. They also are more mature in their behaviour, logic and attitude leading them to become better members of society as a whole.	All schools, regardless of size, are expected to treat each pupil as an individual and provide a pupil-centred teaching and learning experience.
2.1.38	Small primary schools do not provide an inferior service to the larger schools, are, at least in the case of this school, examples of educational and social achievement for children from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. What some children might lose it terms of participation in team games can be, as is, provided in other ways. Small schools are much more able to tailor opportunities to suit individual children.	As above.
2.1.39	In small rural schools like this you learn a lot of values not on any curriculum – Respect for others and their property, what's yours and what's not yours, the seeds of a good and fruitful life are planted in	All schools, regardless of whether they are rural or not, are required to provide a rounded education, based on

	these small schools. Has Powys ever done a survey to assess in later life the % of small school pupils against bigger schools that have ended up in trouble with law etc. I believe that pupils that go to small schools end up in later life costing Powys less money than those from bigger schools because of the start in life they receive from small schools.	inclusivity, respect for others and nurture a strong ethical attitude in all pupils. The Council has not investigated the % of offenders based on their primary schools.
2.1.40	The benefits of a small rural school strike me on every day I step into the yard.... That sense of community, of responsibility, of mutual caring and kindness, of respect and courtesy, of initiative, responsibility..... from when they are very little the children feel seen and heard, their voices and their feelings matter, their thoughts and their role in their own community.... They learn from each other, they care for each other. They tumble out into the yard and play together, in peer friendship groups and across vertical age groups, girls and boys sharing the joys and challenges and laughter of sharing and supporting and developing each other's skills. And they look out for adults, with kindness and courtesy and welcome. And at public events, the children welcome, host, lead, take solo, group and whole school roles, with diplomatic grace and unconscious gifts.... Taking on the baton they have been handed, and ready to hand it on. There is something so precious and deeply rooted in Welsh rural culture about all this. So deeply rooted in community, adaptive, attuned, and resilient through continuity and change.... A process that keeps its roots deeply planted, can offer wondrous blossom, and survive all winters. And ages with beauty.	All schools, regardless of whether they are rural or not, are required to provide a rounded education, based on inclusivity, respect for others and nurture a strong ethical attitude in all pupils.
2.1.41	No negatives have come from children attending small rural schools, yet these schools are the ones Powys County Council are continuously targeting.	Comment noted.
2.1.42	The high proportion of small village schools in the county should therefore not be seen as a negative challenge but as a vital element in our village communities.	See first comment.
2.1.43	Village schools are the heart of the community and provide a lifeline not just to the children, but to mums, dads, grandparents and the wider family. The social and support network in small communities cannot and should never be undervalued. It's an intrinsic part of rural	The Council has recognised the importance of the school to the local community in the draft community impact assessment which will be updated to take account of information gathered during consultation. However, it must

	<p>life; generations of memories, family history and hope for the future. These small, village schools may be a line on a spreadsheet to some but they are the core and lifeblood of the community to so many.</p>	<p>be noted that all schools, regardless of size, or whether rural or urban, are part of their unique community. It must also be noted that 47% of pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School live closer to other schools and, as such, live in other communities.</p>
2.1.44	<p>Village schools have a critical role to play in supporting individual families in need, or as a hub for activities that will promote learning, economic well-being and social cohesion. More than that, it is clear that the choice is becoming binary. Maintain small village schools such as Llanfihangel Rhydithon in rural areas, extend their provision of services, and we can tackle the problems of poverty, aspiration and lack of economic opportunities in those areas. Close the schools, and the evidence would seem to be clear that we cannot do any of that. Closure is effectively a choice to worsen the lives and life chances of the people in any community facing the loss of its school. As the report points out, that loss is “felt to be irreparable.”</p>	<p>As above.</p>
2.1.45	<p>Schools are the heart of our towns and villages, moulding our next generation. What values are we teaching them if we say small is insignificant, inferior, but worth our time or investment, when many of our communities in our rural county of Powys are small?</p>	<p>As above.</p>
2.1.46	<p>Studies have shown the effectiveness small school have, at forming positive relationships with parents. A study completed by Estyn found that the relationship schools have with parents contributes positively to the school. “The quality and extent of parents’ contribution to school life is best in the smallest schools. Often a special closeness develops between the schools and parents, which contributes positively to school life.” (small primary schools in Wales, Estyn, 2006). This can be evidenced by the FODs (friends of Dolau School) and the commitment they show to the school.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
2.1.47	<p>A report by the Commission for Rural Communities states: “Small village schools are in close contact with families and have a track record of providing good outcomes for children. Based in isolated communities, small schools may hold the key to engaging the most disadvantaged families, but their numbers are decreasing.”</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>

2.1.48	National Association of Small Schools (<u>National Association of Small Schools - Home</u>) suggested that small primary schools, consistently top national performance measures across the UK. In 1999, a Government study revealed that three times as many smaller schools achieved 100% pass rates in primary Sats than larger schools. In 2007 Ofsted noted this proportion had increased.	Comment noted. However, the Council's concerns about the challenges facing very small two class schools are outlined in 2.1.2 above. In addition, there are no SATS in Wales therefore this information is not comparable.
2.1.49	Small schools regularly top national performance measures across the UK and many other countries. They consistently provide evidence that as an analytical model they are integral to raising the educational standard as a nation. Both Ofsted and Estyn have noted that the pass rates of small schools in Primary SATs far exceed that of larger schools and are continually increasing.	As above.
2.1.50	We believe a more sophisticated analysis of the economics of school size is required. Small schools bring significant benefits, not just in sustaining rural communities. PCC should see small schools as assets not liabilities. They offer a family-friendly, community-based model for education which is too precious to lose.	Comment noted.

2.2 Positive comments about rural schools

2.2.1	There are so many great things about rural schools, going from Primary to High school showed this as all the former past pupils would all be helping and looking after any Dolau school pupils.	The Council notes these positive comments about rural schools. The Council has recognised the importance of the school to the local community in the draft community impact assessment which will be updated to take account of information gathered during consultation. However, it must be noted that all schools, regardless of size, or whether rural or urban, are part of their own unique community.
2.2.2	Powys need to recognise the importance of preserving access to a local school for rural communities, recognising the importance of ensuring that rural communities thrive, benefit from and contribute to sustainable economic growth, and are able to identify and address local needs. As part of that, Powys need to ensure that there is greater choice in rural areas, and that standards are maintained and improved through continued funding and support.	As above.

2.2.3	Recent political rhetoric makes much of building rural communities and a better future for our children and yet an outstanding school in such a community is facing closure.	As above.
2.2.4	It will marginalise those living rurally	As above.
2.2.5	Rural, small schools provide a different education for our farming children, and keep our communities together.	As above.
2.2.6	We need to nurture and cherish such community schools, especially in rural areas, for the wellbeing of the youth and the community surrounding it.	Comment noted.
2.2.7	From experience, rural schools are inclusive, promote acceptance of others and breed positivity and strong morals. Every family has their issues and rural schools and families embrace this and support each other to create better outcomes.	All schools, regardless of whether they are rural or not, are required to provide a rounded education, based on inclusivity, respect for others and nurture a strong ethical attitude in all pupils.
2.2.8	I think the rural schools are important for communities people speak to each other less and less these days and just passing the time of day with others makes children realise it's ok to be polite and speak to other parents	Comment noted.
2.2.9	You can not underestimate the positive effect and impact education delivered in a rural setting and the community as a whole, including the Young Farmers club, Youth clubs and the wider community.	Comment noted.
2.2.10	In rural communities it is really important to maintain local schools to build the connections with neighbours and other families within a reasonable difference.	Comment noted.
2.2.11	Learning in a rural setting can be more advantageous	The Council has no evidence that learning in a rural setting is more advantageous than learning in an urban setting.
2.2.12	I think it's a massive shame to close yet another rural school, they are so important for the children of the surrounding farming community.	Comment noted.
2.2.13	A lot of support services are targeted at early intervention and prevention, so it brings the question – what is more early intervention and prevention than a rural community school that gives young people the opportunity to create long-lasting relationships, form positive connections, feel a sense of belonging, experience no bullying all while receiving the highest standard of education in the area? Why would it be appropriate to close this school and inflict trauma on these pupils after an already massively traumatic year AND send them to a	The Council has no concerns about the quality of education at any of the alternative schools, should Llanfihangel Rhydithion C.P. School close.

	school where they do not have the community behind them and it is a LOWER educational standard to what they have been receiving.	
2.2.14	The need for rural schools in Powys is greater than any other county, due to its sparsely spread population.	The Council is aware that the county is a geographically large and sparsely populated area. However, the Council needs to consider the number of schools it can maintain across the county and the need for equity across the whole system.
2.2.15	The view that rural schools are vital to their communities is increasingly widely shared across the UK. For example, in recent report by Queen's University of Belfast ^[1] stated " <i>The local rural school is more than bricks and mortar, it can function at many levels if fully utilised. In many areas it is the heart of the community. The school can often act as a central focal point to the development plan and the attractiveness of the area in its attempt to develop and become self-sustainable.</i> "	Comment noted.
2.2.16	Why are rural schools not treated equally to urban?	The Council is aware that the county is a geographically large and sparsely populated area. However, the Council needs to consider the number of schools it can maintain across the county and the need for equity across the whole system.
2.2.17	The village schools need to be kept going to provide education without the transport difficulties encountered in rural areas.	The Council needs to consider the number of schools it can maintain across the county and the need for equity across the whole system.

2.3 Parents should be able to choose a small / rural school

2.3.1	By closing the few remaining small schools the Council would be denying parents the choice of sending their child to a small school.	<p>The Council recognises that parents are able to choose any school for their child(ren) to attend but there is no requirement to provide a range of schools according to size.</p> <p>In terms of the choice of a small school, the Welsh Government's definition of a small school is a school that has fewer than 91 pupils. In Powys, there are 33 schools with fewer than 91 pupils. However, the Council has a duty</p>
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		<p>to maintain an equitable schools infrastructure across a large and sparsely populated county. The Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-30 was developed following an extensive engagement exercise with schools and other stakeholders. One of the challenges facing Powys, as identified in that engagement exercise, was the fact that the county has too many small schools:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">i) High proportion of small schools</p> <p>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.</p>
2.3.2	Parents should have the choice of a smaller school if they feel that is better suited to their children.	As above.
2.3.3	Parents wanting the small school option would not be able to get it, taking away their freedom of choice!!!!	As above.
2.3.4	It's discrimination targeting the smaller schools and you are taking away our freedom of choice!!! and our rights as human beings to choose .	As above.
2.3.5	Not all parents want a larger school setting for their primary age children. Some actually seek, appreciate and need the choice of a smaller school to suit the needs of their child which will be denied if PCC success in eliminating them all, largely it would seem solely on the basis of cost per pupil head alone.	As above.
2.3.6	Many parents will make the decision to take their children to a small school when they are not living in the catchment area, as they feel that is the best thing for their particular child. Bit by bit that choice is being taken away as we will be left with only large primary schools in Powys	As above.

2.3.7	When I was looking for a primary school for my own children upon my return to Wales, I was actively looking for the benefits of a smaller school to nurture self confidence in my children. Luckily I was able to choose one but Powys seem hell bent on denying the choice to any future Powys children.	As above.
2.3.8	Take Dolau school away, and you also take our rural choice away.	The Council disagrees with this statement. Of the alternative schools named within the Consultation Document, both Crossgates C.P. School and Llanbister C.P. School are classed as 'rural' schools.
2.3.9	People living in a rural area are just as entitled to a school in their community and surely have the freedom of choice and the right to choose, if you were to close our school you are taking away our rights and that freedom of choice.	As above.
2.3.10	It would be discriminating. If Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School were to close, it would take away the option of a rural school, which is unfair.	As above.
2.3.11	We chose a rural school for our children. We have no other rural school choice , New Radnor is 12 miles away, Franksbridge is further.	As above.

2.4 Reference to Welsh Government policy

2.4.1	It is stated Welsh Government policy to be " <i>supporting rural schools to be at the heart of their communities.</i> "	<p>In 2018, the Welsh Government published a Rural Schools Action Plan. The plan sets out the actions that the Welsh Government are taking to support the delivery of education in rural Wales as part of the national mission.</p> <p>However, the Welsh Government also states in the School Organisation Code 2018, '<i>that the planning and development of effective school organisation proposals is crucial to the Welsh Government's goal of transforming education in Wales and providing better outcomes. Relevant bodies should aim to ensure that proposals support the Welsh Government's commitment to increase school effectiveness, and narrow inequalities in</i></p>
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		<i>achievement between advantaged and disadvantaged areas, groups and individuals.'</i>
2.4.2	Where are these children supposed to go to school isn't the whole idea of the rural school code to keep these schools open to support the local community and families.	<p>The Welsh Government's School Organisation Policy 2018 includes a section entitled: 1.8 Presumption against the closure of rural schools.</p> <p>This outlines the additional considerations that local authorities/proposers need to carry out when formulating and consulting on proposals related to rural schools.</p> <p>The Code states: '<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 conscientiously considered by the proposer, including federation</i>'.</p> <p>Of the alternative schools named within the Consultation Document, both Crossgates C.P. School and Llanbister C.P. School are classed as 'rural' schools.</p>
2.4.3	The Welsh Government Rural Education Plan states a presumption against closing small, rural schools.	As above..
2.4.4	Another aim of Welsh Government's policy for rural schools is to ' <i>promote excellence</i> '.	As above.
2.4.5	The national policy is clear that this school should exist	As above.
2.4.6	I trust that Powys County Council will do the right thing and stick with the 'default setting,' of keeping rural schools open as introduced by the previous Education Minister Kirsty Williams, as if they don't there will be lots of children, who have had enough to contend with over the last fifteen months as it is, that will miss out on the opportunity's I was lucky enough to experience thanks to Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School.	As above.
2.4.7	The then Welsh Government Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams amended the School Organisation Code, a statutory code, and stated "Presumption against the closure of rural schools". The second edition of the Code makes special arrangements for rural	The Code does not require local authorities/proposers to have 'done everything they can' to keep a rural school open. The Code in fact states:

	<p>schools, establishing a procedural presumption against the closure of rural schools. 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. This means that closing a rural school should only happen after councils have done "everything they can" to keep it open. Llanfihangel is listed as a rural school within this code. Following recent Welsh Government's elections, the newly Elected Member of the Senedd for Brecon and Radnor, James Evans asked a question of the First Minister, Mark Drakeford. The question asked the First Minister's views on the plight of small rural school. Mr Drakeford was very clear in his response that schools such as Llanfihangel Rhydithon should be protected. He stated that 'unless good reasons can be deduced for those schools not to be continued, they will be continued' and the School Organisation Code 'provides greater power to parents who want to make the argument for the continuation of a school in a community'. This enforces the rational To strengthen the governance on the alignment and the need to retain the good quality educational provision delivered by Llanfihangel Rhydithon C P School.</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 conscientiously considered by the proposer, including federation'.</i></p> <p>The comments made by the First Minister are noted. The consultation exercise itself has enabled parents to make the argument for the continuation of a school in the community, and this consultation report reflects that.</p>
2.4.8	<p>First Minister Mark Drakeford recently announced that a rural school cannot be closed for financial savings alone. I see no other possible reason for closing Llanfihangel Rhydithon school. I urge you to look past any financial gain and to look and the wonder that is Llanfihangel Rhydithon school. To look at the children that attend and how it helps to shape their lives to fulfil their potential and to become upstanding members of society.</p>	<p>As stated in the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-30, the Council faces a challenge due to the high proportion of small schools in the county and the lack of equity amongst schools. Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School teaches children in two classes of mixed aged groups. With such low pupil numbers the teacher-pupil ratio is notably different to many other schools in the area, and due to the Council's funding formula, the school the funding per pupil is higher than the Council's average. This does not provide equity across the education system - teachers in larger schools are required to provide the same education as smaller schools for less funding per pupil. Powys' Strategy is intended to improve equity across the education system and to ensure an</p>

		improvement for every pupil's learning entitlement and experience.
2.4.9	More recently Mark Drakeford was questioned by the newly elected James Evans MS, in regards to how the Welsh Government could further protect rural schools and keep rural school closures off the table. Having been educated at a rural school himself, James Evans recognises their importance by quoting that 'rural schools play a huge part in our communities'. Mark Drakeford agreed by clearly stating that rural schools should not close and 'to make it a presumption that those schools stay open'. He also shared the strong opinion that 'unless good reasons can be induced for those schools not to be continued, they will continue'.	<p>The Code states that Presumption Against Closure of Rural Schools</p> <p><i>'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 conscientiously considered by the proposer, including federation'.</i></p> <p>The comments made by the First Minister are noted</p>
2.4.10	The Welsh Government stated it was committed to 'Strengthened organisation and support for rural schools' (Theme 1), in the Rural Education action plan 2017 . In summary, Llanfihangel (for Theme 1) had a part time (half day per fortnight) business manager for one academic year, as part of a pilot. As her time was diluted due to being shared with 5 other schools this had very little impact. Theme 2 (Supporting equity and excellence in rural schools): small and rural schools' grant: Llanfihangel were successful in a bid for 2 terms of increasing responsibility for a member of staff to be promoted to acting assistant head. However, this grant was not sustained, and it was not continued. Theme 3 (Supporting rural schools as community and educational spaces): Llanfihangel did benefit from improved connectivity. They use HWB (as do all primary schools in Wales) and Google for Education. Lastly, they also have access to behavioural/pastoral support worker (shared with 10 other schools). This was largely accessed by larger schools and was cut short due to the post holder leaving to take up a post elsewhere. How did the Government's commitment to raising education standards in rural areas such as Llanfihangel actually made an impact?	The Council notes these comments about the Welsh Government's initiatives to support small and rural schools. As noted in the comment, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School benefited from a variety of different initiatives, including additional funding through the Small and Rural Schools Grant.
2.4.11	The Welsh Government stated it was committed to 'raising education standards in rural areas', in the Rural Education action plan 2017	Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, pupils would be able to access high-quality education and have

	(Theme 2: Supporting equity and excellence in rural schools). As parents and community members, we are in agreement with the Welsh Government that every learner in Wales, wherever they live, has the right to benefit from high-quality education and the opportunity to reach their full potential. We cannot see how the closure of Llanfihangel would address this aim?	the opportunity to reach their full potential in any of the alternative schools within a reasonable distance from their homes.
2.4.12	One of the key actions in Education in Wales: Our national mission, Action plan 2017–21 was to ‘reduce infant class sizes’. Long-term close relationships between pupils and teachers allow for closer match of the learning to the child and for greater commitment by both the child and the teacher to each other. This in turn helps with closely focussed revisiting. Why would parents choose to send children to a schools with a high Pupil Teacher ratio? Parents want their children’s confidence to grow in a small rural school, rather than in a larger hub primary where children travel miles on public transport to larger classes and year group segregated teaching. Children thrive in small schools and the teachers provide 1:1 guidance.	See 1.3.1
2.4.13	The rural school policy says 91 is a small school, but it doesn’t say that it should be discriminated and closed just because it is classified as a small rural school.	<p>Section 1.8 of the Welsh Government’s School Organisation Code outlines the steps that proposers need to take when bringing forward proposals for rural schools.</p> <p>It also states that this:</p> <p><i>‘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 conscientiously considered by the proposer, including federation’.</i></p> <p>The Council has carried out these steps during the formation of the Proposal Paper that was considered by Cabinet in February, and has carried out the additional steps required in the preparation of this Consultation Report.</p>

2.5 Comments about the Covid-19 pandemic

2.5.1	The pandemic has been difficult but surely easier to deal with in rural communities keeping people within their own areas thus helping to stem the spread. By closing small community schools, if in the future Covid continues or something similar occurs, it would be much harder to control.	The Council does not agree that maintaining a large number of small schools would help stem the spread of a pandemic as there need to be many interventions to address public health matters such as this
2.5.2	If Covid-19 has taught us anything, surely it is the need for more local, small-scale connections and institutions, not fewer?	As above.
2.5.3	How many of Powys schools remained COVID free during pandemic? Dolau did and why? Because we were in our community and our classrooms are not FULL meaning children and staff can socially distance.	Many schools in Powys remained free of Covid during the pandemic.

3. IMPACT ON PUPILS

3.1 General concern about the impact of the consultation on pupil well-being

3.1.1	The talk of closure is not good on the children's mental health.	<p>The Council recognises that any school reorganisation process creates a period of uncertainty for all involved, including children. The Council is committed to supporting schools and learners, including through periods of change. An experienced member of staff from the Council is supporting school leaders effectively to help them manage possible changes for their learners.</p> <p>It is also expected that school governors, staff and parents support the children to ensure that there isn't a detrimental impact on their wellbeing.</p>
3.1.2	The main concern I have in this area is the impact the stress of all of this is having on the children's mental health. It is unnecessary and I	As above.

	feel they have already had a very disruptive start to their education and well-being.	
3.1.3	On top of the visual damage the affect closures have had on the mental health of the pupils going through the trauma of the consultations and closure of the schools.	As above.
3.1.4	A major concern of the potential closure of Dolau School, is of course the emotional impact that this proposal has had on the children and adults alike.	As above.
3.1.5	I hope that the abundance of support and positive facts that you will be presented with during this consultation period, are enough to stop this process. Ideally before any further damage is done to our children's Mental Health, their Education and our precious Community.	As above.
3.1.6	The decision must be to keep Dolau school open, otherwise you will have wronged the children of Dolau and put their well-being at serious risk.	As above.
3.1.7	Pupils at Dolau school are extremely upset by your actions.	As above.
3.1.8	Do you have any idea of the impact you are having on our children? We have tried so hard to shield them from this consultation. We are dealing with children wetting the bed, children having nightmares and being terrified of having to leave their friends, not only is this impacting on their well-being, it is impacting on our well-being. You may say that it doesn't effect children, but you could not be more wrong! This is not just happening to my child, it is happening to many in the school.	As above.
3.1.9	Several of the children in school are affected by all this change already. Some of them only 6 yrs old are crying, waking up with nightmares, wetting the bed. It's awful to hear the stories of these little children so traumatised by it all.	As above.
3.1.10	Our children here in Dolau are already suffering and going to be scarred from this for a very long time. As an example my daughter is 6yrs old and is now afraid to leave the room without me. A boy in her class has cried for the last 10 days after being told that the school might close, because he thinks he won't be going back there to school to see his friends. He also cried the other day putting his school jumper on for school photos that day, saying that it would be his last photo in that school jumper. He loves his school. Another boy woke up	As above.

	<p>having a nightmare about all his friends being killed by bad people and he was trying to pull the bad people off his friends. Another child suffers from anxiety. This has all been escalated by covid and now school closure. She cries every morning by the school gates and does not want to go to school or anywhere else. It really is heart-breaking to see. These are just some examples of the affect that all this is having on little children even at 6yrs old. This is obviously affecting our children even at such a young age. If the school were to close, our children would all be separated and they would lose their friends- another stress factor for them to take in.</p>	
3.1.11	<p>We are already seeing visible signs of our children's well-being and mental health suffering with the uncertainty of closure hovering over them – this is torture to our little ones who now know the school is threatened since the Zoom meeting with the Powys officials and our school Council members, and what's more, it will be a 'long time' in our children's minds before they know the outcome.</p>	<p>The Council has a duty to consult with children during any reorganisation process, and children's consultation documents were distributed to the school to share with pupils when the consultation started. In agreement with the school, officers held a virtual consultation meeting with the School Council which also had the Headteacher and the LEA governor in attendance.</p>
3.1.12	<p>My children have been inflicted with three consultation processes whilst at Dolau school. I do not feel that you have any idea of the impact this has had on our family or community. It is devastating. So, devastating that it cannot be quantified, some things cannot be quantified. Somethings do not fit into boxes.</p>	<p>The Council carried out a consultation in 2016 on a proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and acknowledges that some of the older pupils would have been included in that process.</p>
3.1.13	<p>We strongly object to the plans of Powys County Council to close the primary school in Dolau. A second attempt in only 4 years. Can you imagine what that does to the children living under constant threat of disruption?</p>	<p>As above.</p>
3.1.14	<p>I can tell you what I haven't missed though.....and that's my Daughter that wakes up every night since this all started! Our daughter that has now been through the consultation period TWICE, yes TWICE and in the same school. We have now started some therapy for her to try and calm the anxiety down as this has really effected her this time.....she thinks she has done something wrong for you to be trying to close her school again, perhaps you could explain to her the reasons? Because I can't!</p>	<p>As above.</p>

3.1.15	I can see no benefit to the emotional development and mental health of the pupils and staff of Llanfihangel Rhydithon school if it were to close. However, the negative effects on their mental health would be huge! We have known for some time that exposure to stress has a negative affect on brain development, this is scientific ally proven. For some of these children, (staff and families) this is the second time they have faced the possible closure of their school. The second time they have worried about having to be split up from their friends and familiar adults, the second time they have worried about the possibility of starting a new school and travelling on a bus and the second time of parents worrying about how their morning and evening routines will work if their children no longer attends Llanfihangel Rhydithon school.	As above. Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, then any receiving schools would be required to work with the school, families and pupils to ensure a smooth transition process.
3.1.16	As I have stated before, closing Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School would have a huge negative impact on the mental health and well-being of our pupils. The mental health and well-being of our young people is of utmost importance, and should be at the forefront of any decision making; this is why Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School should remain OPEN.	As above.
3.1.17	Surely the mental health and well-being of pupils should be at the forefront of any decision-making?	As above.
3.1.18	PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE consider the impact on the mental health of these children. That has got to be at the forefront of any decision.	As above.
3.1.19	I'm disgusted and outraged that Powys are proposing to close the school at a time when the mental health of children should be at the Forefront of their planning. The undue stress this has caused on top of an already stressful time is terrible and unnecessary. I completely understand that they have to save money however the mental health of children and support that is going to be needed once the pandemic has eased is going to be huge, closing schools is not the answer!	As above.
3.1.20	As we know, the experiences in childhood through adolescence form and shape our adult lives, to tear away the priceless positive effects a school like this has on the pupils attending said school could have long lasting effects.	As above.
3.1.21	I would urge you to think long and hard about the closure of the school, I fully understand that you have budgetary requirements but in	As above.

	reality the savings would be relatively small and with the well-being and best education possible for the children of Dolau, I urge you to think of the longer term and keep Dolau school open.	
3.1.22	If the school were to close, it would massively impact the mental health of our young people; not only would you be taking away their school where they feel safe and secure, but their chance to be part of clubs and groups such as Young Farmers Club and Youth Club, as without the school, there is a strong possibility that these would cease to continue.	As above.
3.1.23	I believe that their mental health would be badly affected if their school was to close, as they would feel like their opinions and thoughts do not come into account as you have seen from speaking to any member of the school about their thoughts. They could end up with mental health issues which could follow them for life, the effect of this on them cannot be underestimated and considering Powys County Council want to promote their support of mental health services, this is an issue where they have failed to see that the mental health of the young people in the county is just as important.	As above.
3.1.24	I will look to fight tooth and nail legally against PCC if my children's mental health is affected due to any school closure.	As above.
3.1.25	These children need as much support and normality as possible at this moment in time and doing anything less is breaking every code of conduct for their wellbeing and breaking the accord of the Children Act. It is, quite frankly, disgusting that this is even being discussed. The Rights of the Child are Paramount!	As above.
3.1.26	The affects of stress of children's brain development is well documented and can have lasting effects, in fact it is considered an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) which is something that the Welsh Government see as a priority to reduce.	As above.
3.1.27	Not even three months later, the children and young people of the Llanfihangel Rhydithon community are faced with another potential life changing situation, which, has again proved to trigger similar reactions relating to their emotional and mental well-being. Since being informed of the proposal to close the school, there has been increased concern by parents in the community of the impact this	As above.

	has had on some of the children and a significant increase in requests to the school for support. The children are experiencing at least four of the six signs identified on Powys County Councils website as 'signs to look out for' relating to poor emotional and mental wellbeing.	
3.1.28	In one of Powys County Councils documents it talks of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 3 part 1 states 'in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration'. Currently under this consultation, that is not what Powys County Council is doing. The state of my children proves that. We are not alone in this; many other children from the school are having the same if not worse problems. The school and teachers have been absolutely fantastic support to us, providing extra resources and referrals. Powys County Council have put us in this position but provided no additional resources to the school and teachers. This is abominable. You want education to improve, but you put children under this pressure how can they learner when subjected to this?	As above.

3.2 Comments about consultation taking place during the Covid pandemic

3.2.1	Some children are suffering mental health illness now due to the pandemic; their lives have been turned upside down for 14 months and parents have suffered with them. Children do not need this trauma now of closing their school. How thoughtless!! Children's mental health must be put before money.	<p>The Council recognises that any school reorganisation proposal creates a period of uncertainty and concern for all involved, including children. However, in order to address the issues raised by Estyn regarding the organisation of its schools, it is necessary to continue with the development and consultation on proposals during the current pandemic.</p> <p>The Council is committed to supporting schools and learners, including through periods of change. An experienced member of staff from the Council is</p>
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		<p>supporting school leaders effectively to help them manage possible changes for their learners.</p> <p>It is also expected that school governors, staff and parents support the children to ensure that there isn't a detrimental impact on their wellbeing,</p> <p>Schools receiving pupils as a result of a school closure are expected to work with the closing school, the pupils and their families to provide full support to pupils to ensure a smooth transition..</p>
3.2.2	After the last 12+ months of being in school, learning at home and then back to a very different learning environment in school these children need a bit of normality and certainty not more worry.	As above.
3.2.3	Closing Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School would affect children's mental health and well-being. It has been unsettling enough the last year or so due to the COVID pandemic, this would not help at all.	As above.
3.2.4	The people of Dolau cannot accept, that the children should be subjected to the psychological impact of carrying out consultation during a pandemic.	As above.
3.2.5	The children have had enough disruption throughout Covid 19, they need stability in their School more than ever.	As above.
3.2.6	After the terrible mental pressures these pupils have been under the last 15 months with Covid this is the last thing that these young children need now!	As above.
3.2.7	The lockdowns due to Covid pandemic have been dreadful and the children have suffered enough. Please don't make things worse	As above.
3.2.8	I strongly believe that the closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School would have a massive detrimental impact on our pupils. So many of our pupils have suffered enough this year due to the coronavirus pandemic, and they do not need to be worried with this as well.	As above.

3.2.9	Powys County Council claim to have the well-being of their pupils at the forefront of all decision making, however this is most definitely NOT the case. In what has been a very difficult twelve months, our pupils need their safe, secure and familiar school setting more than ever.	As above.
3.2.10	Imagine being a child who has struggled through this pandemic to then have another curve ball thrown at them. Again, PLEASE, make sure our children's well-being is at the heart of any decision.	As above.
3.2.11	I have also seen the effects that this threat of closure has had on their Mental Health. On top of COVID lockdowns etc, this has just added to the rollercoaster that should have been evening out with the lockdowns easing. I think the timing is terrible, and I think the proposal is not an option with the children in mind.	As above.
3.2.12	The children at this wonderful school have already endured an uncertain and anxious time with the impact of Covid restrictions so I am staggered that you can even consider this proposal at this moment in time especially when there is much being said about the impact of Covid on children's mental health - so you think you may as well add to that by taking away the very thing that is most familiar to them after their home? These children do not need any more disruption to their lives.	As above.
3.2.13	We are currently enduring the biggest global crisis since the Second World War. Our children's legs have been kicked from under them. Suddenly having to stay at home for reasons they can't comprehend or if they do understand, feeling scared that suddenly one of their relatives or themselves will become seriously ill. As an adult I have felt the impact of that on my mental health so I can't even begin to imagine how it's affected all of the children in Dolau. I can tell you how it's affected my bright, confident, easy going son. Suddenly the boy who couldn't wait to get outside wants to stay indoors. Suddenly, a boy that is almost 6 is soiling himself regularly. His world has been turned ups ide down. Now as he returns to the classroom the brightness is back in his eyes, the spring is back in his step and he's back on his feet. Imagine what happens when again his world is flipped on its head and we have to move schools, he gets separated	As above.

	from some friends and he has to find his feet again. How long until he's focussed on school again after already losing much of his first KEY year of school. One of the most stressful things a child can endure is moving schools. Add on top of this a GLOBAL PANDEMIC, we are setting our children up to fail in later life let alone put their current mental health at serious risk. How is this worth the heartbreak, current and future strain on already stretched mental health system and the impact on not only our children in Dolau but the others that are currently under consultation.	
3.2.14	I know that "professionals" say how resilient children are, and they would adapt and change to a new school, but haven't they already had to be resilient enough this last 14months? Haven't they had enough childhood change for a lifetime during this pandemic? It seemed as though we had literally just crossed the huge hurdle of returning to school after the Winter COVID lockdown, taking a breath that it was OK, our precious children were safe in their friendly, happy bubble; to be met with the threat that their world would be turned upside down AGAIN!	As above.
3.2.15	Over the past 18 months my children have experienced significant interruption to their education, which it is uncertain how this will affect their overall education attainment levels, this would be additionally contributed to with a change in education settling if Dolau school is closed. As a Local Authority you should be supporting my children's educational attainment particularly following the Covid Pandemic, not additionally contributing to their emotional stress at their vulnerable age and potentially further damaging their educational attainment.	As above.
3.2.16	During 2020 and so far in 2021 there has been a global pandemic that's had an effect on the entire population. Children have experienced unprecedented educational disruptions – the effects of which may not become evident for months, or years to come. What all children need now is a lengthy period of stability and consistency, not change. The reasons stated for the need for the change are not the fault of the children that will be affected by the proposal.	As above.
3.2.17	Another reason, the children and staff have just gone through a really tough 18 months due to COVID-19 and now you want to throw this at	As above.

	them as well, shame on you. Put yourself in their position. Please, please think again.	
3.2.18	The events of the last 12 months have affected almost everyone and I feel your actions now are only adding stress that nobody needed, and are having an effect on many peoples mental health. We have had to take our daughter for therapy after your announcement of the closure proposal. These children have had enough of a change to deal with in the last 12 months without the worry of losing their school.	As above.
3.2.19	I strongly request that you reconsider this proposed course of action, Radnor is a rural county and we need to protect rural communities, this starts by protecting the children. They have been through a very traumatic year and now you have placed this additional mental anguish on them at a time they should be recovering from the trauma of the pandemic. You have young children in the school who can't sleep and are having nightmares, that not only might they loose their teachers but also their friends. This is something you have a duty of care to prevent.	As above.
3.2.20	I think that the impact it will have on all of the pupils will be devastating. With them being such a young age and after all of them putting up with so much over the previous 12-18months that this will be the straw that breaks the camel's back in such. The adjustment to a completely different school, potentially being split from their friends and piers. Through absolutely no fault of their own. For some I think it will be too much.	As above.
3.2.21	The first concern I would like to raise is the detrimental impact that this consultation process is having on the mental health and well-being of all those involved, but most importantly the children. My 6-year-old grandson has faced the challenge of starting school just before a global pandemic hit, and has attended his school or his hub care throughout the past 18 months whilst his key worker parents continued to work. He now faces the trauma of this consultation, the possibility of losing his beloved school and being split from so many of his friends.	As above.
3.2.22	I also feel that the past 18 months has had a massive impact of our children's mental health. I know it certainly has with my son. My little	As above.

	boy who would be constantly playing outside, going with his grandfather on the farm turned into a little boy who didn't want to do anything other than play on his iPad. He would cry that he didn't want to go outside, with no real reason. Since this consultation was announced he has started to soil himself. To the point I've had to take him to the doctors for help. This is very distressing as parent to have to try understand why this is happening and so much more distressing for my son.	
3.2.23	School is a place where children learn to self regulate their emotions, to feel safe to try new things and make mistakes, to open up about their worries and to feel valued. To take a child's safe place away from them at any time is damaging but to do so during a global pandemic seems unjust.	As above.
3.2.24	Over the last year, the children of Dolau school have been home-schooled, as has the rest of the country, this can cause distress and confusion. This closure will cause more stress, isolation and sadness to these pupils.	As above.
3.2.25	Since returning to school the pupils have all felt safe and have been happy coming back but then Powys County Council want to take that away from them.	As above.
3.2.26	Why put the children through such a big move when they have just settled back into a school routine after the disruption of Covid-19?	As above.

3.3 Concern about the impact on pupils of having to move to a different school

3.3.1	Taking children at such a young age and putting them in a school away from their community is a backward step and will be detrimental to their well being	The Council acknowledges that children and families would need to go through a period of change, should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close. It also understands that this is a real concern for children, especially if friendship groups go to different schools. However, children are able to be part of friendship groups even if they attend different schools and are able to become part of new friendship groups.
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		All schools that receive pupils as a result of a school closure are expected to work with the closing school, the pupils and their families to provide full support to ensure a smooth transition and help pupils settle into their new schools.
3.3.2	As a mum to a child that currently goes to the school, I feel very saddened that my child maybe put through the trauma of moving schools.	As above.
3.3.3	The impact of this move with children of the ages of 4 to 11 is going to unsettle them and make them anxious about change.	As above.
3.3.4	It's not fair for the children that go to Dolau school now. If you close it they will have to move and be very upset.	As above.
3.3.5	In a year that has seen very unsettled education I think it would be terrible to disrupt the pupils education further by splitting up groups and introducing them to large classes in larger primaries that are already at class capacity in many cases.	As above
3.3.6	The children that are now attending Dolau school are used to a small, rural setting, taking these children away from what they are familiar with especially during a global pandemic when anxiety levels are high could have a very detrimental effect on the children's mental wellbeing.	As above.
3.3.7	The children are settled at the school, it would be a massive change for them going from such a lovely small school to a big school.	As above
3.3.8	It would also destroy the security these children feel in being able to attend a school close to home where they are familiar with their surroundings and people in the environment.	As above
3.3.9	John Hattie, well respected educationalist states that the 5th most impactful negative influence on pupil progress is: "moving between schools". Is this really what we want for our children? Hattie effect size list - 256 Influences Related To Achievement (visible-learning.org).	As above
3.3.10	Moving pupils to larger establishments means they lose their individuality and identity.	As above
3.3.11	It is a small community school where children feel secure, having to change to a school with less familiarity will be incredibly detrimental to	As above

	all children, particularly the older pupils who will also have to undergo the big change at the end of year 6.	
3.3.12	If children from Dolau had to travel to other schools their quality of life and peer network out of school time would be adversely affected	As above.
3.3.13	Concerns for the mental health and wellbeing of the pupils, as far as I'm aware is there another local green school that they can go too.	As above.
3.3.14	I am very nervous about having to move to a new school as I could be the only pupil transferring to one particular school as I only have 1 year left in primary school.	As above.
3.3.15	In small village schools like Llanfihangel, there is a far higher opportunity for pupils to be given 1:1 emotional support when needed, and a chance for a more intimate discussion in circle time around sensitive topics within class when pupils feel comfortable with their peers. These opportunities may be lost when they join larger schools where there simply isn't the time for staff to spend that quality time with individuals, time that some of these pupils are going to so desperately need should this closure go ahead. If these issues are not addressed appropriately it could result in behavioural changes both at home and in school, mental health issues in the future that could be carried into adulthood and an overall very distressing experience for these children. Are the new prospective schools prepared for these challenges? Or are these children expected to just fit in and move on without any follow up	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. Schools receiving pupils as a result of a school closure are expected to work with the closing school to provide full support to pupils to ensure a smooth transition.
3.3.16	This school with a very low bullying rate meaning that if these young innocent children were to be sent to a school with a higher bullying rate would impact the children.	There is no evidence of more bullying taking place in larger schools compared to smaller schools and all schools have anti-bullying policies.
3.3.17	You are adding a lot of stress into these children's lives. Not only have they had two recent lockdowns. You are now asking these children to go onto transport and be ferried to the next local school. Are there spaces for all of the children? What provisions do you have in place at the suggested schools for children's well-being? Are they thrive schools (the whole school concentrate on the well-being of the children)? Do they have staff who are ELSA trained? To help children to understand the move and help them settle into a new place. Have	There are sufficient school places available for the pupils of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School within a ten-mile radius. Ysgol Trefonnen and Llanbister C.P. School are currently over-subscribed. However, an additional classroom will be created at Llanbister C.P. School with work to start in August 2021 – this will increase the capacity of the school to 74 meaning that there will also be places available there.

	<p>you considered this impact? From teaching in a school with a very high need for excellent well-being practise, and provision. I know how high this priority is. Children do not learn unless their well-being is right. You need to guarantee to me that this will be 100% accessible on whatever decision is made.</p>	<p>All schools across Powys are well supported by the council with regards to the provision for wellbeing of children and young people. For example, all schools have been provided with a mental health and emotional wellbeing strategy. In addition, the council has provided a range of high-quality training for all schools. As a result, all schools in Powys are now aware of adverse childhood experiences and most are trauma informed and ELSA trained. Powys does not advocate Thrive approaches, but recognises the value of this approach for some schools. There is also a Hwb network for schools so all schools can access an extensive range of guidance and support. By the end of December 2021, all schools will also be trained in youth mental health first aid. Therefore, the council is of the opinion that all schools in Powys will be able to provide good quality support for the wellbeing of children and young people.</p>
3.3.18	<p>I saw the disruption the closure of Nantmel caused there as well, with some of the older children having to move schools twice in a couple of years. It was not what I would have chosen as a parent and I know many parents felt the same.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>

3.4 Concern that pupils would be separated from their friends

3.4.1	<p>Don't close our school otherwise we will be very upset and not see our friends</p>	<p>The Council acknowledges that children and families would need to go through a period of change, should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close. It also understands that this is a real concern for children, especially if friendship groups go to different schools. However, children are able to be part of friendship groups even if they attend different schools and are able to become part of new friendship groups.</p>
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		<p>All schools that receive pupils as a result of a school closure are expected to work with the closing school, the pupils and their families to provide full support to ensure a smooth transition and help pupils settle into their new schools.</p> <p>The proposal is to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and for pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools. Should the school close, the majority of pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would be closer to Crossgates C.P. Schools and therefore would be able to transfer together. Parents are also able to choose any school for their child(ren) and if there are places available, the child(ren) can attend that school. There are enough places available at Crossgates C.P. School for all the pupils at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School should parents wish for pupils to transfer together.</p> <p>However, free home-to-school transport is only provided to a pupils' nearest school, therefore if a parent was to choose for their child(ren) to attend a school that isn't their nearest school, then the parent is responsible for getting the child(ren) to and from school.</p>
3.4.2	The children at Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School are very kind and welcoming - we are all great friends. I personally think it would be incredibly sad if our school was closed, and our strong friendships were broken by your decision to send us off in many different directions.	As above.
3.4.3	If you close my school and split me from my friends I will be very sad	As above.
3.4.4	I have four best friends at Dolau. We have been best friends since Ti a Fi. We then went to Playgroup together and now Dolau school. If you close Dolau, we will go to different schools. This makes me very sad.	As above.

3.4.5	By closing this school, it will disrupt the children's education even more, damage the community and distance friendships	As above.
3.4.6	She has made so many great friendships and I would be heartbroken to see this being affected.	As above.
3.4.7	I have great friends and if the school was to shut my friends would all go to different schools to me.	As above.
3.4.8	If you close we will feel sad because we might not every see our best friends again	As above.
3.4.9	I don't want all my friends to be split up. 😞	As above.
3.4.10	I really feel for the wellbeing of these children in Llanfihangel Rhydithon, you are splitting friendships groups, leaving a school where they know each pupil by their first name!!!!	As above.
3.4.11	I am writing this with tears in my eyes (again), thinking how my children would be in another classroom, in another school with children they don't know, and haven't grown up giggling with	As above.
3.4.12	The thought of the local school closing and the children been put on a bus to travel miles to school is not only emotionally upsetting for the children as they will probably be split up from their friends but, the problem of isolation for parents will have a serious effect on their well being and mental health	As above.
3.4.13	Their friendships may be broken as there are not enough places in the surrounding communities to take 37 pupils in one school. This can damage the pupil's mental health hugely as well as traumatise them. This is extremely inappropriate and unnecessary, especially when there are other solutions to this overall problem.	As above.
3.4.14	The whole school could be split up with children being separated from friends because there isn't enough room in the same school. This could be very disruptive for children and caused them great anxiety especially at a time when due to COVID children have already had a lot of disruption in their education.	As above.
3.4.15	Another one of my worries is if Llanfihangel Rhydithon did close, it does not mean all these children will attend the same school. The children in Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School have made lifelong friends. Friendship groups will be broken, children may be attending a	As above. Schools receiving pupils as a result of a school closure are expected to work with the closing school to provide full support to pupils to ensure a smooth transition.

	new school alone. How do you plan to help with the transitioning of pupils changing schools?	
3.4.16	The children shouldn't be split, they should go as a unit. Are they all going to Crossgates?	The proposal is to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and for pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools. However, parents can apply for a place for their child(ren) in any school.

3.5 Concern about the impact on the quality of education

3.5.1	If it closes, many students will fall very far behind and not receive the education they deserve	<p>The Council does not have any concerns over the quality of education provided at any of the alternative schools and believe that pupils will not be disadvantaged.</p> <p>All the alternative schools are regarded as 'self-improving' schools, according to the latest National Categorisation in 2019.</p> <p>Estyn, in its response to this consultation, has concluded that 'It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education in the area.'</p>
3.5.2	The transfer of any pupil to a school which has a far lower standard of education than they receive at present would be detrimental to them.	As above.
3.5.3	Also, the school is currently a green band school, so sending children to lower level schools will have an adverse effect on their education. They will be very restricted in their opportunities for extracurricular activities.	As above.
3.5.4	I oppose the proposal to close Dolau school. The school is a vital part of the community and the children who attend will receive a poorer education if they are forced to move elsewhere	As above.
3.5.5	The children affected by the closure of the school will lose out on a friendly, rounded education. There are plenty of out of school activities offered and mixed age classes allow children and teachers the flexibility to teach more able pupils with their older peers as they are in	Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School there are sufficient places for all pupils currently attending the school at Crossgates C.P. School, although free home-to-school

	the same room. I understand that not all the children can be accommodated in just one other school so friendship groups could be broken up and youngsters will face all the difficulties of making new friends	transport would only be available for those pupils for whom Crossgates C.P. School is their nearest school.
3.5.6	To take this school away from children who love to go to school each day with teachers who make them smile and learning is fun for them all is wrong.	Comment noted.
3.5.7	It will likely be a detrimental move and will NOT improve educational standards. Larger classes in other schools COULD also result in the decline in standards of education for all the children of the receiving schools. Will the proposals guarantee the excellent child-centred experiential approach to teaching and learning in the receiving schools?	Estyn, in its response to this consultation, has concluded that 'It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education in the area.'
3.5.8	My own children go to the other school run by Dolau's headteacher Mr Shearman, Llanellwedd, and they also benefit from having a 'sister school' to share good practices with, with the benefits of a rural school that Dolau brings such as valuing outside play and looking out for children both older and younger than themselves, I feel it would be a travesty if this was lost.	Comment noted.
3.5.9	Having previously taught in one of the local schools you are proposing children attend I know first-hand what impact this will have on the pupils. Not only are class sizes so big you don't get around each child, but the learning environments are completely different. One example would be the impact each class size will have on the children as you will be splitting each year group from their current peers. Pupils at this school are used to working in class with other children of different ages and they will be split up from their friends. Another example of the impact it would have would be that Within smaller schools you have the opportunity to work as one group and this is something that will be missed if pupils were expected to attend bigger schools.	Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close and pupils attend alternative schools which are larger, then pupils would be placed in age-appropriate classes and would no longer be taught in classes of four year groups. This should be a positive experience for the children.

3.6 Concern about access to extra-curricular provision

3.6.1	There appears to be the perception that larger schools potentially give additional opportunities for pupils to take part in sport, art, and other	The Council has acknowledged that there are a number of extra-curricular activities happening at the school. This is
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	<p>extra-curricular activities. However, this is not the case Llanfihangel Rhydithon as other smaller schools, already provides a wide and varied programme of extra-curricular activities and being a pupil at a smaller school gives the opportunity to all, it is not competitive choosing only the strongest netball or football player, the best singer or most confident speaker but allows all pupils to gain confidence and skills by giving all the opportunity to take part in all activities. Smaller schools operate more like a community than a corporation. They have a greater sense of unity and belongingness, shared by the parents and staff/committee members/governors alike. Children do not go unnoticed. This close-knit feel enables more opportunities for kids to participate. In larger schools and clubs, competition is fierce for the sought-after few spots on teams; those pupils/members who make the team gain a personal investment in the school, while those who don't make the teams—and their families, by extension—can feel side-lined. In smaller schools the chance for student participation is recurrently higher because students are required rather than redundant; as a result, children in smaller schools and their families have more of a stake in their school.</p>	<p>outlined in the Consultation Document and within the draft Community Impact Assessment, which will be updated to take account of information gathered during the consultation period.</p> <p>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 activities and are expected to ensure that pupils can participate fully with these.</p> <p>All schools, regardless of size, operate within their own communities and facilitate relationships with parents and families – this does not only happen in very small schools.</p>
3.6.2	<p>You will be depriving these children and also not allowing them to attend the extracurricular activities after school as it will be making it more difficult for the parents.</p>	<p>The Council has acknowledged that, should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C. P. School close, then it may be more difficult for some pupils to access after-school activities due to reliance on home-to-school transport.</p> <p>However, the alternative schools also have pupils that rely on home-to-school transport and they are experienced in ensuring that all pupils are able to take part in a range of extra-curricular activities to enrich their experiences at those schools.</p>
3.6.3	<p>If I attended larger school I would never have been picked for cross country, football or any other team events because other children would have been picked. But having gone to Dolau School I got to do everything and achieve happy memories and learn it is really important being part of a team, no matter of your capabilities.</p>	<p>Comment noted. However, all schools have opportunities for children to participate in extra-curricular activities, even if this means there is more competition for places in sports teams or on certain committees. In a larger school, it is</p>

		more likely that there are more sports teams for different age groups.
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3.7 Other comments

3.7.1	The value of teaching young children within their community is always important and in a remote community far more so, particularly in developing social and emotional skills in terms of a sense belonging to the community.	Comment noted.
3.7.2	There is a strong emphasis in schools to teach about the local area and community in order to help children form a sense of self and their place in the world. Taking them away from their community and then having to build their sense of community seems counterintuitive	Comment noted.
3.7.3	As a disabled person I could not attend my local secondary school as the building was not suitable, and despite making new friends easily it was just not the same and on occasion I felt like I was on the edge of my community, that I didn't truly belong in one or the other, conversations about school life with in my home community meant nothing to me as I wasn't familiar with the people and places that my friends were	Comment noted.
3.7.4	If it closes I will have to home school my child, which could affect his education and future.	This would be a decision for an individual parent/family.

4. COMMENTS RELATING TO OTHER SCHOOLS

4.1 Comments about Crossgates C.P. School

4.1.1 Comments about quality of provision at Crossgates C.P. School

4.1.1.1	Dolau has a Green Estyn rating, Crossgates and amber rating. The Welsh assembly states that local authorities should only make these closures when it is certain that the children will have a better education and improved well being	The Council does not have any concerns over the quality of education provided at Crossgates and believe that pupils will not be disadvantaged by attending this school.
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		<p>The Consultation Document includes the latest Estyn judgements and the 2019 National Categorisations for both Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and also the alternative schools that pupils may transfer to, in the event that the school closes. It must be noted that there is a difference between Estyn inspections and National Categorisation - Estyn evaluate by judgements, National Categorisation uses colours to identify the support that a school needs.</p> <p>In the last Estyn inspection for Llanfihangel Rhydithon in 2019, the school were judged to be 'good' for standards, provision and leadership.</p> <p>Crossgates School were inspected in 2016, and were placed in Estyn review. However, within a year they had addressed the recommendations and were removed from any form of follow up.</p> <p>National Categorisation identifies the amount of support a school will receive on an annual basis. The last categorisation took place in the autumn term 2019. Since that period, Welsh Government have suspended categorisation. There are four colours for categorisation (Green and Yellow are seen as self-improving schools; Amber and Red are schools in need of significant support).</p> <p>Llanfihangel Rhydithon was classified as Green and Crossgates were categorised as Yellow in 2019. Both schools are self-improving schools.</p> <p>Although there is no National Categorisation for schools, the Council has continued to work closely to support these schools. Both schools are strong schools for standards,</p>
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		<p>provision and leadership and have responded well to the challenges of providing education over the pandemic period. This has reinforced the view of the local authority that the schools are self-improving schools and provide education to a standard that is equitable.</p> <p>Estyn's response to this consultation also confirms the Council's view: <i>'It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education in the area.'</i></p>
4.1.1.2	I am extremely concerned about the 'quality' at Crossgates school - our next nearest school. This is not on par with Dolau.	As above.
4.1.1.3	Llanfihangel Rhydithon school is rated Green in Welsh Government's ERW banding. This means it is highly effective and has a track record of raising standards and has the capacity to support other schools to do better. Crossgates school on the other hand has been rated in the lower band of Yellow.	As above.
4.1.1.4	Powys CC deems it acceptable for Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils to attend Crossgates school and considers it suitable, even though it is a yellow rating in the national standards.	As above.
4.1.1.5	The other alternative school to consider would be Crossgates. This again would put my children at a severe learning disadvantage due to the level of moderate teaching and below average learning.	As above.
4.1.1.6	What I find really unacceptable is that PCC believe it is acceptable to send the children from Dolau to a feeder school which has lower educational standards which again is evidenced in this schools most recent Estyn report.	As above.
4.1.1.7	It is proposed that the pupils will be sent to nearby schools, one of which - Crossgates, was only rated as Adequate in its most recent inspection. Why should children have to leave a school which was noted by Estyn as being a "happy, caring, community, where all children enjoyed learning" to attend a busy school where they won't have as much individual teacher input from merely an adequate facility?	As above.

4.1.1.8	The designated receiving school has a lower rating than Dolau school, so that pupils would be moving into a lower overall standard.	As above.
4.1.1.9	The Powys CC proposal is to transfer pupils to other local schools, but with many of these having already closed, Crossgates remains the nearest option. The latest Estyn report for Crossgates classed that school as merely 'Adequate'.	As above.
4.1.1.10	I do not want my children to receive a lower standard of education which is what would happen if they were forced to attend one of the alternative schools put forward by Powys. Powys CC can not claim that they are of equivalent standard. To do so goes against nationally recognised benchmarking systems which have been created for a reason. If they are of equivalent standard then why are they yellow?	As above.
4.1.1.11	My children will absolutely NOT go to Crossgates School as an alternative – not just on principal that you are trying to close our beloved school on the preface that we will fill Crossgates surplus spaces; but because I don't believe the quality is anywhere near that of Dolau School. I know that you will argue that you've brought the education standards up since their previous "Adequate" ESTYN inspection, and they are on a PAR with us now. However, they will never have the small class sizes of Dolau, they can't have the empathy that Dolau children have and they do not have the same values that can't be taught in a large school.	As above.
4.1.1.12	In your document you state that 'However, there are no concerns in relation to quality and standards at Crossgates C.P. School, and it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on standards and progress overall.' How can you claim this when in every category Dolau outperforms nearly all the closest schools to it and especially Crossgates in the areas concerned? What criteria have you based this on? I would personally like a full break down of the criteria you used and how you came to this conclusion that there are no concerns in relation to the quality and standards in comparison to Dolau.	As above.

4.1.1.13	Why on earth is Powys CC proposing to shut Llanfihangel Rhydithon school and transfer pupils to Crossgates, as it cannot be to improve the quality of their education?	As above.
4.1.1.14	Our nearest receiving school Crossgates does not compare educationally with Dolau as stated by Estyn and the categorisation codes, it's insulting that Powys feel they can override these inspections bodies with a phone call.	As above.
4.1.1.15	The consultation says that "There are no concerns in relation to quality and standards at Crossgates school and it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on standards and progress." Crossgates school has not got a very good reputation. It certainly has not got the standards that Dolau has.	As above.
4.1.1.16	It is stated in the consultation document that the alternative receiving schools such as Crossgates and the other schools are 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. It is as wrong to assume that a small school cannot meet the full range of requirements of the National Curriculum as it is to assume that a large school can.	As above.
4.1.1.17	It is claimed that 'Crossgates and the other schools are 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.' The key word in that phrase is expectation, not a guarantee that it would happen but an expectation, so the children would not receive the same high level of breadth and balance that they do at Dolau school.	As above.
4.1.1.18	Crossgates is a larger school that provides a very different atmosphere to LR. Children would be expected to leave a small but extremely good school to go to an inferior school and run the risk of becoming lost in the crowd.	As above.

4.1.1.19	<p>On page 18, the LA notes, 'The Council's view is that Crossgates C.P. School and the other schools named...would provide a curriculum which is at least equivalent to that currently provided at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School'. The Welsh Government is encouraging its schools to create a vision and new curriculum plans which reflect their unique communities and needs, thus we cannot accept an offer of an 'equivalent' curriculum. The curriculum delivered in Crossgates CP School, Ysgol Cefnlllys or Knighton C in W Primary School should serve the community of that school and may therefore be of little relevance to those living in or near the community of Dolau. On this basis, the LA should stop noting that in moving to another larger school, 'there would be an improvement in the...appropriateness of the curriculum provided to pupils.'</p>	<p>It is essential that all pupils have a well-planned and structured curriculum with opportunities to learn across subject areas contained within (and across) the Areas of Learning and Experience. This should be developed in such a way to develop their knowledge and connect their learning (across Areas of Learning and Experience) to deepen their understanding, but also include a longer-term plan that maps out this learning in a logical and sequenced way. It is also important that learners have a voice to shape the experiences and areas of inquiry that will help to ensure that their learning experience builds on their prior knowledge and experiences, providing them with an authentic and relevant curriculum. Teachers make decisions on content/topics that ensure breadth and relevance with pupils having a voice within that.</p>
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4.1.2 Comments about behaviour at Crossgates C.P. School

4.1.2.1	<p>A number of additional comments were received which referred to individuals. However, these have been redacted for data protection reasons.</p>	
4.1.2.2	<p>Can you as a team and a local authority hold your head up high and guarantee that the local schools named in your document offer a BETTER standard of education and a SAFER environment for the pupils of Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School? I don't think they can!</p>	<p>The Council does not have any concerns about the standards of safeguarding and the leadership of any of these alternative schools</p>
4.1.2.3	<p>I have seen the standard of behaviour at the next nearest school first-hand. I have seen the safeguarding issues, having raised these with the school. We know that there is a need for a special classroom for the troubled and challenging children to go to for biscuits and treats to help them feel secure when they misbehave. Excuse me, but have I missed something? Disruption and a lack of respect for teachers is unacceptable. We do not have these problems in Dolau. Why should my well-behaved, well rounded, accepting, level-headed children be subjected to this?</p>	<p>All schools have different approaches to managing behaviour including nurture provision.</p>

4.1.2.4	I don't want to go to a big school like Crossgates as there are not very nice children there and I will get bullied.	There is no evidence that more bullying takes place in larger schools.
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4.1.3 Comments about capacity / pupil numbers at Crossgates C.P. School

4.1.3.1	<p>One of our main concerns is lack of surplus places in Radnorshire. As part of our research we have asked several times for the correct capacity figure for Crossgates School, which we have yet to receive. Also with plans to open a Satellite class at Crossgates School, building plots in Llanddewi and Llandrindod Wells, and not to mention children being taught in temporary classrooms at Crossgates. People are moving back into the area and with many schools in this area already full, where are we going to put them?</p>	<p>Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, the Council is confident that there are sufficient places for pupils at the alternative schools named in the Consultation Document.</p> <p>The capacity of Crossgates C.P.School is 210 and this does not include the mobile as it is not used as a class-base. The number on roll (September 2021) is 126 which means there are 84 places available. The Council will be using one classroom for satellite ALN provision from September 2021 but there would still be a significant amount of surplus places available.</p> <p>Whilst Ysgol Trefonnen and Llanbister C.P. School are currently over-subscribed, an additional classroom will be created at Llanbister C.P. School with work to start in August 2021 – this will increase the capacity of the school to 74.</p>
4.1.3.2	There is no available capacity in neighbouring schools. To quote a major mid Wales newspaper “Crossgates primary school is already bursting at the seams”	As above.
4.1.3.3	The only reason that I can see for closing Dolau school is to fill the surplus places at Crossgates school.	The proposal is for Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School to close and pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools. Crossgates C.P. School has not been named as a ‘receiving school’ and the proposal is not intended to fill surplus places at Crossgates. However, one of the reasons for the proposal as stated in the Consultation Document is that it

		<p>- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools.</p> <p>As stated in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2018 '<i>It is important that funding for education is cost effective....Some spare places are necessary to enable schools to cope with fluctuations in numbers of pupils, but excessive number of unused places that could be removed mean that resources are tied up unproductively.</i>' The Council has 13% of surplus places in its primary schools, and, in order to improve the overall cost effectiveness, it must plan and organise schools accordingly.</p>
4.1.3.4	It appears that this consultation is purely about filling Crossgates school which is only at 62% capacity and is not expected to increase in future years. Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils should not be penalised against because of this issue.	As above.
4.1.3.5	You state that closing Llanfihangel Rhydithon school will reduce the surplus paces in other schools therefor making a financial saving but the reality is this can only happen if children send their children to Crossgates.	As above.
4.1.3.6	Crossgates is currently at 62% capacity therefore it is an expensive school to run. It's future numbers are not promising, unlike Llanfihangel Rhydithon who can demonstrate growing numbers - down to the fact it is an excellent green rated school with a good Estyn inspection, qualities which I looked for when choosing a school for my child.	<p>Projected pupil numbers at Crossgates C.P. School as outlined in the Consultation Document are as follows:</p> <p>i) Projected pupil numbers (Finance projections)²</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan 2021 – 131 • Jan 2022 – 122 • Jan 2023 – 120 • Jan 2024 – N/A • Jan 2025 – N/A

² Powys Finance Projections based on data provided by the school – November 2020

		However, the projections for all the alternative schools (apart from Llanbister C.P. School) show a decrease over the next few years.
4.1.3.7	If there were capacity in Trefonnen and Cefnlllys, then surely Crossgates would be well under capacity and its price per head well over what Dolau schools' is. If under capacity and cost per head is the reason for our consultation, why then is Crossgates not in consultation?	Ysgol Trefonnen is currently over-subscribed but there are surplus places at Cefnlllys C.P. School. The options considered for Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School included options for Crossgates C.P. School as well. However, the preferred option was to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.
4.1.3.8	Crossgates is now overrun by children from Llandrindod so only place for pupils to go in and around Dolau and Penybont is Dolau school why close a school which provides such a high standard of education and safe family environment for your children.	The Council is aware that 36% of pupils attending Crossgates C.P. School (PLASC 2020 data) live nearer to either Cefnlllys C.P. School or Ysgol Trefonnen. There is still sufficient capacity in Crossgates C.P. School in the event that Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School closes.
4.1.3.9	Do you think it is fair that the children in Dolau should have their future education compromised just to fill up surplus places in a neighbouring school, which has had to rely on children coming out from Llandrindod Wells to keep their numbers at the level they currently are?	The Council is aware that 36% of pupils attending Crossgates C.P. School (PLASC 2020 data) live nearer to either Cefnlllys C.P. School or Ysgol Trefonnen.
4.1.3.10	It is thought that Powys want to close Dolau school to fill up the surplus places at Crossgates school. Can Powys guarantee that Crossgates can accommodate our children comfortably without being taught in a cold portacabin???	The capacity of Crossgates C.P. School is 210 and this does not include the mobile as it is not used as a class-base. The number on roll (September 2021) is 126 which means there are 84 places available. The Council will be using one classroom for satellite ALN provision from September 2021 but there would still be a significant amount of surplus places available.
4.1.3.11	The council have spent money at the next school in trying to make this bigger which I totally disagree with and as they have now not got children to fill the available spaces, so you want to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School.	A large extension was added to the school approximately 12 years ago.
4.1.3.12	In my view its more about what you do with Crossgates school, building a 210 capacity school when demographic trends clearly indicate pupil numbers are dropping nationally is short sighted and an	The extension was added at a time when pupil numbers at the school were relatively high. As across Powys,

	irresponsible use of public money and gives me no faith in how the council manage the public purse.	primary pupil numbers have seen a decrease over the last few years.
4.1.3.13	The PTR in Crossgates is currently 22.9 is there capacity to absorb all of Dolau without going over the class size of 30 for all classes? Qn: If the forecast pupil numbers are falling in Reception/Y1 in Crossgates per current demographic trends in Powys and the UK as a whole, has Crossgates reviewed the option of having multi-year classes to reduce teacher costs and mitigate the deficit position in the school?	The management of class structures is a matter for the governors and headteacher of Crossgates C.P. School. The current structure of Crossgates C.P. School is as follows: Dosbarth Camlo – Reception/Year 1 class Dosbarth Elan – Year 2 class Dosbarth Afon Gwy – Year 3 class Dosbarth Pen y Fan – Year 4/5 class Dosbarth yr Wyddfa – Year 5/6 class
4.1.3.14	The parents at Crossgates surely cannot be happy about this idea, class sizes of over 32? Is that not against welsh government policy and against the National Union of Teachers policy? The standard of education and support cannot possibly be as good in classes of that size.	Infant classes are capped at 30. There is no cap on the size of other classes.

4.1.4 Comments about SEN/ALN satellite provision at Crossgates C.P. School

4.1.4.1	With plans for SEN teaching at Crossgates, will the children from Dolau end up being taught in a portacabin? This too is against WG policy.	Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, and parents choose for their child(ren) to attend Crossgates C.P. School, then they would join the appropriate class for their age. All classes at Crossgates are taught within the permanent building. The mobile is categorised as a 'community room'. There are seven classrooms in Crossgates C.P. School with one of these to be allocated for SEN satellite provision.
4.1.4.2	Furthermore, Crossgates has been earmarked as a new SEN/ALN satellite provision for mid Powys, which as I understand, is that the cohort will take a classroom which would normally accommodate 28-30 children which means that if Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils were	As above.

	transferred there also they would have to endure being taught in portacabins which is against WG policy.	
4.1.4.3	What happens if the 12 month trial is a success, are you going to extend it to make it two classes?	It is not anticipated that there would need to be more than a single class provision for the satellite ALN provision.

4.1.5 Comments about extra-curricular activities at Crossgates C.P. School

4.1.5.1	Our school offers a well-attended breakfast club as well as a variety of after school clubs - does Crossgates?	Crossgates offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities and a breakfast club.
4.1.5.2	I am aware that after school clubs in schools such as Crossgates are only open to certain year groups.	Comment noted
4.1.5.3	I cannot see how the likes of Crossgates could possibly provide a wider range of extra curriculum or educational opportunities when compared to what I received here in Dolau.	Comment noted
4.1.5.4	I find it difficult to understand how Crossgates as a receiving school would be able " <i>provide a wider range of educational and extracurricular opportunities</i> ".	Comment noted
4.1.5.5	The extracurricular activities and links with the community – in Crossgates are just in no way positively comparable with those in Dolau. These are facts.	Comment noted
4.1.5.6	The provision of extracurricular activities at Crossgates is not comparable to Dolau. Crossgates do not provide the same breadth of activities as Dolau, for example Eisteddfod, Eco school club, sports club etc.	Comment noted
4.1.5.7	My friends go to Crossgates and do not have as many opportunities as we do.	Comment noted

4.1.6 Other comments about Crossgates C.P. School

4.1.6.1	I have read over the consultation document for Llanfihangel Rhydithon. As stated in the 'Schools Organisation code 2018' the consultation document where proposals involve the closure of a school the following information must be included in the consultation document: d. a comparison of the quality of accommodation at the	The 'quality' of school building accommodation includes a consideration of both condition and suitability.
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	<p>school from which pupils would be transferred and at the proposed alternative and an outline of any steps necessary in order to ensure that any shortcomings in the latter are addressed; e. information on any building works necessary to ensure that transferred children can be accommodated at the alternative provision; Within the consultation document for Llanfihangel Rhydithon I have found this statement' The condition of the Crossgates building is assessed as condition B. This is the same as the condition of the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building, therefore pupils would be able to continue to access accommodation which is of at least equivalent quality as the current accommodation at Llanfihangel Rhydithon'. I cannot find any information with regards to the quality of accommodation alternative receiving schools might offer. Only 'suitability' and 'condition' (Llanfihangel Rhydithon ranking B and good in both) . In 2009, Welsh Government carried out condition and suitability assessments of the schools- that was 12 years ago. Is there a more recent report? 12 years is a long time. Would the 'suitability' and 'condition' have altered? And does this address 'quality'? Does the It capacity calculation for Crossgates school include the use of an old mobile classroom at the rear of the building? I believe Crossgates school is having a permanent classroom within the school renovated to become a satellite classroom of Ysgol Penmaes from September 2021. Is it within the code to take pupils from a permanent and good condition building (good, B) and move to a temporary building? What 'suitability' and 'condition' is the mobile classroom at Crossgates?</p>	<p>Information on the condition of all the alternative schools is included in Appendix A Section 2 of the Consultation Document.</p> <p>The Council carried out a condition assessment (not a suitability assessment) of Llanfiangel Rhydithon C.P. School in autumn 2020 by an external surveyor. The school was judged to be in condition category C following this assessment. However, as there has been no updated condition surveys done of the alternative schools and as the survey did not include consideration of 'suitability', the 2009 condition grading was used in the Consultation Document.</p> <p>It is correct that a new ALN satellite class will delivered at Crossgates C.P. School from September 2021 onwards, using one of the existing classrooms.</p> <p>The mobile building at Crossgates C.P. is not used as a classroom.</p>
4.1.6.2	<p>In line with the School Organisation Code, the consultation document associated with Llanfihangel <i>must</i> contain the following information 'a comparison of the quality of accommodation at the school from which pupils would be transferred and at the proposed alternative and an outline of any steps necessary in order to ensure that any shortcomings in the latter are addressed'. In 2009, Welsh Government carried out condition and suitability assessments of the schools. This was 12 years ago, are PCC planning on using this data or is there a more recent report that DSAG have missed? The consultation document states that the condition of the Crossgates</p>	<p>To determine the 'quality' of accommodation, the Council considers condition and suitability information. The information about the quality of alternative accommodation can be found in Appendix A of the Consultation Document. building is defined as The condition of Crossgates' school building is categorised as a 'B' with a suitability rating of 'A'.</p> <p>The Council carried out a condition assessment (not a suitability assessment) of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P.</p>

	building is assessed as condition B. This is the same as the condition of the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building, therefore pupils would be able to continue to access accommodation which is of at least equivalent quality as the current accommodation at Llanfihangel Rhydithon. But there is no mention of quality of accommodation therefore we challenge the building condition and quality of receiving schools, especially the mobile classroom at Crossgates.	School in autumn 2020 – this was undertaken by an external surveyor. The school was judged to be in condition category C following this assessment. However, as there has been no updated condition surveys done of the alternative schools and as the survey did not include consideration of 'suitability', the 2009 condition grading was used in the Consultation Document.
4.1.6.3	Crossgates school has not got a good reputation at the moment, I don't think its right to be expected to take our children there after the events in recent weeks. I certainly won't be taking my children there.	The Council does not have any concerns about the quality of education at Crossgates C.P. School.
4.1.6.4	I was a pupil at Crossgates school and the school is vastly different to the school you now see. Back then it was a Rural school. Now it is not.	Crossgates C.P. School is categorised as a rural school according to the Welsh Government.
4.1.6.5	There is no community at the nearest school! That's why we didn't go to our nearest school.	Comment noted
4.1.6.6	We by passed Crossgates for many reasons. We will not send our children to this school unless we absolutely have to. Perhaps it would be prudent for the Local Authority to look at why many of us have chosen Dolau over Crossgates. There are many reasons.	Comment noted.
4.1.6.7	For the important decision of which school we would send our children to, we spoke to as many parents as possible and were fortunate enough to know several supply teachers in the area. Between them these teachers have worked in all of the local schools and gave invaluable inside knowledge to help us make an informed choice. The answer was clear cut. Llanfihangel Rhydithon was selected and we have been very happy with the decision. Conversely, Crossgates- the alternative provision in the event of a closure, came out with reviews that were undesirable to say the least.	Comment noted
4.1.6.8	If the school were to shut you propose most of our children will attend Crossgates CP School however, from speaking to the children and parent, most parents do not wish to send their children here. However, it looks as they wouldn't have many options. As Llanbister CP School is at full capacity and so it Ysgol Trefonnen. Parents and children should have a choice where to send their children, should	Many parents have also chosen for their child(ren) to attend Crossgates C.P. School when they actually live closer to other schools. Analysis of pupil postcodes indicate that approximately 70 pupils attend Crossgates C.P. School but live closer to other schools.

	they not? We have had families come from Crossgates CP School to us in Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School. Does that not say a lot within itself?	
4.1.6.9	In comparison to the named nearest receiving school, Crossgates, there has been significantly more monies raised in Llanfihangel. For a school approximately a third of the size, the FODS and the community actually raised three times the funding to support the school, in 2018, there was £5,400 raised in Crossgates and £13,950 in Llanfihangel.	Comment noted
4.1.6.10	By closing Dolau you would be placing extra burden on the next nearest school. Is that fair to the children and parents already attending that school.	Crossgates C.P. School would be able to receive additional pupils should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close and ensure that they are fully integrated within the school.
4.1.6.11	The area around Crossgates School is already congested at the start and end of the school day and any extra vehicles will aggravate the situation.	Comment noted. However, it is not expected that there would be a significant number of additional vehicles due to the fact that 29 of the current 36 pupils at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School are eligible for free home-to-school transport and can be accommodated on existing vehicles.
4.1.6.12	It is unrealistic and unfair to expect the children of the area to have to travel miles to get to another school that would potentially put their health's at risk by exposing them to chemicals omitted by the petrol station next door.	There is no evidence that pupils attending Crossgates C.P. School are affected by being next door to a petrol station.
4.1.6.13	One of my many concerns is the possibility of children moved to a school situated on a main trunk road with a higher rate of pollution, with all its associated health problems for young children.	Comment noted
4.1.6.14	The location of Crossgates School next to a Fuel Station and roundabout will lead to busy vehicle movements at peak times.	Comment noted.

4.2 Comments about Llanbister C.P. School

4.2.1	Llanbister's education is not as well-structured or presented as the Estyn school inspections will confirm!	In the last Estyn inspection for Llanbister Primary School, they were judged to be good for standards, provision and leadership.
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4.2.2	Llanbister school which is nearby is over capacity, showing this need, but also that it wouldn't be able to take Dolau's children.	The current capacity of Llanbister C.P. School is 45 and the school is over-subscribed. However, an additional classroom is to be added, meaning that the school's capacity will increase to 74. If Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School closed, 5 of the current intake of pupils (September 2021) would be closer to Llanbister C.P. School.
4.2.3	The thought of sending my children to Llanbister Primary school is unacceptable as they are bordering on full to capacity	As above.
4.2.4	Llanbister School is already over capacity and is becoming a school of choice for looked after children so if we were to be impacted on the closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School then are there plans to improve teaching spaces at Llanbister? There needs to be a plan for Llanbister if the children from Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School want to access Llanbister.	As above.
4.2.5	Look at the map supplied by the community in their response, to see that this is truly the case, with Llanbister County Primary School, being the only rural school within easy reach and one that is presently GROSSLY oversubscribed, also supported by people with children from outside the catchment area. Another testament of the appealing quality of small rural schools.	Crossgates C.P. School and Llanbister C.P. School are both classed as rural schools by the Welsh Government.
4.2.6	Here at Llanbister we find ourselves in a very fortunate position with pupil numbers continuing to increase, however even with our current numbers we are experiencing issues with teaching spaces and not having enough space to teach all the children in our current configurations and you may or may not be aware but we have been reviewing the safety of our current numbers in class 1 and 2 as we now have significantly more pupils than in previous years. We only have two classrooms in the school which has worked for years but we are now seeing the need for a third classroom with our current number on role which we are trying to develop the kitchen space which is making slow progress. We have done most things to it by using community resources but we now need some Powys finishing touches.	Comment noted.

4.3 Comments about Knighton C. in W. School

4.3.1	Knighton Primary would not be a school of choice for my children anyway due to the size, past Estyn reviews and red building sufficiency.	Knighton C. in W. School was inspected in 2019, and was judged to be 'good' across all criteria. The number on roll in September 2021 is 186. The condition and suitability of the school's building have been categorised as 'B'.
4.3.2	Comments about lack of places at Knighton C.in W. School's afterschool clubs. (actual comment redacted due for data protection reasons)	Comment noted.

4.4 Comments about Llanelwedd C. in W. School

4.4.1	<p>The governing body of Llanelwedd Church in Wales primary school would like to object to the closure of Dolau school. When it was agreed that we would share a headteacher in 2015 the governors agreed to give it a trial period to ensure that it was a mutually beneficial arrangement. Following the implementation we have seen many benefits as a school and know these are shared across the other school as well. We have a headteacher who is one and only focus his leadership and management ensuring teaching and learning is affective in both schools. Staff work closely together across both schools. For example, with the implementation of the new curriculum each member of teaching staff has responsibility for an area of learning or for additional learning needs. They then have the opportunity for CPD and share this with staff across both schools. Whilst both sets of governors acknowledge that the headteacher is not always on site, he is always accessible to the other school. Staff in both schools have benefited from the opportunity to undertake middle management training where desired. Distributed leadership is in place and is affective. Our headteacher is available every day for children, governors, parents. He does not have to juggle a substantial teaching commitment. This increased and effective communication has benefits for all.</p>	Comment noted.
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4.5 Comments about other schools pupils may transfer to

4.5.1 There is no choice of a rural school available

4.5.1.1	We have no other rural choice of school; Crossgates is no longer a rural school and has no community feel at all. What happened to our right to a choice?	Parental choice is not affected by this proposal. Parents are able to apply for a place at any school for their child(ren) and Crossgates C.P. School and Llanbister C.P. School are both classed as rural schools, according to the Welsh Government.
4.5.1.2	There is only one other school for Dolau children, the two schools in Llandrindod are full. Franskbridge, New Radnor, Knighton and Newbridge are too far. What other rural choice do we have?	This is incorrect. Ysgol Trefonnen and Llanbister C.P. School are the only alternative schools currently over-subscribed, but an additional classroom is being developed at Llanbister which will increase the school's capacity. Crossgates C.P. School, Llanbister C.P. School and Franksbridge C.P School are all classed as rural schools, according to the Welsh Government.
4.5.1.3	We chose a rural school for our children. We have no other rural school choice, New Radnor is 12 miles away, Franksbridge is further.	As above.
4.5.1.4	I chose for my children to attend Dolau school due to its locality and the rural vision it enables its pupils to have. From the school itself, the children can learn and play whilst observing the farming culture that they are all a full part of – they can see first-hand the farming calendar as it unfolds around them: the lambing season, shearing, cultivating and harvesting. These sights cannot be observed at Crossgates CP School, Ysgol Cefnlllys or Knighton C in W Primary School as they are at Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School.	Comment noted.
4.5.1.5	Crossgates C.P School is a big school, it is unfair for parents if they wish for their children to go to a smaller rural school.	The Council is not required to provide a choice of schools according to size. The definition of a small school according to the Welsh Government are schools with 91 or less pupils. Crossgates C.P. School currently have 131 pupils on roll.
4.5.1.6	If you were to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon school believe me most of the parents would seek a similar school With the same educational standards as Llanfihangel Rhydithon and would be willing to drive their children those extra miles to get the excellent standard of education that their children deserve. The remaining rural schools	The proposal is to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and for pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools. However, parents are able to apply for a place in any school that they wish their child(ren) to attend.

	would be full and our large neighbouring school would still have all those surplus spaces what do you do then.	The Council monitors the capacity of schools on an annual basis, and if a school is over-capacity, then the Council would need to address this.
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4.5.2 Comments about quality of provision at alternative schools

4.5.2.1	<p>The national categorisation system gives a clear and fair picture a school is performing compared with other schools across Wales. It also helps to identify the schools that need the most help, support and guidance to improve. The support category for the potential alternative receiving schools Crossgates, Knighton, Llanbister, Cefnlllys are all yellow and Llanfihangel is green. Why should children from Llanfihangel be sent to lesser schools?</p>	<p>The Council does not have any concerns over the quality of education provided at the alternative schools and believe that pupils would not be disadvantaged by attending these schools.</p> <p>National Categorisation identifies the amount of support a school will receive on an annual basis. The last categorisation took place in the autumn term 2019. Since that period, Welsh Government have suspended categorisation. There are four colours for categorisation (Green and Yellow are seen as self-improving schools; Amber and Red are schools in need of significant support).</p> <p>Although there has been no National Categorisation for schools for the last two years, the local authority has continued to work closely to support all of Powys's schools. The schools mentioned have all responded well to the challenges of providing education over the pandemic period. This has reinforced the view of the local authority that the schools are self-improving schools and provide education that is equitable.</p> <p>Estyn, in its response to this consultation, has concluded that 'It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education in the area.'</p>
4.5.2.2	Impact on quality and standards, page 19 section iv. "Not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative	All leaders are challenged and supported to ensure that all schools provide a broad and balanced curriculum that

	impact on standards and progress overall". What evidence does the council have from schools to come to this conclusion remotely and not in person where they can SEE first-hand the children and staff and teaching and learning in action?	impacts well on pupils' learning, progress and achievement. Leaders have a duty to ensure effective evaluation for improvement. When evaluating the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and achievement, leaders should base their evaluations on first-hand evidence, for example from observations of pupils in lessons, learning walks, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils. LA officers are available to support with such processes or have an insight into the self-evaluation processes and reports generated by school leaders.
4.5.2.3	Dolau school is currently 'Green' which is the highest educational standard in Wales so as a future parent if you go ahead with your proposal, I will expect my son to attend a school of the same standard.	As above.
4.5.2.4	Llanfihangel Rhydithon School is in the green category while all the receiving schools are in the yellow category.	As above.
4.5.2.5	Of the alternative schools listed there is only one in the same green support capacity as Llanfihangel Rhydithon. Transferring pupils to a school of a lower support capacity is dumbing down the level of education of the pupils.	As above.
4.5.2.6	The support category for the potential alternative receiving schools Crossgates, Knighton, Llanbister, Cefnlllyn are all yellow and Llanfihangel is green. Why should pupils attend a lesser school?	As above.
4.5.2.7	On page 18, the LA notes, 'The Council's view is that Crossgates C.P. School and the other schools named...would provide a curriculum which is at least equivalent to that currently provided at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School'. The Welsh Government is encouraging its schools to create a vision and new curriculum plans which reflect their unique communities and needs, thus we cannot accept an offer of an 'equivalent' curriculum. The curriculum delivered in Crossgates CP School, Ysgol Cefnlllys or Knighton C in W Primary School should serve the community of that school and may therefore be of little relevance to those living in or near the community of Dolau. On this basis, the LA should stop noting that in moving to another larger	It is essential that all pupils have a well-planned and structured curriculum with opportunities to learn across subject areas contained within (and across) the Areas of Learning and Experience. This should be developed in such a way to develop their knowledge and connect their learning (across Areas of Learning and Experience) to deepen their understanding, but also include a longer-term plan that maps out this learning in a logical and sequenced way. It is also important that learners have a voice to shape the experiences and areas of inquiry that will help to ensure that their learning experience builds on their prior

	school, 'there would be an improvement in the...appropriateness of the curriculum provided to pupils.'	knowledge and experiences, providing them with an authentic and relevant curriculum. Teachers make decisions on content/topics that ensure breadth and relevance with pupils having a voice within that.
4.5.2.8	"Crossgates and the other schools are 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" - Regarding breadth and balance of the curriculum on page 6 of ESTYN's report they say the school has good breath and balance. The new curriculum is all about giving experiences and being flexible and creative. A mixed age class lends itself well to this.	All primary schools will plan and implement the new curriculum with a key focus on the 4 purposes (all children and young people will be enterprising, creative contributors who are ready to play a full part in life and work, is one of the 4 purposes), the six Areas of Learning and Experience and on the 12 pedagogical principles. Pupil voice will be at the heart of the curriculum in all schools.

4.5.3 Comments about capacity at alternative schools

4.5.3.1	2 of the 5 alternative schools listed already exceed capacity. It is a well-known that overcrowding in prisons leads to poor education of prisoners, increased disease transmission and a overall lowering of the welfare of both prisoner and prison officers. How is it that similar effects are not seen when children are educated in overcrowded school buildings?	Ysgol Trefonnen and Llanbister C.P. School are currently over-subscribed. However, an additional classroom will be created at Llanbister C.P. School with work to start in August 2021 – this will increase the capacity of the school to 74. When schools are full, the leadership and staff at the school ensure that the children continue to receive the best teaching and learning experiences.
4.5.3.2	Llandrindod Wells' schools are full, so much so that they are transporting children from Llandrindod to Crossgates daily.	Ysgol Trefonnen is over-subscribed but there are places available at Ysgol Cefnlllys – both of these are schools in Llandrindod Wells. The Council is aware that 36% of pupils attending Crossgates, based on PLASC Jan 2020 data, live closer to these schools. There is school transport currently running from Llandrindod Wells to Crossgates – this has been in place for a few years from a time when Ysgol Cefnlllys was also over-subscribed. If Ysgol Cefnlllys or Ysgol Trefonnen are the closest schools for a child that lives in Llandrindod

		Wells, they would not be eligible for free home-to-school transport to Crossgates, or any other school.
4.5.3.3	There is only one other school for Dolau children, the two schools in Llandrindod are full. Franksbridge, New Radnor, Knighton and Newbridge are too far. You would be backing our parents into corners.	<p>Parental choice is not affected by this proposal. Parents are able to apply for a place at any school for their child(ren). Ysgol Trefonnen and Llanbister C.P. School are currently over-subscribed. However, an additional classroom will be created at Llanbister C.P. School with work to start in August 2021 – this will increase the capacity of the school to 74.</p> <p>This means that there are sufficient school places available for the pupils of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School within a ten mile radius.</p>
4.5.3.4	Mr nearest alternative school already exceed capacity does this mean there will be no room in this school for me or will I have to travel even further to a different school.	If a school is over-subscribed, a parent can still apply for a place at that school. The Council's Admissions Policy includes criteria for allocation places if schools are over-subscribed, and this would be applied in this case. If a child is not granted a place due to not meeting the criteria, then they would be offered a place at the next closest school which has a place for them.
4.5.3.5	Only Crossgates and Cefnlllys have spaces but not all the children would transfer to these schools. A number of children would be told to transfer to other schools. Other schools are at or over capacity so would children be REFUSED admission or would the local authority have to offer EXPENSIVE 1:1 transport for these children via taxi?	As above. Free home-to-school transport would be provided to the pupil's next closest school, should they not get a place in the closest school.
4.5.3.6	Whilst Powys has put forward a number of alternative receiving schools, two of these schools are already at over-capacity. It is highly unlikely that Powys would agree to place a pupil in an already over-subscribed school.	As above.
4.5.3.7	Furthermore, where are all these children going to go? What happens if the nearest school is full would children be force to go to a school further away again? Or will they end up been taught in a portacabin, this would totally unacceptable.	If a school is over-subscribed, a parent can still apply for a place at that school. The Council's Admissions Policy includes criteria for allocation places if schools are over-subscribed, and this would be applied in this case. If a child is not granted a place due to not meeting the criteria,

		then they would be offered a place at the next closest school which has a place for them.
4.5.3.8	I am aware that neighbouring schools are bursting at the seams and have no capacity. Powys county council have not provided assurance on alternative school arrangements.	<p>The Consultation Document included information about pupil numbers, both current and projected, along with the capacities of alternative schools.</p> <p>Classes at all the alternative schools are taught in permanent buildings.</p>
4.5.3.9	At what point do Powys believe that filling other schools with pupils from smaller schools is beneficial to the children? The schools identified as taking the pupils are already over-subscribed with little extra resource to back them up.	<p>One of the reasons for the proposal as stated in the Consultation Document is that it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools. <p>As stated in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2018 ' <i>It is important that funding for education is cost effective....Some spare places are necessary to enable schools to cop with fluctuations in numbers of pupils, but excessive number of unused places that could be removed mean that resources are tied up unproductively.</i>' The Council has 13% of surplus places in its primary schools, and, in order to improve the overall cost effectiveness, it must plan and organise schools accordingly.</p>
4.5.3.10	Currently eighteen affordable houses are being built at Llanddewi which is in Crossgates catchment, and a large estate of similar houses in Llandrindod which will put further pressure on school places in the area.	The Council is aware of the housing developments in the area, but is not of the view that this would lead to a significant increase in pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.
4.5.3.11	As a parent of children in Presteigne primary school, which would need to accommodate some of the children from Dolau school, I am not sure Presteigne has capacity to accommodate more children.	Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, no pupils have Presteigne C.P. School as their nearest alternative school. However, parents can apply for a place for their child(ren) at any school. There are sufficient places available at Presteigne C.P. School.

4.5.4 Comments about extra-curricular activities

4.5.4.1	Neighbouring schools not only have a very limited range of after school clubs, and usually these a waiting list to attend them but, if Llanfihangel Rhydithon school were to close and the children travelled to school on the bus, they would not be able to take part in these anyway as at the end of the school day they would be on the bus to go home!!	<p>The Council has recognised within the draft Impact Assessments that it may be challenging for pupils to attend after-school activities if they are reliant on home-to-school transport. However, schools are able to offer extra-curricular activities during the school day as well as after school. It would be an expectation of the new curriculum that schools provide additional experiences for their pupils.</p> <p>Many schools in Powys have pupils who are using home-to-school transport and these schools are experienced in ensuring that all pupils are able to participate in extra-curricular activities. Schools are 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>
4.5.4.2	I am concerned that most of the children of Llanfihangel Rhydithon will, by being transferred to other schools, miss out on the valuable extra-curricular experiences, such as after-school clubs (the valuable 'extras' such as music, art, drama and sport that cannot be included in the curricular timetables), breakfast club and community based activities.	As above.
4.5.4.3	The after school clubs and activities would be unlikely to be replicated in a larger school. Our grandchildren love to take part in all the activities and identify with teaching staff and at least one of our grandchildren would struggle with anxiety in a larger school in the current environment both of them are thriving in their current environment	As above.
4.5.4.4	In larger schools and clubs, competition is fierce for the sought-after few spots on teams; those pupils/members who make the team gain a personal investment in the school, while those who don't make the teams—and their families, by extension—can feel side-lined.	However, all schools have opportunities for children to participate in extra-curricular activities, even if this means there is more competition for places in sports teams or on

		certain committees. In a larger school, it is more likely that there are more sports teams for different age groups.
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4.5.5 Other comments about schools pupils may transfer to

4.5.5.1	Upon hearing about the proposed closure, I have taken the time to research the other local schools in the area, his “options” if you like, and I am shocked to realise that the local authority plan to send the majority of Dolau pupils to schools which are of a lesser standard. How are the local authority able to overrule the findings of Estyn and state that there are “no concerns” about local schools? How can Powys send our children to schools which are already oversubscribed? If you are to continue ahead and choose to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon School, how will you guarantee that you can provide ALL families a place at a school within their reach geographically and a standard of education that is better than the one they are currently receiving? The reputation of other schools in the area lead me to question their ability to provide a good standard of education or to provide a safe and stable environment for their learners.	<p>The Council does not have any concerns over the quality of education provided at any of the alternative schools – see 4.5.2.1</p> <p>There are sufficient places available at schools within a ten mile radius.</p> <p>All the alternative schools have safe learning environments.</p>
4.5.5.2	Dolau School have exemplary standards of education, attendance, social abilities, achievements – I feel the other schools in the “closest schools list” are poorer in all of these elements.	As above.
4.5.5.3	Can you guarantee that every pupil will have their own ICT device which is the standard they are currently used to? I know from experience that at least one of your alternative schools doesn’t have the ICT resources needed to ensure this so you are suggesting that pupils move from a school where they have the resources to a school where they will no longer receive this.	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.
4.5.5.4	Can you also guarantee that every pupil will be supported independently as they are now during each lesson?	All pupils will be supported independently during each lesson.
4.5.5.5	It is my belief that my child, and the other pupils of Dolau school, would have less opportunities to develop their Welsh language skills in other nearby schools. I am confident that the teaching and non-teaching staff at Llanfihangel Rhydithon create an environment	One of the key characteristics of the four purposes in the Curriculum for Wales is to develop ambitious, capable learners who can communicate effectively in different forms and settings, using both Welsh and English. All

	<p>emerged in Welsh language and culture. A majority of teaching staff have very good Welsh language skills, some developed on the PCC educational sabbatical scheme, and actively encourage pupils to participate in Welsh language events. The Llandrindod Wells Eisteddfodd is a key event on the school calendar, and the pupils participate in many Welsh language aspects. How many other English medium schools offer such an opportunity in the area?</p>	<p>learners should have appropriate pathways for learning Welsh and English to enable them to develop the confidence to use both languages in everyday life. All Powys schools are well supported with excellent resources from the Athrawon Bro Team to enable teachers to teach Welsh. Staff from nearby schools have attended the sabbatical Welsh language course with further staff attending the sabbatical course in Newtown in September 2021. Opportunities to use Welsh within and beyond the classroom (including on digital platforms) support learners to use Welsh confidently and appreciate its usefulness to communication in a bilingual Wales and again all Powys schools are effectively supported with rich resources from the Athrawon Bro Team. Schools, through effective pupil voice forums, known as the 'Cryw Cymraeg' plan a range of activities to increase the use of Welsh outside the classroom. Facilitating the use of Welsh, through planned linguistic progression in every phase of education from ages 3 to16, and as part of a whole-school approach, offers opportunities for all learners to develop bilingually and this is a key priority for all schools in Wales.</p>
4.5.5.6	<p>Teachers in every school across the nation are required to provide differentiated lessons and tasks to meet the needs of every individual in their class, regardless of age, stage, race, gender, ability, or additional needs. In my many years as a teacher, I have taught single year groups, mixed year groups and whole key stage classes; all with distinctly varying abilities and needs, and all highly demanding. Is teaching mixed age classes "difficult"? No more so than any other teaching job! You may be aware that even larger, over capacity schools, such as Ysgol Trefonenn, have a large majority of mixed age classes, many containing pupils from across 3 year groups. Are the pupils in these classes, in these larger schools, also "difficult" to challenge?</p>	<p>The Council understands and appreciates that teaching mixed age classes is a challenge. This would be for any school with mixed age classes. However, this can be an even greater challenge with mixed ability classes with four year groups.</p>
4.5.5.7	<p>How many schools in Powys have combined year group classes?</p>	<p>Figures from unverified PLASC 2021:</p>

		<p>Primary Schools 72 of 76 schools have mixed year group classes</p> <p>All Through Schools Both schools have mixed year group classes (primary phase)</p> <p>Special Schools 3 of 3 schools have mixed year group classes</p> <p>Secondary Schools There are no schools with classes listed as having mixed year groups</p> <p><i>To note, although a school may have some mixed year group classes, they may not all be.</i></p>
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5. IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

5.1 General concern about the impact on the community/village

5.1.1	I object to the closure and feel that it would be catastrophic, and have a detrimental effect on my children's future and the community around them.	The Council has recognised within the Consultation Document and the draft Community Impact Assessment that there would be negative impact on the community, should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close. The Community Impact Assessment will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation.
5.1.2	You only need to look at the 'Dolau Community Hall' facebook page to see what an incredible and buzzing community Dolau is, there really is no other community like it – Please do not take this away from us!	As above.
5.1.3	By closing this school you will be damaging the culture and ethos of this community.	As above.
5.1.4	If the school is closed these relationships will fracture to the detriment of the whole community	As above
5.1.5	I feel physical and mentally drained at thought of the impact on our community should this proposal go ahead.	As above

5.1.6	We are deeply worried about the impact this will have on the local community – particularly the children who so love their school. For their sake, we urge you to keep it open.	As above
5.1.7	It is saddening to see small communities lose their heart and soul across Wales which I believe primary schools to be a central part.	As above
5.1.8	I urge you to reconsider your decision to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon School, as this is just not a school for the children, it is a place for the community to enjoy and thrive together. No school and there is NO community.	As above
5.1.9	Over the years our three children have had the privilege of being educated and brought up in the close nit community, as well as my youngest Grandson attending the school and is currently in Year one. The closing of the school will have a profound effect on not just the school children but the whole community.	As above
5.1.10	We have an amazing community and this would be ruined by closing Dolau school.	As above
5.1.11	[I am] a past pupil of Dolau school and past member of Dolau YFC, currently living in Dolau. I am 17 years old and concerned about the impact this 'closure' may have on my local community. The school really is the heart of the community, closure will break the village. In the future, as a member of the community I would have liked my children and grandchildren to attend this amazing school. It is unfair and unnecessary to propose to close this amazing school. It will not only affect the pupils and staff, but effect the surrounding community.	As above
5.1.12	The closure of this school will have a detrimental effect on all the members of the school, the wider community...	As above
5.1.13	I am also a member of the local community which I fear will be detrimentally impacted if the school were to close.	As above
5.1.14	If the school is taken out of this long stratification then there is a REAL DANGER that the community will suffer and it will cause the loss of many and probably long term all of the current organisations in the community. Then this community located on the edge of Radnor Forest will no longer exist and people will travel for social interaction	As above.

	and our Neighbours who would normally be our friends will become strangers as they would in a large village or small town like Crossgates or Llandrindod.	
5.1.15	Our community is thriving, and our school and various village events show that to be the case. This 'green heart of Wales' is very much alive and I urge you not to kill it off.	As above.
5.1.16	I think it's about time Powys County Council started looking at the bigger picture. You may save some money by closing Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School, but you destroy a community.	As above.
5.1.17	This is an outrage that Powys county council can yet again try to close the school, it will destroy Dolau and the community.	As above.
5.1.18	Llanfihangel Rhydithon School is part of a very vibrant community and is a very large cog in a very small wheel and works exceptionally well. This village needs its school for the village and community to survive into the future.	As above.
5.1.19	Llanfihangel Rhydithon School is an old school with a long-held place in the community.	As above.
5.1.20	Such a shame to close such a lovely school in a close-knit community.	As above.
5.1.21	Closing this school, would have a huge negative affect on community in general.	As above.
5.1.22	To close it would do irreparable damage to the pupils and community alike and certainly not be in the interests of a prosperous and sustainable future life in the area.	As above.
5.1.23	To close the school would be to lose a family from the community.	As above.
5.1.24	It would be a travesty to close the school, to kill the community, and to break up a school, and break the hearts of the children.	As above.
5.1.25	I think that if the school were to close it would have a devastating effect on the community.	As above.
5.1.26	The school is the strength and focus of the community and to remove it would be detrimental to the sustainability and resilience of the community, thus denying support to the community and those who live in it. During the COVID pandemic the community pulled together and	As above.

	the strong connections in the community propagated by the school was key in helping people make connections.	
5.1.27	The enforced closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon school would have a detrimental effect to individuals, families, and the wider surrounding community. We have a vibrant community with forward thinking, positive residents who support each other and have a strong community spirit. That is the beauty of small, connected communities-they get things done.	As above.
5.1.28	If you take away our School there will be NO DOUBT about the CATASTROPHIC effect it will have on our children AND our community. There is NO MAYBE about it. NO 'ANTICIPATING,' OR 'ASSUMING', that it won't have a detrimental effect, because IT WILL.	As above.
5.1.29	I find it unbelievable that the consultation document says the closure of our school "May" have an impact on the local community. Let's not beat around the bush here, this closure will be catastrophic in its impact on our community. As previously stated the school is at the heart of our community. Remove the school and you destroy the community!	As above.
5.1.30	It would be catastrophic if the school closed. The community would most definitely suffer. I urge you to reconsider the proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School. WE ARE DOLAU, WE ARE PROUD	As above.
5.1.31	The closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon school would have a significant emotional and wellbeing impact on the pupils, staff and wider community.	As above.
5.1.32	I object to the closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon School as it would be a great loss to this thriving community.	As above.
5.1.33	The Area values community so much and without the C.P. school the rural community will suffer socially!	As above.
5.1.34	I would urge PCC to consider the negative impact on the community that losing the school will create and also the mental health	As above.
5.1.35	I don't think any other option will keep this community together the children would be spread across lots of other schools.	As above.
5.1.36	To close Llanfihangel Rhydithon would be devastating, not only for my children who attend but also the local community.	As above.

5.1.37	The school is at the heart of this remote community to close it would be a very destructive move for the whole community	As above.
5.1.38	I feel strongly that Dolau school should remain open, for the local community and pre- school children joining Dolau in the future.	As above.
5.1.39	It has a very special community which I do feel will be completely lost if this school closes. The closure of this school will also sadly effect the clubs like YFC, youth club.	As above.
5.1.40	Finally, I ask that you strongly consider the impact that this will have on Dolau Community and those living in the surrounding areas, such as ourselves. We have been welcomed into the Dolau community over the past 20 plus years and have been made to feel that we belong.	As above.
5.1.41	We urge you as a committee and group to consider the detrimental effects that closing the school will have on the community, it's an amazing school.	As above.
5.1.42	Closure of this school would be a threat to this rural community	As above.
5.1.43	Closing the school will ruin the community	As above.
5.1.44	To close the school and scatter the children in schools across the area would destroy the community at large, but most importantly the school lives of each pupil. At what cost?	As above.
5.1.45	If you close the School, you close the community and you ruin Childrens and Parents and Grandparent's lives.	As above.
5.1.46	It seems such a shame that the Community has to divert so much of their energy and resources to constantly fight closure proposals. Folk want the opportunity to choose a smaller if that is what suits their child best, even if it works out a bit more expensive. By closing the school Powys will seriously damage the community that they are paid to serve & protect not sabotage.	As above.
5.1.47	Closure of Dolau means our community is unsustainable.	As above.
5.1.48	The schools you are targeting are inherent parts of their individual communities. When you threaten the school's existence you are also attacking the community in which they are set. Time and resources have to be summoned and diverted just to maintain their survival. By insisting that children in schools that PCC deems too small be plucked from their community and dumped in another school (just because it	As above.

	has spare capacity) Powys would be sabotaging the very thing they are supposed to be protecting.	
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5.2 The school is the heart of the village

5.2.1	The school has strong links with the community and it very much feels like a family.	The Council has recognised within the Consultation Document and the draft Community Impact Assessment the central role that the school has in the community, and the impact should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close. The Community Impact Assessment will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation.
5.2.2	A school is the heart of any community, and as we all know anything without a heart does not last long.	As above.
5.2.3	The school is the heart to the village and it would be utter devastation, not only for the staff, the present children and their families but also the future children to come in and the whole community would also suffer.	As above.
5.2.4	This village needs its school for the village and community to survive into the future	As above.
5.2.5	This rural setting depicts our way of life and in closing this school, you are removing the essence of our community. It is very unfair for the people of rural Radnorshire to be penalised in this way purely because of the geography of where they choose to live.	As above.
5.2.6	Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School is the heart of the Dolau community. The pupils learn about and are actively involved with their local community, their national community, and the global community. There are too numerous examples to list; but their work with local councillors, business and community groups, their regular participation as competitors in local and national Eisteddfodd, visits to the Senedd and allowing their own teachers to visit and provide value experience to schools in Africa are just a few that spring to mind.	As above.
5.2.7	The school has strong links with the community and it very much feels like a family. I have friends with children in larger Powys schools and they often comment about the strength of Llanfihangel Rhydithon school and its integration and importance within the community. A	As above.

	school is very much the heart of a community in small rural areas. The strong community will unfortunately start to break down if the school is shut - clubs such as the Young Farmers will not have the easy access to members. This has already happened to other communities whose school has been shut (Felindre) as young families see no desire to stay in the area.	
5.2.8	Llanfihangel Rhyidthon CP schools needs to be kept open, not just because it offers the best level of education in the area, not because it is the only primary provision in Dolau but because it gives our wider community a focal point, a meaning of belonging. The school works with other groups in the village, like the Church, WI, Youth club, bowls, YFC and Hall committee, helping to bring people together in a rural area.	As above.
5.2.9	Dolau's strong sense of community stems from its heart, THE SCHOOL! My time at Dolau school led me to attend Dolau Youth Club and then to become a member of Dolau YFC. Without a school in the village, there is an extraordinarily strong possibility that the community would lose these youth forums which have been so pivotal in my life. These youth groups provided well-being support long before it was ever a recognised idea, they gave me the confidence and the sense of self needed to move forward in life. I have been in employment since the age of 16 and have gained many recognised qualifications. I now live locally and for the last 8 years have run my own Agricultural Engineering Company.	As above.
5.2.10	Closing Dolau school, will rip the beating heart out of this amazing, thriving community. Closing Dolau school will throw yet another village/community to the dogs.	As above.
5.2.11	Our School is at the centre of the community and without this it will have a profound effect on everybody. The school have had the ability to organise many events over the last forty years since I have been involved, and these events have always brought us together as a community.	As above.
5.2.12	As with many communities, I'm sure it will come as no surprise that village life in Dolau revolves largely around the school. To close this school would result in the fracture of yet another country community.	As above.

	After such a tumultuous year for everybody with the COVID-19 pandemic, the fact that this school is even marked for closure suggests an absolute disregard for the mental health of a small community and even more shockingly a generation of children in the area.	
5.2.13	Village schools are central to their communities and provide much more to the area, being central hubs for events etc.	As above.
5.2.14	Llanfihangel Rhydithon/Dolau school is the hub of the community in Dolau, an active Cylch Meithrin, after school activities and more. There will be increasing numbers of pupils in the very near future and to close a Green school smacks of going against your own guidelines.	As above.
5.2.15	Dolau WI feel the Powys County council have failed to recognise how essential it is to have a small school in a rural community like Llanfihangel Rhydithon. The school represents the heart of the community, and a number of members have met through having children in the school, and then joined the WI to continue the friendship gained. Dolau is a thriving, busy and sociable village, but that starts at the school gates, and then continues throughout the lifespan of the families. The social and financial costs to the parents and friends of this lovely successful community school cannot be underestimated and it would be criminal to close this school when its standards are so high, its capacity full, with a number of children waiting in the wings, and families returning to the area to attend the school.	As above.
5.2.16	The community spirit in Dolau is great and that is all centred around the school if they lose the school what happens to the wider community?	As above.
5.2.17	Llanfihangel Rhydithon School is at the centre of the surrounding community; The Friends of the School raise funds for it & the main hall (the Community Centre) is used by other organizations such as the W.I., & the Y.F.C. The latter is very important to the young people of the area, many of whom would have been pupils at the school. When they have their own children, the natural progression would be to send	As above.

	them to this school, where in some cases there have been 3 generations from the same families.	
5.2.18	Dolau itself is a scattered village, without a traditional centre - Dolau school gives that centre, adjacent and sharing the well-equipped Community School where nursery, toddler and other provision is available and well supported. To close this high performing primary school covering northeast Powys which gives the rural education that many parents want for their children is short sighted and will rip the centre out of the close community which works with, supports in many ways and has this school at its heart.	As above.
5.2.19	The school is the centre of the village, its beating heart, its focal point and, in many ways, its pride. If the school is taken away from Dolau, the consequences will be profound. Not only will the village suffer a huge blow in terms of status and pride, but the message given to the pupils at the school will be one that is frankly cruel.	As above.
5.2.20	The school is the heart of the community, and closure would be major challenge to its continuity. The destruction of this community and others like it, would contribute to the decline of the rural areas of Powys.	As above.
5.2.21	Llanfihangel Rhydithon (Dolau) is at the beating heart of the community. Without the heart the body cannot function, without the school the community will not be able to function. Dolau school is the heart of the community if it were to close then many children would have go to different schools which would split up the community.	As above.
5.2.22	We all know each other in this community and the only reason for that is because of the school which is the true heart. We recently faced some problems and without asking for help the community came together and helped us through an exceedingly difficult time. I am sure there are many more stories like ours, but if you don't know your neighbours then you are alone at these times.	As above.
5.2.23	Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School is the centre of Dolau community so therefore gets a lot of support from all locals with raising money and with any work that needs doing.	As above.

5.2.24	I think it will have an adverse effect on the community. It is certainly the glue in this village. As the village expands there will undoubtedly be more children and this will strengthen the heart of the community	As above.
5.2.25	Finally I think it is important to reiterate how much of a loss to the community of Dolau a potential school closure would be. Dolau doesn't have a pub or a shop so the school stands at the centre of the community, if this was to be lost, I fear that the village will be somewhere where people simply reside and nothing else which would have a devastating effect on a place that has thrived socially for years with many happy memories made as a result.	As above.
5.2.26	If Powys County Council's vision is to strengthen communities and make them more resilient, how will closing the local school fulfil this? A school is not only a centre of learning for children but a community hub; a meeting point for local parents; an opportunity for children to engage with other members of the community through events and fundraising. If you remove this central point, the Dolau community will be dispersed among other communities and in doing this there will be individuals and families who become isolated.	As above.
5.2.27	This school has been the heart of the community for the last 80/90 years. It's at the centre of everything that happens in the area. Without this school the community will be lost.	As above.
5.2.28	As with any community, things like a pub, a post office or more importantly a village school, are hubs of the community and give people a chance to see other people and make friendships and relationships. Covid lockdowns have been really hard on some people, closing a rural school like this, will not only deprive the community of a central hub to see other people	As above.
5.2.29	The school is the hub of our community, hosting events and raising money for charity.	As above.
5.2.30	The school is the centre of the village, with respect to social cohesion, losing the school will have a negative impact on the village not only for the children, parents but for all.	As above.
5.2.31	If the PPC were to close our school it would dismantle and destroy our community! Living in a rural area can be quite isolating and for a lot rural families the local school is their life line and social life, take that	As above.

	away and you take their life away, even more so due to recent events now than ever! It will have a major impact on their well-being and mental health, and I find this very worrying indeed. I can see a real change even in these past few weeks with all the uncertainty surrounding the school !!	
5.2.32	Over many years since the school hall was built, the who community has benefitted and been able to come together there. Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School is the HUB OF THE COMMUNITY, and provides a very important input to the village; and as such it is part of St Michael's Church, again providing support. On numerous occasions the children have brought Harvest gifts to the altar, (including the presence one year of 'Dolly the sheep), and then repaired to support in the school hall. Likewise, at the festivals of Easter and Christmas, the children take part in reading and reciting, progressing on the Young Farmers to carol singing around the village. In addition, over the years, there have been very many worthy fundraising events in the hall when the children have taken part. I repeat, Dolau School is the HUB of this community; without it the community has no foundation, and the school must NOT be closed.	As above.
5.2.33	The school and the attached community hall are central and intrinsic to the community. Dolau, doesn't have a post office, shop or pub, so unless you are religious and attend one of the churches, there is nowhere else for the community to meet.	As above.
5.2.34	I know that you will have received emails and letters saying that the school is the heart of the community but truly, here in Dolau it is. I am not a Doctor but I know that removing the heart from a body, the body will die and I know that removing the heart from Dolau, Dolau will die out with it.	As above.
5.2.35	The local primary school for a lot of people is their social life and life line, living in a rural area can be quite isolating at times even more so this past twelve months, especially for young mums, and sometimes a chat at the school gate or a school function can help especially in the current climate! We in a rural community are able to support each other and share our problems.	As above.

5.2.36	As the County Council tacitly acknowledges in the Impact Assessment of the Consultation Document, the school is very much the hub of the community... and its future.	As above.
5.2.37	The school building and hall are central to the community and are used outside of school hours for other purposes	As above.

5.3 Comments about the impact on the community centre

5.3.1	Our community hall is partly funded by the school for their daily use and without that funding, our community hall would struggle to survive.	The Council has recognised, within the draft Community Impact Assessment, that there could be an impact on the community hall in Dolau should the school close. If this were to happen, then it would be a matter for the management committee of the hall to ensure its viability.
5.3.2	I feel that the wellbeing of the community lies directly on the shoulders of the school and the village hall, that without the one the other would not work and operate.	As above.
5.3.3	This closure would also be devastating for our community. The school and the hall work side by side and without one the other would certainly close.	As above.
5.3.4	The parents, families and wider community in Dolau work tirelessly to raise funds to support the school, that community spirit will be lost, as quite possibly there will not even be a Community Hall left in Dolau due to the impact the closure of the school would have.	As above.
5.3.5	The links the school has to the community hall means a lot of the funding to the hall would be lost, then the upkeep of the hall falls. Where do the community go then? They move away. Another local village is left derelict and deprived.	As above.
5.3.6	The school is co-located with the community hall. If the school were to close, the loss of income from the school to the community hall would have a truly catastrophic impact on community life as the school really is the heart of the area	As above.
5.3.7	If the school were to close, we believe this would have a devastating effect on the community; the adjacent Community Hall would struggle to pay its outgoings without the income it receives from the daytime use by the school's children. In any event the community hall provides	As above.

	a facility to the children for extra-curricular activities ... readily accessible without too much costs or inconvenience (for their parents).	
5.3.8	Closing the school would have a devastating impact not only on the families with children at the school but also the wider community who go to great lengths to support not only the school, but the community hall which is situated on the same site.	As above.
5.3.9	Our community hall here in Dolau is very well supported and used daily, and partly funded by the school for their use.	As above.
5.3.10	The closure of the school would have a catastrophic effect on the economic viability of the community hall which is collocated beside the school. The hall is used by a variety of community groups, it is vital for the survival of the parish church and the chapel as both have accessibility issues and lack facilities. These organisations use the hall for collective worship. Thus, the school is at the heart of a much larger community network which depends on the school remaining open. Small rural schools have a social value in rural areas that should be considered and out way any minor financial gain by closing them. The greater loss of overall community facilities and groups need weighed against the gain of closing this school.	As above.
5.3.11	The closure of the school would have a catastrophic effect on the economic viability of the community hall which is collocated beside the school. The hall is used by a variety of community groups, it is vital for the survival of the parish church and the chapel as both have accessibility issues and lack facilities. These organisations use the hall for collective worship. Thus, the school is at the heart of a much larger community network which depends on the school remaining open. Small rural schools have a huge social worth in rural areas that should be quantified. This social value out ways any minor financial benefit by extinguishing them for ever.	As above.
5.3.12	The community hall was built to support the school and also the whole community and I cannot imagine the impact it would have if this fantastic and hard-earned (through many years of fund raising by the community during my childhood) resource were to be closed. I believe that if the school were to close this would have a severely detrimental effect on the entire community.	As above.

5.3.13	I feel that the hall would struggle to stand on its own 2 feet if the school were to close. Other users of the hall include the Young Farmers club, Youth club, Bowls, Football, Women's Institute, Dolau Mixtures Choir, Community Council, Mother & Toddler, Cylch to name just a few. A lot of these users are our younger people who are our next generation. I feel that these users would struggle to continue if their costs were to increase to keep the hall going and they would cease. Therefore, our hall would close and our community would be gone. People would soon get to feel isolated. People in rural areas rely on community functions as their connection with the outside world.	As above.
5.3.14	Many in the community use the hall regular. I am a member of the Young Farmers Club and feel that being a hall user our costs would increase and would find that in time it would not be possible for the club to continue. I urge you to think what you are doing to communities by shutting schools.	As above.
5.3.15	All events held in the village are focused on the school children to ensure that everyone's able to attend and enjoy. Within the past 3 years the Dolau Recreation Association has been successful in receiving £35k in grant money to upgrade the hall to ensure it is user friendly for the school. I have recently received another grant for a playpark which we are looking to have up and running this year which is going to be opposite the school – another great asset to our amazing community. Without the school the hall will not be required which will mean our community will slide away. The community hall is buzzing being booked out most evenings for groups including the YFC, Youth Club, W.I, Short mat bowls – all of which have links with the school. Without the school there will be no Dolau YFC as all pupils are from Dolau School.	As above.
5.3.16	If the school closure proposal goes ahead, we as a hall committee would lose the £3500.00 financial support we annually receive to compensate our inability to hire the hall out during the school day. We as a hall have just through grants and fundraising efforts had a refurbishment to our kitchen facilities, and also had a new secure entrance for our groups such as mother and toddlers and the newly	As above.

	set up Clych (Welsh playgroup) funded by Powys County Council, who come on site and use the hall and its facilities on set days during the week. Apart from the school related groups which presumably would really struggle to continue with no school on site we also have a youth club, young farmers club, W.I, short mat bowls group, singing group amongst others who would all have to bear the brunt financially if we were to lose our school funding. Who is to say how long they could continue with a heavier financial burden?	
5.3.17	In 1992 & 1993, the people of Dolau and its surrounding area helped raise many thousands of pounds to build our village hall, which is situated right next to the school. This building has enhanced the school in many ways providing a superb lunch space, assembly hall and indoor area to perform drama or sport activity, to mention just a few. The hall committee and the school team work tirelessly together to ensure both groups benefit mutually from their shared commitment. Everyone here understands that the school and the community hall are the centre of OUR community .	As above.
5.3.18	The village hall is very active and has organised events that have attracted not only residents from Dolau but from surrounding villages and towns. These events have been successful in raising funds. The committee has also been successful in applying for funding to make improvements to the hall	As above.
5.3.19	Dolau Recreation Association operates and maintains Dolau Village Hall on behalf of the community. We are writing to express our grave concerns about the proposed closure of our village school and its effect on the local community. The school use of the hall contributes significantly to our finances; however, our primary concern is the detrimental impact the loss of the school would have on our wonderful community.	As above.
5.3.20	Our village hall provides a meeting place for a wide range of user groups, catering for people of all ages. The groups all meet regularly and enable local residents to participate in a variety of activities and more importantly, an opportunity for social interaction. It is widely recognised that people living in rural areas like ours can suffer from social isolation and deprivation. Without the village	As above.

	<p>school, membership of these groups is likely to dwindle. Should children attend schools much further away, they and their wider family are likely to be attracted to groups affiliated to the new school. Furthermore, interaction at the school gate provides a unique opportunity to promote and advertise local events and clubs, this will be lost if the school closes. We believe the closure of the school will therefore exacerbate loneliness and isolation in Dolau and the surrounding area.</p>	
5.3.21	<p>Together with the school the village hall has built and maintained a strong, vibrant and supportive community over many years. We have organised many celebrations and events at the hall, using both the inside facilities and also outside space, these have included royal anniversaries such as the Queens Diamond Jubilee, Royal Weddings, and more recently a series of 'fun and frolic's' evenings. We have also been fortunate to take advantage of using 'flicks in the sticks', a great hit with the younger element of our community, enabling families from Dolau and neighbouring villages to access many popular and newly released films without the expense of travelling long distances to do so, made a lot easier since we, the hall committee have refurbished our kitchen, upgrading all facilities, partly funded with grants but also combined with fundraising events supported by the school and wider community.</p>	As above.
5.3.22	<p>The village hall has just secured a £10,000 grant towards establishing an outside play area, which we hope to site near the school, which would be an invaluable asset to the community, providing a secure area for young families to meet safely outdoors during these uncertain times.</p>	As above.
5.3.23	<p>The hall co-operates effectively with the school to support lots of fund-raising events by the PTA and concerts put on by the school. All these events offer the opportunity to socialise and strengthen the sense of community amongst local people. Without collaboration with the school these events would be less well attended, possibly less frequent and the closure of the school would therefore inflict irreparable damage to our community. We ask you to seriously consider the huge impact on our whole community, both now and</p>	As above.

	stretching for many years into the future. The closure of the school will rip the heart out of Dolau and it will never beat in the same way again.	
5.3.24	Dolau WI is a group of 12 members from Dolau, and the surrounding areas. We were meeting once a month in Dolau Community Hall within the curtilage of Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School. All members of the group are very concerned at the County Council's proposals to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon School which sits at the heart of our small community. The group has met monthly at the Community Hall since in construction in 1997. Powys County Council promoted a very successful partnership between the community and school that enabled the multi-use community hall to share its accommodation with the school and satisfy the statutory requirements for hall accommodation for the school.	As above.
5.3.25	The Community Hall is co-located on the same site as the School, the Community supported the school by fundraising and managing of the building to give the school much need indoor space for physical activity and lunch arrangements. The Dolau Recreation Association manages the hall, which would struggle very quickly given the loss of income from the school use and the income from associated groups such as pre-school and FODS. Dolau Recreation Association has 75 years of a 99-year lease remaining, giving the hall and its users access to the school grounds whilst an event is going on. There is no defined area that cars need to park away from the school building or any time restrictions, but the Community and school have an understanding that works very well. We feel that the structure of the community would soon be under pressure and issues of rural isolation and wellbeing would escalate as activities would be limited as FODS are a driver in organising social fundraising events in the community hall.	As above.
5.3.26	Without the school, the Hall will add an unsustainable financial burden on the local community, which would have a 'catastrophic impact' on the running of the Hall, whose future would be in serious doubt.	As above.

5.4 Reference to other community activities / organisations

5.4.1	Closing the village school would have a devastating impact on the community of Dolau. The pupils support the local groups, especially the church, by attending and participating in numerous local events throughout each year.	The Council has recognised, within the draft Community Impact Assessment, that there would be a detrimental impact on the community should Llanfihangel Rydithon C. P. School close. The Community Impact Assessment will be updated to take account of information gathered during the consultation, including the impact on other organisations and activities.
5.4.2	There are so many “knock-on” effects that would be linked back to the closure of the school – the Youth Club, YFC, Choir, W.I. - the list goes on and on of all groups that would be dispersed if the school was closed.	As above.
5.4.3	Many community groups make use of the Hall, and are all vehemently against the closure of the school, including: Dolau Football Club, Dolau Mixtures Choir, Dolau Mother & Toddler Group, Dolau Playgroup, Dolau Short Mat Bowls, Dolau WI, Dolau Young Farmers, Dolau Youth Club.	As above.
5.4.4	If the school closes, things like youth clubs and YFC clubs, mother and toddlers, play group which are held in the hall will be severely affected because children are more likely To go to clubs where there friends are and if they move from the school they are more likely To go to Crossgates or Llanbister.	As above.
5.4.5	If the school closes it is felt by all that the community will distinguish and a lot of clubs that are active in Dolau will also become non-existent. Maybe the parish council in a few years time will become unnecessary or there quite frankly will not be any members of the public wishing to stand as a Councillor.	As above.
5.4.6	Children within the school then participate in the youth club and Young Farmers club. Therefore, I feel like the school is important to keep the community alive.	As above.
5.4.7	At the other end of the age group youth groups such as Young Farmers will also be negatively affected by the closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon school and I feel it likely that Dolau YFC will find their young members starting YFC with other clubs where their peers from their new schools are attending.	As above.

5.4.8	This school is an excellent school and has many links to the community which my daughter went onto be involved with after leave the school at the end of her primary education, she attended Dolau youth club and Dolau young farmers club , these clubs kept her in touch with friends and helped with her life skills to further her education, she now attends University and still keeps her contact with the Dolau community even though our home is now in Llanbister, I feel these connections	As above.
5.4.9	If Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP was to close this would have a negative impact on many other groups such as Dolau Young Farmers Club, Dolau Youth Club, Cylch Meithrin and Mother and Toddlers. These things are needed and are essential in a rural community.	As above.
5.4.10	Llanfihangel Rhydithon school is the heart of the Community, should the school close then many other communities' activities would cease instantly. There is a strong parent and toddler group, and the preschool Cylch Meithrin which is held on the site and has good links with the Foundation Phase. These are vital to the success of the school but would naturally disperse as the children would have to attend their nearest school as their receiving school. Again, some of the facilities and activities at the nearest school or receiving school actually rate as lower than Llanfihangel Rhydithon by the relevant governing body.	As above.
5.4.11	The young farmers club as I'm sure you have read from their response letter to you, have grave concerns for the future of their club if the closure of Dolau school goes ahead fearing the young people of the village and surrounding areas if forced to attend other schools, will also attend other young farmers clubs, with 70 years of a club's history also falling victim to this unfair and ill thought-out closure proposal.	As above.
5.4.12	Not only is Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School an excellent education setting but it also has many links to the community. I believe that closing the school could result in numbers dropping in local clubs such as YFC with children wanting to attend clubs that their peers will attend. With a thriving YFC group in Dolau it would be a shame to lose out on these things in such a strong community. Pupils and their families are always supporting events organised within the community.	As above.

	Just a couple of examples would be the recent participation in many events ranging from fun ride, tractor run and cake sales.	
5.4.13	Dolau School is boasting a very vibrant community which would be decimated by any closure, clubs would struggle to survive this ill thought out process.	As above.
5.4.14	We are a group of children aged between ten and fifteen, who belong to Dolau Youth Club. All of us live in the village or the surrounding community, and every one of us apart from a few exceptions has been educated at Dolau Primary School. Our Youth Club has been in existence for nearly twenty five years, soon after the Dolau Community Centre was built, part funded by the children, parents and the outlying community. Meeting twice a month, we enjoy a whole range of activities and learn many new skills, such as cooking, first aid, gardening and orienteering. We also get lots of physical exercise which includes bike rides, walks and sports evenings in the summer. All within a safe and nurturing environment. All the children get a say in how the club is run, organising our own programme of activities and events. During the past few years we have successfully applied for grants obtained through PAVO, which we have used to develop and expand our club. Amongst other activities we were fortunate to have a workshop which took place through the summer months where we were all able to take part in silver jewellery making. Other skills that we have enjoyed taking part in, a first aid course run by St John's ambulance. We are all aware how very lucky we are to live in Dolau and to have a Youth Club right on our doorstep. Our parents are very supportive, through supervision of our sessions and support in running the club and without the local and wider community all our fundraising efforts would be in vain. We need to know how the club is going to survive if you take our school away? There is no Youth Club at Crossgates with the nearest been Llandrindod Wells nearly ten miles away. Many children who attend Crossgates are from outside that community therefore they have no ties to the local area after school has finished, no child or parent feels part of the community. We do not have that problem in Dolau. The school at Llanfihangel Rhydithon is and always will be an integral part of the community, every child that	Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, there is no reason that the Dolau Youth Club would not be able to continue to meet and hold activities.

	has been educated at Dolau school has then moved into Youth Club and then onto other Youth organisations within the village. The closure of the school will have a devastating and irreversible impact on both our club and the village.	
5.4.15	When considering the future of rural schools, it is important also to look at the wider picture. In Dolau village 30 years ago, there was a shop, three places of worship and a school. The shop has closed as has one of the chapels. Yet the school remains and thrives. Indeed, in combination with the village hall, a wide variety of activities and local groups are also thriving thanks to the existence of the school.	As above.
5.4.16	The knock-on effect of where they choose to send the children to school will affect youth clubs, young farmers, local sports teams etc. The lack of people in the small villages results in the closure of shops, post offices, churches, pubs etc. It seems it is the beginning of a slippery slope and younger people have nothing to encourage them to stay in the area and carry on with family business's or to return to once they have gained valuable qualifications and an all-round network of varied occupations which is vital for our rural communities and one that Dolau at the moment is proud to have.	As above.
5.4.17	Many other community groups and clubs are affected by potential closure tearing apart a community leading to a geriatric population and no future for a village.	As above.
5.4.18	Recently very large community events have shown how the school is cherished by the community in the catchment area of the school. The events have shown the strength of feeling in the rural community of Dolau and the wider rural community, about the closure of small rural schools.	As above.
5.4.19	The school has close connections to the local church which plays a big part in the community.	As above.
5.4.20	The school is co-located with the Community Centre and there are strong links between the Community Centre user groups and the children that attend the school.	As above.

5.5 Closure of the school would mean that people would not want to live in Dolau

5.5.1	Without a school, young families are discouraged from locating to a village and the community has no base for the future.	The Council has prepared draft impact assessments and this issue will be included within the updated impact assessments that will be considered alongside this Consultation Report.
5.5.2	You want young families to move to Powys, however how are you going to support these as there won't be the community rural schools which encourages people to come to the area.	As above.
5.5.3	Closure will adversely affect the demographics in the area, with a reduction of families with young children.	As above.
5.5.4	With nothing to offer young families, this whole region is destined to become a geriatric retirement home and fade into obscurity.	As above.
5.5.5	As I'm sure you are fully aware Powys has an ageing population and recruiting to this area is extremely difficult within the county council and teaching health board, you as a county council should be encouraging families to move to the area and the best way to do this is promoting rural schools. By closing all the rural schools you will break the communities pushing families away!!	As above.
5.5.6	If the school should close, young families will not move back into the area, leaving a disillusioned older generation. Who will provide local support to this older generation?!	As above.
5.5.7	It may not affect pupils in the school but it will have an affect on the community as those who have children will be less likely to choose to live in the village as the school hall is also the community hall and is used for all manner of groups.	As above.
5.5.8	Dolau school is very much a part of the community and I fear if you take the school away from Dolau, you will be taking away the young families, therefore only leaving an elderly generation, effectively killing off the village in the long term.	As above.
5.5.9	Closing this school would lose jobs and would mean a younger generation would probably leave the community in search of living in better catchment areas and reducing their children's commute to school. This in turn would reduce revenue for the immediate businesses that rely upon and cater for that generation.	As above.
5.5.10	We need young families in local communities for them to survive and forcing them to move to town will just create more problems.	As above.

5.5.11	Young families won't come to live here [if the school closes], local groups will inevitably deplete and no doubt businesses will suffer and move elsewhere.	As above.
5.5.12	You are putting young families off by closing these schools.	As above.
5.5.13	Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School is the hub of the community. Without the school the Village will become an aged population, evidence of this can be seen in other communities that have lost schools over the years. If there is no school there will be less incentive for families to settle in this local area.	As above.
5.5.14	Officials, whether in Cardiff Bay or County Hall, must realise that a community is not represented by maps or statistics but by inter-related lives. We wonder what future our community now has. There is plenty of land available for development but, knowing that their children will have to travel out of the community for their education and may have less access to the broader after-school activities which enhance educational opportunities, why would any young family choose to come and live amongst us?	As above.
5.5.15	Closure of Dolau school will enhance rural deprivation due to fewer people of working age living in this rural area.	As above.
5.5.16	Not only this, but many of us parents and children from rural backgrounds are business owners - do you want Powys to be a work, live and play county as per your strap lines, or and continually aging county? Open and enterprising - then you need to encourage us your business owners to stay!	As above.
5.5.17	The school is at the heart of the community and is a reason for people locating to the area at a time when a recent report has highlighted the decline in rural populations and facilities. Decline in rural amenities does not encourage people to move to or remain in an area.	As above.
5.5.18	Closing rural schools and/or services will decimate the community. Creating a far less attractive area for people to live and work. The removal of this school will leave the community without the hub which it operates.	As above.
5.5.19	The closure of this school will affect everyone in the Dolau Community and surrounding areas. How are families supposed to live in rural communities if there are no services provided	As above.

5.5.20	But if PCC continue to close all our rural schools thus killing our rural communities we have no amenities in the area to attract young families and Powys will fast become a retirement home for the pensioners of England !!!Who bring nothing to the area and have no sense of community. In order to keep our county thriving and affluent we need these rural schools.	As above.
5.5.21	We are a young family who moved to the Dolau area primarily for the excellent school and close-knit community. We are aware of other young professional families who have also made this decision. Closing the school would result in young families/professionals moving away from the area, thus negatively impacting the wider community.	As above.
5.5.22	Many young couples have moved back into the area so that their children can attend the local rural school, it is so important to keep our young people in the countryside for it to thrive and move forward.	As above.
5.5.23	Powys has an aging population and has difficulty in retaining its young people with little or no higher education facilities such as universities. Powys also has difficulty encouraging the leavers to return and professionals to settle. Without primary school provision families will not stay/ move to the area. Instead properties will be snapped up by retirees or as holiday homes, who can afford to pay more than local people. Most of these individuals will have little community involvement.	As above.
5.5.24	As an aging population, requiring care and support, Powys needs to attract young, economically productive people into the area, and destroying the most appealing parts of our County is not helpful.	As above.
5.5.25	We NEED our adults to stay in the area to look after the countryside, nurture the land and grow our food. They need workers and supporters to their businesses, and we need tourists to come to the county to enhance our livelihoods as well. Where will the staff for these rural areas come from if you take away our rural education and way of life? For sure we can't just bulldoze away the hills and create a Central Wales City just to make our kids a bit cheaper to educate! A ridiculous idea isn't it!	As above.

5.5.26	<p>Many young people are moving back to Powys because of small community schools like Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. Young working parents would rather commute long distances to work than leave the vibrant community of Dolau, where they were brought up. The recent switch to home working along with improvements in connectivity helps to allow families to stay local. The strength of rural communities is part of the USP of Powys. Some families have been eager to 'Move to Mid Wales' because Powys has strong rural communities and small schools within them. The school is therefore an economic pull factor to improve the economy of the county and to help to slow the increase in the average age of the population in Powys, as it increasingly resembles 'Gods Waiting Room'.</p>	As above.
5.5.27	<p>The death of a school and community does not just mean the drop in young families there, it also means the drop in local businesses that provide employment. I started my business when we moved here and now employ 1-2 local people to work for me. We are currently expanding and look to employ more people. However, if there weren't the young innovative people in the community to employ, we would be forced to move and like the above-mentioned communities that lost their school, the people left are elderly and retired.</p>	As above.
5.5.28	<p>Many young people are moving back to Powys because of small community schools like Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. Young working parents would rather commute long distances to work than leave the vibrant community of Dolau, where they were brought up. The recent switch to home working along with improvements in connectivity helps to allow families to stay local. The strength of rural communities is part of the USP of Powys. Some families have been eager to 'Move to Mid Wales' because Powys has strong rural communities and small schools at their heart. The school is therefore an economic pull factor to improve the economy of the county and to help to slow the increase in the average age of the population in Powys, as it increasingly resembles 'Gods Waiting Room'. Small schools are vital to the cohesion of rural areas and are a valuable part of the national identity of Wales.</p>	As above.

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

5.6.1	We have had several families that have moved back to the area where they themselves went to school, so that their children can come to this fantastic school and have the same standard of education that they did.	The Council notes these comments about previous generations of families that have attended the school.
5.6.2	My Son will be the fifth-generation farmer at our current home and in the parish of Llandegley and Dolau community. I cannot express enough how concerned I am by the proposals to close Llanfiangle Rhydithons school and what this would mean for his future.	As above.
5.6.3	Many of the pupils are the fourth generation of the same family to attend the school. It is helping to maintain family ties, which reduces the cost of social care in that area. The sense of social responsibility is maintained in this strong community, reducing the need for costly outside agencies. Recently very large community events have shown how the school is cherished by the community in the catchment area of the school. The events have shown the strength of feeling in the rural community of Dolau and the wider rural community, about the closure of small rural schools.	As above.
5.6.4	For generations, local rural families have attended this local rural school which has encouraged young people to remain or return to work in the area. The parent community of the school is made up of a large proportion of local professionals and key workers. The children of Dolau school are the leaders of tomorrow, the professionals of the future, the key workers you need to ensure that Powys thrives year on year!	As above.
5.6.5	My dad and my grandfather went to Dolau school, as you can imagine the school means a lot to me and my family, as I have stated it's the heart of the community!	As above.
5.6.6	Some of us at Dolau school have many generations that have previously attended this school and have gone on to become very successful members of society. Some of our families have moved away for university and move back to the area to raise their families and bring their children to the school they attended.	As above.

5.6.7	It would be an absurd idea to shut such a wonderful little school. Not only has it been in the community for numerous years, it has also been the source of education for many generations of families.	As above.
5.6.8	It would be such a huge loss to sever these richly interwoven threads of school and community down the generations of a resourceful rural community, rooted physically, geographically, socially in its community, and contributing to a much wider web of activity and engagement... locally, countywide, and nationally....in so many diverse and multidimensional ways, that enrich the skills and future of Wales... our world and our planet. Act local, think global. To nurture resilience and resourcefulness to steer through challenge and change, let us start where early childhood begins, rooted in those communities. What can we know? What ought we to do? What may we hope?	As above.
5.6.9	PLEASE do not discount the reality of the execution of this proposal to close the school. It will indeed, be the execution of generations of rural families, and those that have chosen to join us or return to us. This is very dramatically shown by our Community Impact tour of the 'SCHOOL - LESS' villages of Radnorshire with the 'SAD SCARECROW'.	As above.

5.7 Queries about what would happen to the school building should the school close

5.7.1	The school is linked to the community hall which I might add, have you looked what would happen to the school if you closed it as it could not be sold as it is tied into the community Hall. The Community Hall has a lease which entitles them to park vehicles on the school playground.	The Council is aware that the site surrounding Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School includes the community hall which has a lease to use the school playground as a car park, which creates a practical and legal challenge to the disposal of the school. However, the Council's Corporate Asset Policy would be followed, should the school close. This would include consideration of a community asset transfer or a sale on the open market via different methods. The Council's policy is to dispose of any surplus assets.
5.7.2	The argument that it would realise a capital receipt from the sale of the site goes to show how little regard for Dolau Community that Powys has. During lockdown particularly, the site has become a focal point for the community where all age ranges have come together to	As above.

	support each other. If the site were to be sold what would become of it and the community hall and play equipment currently enjoyed by the communities children regardless of whether they attend the school or not?	
5.7.3	On the note of the hall, have the council considered the lease on the car park? Basically rendering an abandoned school building useless.	As above
5.7.4	The Community Hall in Dolau, as in Whitton, was used jointly between the Hall committee and the school and it will take years to sort out all the joint infrastructure that exists, fire alarms, legionella testing, electrical testing, heating costs, etc. etc.	The Council recognises that some services are shared between the school and the Hall – however, it disagrees that these would take years to sort out should the school close.
5.7.5	Finally, what will happen to the infrastructure, will it lie redundant and neglected for years? before eventually being sold to a developer and then continue to be an eye sore until eventually planning will no doubt be given for new homes, that will increase the population of a village that no longer has the facilities to support itself.	Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School be closed, the Council's Corporate Asset Policy would be followed, should the school close. This would include consideration of a community asset transfer or a sale on the open market via different methods. The Council's policy is to dispose of any surplus assets.
5.7.6	Could the School building be used for any purpose other than housing?	As above.

5.8 Comments about the impact of previous school closures on communities

5.8.1	Over the years several local small schools have been closed by Powys County Council, and the schools themselves have been left derelict and the villages have become "Ghost towns". The residents that remain there are mostly elderly, as all families with young children have moved away to attend other schools.	<p>The Council, like all other local authorities, has a duty to plan effective school organisation and to manage its schools infrastructure effectively, and, as a result, schools have been closed over the years.</p> <p>In terms of leaving schools to become derelict, the Council's Policy is to dispose of any surplus assets in accordance with the Council's Asset Management Policy. Once the asset has been transferred to a third party, then the Council has no control over it or what happens to that asset in future.</p>
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5.8.2	Communities where schools have closed are like ghost towns. Keep Powys thriving and connected.	As above.
5.8.3	The strong community will unfortunately start to break down if the school is shut – clubs such as the Young Farmers will not have the easy access to members. This has already happened to other communities whose school has been shut (Felindre) as young families see no desire to stay in the area.	Comment noted.
5.8.4	I strongly urge you to look at the damage which has been done to surrounding rural schools which have been closed in the past, the schools look dreadful as have not been touched since the closure and the communities are now non-existent.	The Council's Policy is to dispose of any surplus assets in accordance with the Council's Asset Management Policy. Once the asset has been transferred to a third party, then the Council has no control over it or what happens to that asset in future.
5.8.5	I myself was supposed to attend a small school in the village of Bwlch y Sarnau but, following the decision to close the school in the summer before I was due to start, I was forced to attend school in Rhayader instead. I have first-hand knowledge of what closing a small does to a community and can state that it is the beginning of the end for small villages and the communities that surround them. In the 1980's Bwlch y Sarnau had a small but vibrant community with a large attendance at the local chapel, a youth club, WI group, choir, as well as regular sport tournament's in the hall, music lessons, art and painting groups to name but a few. The sad reality is that 30 years on since the closure of the school... none of these groups have survived!!! The chapel has a dwindling congregation and a handful of services every month, the old school building is privately owned and none of the activities and groups mentioned above remain. There is nothing left to attract young people into the area and the community now consists of an aging population whose contribution to the local economy is minimal.	Comment noted.
5.8.6	Llangunllo and Bleddfa community council members all agree that the closure of another local school, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P.School. Would have major social and economic implications for the local area. If you take away a school as we have seen in Llangunllo and Bleddfa , it leads to the closure of small local shops and families moving into bigger towns. Without young families rural communities die.	Comment noted.

5.8.7	When Llangunllo school closed we lost our shop and pub.	Comment noted.
5.8.8	Take away our school and you will kill off yet another rural community – you only have to look at the villages of Beguildy and Nantmel to know what I mean! Closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School would be a disaster for our rural community	Comment noted.
5.8.9	Closing this school will have a catastrophic effect on the community, there is nothing positive nor will there be any positive effects if the school is closed. Look at Whitton, Nantmel and Beguildy and the negative effect of closing the school that has been passed on to the community.	Comment noted.
5.8.10	I have lived in Dolau all my life until now recently moving to Nantmel in Powys where you have also closed a school and ruined a community's spirit. These schools are the heart of these rural communities and pulls all the rural living people together, the bond they form is unreal, and you don't appreciate it until you have been involved.	Comment noted.
5.8.11	You only have to look closely at the impact on other small local communities; Nantmel, Whitton & Beguildy. Derelict buildings just left to rot. Impacted local young farmer groups. There's plenty of evidence to look at just around the corner that warns what happens if you close the school.	Comment noted.
5.8.12	Many small primary schools have closed in Powys and there has been a loss of community that has occurred as a result. The impact is a slow decay of community cohesion, sense of place and wellbeing that can be felt decades after the enforced closure. The complex web of social interactions that a local school provides is incalculable and it is shameful that this is not being taken into account on any level while these decisions are being made. Many small rural schools in Powys have been forced to close by cabinet including Bleddfa, Llangunllo, Llandegly, Llandewi and Howey, and many now been left derelict and in ruin including Beguildy, Nantmel and Rhosgoch. These villages in the area, who had their schools closed many years ago, are now mainly aging populations, with issues of rural isolation and little or no community activity.	Comment noted.

5.8.13	These communities will not be strong when you rip the heart out of them. Previous schools Powys have closed are now sat, derelict, eye sores for the local community and landscape	Comment noted.
5.8.14	I have seen other village schools close, and with it the local community goes. I know some of the children that have attended this school, past and present.	Comment noted.
5.8.15	Derelict school buildings boarded up and barriered off. Villages with just retired people and no children and young families. Shops and pubs gone. Properties lose their value and get turned into 'second' homes by the wealthy people from the cities seldom used, often empty. The HEART of the villages NOT BEATING ANY MORE.	Comment noted.
5.8.16	We have seen that Powys does not respect its communities; where schools have been closed in the past, the buildings are not maintained or even protected from vandalism. The sites are seldom suitable for other uses and so the buildings deteriorate in the heart of a community	Comment noted.
5.8.17	Similar buildings have been historically given to the Community for £1 or sold for minimal amount on the open market and have then left to decay (e.g Beguildy, Nantmel and Rhosgoch schools).	Comment noted.
5.8.18	Powys County Council are ripping the heart out of small local communities by shutting the primary schools. The financial gain is minimal but the trauma and hurt it causes the children, the parents and the community is massive.	Comment noted.
5.8.19	When you take away the heart, the community dies and this has been extremely evident in the recent closures of small schools in Powys, such as Whitton, Beguildy and Nantmel.	Comment noted.
5.8.20	Regards to the community though, I feel there will be a detrimental impact as I feel the rural community are sometimes being discriminated against. Rural communities need to be nourished and continued within Radnorshire. So many young families are moving back to this area to ensure their children can have the education that they had as a child. Please visit some of the areas where the schools have been closed previously and see the impact this has had.	Comment noted.

5.9 Comments relating to community well-being

5.9.1	I come from a rural farming family, and if the school and hall were to close here, I do worry what would be left here for my 2 sons who want to remain farming, and in time their families without a community. I am sure that in time they would become very isolated. The suicide rate is very high for farmers and rural people, and I do feel that this closure will contribute to people's mental health. You can't just pick up your farm and move it to the town like most other people can with their jobs. People in rural areas rely on community functions as their contact with the outside world.	The Council has recognised in the Consultation Document and draft Community Impact Assessment that there would be a detrimental impact on the community should the school close. The Community Impact Assessment will be updated to include any additional information gathered during consultation.
5.9.2	The schools symbiotic relationship with the community is an important mutual strength. If we have learnt nothing else as a result of the pandemic and its disruptive effects it is surely that the crucial bonds within a community are vital and these bonds require a hub to secure a reliable lasting network. In this village that hub is secured by the school and the church to which it is linked. As well as all this you have a responsibility to the wider community. The building itself is an integral part of the it and facilitates many different groups. There is also a well-attended Cylch Meithrin and all sorts of other clubs.	As above.
5.9.3	Small school closures on rural community's research found that closures not only create divisions between communities but lead to a reduction in parental and community involvement in school life. They diminish children's sense of community identity and result in a loss of community confidence and general decline in the quality of life.	As above.
5.9.4	I am a Psychiatric Nurse, and I see everyday how wellbeing and lifestyle can support some of the most challenging life experiences ... living in a rural area where a functional school implements some of the the most fundamental factors in promoting healthy communities... Everyone who lives in this area is used to travel and would travel many miles for education this is more than this. This is caring about and having a choice in how we educate our children.	As above.
5.9.5	The closure of the school although saving money initially will have a negative effect on the well-being of the pupils and community of Dolau.	As above.

5.9.6	With an ever-increasing depression rates and suicide within the agricultural sectors we should be investing in these communities to foster better support networks not tearing out the heart that currently holds them, together!	As above.
5.9.7	As a community resource it's closure will adversely affect those living and using it. It will be detrimental to their Wellbeing closing it.	As above.
5.9.8	The impact on the community is already being felt, the emotional stress that the thought of closure is so high it is really quite frankly outrageous.	As above.
5.9.9	Members of Dolau community, school and parents are all really struggling mentally due to this consultation.	As above.
5.9.10	The school is the heart of this community and without it many of the community groups will struggle to continue. This will leave many of the community without a lifeline of support which is very important for their wellbeing. Closing this school will put pressure on the mental health and wellbeing of those living in this rural community.	As above.
5.9.11	Mental health will suffer if the school closes as it is the central hub to the community, all ages are involved with the school and the village hall.	As above.
5.9.12	The cost to the children and the community of settlements and isolated homesteads will be far greater than any saving to Powys County Council if the school is closed. Settlements in this District provide services to a large section of the community who live in isolated homesteads and this is vital to the infrastructure that enables a community to work. Closing the school will inevitably destroy what has built up over generations.	As above.
5.9.13	Groups such as Young Farmers Clubs, Youth Clubs, Choirs and Bowls need to keep going within the community for the mental health of all ages, something which our local government needs to support.	As above.
5.9.14	One of the seven Welsh Government Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 well-being goals is: 'A healthier Wales and A Wales of cohesive communities'. This goal strives for 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 within attractive, viable, safe, and well-connected	Comment noted. The Council has considered the impact of the potential closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School on the well-being goals as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 within the draft Integrated Impact Assessment, which will be further

	<p>communities. 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 within attractive, viable, safe, and well-connected communities. Currently 31 pupils are dropped at school by parents and if they are going to be transported by bus to another school the parents will inevitably not have the social/community support currently get at school gates, creates further isolation in a rural farming community with increasing suicide rates and increasing mental/emotional problems. Additionally, a lot of rural grandparents benefit from picking grandchildren up from school and see it as a social activity, enhancing their emotional well-being.</p>	<p>updated to take account of information gathered during consultation.</p>
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5.10 Comments about community impact beyond the village of Dolau

5.10.1	<p>What I would like you to understand, is that it is not just ONE village which will be affected by the closure of Dolau School. Llanfihangel Rhydithon School is an important part of the community for many other local villages: Bleddfa, Llangunllo, Llandegley, Penybont and us, here is Llanddewi. Many people living in or between these areas choose for their children to attend this small rural school with its engrained family feel and Christian ethos. The people of these villages share a real sense of community and regularly meet to support each other and local charitable causes. They support each other's village shows, Christmas Carols, Harvest services and suppers, Big Breakfasts, YFC events and they support THE SCHOOL! The "Friends of Dolau School" (FODS), raise tremendous amounts of money, they may be smaller in numbers but they are mighty in work ethic, and over the last few years have put other larger school's fundraising efforts to shame. The FODS are able to support the school for years to come, ensuring the school will never need to be overbudget!</p>	<p>The Council recognises the hard work of the Friends of Dolau School in supporting the school through fundraising.</p> <p>It is also recognised that Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School serves an area wider than the village of Dolau.</p>
5.10.2	<p>Dolau school is not just for the children of the village, it is for the children of the neighbouring villages who are without a school, it is for the RURAL children and their families who are understood, educated, and supported at this RURAL school.</p>	<p>It is recognised that Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School serves an area wider than the village of Dolau.</p>

5.10.3	Detrimental impact on the rural life and development and commerce in this pocket of Radnorshire.	The Council has recognised in the Consultation Document and draft Community Impact Assessment that there would be a detrimental impact on the community should the school close. The Community Impact Assessment will be updated to include any additional information gathered during consultation.
5.10.4	Removing the school provision in Llanfihangel Rhydithon will leave East Radnorshire as a remote area of the County that will require interventions to reduce the rural deprivation and increased social care needs over years to come. This will have a long-term budgetary cost to the Authority with additional supportive social care, which we feel has been significantly overlooked	There is no evidence to support this statement. Families living in the Dolau area would still be able to access education in the locality. This would not increase rural deprivation or increase social care needs.
5.10.5	Stop destroying our rural communities.....our schools are an important part of our rural life.	Comment noted.
5.10.6	The school closure will have a severely adverse effect on the cohesiveness of surrounding communities. This is a dispersed community that doesn't have the facilities of those living in Powys towns.	It is recognised that Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School serves an area wider than the village of Dolau.

5.11 Comments about the role of the community during the Covid pandemic

5.11.1	In the past 16 months we have all realised that our communities are vital and I feel that Dolau has excelled in how we performed during the pandemic keeping our vulnerable safe.	Comment noted.
5.11.2	Many people have suffered over the past 12 months due to Covid-19, this community was one of the first to set up a community support page for themselves and support others who need it.	Comment noted.
5.11.3	The pandemic brought to the fore how important the community spirit and a sense of belonging, and the support to one another helped many through this difficult period. At a time when we should be praising and celebrating that wonderful community spirit they are faced with the worry of the possible break up of this wonderful togetherness.	Comment noted.

5.11.4	The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance and strength of having 'younger' generations in a community to assist the older generations.	Comment noted.
5.11.5	A local community-based school is the heart of the community. Especially after what we have all endured this part 18 months with highlighting community spirit at the highest importance to the mental health of all generations.	Comment noted.
5.11.6	What the pandemic has demonstrated is that local communities are strong and supportive, indeed the community within Dolau pulled together very effectively and these strengths will continue to be built upon with the school at the heart of the community.	Comment noted.

6. COMMENTS ABOUT PUPIL NUMBERS

6.1 Comments about current pupil numbers at the school

6.1.1	There are currently 10 x Year 1 pupils and 7 x Reception pupils. Whilst future pupil numbers across Powys are expected to decrease, this is not the case for anticipated numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon where pupil numbers are set to increase from 37 to 43 by 2024 (a 16% increase).	<p>Pupil numbers in September 2021 are as follows:</p> <p>Reception = 4 Year 1 = 7 Year 2 = 10 Year 3 = 2 Year 4 = 8 Year 5 = 5 Year 6 = 0</p> <p>Total = 36</p>
6.1.2	The school currently has a roll of 37 pupils from 4 to 11 years old and is full to capacity.	The Council recognises that the school is full but it does have a very low capacity figure of 36.
6.1.3	The school is also at capacity so it seems counter intuitive to close a school which is well used.	As above.

6.1.4	The pupil numbers have increased since 2016, when the Authority last proposed to enforce closure of the school and the numbers of pupils set to attend Llanfihangel are due to increase in the coming years. At present the school is over capacity with 37 pupils attending, and the projected pupil numbers are set to increase to 43 by 2024, and are forecast to remain higher (at least for the next 8 years as shown in Appendix A in consultation document).	The historical pupil numbers for the school are shown below: Jan 2014 – 38 Jan 2015 – 29 Jan 2016 – 31 Jan 2017 – 35 Jan 2018 – 35 Jan 2019 – 29 Jan 2020 - 33
6.1.5	The school is small. There is no getting away from that. It does not mean that is a bad thing! More and more young families have returned and bought/ built homes so that their children can attend Dolau as they did. 5 families have done this in the last two years.	Comment noted.
6.1.6	On the advice of PCC Officers to reduce the vacant pupil numbers an area of the school has been refurbished into a storage/administrative area. This can easily be returned to its original condition by FODS with no cost to PCC. Historically, pupil numbers have gone up to 65 at the highest point, so therefore it is clear that the school has capacity for more than 37 pupils.	If the storage/administrative area was remodelled into a classroom, this would add some additional capacity to the school. However, this would reduce the required storage and administrative space at the school.
6.1.7	Also, we see a large increase in younger couples choosing to return to the area, in most cases so they can obtain for their children the educational standards that Dolau school offers. Consequently, numbers have already risen and are on course to steadily increase over the next few years. With new houses to be built in nearby locations and people increasingly able to work from home, this is only going to improve predicted numbers within the school.	The Council is aware of the current and planned housing developments in the area, however, it is not expected that these would lead to a significant increase in the number of pupils at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.

6.2 Comments about future pupil numbers

6.2.1	There are 37 children attending and I am fully aware there are also more babies and toddlers within the local community who plan to attend this school. Pupils are set to rise to 43 by 2024.	The information within the Consultation Document suggests that pupil numbers will rise to 44 by 2023. Even with these projected numbers, the school would still be categorised as a small school according to the Welsh Government and would still operate as a two class school. The challenges of this have been outlined in previous sections of this report.
6.2.2	Our pupil numbers are rising and we have scope to easily expand our capacity within a few days to accommodate additional children.	As above.
6.2.3	Pupil numbers in Dolau have fluctuated over the years. Currently, bucking the general trend in Powys, they are on the rise. This is partly due to demographics, but also due to the excellent reputation of Llanfihangel Rhydithon school.	As above.
6.2.4	Why close the school, it has 37 children, it has more to come by 2024, there are known now to be increasing to 43.	As above.
6.2.5	There is a baby boom within the village meaning that the school is expected to get larger.	As above.
6.2.6	There are obviously still lots of young families in the area and as far as I am aware the school is currently growing in numbers, which seems ironic that you would now think about closing the school when it is on the up.	As above.
6.2.7	The Consultation states that pupil numbers are low and are not expected to rise significantly over the coming years - in fact pupil numbers are set to increase by over 16% by 2024.	As above.
6.2.8	The Consultation Document also states that pupil numbers may be set to decrease in Powys. However, Llanfihangel Rhydithon is a thriving community, where in fact, projected numbers are expected to increase. Many of my school friends and family are returning to the community to raise their families and having a wonderful school is a major factor contributing to this.	As above.
6.2.9	The last time we were in consultation the education department predicted that numbers would decrease but in fact pupil numbers have increased by 12% and with young families moving back into the area and building houses, pupil numbers will increase again. There is a successful Cylch Meithrin that runs independently in Dolau, next to the	As above.

	school, which is full with a waiting list. We need to listen to the younger generation that are returning to this area for primary provision in Dolau.	
6.2.10	The area has a whole has got young children who will be going on the school list for entry in future years this needs taking into your plans.	As above.
6.2.11	The pupil numbers are due to increase over the next few years with our own children included, there are families interested in moving to this area, with its proximity to Llandrindod and Presteigne I expect the number of families to only increase. I know we are not the only family in this position.	As above.
6.2.12	Pupils numbers are set to increase. We have 25 siblings and new children in the Mother & Toddler group which have stated that they would be attending Dolau school. We have a Cylch Meithrin Dolau which is a registered setting and offers funding through the childcare element. They offer the 3+ funding and currently have 9 children using the setting.	As above.
6.2.13	The consultation states there are dwindling numbers over the coming years yet from personal knowledge alone it is clear to see that these predictive figures are incorrect and over the next 4 years the numbers will in fact increase.	The Consultation Document states: <i>'Whilst an increase is projected over the next couple of years based on information held by the Council's Finance Team, they are expected to remain low for the foreseeable future.'</i>
6.2.14	What is Powys thinking about, have you even looked at census figures to see there is a need for this school in the coming years. Where do you expect these children to go to school? Nearly all the other schools are at full capacity due to you already closing schools when they were needed. And with covid now, the smaller schools are a huge asset.	The proposal is for Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School to close with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools which are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crossgates C.P. School • Llanbister C.P. School • Ysgol Cefnlllys • Ysgol Trefonnen C.in W. Community School • Knighton C.in W. Primary School Of these schools, Ysgol Trefonnen is over-subscribed but the rest have available places.

		Whilst Llanbister is currently full, work is planned to convert a dining area into a third classroom which will increase the capacity of the school to 76. It is expected that this work will be completed in 2021.
6.2.15	Have you looked at the wider picture to see how many under school age children there are in the area that would feed into the school?	The Office for National Statistics 2019 Mid-year population estimates ³ for the Llangunllo LSOA indicate the following: Aged 0 – 12 persons Aged 1 – 8 persons Aged 2 – 11 persons Aged 3 – 14 persons Aged 4 – 12 persons However, it must be noted that the LSO Area covers a larger geographical area than Dolau and the vicinity.
6.2.16	Like many mid-Powys children she was born in Hereford and I believe the council are underestimating the size of the pre-school population with Radnorshire Please reconsider the proposed closure.	As above.

6.3 Comments about housing developments in the area

6.3.1	Closing the school would have an impact on attracting families to the area to live as there are several new houses being built locally at present.	The Council's draft Community Impact Assessment will be updated to reflect this issue. The Council is aware of current and planned housing developments in the area, although it is not anticipated that these would lead to a significant increase in pupil numbers at the school.
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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/lowersuperoutputareamidyearpopulationestimatesnationalstatistics>

6.3.2	Children's numbers will go up as well as down, there are two houses being built by the school, and both will hold young children, there is also a development of 14 in planning, all within walking distance of the school.	As above.
6.3.3	Development plans are already under way, supported by Powys Planning Department, to sympathetically develop Dolau with new housing, including some affordable housing, which would make the school even more viable.	As above.
6.3.4	We have had several planning requests from families wishing to build their homes in Dolau within the last 12 months. They have all been approved with strong backing from the Councillors as it brings young, growing families into the village. Surely this should be taken into consideration, surely this is a positive aspect as to why the school must be kept open.	As above.
6.3.5	With planning permissions in Llandrindod wells, Crossgates, Llanddewi, Dolau and Penybont all at significantly high levels, where do you propose that all of the additional children moving to the area be educated? It seems to me that planning the future for our children in Powys is a very short-term thing.	As above.
6.3.6	There are also 18 affordable houses being built in Llanddewi, also in Crossgates' catchment area.	As above.
6.3.7	New houses are being built both here and 2 miles away in Llanddewi which will bring in further potential pupils.	As above.

6.4 Comments about a possible increase in people moving to the area following Covid

6.4.1	Has any data for population growth been taken into account? Since the Covid Pandemic many families are looking to relocate in rural locations where homeworking is possible with employers	The Council considers the ONS Population Estimates for forward planning purposes across a range of services. The latest data shows that in 2019, there were 5746 in-migrants into Powys from the rest of the UK. In 2020, this fell to 5,442. There is no evidence that Powys is expecting a significant increase in in-migration.
6.4.2	It is already apparent that following the Covid19 pandemic, a significant portion of the office-based population will in future prefer not to continue the daily grind of commuting to cities, but will instead	Comment noted.

	move house to live in more pleasant rural areas. Recent data from Manchester, for example shows that 80% of businesses in the city centre expect their employees to spend much less time physically in the office. Whilst it seems that a total shift to home-working is likely to be the exception, many businesses expect 'hybrid working' to become the norm, where staff will make the commute once or twice a week.	
6.4.3	This shift in patterns of living and working may well be an opportunity for Powys in particular, being a border county with England and having Cardiff and Swansea reachable within a couple of hours.	Comment noted.
6.4.4	Indeed, this population shift may have started already. The latest official ONS data on UK house prices (year to March 2021) shows them at the highest levels since 2007, with Wales showing the largest national rise in prices of 11.0%, with London the lowest at 3.7%, and Southeast England at 7.9%. It therefore seems that we are seeing a significant population shift from metropolitan areas towards more rural regions such as Wales.	Whilst the Council recognises that house prices increased in Powys in 2020, the number of actual sales decreased compared to the previous year: 2019 – 1712 sales 2020 – 1378 sales. House price increases does not necessarily indicate increase in population.
6.4.5	House prices are rising (by 10%) as people 'race for space'. The highspeed broadband has negated geography as people look to relocate to rural areas away from expensive urban hubs. We will see a new blended way of working and, as such, there will undoubtedly be more young families moving into the area to seek the rural idyll. Rural community schools will be needed to be the hub of the communities and so good performing schools should be supported by a rural LEA.	As above.
6.4.6	In the past twelve months we have seen a dramatic change in working practices and a huge increase in home and remote working. This is likely to be sustained and increase with more young people seeking to live in rural areas reversing the trend of young families leaving areas like Powys and moving to urban conurbations. In this changing socio economic environment it will be necessary to retain teaching space capacity and not close schools, particularly those that are high performing settings such as Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School.	There are sufficient school places available within the area. The Council also reviews the school capacities on an annual basis, and would need to take action if additional capacity is required in future.
6.4.7	The strongest argument I can see for keeping the school open is the expected increase in the numbers of young people moving to rural communities, following the pandemic, wherein people demand more	Comment noted.

	space. Now is the very worst time to do away with such a strong local asset as a primary school, especially one of the quality of Llanfihangel Rhydithon.	
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6.5 Comments about pupil numbers in other schools

6.5.1	Even more pupils being moved to Crossgates and the classes in Crossgates are already over numbered. Wouldn't be fair on the pupils or staff.	<p>The current structure of Crossgates C.P. School (September 2021) is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception 1 Class 27 pupils • Yr 1/2 Class 22 pupils • Yr 3 Class 19 pupils • Year 4/5 Class 28 pupils • Year 5/6 Class 30 pupils <p>All schools manage their class structures in response to pupil numbers.</p>
6.5.2	With changes happening in the local primary schools, e.g. satellite classroom at Crossgates, affordable housing being built in Llandrindod the council will NOT have a problem with a surplus capacity but a problem of not enough places for the local community.	<p>A satellite ALN provision will begin in Crossgates C.P. School in September 2021, which will be provided in one classroom. Even with this development, there are sufficient places in Crossgates C.P. School for pupils from Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.</p> <p>It is recognised that there are affordable housing developments planned or in construction in Llandrindod. The Council monitors school capacities on an annual basis and if additional capacity is required in future, then this would need to be addressed.</p>

6.6 Other comments

6.6.1	As even the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has said recently: "Providing access to quality	The Council is continuing to provide access to quality education in a rural area – Crossgates C.P. School and
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	education in rural areas is crucial to meet the needs of rural youth and also to attract young families to settle in these regions.”	Llanbister C.P. School are both classed as rural schools according to the Welsh Government.
6.6.2	The council should consider the growing local population and future investment in the area through the growth deal which will surely increase the numbers of young families within the area. Closing the school is short-sighted.	The Mid Wales Growth Deal is intended to boost the Mid Wales economy. However, it is unlikely that this would directly increase the number of young families in the Dolau area.
6.6.3	Powys is a very rural county, you just have to look at the geography, we don't have a huge population, so of course the schools are going to be smaller.	The geographic size of Powys, along with the sparse population, means that the Council needs to plan the organisation of its schools in the most effective manner possible.

7. TRAVEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The proposal would lead to additional travel

7.1.1	Currently the majority of pupils walk to school or are transported by parents. Closure of the school would result in an additional 31 pupils requiring school transport.	<p>Currently, at least 24 of the 36 attending the school in September 2021 are transported to school but only 7 of these are on free home-to-school transport. 17 pupils are not eligible for free home-to-school transport as they live closer to other schools therefore are transported in by private arrangement. The remaining pupils either walk to, or are transported, to school.</p> <p>Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, then free home-to-school transport would be provided to eligible pupils to their nearest alternative school i.e. if pupils live 2 miles or more from their nearest alternative school. The closest schools for pupils currently attending the school in September 2021 are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School – 53% • Crossgates C.P. School – 28% • Ysgol Cefnlllys – 11% • Knighton C. in W. School – 5%
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhayader C. in W. School – 3% <p>If there was no school in Llanfihangel Rhydithon, the nearest alternative schools for pupils would be as follows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crossgates C.P. School – 67% • Llanbister C.P. School – 14% • Ysgol Cefnlllys – 11% • Knighton C. in W. School – 5% • Rhayader C. in W. School – 3% <p>Of these children, 7 would not be eligible for free home-to-school transport as they live 2 miles or less from their closest school. 29 pupils would be eligible for free home-to-school transport if they chose to attend their closest alternative school. This compares with at least 24 pupils who are transported to school currently, either on free transport or by private arrangement.</p>
7.1.2	<p>There are currently 37 pupils who attend Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School; 30 of which either walk or come in the car. The remaining 7 are transported to and from the school by Powys. If the school were to close, only 6 are within walking distance to their nearest school, which leaves 31 pupils left to transport by Powys. Not only would this be very costly to Powys, but by far the most important issue would be the detrimental impact on the well-being of our pupils. If the school were to close, the majority of children would have to endure long and tiring bus journeys, which would significantly affect their ability to learn. This would have a huge negative impact, both physically and emotionally. I certainly wouldn't want my two young children to have to endure this, and it is another strong reason why Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School should NOT close.</p>	<p>29 pupils would be eligible for free home-to-school transport if they chose to attend their closest alternative school.</p> <p>There are two home-to-school transport routes that transport pupils to Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School – the LW14 and LW15. The LW14 is a 16 seat minibus and the LW15 is a 16 seat minibus, but could also be a 21 seat minibus. However, it is not anticipated that there would be additional transport costs, based on the analysis of pupils' postcodes (PLASC Jan 2020), as pupils can be accommodated on existing transport routes to their nearest alternative school. There may be a situation in the future where additional transport routes may be required for additional children (i.e. children starting school for the first time or children who move into the area) which would depend on where they lived. However, at this point in time, it is not</p>

		possible to know the exact cost of this but it is anticipated that it would be a minimal cost.
7.1.3	It will also make the children have to travel miles and miles to school.	<p>If there was no school in Dolau, the average travel distance for all pupils on roll in January 2020 attending the school to attend their closest alternative provision would be 3.6 miles. Of these pupils, if there was no school in Dolau, the furthest travel distance to the nearest alternative provision would be 6.4 miles.</p> <p>Due to the geographic nature of Powys, many pupils of primary age are transported to school with no detrimental impact, and the Council does not consider that the distance or travel times for pupils at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is excessive.</p>
7.1.4	Currently 37 pupils attend Llanfihangel, only 7 are transported to the school by Powys funded transport, 30 either walk or are transported by parents/guardians. If the school closes, only 6 pupils are within walking distance to their nearest alternative receiving school, leaving 31 pupils left to transport by Powys funded transport.	As above.
7.1.5	The distance to the nearest school for some children is a fair distance	As above.
7.1.6	A young child should not have to travel an excessive distance for education.	As above.
7.1.7	To expect primary aged children to travel many miles to school would seriously impact their learning and development. I urge Powys to reconsider and find an alternative solution to closure. We don't have to travel far to school except the people that live further away.	As above.
7.1.8	I like my school because I don't have to travel far at all because I live right by the school but if I had to go to a different school, I would have to travel further which is not nice at all.	Comment noted. The Council recognises that pupils who currently walk to school would not be able to do so, should the school close.
7.1.9	I was very lucky to live next door to this primary school so was in school in a matter of seconds, I couldn't think of anything worse than making young children make a 30/50minute bus journey to school every day there and back.	Due to the geographic nature of Powys, many pupils of primary age are transported to school with no detrimental impact, and the Council does not consider that the distance or travel times for pupils at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is excessive.

7.1.10	4-year-old children being expected to travel much further meaning longer away from their homes is detrimental to their mental health and wellbeing.	As above.
7.1.11	It will increase travel, which can impact on children.	As above.
7.1.12	I am also concerned about the distance some of the children would have to travel each day making an already tiring day for young children much longer in some cases.	As above.
7.1.13	It's a small village school the children will have to travel to get to an alternative school and there is a lot of young children that are coming up to school age and has a fantastic community	As above.
7.1.14	It's essential for little kids to learn without traveling too far in their early years.	As above.
7.1.15	It's an idiotic idea to propose sending the pupils further afield for their primary education.	As above.
7.1.16	Children would be spending much more time on transport that they currently do – waste of precious learning time	As above.
7.1.17	Young children should not have to travel an excessive distance to school, a tired child cannot concentrate	As above.
7.1.18	Very young children having to travel much further distances to school would impact on their day which is already long.	As above.
7.1.19	Having to travel so far and having less down time at home because of spending so much more time on the road.	As above.
7.1.20	It will cause an awful lot of upheaval to the children who will have to travel further	As above.
7.1.21	If Llanfihangel Rhydithon closes, a larger number of pupils would have a significant travel time.	As above.
7.1.22	Distressing and long journey to the next school.	As above.
7.1.23	It will be harder for kids to get to and from school.	In accordance with the Council's Home to School Travel Policy, free transport would be provided for all eligible pupils i.e. those that live 2 miles or further from their nearest alternative school.
7.1.24	Impact on these little ones us travel further than they need making their days longer when not necessary, keep their community alive and let them thrive. Why brake what's not broken	As above.

7.1.25	Children as young as 3 / 4 / 5 will be having to travel ridiculously far to get to the next primary school this meaning leaving early and getting home late. This as a result would effect their performance in school.	As above.
7.1.26	Access and travel issues for young people would be created including additional travel time impacting on ability to concentrate in comparison to others where schooling is closer to home.	As above.
7.1.27	It is essential to the village and in rural areas how can you ask small children to travel miles to school?	As above.
7.1.28	The idea of our local children having to spend hours on buses to get to a bigger school further away, instead of spending that extra time at home is crazy. How can that be good for a 4/5/6/7/8/9/10 year old?? I don't know what you can be thinking. It certainly can't be for the good of the children.	As above.
7.1.29	If a pupil is unwell during the school day or should an accident occur, the families of Llanfihangel Rhydithon will be expected to travel much further to collect their child from school when they already live in a very rural area. It extends collection time and increases travel costs for these families, so although you are proposing to offer free transport to an alternative school, there are many other factors to be considered other than the normal drop off and collect school runs at the beginning and end of the day. Your consultation document frequently refers to the next nearest school yet it does not emphasise that you are not talking about a few kms away, we're talking many miles away to an already very rural area.	<p>The Council has recognised that the additional travel would have an impact on families</p> <p><i>'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. There would also be an impact on the parents of these pupils in terms of accessing school activities.'</i></p> <p>This has been included within the draft Impact Assessments which will be further updated to take account of information gathered during the consultation, such as this.</p> <p>It must also be noted that just under half of the pupils at the school in September 2021 live closer to other schools and are already being transported to Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. It can therefore be argued that some of the families of pupils at the school already deal with the issues raised in this comment.</p>
7.1.30	Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School is the nearest school for a lot of its students. Many parents fit their work commitments around taking their	All parents have to manage the complications of work, school opening times and school transport – the Council does not

	child to and from school but if we all had to go to a school further away, our parents may not have time to bring us to school.	think this is an insurmountable matter, and it would be for the parent to manage these arrangements. More than half of the pupils at the school live closer to other schools and already travel to Dolau.
7.1.31	The extended travel may have an effect on parents ability to work.	As above.
7.1.32	Our youngest daughter has recently decided to move back to Dolau with her husband and two young children to build their forever home and attend the local school. This house is within a five minute walk of the school and is in an excellent position to be able to walk to school each day.	Comment noted.
7.1.33	Very few pupils are transported by Powys County Council to school, many are within walking distance but these pupils would need to be transported under the proposal to close.	See 7.1.2
7.1.34	Many of the children at the moment are able to walk to school so their travel time will be increased.	See 7.1.2
7.1.35	Also, it is unfair that the children would have to travel when Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School is within walking distance or 2 or 3 miles.	See 7.1.2
7.1.36	Only 7 pupils from Dolau currently have paid transport. This is 7 out of 37 pupils. If the school was the close, Powys would then have to provide the other 30 pupils transport to the next nearest school, which is 20 minutes away (even longer for some pupils). The legal time for a child to travel via bus is 45 minutes however, some pupils will travel longer than that, which is unfair and illegal.	Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School close, 29 pupils out of the September 2021 intake would be eligible for free home-to-school transport. In relation to journey times, the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014 states: <i>'The Measure does not specify a time limit for journeys, however, local authorities are required to assess the individual needs of learners when considering if a journey is reasonable. An assessment should take into account the ature, purpose and circumstances of each journey.'</i>
7.1.37	Currently it is estimated that the current bus driver stays on the for circa 30 to 35 minutes depending on traffic. If children are kept on the same route on the bus, the driver would be on the bus for circa 45	Comment noted.

	minutes to go the extra distance to one of the nearest alternative schools Crossgates.	
7.1.38	We have seven children who travel on the bus. They are with the same bus driver every day, who parents and staff have got know and trust. The children think the world of their bus drivers and quite often end up opening up to them. The longest a child is on the bus is half an hour. If Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School was to close these children have to be on a bus a lot longer, maybe with a different driver most days.	Comment noted.
7.1.39	Why should my child have to spend a large proportion of their day travelling unsupervised in order to receive an education simply because of where they have to live?	See 1.3.1.
7.1.40	Due to the ruralness other schools can be difficult or impossible to get to for some students and families.	Home-to-School Transport would be provided to eligible pupils to their closest alternative schools, should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close. The Council has recognised in the Consultation Document and draft Impact Assessments that it would be more difficult for pupils to access after-school activity if they were reliant on school transport. These will be updated to take account of issues raised during the consultation.
7.1.41	There will be a massive time and financial impact on the families who will have to then drive 20mins or more both ways twice a day for the entire school life of their children.	Home-to-School Transport would be provided to eligible pupils to their closest alternative schools, should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close. The Council has recognised in the Consultation Document and draft Impact Assessments that it would be more difficult for pupils to access after-school activity if they were reliant on school transport. These will be updated to take account of issues raised during the consultation, such as the economic impact on families.
7.1.42	The consultation states there would be a reduced travel time. This would be the case for those who have chosen to send their children to Dolau. It is a credit to Llanfihangel Rhydithon school that parents from outside the immediate catchment area choose to send their children to Llanfihangel Rhydithon. As a parent you want your child to receive the best education ... demonstrated by the number of out of	Comment noted.

	catchment area parents that are willing to travel to Llanfihangel Rhydithon.	
7.1.43	If children were to be transported to the receiving school by bus, it would mean that parents would lose contact with the school. It would also mean that teachers would lose the ability to discuss issues with parents at the start or end of each day. Teachers and parents would be restricted to telephone calls or organised meetings at the school.	<p>The Council has recognised in the draft Community Impact Assessment that additional travel 'could impact on the ability of parents to take part in school events, meetings etc'. This will be updated to take account of issues raised during the consultation, including the loss of direct contact at the school gate with teachers.</p> <p>However, most of the alternative schools have pupils on home-to-school transport and are experienced in managing appropriate communication channels with parents.</p>
7.1.44	Some residents have located close to school deliberately to save on a commute.	Comment noted.

7.2 Comments about additional transport costs

7.2.1	What about the transport cost then?	<p>Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, then free home-to-school transport would be provided to eligible pupils to their nearest alternative school i.e if pupils live 2 miles or more from their nearest alternative school. An assessment of pupils currently attending the school in September 21 shows that 29 pupils would be eligible for free home-to-school transport.</p> <p>There are two home-to-school transport routes that transport pupils to Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School – the LW14 and LW15. The LW14 is a 16 seat minibus and the LW15 is a 16 seat minibus, but could also be a 21 seat minibus. However, it is not anticipated that there would be additional transport costs, based on the analysis of pupils' postcodes (PLASC Jan 2020), as pupils can be accommodated on existing transport routes to their nearest alternative school. There may be a situation in the future where additional transport routes may be required for</p>
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		additional children (i.e. children starting school for the first time or children who move into the area) which would depend on where they lived. However, at this point in time, it is not possible to know the exact cost of this but it is anticipated that it would be a minimal cost.
7.2.2	The majority of pupils attending the school do not require school transport. Should you close the school have you taken into consideration the cost of additional transport needs?	As above.
7.2.3	PCC will have increased travel costs as all these children will now have to be bused to their suggested schools as over 3 miles.	As above.
7.2.4	I assume the council will also have the cost of school transport for some of the children affected by the closure too.	As above.
7.2.5	Surely the cost of transporting these children will wipe out any of the revenue gained by closing the school.	As above.
7.2.6	Closure will also lead to younger children travelling longer distances and lead to increased transport costs thereby diluting any possible saving.	As above.
7.2.7	If the school closes the cost to transport these children would increase hugely.	As above.
7.2.8	The closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon School will lead to additional transport costs which will be considerably more than any saving made by closing the school.	As above.
7.2.9	If you close the school, pupils will have to be transported to other schools, which will be at a huge cost to Powys County Council.	As above.
7.2.10	I urge you to think of the children and also the extra expense of transporting them from their local school.	As above.
7.2.11	Transport – if Dolau school closed every child would need transporting to an alternative school. The document This would mean a huge cost to PCC; in fact, a cost so great that it would negate any 'savings' proposed to the council education. NOT MENTIONED IN 18.vi	As above.
7.2.12	Will there really be no extra travel costs? There are currently 7 pupils being transported, however, you will need to transport 24 children to the nearest proposed school, how do you intend to do this without any extra cost? Many of our children walk to school or are transported by parents directly.	As above.

7.2.13	I would also like to meet the bus company that are going to transport the children to receiving schools for free. At the moment Powys are only paying to transport 7 children. This will increase to 37.	As above.
7.2.14	Currently the majority of pupils walk to school or are transported by parents. Closure of the school would result in an additional 31 pupils requiring school transport.	As above.
7.2.15	Only 7 pupils are transported to our school by Powys CC, if the school closes only 6 are within walking distance to their nearest school. Therefore, it is likely that transport costs for up to 31 pupils will be significantly increased.	As above.
7.2.16	The current 37 pupils 37, who attend the school, only 7 are transported in by Powys, the other 30 walk or are driven by a parent. If the school was to close only 6 are within walking distance, all the others would need transport which will mean a substantial added cost to Powys, common sense tells you that you will not make savings here. I am fully aware there are other transport companies out there but they are going to have to be paid on top of what they receive now.	As above.
7.2.17	Currently 37 pupils attend Llanfihangel, only 7 are transported to the school by Powys funded transport, 30 either walk or are transported by parents/guardians. If Llanfihangel were to close then the 7 pupils currently receiving school transport would still require transport, so there will be no saving on transport for these pupils, which currently costs circa £24k (£18 a day x 7 pupils x 190 school days = £23940).	As above.
7.2.18	If the school closes, only 6 pupils are within walking distance to their nearest alternative receiving school, leaving 31 pupils left to transport by Powys funded transport. £18 a day x 31 pupils x 90 school days = £106,020; £106,020 - £23940 = £82080	As above.
7.2.19	Currently only 7 children receive school transport, the remainder either walk or are driven in by parents, should the school close a further 23 children will qualify for school transport. Contrary to the assumptions made in the report at 18 iv) these children cannot be accommodated by the current bus service and owing to the numbers of qualifying children and differing directions the children are located a second bus will be needed. A conservative estimate of the cost of a second bus would be £48,000.	As above.

7.2.20	The consultation document states that there will be no additional transport costs! Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon school be closed by Powys, a significant number of additional pupils (31) would need to be transported, incurring significant costs (only 6 pupils would be in walking distance to their nearest school) Powys County Council would therefore not be making the savings they suggest in the consultation document. It is apparent from the consultation document that Powys has not costed the additional transport costs!	As above.
7.2.21	The document states that it is “assumed” there will no additional costs. How is this possible? When at the moment only seven children travel on the bus. Can you confirm that there will genuinely no additional costs?	As above.
7.2.22	At present only 7 children are transported to Dolau School, if you close our school this will mean that only 6 are within walking distance to the nearest school. Having attended the mother and toddler group knowing that the majority who attend are within walking distance the travel costs need to be looked into in great details.	As above.
7.2.23	At present there are 37 pupils in the school and it would be likely to increase to 43 by 2024. If the school closes 31 of the present pupils would need transport by Powys County Council, an un-necessary cost of closure.	As above.
7.2.24	Another issue to consider is school transport, which at present amounts to only 7 pupils accessing this, not much of drain on the councils’ funds at present, but if school closure goes ahead Powys County Council could see this increase substantially, most probably wiping out any monies saved should closure continue, I do hope this is considered accurately.	As above.
7.2.25	The document states that it is “assumed” there will no additional costs. How is this possible? When at the moment only seven children travel on the bus. Can you confirm that there will genuinely no additional costs?	As above.
7.2.26	Have Powys County Council weighed up the costs of transporting all future pupils to alternative schools and the emotional impact as well as cost that this will have on our children?	As above.

7.2.27	The school is within walking distance for many of the children or parents drive them in therefore saving on transport costs.	As above.
7.2.28	Without a local school very young children often have to travel long distances to alternative provision and this is itself a costly exercise and must be fully costed when analysing savings.	As above.
7.2.29	With many of the receiving schools mentioned in the consultation document already full, there will be a number of children that will require transport, not necessary to their nearest school and this WILL out way the saving of this proposal.	As above.
7.2.30	Added to the school transport consideration should be that very few pupils receive school transport as the children are prepared to travel to attend Dolau school from the locality at their own cost. If the school were to close there would be a substantial increase in school transport provision to take the local children to alternative schools	As above.
7.2.31	Our survey shows that there will be some extra transport costs, as the children East of Dolau will have to be supplied with an extra bus – again, Llanbister is seriously oversubscribed so there is no room there, Knighton is full I believe and not classed as a rural school. So, a new run to Crossgates would have to be arranged. With only 7 children on transport now, this will change to the majority needing transport once moved – these children are bound to cost more to move around, as well as spending a lot of time travelling. Also, by the time we get to August 2022 our numbers will be up again predictably from the present 37 to 43 and may be even more, so the costs can only go up. Would Powys County Council prefer to spend their money transporting children around the countryside, unsupervised and at potentially more daily risk while travelling, than spend it on their education in their locality, in a happy and secure surrounding already proven to be an efficient and vibrant school with a history of very successful ex pupils???	As above.
7.2.32	If the school were to close the children would need to be transported to other school s. Obviously this has its own cost implication and I imagine would affect the existing bus route. I believe the high school bus links with the primary school bus again this cause problems. Pupils would need transport to Knighton Primary School, there is no	Analysis of pupils home postcodes indicate that 2 pupils live closer to Knighton C.P. School, if there was no school in Llanfihangel Rhydithon. The Transport Unit confirmed that these pupils could be accommodated on current transport routes at no extra cost.

	such service currently running. Transport would also need to be provided to Crossgates and Llanbister again at further cost.	
7.2.33	It also states that some of our children are nearer to other schools so there would be no extra transport cost there. Some children bypass their local schools to come to Dolau, but that is parent choice.	<p>The Consultation Document states that ‘Should there be no school in Dolau, there would be a reduction in travel time / distance for pupils attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School for whom this isn’t currently the closest school should they transfer to their closest school.</p> <p>The Council notes the comment about parents choosing Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School instead of their nearest school.</p>
7.2.34	Will additional transport costs be incurred as a result of the proposal? It is not anticipated that additional transport costs would be incurred as a result of the change, it is assumed that the current bus would be used at no additional cost to the Authority. Only 7 children in Dolau are transported at the cost of the local authority. How will transporting 30 additional children effect bus routes? How will it affect the high school bus timetables?	It is not anticipated that secondary school bus timetables would need to be revised.
7.2.35	The expense of this additional transport is going to be staggering and at the cost of the taxpayer. Even though Powys have said that this cost comes out of a different budget to education, it still has to be paid by Powys.	The estimated additional transport costs are included in the calculation of the estimated savings of £59,000 for the proposal.
7.2.36	They would therefore have to send their children on school buses which will cost you a lot of extra money – have you worked out how much this cost will be in September 2022?	As above
7.2.37	Transport costs for Dolau School are currently at a minimum for Powys County Council to bear, but there would be significant additional costs for the children to travel to a distant alternative school	As above
7.2.38	Currently 2 minibuses transport a very small number of pupils (7) to Llanfihangel Rhydithon school. This is a shared resource with local high school pupils, offering value for money.	As above

7.2.39	The cost of transporting them to these other schools will soon add up to the amount PCC envisage they will save by closing. Look to the future, not just saving a small amount now.	As above
7.2.40	Revenue saving to the council transporting 30 additional children to their next nearest schools, more bus runs, more higher carbon footprint of Powys County Council. This alone costs more than your proposed savings in year 1. The extra transport costs of Powys County Council transporting children to Crossgates would far outweigh the savings you propose to make. Currently there are only seven children being transported to Dolau at the cost of PCC. The others are driven by parents or grandparents.	As above
7.2.41	If Powys were to close Dolau school they would not be saving money, it would cost them more in the long run on transport costs alone. I think closing it won't actually make any savings in the long run.	As above
7.2.42	The travel cost alone of shipping children to other schools per year will dwarf this annual saving. The consultation document states there will be no additional travel cost, rubbish and pure wishful thinking.	As above
7.2.43	I question how much money the local authority would save with the added costs of transporting two classes of young people to alternative schools.	As above
7.2.44	Powys CC states in the consultation document that savings of around £59,000 per annum. This figure will soon be neutralised with the additional transport costs.	As above
7.2.45	On the costings that Powys gave us 5 years ago when we were faced with closure before, it is calculated that it would cost almost this amount [£59,000] to bus our children elsewhere in the first instance.	As above
7.2.46	The figures regarding the transport of children contradict the proposed plans to save money.	As above
7.2.47	A detailed analysis was prepared within the community the last time Powys CC proposed closure of the school, five years ago. This demonstrated that with the inclusion of increased transport activity and other impacts of the school closure, there was no financial benefit to closing Llanfihangel Rhydithon school. That situation will not have changed over the past 5 years.	As above

7.2.48	If there are 31 pupils to transport as a result of the school closure this will cost the local authority an additional £82,080 has this been included in the finance figures and the overall saving of £59k? - how will PCC be making savings?	As above
7.2.49	I am an ex-business bank manager so the last time (in 2016) the school was under threat of closure I conducted a thorough financial analysis (I still have copies if you need them) which concluded that even when numbers were down to 28 children the increased transport costs were going to wipe out the claimed savings that the council said they were going to make in the delegated budget and in fact cost the council a further £20798.50. As a result of this fact , it is obvious that the council are going to be spending not saving money as the cost of transport has increased during the last 5 years, the amount of children in the school have increased by a third (now 37 children) and the amount that the council even claim to be saving this time around has decreased to a mere £50k. A quick calculation tells me that transport costs are going to be around the 100K mark which will mean this proposal will cost the council £50k extra.	As above
7.2.50	The savings if Dolau should close are eroded by the extra transport costs to take children to their local schools!! Recent quotes have indicated that it will cost £50k to transport some pupils to Crossgates School!! Also transport will have to be provided to take children to Knighton's School from Llangullo and Llanbister Road, as no bus at present is active on that route!!	As above

7.3 Concern about the impact on the environment

7.3.1	If all small schools are to close in Powys to fill up the bigger less popular schools, then this is going to have a great impact on the climate with extra vehicles on the road transporting children further afield.	<p>The Council is not proposing to close all small schools in Powys to fill up the bigger less popular ones.</p> <p>In terms of the impact on the environment, the Council has recognised that additional travel would be required should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close:</p>
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7.3.2	If they have to go elsewhere like Crossgates or Llanbister you are then pumping MORE CO2 into the atmosphere. I think you are more than a bit backward there.	As above.
7.3.3	The carbon footprint getting all the children to schools outside of the catchment area.	As above.
7.3.4	As well as the significant travel costs, this would also negatively impact the environment – additional car journeys will add to the carbon footprint.	As above.
7.3.5	Where are the children going to go? The cost of transportation to another school will be outrageous, and very polluting	As above.
7.3.6	Moreover in the present time of climate change and the pandemic. Why send children further away to school in cars or buses when they can attend a local school with less travel. A smaller school allows for less social mixing in the present climate.	See 1.3.1.

7.3.7	If the plans go ahead and Dolau school is closed, none of the children will be able to walk to school and how can this be good for the environment? Increasing the number of vehicles that need to be on the road.	As above.
7.3.8	Closing the school will increase transport as pupils will have to travel further. This will have an impact environmentally at a time when we should be cutting our carbon emissions.	As above.
7.3.9	Closing Llanfihangel Rhydithon school would mean that the vast majority of pupils would have to travel further to school, adding to local road traffic and thereby increasing greenhouse gas emissions.	As above.
7.3.10	What is the environmental impact of ferrying these children to and from there alternative school?	As above.
7.3.11	Moving these children to Crossgates will only add to Powys County Council's carbon footprint and kg/tonne of carbon dioxide and greenhouse gasses released.	As above
7.3.12	The cost and carbon impact of the proposal are out of sync with the aspirations of the council and wider society.	As above.
7.3.13	Having declared a Climate Emergency on the 24th Sept 2020 (https://en.powys.gov.uk/climatechange) the council is now proposing shifting a commute of over 40 pupils to a minimum of 10 miles a day (based on Crossgates), so an increase of somewhere in the region of 40,000 to 80,000 extra commute miles a year! (based on 200 school days, 2 x 5 miles additional commutes a day and 20-40 cars (accounting for some siblings))	As above.
7.3.14	The government are always stating how the country needs to become more greener, stop polluting, if you close the school, there will be a huge increase in pollution due to having to travel further, also a huge cost to the authority for transport. At present the parents take 30 children locally to the school, Powys only transport 7, but if it were to close you would be transporting the majority and it will be further to travel.	As above.
7.3.15	There is a significant movement across the world to localise our economies and activities. This makes moves to close more local schools fly in the face of changed realities and environmental imperatives.	See 1.3.1.

7.3.16	Within the consultation document the effect upon the carbon footprint of all the possible options has not been considered.	As above.
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7.4 Concern about impact on pupils' access to after schools activities

7.4.1	Transporting children to another school would mean a longer school day for small children that may only just be 4 yrs old. In Dolau the children have access to after school clubs most days. This would not be possible if the children were using the bus home.	<p>The Council has recognised within the draft Impact Assessments that it may be challenging for pupils to attend after-school activities if they are reliant on home-to-school transport. However, schools are able to offer extra-curricular activities during the school day as well as after school. It would be an expectation of the new curriculum that schools provide additional experiences for their pupils.</p> <p>Many schools in Powys have pupils who are using home-to-school transport and these schools are experienced in ensuring that all pupils are able to participate in extra-curricular activities. Schools are 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>
7.4.2	The vast majority of Dolau pupils will not be able to attend any after school activities that may be available	As above.
7.4.3	Currently it is possible for my children to take part in all extracurricular activities as they do not use school transport, however, they would not be able to access any extracurricular activity due to then requiring school transport.	As above.
7.4.4	Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils be moved to a larger school, then many of these pupils would not have the opportunity to partake in after-school activities due to the times of home-school transport. Therefore, they would not be provided a wider range of extra-curricular opportunities.	As above.
7.4.5	If you were to close our school many of the children would not have the chance to take part in what little is on offer as they will be getting	As above.

	on a bus for the long journey home so, not able to take part in after school activities anyway!!	
7.4.6	With parents of young families traveling greater distances there is less time for community led activities. If this school is closed those children who have to travel out of the area to other schools will lose out of end of school activities as bus only run at the end of the school day and not end the end of after school activities.	As above.
7.4.7	Parents who are without a vehicle or driving licence are not able to attend meetings or events in schools further away, discriminated against, families unable to support their children, making them feel lonely and neglected and unable to attend after school clubs.	As above
7.4.8	Working parents may not finish work on time to pick children up from after school clubs if transport is not supplied so children won't have the same opportunities as others.	As above.
7.4.9	The consultation states that Pupils would attend larger schools, would have access to a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities – this is factually incorrect due to Powys county council's agreement to transport pupils to their nearest schools. School transport times DO NOT allow children to attend after school clubs, which in turn then increases the social isolation and discrimination of children who have to use public transport as they cannot access the same opportunities as their peers.	As above.
7.4.10	You state in your consultation document that a benefit of these pupils attending larger schools would be a wider variety of extracurricular activities...I would however argue this point. When offering free transport for pupils to attend their next nearest school, this does not include free transport should they wish to attend any after school clubs. Therefore, limiting the choice of extracurricular activities rather than enhancing it.	As above.
7.4.11	Attending the after-school clubs would also be difficult for many and would mean that the children could only attend if parents could provide transportation, therefore would have a negative impact	As above.
7.4.12	Once our children get bussed off to another school will they be able to enjoy the same benefits (e.g. before/after school clubs)? Will the transport that Powys council MUST provide ensure children are still	As above.

	able to enjoy extracurricular activities after school or benefit from a decent breakfast club offering or is the travel provision just there to get school children to attend the normal school day, I expect so. Suddenly the current 7 that rely on council transport becomes 30, that, unless Powys commits to providing transport for extracurricular activities potentially miss out on this key part of a decent and proper education.	
7.4.13	The children will miss out because they will be travelling during the times the extra-curricular activities are taking place. These extra-curricular activities also assist parents in their ability to balance family life with necessary employment. Breakfast clubs have enabled parents to get to their places of employment on time. To take these facilities away would create difficulties for parents as well as taking away the valuable educational and social benefits for the children.	As above.
7.4.14	In the last few years we have lost Whitton and Beguildy primary schools, this has led to very young children traveling ever greater distances, missing out on after school clubs and activities.	As above.

7.5 Other comments

7.5.1	Railway timetable does not give an alternative option no buses to Dolau at present.	Comment noted.
7.5.2	Travelling to Crossgates School involves using the A488/A44 at a time when the road is already busy and I question if any traffic surveys have been carried out as to the type of vehicles that would be using the road at this time? My concern is HGV's that supply local farms and other goods carriers that use the road would be mixing with the school traffic. Many pupils walk to the current location in relative safety commuting to Crossgates increases risk especially during the winter months.	All home-to-school transport routes are risk-assessed.
7.5.3	We need to cut down on commuting.	Comment noted.

8. IMPACT ON STAFF

8.1	Concern about the impact on staff that work hard and endlessly to provide a safe teaching environment for the children, who are at risk of losing their jobs	Should the school close, Staff currently employed at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would be subject to a management of change process and be supported fully throughout the process.
8.2	The staff may not be able to secure another post.	As above.
8.3	Teachers who work so hard they will be jobless which is difficult in this area.	As above.
8.4	Concern about the ability to secure teaching posts for the staff of Dolau school.	As above.
8.5	Will there be jobs for these people?	As above.
8.6	Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon school close then there would be a number of redundancy packages required	As above.
8.7	If there aren't any schools, there are less jobs. Can you, at Powys County Council prove that jobs in schools are going to be available for these staff. I know of a young family who want to move back to the area, but she is a teacher, if you close all these schools what's the chances of her getting a job in Powys to make her want to come back to the area.	All vacancies for jobs within Powys schools are advertised and it would be the decision of the individual whether they wished to apply for a post in a Powys school or not.
8.8	How much will it cost to make the staff at the school redundant. I am sure you say they will be redeployed. How many would actually be redeployed. Do you know this? Where is the proof of this in the consultation document.	Until a decision is made to close the school, it is not possible to know what options would be available for staff. However, should the school close, staff currently employed at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would be subject to a management of change process and be supported fully throughout the process.
8.9	Not only would this process put myself through more worry and concern over my employment but most likely have an effect on other positions outside of Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School, which I do not think has always been taken account of. By taking away my role at Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School you could eventually take away my other roles within the Council. I also feel by not having an adequate timeline staff and parents are being left without knowing when there will be an actual decision made. We may have to endure this pressure and unknowing over the Summer holidays which will be	The Council recognises that any school reorganisation proposal creates a period of uncertainty for staff and parents. The Consultation Document states that a final decision is anticipated to be made towards the end of 2021, although this is dependent on the number of responses received and a Cabinet decision to proceed to publish a statutory notice.

	basically unfair especially as some employees have mortgages to pay and are wanting to plan ahead.	
8.10	Do you have any idea the impact you already having on staff? Are you supporting staff during this time?	The Council's HR team have met with staff and the Council has employed an ex-head to support headteachers involved in school reorganisation.
8.11	The staff have almost zero sick leave and are exemplary employees, again, why punish those who work the hardest?	The Council is not punishing staff and the reasons for the proposal are outlined within the Consultation Document.
8.12	What about our teachers will they be part of our children's transition?	Should the school close, the receiving schools would work closely with Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School to ensure a smooth transition.

9. COMMENTS ABOUT EARLY YEARS PROVISION

9.1 Comments relating to the Cylch Meithrin at Dolau

9.1.1 General comments about the Cylch Meithrin at Dolau

9.1.1.1	Cylch Meithrin is a real asset to Dolau school which already has a large waiting list – this shows how popular the setting is.	The Council notes these comments about the popularity of Cylch Meithrin Dolau.
9.1.1.2	Cylch Meithrin is a popular and well attended early year setting based at the school, children are introduced to the Welsh language from a young age.	As above.
9.1.1.3	There is also a very successful and well-attended Cylch Meithrin setting, which my children will attend as their chosen early years setting, before starting school.	As above.
9.1.1.4	Cylch Meithrin is a Welsh medium playgroup promoting the education and development of children from 2 years through to school age. We currently have 9 children attending Cylch with another 11 due to attend in the next year, 5 of these children have newborn siblings who will hopefully follow in their footsteps and attend the Cylch setting leading on to Dolau school. That is 25 children in the next few years. If Dolau school closes, the Cylch setting will unfortunately not get these numbers.	As above.

9.1.1.5	Cylch Meithrin Dolau has gone from strength to strength and with growing numbers in the future are having to provide another session to enable us to accommodate these growing numbers and from September 2021 will be adding a Monday morning to our Tuesday and Thursday sessions.	As above.
9.1.1.6	We also have Cylch Meithrin Dolau, which offer fun and learning for pre-school children from two and half all through the medium of Welsh. They have 14 children booked in within the next year and 24 children in the next few years. This Cylch Meithrin helps promote Welsh language then can continue throughout the school and within the local area.	As above.
9.1.1.7	The setting will be at capacity in September, with a waiting list, making a profit! We could expand this setting with additional staff.	As above.
9.1.1.8	Dolau has a thriving preschool setting which directly feeds the school & will result in increased pupil numbers over the next few years, has this been factored into your closure proposal?	As above.
9.1.1.9	There has also been a new preschool setting added since your last school closure proposal which is just up and running now with the potential of really boosting school numbers in the future, The Cylch Mythrin is such a valuable asset to the school that this should be given time to take effect.	As above.
9.1.1.10	Over the last 2 years 22 children have accessed Cylch Meithrin provision.	As above.

9.1.2 Concern about the future of the Cylch Meithrin at Dolau

9.1.2.1	If the school closes, the Cylch Meithrin will be lost too.	Should there be no school in Llanfihangel Rhydithon, it is likely that there would be an impact on Cylch Meithrin Dolau if parents decided to choose other early years providers that are co-located with any of the alternative schools thereby reducing the number of pupils attending the Cylch, with an impact on its viability. However, this is not a given, as the Cylch could potentially continue to operate if there was sufficient demand.
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		There are places available at Little Acorns, a funded early years provider located at Crossgates C.P. School. Welsh-medium early years provision is also available at Cylch Meithrin Llandrindod located at Ysgol Trefonnen C. in W. Community School.
9.1.2.2	What would happen to our fantastic Cylch setting, odds on closure of the school would lead to closure of this also,	As above.
9.1.2.3	Our Cylch will NOT be able to survive if the school closes, many of those attending or waiting to attend, are siblings of those already coming to Dolau School. If their siblings are no longer going to the school, nor will they attend the Cylch.	As above.
9.1.2.4	There is an active and popular Cylch Meithrin at Llanfihangel Rhydithon school which promotes the use of the Welsh language. This setting would also be under threat should the school close.	As above.
9.1.2.5	What would happen to the recently opened Cylch this is a very popular setting. Would you still allow that to stay open.	As above.
9.1.2.6	This as its name suggests is a Welsh language setting and is invaluable in promoting the Welsh language. If the school should close so too would the setting risking the development of the Welsh language in the area.	As above.
9.1.2.7	The current Welsh Medium Cylch Meithrin is providing a Welsh Medium start to the youngest learners. Their parents have benefitted from Welsh language education and are able to support their Welsh language skills at home. If the school was to shut this opportunity would have to be replaced by more costly Welsh Medium education in the receiving schools for the pupils. The opportunity to bring back Welsh to the Llanfihangel Rhydithon community would be lost.	Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, children would still have an opportunity to develop their Welsh language skills. One of the key characteristics of the four purposes in the Curriculum for Wales is to develop ambitious, capable learners who can communicate effectively in different forms and settings, using both Welsh and English. All learners should have appropriate pathways for learning Welsh and English to enable them to develop the confidence to use both languages in everyday life. All Powys schools are well supported with excellent resources from the Athrawon Bro Team to enable teachers to teach Welsh. Staff from nearby schools have attended the sabbatical Welsh language course with further staff attending the sabbatical course in Newtown in

		<p>September 2021. Opportunities to use Welsh within and beyond the classroom (including on digital platforms) support learners to use Welsh confidently and appreciate its usefulness to communication in a bilingual Wales and again all Powys schools are effectively supported with rich resources from the Athrawon Bro Team. Schools, through effective pupil voice forums, known as the 'Cryw Cymraeg' plan a range of activities to increase the use of Welsh outside the classroom. Facilitating the use of Welsh, through planned linguistic progression in every phase of education from ages 3 to 16, and as part of a whole-school approach, offers opportunities for all learners to develop bilingually and this is a key priority for all schools in Wales.</p> <p>Those pupils living in the Llanfihangel Rhydithon area would continue to be able to develop their Welsh language skills and use it within the community.</p>
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9.1.3 Comments about funding of the Cylch Meithrin

9.1.3.1	<p>In 2019 Powys County Council provided funding for the Cylch – which is a Welsh language playgroup operating on the school grounds. This is a popular facility in the area and a positive way to promote and develop Welsh language skills. It therefore seems extremely short-sighted and a poor use of taxpayer funds to close down the Cylch just two years later. Far from closing it down, the playgroup should be given every possible support and encouragement.</p>	<p>The Council is not proposing to close down the Cylch Meithrin.</p> <p>The Council provided £10,000 of funding through the Welsh Government's Childcare Offer 'small grants' scheme to refurbish the Cylch Meithrin. The allocation of funding is based on the needs of individual settings.</p>
9.1.3.2	<p>Powys County Council have just given a grant of £310,000 to set the Cylch Meithrin up!</p>	<p>As above.</p>
9.1.3.3	<p>Powys County Council have just given a grant of £10,000 to set this up!</p>	<p>As above.</p>
9.1.3.4	<p>This valuable setting (which received a generous grant from Powys County Council only last year, to refurbish a portacabin and help us move forward), is CIW registered, providing important 3+ Funding, immersion in the Welsh language, and the beginnings of beautiful</p>	<p>As above.</p>

	friendships that are nurtured through to school age, and beyond. We provide a valuable feed to Dolau School admissions.	
9.1.3.5	Cylch Meithrin Dolau meets on the site of Llanfihangel Rhydithon Funded provision is available at the site -your statement is incorrect, Cylch Meithrin Dolau is funded. My daughter receives funding here.	As above.
9.1.3.6	Those that attend the Ti a Fi go to the Cylch group which has recently been approved the 3 + funding who then go to the school.	As above.

9.1.4 Comments about registration

9.1.4.1	My young daughter is due to start at Dolau School in September 2023. She currently attends Cylch Meithrin Dolau on the school site, which is fully registered with the CIW (reg no: W1400002814), where she receives Welsh medium preschool education, a rarity in our local area. I notice the information regarding Cylch Meithrin Dolau is incorrectly listed as “unregistered” in your consultation document. It is my wish for her to attend Llanfihangel Rhydithon School, as I did, alongside her older brother, which I have no doubt will give her the best possible start available in the local area.	It is acknowledged that there is an error in the Consultation Document – the Cylch Meithrin was registered in September 2020.
9.1.4.2	It is implied within the report that no early years provision is provided at Llanfihangel Rhydithon School, this is not a correct statement, Cylch Meithrin Dolau is a registered setting and offers funding via the childcare element.	As above.
9.1.4.3	The Cylch Meithrin has recently been registered and together with the mother and toddler group, provide a strong feeder stream for the school which would include houses being built in the community which are providing additional children on roll.	Comment noted.

9.2 Comments relating to Dolau Parent and Toddlers Group

9.2.1	The Dolau Parent and Toddlers group were so welcoming and felt so nice knowing we were with a group of children who will all be attending Dolau School. Again through the most recent lockdown the Dolau Parent and Toddlers Group continued to meet on Zoom and messaged to check everyone was coping and thankfully have started back up now	The Council is pleased that the Dolau Parent and Toddlers Group (Ti a Fi) was able to provide this support during the lockdown periods.
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	things are opening up again. I feel really grateful to the group for encouraging me to attend and helped me when at times I was really struggling. The group has great attendance showing the future of Dolau School is strong, I have never known so many young families living in the area with more looking to return.	
9.2.2	The pandemic has meant that I have not been able to attend any baby classes with my son indoors, I feel so thankful that Dolau Playgroup are the only playgroup that started up in the summer outdoors when they were able to.	Comment noted.
9.2.3	I feel that the 4 of my children have all benefited from starting at the Mother & Toddler group and the Playschool, as they meet children of similar ages and make friends before starting school – friends that they will be with their whole school life. I feel that if Dolau school were to close so would these 2 settings as they work side by side with the school and would not be viable on their own.	Should there be no school in Llanfihangel Rhydithon, it is likely that there would be an impact on Cylch Meithrin Dolau if parents decided to choose other early years providers that are co-located with any of the alternative schools thereby reducing the number of pupils attending the Cylch, with an impact on its viability. However, this is not a given, as the Cylch could potentially continue to operate if there was sufficient demand.
9.2.4	Dolau School is the basis of our parent and toddler group and without the school there will be no parent and toddler group!	As above.
9.2.5	What would happen to our lovely Ti a Fi setting that meets in the hall weekly? What support do young mums have in the community if the school closes. This was absolutely vital for me as a young mum, the support of the other mums was critical to my wellbeing.	The Council notes the comments about the importance of the early years provision to the wellbeing of young mothers in the community.
9.2.6	Thankfully Dolau Mother and Toddlers group started back up in the summer and after personal invites and messages to encourage us to attend, we did and what an amazing group they are. We were welcomed from day 1. No other local playgroups started back up so this was a lovely way to be able to meet other children following covid guidelines.	Comment noted.
9.2.7	Dolau Parent & Toddlers (Ti a Fi) is a group that welcomes all and have a great network of mums and grandparents who attend. Powys county council should be encouraging families to move to the area and supporting and promoting rural schools is what they should be doing.	Comment noted.
9.2.8	We have started outdoor activities and have found new mums have	Comment noted.

	<p>really benefited from the interaction. During the pandemic babies and toddlers have had limited social interaction and this will have had a detrimental effect on their development and we may not see the full effects of this for years to come from the pandemic! The education system in Powys is going to have to ensure these are dealt with and small rural school are the best way to tackle and ensure the effects of the pandemic are looked at.</p>	
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9.3 Comments about early years provision at other locations

9.3.1	<p>There is no parent and toddler groups in Penybont, Crossgates, Bleddfa the nearest groups would be some miles away, in the last 18 months Llanddewi group closed. These groups are vital to new parents especially mothers they need that contact especially during the pandemic.</p>	<p>There is a Cylch Ti a Fi at Llanbister C.P. School and at Ysgol Trefonnen.</p>
9.3.2	<p>Where would our preschool children go if Dolau school closed? Crossgates setting is not affiliated to the school and should the school acquire its portacabin back to cope with additional numbers enrolled at the school, what happens then?</p>	<p>There are a number of pre-school settings available in the area as outlined in the Consultation document. Little Acorns in Crossgates is a non-maintained setting but works closely with Crossgates C.P. School. – a new demountable has recently been provided for the setting.</p>
9.3.3	<p>Little Acorns (Crossgates) Little Acorns is a non-maintained community run setting which operates from the site of Crossgates C.P. School. Does this facility have places for 14 additional children should Cylch Meithrin Dolau close in 12 months' time? There is already a lack of childcare provision in Llandrindod Wells. Can you guarantee places are available?</p>	<p>The Council manages the admission of children aged 3 and 4 for funded pre-school provision. Parents would have to apply for these places and, if settings are full, then an over-subscription criteria is applied. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils with a statement of special education needs, which names a specific pre-school setting which the child should attend because their needs can be best met by that particular pre-school setting and its facilities, will be automatically allocated a place. • Looked after or previously looked after children (Evidence of a previously looked after child will be required to accompany the application form) • The nearest setting to child's normal place of residence, with a sibling attending the setting at the

		<p>time the child will commence at the setting. If a setting is sited within a school campus, consideration will be given, if possible, if a sibling is attending the school when the child commences at the setting, provided the normal place or residence is in the catchment area of the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nearest setting to the child's normal place of residence. • Residing outside the catchment area of the setting with a sibling attending the setting at the time the child will commence at the setting. If a setting is sited within a school campus, consideration will be given, if possible, if a sibling is attending the school when the child commences at the setting. • Residing outside the catchment area of the setting
9.3.4	Little Acorns (Crossgates) Little Acorns is a non-maintained community run setting which operates from the site of Crossgates C.P. School.	Comment noted.
9.3.5	Do all alternative schools have functioning Cylch Methrin settings.?	The nearest Cylch Meithrin is Cylch Meithrin Llandrindod at Ysgol Trefonnen.
9.3.6	Has any other closest school got a registered Cylch Meithrin setting?	As above.
9.3.7	They do not have this facility [Ti a Fi] at the next nearest school – Crossgates!	The Council recognises that there is no Ti a Fi provision in Crossgates. There is a Ti a Fi group that meets in Llanbister and at Ysgol Trefonnen.

9.4 Other comments

9.4.1	It's essential that Powys County Council works more closely with Mudiad Meithrin. Establishing Cylchoedd Meithrin and ensuring appropriate staff who can ensure appropriate Welsh medium opportunities is not easy. Due to the pandemic, I as Support Officer was unable to meet with Cylch Meithrin Dolau to support with the Welsh language on the ground, but I continued to support virtually by providing support to the staff and management support to the committee.	The Council is committed to working closely with Mudiad Meithrin in order to ensure Welsh-medium early years provision.
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10. REFERENCE TO PREVIOUS CONSULTATIONS

10.1 Previous Dolau consultations

10.1.1	<p>In 2016 at a full council meeting, the Cabinet and councillors requested to abandon the proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School and to put a formal agreement between Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School and Llanelwedd CoW School. To allow Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School to become a Church of Wales School so they can federate and become one school over 2 sites. Why hasn't this been allowed to happen?</p>	<p>The Council previously carried out a formal consultation on a proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School in 2016.</p> <p>The Cabinet in 2016 did not decide that the best way forward was to have a formal arrangement between Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and Llanelwedd C.i.W School. Paragraph 23 of the Cabinet report of 27th September 2016 states:</p> <p><i>'It is recommended that a new report is brought to Cabinet with draft recommendations for Llanbister C.P. School and Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School in accordance with the Schools Reorganisation Policy 2015, which considers the circumstances of the two schools alongside the Authority's aspiration for primary education, which is to have 'headteachers with no classroom responsibilities.'</i></p> <p>Following that Cabinet decision, discussions took place with governing bodies of a number of schools about possible partnerships with both Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and Llanbister C.P. School.</p> <p>This included Llanelwedd C.i.W Primary School as there was already a shared headship arrangement in place. The outcome of this discussion was that officers</p>
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		<p>suggested that a formal partnership agreement was the most appropriate way forward, verified in an email sent from an officer to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School on the 21st September 2018, as follows:</p> <p><i>'As you know, we met with you earlier this year to consider options for Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School, and this included further discussions with other schools that may be willing to formally partner or federate/merge with the school – the premise of the discussions was PCC's Cabinet's wish to maintain primary provision in Dolau to serve the local community.</i></p> <p><i>This stage has now been completed, and, following consideration of all information received, it would appear that the most appropriate way forward for the school is to formalise the current partnership with Llanelwedd, supported by the rural schools grant.</i></p> <p><i>I understand that you have a governors meeting tonight, therefore it would be good to know the views of your governing body – I am sure that there are many questions about what a 'formal partnership' looks like! We would then be happy to attend a meeting with both chairs and the head to discuss this further.'</i></p> <p>This was clarified in a further email on the 28th February 2018 from an officer to the Chair of Governors which stated the following:</p> <p><i>'We have no plans currently to federate or merge Llanfihangel Rhydithon and Llanelwedd – the outcome of discussions was that the partnership should continue as it is. However, we are in the process of finalising a</i></p>
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		<p><i>Collaborative Partnership Agreement for schools in your position i.e. with shared arrangements. This isn't a legal document, but it does set out the roles and responsibilities of each party, and helps 'formalise' the arrangement to some extent. If this is something both schools would wish to see in place, then I'm sure we could arrange this.'</i></p> <p>However, no further action was taken by either the Council or the two governing bodies in relation to this.</p>
10.1.2	At the end of the previous consultation the proposal was dropped, and it was decided by Powys County Council that the best way forward for our school was to formalise the already successful ongoing partnership that had been forged between Dolau County Primary and Llanelwedd Church In Wales primary school, Builth Wells.	As above.
10.1.3	How disappointed we are here again, only 4 years ago Cabinet instructed School transformation team to abandon the proposal to close the school and to have discussions with other schools that may be willing to formally partner or federate/ merge with the school – the premise of the discussions was PCC's Cabinet's wish to maintain primary provision in Llanfihangel Rhydithon to serve the local community. These discussions had been carried and in September 2017 This stage had been completed, and, following consideration of all information received, the most appropriate way forward for the school is to formalise the current partnership with Llanelwedd. But this never went any further. The Governors and Headteacher Mr Shearman have worked closely with the Diocese and they are still waiting for the LA to respond.	As above.
10.1.4	The idea of a formal partnership between the two schools was documented and agreed.	As above.
10.1.5	We have been in discussion with the Church in Wales since, exhibiting our school Ethos to be compatible with becoming a Church in Wales School. They are very happy to proceed and are ready to go forward, awaiting further steps in this direction by Powys, which have not materialised. I am not sure why this agreed process has just stopped...	As above.

10.1.6	<p>Is the current leadership arrangement still a temporary arrangement or a permanent one? When an agreement has been promised by the Local Authority and has not been forthcoming and the arrangement is in its sixth year how is it classed as a temporary arrangement in the consultation. At no point over the last six and a half years (during Mr Shearman or the term with Mrs Williams) has this been called temporary. Indeed, for Estyn 2019 the Local Authority issued a letter to the team stating the leadership arrangements were to be an ongoing arrangement. There is no mention that we are looking into federating officially with Llanelwedd and that the option to do this was not followed up by Powys County Council after the last consultation concluded.</p>	<p>The current shared headship arrangement between Llanelwedd C.in W. School and Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is called a 'temporary' arrangement because the Head's substantive post is as headteacher of Llanelwedd C.in W. School. In terms of federating with Llanelwedd C.in W. School, it is not possible to federate a denominational school and a community school. It is also clear from the emails sent to the school on the 21st September 2018 and the 28th February 2019 that the authority had followed up on discussing options with Llanelwedd C.in W. School but that the outcome of these discussions was to formalise the current share headship arrangement, and not to federate or merge the schools.</p>
10.1.7	<p>It is with frustration that I write this letter to express my significant concerns regarding Powys County Council's plans to once again try and close Llanfihangel Rhydithon's close knit community school when it only seems such a short time since I last wrote with the same concerns.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
10.1.8	<p>The school is the very heart of our community, so I am sat here thinking in the last five years what has changed for our school which sees it once again facing such a cruel and unfair fate.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
10.1.9	<p>I read with dismay the proposal to close the school. Indeed I remember writing a letter 5 odd years ago when a similar proposal was made. Perhaps I shouldn't be surprised that it hasn't taken long for that threat to re-emerge.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
10.1.10	<p>Just over FIVE years ago, we were put through one of those repetitive processes of Consultation to close our small rural primary school of Llanfihangel Rhydithon, otherwise known as Dolau school, yet AGAIN.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
10.1.11	<p>Leave this school be, we fought a few years back against closing it and here we are again doing the same thing.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
10.1.12	<p>Llanfihangel Rhydithon has already been through this threat of closure twice before.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
10.1.13	<p>Dolau just needs you to stop threatening it time after time with closure and start supporting this excellent school at the heart of its thriving vibrant community.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>

10.1.14	When the proposed closure of the school is brought up on a regular basis it does not instil confidence in the community and yet the support for the school never wavers.	Comment noted.
10.1.15	My sister was involved in the fight to keep the school open in the 70s and the parents and the community have continued the fight every few years ever since.	Comment noted.
10.1.16	I remember huge battles to keep such a tiny school open in the 80's, and I certainly remember the feelings of anxiety and dread as a pupil about a potential move to the primary school at Crossgates, we loved our school community, we knew how special it was. Thankfully we won, our school stayed open, and I received a primary level education which I strongly believe was first class.	Comment noted.
10.1.17	I really don't know where to start..... So tonight I've read through my speech from 5 years ago that I had wrote for the public meeting we had with Powys officials. And here we are going through the same motions again. I guess my main train of thought is " how can this be happening again?" Our brilliant school with rising numbers and excellent standards is under review AGAIN! Are we doing something wrong.....? I closed the meeting 5 years ago with the following statement, and it still stands. Dolau School WILL go on, improving and expanding. Dolau School WILL NOT close.	Comment noted.
10.1.18	Wellbeing - My children have been inflicted with three consultation processes whilst at Dolau school. I do not feel that you have any idea of the impact this has had on our family or community. It is devastating. So, devastating that it cannot be quantified, some things cannot be quantified. Somethings do not fit into boxes. During the previous consultation in 2015, it was evident that my concerns and response had not been considered.	The Council recognises that any school reorganisation proposal creates a period of uncertainty for those involved.
10.1.19	My youngest child was still in Dolau school when it last was put through consultation. This was a very trying and worrying time for all involved	The Council recognises that any school reorganisation proposal creates a period of uncertainty for those involved and recognises that some pupils at the school would have been consulted as part of the previous proposal in 2016.
10.1.20	My family has been through this process three times since my sister started playgroup in Dolau. This makes me very sad. The effect that you	As above.

	are having on my friends and I is really bad. We are all very upset and some are having nightmares.	
10.1.21	This will be the second time now you have tried to close this school since I have been there, WHY? Why now? Over the last year due to COVID 19 parents, children, members of staff have struggled enough but we worked together as a team and got through it.	As 10.1.2
10.1.22	Well, here we are again.... this will be the third time I have been through a proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School and yet again I find myself asking why us? I understand we are a small school but each time I find there are other small schools who never seem to be included in the review.	<p>See 1.3.1. The reasons for the proposal are outlined in the consultation document.</p> <p>The Council has recently consulted on proposals relating to the following small schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Churchstoke C.P. School - Llanbedr C.i.W School - Castle Caereinion C.i.W School <p>Cabinet has also approved that consultation can begin on proposals related to the following small schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Llangedwyn C.i.W School - Llanfechain C.i.W School - Ysgol Bro Cynllaith <p>The Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys is a ten year Strategy. The provision of education in all 13 localities of the county will be reviewed over the next few years.</p>
10.1.23	On 27th September 2016, the Cabinet approved a paper that made recommendations "To abandon the Proposal and to bring a new report back to Cabinet with draft recommendations for Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and Llanbister CP School in accordance with the Schools Reorganisation Policy 2015, by no later than the end of November 20. " The preferred choice is to abandon the current proposals in respect of. Llanbister C.P. School and Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. Schools The reasons for this are: - increase expected in pupil numbers at the two schools - The impact of significant additional travel for some of the pupils" is stated in the report.	<p>The proposal that was consulted upon in 2016 was to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and Llanbister C.P School and the impact of increasing pupil numbers and significant additional travel was the reason for abandoning that particular proposal.</p> <p>Llanbister C.P. School is not being reviewed at this stage, but all schools in the Ysgol Calon Cymru catchment will be reviewed as part of Stage 2 of the Ysgol Calon Cymru Transformation Programme.</p>

	There does not appear to have been a review with regard to Llanbister C P School, however, the position of Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School has changed positively since this report.	
10.1.24	Dolau has been in consultation twice in five years, how many other schools have been in consultation twice in five years?	The Council recognises that Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School has been in a school reorganisation process previously in 2016 and recognises that this is an unusual situation. However, other schools have been reviewed and part of consultations previously including Llangedwyn C.i.W Primary School and Llanfechain C.i.W Primary School.

10.2 Comments about previous school closures

10.2.1 Nantmel C. in W. School

10.2.1.1	Over the years I've sadly seen other schools close and the upset it causes the children, most recently my nephew suffering at the closure of Nantmel.	Following a school reorganisation process, Nantmel C.i.W School closed on the 31 st August 2017.
10.2.1.2	Myself and my family knew the names of each and every pupil and their families in Nantmel school during our time there and as with Dolau School it created a sense of community and trust in one another. Nantmel community is now diminished thanks to Powys County Council school closures and the building stands empty and unused.	Nantmel C.i.W School building is the responsibility of the Diocese of Brecon and Swansea and they own the building.
10.2.1.3	Nantmel School closed and I see the loss of community that has occurred as a result. The complex web of social interactions that a local school provides is incalculable and it is shameful that this is not being taken into account on any level while these decisions are being made.	The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation.
10.2.1.4	Powys County Council has had in their sights smaller schools for a while now and has succeeded in picking them off one by one with a few notable exceptions (Well done Llanbister) (R.I.P. Nantmel).	In accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, the planning and development of effective school organisation proposals is crucial to the Welsh Government's goal of transforming education in Wales and providing better educational outcomes. The Council has a duty to manage its schools infrastructure to ensure equity across the whole system and to

		ensure that learner entitlement and experience is improved.
10.2.1.5	I have seen the impact on closing Nantmel school it's huge!! And very cruel message to children	As above.
10.2.1.6	The school is at the heart of the community and if you close the school you will effectively kill the community - I have seen this happen at Nantmel School. Nantmel village now has many older residents who do not have the same sort of access to social events as there is no school community organising them, and for some this has had an impact on their mental health. You risk the same happening with the village of Dolau if you close the school.	<p>The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation.</p> <p>The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation, such as the impact on older residents.</p>

10.2.2 Whitton School

10.2.2.1	We have been fortunate in Whitton as the old school has found a new lease of life as an Arts and Craft Centre, but many closed down Primary schools in Powys villages look a terrible eyesore in a rural setting.	The Council is pleased that Whitton School has been re-purposed. However, it is recognised that this is not the same position for all schools that have been closed.
10.2.2.2	I think that the council should look at the harm done to the community at Whitton when the school was closed there.	<p>The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation.</p> <p>The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation</p>
10.2.2.3	Having been a parent subject to Powys' school closure programme (Whitton School, 2014) I know first-hand what the impact can be for children who are required to move schools, this is a major milestone in a child's lifetime.	The Council recognises that any school reorganisation proposal creates a period of uncertainty for all involved, including the pupils. Schools receiving pupils as a result of a school closure are expected to work with the closing school to provide full support to pupils to ensure a smooth transition.
10.2.2.4	I am writing in support of Llanfihangel Rhydithon School as someone who lives in Whitton, whose primary school was closed in December 2015. I am Chairman of the Dame Anna Child's Trust that funded the	An area review in the John Beddoes catchment area took place in 2012/13. Officers currently working for

	<p>school, in the modern buildings and pupils needs such as a modern IT suite, subject books and many other resources. When the idea of closing primary schools in the John Beddoes catchment area was first mentioned, I well remember that we were told that £7 million would be spent on the remaining Primary schools, namely Knighton, Presteigne and New Radnor, I am certain that this amount was never spent on improvements, so be wary if such promises are made in respect of "Dolau" school. On a village aspect the closure of the school has ripped the heart and soul out of the village, no children's voices and laughter at playtime, no interaction with the village community, no involvement with the village Church for Harvest and Christmas services or in Whitton our annual Founders Day service. There had been for several years an invitation for villagers to come into school for lunch once a week for the children to have an interaction with an older age group, a feature that was appreciated by both age groups.</p>	<p>the Council are not aware of any plans for capital investment that resulted from that review.</p> <p>The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation.</p> <p>The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation</p>
10.2.2.5	<p>When Whitton school closed I was a pupil and I feel it affected me negatively. We went from a lovely little rural school where we had lots of one to one tutoring and small learning groups where we always got the help we needed to going to a bigger primary where you in a larger class abs the personal touch is lost. A lot of us lagged behind because of this abs struggled without the smaller classes.</p>	<p>The Council is disappointed that this was the experience of a pupil who moved from Whitton C.i.W School to a larger primary school. All schools, regardless of size, are expected to support, challenge and nurture all pupils to reach their full potential.</p>

10.2.3 Dolfor CP School

10.2.3.1	<p>Dolfor CP School was the absolute centre point of all Dolfor village community life. A small school yes, but one that had the biggest heart where the wellbeing of the pupils was paramount in a smaller, safe, caring, exciting, countryside located, school environment. A school that nurtured the varied talents of young people, allowing education to be delivered in an appropriate manner in an appropriate rural setting. A school that allowed country air to be breathed, that allowed the wildlife to be heard <i>and</i> seen by the pupils every day, that allowed the pupils to understand their school, that allowed the pupils to grow and prosper in a small school environment. Dolfor CP School was a school that recognised the needs of every pupil and used it's location to deliver on</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
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	their needs. 2012 was the year that Dolfor CP School was closed by Powys County Council. 2012 was the year that changed Dolfor as a village for ever.	
10.2.3.2	In short, closing the school: - ended the <i>daily social interaction</i> of different family groups/social groups as they dropped off/collected their children. Ended the <i>positive effect to the village of the regular school calendar events</i> such as the Christmas pantomime, the school sports day, the school trip, the regular playgroup sessions, the varied fundraising events which included promise auctions and sponsored walks which more people supported because it was only and specifically for the school. Ended the <i>lifelong childhood community friendships</i> that attending Dolfor CP School would have made. Ended the <i>positive eating message</i> that our small rural school pupils benefitted from, which included the subtle structure and discipline that our small school canteen provided.	<p>The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation.</p> <p>The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation.</p>
10.2.3.3	However, the point I wish to make writing this, is not to focus only on the devastating negative impact that closing the school has had on daily village life, nor is it to focus on the detrimental effect that closing the school has had on the social wellbeing of the village and it's occupants. The point I wish to make is to focus on the immense negative effect that closing Dolfor CP School had on a former 7 year old pupil. A pupil who, through no fault of his own, was caught up in the middle of the closure and had to move to a much bigger/town orientated school as a result. That pupil is my son. The effect that closing Dolfor CP School had on my family, and in particular, the impact the closure of the school had on my son, is well documented. He is now 16, has just left Newtown High School and only now, after a 9 year period, seems able and capable to follow a trade apprenticeship. His journey to get to this stage has been filled with lack of confidence and issues with self-esteem. Issues that I now know, because of the work and help we had to receive from CAMHS, the well-being department of the High School, and personal counselling, started when Powys County Council forced the closure of Dolfor CP School in 2012.	The Council is disappointed that this was the experience of a pupil who moved from Dolfor C.P. School to a larger primary school. All schools, regardless of size, are expected to support, challenge and nurture all pupils to reach their full potential.
10.2.3.4	In Dolfor's case, a perfect storm of conditions hit us (a large year group number left to attend High School, our Head Mistress required time off	Comment noted.

	due to stress issues, we had a below par Estyn report, we had a number of new pupils lined up but unfortunately the headline on the front page of The County Times sealed our fate (i.e. what parent/guardian in their right mind would consider sending their child/children to a school that is on the radar for closure)).	
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10.2.4 Beguildy School

10.2.4.1	Please stop closing small local school Powys county council. Beguildy is a sorry example if this I am afraid.	Comment noted.
10.2.4.2	My children, who are now adults, grew up on the farm with strong rural values. They attended Beguildy Primary school which has now closed. With the small rural school start my children flourished, achieved BScs and PhDs and are well-educated and well-rounded individuals. They all now have children of their own and retain their strong family values and commitment to rural Powys.	Comment noted.
10.2.4.3	I attended Beguildy Church in Wales primary school and regularly pass by the school and see the sad state it is now since being closed. My parents are a part of the Beguildy community and have seen first-hand the detrimental effect the closure of the school has had on the rural community. In Beguildy, a community that once had a sense of togetherness has slowly diminished with the children from the area having to attend various other schools and having to travel significant distances, some opting to go over the border to Shropshire as for some this is the nearest option. This has a detrimental effect on the ability for the children to learn and use the Welsh Language. Whereas these children would have been taught within their own community together, they now have to attend, Newtown, Llanbister, Knighton and Newcastle on Clun primary schools.	<p>Comment noted. Following a formal school reorganisation process, Beguildy School closed on the 31st December 2013.</p> <p>The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation.</p> <p>The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation.</p>
10.2.4.4	This cannot be allowed to happen. Haven't these children been through enough the last year and through this process previously. Closing Beguildy has killed our community. My daughter was just about to start when it closed and is now about to start high school. She should be starting young farmers now but instead of going to her local club with	Comment noted.

	her neighbours she wants to attend a different one as she doesn't know her neighbours	
10.2.4.5	My partner attended Beguildy primary school and retains very close links with this community. We have seen first-hand the negative and long lasting impact the school closure in Beguildy has had and feel that as a young couple, we would not seek to settle in this community due to void left with the closure of the school. Impact on the Teme Valley community can be seen in their young farmers members' numbers which have nearly halved since the school closed in 2013.	<p>The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation.</p> <p>The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation.</p>
10.2.4.6	I know too well what closing the local school can do to families and the wider community as our local school Beguildy, near Knighton was closed a number of years ago, my eldest daughter was attending the school at the time and she was 6 years of age when the school finally closed it's doors for the last time. I am not exaggerating but the effect of closing the school still impacts her today as I understand it did for the majority of children who were attending Beguildy at that time. After Beguildy closed my 2 children went to Knighton Primary school, this had a negative impact on them , the teaching was very good but the shock of moving from a smaller school into one with over 200 pupils was too much for them as young children and therefore we took the decision to move them again to another smaller, rural school - the children have not looked back and are thriving in their current setting.	Comment noted.
10.2.4.7	Families who we would have mixed with we never see because the children from Beguildy ended up going to 7 separate primary schools in England and Wales, it ruined our community and spoilt our lives.	<p>The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation.</p> <p>The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation.</p>
10.2.4.8	After the closure of my local school Beguildy we was told it would have no effect on the surrounding community, the local YFC club had no new members for the following 5-6 years after the closure cause the children as they grew old enough to join joined the club that was local to the schools they were moved to which was 7 different schools. The local	The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation.

	church has also been struggling since as the community lacks the glue to keep it together like it did when the school was there and working	The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation.
10.2.4.9	When the doors finally closed on Beguildy Church-in-Wales School on 31st December 2013, it was the end of a vigorous campaign fought not just to save our school but to save our community. The official Community Impact Assessment (CIA) from the County Council (extracts quoted in the table below) brushed aside arguments from Governors, Parents, Community councillors and the wider community that the closure of our rural school would mean that the community was not only losing its heart but its future.	Cabinet agreed to close Beguildy C.i.W School on the 11 th June 2013. The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation.
10.2.4.10	The reality: Our concerns about the future viability of the community to attract people with children and of working age were dismissed but have all proved to be true. The last phrase betrays a wilful ignorance of a rural community which, by definition, draws its members from the homes and farmsteads scattered around the core settlement.	Comment noted.
10.2.4.11	Our once thriving church is now open for occasional services and has an increasingly elderly and dwindling congregation. As a Church in Wales school, there had been close links between the school and the church. Harvest Suppers were held in the school hall which was conveniently located for the church. The children contributed to all major festivals and this, of course, brought the parents and grandparents, who might not otherwise have considered themselves to be churchgoers, through the doors.	Comment noted.
10.2.4.12	The village shop benefitted greatly from customers dropping in as they dropped off or collected pupils from school and, in turn, the community benefitted from the opportunity the shop provided as a meeting place. That now has been lost and trade has declined. When the current owners retire it may signal the end of the shop as a going concern.	Comment noted.
10.2.4.13	The central location of the school as a base for the Parent and Toddler Group was a unifying feature in the valley. Retaining use of the building was not possible as our expression of interest was ignored and there is no suitable alternative building in the village. Now, those parents from the southern end of the valley choose to send their pre-school children to Knighton rather than journey further up the valley to Felindre, thereby weakening the links between the upper and lower valley. Former pupils	Comment noted.

	scattered to five different schools, some across the border into England, not to the one school designated by the LA. The equation had seemed simple to the officials looking for a neat solution on paper; we had a small school and six miles away was a larger school in a less rural setting with surplus places so why not simply transfer those children as a block. For so many parents, themselves educated in a small rural school, the choice was understandable and simple; they wished their own children to have that unique experience and consequently, the neat solution, envisioned by the accountants and bureaucrats, was side-lined and thus began the breakup of the community as we knew it.	
10.2.4.14	Our close-knit community where youngsters went to school together, grew together and shared their social lives has now fragmented. New friendships have formed in different catchment areas, pupils moved through the primary schools to different secondary schools, with their new friends, in areas further afield and alien to the previous generations. Social links outside school drew these young people away from previously thriving organisations in the valley, such as YFC, as new alliances were formed, leading to the predicted decline in membership.	Comment noted.
10.2.4.15	The loss of the school has left a hole in our community. Social isolation, especially amongst the elderly, has increased. The physical buildings provided opportunities for cross generational mixing which was beneficial to old and young alike. The Cosy Café set up within in the school allowed senior citizens to mingle with young people, reducing their loneliness, keeping them young at heart and enabling the next generation to learn tolerance and understanding of their older neighbours. Fund raising events were also social opportunities which encouraged people to get to know one another, as were the celebrations of national events. The school grounds, as the only publicly owned land in the upper valley and offering catering and toilet facilities, were invaluable for communal activities.	Comment noted.
10.2.4.16	When Beguildy School was closed, we lost a school that used to compete annually in the Urdd Eisteddfod in the Llannau area.	Comment noted.

10.2.5 Llangunllo School

10.2.5.1	<p>I was one of the children moved when Llangunllo School was closed by Powys County Council in 1984. I was settled, happy and had friends in all years. The demographics in Llangunllo village have changed dramatically since closure of the school. This is a significantly aging community now. I was enrolled at Whitton school, you have now closed that, although my memories of Whitton school are far from happy, the school's history means something. That is now lost also. Moving schools had a profound negative effect on my education and integration in later years and was certainly detrimental and not in my best interests. Since then, I have struggled with change in all areas of my life, struggled to fit in and struggled with self-confidence. This is as a result of the move and counselling has proved so. People who know me may not think this, but no one knows what people feel underneath. There was no bullying in our lovely Llangunllo School, there was in Whitton and if any of you reading this have been bullied in your life you will understand how awful this can be.</p>	<p>Llangunllo School was closed in 1984. The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation.</p> <p>The Council recognises that any school reorganisation proposal creates a period of certainty for all involved and notes experience of this individual. However, it would be expected that, should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School close, then the receiving school(s) would be required to work closely with the school to provide full support for pupils and their families to ensure a smooth transition.</p>
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10.2.6 Ysgol Calon Cymru

10.2.6.1	<p>We are all witnessing what a complete shamble the linking of Llandrindod and Builth High Schools has been with children being shuttled back and forth for lesson and teachers having to give lessons via Zoom to pupils in different schools and that was before COVID.</p>	<p>In September 2020, Cabinet approved a recommendation related to Ysgol Calon Cymru, which recognised that the current model is educationally unsustainable.</p>
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10.2.7 General comments about previous school closures in Radnorshire

10.2.7.1	<p>Take note of the communities where schools in Powys have been closed in the past and the negative impact this has had on those communities for example Whitton, Beguildy, Nantmel to name a few.....those buildings are not reused or attractive to developers, shops in these places have closed and families are not moving there, rather moving elsewhere.</p>	<p>The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation.</p> <p>The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation.</p>
10.2.7.2	<p>I regularly drive by both Beguildy and Whitton schools, Beguildy looks awful, Whitton while tidy has an empty school yard and each village has</p>	<p>As above.</p>

	lost some of its vibrancy, and the same will happen with Llanfihangel Rhydithon should you go ahead with its closure	
10.2.7.3	But after putting forward an FOI request to Powys County Council asking: "With regards to schools that have previously been closed by Powys CC in recent years (i.e. Whitton; Nantmel, Beguildy), can you confirm any follow up activities / consultations with the ex-pupils that have been carried out, to assess the emotional impact that the closure has had on the children?" and receiving the response of: "There have been no follow up activities / consultations with ex-pupils from closed schools to assess emotional impact. However, transition arrangements were in place to support pupils transferring from their original school to their new school." my mind was not put at ease.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>The Council recognises that any school reorganisation proposal creates a period of certainty for all involved and notes experience of this individual. However, it would be expected that, should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School close, then the receiving school(s) would be required to work closely with the school to provide full support for pupils and their families to ensure a smooth transition.</p>
10.2.7.4	The community in Dolau is centred around the school and from viewing the impact on other closures such as Nantmel and Beguildy the community has split.	<p>The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation.</p> <p>The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation.</p>
10.2.7.5	I have seen the impact of other small closures like Nantmel and Llangurig and really hope you reconsider the proposal.	As above.
10.2.7.6	You have also closed John Beddoes School, which I attended and opened it as a campus of Newtown high school, are you trying to wipe out our history, our area and community? It does matter to the community, past present and future pupils and staff. In a business or workplace this would be called discrimination- that is what this is, I feel as though Powys County Council are not treating my choice of school for my children equally to those of larger schools in Powys. Look at the Community impact assessment submitted separately – you are taking community away from them.	<p>The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation.</p> <p>The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation.</p>
10.2.7.7	These closers have happened in other parts of Radnorshire and children have been dispersed to larger schools but could not cope. Children have had to be home schooled and some have had to go over the border into England, this losing their access to any Welsh education.	Comment noted.

10.2.7.8	Having lived in 2 other small rural communities in Powys where the village Primary Schools were closed, I have first-hand witnessed the negative effect this has had on the village life and destroyed the heart of the local communities. Both Bwlch Y Sarnau and earlier St Harmon have become nothing more than a collection of houses in a hamlet where there is very little connection to the community and children now grow up with no sense of community or heritage and who are forced to travel long distances at an early age.	The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation. The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation.
10.2.7.9	To raise awareness of the proposal to close Llanfihangel School and in an effort to highlight the number of small schools which have been closed in Radnorshire in recent years, the DSAG, with the help of children from Llanfihangel School have created scarecrows as visual props to spread the plight of the school, far and wide. A scarecrow has been travelling around Powys looking at the sad, derelict sights of past primary schools that have been closed by PCC. 'Have you seen the scarecrows across Powys?' was published in the Brecon and Radnor 12 th May.	Comment noted.
10.2.7.10	19 schools existed in the last 40 years which have now gone. If you look at the position of Dolau now, if Dolau closes it's another 6 miles to Crossgates – West. There is nothing between the border and us. Beguildy, Felindre, Bleddfa and Dolfor have all gone.	Comment noted.

10.3 Reference to other consultations which are currently ongoing

10.3.1	DSAG have read over the consultation document for the proposed closure of another small Powys School. Llanbedr C. in W. Primary School. One of the key reasons for closure appears to be associated with leadership. It is stated 'Whilst there is permanent leadership in place in Llanbedr C. in W. Primary School, the headteacher has a significant teaching commitment, which limits the time available to focus on leadership of the school'. This seems very contradictory, what does PPC want?	Effective leadership, whereby leaders ensure a high standard of teaching and provision for learners, whatever their needs, is a national priority. 'Our national mission' includes 'Inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards' as one of its four enabling objectives. The focus is on ensuring that leaders at all levels are well supported to develop and inspire colleagues to embed the new curriculum and to create a culture of continuous improvements. Leaders need to have the time and capacity to fulfil their roles, and this can be challenging in a small school.
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10.3.2	Llanbedr is a good school. Cradoc does need a new school..... but in Cradoc not Brecon	Comment noted.
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10.4 Other comments

10.4.1	Derelict and silent, is a painful daily reminder of what we have lost. The school and its children brought life into the village.	Comment noted.
10.4.2	Powys may close schools, then do absolutely nothing with the school buildings, simply leaving them derelict across communities.	<p>The Council, like all other local authorities, has a duty to plan effective school organisation and to manage its schools infrastructure effectively, and, as a result, schools have been closed over the years.</p> <p>In terms of leaving school's to become derelict, the Council's Policy is to dispose of any surplus assets in accordance with the Council's Asset Management Policy. Once the asset has been transferred to a third party, then the Council has no control over it or what happens to that asset in future.</p>
10.4.3	If its all about money why oh why of the schools that you have closed over the years has nothing been done they are still Powys. Why haven't they been sold to create revenue.	All surplus assets are subject to the process of disposal as outlined in the Council's Asset Management Policy. Some schools that have closed have been transferred to other service areas e.g. housing or to a community. In other case they have been sold to third parties. This provides the Council with a capital receipt that is then re-invested in the Council's corporate budget, which in turn supports education.
10.4.4	The school is the heart of the community just look what has happened to other places where you have closed schools.	<p>The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation.</p> <p>The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation.</p>

10.4.5	When Powys tried to close another local school they were actively telling prospective parents the school was closing prior to the end of the consultation! That sure doesn't help!	Comment noted.
10.4.6	We understand that Powys County Council is committed to innovative ways of transforming how they work and how they achieve the very difficult task of expenditure reduction. However, we do not feel there is anything innovative about school closures and it is such a shame that lessons cannot be learnt from communities where the local school has already been closed.	Comment noted.
10.4.7	Knighton did not support Beguildy or Whitton's children well enough when those schools closed. Powys County Council has no data on this - no proof that this was carried out. Can you guarantee this will happen?	The Council is disappointed if pupils from any closed school aren't given the appropriate support. Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, the Council will ensure that it works closely with the receiving school(s) to ensure that the appropriate support is in place. The Council is committed to supporting schools and learners, including through periods of change. Children experience change in a vast range of areas, from family life to technology. The Council is supporting school leaders to help them manage possible changes for their learners. In areas of Powys, and beyond, where schools have gone through transformational change, there is no doubt that the learners have benefitted from the changes, and staff and parents who were sceptical when change was proposed are often strong advocates of such change.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Comments relating to the estimated saving from closing the school

11.1.1	Closing the school on financial grounds does not make financial sense. Closure would force children to primary schools in other parts of Radnorshire, increasing transport costs for the local authority beyond the	As stated in the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-30, the Council faces a challenge due to the high proportion of small schools
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	<p>limited potential savings. This undermines the case for closing the school even further.</p>	<p>in the county and the lack of equity amongst schools. Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School teaches children in two classes of mixed aged groups. With such low pupil numbers the teacher-pupil ratio is notably different to many other schools in the area, and due to the Council's funding formula, the school the funding per pupil is higher than the Council's average. This does not provide equity across the education system - teachers in larger schools are required to provide the same education as smaller schools for less funding per pupil. Powys' Strategy is intended to improve equity across the education system and to ensure an improvement for every pupil's learning entitlement and experience. The specific reasons for the proposal are outlined in the Consultation Document.</p> <p>The estimated savings of £59,000 includes estimated increased transport costs for the pupils currently attending the school.</p>
11.1.2	<p>You clearly only wish to close smaller schools because of the cost savings which really doesn't stack up in any way! We may not be the cheapest cost per pupil but with the standard of education that is being provided and with Llanfihangel Rhydithon being of a green education standard maybe the fact of the matter is that your expectations of investing very little to achieve a very good outcome simply isn't possible. We are far from the most expensive primary school in the firing line and know that if it was simply a case of bringing the average cost per pupil down to what you see as an appropriate figure. The community would happily look to any ways and means of bridging the gap through fundraising etc which being the fantastic community that it is would easily be achieved.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
11.1.3	<p>Powys County Council want to close this absolute gem of a high achieving green school to save money. The money in question was given to Dolau due to the Funding Formula Change made by the same PCC, however</p>	<p>As above. The current funding formula was consulted upon (with all schools) and agreed through Cabinet during 2018 prior to its implementation in April 2019.</p>

	Dolau school did not ask for it and still doesn't require it to continue running and achieving the consistent high standards.											
11.1.4	The information in your consultation document leads me to believe that the main reason for the proposed closure of Dolau School is financial. As a finance professional, I can see that there is a relatively small saving to be made by closing the school, alongside the possibility of some capital release from the proposal. With the school's ties to the local community hall, and the lease on the car park and playground, I would not expect to see the sale of the building being an easy or lucrative one.	As above. The Council is aware that the site surrounding Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School includes the community hall which has a lease to use the school playground as a car park, which creates a practical and legal challenge to the disposal of the school. However, the Council's Corporate Asset Policy would be followed, should the school close. This would include consideration of a community asset transfer or a sale on the open market via different methods. The Council's policy is to dispose of any surplus assets.										
11.1.5	The consultation says that Powys would save £59,000 by closing Dolau school.	Based on current estimates we anticipate that closing Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would save approx.. £59,000 revenue funding each year.										
11.1.6	Does shutting our school really save you any money?	As above.										
11.1.7	The £7000 catering savings include van hire and driver time but has not taken into account driver time and van costs as Crossgates remains a satellite kitchen for Llanbister CP School, which will reduce the savings. The actual savings should Dolau school close: <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Staff serving time in Dolau school (75 mins @ 9.30 per hour)</td> <td>£11.63</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Staff driving time TO and FROM Dolau School (30 mins @ 9.30 per hour)</td> <td>£4.65</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>£16.28</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total annual cost</td> <td>£3093.20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total annual costs including "on costs"</td> <td>£3557.18</td> </tr> </table>	Staff serving time in Dolau school (75 mins @ 9.30 per hour)	£11.63	Staff driving time TO and FROM Dolau School (30 mins @ 9.30 per hour)	£4.65	TOTAL	£16.28	Total annual cost	£3093.20	Total annual costs including "on costs"	£3557.18	The catering savings are calculated using the catering labour calculator based on the number of meals provided at schools currently and then based on the proposal, to estimate a saving on catering staff time. This is combined with the potential saving on the current transportation of meals from Crossgates CP School to Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School (van hire costs plus driver time). The hourly rates quoted in this table are not correct.
Staff serving time in Dolau school (75 mins @ 9.30 per hour)	£11.63											
Staff driving time TO and FROM Dolau School (30 mins @ 9.30 per hour)	£4.65											
TOTAL	£16.28											
Total annual cost	£3093.20											
Total annual costs including "on costs"	£3557.18											
11.1.8	The actual cost per pupil for Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is much closer to the Powys average than the consultation document suggest:	The cost to the authority is the amount of funding delegated to the school, as quoted within the consultation documented.										

	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P.</td> <td>2018-19</td> <td>2019-20</td> <td>2020-21</td> <td>2021-22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Budgeted spend per pupil</td> <td>4,724</td> <td>6,143</td> <td>6,304</td> <td>5,691</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Actual cost per pupils</td> <td>4,088</td> <td>5,665</td> <td>4,939</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>This information is crucial for councillors and scrutiny members to be aware of prior to any decision making as it is a significant contrast to the information provided in the consultation document.</p>	Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P.	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Budgeted spend per pupil	4,724	6,143	6,304	5,691	Actual cost per pupils	4,088	5,665	4,939		<p>The school benefits from any difference between this and actual costs which results in a surplus position, which is managed by the governing body.</p>
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P.	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22													
Budgeted spend per pupil	4,724	6,143	6,304	5,691													
Actual cost per pupils	4,088	5,665	4,939														
11.1.9	<p>The financial savings are minimal and short term if closure takes place... I suggest the council do some good housekeeping within Powys in other areas.</p>	<p>The estimated savings set out in the consultation document are recurring savings that the Council will benefit from each year.</p> <p>Powys County Council always strives to provide value for money in the delivery of its services, constantly seeking out cost savings and efficiencies, including service transformation across all service areas.</p>															
11.1.10	<p>It was noted at the last meeting of the 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>Savings estimates are based on the best information available at the time they are calculated and are subject to change for example due to changes in pupil numbers, parental choice, staff changes etc. The calculations are reviewed by a range of officers and sensitivity analysis is also carried out.</p> <p>It is not appropriate to share the detail of individual calculations of specific projects as they include confidential information but the methodology could be shared.</p>															
11.1.11	<p>The decision to close the school is a financial decision and does not consider the impact on the community itself.</p>	<p>The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community and the draft Community Impact Assessment will be updated to include information gathered during consultation.</p>															

11.1.12	Surely the well-being and mental health of our school children, families and community is more important than trying to save a few pounds.	As above.
11.1.13	Closing schools purely on financial grounds is short-sighted and ignores the needs of communities in a way that seems breathtakingly arrogant.	As above.
11.1.14	I appreciate that balancing budgets is extremely difficult and necessary. But to close a school that is performing in the highest category of teaching and learning (according to Estyn), to negatively impact the community centre, and to destroy a community by taking away, not only its current beating heart, but also the future that the children, as they grow, will bring to the area, is a short-sighted attempt to simply cut costs. It will not improve standards and will make a thriving community the long-term victims of short-term cost-cutting measures. Please re-consider and keep a successful school and a thriving community alive.	As above.
11.1.15	Do you think, that by closing our insignificant little rural school that the money saved {if any} is going to solve the massive problems with the education budget in Powys? NO IT WILL NOT PLEASE – look at the big picture, not just tomorrow's bottom financial figure.	As above.
11.1.16	Closing schools purely on financial grounds is short-sighted and ignores the needs of communities in a way that seems breathtakingly arrogant.	As above.
11.1.17	But most importantly, from your report there will be money saved by closing the school, which in the grand scheme of things is negligible, when compared with the lasting damage you will inflict on our community.	Comment noted
11.1.18	The short-term financial savings in closing this village school should be set against the much longer-term loss to the whole community and to community cohesion.	Comment noted
11.1.19	It was with sadness that we learnt that Powys CC are proposing to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon School in the hope of saving money, we strongly disagree with this decision and hope that Councillors will think again before they make their decision.	Comment noted
11.1.20	I don't believe this is the legacy of a failing school and would encourage Powys CC to consider the real impact of their cost-saving measures to close village schools like Dolau.	Comment noted

11.1.21	The future of these children lies in your hands. I hope that due consideration is given to any decision made and alternative financial savings are thoroughly researched and made elsewhere in Powys.	Comment noted.
11.1.22	Page 26 section ii. How are these savings figures calculated? Why are estimated numbers given? How can councillors hold cabinet and officers to account based on approximations? What study has been made of estimates used to close other schools? Were the estimated savings attained in Rhosgoch? Nantmel? Beguildy? Why is there no further breakdown provided of HOW these estimated costs have been arrived at? The £7000 for catering, we assume MUST include the hire of the van and staff costs to transport food. However, the van and staff member are used to transport food to Llanbister also so would NOT be a saving to the authority.	<p>These estimated savings are calculated by running the funding formula for the current school arrangements and then running the funding formula for the proposed arrangements, assuming pupils go to their next nearest school. The difference gives the estimated saving or cost of the proposal.</p> <p>There are many unknowns at this point and estimates are based on the best information available at the time. Councillors can hold cabinet and officers to account by scrutinising the methodology and robustness of the estimates.</p> <p>The estimated savings for Rhosgoch, Nantmel and Beguildy were £77,000, £68,000 and £100,000 per annum respectively and the authority achieved the savings by reducing budgets accordingly, at the time the schools closed.</p> <p>The catering saving has been estimated by using the average meals per day and this is then used to identify what staffing requirement is needed. Based on this it equated to a £7k estimated saving.</p>
11.1.23	The consultation document states that 'it is estimated that this would result in annual revenue savings to the Council of around £59,000 per annum. This overall figure comprises a potential saving on schools' delegated funding of over £52,000 and savings on catering costs of around £7,000'. Are the redundancy costs included in the figures of the savings? How much does it cost the PCC each time it puts the school into consultation?	<p>The redundancy costs are not included in this costing, these costs are variable dependant on the staff made redundant and length of service with the council.</p> <p>The cost of school consultations is minimal and mainly around printing and postage.</p>

11.1.24	<p>The consultation document does not give detailed breakdown of the estimated £59,000 per annum revenue saving which we consider is open to challenge. In particular this figure does not account additional transport costs which will obviously be incurred even though the report states It is not anticipated that additional transport costs would be incurred as a result of the change, it is assumed that the current bus would be used at no additional cost to the Authority. This is clearly not accurate.</p>	<p>A detailed assessment of potential additional transport requirements was undertaken by officers.</p> <p>There are two home-to-school transport routes that transport pupils to Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School – the LW14 and LW15. The LW14 is a 16 seat minibus and the LW15 is a 16 seat minibus, but could also be a 21 seat minibus. It is not anticipated that there would be additional transport costs, based on the analysis of pupils’ postcodes (PLASC Jan 2020), as pupils can be accommodated on existing transport routes to their nearest alternative school. There may be a situation in the future where additional transport routes may be required for additional children (i.e. children starting school for the first time or children who move into the area) which would depend on where they lived. However, at this point in time, it is not possible to know the exact cost of this but it is anticipated that it would be a minimal cost.</p>
11.1.25	<p>On page 24, the LA note, ‘it is not anticipated that additional transport costs would be incurred as a result of the change, it is assumed that the current bus would be used at no additional cost to the Authority’. When we are threatened with closure, I feel the words ‘not anticipated’ and ‘assumed’ are quite frankly inadequate – we deserve an exact calculation of travel costs incurred which could be worked out according to those on roll and those known to the admissions department.</p>	<p>As above – it is not possible to provide an exact calculation as the destination of current pupils is unknown and is dependent on parental choice.</p> <p>All estimates are calculated on a prudent basis, based on known costs per vehicle type and average costs per pupil. In assessing the transport requirements it is assumed that all pupils will transfer to their nearest school, maximising the authority’s responsibilities under the Council’s Home to School and College Transport Policy.</p>

11.1.26	"Travel Costs" - The document states it is "assumed" that there will be no additional transport costs. For the purpose of the consultation should it not be confirmed that there will be no additional cost to transport 24 children rather than the 8 currently transported? Will there genuinely be NO additional cost? Has work been carries out on this? Can the transformation team satisfy the council that there will not be increased costs? The spaces required will exceed the current mini bus that brings children to Dolau.	As above.
11.1.27	Transport figures need to be included to make this process transparent going on a worse case scenario, your consultation paper states no extra costs which simply won't be true.	As above.

11.2 Comments relating to the budget share per pupil / funding formula

11.2.1	Llanfihangel Rhydithon school receives its budget allocation based on a formula devised by Powys CC. Prior to the formula change, the school balanced its budget. Had the formula not changed, the school would not be the 8 th highest. Perhaps this funding formula needs to be re-considered?	<p>The development of the current funding formula was overseen by the Formula Working Group which included several representatives from across schools in Powys, including headteachers and governors.</p> <p>Prior to the change in formula the school budget was in a deficit position. The 2016-17 actual outturn £18,356 and the 2017-18 budgeted position was a deficit of £32,375. The 2017-18 actual outturn was a cumulative deficit of £47,043.</p>
11.2.2	PCC state that Dolau are the 8 th highest funded but this is only since the Funding Formula was changed and this has not been fully agreed upon yet	<p>The current funding formula was consulted upon (with all schools) and agreed through Cabinet during 2018 prior to its implementation in April 2019.</p> <p>The funding formula is under constant review to ensure it is fit for purpose.</p>
11.2.3	Powys needs to take responsibility for their own actions and revisit the fair funding formula again	As above.

11.2.4	The reason that the cost per pupil is so high is due to the fair funding formula -using the old formula our price per pupil was within the Powys average.	As above
11.2.5	A funding formula change that puts Dolau school as the 8th highest funded school in Powys is a smoke screen for the fact the school runs at a surplus year on year. Why not take some of that surplus back? The school then looks much more viable.	As above. The circumstances in which the Council can require repayment of a school's surplus are strictly governed by the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010.
11.2.6	The fair funding formula pupil cost figure MUST NOT be misconstrued as a figure resulting from bad budget management by us - far from it. The budget was fine as it was prior to the 'Fair Funding Formula' adjustments, and this new figure was entirely delivered by Powys without any request from us.	As above – there is no judgement on the quality of budget management at the school intended. As stated above the school was in a cumulative deficit position which was increasing year on year.
11.2.7	Powys schools funding formula is far too generous to small schools meaning Llanfihangel Rhydithon receives far more money than is needed. There will be a huge surplus budget!! Has Powys formula not changed we would not be the 8th highest by pupil share.	As above. The surplus results from the long-term temporary management structure put in place by the governing body (a shared headship) which results in an annual saving for the school. The reason for the development of the current funding formula was to ensure that small schools were funded at a minimum level required to operate, including management time, PPA and teaching time.
11.2.8	The significant variation in the budget share per pupil across Powys in the primary sector is solely down to the Powys Schools Funding Formula. This formula is overly generous to small schools and underfunds larger schools. Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School receives more money than it actually needs and will be in a financial surplus position for future years. The Powys Schools Funding Formula is an example of poor financial management and needs to be urgently rectified.	The development of the current funding formula was overseen by the Formula Working Group which included several representatives from across the full range of schools in Powys, including headteachers and governors.

11.2.9	Although you claim that we have a high cost per pupil, this is due to your “Fair Funding Formula” developed to help small rural schools, and our actual cost per pupil reflects the careful management of the budget. The excess budget will be available for clawback. Any decisions should be made with the actual figures in mind, rather than an inflated and unnecessary budgeted figure	As above
11.2.10	In recent years, Powys County Council changed the funding formula for its schools. Although overjoyed that small schools were able to receive a seemingly “fairer” budget which would benefit the learners, I feel that this is now used against the smaller schools as the “cost per pupil” is higher.	The Council disagrees with this comment. The reason for the development of the current funding formula was to ensure that small schools were funded at a minimum level required to operate, including management time, PPA and teaching time. The formula was not created to increase funding to small schools with a view to providing a financial case to close small schools.
11.2.11	The increase in the amount of funding provided over the years by the Local Authority was due to a review of the Fair Funding Formula. Was this formula reviewed and the Local Authority policy changed so that it would increase funding to small schools and then allow the Local Authority to propose closures with a financial case to support it?	As above.
11.2.12	With regards to the latest pupil costs, recently calculated OFFICIAL POWYS figures show the following: Fair funding formula pupil cost at Dolau this school year = £6304; PCC confirmed ACTUAL pupil cost at Dolau this school year = £4939	£6,304 is the budgeted spend per pupil for Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP school for the financial year 2020-21, based on the cost to the Council’s budget. The actual per pupil cost is based on the total actual spend for the school in that same financial year. The difference from the budgeted figure to the actual cost per pupil results from the long-term temporary management structure put in place by the governing body (a shared headship) which results in an annual saving for the school compared to its budget allocation.
11.2.13	Schools receive their budget allocation based on their local authority’s Funding Formula. One of the main challenges facing PCC is the high proportion of small schools and generally the budget share for those pupils is higher than the Powys average for primary schools. Based on	The 7 schools that have a higher cost per pupil than Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School are Llangedwyn C. in W. School, Churchstoke C.P. School, Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, Llandinam C.P. School, Castle Caereinion C.

	the Council's Section 52 Budget Statement for 2020-21, the school's budget share per pupil during 2020-21 was £6,304. This is higher than the Powys average of £4,264. Along with Llanfihangel, 44 schools (57%) of schools are over this amount. Out of these 44 schools and in particular the 7 schools ranked above Llanfihangel, what has been done to review the costs in these schools and address the fact they are budgeted to cost more than the current Powys average?	in W. School, Irfon Valley C.P. School and Ysgol Cwm Banwy. Cabinet has approved that consultation should be held to close Llangedwyn C.in W. School and Ysgol Bro Cynllaith. Consultation has been held on a proposal to close Churchstoke C.P. School. Ysgol Cwm Banwy is a newly established school following the closure of Ysgol Dyffryn Banw and Ysgol Llanerfyl. The remaining schools will be part of reviews in Wave 2 of the Transformation Programme.
11.2.14	Many smaller community schools are in fact, in a financial surplus position due to the change in funding formula.	Comment noted.
11.2.15	Why are decisions being made on budgeted costs only, that are out of date (i.e. based on pupil numbers as at Oct 2019). This formula is under review again. Does this demonstrate the lack of confidence in the Education department and PCC if only 3 years later its under review again as its not fit for purpose? Perhaps PCC needs to revisit its Funding Formula properly?	The Council is constantly reviewing funding formulae to ensure that they are fit for purpose.
11.2.16	Capital funding from Central Government and the Welsh Assembly is important, but the ongoing revenue funding for schools? A fairer funding formula, which does not discriminate against rural areas is vital to keeping small rural schools viable. The funding formula does need to be looked at and given the inconsistent definition of rurality, we need to have a more sophisticated approach to the funding of pupil places, rather than the blanket, catch-all provision for rural areas.	As above.

11.3 Comments relating to the financial position of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

11.3.1	Due to excellent budget management, I understand the school currently has a surplus of £63,000 which Powys County Council has refused to accept back, can PCC explain this?	As at 31 March 2021, the school has a cumulative surplus of £27,385.
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		The circumstances in which the Council can require repayment of a school's surplus are strictly governed by the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010.
11.3.2	Llanfihangel Rhydithon school is a financially successful operation, which runs a surplus, even in these tight financial times.	As at 31 March 2021, the school has a cumulative surplus of £27,385.
11.3.3	Despite smaller pupil figures than some other schools – although by no means the smallest school in Powys – the leadership team at Dolau has maintained a budget surplus.	As above.
11.3.4	Regarding funding the school has always balanced the budget and will be in a surplus position in future years. The cost per pupil was not down to the school, this was due to the funding formula change.	As above
11.3.5	“Dolau school is the 8th highest funded school, by pupil share, in Powys” - This is as a result of the Funding Formula change. Careful financial planning prior to this change meant the school historically balanced the budget and the school will be in a financial surplus position for future years. Had the formula not changed the school would not be 8th highest in funding. The school now, in our view, receives too much money per pupil. Our projected surplus is c£50,000 by 2023 this takes into account the current level of expenditure which allows us to maintain current staffing levels and good level of resource refresh in place. This over-funding is a county council issue and not a school issue. Was the formula designed to support small and rural school closure?	<p>The development of the current funding formula was overseen by the Formula Working Group which included several representatives from across schools in Powys, including headteachers and governors.</p> <p>Prior to the change in formula the school budget was in a deficit position. The 2016-17 actual outturn £18,356 and the 2017-18 budgeted position was a deficit of £32,375. The 2017-18 actual outturn was a cumulative deficit of £47,043.</p> <p>The surplus results from the long-term temporary management structure put in place by the governing body (a shared headship) which results in an annual saving for the school.</p> <p>The reason for the development of the current funding formula was to ensure that small schools were funded at a minimum level required to operate, including management time, PPA and teaching time. The formula was not created to increase funding to small schools with a view to providing a financial case to close small schools.</p>

11.3.6	Much is made within the report of the high budget share per pupil, this over funding is entirely an Authority issue caused by the Fair Funding Formula. The projected surplus by 2023/24 is £65880, this coupled with no increase in transport costs by not closing the school would roughly equate to the projected savings from closure. The surplus funding can easily be clawed back by the Authority and would be welcomed by The Governing Body.	The estimated savings of £59,000 is an annual saving. The circumstances in which the Council can require repayment of a school's surplus are strictly governed by the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010.
11.3.7	The school governors are ready to hand any surplus budget back over to Powys at any point. I believe the claw back system has just been reviewed and allows the opportunity to take back any unallotted funds of over £10,000 in a schools account now. What a good cash flow benefit that will be to Powys. A very good idea. We predict that we will have a surplus in excess of £63,000 by 2024 under the present regime. So please DON'T try and use this argument to close our school - it is manipulative and false.	As above
11.3.8	At the end of 2020/21 the Governors forecast Reserves are circa £20k, going forward based on increasing pupil numbers and current annual expenditure. By the end of 2022/23 the school reserves could potentially increase to circa £40K which is 20% of the total school budget. This is a strong position that very few other schools in Powys are in, which allows the school to invest further in the already high quality and standards of the school. We are aware that the Cap Powys currently allow schools to hold is £50k anything over this then goes back to the local authority.	As above
11.3.9	This PCC decision-making process does not take into account or reflect results of the last 3 years where the school reserves have moved from a deficit of £47k in 2017/18 to a surplus of £4k in 2019/20 and this is forecast to increase to a surplus of circa ~£20k.	As above
11.3.10	2019/20 $31 \times £6143 = £190,428$ budget and put 4k to reserves so spent £186,428; 2020/21 $33 \times £6304 = £208,032$ budget and if spend £186428 x 3% = £192020 will put £16k to reserves (Governors forecast reserves end of 20/21 circa £20k)	As above 2019-20: £4k put to reserves 2020-21: £28k put to reserves 2021-22: £12k estimated to be put into reserves based on the budget submitted on the 1 st May 2021

11.3.11	Many small schools, including Llanfihangel Rhydithon, have historically balanced their budgets with great care to ensure that they not only provide an excellent environment for learners but also get value for money when spending.	All schools are expected to demonstrate value for money and produce balanced budgets.
11.3.12	ESTYN summarised that Dolau “set high standards and ensure that they deploy the school’s resources efficiently.”	Comment noted
11.3.13	Only Llanfihangel and 1 other school have managed to balance their budgets and in fact contribute to reserves over the last 3 years out of the top 8 schools ranked as having the most expensive budgeted cost per pupil, what scrutiny and review is being done with the other 6 in Schools?	<p>This statement is not accurate.</p> <p>The 7 schools that have a higher cost per pupil than Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School are Llangedwyn C. in W. School, Churchstoke C.P. School, Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, Llandinam C.P. School, Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, Irfon Valley C.P. School and Ysgol Cwm Banwy.</p> <p>Cabinet has approved that consultation should be held to close Llangedwyn C.in W. School and Ysgol Bro Cynllaith. Consultation has been held on a proposal to close Churchstoke C.P. School. Ysgol Cwm Banwy is a newly established school following the closure of Ysgol Dyffryn Banw and Ysgol Llanerfyl.</p> <p>The remaining schools will be part of reviews in Wave 2 of the Transformation Programme.</p>
11.3.14	There are currently 34 schools that fall under the Welsh Government definition of a ‘small school’ as a school with less than 91 pupils. Of these 34 schools, 29 current have a budgeted share per pupil of more than the Powys average of £4,264. Qn: What is being done to address the other schools who are currently not under consultation to close.	The Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-2030 encompasses all Powys schools and all schools will be subject to a review.
11.3.15	Cost; which is mentioned in the report as a driving reason for closure, has not taken into consideration the shared headship with Llanlwwedd which was introduced while I was a governor and the surplus the school has generated by frugal spending and an over subscription by the funding formula. This re-calculation should be addressed by the Council	The surplus results from the long-term management structure put in place by the governing body (a shared headship) which results in an annual saving for the school.

	before using this as an argument and compared to other small rural schools which I believe would be favourable to Dolau.	The reason for the development of the current funding formula was to ensure that small schools were funded at a minimum level required to operate, including management time, PPA and teaching time.
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11.4 Comments relating to the possible sale of the Dolau building

11.4.1	How has the Council quantified how much money is released from sale of Dolau site? Does this value take into account the lease the hall has for the outdoor space surrounding the school?	While the consultation document mentions the potential for a capital receipt, it is not quantified.
11.4.2	The Dolau Recreation Association holds a lease of over seventy years allowing members of the community to park in the school yard outside of school hours, making the sale of the school if closure goes ahead impossible.	The Council is aware that the site surrounding Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School includes the community hall which has a lease to use the school playground as a car park, which creates a practical and legal challenge to the disposal of the school. However, the Council's Corporate Asset Policy would be followed, should the school close. This would include consideration of a community asset transfer or a sale on the open market via different methods. The Council's policy is to dispose of any surplus assets.
11.4.3	The building cannot be sold as there is a 99-year lease on the playground for parking for the adjacent Community Hall. Transport costs will cancel out any savings, the school premises will need insurance, security, maintenance and is presently not saleable.	As above.
11.4.4	If the proposal goes ahead there will be a potential one-off capital receipt for selling the school. PCC need to be aware the amount of the capital receipt will be impacted by fact car park is on a long-term lease (99-year lease, signed in 1997 with 75 years remaining) and may mean it's actually worth next to nothing as there would be no access to the school and grounds. The school building itself does not lend itself to alternative use as living accommodation easily. It may be suitable a workshop site, although the Council appears to be rationalising its workshop portfolio.	As above.
11.4.5	What do you propose to do with the building afterwards – probably left empty for years to come (incurring costs for PCC).	As above.

11.5 Comments relating to the cost of consultation

11.5.1	The savings you will make in comparison to the money you are spending on the whole consultation will be very little.	Comment noted – consultation on schools' reorganisation is a statutory obligation. The cost of the consultation is minimal and mainly consists of printing and postage costs.
11.5.2	Maybe spend the thousands this consultation costs on the schools that are so needed.	As above.

11.6 Criticism of the Council's financial position

11.6.1	There are plenty of savings that can be made within the Education Budget, closing small schools is an easy target, why do they not try to help failing school all across the county whether it be with leadership issues, financial issues or educational issues, those schools need help not pressure from above.	<p>As stated in the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-30, the Council faces a challenge due to the high proportion of small schools in the county and the lack of equity amongst schools. Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School teaches children in two classes of mixed aged groups. With such low pupil numbers the teacher-pupil ratio is notably different to many other schools in the area, and due to the Council's funding formula, the school the funding per pupil is higher than the Council's average. This does not provide equity across the education system - teachers in larger schools are required to provide the same education as smaller schools for less funding per pupil. Powys' Strategy is intended to improve equity across the education system and to ensure an improvement for every pupil's learning entitlement and experience. The specific reasons for the proposal are outlined in the Consultation Document.</p> <p>The Council supports and challenges all schools across the county to improve – this includes standards of</p>
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		education, financial management and leadership matters.
11.6.2	Whilst I appreciate that budgets are very tight I would ask you to look at other areas where cuts could be made before you make the decision to close yet another of our rural schools.	As above. The Council always strives to provide value for money in the delivery of its services, constantly seeking out cost savings and efficiencies, including service transformation across all service areas.
11.6.3	Yet again you are hell bent on closing another rural Primary School. When your budget is £8 million better than expected. HYPOCRITES.	As above.
11.6.4	Powys should look at other ways of saving money if it needs to. Closing small schools is not the answer.	As above.
11.6.5	There is no legitimate argument for closing this school and there should be better management throughout Powys with regards to funding and financial matters with a consistent and more efficient system than the one that has been in place for some time.	As above.
11.6.6	I can see yes that the Council needs to save money, but this is not the way! You WILL NOT save any money closing our school, this is a complete waste of emotions and resources which ultimately is going to effect the well-being of our kids.	As above.
11.6.7	Powys need to look after and keep open all the schools that we have. Try using the ever-growing council tax you force us to pay to actually maintain services like schools for our community!	As above.
11.6.8	The money being spent on school improvements amounting to millions is a kick in the teeth and a real insult to this community.	As above. Due to the poor condition of a number of schools across the county, the Council is investing in building new schools and remodelling others, in order to improve the learning environment for pupils and staff.
11.6.9	But more worryingly is the huge inconsistencies in your forecasted budgets which appears there actually may not be any savings at all.	Savings estimates are based on the best information available at the time they are calculated and are subject to change for example due to changes in pupil numbers, parental choice, staff changes etc. The

		calculations are reviewed by a range of officers and sensitivity analysis is also carried out.
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11.7 Other comments

11.7.1	“Play grant” - Llanfihangel Rhydithon received £5000 from Powys County Council within the last 6 months for enhanced play provision. Is this effective use of council money to close the school so soon after?	The Council provided £10,000 of funding through the Welsh Government’s Childcare Offer ‘small grants’ scheme to refurbish the Cylch Meithrin. The allocation of funding is based on the needs of individual settings
11.7.2	“Funding for 3+” - The Cylch Meithrin received a £10,000 grant from Powys County Council within the last 12 months for repurposing. Is this effective use of council money to close the school so soon after?	As above.
11.7.3	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.	The Council notes the comment of the School Forum.

	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.	
11.7.4	I urge you to reconsider or our rural communities will be full of elderly people which in turn may be a huge drain on our social services.	Comment noted
11.7.5	There will be little or no investment for the 21st Century Schools program from this proposal.	Comment noted
11.7.6	Financially we can appreciate that stretched PCC resources put pressure on smaller, older schools with low pupil numbers. But closing small schools is such a short-term solution to the situation, and once taken is frighteningly irreversible. Like small cottage hospitals in the area there are strong arguments for closure, but the reality produces a wasteland of provision and fails to cater for the community needs. Small schools seem to be unfashionable at the moment, while finances and PCC savings appear to mean everything.	See 1.3.1
11.7.7	We have previous experience of the detrimental effect on individuals affected by the disruption to lives consequent upon enforced removal from familiar bases, when 'cost' arguments over-ride pure (in this case, education) objectives. It is axiomatic that the interests (educational) of the child are paramount. We sincerely believe that these interests are best served by the children continuing their primary school education at Llanfihangel Rhydithon County Primary School.	See 1.3.1
11.7.8	Do Welsh Government not give extra money to Powys County Council for rural schools?	Powys County Council is in receipt of a time limited Small and Rural Schools grant which ends on 31 March 2022.
11.7.9	There is no getting away from the issue of Rurality in Powys and demographic trends are key to assisting with dealing with this, but where is the balance between saving money and the residents of Powys' mental health. There are many many ways Powys can save £52k a year without shutting this school, which is thriving at a time when others are not. All anyone wants if fairness, consistency and transparency and there is none where this decision is concerned. Powys average budgeted cost per pupil is £4264 – 44 schools (57%) of schools are over	See 1.3.1 Details of budgets per pupil for all schools can be found here: https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Local-Government/Finance/Revenue/Delegated-School-Budgets/delegatedschoolbudgetsperpupil-by-school

	<p>this amount. There are 15 schools (19%) currently with a budgeted cost per pupil of more than £5500 per pupil Qn: Out of these 44 schools and in particular the 7 schools ranked above Llanfihangel, what has been done to review the costs in these schools and address the fact they are budgeted to cost more than the current Powys Average? Qn: For 19/20 what was the variance between the 19/20 budgeted cost per pupil and the actual outturn cost per pupil for all of the schools in Powys?</p>	<p>Details of actual outturns for all schools can be found here: https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Local-Government/Finance/Revenue/Delegated-School-Outturn/delegatedschooloutturnexpenditure-by-school The average 2019-20 Delegated Schools Budget per pupil for Powys was £4,156 and the average 2019-20 delegated schools actual outturn cost per pupil for Powys was £3,792, which is a variance of £364 per pupil.</p>
11.7.10	<p>What about the uniform? The children will all need new uniform, is this a cost Powys County Council are going to cover or will the parents be expected to cover this cost? This is another expense that is unfair on all the parents involved.</p>	<p>If the proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon school is agreed, it is recognised that there would be an additional cost to parents needing to buy new school uniforms.</p> <p>Funding is currently available to support low-income families with support for uniform costs.</p>
11.7.11	<p>Please remember big is not always better and not always more economic. A large school performing badly will cost the authority more than any small school does in total.</p>	<p>See 1.3.1.</p>
11.7.12	<p>You say that there is plenty of money in the overall financial envelope for education. Firstly, if there is enough money why close these schools? Secondly, you are saying this money that is proposed to be saved will help other schools develop. Are these other schools lacking?</p>	<p>As stated in the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-30, the Council faces a challenge due to the high proportion of small schools in the county and the lack of equity amongst schools. Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School teaches children in two classes of mixed aged groups. With such low pupil numbers the teacher-pupil ratio is notably different to many other schools in the area, and due to the Council's funding formula, the school's funding per pupil is higher than the Council's average. This does not provide equity across the education system - teachers in larger schools are required to provide the same</p>

		<p>education as smaller schools for less funding per pupil. Powys' Strategy is intended to improve equity across the education system and to ensure an improvement for every pupil's learning entitlement and experience.</p>
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12. CRITICISM OF POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

12.1 Criticism of the support provided to the school / pupils during the consultation period

12.1.1	<p>What additional support have Powys offered the school and its pupils at this time? It is the now the end of May and I have failed to see any support provided by Powys to the pupils and staff. It is the school who have felt compelled to seek external pastoral support for the pupils and have arranged for a 'happiness club' and external facilitator to visit the school during June.</p>	<p>The Council's HR officer visited the school on Monday 26th April and met with the staff for an informal meeting so they could ask informal questions / raise concerns. The Headteacher was asked on the 14th June if staff wanted another meeting before the end of the summer term but it was confirmed that the staff did not feel they needed another meeting at that point.</p> <p>The Council is committed to supporting schools and learners, including through periods of change. Children experience change in a vast range of areas, from family life to technology. An experienced headteacher is working for the Council to support school leaders to help them manage possible changes for their learners.</p> <p>However, it is also expected that school governors, staff and parents support the children to ensure that there isn't a detrimental impact on their wellbeing, and Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School have done this via a range of methods.</p>
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12.1.2	PCC needs to consider the trauma and emotional well-being of the children who are being caught up in this current consultation and if closure goes ahead, both now and ongoing into their futures. This should not be measured against a balance sheet – a balance sheet that dictates that a child’s education can take place anywhere. It should not be measured against short term conditions/circumstances that a village school may find itself in either, conditions/circumstances that through unfortunate luck bring a village school into the spotlight of PCC potential rural school closures.	The Council has recognised, within the draft impact assessment, that the proposal could have a negative impact on pupils’ wellbeing: <i>‘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.’</i>
12.1.3	At no point as part of the transforming education process has any increased resources or support been offered to the school, parents and or governing body about how to support the children through this process, which clearly indicates no consideration for the impact this may have on the emotional and mental wellbeing of our children and young people.	See 12.1.1 and 12.1.2
12.1.4	The school have been fantastic and are putting in place extra measures to deal with the stress caused by the consultation, but this is all because you - Powys County Council have put us in this position. What support have you offered us? You won’t even listen to our concerns about the nearest school. You won’t reply to Freedom of Information requests. I am so angry that you are having this effect on our family life, a happy well-balanced family trying to do the very best for our children and to live work and play in Powys. Isn’t that your strap line now? Destroying communities - and you will if you close Dolau school. You should be ashamed of yourselves. We are mostly business people and professionals associated with the school.	The Council disagrees with the statement that it is not listening to concerns about the nearest school. As seen in this report, there are a significant number of comments related to other schools. The Council has a legal duty to respond to FoI requests. The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation. The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation.
12.1.5	Earlier on in the year, Powys County Council put up on social media ways to help children’s mental health, not long after this Powys County Council announced the plans to close four small schools. I do not see how closing Llanfihangel Rhydithon, a school where the children feel happy and safe will have a positive impact on them.	The Council recognises that any school reorganisation process creates a period of uncertainty for all involved, including children. The Council is committed to supporting schools and learners, including through periods of change. An experienced member of staff from the Council is

		<p>supporting school leaders effectively to help them manage possible changes for their learners.</p> <p>It is also expected that school governors, staff and parents support the children to ensure that there isn't a detrimental impact on their wellbeing, and Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School have done this via a range of methods.</p>
12.1.6	<p>At no point during the consultation have Powys actively supported the pupils or parents with the emotional and mental strain this consultation had burdened them with. My 6-year-old has attended school throughout the pandemic, and it has been his safe place. The news of possible closure has had an immeasurable impact on his emotional well-being, after all you risk closing his safe place, just as our young people are being pushed to close the "attainment gap" and "accelerate" their learning. During his first year of primary school, he had only 5 "normal" months, his second year has been littered with blended learning, covid measures and the fear of PCC closing his beloved school. His third year COULD be a year of impending closure, a year of unnecessary emotional turmoil, quite frankly another Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) which is entirely avoidable. His fourth year, if closure should happen, will be filled with huge change, separation from many friends and his trusted adults. How do Powys propose to ensure that his mental health is not impacted detrimentally? What about the pupils who are experiencing a closure consultation for a second time in their short school life? Will Powys accept responsibility for the impact this will have on them? The transformation team at PCC are adding ACEs to our young people's lives, in a time when our young people cannot take any more.</p>	As above.

12.2 Criticism of the Council's approach to small / rural schools / communities

12.2.1	<p>Having recently called by at the previous Nantmel School, I was shocked and saddened to see the state that it had been left in. I assumed that the building had been sold for redevelopment, rather than simply closing the</p>	<p>Nantmel School building is the responsibility of the Diocese of Brecon and Swansea as it is owned by the Diocese.</p>
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	doors and leaving it to the wrath of vandals and nature – what a dreadful waste! And it seems it is not the only school that has been closed and left to rot. I can imagine it adds another “kick in the teeth” to those lost communities each day.	
12.2.2	Powys has already closed a number of rural schools and a number of these - Nantmel, Rhosgoch and Beguildy are still derelict buildings. The expense of these consultations as well as the emotional impact on pupils, staff and communities has been for nothing.	All surplus assets are subject to the process of disposal as outlined in the Council’s Asset Management Policy. Some schools that have closed have been transferred to other service areas e.g. housing or to a community. In other case they have been sold to third parties. This provides the Council with a capital receipt that is then re-invested in the Council’s corporate budget, which in turn supports education. If an asset is transferred to a third party, it becomes the responsibility of that third party.
12.2.3	So this is a little worrying that Powys want to close it. We were told not to take it personally, but it is hard not to when there are other small schools in the area that have never been under consultation but are in very similar circumstances to Dolau School.	The Council’s Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys is a ten year plan, and education provision in all localities will be reviewed within the next few years.
12.2.4	It has been seen from as early as 1833 local councils have misused funds provided by the government towards educating those living in rural or partially built-up working areas. It has always been seen as an after thought to those in power. Is it that you, Powys County Council, want to eradicate educating the rural areas once again? Or are you simply ignorant to the high education standard provided in small classroom setting in schools like Llanfihangel Rhydithon County Primary School?	The Council is not proposing to eradicate educating the rural areas. See 1.3.1.
12.2.5	It appears from the outside that this whole process of closing rural community schools is an act to save money, to make up for the sheer ridiculous amounts of money that you waste on unnecessary projects, and to justify your very jobs in Powys. By the way you poorly handle closing these schools and many other projects in Powys, it smacks of a sheer lack of common sense and incompetence, which runs right through the heart of Powys county council and all the way through to the top.	See 1.3.1.
12.2.6	The loss of a small school should not be a financial decision on the cost running that school, it should also take into account the loss of the community, as the children may go to a different schools from their	The draft Community Impact Assessment is based on information supplied by the school, and will be updated

	friends so that community bond made in school is loss for future generations, If you look at areas where you have closed small schools already and do a study on the impact it has had to that community - a proper survey talking to the children that were displaced and how it has affected them. Do they know the children that live a mile down the road or not – not a survey of what some expert thinks.	to take account of information gathered during the consultation.
12.2.7	I fear this is yet a further attempt by the council to rampage through rural community life in pursuit of the holy grail of cutting costs, in order to protect and enhance the jobs and salaries of its employees. The council has long ago lost sight of and abandoned the core reason for its existence, which I remind them is to provide services TO THE RESIDENTS OF POWYS. I regret the whole approach of the council has in recent years been to ignore and override the needs and wishes of the residents it is meant to serve and who, by force of law, are obliged to pay for it's existence.	The Council isn't rampaging through rural community life in pursuit of cutting costs to protect and enhance the salaries of its employees. Any savings from school closures are re-invested within the Council's corporate budget, which is then used to fund services, including education.
12.2.8	There appears to be a complete lack of vision and forward thinking on behalf of Powys Education Department, with the closure of rural schools been a quick and easy fix, to fill surplus school places in larger local Primary Schools.	The Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-30 outlines the Council's vision for all learners in Powys. The closure of rural schools is not a 'quick and easy fix' – all school reorganisation proposal are required to follow the same process and due consideration must be given to issues raised during consultations. See 1.3.1
12.2.9	If Powys continues to ravage their small schools, they are likely to find that Powys isn't a place that young people and families want to be.	The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation. The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation
12.2.10	The closure of smaller country schools is very short sighted and made with only financial interests rather than the best interests of the children	All schools, regardless of size or whether they are classed as rural or urban, are required to support,

	or the community. Many children do not thrive in larger schools and is a barrier to the accessing education altogether.	challenge and nurture all pupils to reach their full potential. The reasons for the proposal are outlined in the consultation document and financial saving is only one of these reasons.
12.2.11	In a business or workplace this would be called discrimination- that is what this is, I feel as though Powys County Council are not treating my choice of school for my children equally to those of larger schools in Powys	The Council disagrees that the proposal is discriminatory. In accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, the planning and development of effective school organisation proposals is crucial to the Welsh Government's goal of transforming education in Wales and providing better educational outcomes. The Council has a duty to manage its schools infrastructure to ensure equity across the whole system and to ensure that learner entitlement and experience is improved.
12.2.12	I feel discriminated against. I was a pupil of Llangunllo school, - you closed that in 1984. I was moved to Whitton - you have closed that. Then John Beddoes school - you have closed that. I found a community in Beguildy and attended YFC there as that was the next nearest. You have now destroyed that community. I married and moved and wanted my children to have a rural education. Since being at Dolau school - this is the third time you have put us through this consultation process. This is bullying. You could call it racist as Radnorshire is victimised by this appalling farce and is under represented in the cabinet. Do we all not have protected characteristics.	As above. School reorganisation has been carried out across all areas of Powys. There are currently 2 members of Cabinet representing wards in Radnorshire, 2 representing wards in Brecknockshire and 4 representing wards in Montgomeryshire. This reflects Powys' population.
12.2.13	There is a concern at the way in which the local authority seems to be pursuing rural schools.	The Council is not pursuing rural schools. The Council is implementing its Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys which was developed following extensive engagement with schools and other stakeholders. One of the challenges highlighted during the process was the fact that Powys still has a high proportion of small schools. Due to the rural nature of Powys with its sparse population, these small schools tend to be located in rural areas.

12.2.14	Small rural communities are classified as unsustainable by their local authorities and local development plans, so they cannot expand and support local schools, post offices and so on? The problem is that communities in such areas want to expand, but are not allowed to, and the unsustainable tag becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.	Powys is a rural county and the Council has many policies that support rural communities.
12.2.15	You can't keep closing rural schools, there will eventually be none left, so many in the area have already been closed.	The Council is not pursuing rural schools. The Council is implementing its Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys which was developed following extensive engagement with schools and other stakeholders. One of the challenges highlighted during the process was the fact that Powys still has a high proportion of small schools. Due to the rural nature of Powys with its sparse population, these small schools tend to be located in rural areas.
12.2.16	Powys is primarily a large rural area and the priorities and strategic direction of the council should reflect this	As above.
12.2.17	Powys CC and its Councillors need to protect small rural schools and should understand that the backbone of Powys are the rural communities. The heartbeat of these communities is the Community School and, as can be seen from other communities who have had their rural schools closed, the village communities are slowly decaying. PCC need to turn this around – village shops, pubs, chapels/churches and now attempts at the schools. There will be nothing left.	The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation. The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation
12.2.18	Powys are trying to kill off the county by pushing out families and young people. The way things are going in the next decade they will be providing very little education and as it will be all in the larger towns the rural communities will be left with nothing	The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation. The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation.
12.2.19	You're looking for a quick fix. The closing of more small primary schools, when these should be the happiest and most important learning years for any infant and child. The school is providing good outcomes for education for its pupils. The council needs to be looking at the wider	The Council has committed, within its Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys, to providing secondary education in all thirteen localities. However, these will be developed into all-age schools, linking the primary and secondary phases of education.

	issue, secondary education across the county, and stop closing the primaries providing a good education at the heart of their communities.	See 1.3.1
12.2.20	Our children are now in a Shropshire school (our nearest school) as we live on the border and Shropshire Council seems to find a way of keeping small rural schools open for the greater good of the children and the communities in which they live, please can Powys County Council reconsider the future of this school and other village schools too.	Comment noted.
12.2.21	We don't complain about a 20-mile round trip just to go food shopping, nor do we expect to be subsidised for it, even though we cut our journeys down to help our carbon footprint. Neither do we mind travelling our children just as far for other amenities that we haven't got locally, e.g. Leisure centres, swimming pools, football and rugby pitches, fuel and clubs etc etc, that the towns people have on their doorstep. We also appreciate and don't complain when it takes more than 8 minutes to get an ambulance or Police help out to us when we really need it. But, we pay our council tax just the same. We are YOUR people, you are OUR public servants, and we expect to be looked after in the same way, whether we live in towns or in the country, simply just with fairness.	The Council recognises that Powys is a largely rural county with a sparse population, and access to services is challenging depending on where people live. However, In accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, the planning and development of effective school organisation proposals is crucial to the Welsh Government's goal of transforming education in Wales and providing better educational outcomes. The Council has a duty to manage its schools infrastructure to ensure equity across the whole system and to ensure that learner entitlement and experience is improved.
12.2.22	The council need to consider making changes where schools are not meeting targets and goals and stop picking on a school which is a green school, the highest standard of education in Wales.	As above.

12.3 Criticism of the Council's treatment of Dolau school

12.3.1	I also wonder why Dolau again is picked on for consultation, when other schools in the area never seem to get mentioned for closure, it's like it is a very personal vendetta against this lovely school.	<p>The Council previously consulted on a proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and Llanbister C.P. School in 2016. The challenges facing Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School are outlined in the Consultation Document.</p> <p>As stated in the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-30, the Council faces a challenge due to the high proportion of small schools in the county and the lack of equity amongst schools.</p>
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		<p>Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School teaches children in two classes of mixed aged groups. With such low pupil numbers the teacher-pupil ratio is notably different to many other schools in the area, and due to the Council's funding formula, the school the funding per pupil is higher than the Council's average. This does not provide equity across the education system - teachers in larger schools are required to provide the same education as smaller schools for less funding per pupil. Powys' Strategy is intended to improve equity across the education system and to ensure an improvement for every pupil's learning entitlement and experience. The reasons for the proposal are outlined in the Consultation Document.</p> <p>Also see 1.3.1</p>
12.3.2	<p>Our school does not deserve to close simply to use our pupils as pawns in a game to fill another school at the cost of our community and only a very small annual saving to the authority. Powys County Council - you should be ashamed yourselves – you have a successful, high achieving school in Dolau, but rather that address short comings at other sites and asking why they have so many available spaces you pick off the 'small guy' as they are deemed an easy target.</p>	As above.
12.3.3	<p>Why do the council want to slate such a good school. You need to look at other areas in the council department to see where you can make savings not target something which is thriving.</p>	As above.
12.3.4	<p>I find it disappointing that PCC want to close this school. There is a lot more things that the council do that could be cut before closing this school. Stop wasting money elsewhere</p>	As above.

12.3.5	Powys County Council are threatening to erase the history of Dolau school and its community, leaving behind another empty and unused building on the road to so called money saving.	<p>The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation.</p> <p>The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation.</p> <p>All surplus assets are subject to the process of disposal as outlined in the Council's Asset Management Policy. Some schools that have closed have been transferred to other service areas e.g. housing or to a community. In other case they have been sold to third parties. This provides the Council with a capital receipt that is then re-invested in the Council's corporate budget, which in turn supports education.</p> <p>If an asset is transferred to a third party, it becomes the responsibility of that third party.</p>
12.3.6	A fabulous community asset, I could not believe my eyes when I saw the school was being put through this again!	<p>The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation.</p> <p>The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation.</p>
12.3.7	I think this is very short sighted of Powys County Council to shut such a great school	Comment noted.
12.3.8	Absolutely ridiculous. A local school that is thriving with a fantastic number of children and you want to close it's absolutely stupid.	Comment noted.
12.3.9	The whole community are frustrated and angered by the PCC total disrespect and sheer arrogance in attempting to close our excellent rural school, of which should not be in consultation. I believe that Powys officials alongside the cabinet are misguided in their judgement if they believe the community will allow closure to happen. This will be fought to the end, judicially if required, Powys will be bought to account.	Comment noted.

12.3.10	I am utterly disappointed that we have been put in this position to fight to keep our school, Llanfihangel Rhydithon open. The fact is, you are trying yet again to break down a community, who puts every effort into supporting the school.	Comment noted.
12.3.11	Llanfihangel Rhydithon sits within Powys, the largest county within Wales, with a population just 133,000 people, who all live in small towns and rural villages. This poses unique policy challenges in Powys, from education, health and economic development, and many of those require unique local solutions. However, none of that removes the Local Government's obligations to the communities they serve, in this instance, the people of Dolau and the children of Llanfihangel Rhydithon school.	The Council recognises that Powys is a largely rural county with a sparse population, and access to services is challenging depending on where people live. However, In accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, the planning and development of effective school organisation proposals is crucial to the Welsh Government's goal of transforming education in Wales and providing better educational outcomes. The Council has a duty to manage its schools infrastructure to ensure equity across the whole system and to ensure that learner entitlement and experience is improved.
12.3.12	It is sad to see yet another school victimised by the council trying to make a quick buck without considering the long-term impact on the pupils and the wider community.	The Council is required to fully consider the impact on pupils and the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation. The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation
12.3.13	This proposal should not have come to fruition the blame for all the pain, suffering, heartache and anxiety that has been felt within our community over the past three months since the proposal was first suggested lies fairly at the feet of the Powys School Transformation Team.	The School Transformation Team are officers who have been directed to co-ordinate the consultation process on behalf of the Cabinet.

12.4 Criticism of Council staff / councillors

12.4.1	I suggest that the leaders of Powys County Council look at why this proposal was wrongly started and why it continued through a Cabinet meeting when the proposal itself leaves PCC open to a legal case.	Cabinet considered a Proposal Paper at its meeting on 9 th February 2021, which considered the challenges facing Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, along with draft impact assessments. The process has been
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		carried out in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code.
12.4.2	Dolau has received the support of both the local MP and MS for Brecon and Radnor, two Conservative members. They both cannot understand why a conservative member, who is charge of education for the county wants to close rural, small schools. Both Fay Jones and James Evans expressed their confusion as to why the council would want to close a school that the previous Minister for Education in the Senedd used as a great example of a rural school. Why would Powys want to shut such a great school with the support of both the MP and MS for Brecon and Radnor?	See 1.3.1
12.4.3	I think the proposals would have a wonderful effect if they were written in full on a length of barbed wire and shoved down the throat of any councillor who supports the idea of closing schools or making teachers redundant in Powys.	The Council strongly objects to this comment.
12.4.4	Powys should be leading by example, councillors should taking opportunities to show how rural communities can continue to thrive in our modern world, they should not choose to isolate rural communities by making decision which negatively affect diversity and investment.	The Council is required to fully consider the impact on pupils and the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation. The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation.
12.4.5	How can sensible decisions be made at Powys County Council when it is alleged that there is conflict at top level? (Journal May 21)	The Council disagrees with this comment. Decisions are made based on evidence, and the next decision will be made based upon the responses to the consultation and the updated impact assessments.
12.4.6	I have had many deliberations with Senior Professionals within several departments within PCC. NONE HAVE BEEN FAVOURABLE!!! I have scores of email exchanges, even hundreds, and these email exchanges demonstrate that the attitudes and behaviour of these professionals are discourteous, disrespectful, fallacious, duplicitous and honestly, quite disgraceful. This then brings me on to the issue of Directives as issued by WAG and which has a direct bearing on this case. I will choose one Department as an example...the planning department!!! I have contacted WAG and the Planning Inspectorate for Wales and my experience is that	Comment noted.

	PCC do not interpret these Directives to best serve their own constituents. This displays an arrogance and disregard for the best interests of ordinary people which is more reminiscent of a dictatorial, totalitarian, fascist state!!! The definition of fascism by the way is this “the forcible suppression of opposition”.	
12.4.7	Perhaps those making the decisions on our school should come and visit the school before making such strong proposals? You would then see what a thriving school it is and how you will be crushing not only the children but the parents, teachers, and community if you continue with your proposal.	Both the Portfolio Holder for Schools and Property and the Deputy Leader of the Council have met with the school governors. Cabinet will be visiting the school as well in the near future.
12.4.8	Maybe worth asking the chief executive to visit the school herself!	Comment noted.

12.5 Criticism of the Council’s use of money

12.5.1	I hope that Powys county council will see sense and remember that things are not all about money but, about the people and especially young people that they are employed to benefit and serve, as our council tax seems to keep expanding every year lets at least have a quality service in return!	See 1.3.1.
12.5.2	The council need to look at their own departments and consider where the money is really being wasted, take a good look at what the money is being spent on and where you can save and not damage the children’s lives and education in the community. Spending money making other schools bigger which are of a poorer educational standard is not the answer, it is bad practice and it’s the children futures which will suffer.	See 1.3.1 The Council practises sound financial management. Powys County Council always strives to provide value for money in the delivery of its services, constantly seeking out cost savings and efficiencies, including service transformation across all service areas. Audit Wales reviews the Council’s financial reporting and sustainability each year and also undertakes value for money reviews. The Auditor General gave an unqualified true and fair opinion on the Council’s financial statements for 2019-20 (the latest available currently). Audit Wales also reviewed transformation at Powys County Council during 2019-20 and concluded that overall the Council is well placed to deliver its transformation programme while acknowledging that

		<p>Covid-19 presents new challenges and risks to the programme.</p> <p>In October 2020, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) have identified that the local authority has made significant progress since their last inspections and that the enhanced monitoring arrangements at Powys County Council social services are no longer required.</p> <p>In November 2020 Estyn held a virtual post-inspection conference with Powys County Council and concluded that the local authority demonstrated that it has begun to make sound progress since the inspection in July 2019 and that it is showing a clear commitment to addressing the issues that were raised. Importantly, the authority is building leadership capacity which has the potential to secure sustainable improvements.</p> <p>The authority's work during the pandemic in response to the impact of Covid-19 on learners was also referenced in Estyn's review "Local authority and regional consortia support for schools and PRUs in response to Covid-19".</p>
12.5.3	<p>On the negative side, however, a weighted pupil cost formula has been applied by Powys, putting us in a bad light on the average pupil cost scale; oh, and there is that unfulfilled promise from Powys County Council to formalise and stabilise our links with Llanelwedd.</p>	<p>The current formula is not a weighted pupil cost formula, rather it is based on providing the funding required to run the school, largely based on both pupil numbers and class numbers.</p> <p>The development of the current funding formula was overseen by the Formula Working Group which included several representatives from across schools in Powys, including headteachers and governors.</p> <p>Generally, the lower the number of pupils, the higher the cost per pupil will be.</p>

12.5.4	If Powys had academy schools like those in England they would not be run in this way, the education department is short sighted in their decision making and if makes me wonder how officers manage their own money if this is how they manage tax payers money, if Powys was a business it would have gone bust years ago, there is no business acumen or commercial awareness in anything financial the Authority does, promoting staff from within that have never worked anywhere else and never experienced life in the private sector where you are responsible for peoples livelihood every day amazes me.	Powys County Council must work within the regulatory framework within Wales. Its services and finances are reviewed regularly by Audit Wales, CIW and Estyn – their latest opinions are set out above.
12.5.5	If the council wishes to make cuts they ought to look at themselves first and lead by example and cut the Councillors wages first.	Comment noted.
12.5.6	If we are looking at money saving within Powys then could the councillors have foregone their annual pay rise or is it a case of I'm alright, Jac. Certainly appears that way.	Comment noted.
12.5.7	Do not waste Powys money elsewhere like the idiotic & expensive combining of LHS & BHS	The Council disagrees with this comment.
12.5.8	I don't believe that any child should be made to be a scape goat for a council who know that can't manage they budget even if it's an English or Welsh school.	The Council disagrees with this comment.
12.5.9	The council seems to have the wool pulled over its eyes when it comes to trying to save money.	The Council disagrees with this comment.

12.6 Other criticisms

12.6.1	With planning permissions in Llandrindod Wells, Crossgates, Llanddewi, Dolau and Penybont all at significantly high levels, where do you propose that all of the additional children moving to the area be educated? It seems to me that 'planning' the future for our children in Powys is a very short-term thing.	The Council is aware of the current and planned housing developments in the area. However, it is not anticipated that these will result in a significant increase in pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.
12.6.2	It is not acceptable for Powys CC to disregard both the school categorisation system and Estyn, which are nationally recognised benchmarks and offer alternative receiving schools that have a yellow rating. The school categorisation system is a national standard rating and has been created for a reason.	See 4.5.2.1

12.6.3	Your education department is in and out of special measures all the time you should be embarrassed! I think there are other issues you should be addressing, where the real problems are!!!!	It is correct that the Council's education service is currently in Estyn category.
12.6.4	Perhaps the next Education Minister will kick out your plans and not just think about his or her ego. The only thing that needs transforming, is the 'mindset' of your so called Education Department'. THIS IS JUST SO WRONG ON EVERY SCALE.	The responsibility for decisions related to school reorganisation is that of the Council, not the Welsh Government or Minister for Education.
12.6.5	My suggestion is if your looking to close down something, please look no further than PCC, an organisation which has been unfit for purpose for many years.	Comment noted.
12.6.6	I have been led to believe that members of Public State Bodies are subject to a range of legislation and regulations including The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which states that: "Article 3 (best interests of the child) The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children." "Article 29 (goals of education) Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full." I believe PCC is NOT putting the children's interests first with the proposal of a school that develops every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.	The Council is putting the interest of children first. All schools, regardless of size, location or whether rural or urban, are required to support, challenge and nurture all pupils to meet their full potential.
12.6.7	I believe the proposed closure, and the obvious charade that is this consultation, is another example of the disregard and contempt in which the council holds the Powys residents	The whole process is aligned with the requirements of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code. The Council is required to prepare a Consultation Report following consultation, which will be the basis of Cabinet's next decision in relation to Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.
12.6.8	Powys county council is the largest council in England and Wales and should be supporting local communities.	The Council is supporting local communities in a number of ways.
12.6.9	If the Local Authority do not support the youth of the County, I feel that, in the long run, it will cost the Local Authority much more, both in terms of finances and also lack of qualified workers, as sadly, the youth of the County will leave the area permanently.	The Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys aims to improve learner entitlement and experience across a range of areas.

13. COMMENTS ABOUT COUNCIL STRATEGIES

13.1 Comments about the Council's Transforming Education Strategy

13.1.1	<p>I read the 2020 Transforming Education in Powys, case for change document – were parents actually consulted? And past pupils of ‘small rural schools’?</p>	<p>The Case for Change was formulated by the Schools Conference report and the Engagement Report. These reports were generated from the Schools Conference and subsequent engagement sessions held with governors, school staff, schools service staff, County Councillors and Town and Community Councils.</p> <p>Alongside the Case for Change, a draft Vision for Education in Powys was formulated. A public engagement period took place during January 2020 and February 2020 on the draft Vision for Education and a total of 478 individuals completed the engagement questionnaire and 124 written responses were received.</p>
13.1.2	<p>It appears that two reports ‘Schools Conference Report’ (compiled of thoughts and aspirations of head teachers and governors) and ‘Engagement Report’ (from engagement sessions including governors, school staff, school service staff, County councillors, community councils) were generated, and based on these findings the council prepared a Case for change document highlighting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small schools are unsustainable and do not offer social benefits • Too many small schools for the population of Powys • Small schools are draining resources • Declining pupil numbers <p>The Case for change document did not appear to consult parents or alumni of small rural schools.</p>	As above.
13.1.3	<p>The Council states that it's vision statement to transform Powys' education system is 'All children and young people in Powys will</p>	This is correct.

	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’.	
13.1.4	Powys County Council believe: ‘All children & young people in Powys will experience a high quality, inspiring education to help develop the knowledge, skills & attributes that will enable them to become healthy, personally fulfilled, economically productive, socially responsible & globally engaged citizens of 21 st century Wales.’ Well, Llanfihangel Rhydithon primary school is already providing and doing all this and are already to deliver the new curriculum, and as ESTYN pointed out: The Executive Headteacher, staff and Governors have a clear vision for the future of the school. They set high standards and ensure that they deploy the schools resources efficiently!!!	See 1.3.1
13.1.5	The Vision Statement within the new Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys has been, and is being, achieved by the school... as evidenced by Estyn’s report in 2019. This, to a greater extent than other CP schools in the area! Whilst it is acknowledged that Llanfihangel Rhydithon School is a small rural school (as befitting a small rural community) we believe the school should be actively promoted as a Beacon or exemplar model of a CP school in Powys showing the high standards of education that can be achieved with excellent teachers, widespread use of information technology, and strong community support. The children themselves have a greater sense of belonging to, loyalty to and ‘ownership’ of such a successful school, and this may be, in part, also due to the financial support from the Education Authority.	Comment noted.
13.1.6	Powys CC states that its vision and rationale for closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon school is in part to enable pupils to “... <i>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.</i> ” To move young children from a ‘good’ school, which is already delivering an inspiring education, to a merely ‘adequate’ school which is not doing so, appears to fly in the face of Powys CC’s own ‘vision and guiding principle’.	See 4.1.1 and 4.5.2.1

13.1.7	Whilst I support Powys' strategic priorities and its desire to move ahead in implementing them, I feel that to target closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon school much more would be lost, irreplaceably so, than would be "saved."	Comment noted.
13.1.8	School Transformation was for better education for the children and not to save money.	See 1.3.1
13.1.9	There is no doubt in my mind that Powys Education Department could help "transform" education across the county and mend their financial issues in other ways than to simply close our small rural schools.	See 1.3.1
13.1.10	Real schools transformation shouldn't be starting with the easy, vulnerable ones, it should be done fairly and equitably by looking at them all, acknowledging there will always be the 45 minute travel time restriction, rurality and lower pupil numbers going forward and start from scratch with the right staff with the right skills and expertise to follow it through fairly look at what Scotland and England are doing as well, we all face the same issues	The Council is implementing its Strategy for Transforming Education in a number of ways: sometimes by considering individual schools, other times considering whole area/catchments.
13.1.11	I would urge you to reconsider your transforming strategy.	Comment noted.
13.1.12	It does seem that PCC won't be satisfied until it has culled every small school within it's control regardless of the wishes of the families and communities that these schools serve.	See 1.3.1
13.1.14	I know that if PCC has decided that it wanted to insist on this closure programme then it will probably happen despite any 'consultation' but please do not try to justify them as being for the benefit of the children. Shunting children from good schools to average schools under the guise of offering extended facilities is really just about saving cash.	See 1.3.1
13.1.15	Please can you let me know how you envisage the primary sector to look in the Llandrindod and surrounding areas in the next 10 years?	The whole catchment of Ysgol Calon Cymru will be reviewed in Wave 2 of the Programme (2022 – 2025.)
13.1.16	Powys had these fantastic visions 20 years ago. What happened? If these visions haven't happened in the last 20 years, how is it going to happen in the next 20 years?	Estyn inspected the Council's education service in 2019. It judged that ' <i>despite making modest progress in reorganising primary schools over time, the authority has been unable to deliver on a few key proposals in recent years.</i> '

		The new Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys is a ten year strategy that focuses on improving learner experience and entitlement across a range of areas.
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13.2 21st Century Schools and Education Programme

13.2.1	PCC's 21st Century Schools and Education Programme aims to reduce running costs to maximise resources available to target improvements to learner outcome.	Comment noted.
13.2.2	One of the primary aims of Powys County Council's 21st Century Schools and Education Programme is to reduce the number of school buildings in poor condition. However, PCC has openly stated that Llanfihangel Rhydithon School is in a good condition. Therefore, it does not meet this aim of the programme and perhaps the focus should be turned to those schools that have structural issues in comparison.	The Council's 21 st C Schools Programme is the main capital investment programme for schools. There is no requirement for capital funding with the proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.

13.3 Towards 2040 – the Powys Wellbeing Plan

13.3.1	On pages 14 and 24 of your 'Towards 2040 – the Powys Wellbeing Plan', you note that more people will move to Powys 'recognising it as a great place to live and raise their families' and that 'Our environment will be valued by residents...for its beauty and the opportunities it offers'. Both statements are misleading. Who do you honestly think is going to move into our Powys villages and raise their families, if their communities have no schools? Were you to speak today to those living in Beguildy, Whitton and Nantmel, you would hear how closing their schools has negatively impacted the opportunities offered to their communities. Therefore, how can you promote such nonsense in a published document when you are fully responsible for ripping the heart out from your rural communities?	The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation. The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation.
13.3.2	The Well-being of Future Generations Act places a duty on four statutory organisations – Mid and West Wales Fire Service, Natural Resources Wales, Powys County Council and Powys Teaching Health Board – to work as a Public Service Board to improve the well-being of its	As above.

	<p>residents. This led the Public Service Board for Powys to develop a well-being plan – ‘Towards 2040, the Powys Well-being Plan’. Objective 1: People in Powys will experience a stable and thriving economy. It was noted in the report that a quarter of Powys residents have jobs outside the County. With young professionals now coming back to the area, with young children attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon, do we not want to retain this educated skill force within Powys? And retain the future generations of these professionals? Farming and rural living is changing. The future of agriculture depends on attracting young talent by making them realise what a modern, challenging career it can be. These are the skilled, educated farmers of the future. I cannot see how this objective of the ‘Towards 2040, the Powys Well-being Plan’ is being addressed if Llanfihangel Rhydithon is to close. How do you expect young families to stay in Powys if you close the small primaries schools that are the heart of many communities?</p>	
13.3.3	<p>It will also inhibit Powys’ Towards 2040 Well-being Plan, which states that Powys ‘should be recognized as a great place to live and to raise families’.</p>	As above.
13.3.4	<p>In the ‘Towards 2040, the Powys Well-being Plan’ in July 2018 it is stated that ‘People in Powys will be healthy, socially motivated and responsible’. It was noted in the report that Powys should be ‘recognised as a great place to live and to raise families, therefore boosting school pupil numbers and community capacity’. Do you expect young professionals to come back to Powys, settle down and start families, if you close the small primaries schools that are the heart of many communities?</p>	As above.
13.3.5	<p>It was noted in the Towards 2040 - the Powys Well-being Plan that Powys should be ‘recognised as a great place to live and to raise families, therefore boosting school pupil numbers and community capacity’. Do you expect young professionals to come back to Powys, settle down and start families by closing primaries schools that are the heart of many communities? More people, are seeking a rural life, at a younger age rather than at retirement. But without schools and strong communities, they will not be encouraged to come to East Radnorshire.</p>	As above and see 1.3.1

	Powys as a County has an aging population and young people leave the County for further Education and do not return.	
13.3.6	Within 'Towards 2040 – the Powys Wellbeing Plan you also promote that Powys 'Children will enjoy a positive childhood experience.' This is an untruth – my children have loved their learning time spent at Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School, yet for the second time in their primary school life, they are facing another Powys Consultation regarding the same school. Your decision is negatively impacting their ability to have a positive childhood and as a result, my children are experiencing much uncertainty and heightened anxiety.	The Council recognises that any school reorganisation process creates a period of uncertainty for all involved, including children. The Council is committed to supporting schools and learners, including through periods of change. An experienced member of staff from the Council is supporting school leaders effectively to help them manage possible changes for their learners. In areas of Powys, and beyond, where schools have gone through transformational change, there is no doubt that the learners have benefitted from the changes, and staff and parents who were sceptical when change was proposed are often strong advocates of such change.
13.3.7	The 'Towards 2040- the Powys Well-being plan' states that it is hoped that by 2040 'More people will move to Powys recognising it as a great place to live and raise their families boosting our school pupil numbers and community capacity'. How will closing Llanfihangel Rhydithon aid in this?	See 1.3.1
13.3.8	In the ' Towards 2040, the Powys Well-being Plan ' it is stated 'People in Powys will experience a stable and thriving economy' by 2040. We cannot see how 'Powys will be a prosperous county with a well-educated and skilled local workforce where opportunities exist for all and everyone can reach their full potential, reducing poverty and deprivation. The county's own talent, together with innovators and entrepreneurs who are attracted to the county, invest in Powys and contribute to its success', by closing small rural schools? Growing Mid Wales is a transformational project for the Council and will see the development of a Mid Wales Growth Deal. Llanfihangel Rhydithon and the border areas lends itself well to integrated schemes with partners on the English side of the border such as the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership to develop tourism and other opportunities, although no educational provision may hinder any ambitions.	See 1.3.1

13.3.9	In the Towards 2040, the Powys Well-being Plan' in July 2018 Objective 3 stated: People in Powys will be healthy, socially motivated and responsible. It was noted in the report that the Powys we want: • More people will move to Powys recognising it as a great place to live and raise their families boosting our school pupil numbers and community capacity • Schools will offer pupils, of all abilities, a more flexible teaching approach ensuring everyone has the best possible school experience, achieves their potential and can move forward with their lives. How do you expect young families to stay in Powys if you close the small primaries schools that are the heart of many communities?	See 1.3.1
13.3.10	One of the Welsh Government Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 goals is 'A more equal Wales', creating a society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances, including protected characteristics and background. The Towards 2040 – the Powys Well-being Plan states 'Schools will offer pupils, of all abilities, a more flexible teaching approach ensuring everyone has the best possible school experience, achieves their potential, and can move forward with their lives'. The small school of Llanfihangel, with the low Teacher pupil and ratio and stimulating teaching environment addresses this aim entirely.	See 1.3.1

13.4 Vision 2025

13.4.1	In Vision 2025 one of the equality objectives is 'Learning and skills - We will strengthen learning and skills'. If PCC implement the closure of Llanfihangel school, it will mean that pupils would transfer to their nearest alternative schools. Llanfihangel school has been categorised as good in all elements by ESTYN in 2019. All schools named as the nearest school and as such the potential receiving schools within the proposal documents are all categorised. It is concerning that the proposal papers are dismissive of this fact, stating that there are no concerns in relation to quality and standards, and the Council's view is that provision for pupils would be at least equivalent to the current provision. Surely if this were factually correct the schools listed would be categorised the same as Llanfihangel Rhydithon school, this is misleading and raises great	See 4.1.1 and 4.5.2.1
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	<p>concerns that the Authority does not take ESTYN and its requirements seriously. Fundamentally the Councils statement that “the principle of implementing the proposal is to provide the best possible opportunities to learners, enabling them to reach their full potential” is incorrect as each school named as the nearest school or receiving school has a lower record of attainment, lower attendance, and lower ESTYN inspection status. Leaving the pupils in their current environment, with high quality education in secure and safe surroundings should be a priority for the Council. It also suggests that PCC has little or no regard for the educational achievements of the county’s schools.</p>	
13.4.2	<p>In Vision 2025 one of the equality objectives is ‘Residents and Communities - We will support our residents and communities’. If PCC implement the closure of Llanfihangel school, it will have an impact on the community over many years to come. There is no understanding of the long-term effects of the enforced closure of a rural school on the pupils, staff, and local and wider community as no study on either the long or short-term impacts has been undertaken. Although, PCC states it will provide support through the process, there has been no evidence of a pro-active approach to the issues of the communities left behind once the school has been removed. PCC need to strengthen our economy: high streets, showcasing fantastic local products and supporting local pubs, shops and cafés. These businesses are the backbone of our communities. Small primary schools are often the heart of many communities, and if these close then why would businesses stay? How will the economy thrive in rural communities without the heart?</p>	<p>The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation.</p> <p>The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation, including the potential impact on the economy.</p>
13.4.3	<p>In Vision 2025 one of the equality objectives is ‘Economy – ‘We will develop a vibrant economy’. If the closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon School goes ahead then there will be a detrimental effect on the local and wider economy in Powys. It is well-known that good early years education is a highly sought-after requirement when professional people are looking to relocate themselves or their businesses to Powys. A successful and vibrant school in the community encourages young families into the area. Closure of the school will have a detrimental effect on the housing market as well as the potential workforce in a significant area of Mid and East Radnorshire. The socio-economic effect of an</p>	As above.

	enforced closure will be detrimental to the local housing market, employment opportunities and further weakening rural East Radnorshire way of life.	
13.4.4	In Vision 2025 one of the equality objectives is 'Health and Care - We will lead the way in providing effective, integrated health and care in a rural environment'. It is difficult to assess the impact on mental health and wellbeing of the wider community, as the effects of the school closure can be felt over the months and years that follow. No long-term assessment of the implications has been undertaken by the Council.	Comment noted.
13.4.5	In Vision 2025 one of the equality objectives is 'Health and Care - We will lead the way in providing effective, integrated health and care in a rural environment'. This wellbeing objective is very relevant to the health and wellbeing of the current pupils. They are currently going through the Covid-19 pandemic and now the potential of being removed from their friendship groups and familiar surroundings. Children have had a year of disrupted teaching due to Covid-19 and now PCC feel the timing of this decision to consult on this proposal is correct. How can this be even considered? Does the welfare of the current children not mean anything? The implementation of the proposal to enforce closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon School, with pupils transferring to alternative schools would have a negative impact on the mental well-being of pupils, staff, as well as the wider community. Friendship groups will be separated, and each child will have to form new relationships with Teachers, support staff and new class structures. Pupils will be removed from familiar surroundings where they know everyone by first name to be placed in an alien environment, expected to make new friends, and establish new relationships with their teachers and the support staff.	Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, the Council will ensure that it works closely with the receiving school(s) to ensure that the appropriate support is in place. The Council is committed to supporting schools and learners, including through periods of change. Children experience change in a vast range of areas, from family life to technology. An experienced school leader working for the Council is supporting school leaders to help them manage possible changes for their learners. In areas of Powys, and beyond, where schools have gone through transformational change, there is no doubt that the learners have benefitted from the changes, and staff and parents who were sceptical when change was proposed are often strong advocates of such change

13.5 Other

13.5.1	Community – The One Powys Plan talked about protecting and promoting sustainable communities, you don't need to do that in Dolau, we already have that and ensure that is not in any way jeopardised. But the closure of Llangunllo school did destroy the community. Beguildy community is depleting – the children from Beguildy went to several	The Council is required to fully consider the impact on the community should a school close and this information is provided to Cabinet when it makes any decisions related to school reorganisation.
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	<p>different schools and the children that went to Knighton were promised support from Powys County Council which they did not receive. The impact on the local YFC has been massive. Lower numbers, children who attended different primary schools following closure moving to different clubs outside of their catchment area. Community breakdown was not instant in Llangunllo, but happened approximately 10 years following closure, with us all having to find new communities to be a part of. This is what would happen to Dolau if you closed the school, putting further pressure on PCCs resources by having to have help from the One Powys Plan and your community champions. If you look at the impact assessment that has been compiled on the community of Dolau's behalf you will see exactly what would happen. This totally goes against all of Powys County Council's sustainability policies.</p>	<p>The draft impact assessments will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation.</p>
13.5.2	<p>We understand that Powys County Council is very proud of its Corporate Improvement Plan – Vision 2025 and that there is buy-in for this vision from Officers and Councillors alike. We understand Residents and Communities to be one of the plan's priority areas. Therefore, we would question how this proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon school aligns with supporting residents and communities?</p>	<p>As above. The aim of the proposal is to improve learner entitlement and experience and provide equity across the whole system.</p>
13.5.3	<p>We believe that "Building strong (rural) communities in the heart of Wales" should still be a main objective of the County Council's missions policies.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
13.5.4	<p>Was Powys old strap line not 'strong communities in the green heart of Wales'? Well, that is exactly what you will not have if you continue on this path, no communities and a less 'green' county. Is it not now 'open and enterprising'? without young people in these communities, enterprise will decline and you will have increased social care costs in rural communities. How exactly do you Powys define 'open'? It seems to me that Powys just want to close resources and centralise. From experience a 'top-down approach' never leads to prosperity!</p>	<p>It is correct that 'strong communities in the green heart of Wales' was the Council's previous mission statement, and that it is now 'Open and Enterprising'. With regards the proposal for Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, the consultation process itself is an example of the Council's 'open' approach where everyone has a chance to provide their views.</p>
13.5.5	<p>I am astonished to learn of the proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School, especially since you promote a vision that states, 'strong communities in the green heart of Wales'. I urge you to consider how the closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School enables you to fulfil this vision and be of any benefit to the Powys people that you represent –</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>

	everyone living within this rural community is deeply disappointed with your recommendation.	
13.5.6	Again, Powys County Council are looking at closing the heart of a community. It's quite ironic how the school still shows one of Powys' old mission statements "Strong communities in the green heart of Wales".	Comment noted.
13.5.7	It has, for some time, been the policy of Powys County Council to concentrate development and resources in larger settlements. However, the pandemic has accelerated a change in working practices for many people, a change that is likely to become permanent. As a consequence of more people being able to work from home there will be opportunities for our smaller villages to grow and thrive particularly with the rapid development of more sustainable and cleaner transport forms.	Comment noted.
13.5.8	PCC's booklet " Move to Mid Wales, Discover Powys " cites high quality education as "There are many nursery, pre-school and childcare options in Powys to suit your needs. Throughout their learning, Wales' Curriculum encourages your child to develop their interest, build on their strengths, and learn in creative and encouraging settings". Yet Llanfihangel Rhydithon school is under threat and is deemed high quality education by ESTYN .	Comment noted.

14. COMMENTS ABOUT THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENTATION

14.1 Comments about the consultation document

14.1.1 Data

14.1.1.1	I feel that there is no new data in the consultation document compared with the 2016 document. I feel that you are placing undue pressure on families already struggling. I feel that you have used data from 2019 to base your assumptions for the future. No business would ever use historical data, why would the leaders of our county	The data sources within the Consultation Document are referenced and this was the most up-to-date information available at the time of writing. The Welsh Government's School Organisation Code states the information that needs to be published in a consultation document – this includes both historical and forecasted pupil numbers.
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14.1.1.2	Your data is old. Any business forward plans - you are not forward planning you are using old data. Your projections as always are incorrect. Our numbers are growing, not declining. Perhaps the problem is with the receiving schools – not the rural schools. Therefore, your business case is flawed.	As above. The Council recognises that pupil numbers are projected to increase but not significantly.
14.1.1.3	After reading the consultation document I was left dumb struck at the stark inaccuracy in the -facts' and 'figures', terms which I use loosely given how far wide of the mark they are. Which makes me and many others wonder how out of touch are the people making these decisions!?! Do they even know how many pupils attend the school, do they know how many staff are even employed at the school and future pupil numbers, unlikely. This fact alone should be enough for the whole process to be halted immediately. I'm sure had the councillor(s) been educated in Dolau they would be able to draw up a much more accurate document that would in fact show the value Dolau school adds to the lives of the children who attend it.	As above.
14.1.1.4	As stated earlier the pupil numbers are incorrect, how then is it possible to know if more transport is required or not!?! Just because you put this in the consultation document, doesn't make it so.	As above. The Council carried out an analysis of pupils' postcodes to understand how many would be eligible for home-to-school transport, should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close.
14.1.1.5	I would like additional information please with regards to section 17.i. in the consultation document, I cannot see Knighton figures on the table. I understand this is school is not within 10 miles however to some pupils this will be their nearest school, as mentioned frequently in the document. Also, the capacity of Crossgates – does this include the mobile teaching rooms?	Information about Knighton C.in W. School is included in Appendix A Section 2. The capacity of Crossgates does not include the mobile classroom.
14.1.1.6	Appendix A – Key Data. It is worth pointing out that whilst the figures in table ii look like school numbers are maintaining historically, it must be noted that between 2014 and 2017 the figures include Nursery age children. Since 2017 these have been removed from schools. In real terms this shows the growth of school numbers.	Comment noted.
14.1.1.7	The figures and rationale being used by PCC to justify the closure are flawed and contradict PCC and Welsh Government Policies (Appendix 1: SWOT analysis).	The data sources within the Consultation Document are referenced and this was the most up-to-date information available at the time of writing. The Welsh

		Government's School Organisation Code states the information that needs to be published in a consultation document.
14.1.1.8	Page 23 section iv. Do the projected numbers for the area take into account the huge housing development being built (55 near completion and a further 60 gone through planning) in Llandrindod. If Newbridge, and both town schools are full where does the LA propose children from this housing estate which includes local needs and families housing attend school if Llanfihangel Rhydithon School was to take up a considerable amount of Crossgates' surplus capacity? There are also 18 affordable houses being built in Llandewi, also in Crossgates' catchment area.	<p>The pupil projections in the Consultation Document do not include any estimates from housing developments in Llandrindod Wells.</p> <p>The Council is aware of current and planned housing developments in the area but it is not anticipated that these will lead to a significant increase in pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.</p> <p>The Council monitors school capacities on an annual basis. The next phase of the Ysgol Calon Cymru transformation programme will consider the overall impact of pupil numbers and school places.</p>

14.1.2 Reasons for the proposal

14.1.2.1	On page 10, you note that Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School's low pupil numbers and high budget share per pupil have influenced your decision to consult on its future. Could you explain why our school has, once again, been chosen for consultation on a proposal to be closed when a total of 33 schools including Franksbridge, Gladestry, Brynhafren and Pontrobert, to name a few, all face the same challenges?	The Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys is a ten year plan that will be carried out in different phases known as 'waves'. All schools will be reviewed as the programme goes forward.
14.1.2.2	The high budget share per pupil is always going to be a factor for small schools. In recognition of this we understand the Welsh Government provided Powys with extra funding to support small schools. Llanfihangel Rhydithon is currently ranked 8th highest school in Powys by budget share meaning seven other schools have higher costs. With the projected pupil numbers increasing over the next few years budget share	See 1.3.1

	per pupil will reduce and therefore this is not a good reason to recommend closure.	
14.1.2.3	One of the reasons cited by Powys for its closure state that pupils could "attend larger schools and potentially have access to a wider range of educational and extracurricular activities." I believe this is a moot point. The parents of those pupils already know what extracurricular activities a small school can provide and have still deemed it the most suitable for their children. Most extracurricular activities in this area are not affiliated with any of the primary schools in any case. There are plenty of options should a child wish to participate in activities, notably football, swimming, gymnastics, brownies, beavers, scouts, tennis, karate. All of these are available in Llandrindod as out of school activities regardless of which school a pupil attends.	Comment noted. Extra-curricular activities are also provided at all the alternative primary schools.
14.1.2.4	After reading all the proposals from Powys, the reasons still do not make any sense at all.	See 1.3.1.
14.1.2.5	We consider the consultation document prepared by the Transforming Education Team has failed to identify any good reasons to select Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School as a candidate for closure. Without good and accountable reasons that might induce closure we believe Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School should continue to provide the exemplary education setting for which it is famed.	
14.1.2.6	The reasons given are weak, and do not make a valid case for closure.	See 1.3.1
14.1.2.7	It is clear that Powys County Council DO NOT have good reasons for educational provision at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School not to be continued, and the reasons outlined in the consultation document are very poor indeed	See 1.3.1
14.1.2.8	The reason is quite simple, the school does not stand out from any of the other small rural school within Powys and the only thing that singles out Llanfihangel Rhydithon School is the fact that it neighbouring school has surplus places there is no other valid reason for this proposal.	See 1.3.1
14.1.2.9	The case for closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School and transfer pupils to their nearest alternative schools has not been made.	See 1.3.1
14.1.2.10	The proposed closure seems to rest on two key reasons; financial and the low level of SEN provision in small Powys primary schools.	See 1.3.1

14.1.2.11	Kirsty Williams brought in the rural small schools code, which means that a small school should not be shut unless there is no other option. Why are Powys not taking any notice of this? They have not given a good reason for closing Dolau school, other than numbers, even though there are other small schools with less numbers than ours. I urge you to reconsider your thoughts on closing this lovely little school in such a fantastic community.	See 1.3.1
14.1.2.12	First Minister, Mark Drakeford replied to James Evans, MS on 20th May: “Unless good reasons can be produced why school should not continue, then they should”. “Extra funding has been provided to ensure education can maintain on a smaller scale.” “Sometimes Local Authorities are able to make good arguments that alternative provision would be to the benefit of that student and parent population” “This government has no plans to change this set of circumstances”. None of the “Need for change” set out by the Local Authority in respect of closing Llanfihangel Rhydithon meet the criteria set out clearly by Mr Drakeford. The “need for change” is a Local Authority “need” and not for the benefit of the student or parent population.	See 1.3.1
14.1.2.13	Many of the Local Authority (LA) reasons, noted through the consultation document for closing Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School, are incorrect or lack any constructive explanation which in turn could mislead members of the Cabinet and public.	See 1.3.1

14.1.3 Options considered

14.1.3.1	5. Options considered. Why is federation/merger with Llanelwedd not considered as possible options? All schools and parents in the locality have been asked to comment on the proposal yet the school we work closest with (Llanelwedd) has not. Llanelwedd would be affected by the closure with the head returning full time yet they have not been asked to be part of this consultation.	All options that have been considered include those schools that are within close geographic proximity to Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and within the Llandrindod area of the Ysgol Calon Cymru catchment. Llanelwedd C.in W. Primary School is not within close geographic proximity to Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and is in the Builth Wells area of the Ysgol Calon Cymru catchment.
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		The Governing Body of Llanelwedd have responded to the consultation.
14.1.3.2	Powys County Council outline a large number of alternative options to complete closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon and it is a shame the consultation document does not include the analysis of the other options.	The Consultation Document contains a full analysis of the alternative options that were considered.

14.1.4 SWOTs

14.1.4.1	One of the advantages listed of closing the school is that there is an 'Opportunity to realise a capital receipt from the sale of the site'. There has been no attempt within the report to explain how this could be achieved given that the Dolau Recreation Association (DRA) has a 90-year lease on the car park immediately from the school wall to the edge of the carriageway which services the Village Hall.	The Council is aware that the site surrounding Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School includes the community hall which has a lease to use the school playground as a car park, which creates a practical and legal challenge to the disposal of the school. However, the Council's Corporate Asset Policy would be followed, should the school close. This would include consideration of a community asset transfer or a sale on the open market via different methods. The Council's policy is to dispose of any surplus assets
14.1.4.2	In your SWOT analysis, there is not a single threat in the preferred option, yet there is at least one in every single other option, I would say there are many threats that you have missed out, including, the mental health of the children. When the children from Nantmel moved into their new schools, I was teaching in one of the receiving schools. I was not aware of any support once they had walked through the door of their new school, they were just placed into their respective classes in the morning and had to get on with it. Yet in your document you state that 'the receiving school(s) would provide full support to the pupils during the transition period, to minimise any negative impact on them.' I would like to see a breakdown of the support you are willing to offer the children and what mental health counselling would be available to the children as there are no doubts in my mind that their mental health would be affected during this process. I truly believe that you have completely underestimated the impact this will have on a small community like Dolau, I see the impact it had on Nantmel and it breaks my heart to think that the same could happen to Dolau.	The Council has recognised the potential impact on pupils' wellbeing from the closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School within the draft Impact Assessment.

14.1.4.3	<p>Opportunities of retaining education in Dolau - 2, Cylch Meithrin Dolau to continue and increase capacity to provide Welsh Medium education in the early years through CIW funding to young families in Dolau and surrounding areas. 3, Opportunity for more Welsh Medium education in Dolau 4, Opportunity for more Environmental education in Dolau, Dolau has the resources, abilities and skills. Allow Dolau to build on this. Because of where the school is situated. Local woodlands, Radnor Forest, lakes, farms, we have a wide range of environmental resources and expertise to disseminate these topics to the children to meet the demands of the climate emergency. 5, Cost per pupil could be reduced if PCC allowed a new business model to be implemented. 7, Opportunities to interact with children from other small schools such as at the 'small schools swimming gala', football tournaments, 5x60 events, mixed schools Cycling proficiency training, school trips. You do not have that opportunity in larger schools. 8, Staff development in new areas. 9, Allowing the opening up the end room to allow capacity to be increased, so that we can welcome new families to the area. 10, To share resources with other local small schools, to work together and save resources in the future. 11, To improve upon SEN provision. 12, Children that struggle with concentration and discipline in larger schools can thrive in smaller schools. There is an opportunity for partnership working in this area.</p>	Comments noted.
14.1.4.4	<p>Strengths of retaining education in Dolau - 2, No requirement for a reorganisation process, Saving PCC money in consultations and resources. 3, No change for staff – the financial costs to staff of losing employment have not been mentioned. 8, By retaining a 'green' categorised school, PCC use less resources in support. 26, Communication and engagement – weekly newsletter information parents and carers of events, development, policy change plus much more. Everyone is informed. 27, Knowledge and expertise of staff – Many staff member have been at the school for many years, they know the children and the families and what their back grounds are. They understand their interests. They are approachable and share in our lives and development as families and the community.</p>	Comments noted.
14.1.4.5	<p>Weaknesses of retaining education in Dolau - 4, Would not reduce surplus places - in other schools. No impact on Dolau. 6, Would not</p>	Comments noted.

	address the high budget per pupil – Has the question been asked – does Dolau require the additional funding?	
14.1.4.6	P56 – Why is it questioned that Option 8 provides value for money? Very little difference between Options 8 and 12.	Option 8 is 'To merge with Crossgates C.P School to establish a new school on the Crossgates site'. This has been given a question mark against the 'value for money' criteria because although the eventual outcome would be as option 12, and could provide value for money, there would be substantial additional resource requirements for the Council in order to implement the option i.e. wholesale staff restructure process, branding, new signage, new website, ICT requirements etc.
14.1.4.7	Appendix D, P69 – option 8. Does not meet critical success factors – Is this correct, it scores 3 on P56?	As option 8 had a question mark against the value for money criteria, it does not meet all the critical success factors.
14.1.4.8	"Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities" - The consultation report states this as a positive although it then goes on to acknowledge that this would impact negatively as children may not have the opportunity to attend as the majority of children will use Powys Transport. Thus, meaning children could only attend if parents can provide home transport. In some cases this may me up to a 45 minute round trip. We also challenge whether alternative schools offer a wider range of clubs and whether they are accessible to ALL AGE PUPILS, as they are in Dolau.	Comment noted.

14.1.5 Comments suggesting there are inaccuracies in the document

14.1.5.1	Page 25 section ix. The term 'current bus' this suggests offices think there is one bus? there are two buses running currently in Dolau from different village directions. These buses connect with secondary school buses. If primary routes change then connections would not be made meaning costs WILL increase and current bus routes and arrangements	Section 19 (iv) of the Consultation Document refers to 'the current bus' – this is an error and it should instead have stated 'the current transport'. See Section 7 – Travel Implications.
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	will not be the same. Extra travel cost – 24 EXTRA pupils to transport to alternative schools, why do PCC anticipate that no additional costs would be incurred. As part of a fair consultation travel cost MUST be included, so why have PCC not calculated them to show this.	
14.1.5.2	Impact on quality and standards, page 17. The council said that the colour coding of schools had been stopped. We can find no statement from Welsh Government that this has been stopped, only that it has been suspended for 12 months. But if a prospective parent is looking for a school for their children the colour coding and the Estyn inspection is the only data available to them.	Jeremy Miles, the Minister for Education confirmed on the 21 st of June, 2021 that School Categorisation will not take place in academic year 2021/22. Regional consortia and local authorities will continue to work in partnership with schools to help provide them with the support they need to improve and to successfully implement the ambitious national reforms. Schools will not be assigned a published category as part of this support process.
14.1.5.3	DETAILS INCORRECT IN THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT: Cylch Meithrin Dolau is a registered setting with CIW (Care Inspectorate Wales), Cylch does offer 3+ funding via the Childcare Element, with 2 children currently using this funding and 9 children currently using the setting.	The Council agrees that the Consultation Document is incorrect when it states that the Cylch Meithrin Dolau is unregistered. The Cylch was registered in September 2020.
14.1.5.4	The Consultation document states that the closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School is in line with the Council's vision to transform education in Powys. I would like to strongly dispute this.	Comment noted.
14.1.5.5	The consultation document from Powys has got many inaccuracies. Our school here in Dolau is category green, the highest category in Wales, and has a very good standard. Powys say that moving our children to a bigger school would provide a wider range of education, offer them more opportunities, and would be "better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum". Powys also says that its aim is to "improve learner entitlement and experience". But how can this be correct, when the other nearest schools named are a poorer standard than Dolau. It comments on mixed year groups in classes, but all other schools have this within their classrooms.	See 1.3.1 and 4.1.1.
14.1.5.6	The consultation states that Dolau is not a welsh medium school. We currently have 3 teachers who speak welsh in the school and the Cylch which is obviously a welsh setting.	Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is categorised as an English-medium school as it does not teach the full curriculum through the medium of Welsh.

14.1.5.7	The consultation document contains errors and omissions that we consider vital for your informed consideration to protect the future of our happy, rural school.	Comment noted.
14.1.5.8	I'm disappointed to read in the consultation document that Powys county council believe there is no preschool provision in Dolau. Therefore, no setting acting as a feeder for Dolau school, when in fact there is a thriving Cylch Meithrin that offers 3+ funded childcare places which in turn supports the working families of the community. The Cylch Meithrin also increases the confidence and abilities of our children to learn the Welsh language at an early age which is exactly what Powys county council state they are lacking as part of there drive to transform education in Powys.	The Consultation Document acknowledges that there is a Cylch Meithrin in Dolau but incorrectly states that it is not funded and not registered with CIW.
14.1.5.9	It's a great shame that the consultation document states that there is not a 3-year-old funded setting on site as I believe this to be very misleading information to the councillors that are trying to make a fair decision on this issue.	As above.
14.1.5.10	'Funded early years provision is provided for pupils at a number of locations across Powys, however no funded early years education is available at Dolau. Cylch Meithrin Dolau meets on the site of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, however no funded provision is available here. This provision is currently not registered with Care Inspectorate Wales.' This statement is false and incorrect, therefore cannot be used as a negative for Dolau, Cylch Meithrin Dolau is a registered setting that offers funding via the childcare element. Cylch Meithrin Dolau is a fantastic Cylch and has very close links with the school, we support the transition from Cylch to school and are in constant communication with the leader of Cylch regarding the children. It is also a great thing that they can see the school and the children playing happily for when they come to school. Their building has had a recent upgrade due to a £10,000 grant from the Council, which has allowed them to really become a 21 st century building which supports all learners. If the school were to close, you would be responsible for the decrease use of Welsh in the area, as the funded setting in the alternative school is an English medium setting. This will have an impact	Section 14 of the Consultation Document outlines the impact of the proposal on nursery/early years provision. This includes a description of the early years provision available in the area. The description of Cylch Meithrin Dolau is a description and is not meant to be considered as a 'negative' statement. The Council recognises that the description of the Cylch Meithrin as unregistered and unfunded is incorrect. Should there be no school in Llanfihangel Rhydithon, it is likely that there would be an impact on Cylch Meithrin Dolau if parents decided to choose other early years providers that are co-located with any of the alternative schools thereby reducing the number of pupils attending the Cylch, with an impact on its viability. However, this is not a given, as the Cylch could potentially continue to operate if there was sufficient demand.

	on the use of Welsh in the area and the level of Welsh the children will come into school with.	
14.1.5.11	Whilst I understand that a good standard of education is not obligatory when working for Powys County Council, could you please at least have the decency when compiling a legal document and putting it out for public consultation spell Llanfihangel Rhydithon correctly. Please tell me which school you are attempting to close, because according to your consultation paper Llanfihangel Rhydithon is not one of them!!	The title of the Consultation Document is: Proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School Consultation Document

14.1.6 Other comments about the consultation document

14.1.6.1	I am surprised and disappointed that with major Welsh and UK Government policy moves to reduce the causes of climate change, there is no serious consideration of this aspect in the Powys CC consultation document. Indeed, the word 'Environment' does not even appear in the document.	The Council has recognised that additional travel would be required and that this would have a negative impact on the environment within the draft impact assessment which will be updated to take account of information received during the consultation.
14.1.6.2	So - - let's not 'ASSUME' and 'ANTICIPATE' anymore outcomes. No more 'MAYBE'S'. Far too many times these words have been loosely used in the Powys closure proposal documents about outcomes that will actually be IRREVERSIBLE by the time the FACTS of the effect of closure become clear. We are not pawns on a chess board. We are REAL human beings with a right to a degree of respect from others.	Comment noted.
14.1.6.3	Background – page 5 – the map selected is not a true reflection of the area, catchment or proposed receiving schools. It does not show the true extent of landmass with no school provision. The map should be made large enough to show ALL proposed receiving schools and the spread of communities with no school.	Comment noted.
14.1.6.4	Powys County Councils Consultation document - statement on impacts and our response: Impact on staff – Do you have any idea the impact you already having on staff? Are supporting staff during this time?	The Council is committed to supporting schools and learners through periods of change. An experienced headteacher is working for the Council to support school leaders to help them manage possible changes for their staff and learners. The Council's HR officer has also visited staff at the school.

14.1.6.5	Impact on staff. No mention of Llanelwedd school staff and the impact on the staff if Adam had to return to a teaching head.	Comment noted. The draft impact assessments will be updated to take account of information gathered during consultation.
14.1.6.6	Impact on governance arrangements – no impact on governance but impact on the parents of having to move and having to deal with different policies and procedures of a different larger school.	Comment noted.
14.1.6.7	Governance Arrangements. Will the governance arrangement of receiving schools change to include Dolau governors to safeguard the views and interest of the Dolau Community and transferring pupils?	The governance arrangements of any of the alternative schools that receive pupils from Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School will not change, should the school close. However, there will be opportunities for parents to apply for parent-governor posts when vacancies arise, or can be nominated for community governor posts.
14.1.6.8	The Powys CC consultation document complains of a backlog of school maintenance, and a lack of funds. Surely Powys Councillors should be arguing for a major change in WG policy to properly fund rural schools, and make the remaining schools a positive asset to invest in. A proposal to justify that change in policy is discussed below.	Comment noted.
14.1.6.9	The document states that larger schools have access to more resources in terms of staff and educational resources. As I've stated earlier the school runs at a surplus so there is money there to pay for additional equipment.	Comment noted.
14.1.6.10	I truly believe that the consultation document only serves to show a money saving on paper, to balance the books until another unfortunate school needs closing to show another saving, on paper again. It does not give enough evidence to demonstrate that closing the school is the only feasible option. I believe my response highlights a few of the many reasons why Dolau MUST remain open not just now but for the future.	Comment noted.
14.1.6.11	Quite frankly due to the fact that I have been working extra hours and home schooling my children I have only had a quick read through the current consultation document and am really disappointed at the inaccuracy of the information it contains.	Comment noted.
14.1.6.12	In your consultation document you state that you have “no concerns” about the standard of education at particular local schools but I do not	See 4.1.1 and 4.5.2.1

	believe that Powys can direct families to move their children to schools which provide a poorer standard of education.	
14.1.6.13	It is extremely concerning that your consultation document disregards the above categorisation and Estyn report, and seemingly overrides these judgements by saying “there are no concerns in relation to quality and standards” at other local schools named in the document, even though the majority of the named schools are categorised as lower and have received major recommendations and monitoring for improvement from Estyn. You may have “no concerns”, but as a parent who has chosen to send my child to a school with high standards and an excellent reputation, I certainly have major concerns!	See 4.1.1 and 4.5.2.1
14.1.6.14	The School’s Organisational code also states that pupils should not be moved to a school with a lower standard of education; Powys County Council cannot just comment that they have “no concerns about the quality of teaching at Crossgates C.P. School or the other schools named”. Such reviews and standards are decided by Estyn and through rigorous LA challenge. The lower standard of education offered at other local schools, alongside the lack of available places in others, is a key point which needs highlighted in your consultation report.	See 4.1.1 and 4.5.2.1
14.1.6.15	The School’s Organisational Code makes it clear that if a school is closed by the local authority, the pupils of that school should be provided with a standard of education that is AT LEAST EQUAL. Many of the named schools in your consultation document do not offer a GOOD (Estyn) or GREEN (National Categorisation) standard of education and some of the schools are even oversubscribed. My Grandchild has the legally binding right to “An education that enables children to fulfil their potential” (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child). Removing him from his current GOOD standard of school and sending him to one with only ADEQUATE provision is quite simply a shocking suggestion!	See 4.1.1 and 4.5.2.1
14.1.6.16	“There are no concerns in relation to quality and standards at Crossgates school and it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on standards and progress overall” - School Organisational Code says: In assessing the impact of proposals on quality and standards in education and how	See 4.1.1

	effectively the curriculum is being delivered, relevant bodies should consider any relevant advice from Estyn, refer to the most recent Estyn reports or other evidence derived from performance monitoring, and take into consideration any other generally available information available on a school's effectiveness. External verification and judgements have been made by ESTYN and support category has been agreed based on National Standardised criteria so why does the authority override these two nationally recognised benchmarks. What criteria has been used to assess this? In no published and/or quantifiable criteria does Crossgates and nearly all "closest schools" outperform Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School.	
14.1.6.17	On page 17, the LA writes, 'Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School is currently in the green support category...whilst Crossgates C.P. School is in the yellow support category. However, there are no concerns in relation to quality and standards at Crossgates C.P. School.' Although the categorisation programme is currently on hold owing to the Covid pandemic, it remains valid - yellow schools were classed as that due them needing additional LA support in order to achieve the expected government standards. As a parent of a pupil attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School which did not require your support to ensure the appropriate standards are met, then I would like to know in what areas did these yellow receiving schools need your additional support? What support have you given to them? If, as you say, you have 'no concerns', then what data have they been able to share since their last categorisation to demonstrate they no longer need your support, especially given that no LA 'school' staff have physically entered these schools since the Covid pandemic began? Is your evidence based on 'someone' saying that all is going well? Has the LA explored why 52.5% of pupils who attend Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School do so rather than their nearest alternative school?	See 4.1.1
14.1.6.18	Impact on other schools Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option: Crossgates has mixed year groups to ensure that their pupil numbers do not go over the Welsh Government guidance as do most of the receiving schools. How can we	Legislation is in place that caps the number of children in infant classes. There is no cap on numbers in other classes. School leaders and governors are responsible for managing their class structures/pupil

	be sure that pupil numbers will not exceed the Welsh Government guidance should our children transfer?	numbers, and would be able to adapt structures according to need.
14.1.6.19	Statements have been made about the authority having “no concerns” about alternative schools but NO EVIDENCE, statement or argument has been given outlining any BENEFIT to our pupils or parents.	See 4.5.2.1
14.1.6.20	Risks – What advice and support has the council provided to the school and governing body during the statutory process? The Governing Body has not seen any. No mention of risk to the community is recorded. No mention risk of impact of mental well-being to pupils/staff/stakeholders.	<p>A HR representative visited the school on the 26th April 2021 to have an informal meeting with staff where they could ask questions about the proposal and the process. Further contact was made on the 14th June 2021 but it was stated that staff did not want another meeting at that point. The Council has also employed an ex-headteacher to support headteachers who are part of school reorganisation proposals – a meeting was held with the Headteacher.</p> <p>The impact on the community and the impact on the wellbeing of pupils is included within the draft impact assessments, which will be updated to take account of information gathered during consultation.</p>
14.1.6.21	Only mention risk about negative effect on standards at the school. What about risk of the receiving schools being at lower education standard? No mention of the children at the receiving school being affected by larger class sizes, additional cars in the car park. No mention of the risk/impact to Llanelwedd school having, what has been stated to be an ongoing arrangement ended without consultation with their governing body.	<p>See 4.1.1 and 4.5.2.1</p> <p>All alternative schools have safeguarding protocols to ensure the safety of children. The Council does not believe that being in larger classes with a similar age group is a risk.</p> <p>The Council does not believe that there is a risk to Llanelwedd C.in W. School of having a full time headteacher at the school.</p>
14.1.6.22	Implementation timescale – Are the dates in consultation right? They are vague by not putting the exact date of the cabinet meeting on? This leads to ambiguity. For example the governing body was told they would receive further information after the Easter holiday when in fact we were given hours to notify all stakeholders that consultation was beginning that day.	<p>The implementation timescale is based on anticipated dates which are flexible to take account of the number of responses received to a consultation.</p> <p>The school was informed on the 16th March that consultation would take place after the Easter</p>

		holidays, and were informed on the 13 th April that consultation was planned to begin on the 14 th April.
14.1.6.23	In line with the School Organisation Code , the consultation document associated with Llanfihangel <i>must</i> contain the following information 'admission arrangements at the proposed alternative school'. A concern of ours regarding Powys' proposal to close Llanfihangel and for children to attend the nearest school is the admissions process for some of those schools. For example, Trefonnen, Llanbister and Knighton are at capacity (and in Llanbister schools case is over capacity at 135.6%). Should people live in these areas there is no guarantee they would get into the nearest school. By the Council's own admission Crossgates C.P. School is the only school with sufficient capacity.	See 4.5.3
14.1.6.24	"School capacity" - The table on page 22 of the document shows local schools and their capacity. Throughout the document and indeed the Estyn inspection of Powys Education surplus capacity in the council's schools is a recurring theme. Whilst we recognise we are a small school, our school is NOT under capacity. Has consideration been given to the fact that many of the area schools are at or over capacity? Since publication of the consultation document we have seen the announcement of: Nurture provision at Ysgol Cefnlllys -using one classroom, Penmaes Special School satellite provision at Crossgates-using one classroom, Large housing develop near Llandrindod cemetery is near completion (55 affordable homes), Outline planning for 50 homes near Crabtree green (Llandrindod), Phase 2 of the construction is imminent beside Ysgol Calon Cymru Llandrindod Campus. How will each of these affect the capacity of the schools in the area?	See 4.5.3
14.1.6.25	"Travel Time" - The consultation document states that there would be a shorter journey for children whose parents have CHOSEN to travel to Dolau. No consideration in the report has been given to WHY so many parents CHOOSE to travel to Dolau. These children are in the minority compared to those who will have a significantly increase in the travel time they will face if the school closes. Currently 7 children come by bus whilst many others walk to school. Should the school close 23 ADDITIONAL children (30 children in total) will require school transport.	See Section 7

14.1.6.26	<p>“Accommodation” - The consultation document states that no building work is necessary to accommodate pupils at any alternative school. Does the authority guarantee the children will not be taught in portable/temporary accommodation? At a recent consultation meeting with Governors Marianne Evans stated that if children move to Crossgates they WILL be taught in temporary classrooms. Some children will move to Llanbister as this is their closest alternative school. Can Llanbister continue to grow without development? Will our children be refused a place at their nearest school if that school is full? Will this mean they have to travel even further to a school WITH space?</p>	<p>Crossgates C.P. School uses the mobile building as a community room and not as a teaching classroom. The capacity calculation does not include the mobile building – it was incorrectly stated at the governors consultation meeting that it was included in the capacity calculation.</p> <p>See 4.5.3</p> <p>If a school is over-subscribed, a parent can still apply for a place at that school. The Council’s Admissions Policy includes criteria for allocation places if schools are over-subscribed, and this would be applied in this case. If a child is not granted a place due to not meeting the criteria, then they would be offered a place at the next closest school which has a place for them.</p> <p>As above. Free home-to-school transport would be provided to the pupil’s next closest school, should they not get a place in the closest school.</p>
14.1.6.27	<p>“Surplus spaces across the authority” - Throughout the document and indeed the Estyn inspection of Powys Education surplus capacity in the council’s schools is a recurring theme. Whilst we recognise we are a small school our school is NOT under capacity. We are over our current capacity number. Has consideration been given to the fact that many of the area schools are at or over capacity?</p>	<p>See 4.5.3</p>
14.1.6.28	<p>The consultation documentation produced by PCC, shows that some of nearest alternative schools as the receiving schools do have surplus places. In line with PCC’s 21st Century Schools and Education Programme to ‘Reduce surplus capacity’ it seems very dubious to enforce a school like Llanfihangel, which is slightly over capacity’, with high standard of education, and a solid and sound building to close to help ‘reduce the Council’s overall surplus capacity in primary schools’ and support the reduction of the council issues in other areas of the County.</p>	<p>The Council states that one of the reasons for the proposal is that it would reduce overall surplus capacity I schools. Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, pupils would transfer to alternative schools where there are places available, therefore reducing the Council’s overall surplus capacity.</p>

14.1.6.29	I understand your perspective on the risk of pupils not currently being challenged enough when they share a class with the whole key stage, however this is something that should be constantly observed and reviewed by management to ensure that this is happening. I trust that the school staff applied for their jobs with the understanding of what was expected of them when teaching a class containing a variety of year groups. If they didn't feel they were able to do this then they would have applied elsewhere.	Comment noted.
14.1.6.30	The Llanfihangel Rhydithon school closure consultation document states that pupil numbers are declining in Powys. This is not new. Rural facilities and infrastructure have been in decline for some years. Indeed, it has become a downward spiral – further cuts in rural facilities will attract fewer people to the area, and the population will continue to age and numbers of children will continue to decline, prompting further cuts in rural facilities, and so on.	Comment noted.

14.2 Comments about the impact assessments

14.2.1	To list as MAY in the equality and community impact assessment of the impact that closure of the school would have on the community is a massive understatement, closure of this school would have a catastrophic impact on this close-knit community. Life in a rural community such as this revolves around the school and 'THERE SHOULD BE A PRESUMPTION AGAINST CLOSURE OF RURAL SCHOOLS'	Comment noted.
14.2.2	The document says closure MAY have an impact on the community. We must not dumb this down. Closure WOULD be catastrophic for the community of Dolau and surrounding area. The report also acknowledges there could be an impact on people's ability to attend after-school activities but also parents ability to join in school events meetings etc. IS this acceptable to exclude children and families from school activities based on the rural nature of the area?	Comment noted.
14.2.3	Were the school and community hall to close, there are no viable alternatives for so many community activities. Whilst large, the Church in Llanfihangel Rhydithon is not suitably positioned to enable its use for social events, even if the church authorities were to agree. To say that	Comment noted.

	other facilities exist in other local villages, where these activities could potentially carry on, is not practical and misses the point.	
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14.3 Children / Young People documents

14.3.1	We have read through the children's version of the letter of the Consultation document and we have a problem with it. The letter is written in a way that children struggle to understand. We feel that the document is not easy to understand as we also have younger members on the school council at the age of 7-11 and we found it difficult to understand what you were trying to imply. There were some very strong words that our teacher had to explain in a more understandable way such as: Statutory notice, disadvantages, considered, etc. Our older members of the school council were then unable to ask the younger members what their thoughts were on the topic. We would appreciate if you could send a more child friendly document so that all ages on school Council can understand this letter, it is vital that all children on the council can understand what you have written and can have opinions on it.	<p>The Children's version of the Consultation Document has been developed with advice from the Council's school improvement officers and others to ensure that it is age-appropriate. Officers held a virtual consultation meeting with the School Council, and checked whether they understood the proposal.</p> <p>The School Organisation Code states that 'governing bodies must facilitate' the consultation with children and young people. It is therefore expected that pupils are supported by teachers and governors to understand the consultation document.</p> <p>A video was also prepared which helped explain the proposal.</p>
14.3.2	She is a member of the school council and came home telling us that you had sent them a letter about your closure proposal, she went on to tell us how the teachers had to explain some of the words you had used in your letter as they were too difficult to understand. Do you think the words "statutory notice" are something a 9-year-old child can understand easily?	As above.
14.3.3	The children are not having a say or being listened to. My understanding is that their documentation to give their opinions with was not appropriate for their age, and not taken into account.	As above. All responses are taken into account.
14.3.4	I have read your consultation documents for Children and Young People. Both are poorly worded and fail to give any good reasons for selecting Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School to close.	Comment noted.

14.4 Comments about Welsh language versions of the documents

14.4.1	Why is this form not in Welsh? Something else Powys County Council should be ashamed of! Not very well educated were you!	All consultation documents were published in in both Welsh and English.
14.4.2	Many residents in the community are Welsh speakers and would like to read and respond to the document in Welsh.	As above.
14.4.3	Welsh speakers would like the opportunity to respond in Welsh, and for Welsh to be treated no less favourably than English.	As above.
14.4.4	Last thing I knew Powys is in Wales not England so why is this form not in both languages?	As above.
14.4.5	You should note I have answered these questions in English (not Welsh) to make sure you understand as I'm not convinced you do. Shocking Powys Council.	As above.

14.5 Comments about consultation documentation for other proposals

14.5.1	Powys CC are contradictory; the consultation document for Llanbedr school criticises the teaching head teacher and the consultation document for Llanfihangel Rhydithon criticises the non-teaching head teacher arrangement.	Each school proposal is considered on its own merit. Reasons for each proposal are specific to the circumstances of each school.
14.5.2	Llanbedr school has already had its consultation extended due to wild inaccuracies. How are we as a community and as parents meant to trust that the people completing these consultations have firstly got the figures right for our school in Dolau (they haven't) and will get them right in the future to push through closures.	The consultation period for the proposal to close Llanbedr C. in W. School was extended due to an error in the capacity calculation of an alternative school. The data in the Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School Consultation Document was correct at the time of writing and the data sources are referenced.

14.6 Other comments

14.6.1	In your information video regarding the proposal to close Dolau school you outline some of the shortfalls of education in Powys currently and how this closure would help to "transform" education in Powys, stating that the children would be moved on to bigger schools with "more opportunities". What exactly do you mean by this? And why would you assume that bigger means more opportunity?	See 1.3.1
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15. COMMENTS ABOUT THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

15.1 Comments about consulting during the Covid pandemic

15.1.1	To launch and carry out a closure consultation during the pandemic is questionable at best, devastatingly damaging at worst.	The Council recognises that any school reorganisation proposal creates a period of uncertainty and concern for local stakeholders. However, in order to address the issues raised by Estyn regarding the organisation of its schools, it is necessary to continue with the development and consultation on proposals during the current pandemic. The Welsh Government provided non-statutory guidance for local authorities to manage consultations during periods of lockdown. The level and detail of responses received to all recent consultations outlines that stakeholders have engaged fully in the consultations, even though there have been restrictions in place.
15.1.2	After already a turbulent year due to COVID and the impact on the children's mental health, how is it deemed acceptable that this consultation is being continued at this current time.	As above.
15.1.3	I would like to express my disappointment at the timing of this, after the uncertainty of the last 12 months the children have got this to deal with along with settling back into the daily routine of school.	As above.
15.1.4	There is enough of stress among everybody at the moment from Covid. Parents have been trying to home school children and hold down a full time job working from home, children have not seen their friends for almost 12 months. It has been a turbulent time for everybody and now we have closure thrown into the mix. Powys certainly know how to kick someone when they are down. Their timing to add stress to a community is impeccable.	As above.
15.1.5	In my opinion there should never be a time for a proposal to close small schools but, if it is deemed a must by our local authority who are supposed to represent our views and care about our future then, is this really the right time? Surely our young people and communities have	As above.

	been through enough of a mental challenging time over the last 12 months without now having to potentially deal with the emotional strain that is put upon a community when vital services at the heart of the community are under threat!	
15.1.6	After 12 months of complete change to the lives of everyone due to Covid 19, I am struggling to understand how you would think to propose any sort of closure to not only the children but the staff, parents and community is acceptable? We have all just faced the most difficult year that most of us have ever known. The children were so excited to be going back to school to see their friends and learn in the environment they have always loved, only to be almost immediately told that the school they know and love could be closing.	As above.
15.1.7	Extremely disappointed and bewildered but possibly not surprised by Powys Officials and its Cabinet to place Llanfihangel Rhydithon school into consultation during a global pandemic. I believe this is extremely insensitive timing to put Dolau school children, staff, families and community through the stress of this consultation, when we are all suffering from the effects of the global pandemic. This is having a negative impact on my children's health and causing them a great deal of stress and this consultation continues to affect their emotional well-being. "The Covid-19 crisis has had a significant impact on the lives and health of many Powys citizens" as explained by your Cllr Iain McIntosh, Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Regeneration. PCC website 2021.	As above.
15.1.8	I am extremely concerned by Powys County Council's lack of care or consideration for the members of its communities to start these processes whilst we are still experiencing and recovering from an unprecedented time in our lives having been locked down, socially isolated and living in fear for our loved ones whom we have been unable to see for the best part of 12 months due to COVID-19 pandemic.	As above.
15.1.9	As a nation it is recognised, we have just been through an unprecedented experience having been isolated away from our families, friends, communities and support networks due to the Covid- 19 pandemic. Various national charities, statutory services and governments have clearly identified the this has had impact on our children, young people and wider families emotional and mental wellbeing. The most	As above.

	common themes from these studies relate to increased anxiety, experiences relating to a loss reaction, feelings of not being in control of their lives and especially in younger children, an impact on their interaction with others sometimes, resulting in the breakdowns of friendships. Because of these studies it has been clearly recognised that increased funding and support is required to enable our children to transition back into the classroom environment and reduce the longer-term impacts on their emotional and mental wellbeing.	
15.1.10	The timing around the closure programme is offensive. The COVID 19 pandemic has had a profound impact on schools and children and young people throughout Powys, affecting their routines, their worry and anxiety and their general mental health and wellbeing, this decision, which creates further worry is unacceptable at this stage in their development.	As above.
15.1.11	This consultation comes at a time when pupils have experienced the hardest year of their life. I am disappointed that Powys has chosen to undertake this consultation at a time when children are at their most fragile. Powys CC has a responsibility to ensure that the well-being of children is considered. What considerations has Powys taken before the consultation process started that the emotional needs of the pupils, staff, families and the community will be met?	As above.
15.1.12	Not many people have not struggled in the pandemic but to have this consultation on top really has had a massive effect on people.	As above.
15.1.13	In the pandemic year of Covid this proposal to close the school is wrong and the mental stress on families will only add to it and also the ones that matter the most – the children	As above.
15.1.14	The children and community have been deeply impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, effecting the health and well-being of many individuals. Is this the right time to be suggesting a proposal to close the school, the heart of the community? Additionally, a digital consultation is very questionable. Can this even be a full and robust process?	As above.
15.1.15	The whole country is just starting to recover from what has been the most challenging 15 months. We know consultations need to be carried out but is it really the right time? Welsh Government suggested IF a consultation needed to go ahead, local authorities needed to give communities more time due to COVID. Why as Powys given the minimum time for these	As above.

	consultations when other local authorities like Carmarthenshire have given their communities 6 months? Are Powys really out of touch of what is going on in outside world?	
15.1.16	I feel deeply saddened and disappointed that Dolau School are at threat of closure again, especially when we are still trying to cope living through a pandemic. Everyone has struggled the past year and to have this added stress is really having an effect on the community's mental health and wellbeing.	As above.
15.1.17	Firstly it is a disgrace that the council should at this time when the nation have had a pandemic to deal with decide to announce closure of the school, it has only added to many people/and children's stress at such a difficult time. Was this done because the council thought it would be easy, done and dusted, let's be fair no-one can go to open meetings and discuss this face to face.....	As above.
15.1.18	The message from Powys Education during a global pandemic, to propose closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon shows one of a contemptuous attitude towards the local community.	As above.
15.1.19	The announcement of this round of consultations has been hugely emotional for our household as well as many others at the school, and community. I am very concerned for the additional pressure this is putting on our children, and really feel the timing couldn't have been worse, Transformation Team.	As above.
15.1.20	To bring forward these plans following an extremely difficult twelve months for all teachers, learners and parents is a regrettable step. The current Covid 19 restrictions prevent the local community from being able to discuss and scrutinise these plans in detail.	As above.
15.1.21	I'm completely at a loss to see why any public service organisation would be putting these kids, parents and your own employees under this extra stress after the last 18 months we've had. And in Dolau Schools case.... why at all?	As above.
15.1.22	The added stress and worry of this proposal and consultation has majorly added to parents anxiety.	As above.
15.1.23	I think that the timing of this proposed closure is too bad. These children are still getting over lockdown and to be trying to get their little heads around closure is just too much.	As above.

15.1.24	At this point in time it seems particularly heartless to even consider putting this idea out there when children's mental health is a significant concern with the effects of the pandemic unknown, but significant.	As above.
15.1.25	After the last 12+ months of being in school, learning at home and then back to a very different learning environment in school these children need a bit of normality and certainty not more worry. Has this been taken into consideration?	As above.
15.1.26	Given that your primary function is to provide fair and equal opportunities for all learners, your timing could not have been worse - these children and their families have had so much disruption over the last 12 - 15 months	As above.
15.1.27	We feel that starting a closure consultation at a time of disruption to school life caused by Covid 19 is disingenuous. The children have already lost vital classroom time and association time with their classmates. The anxiety caused by the consultation already hampers their education with fears of being parted from friends and the trauma of starting at a new school part way through primary education	As above.
15.1.28	What has upset the whole community most is the inappropriate timing of this proposal, we are in a global pandemic which has brought its own difficulties upon this and I'm sure many other communities, PCC seem to have used this to their advantage, 'We cannot meet with the community because of covid,' 'We cannot meet with school staff and governors due to covid,' 'We cannot talk to, and see the school children in their safe and nurturing environment because of covid.' Do you think this is a fair and legal way to make and proceed with such a huge decision regarding many children's, and also a community's future? It appears many of you may have forgotten that you may be depending on our support and votes come next May.	As above.
15.1.29	The children and staff are already going through enough worry and stress with COVID without worrying about where they will be going to school or if they have still got a job. The timing of this consultation is completely wrong. We can't hold meetings and not everybody can send e-mails or attend Zoom meetings, which is convenient for Powys County Council I feel.	As above.

15.1.30	The community have spent the last 14 months trying to keep this country on its feet during the biggest crisis since the second world war. Working mothers have bore the brunt of this...a good third of the parents work in health and social care and a quarter of them work in schools. The balance of the Mums are keyworkers involved in food distribution and production. As well as having to put in extra hours at work we have had to home school our children for (in my case) 11 months. What do we get as our reward I hear you ask? A county council who for the second time in 5 years decides to consult on closing our village school.	As above.
15.1.31	This is the third time my family have been through this process brought forward by the school transformation team, whilst we have been involved with Dolau school. Consultations are all consuming, tiring and place a horrendous amount of stress on the community, staff, parents and pupils. Our children are struggling to cope with this. We have done our very best to shield them from chatter and information, but in many cases it is impossible. We as a family have been through the mill in the last twelve months in addition to the Covid 19 pandemic. Home schooling has been an incredible challenge, whilst trying to run our businesses and keep afloat, trying to keep older family members safe, having a lack of childcare and our support network. The pressure has been immense. Now we have to deal with this consultation. I feel that the timing is completely inappropriate?	As above.
15.1.32	I'm already exhausted from the last 18 months, quite frankly dragging ourselves from day to day financially, physically and mentally.	As above.
15.1.33	Impact of COVID, just returning to school and going straight into a consultation. Welsh Government suspended the National Classification. The LA was asked to postpone consultations until communities could have a fair and robust consultation or if a consultation needed to happen to make sure communities have more time to complete their responses due to the current pandemic. Welsh Government recognised, due to the uncertainty of COVID schools/communities needed support in these times not added pressure.	As above.

15.2 Comments about consultation meetings

15.2.1	Finally there has been no offer of a virtual meeting, where parents and members of the community can ask questions and have points clarified.	Virtual meetings have been held with the school's governing body, staff and School Council. There is no requirement for public meetings according to the School Organisation Code.
15.2.2	The timing is also questionable since we cannot hold meetings face to face and not everybody is able to use computers and attend ZOOM meetings (very convenient for the council I feel), to make our opinions heard.	The scale of the response to this consultation clearly shows that stakeholders have fully engaged with the process.
15.2.3	The timing for this consultation is beyond belief! How can any fair consultation take place when face to face meetings cannot be permitted?	Virtual meetings have been held with the school's governing body, staff and School Council. There is no requirement for public meetings according to the School Organisation Code. The scale of the response to this consultation clearly shows that stakeholders have fully engaged with the process.
15.2.4	People within the community have been under a huge amount of mental stress as a result of the pandemic and now we cannot even have a face to face meeting with the council about the proposal.	As above.
15.2.5	There has been no opportunity to have meaningful face to face meetings regarding the consultation.	As above.

15.3 Comments that people didn't know about the consultation

15.3.1	This consultation has, in my opinion not been conducted in a fair manner for many reasons. Holding the consultation during a global pandemic, whilst my husband and I have remained home shielding, with no access to the internet has meant that we were only notified of the proposal by word of mouth. There are many fancy videos, websites and "posts" regarding the proposal but how have you tried to reach the older members of the community, those with little or no technology skills? I am reliably informed that the Welsh Government produced guidance for local authorities outlining the expectations if they were to carry out this type of process during COVID-19. Amongst other guidance it promotes the use of posters outside local shops, on local notice boards and well-advertised "drop-in sessions" or "telephone lines" for drop in calls. I question whether Powys have used this guidance during the Dolau consultation at all, and how that	<p>The Council carried out additional steps to ensure that the consultation was publicised widely and that stakeholders had an opportunity to make their views known, in accordance with the non-statutory guidance issued by the Welsh Government. These included preparing a video, advertising the consultation in local newspaper, putting posters up in the local vicinity.</p> <p>The scale and detail of responses to this consultation shows that stakeholders have been fully engaged with the process.</p>
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	has impacted on the ability of some members of the community to respond.	Hard copies of the consultation document were also available by request, and numerous requests were received.
15.3.2	We are also concerned that the necessary restrictions to our lifestyles during Covid have stopped the community from having their say, and to a degree it has been difficult to keep the outlying and less IT savvy people in touch with the gravity of the situation.	As above.
15.3.3	Finally, I would like to include my concerns about how this consultation has been conducted. Whilst I am fully aware of the effects of Covid-19, Powys CC has taken a very limited approach to notifying the communities of Llanfihangel Rhydithon as well as those of the alternative schools put forward by Powys, about this consultation. Powys CC will be very aware of the population make up of these communities and choosing a digital only approach has prevented many from being aware of the consultation and making their responses. There have been no posters placed on community noticeboards by Powys CC.	As above. Posters were placed in areas of the community including the notice board outside the school, a notice board in Dolau and inside Dolau Train Station. The community also highlighted that the consultation was taking place by placing scarecrows dressed in the Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School uniform in the community area and organising events, which were publicised in the local press and on social media.
15.3.4	Additionally, a digital consultation is very questionable. Can this even be a full and robust process when there will be many people in the community who will have poor internet connectivity or no access whatsoever? Some individuals are self-isolating and are not even aware there is a consultation going on.	As above.
15.3.5	The Welsh Government has issued guidance to all local authorities about conducting consultations during this period and the steps that should be taken. Powys CC have completely disregarded this.	As above.
15.3.6	Fair engagement. During the cabinet meeting where it was agreed to put Dolau school into consultation, Cllr Harris assured the schools that there would be fair engagement. How have the council achieved this please? You have not engaged with me or my family at all. Fair engagement requires physical and verbal engagement - we have not received this.	As above.

15.4 Comments about consultation with pupils

15.4.1	Let the children of the school have their say listen to them, listen to the parents and the community.	The Council has received responses from pupils and has also met with the School Council.
15.4.2	Talking to the pupils clearly shows they do not wish to change schools. And their voices should be heard.	As above.
15.4.3	Has Powys openly consulted with all the children in Dolau? All the children should have the opportunity to be in an education system that supports the needs of the individuals. Children in Dolau are already being impacted by this consultation.	As above.
15.4.4	The children should be heard from, their voices are of upmost importance.	As above.

15.5 Suggestion that the Council should visit the school as part of the process

15.5.1	The Transformation Team, Councillors and Cabinet need to spend an afternoon in the company of the school – not just over a grainy webcam, but really spend time in their company. And that of the community which would suffer catastrophic loss if the school were to close. Yes, it would just be an afternoon, but my goodness you would FEEL the strength, you would KNOW how this community cares about each and every one of it's members – even those from 9+ miles away; even those that left many years ago – they're still welcomed with open arms.	Comment noted.
15.5.2	For those who are making these important decisions, I feel a visit to the school is required to see for themselves the lives that will be affected by this and what may be lost, I feel sure this is not too much to ask?	Comment noted.
15.5.3	Many of the people on the council have never witnessed or experienced a week in this loving and heart felt school but can make a decision whether to close it or not is upsetting.	Comment noted.
15.5.4	I think you should actually visit the school and speak to the children there, you may even learn something! It's easy to type something out on an email and say this works but in the real life does it? transport costs? building facility's????	Comment noted.
15.5.5	I suggest that someone who is part of the decision-making process spends at least a week in Dolau School. These decisions should not be made as a paper exercise, but these are real little people whose future will be greatly affected if the school is closed.	Comment noted.

15.5.6	Clearly the person who had what he/she thought as the brainwave of the idea to have a consultation to close the school obviously was not privileged enough to have gone to a school like this. He/she should spend a few months away from their desk and visit the school daily and be within the community, I can assure you that you would soon change your mind. Truly listen to the community, appreciate the community and leave the School alone, let it carry on thriving like it's children and that of the community.	Comment noted.
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15.6 Comments about presumption against closing rural schools

15.6.1	What has happened to Kirsty Williams' presumption to keep small schools open?	<p>Section 1.8 of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code outlines the steps that proposers need to take when bringing forward proposals for rural schools.</p> <p>It also states that this:</p> <p><i>'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 conscientiously considered by the proposer, including federation'.</i></p> <p>The Council has carried out these steps during the formation of the Proposal Paper that was considered by Cabinet in February, and has carried out the additional steps required in the preparation of this Consultation Report.</p>
15.6.2	Kirsty Williams introduced the Rural Small School Code to help save rural small schools from closure, unless there is really no other option. Mark Drakeford clarified this in the Senedd last week when it was brought to his attention by James Evans MS. Why are Powys not adhering to this???	As above.
15.6.3	The School's Organisational code states that these schools should remain open unless there is no other possible option – this is not the case for Dolau School.	As above.

15.6.4	Any case for closure must be robust and in the best interests of educational provision in the area” and “Educational standards will be the prime consideration” (School Organisation Proposals-Welsh Assembly Government, Sept 2009). The local authority need to consider the appropriateness of their proposal, it is clearly stated by the School Organisation Proposal document that a proposal for a school that is performing well compared to alternatives would need to be clearly examined as ‘educational standards’ SHOULD be the prime consideration.	As above. See 1.3.1, 4.1.1 and 4.5.2.1
15.6.5	The Welsh Government have made clear in their revisions to the School’s Organisation Code that small rural schools should be kept open unless there is no other viable option, and in this case, there are many other options that have not been considered and evaluated fully.	Section 1.8 of the Welsh Government’s School Organisation Code outlines the steps that proposers need to take when bringing forward proposals for rural schools. It also states that this: <i>‘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 conscientiously considered by the proposer, including federation’.</i> The Council has carried out these steps during the formation of the Proposal Paper that was considered by Cabinet in February, and has carried out the additional steps required in the preparation of this Consultation Report.
15.6.6	As the first Minister said recently in answer to a question on Powys’ plans to closure ‘there is a presumption against school closures’. As Powys CC is always quoting Welsh Government ruling, how is it going to explain going in direct contradiction to this one?	As above.
15.6.7	The proposal to close this school is in breach of Welsh Government Policy on small rural schools, which states that there should be a presumption that small rural schools will stay open.	As above.
15.6.8	The RURAL SCHOOL POLICY directs that you must have a presumption against closing Rural schools without good reason to do so. THERE IS	As above.

	NO GOOD REASON. Between everything I have written today, and the facts that have been supplied to you from our community and beyond, over and over again, notwithstanding all the WELSH GOVERNMENT RULES that are there to guide your decisions, I CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY WE ARE IN CONSULTATION AT ALL!!!!???????	See 1.3.1
15.6.9	I understand that there is a policy put in place by Kirsty Williams, after the last time we were in consultation, protecting small rural schools, and stating that all other options must be fully explored and disregarded before closure become the only option – I would be very interested to know what has been done in this area, and what other options have been properly explored in line with this policy.	The options considered are included in the Consultation Document.

15.7 Comments about other schools

15.7.1	Some of us work in other schools so has the effect on them been considered and have their opinions been sourced?	All schools named as 'alternative schools' have been included in the consultation.
15.7.2	Will Llanbister be consulted? we are named in the document several times, we are a potential feeder school and we don't have enough space without the help of Powys. What happens in the event of Dolau parents wanting to access provision at Llanbister? Will they be told we are over capacity so they will therefore have to choose another school? We would appreciate some honesty etc around future admissions so we as a school and governing body can discuss plans for the future in terms of staffing and school configurations.	Llanbister C.P. School received the consultation documentation and were able to provide their views to the consultation.
15.7.3	Llanbister has a willing headteacher and governing body which would welcome discussions with the local authority to ensure all the children in our communities have a good option for education in the future.	Comment noted.

15.8 Other comments about the process

15.8.1	I can't find the consultation document online as I cannot open .docx on my electronic device, only Word documents 97-2002 (.doc). Would you	The Consultation Document was published as a PDF document and not a .docx document.
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	please be so good as to respond urgently, as I understand that others have the same problem.	52 paper copies were sent to persons who had requested a paper copy.
15.8.2	Others in the community have raised concerns that their electronic devices cannot open .pdfs and have requested word documents or .txt available, and nothing has come to light.	Paper copies were sent to all those who requested a copy in an alternative format. 52 paper copies were sent to persons who had requested a paper copy.
15.8.3	Maybe spend the thousands this consultation costs on the schools that are so needed.	The cost of this consultation is minimal.
15.8.4	I believe the proposed closure, and the obvious charade that is this consultation, is another example of the disregard and contempt in which the council holds the Powys residents and I object most strongly to the proposal.	Comment noted.
15.8.5	I am not naive enough to believe that this consultation period is anything other than procedure, let's face it we've all been here too many times before.	Comment noted.
15.8.6	If the Council are intent on saving a bit of cash by closing small schools then they probably will do it regardless of any consultation responses, but please don't try to justify it on the grounds that it will improve the education and / or opportunities as quite simply it just won't.	Comment noted.
15.8.7	The Council members urge you and your colleagues to have a more detailed investigation to give valid reasons to the community as to why this school has been chosen once again for closure?	Comment noted.
15.8.8	Five years ago Powys decided the school should not close and we are now in a better position than we were then so, again, why now? As a Freedom of Information request will be made as to how much the consultation company cost five years ago to undertake the process of closing schools then. Why are they not being used this time if they were used last time? Our children and staff are incredibly resilient, however, thought needs to be taken as there will be a time where they will be unable to cope with anymore, this is not the time and as mentioned later, why try to fix something that is not broken?	In 2016, an external company was commissioned to support the Council with consultation analysis related to proposals for four secondary schools, and to facilitate/chair meetings with Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School and other primaries. The company was not commissioned to carry out the consultation analysis for Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School's proposal or other primaries.

15.8.9	Attempting to close this School of Excellence for the past forty plus years together with the intolerable behaviour of this Committee as has been demonstrated by their actions proves undeniably that they have been exceeding their powers in every possible manner. This constitutes a Legal definition of "ABUSE OF POWER"!! Any Court would be duty bound to uphold this offence. A ruthless Barrister / QC would enforce it, together with other "breaches"!!! I know just the person!!?	Comment noted.
15.8.10	Why are we being targeted for a third time, when other small schools in the area are not even being considered? I could understand it if we were a failing school, but we have proved we are a successful school from our recent Estyn inspection.	See 1.3.1. All schools will be reviewed as part of the Transforming Education Programme 2020-2030.
15.8.11	With 37 pupils on roll at the school and the school seems to tick all the boxes I am wondering if you have looked at some of the other smaller schools in Powys which are not as good and who do not have as many pupils, yet they seem to be still open and not under threat, so I really want to know why you have decided yet again to close another Radnorshire primary school?	The Council has consulted on other small school proposals recently. All schools will be reviewed as part of the Transforming Education Programme 2020-2030.
15.8.12	We are concerned to hear that the closure of the school will not be discussed in full Council. This prevents a local voice from speaking on the issue. Can we ask you to revise the process set out for the consultation and ensure that the local community can be heard?	The Council's Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee will be considering the issues raised in this report. Scrutiny Committee will then make observations to Cabinet and the final decision will be made by the Cabinet.
15.8.13	During the last consultation there was a mediator or third party that came in to make sure a fair and robust consultation was done. Will this happen this time? If not, nobody will be making sure that we are having a fair and robust consultation.	<p>In 2016, an external company was commissioned to support the Council with consultation analysis related to proposals for four secondary schools, and to facilitate/chair meetings with Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School and other primaries. The company was not commissioned to carry out the consultation analysis for Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School's proposal or other primaries.</p> <p>The Council is carrying out the consultation in a fair and transparent manner.</p>

16. COMMENTS ABOUT IMPACT ON PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC GROUPS

16.1 Benefits of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School / small schools in general for pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups

16.1.1	All children regardless of their protected characteristics are still children. I feel that in a smaller school like Llanfihangel Rhydithon these characteristics would be part of the everyday life.	Comment noted.
16.1.2	Llanfiangel Rydithon school stands out as a welcoming and inclusive safe environment, where people from all backgrounds meet and collaborate. The loss of this could crucially separate sections of the community, isolate certain groups of people with protected characteristics. Everybody needs a sense of belonging, and school is at the heart of this for us.	Comment noted.
16.1.3	No one is treated any differently in Dolau.	Comment noted.
16.1.4	All children have always been treated equally and fairly.	Comment noted.
16.1.5	The school is fully inclusive and nurtured children irrespective of race, colour or orientation.	Comment noted.
16.1.6	This small school setting allows for the acceptance of people with protected characteristics	Comment noted.
16.1.7	I personally believe with help from a smaller set school all of the protected characteristics will receive the help needed to thrive.	Comment noted.
16.1.8	Smaller numbers allowing growth and learning around differences	Comment noted.
16.1.9	The nature of a small school is that the care and education is tailored to meet every child's needs. Smaller class sizes give teachers and teaching staff the opportunity to ensure every child is being supported to reach their full potential. Differences are recognised, embraced and nurtured. Children with additional learning needs are given the time and attention they deserve to learn the skills they need to flourish.	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. This adds a challenge for teachers in small schools: they need to plan, implement and assess for the needs of up to four year groups within one class, and within each of those year groups plan, implement and assess for up to several ability groups, some with complex needs, thereby ensuring that the planning is differentiated for each child's needs. Larger schools have a greater level of staffing and single year

		group classes or a mixed year class of no more than usually 2 years.
16.1.10	Small class sizes provided by schools such as this allow much quicker detection of bullying or discrimination between pupils. This can be acted on swiftly to educate all pupils in the class.	There is no evidence that larger classes have more bullying than small classes.
16.1.11	One thing that should not be overlooked is the value of small class sizes to certain children. Even in the last months before closure children with special needs were being sent to Whitton from Knighton primary school to have the benefit of a smaller class size in which they felt more at ease and could make steady improvement, big is not always better.	<p>Although Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P have the support of a specialist teacher, they are only able to support a limited amount of pupils as they only work part-time at the school. In larger schools there may be a designated ALNCo and learning support assistants.</p> <p>There is very good support across the cluster schools in the Ysgol Calon Cymru area for the support of pupils with SEN/ALN. Nearly all schools in the cluster have a designated full time ALNCo who can provide support and guidance to pupils and staff in relation to SEN/ALN. Two schools in the cluster have specialist centres for pupils with SEN/ALN and one hosts a Powys nurture cluster provision. One other school will host a satellite for pupils with complex needs from September 2021. One school in the Calon Cymru cluster provides support for pupils with SEN/ALN through the medium of Welsh. While larger schools may have a greater of number of pupils with SEN/ALN, these larger schools also have more staff that can support their needs. In addition, they may have specialist teaching facilities for pupils with SEN/ALN.</p>
16.1.12	The small school environment creates a caring space where all pupils with and without disabilities have opportunities to care for one another and to be known by the teaching staff.	As above.
16.1.13	Children thrive in smaller community schools. For those children that may have additional needs, they will access better help.	As above.

16.1.14	Small rural community are better at dealing with protected characteristics. Through extracurricular and community activities it is highly likely that pupils will be aware of any protected characteristics and be comfortable with them. All children are welcome at Dolau	Children with protected characteristics are supported, challenged and nurtured to achieve their full potential in all schools.
16.1.15	The school encourages pupils to be accepting of the way people are such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. The school does not have a tiny mind. Its inclusive of protected characteristics and promotes different learning styles and abilities. Smaller numbers of students, a more intimate and personalised learning environment, and a cohesive vision among teachers.	Comment noted.
16.1.16	Pupils with dyslexia are supported well at the school.	Comment noted.

16.2 Concern that moving to larger schools would have a negative impact on pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups

16.2.1	Larger class sizes will make it harder for those children with protected characteristics to feel included as it's harder for a teacher to include them in a class of 35 than say 12.	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. This adds a challenge for teachers in small schools: they need to plan, implement and assess for the needs of up to four year groups within one class, and within each of those year groups plan, implement and assess for up to several ability groups, some with complex needs, thereby ensuring that the planning is differentiated for each child's needs. Larger schools have a greater level of staffing and single year group classes or a mixed year class of no more than usually 2 years.
16.2.2	These characteristics placed into a bigger school will only be escalated by bullying etc	There is no evidence that there is more bullying in larger schools than in smaller schools.
16.2.3	Bigger school with more pupils may lead to less care being given to those with protected characteristics	Children with protected characteristics are supported, challenged and nurtured to achieve their full potential in all schools.

16.2.4	Any child with protected characteristics is going to be traumatised and bullied in larger school. They are going to be greatly affected as are all our children.	As above.
16.2.5	My concern would be that there would be more discrimination within a larger school, even though Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP is a small school the pupils are always very accepting of everyone who attends and welcome them into their 'family' whatever the characteristic.	As above.
16.2.6	I sense that in a larger school environment the needs of individual children with both physical, mental and extended cultural needs / differences could not be as well attended to.	As above.

16.3 The proposal wouldn't impact on pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups

16.3.1	I don't believe this closure will have an impact on protected characteristics as I am aware of how hard each local school works to adhere to policies and procedures in line with the Equality Act 2010, therefore these individuals would be respected regardless of which school they attend.	The Council agrees with this comment. Children with protected characteristics are supported, challenged and nurtured to achieve their full potential in all schools.
16.3.2	I am not in a position to comment on any other matters as I am not sure if there are any people with protected characteristics that attend or are associated with the school.	Comment noted.
16.3.3	I believe needs would be more than adequately covered by the next nearest school.	Comment noted.
16.3.4	Can't see this is effected, everyone should get the same right	Comment noted.
16.3.5	I don't believe there will be any impact on people with protected characteristics. Schools in the catchment area and further afield have been complemented on their inclusive and empathetic ethos. No child would be disadvantaged by the move, apart from having to attend a bigger class, the same as the children in the rest of the county. If anything a bigger school provides a more diverse community for the pupil to experience which would be a positive and beneficial learning environment	The Council agrees with this comment. Children with protected characteristics are supported, challenged and nurtured to achieve their full potential in all schools.
16.3.6	No. I cannot comment on this, the characteristics you list hardly apply to primary school children.	Comment noted.
16.3.7	As far as I am aware all pupils are treated equally and have no comments to make here.	Comment noted.

16.3.8	Powys understands its duties to the equality impact assessment process and I would expect this to be completed as a matter of record.	Comment noted.
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16.4 Impact on pupils with additional learning needs

16.4.1	Would the children with ALN needs have the same opportunities they have in Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School? Most days a specialist ALN teacher comes in and works one to one with these children without them feeling singled out. This is vital that these children get this support. How are you going to guarantee that these children get this support within another school?	<p>Although Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P have the support of a specialist teacher, they are only able to support a limited amount of pupils as they only work part-time at the school. In larger schools there may be a designated ALNCo and learning support assistants.</p> <p>There is very good support across the cluster schools in the Ysgol Calon Cymru area for pupils with SEN/ALN. All schools in the cluster have a designated ALNCo, who can provide support and guidance to pupils and staff in relation to SEN/ALN. This is a statutory requirement. Two schools in the cluster have specialist centres for pupils with SEN/ALN and one hosts a Powys nurture cluster provision. One other school will host a satellite for pupils with complex needs from September 2021. One school in the Calon Cymru cluster provides support for pupils with SEN/ALN through the medium of Welsh. While larger schools may have a greater of number of pupils with SEN/ALN, these larger schools also have more staff that can support their needs. In addition, they may have specialist teaching facilities for pupils with SEN/ALN.</p>
16.4.2	Children with learning disabilities will find it very hard to settle into a new school, and may struggle to make friends.	Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, all children, and especially those ALN, would be fully supported throughout the process to ensure a smooth transition to their new school.
16.4.3	The children with special education needs are going to struggle.	As above.
16.4.4	Children with learning difficulties, particularly those with Statements of Education (for moderate to severe Learning difficulties) thrive in smaller learning environments (This is my experience of being a headteacher in a	There is no evidence to indicate that pupils with moderate to severe learning difficulties, or those with

	school with two STF (Specialist Teaching Facilities) In future, children with particular needs, or ethnic children with communication problems, might thrive at Llanfihangel Rhydithon. Wales is a multi-cultural nation and we must expect all schools to experience multi-cultural education at some point - if not now, then certainly in the future. We must be prepared for children with multiple needs. Closing a school in a Green category would appear to be a negative step	minority ethnic backgrounds, make better progress in smaller schools.
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16.5 Impact on disabled pupils

16.5.1	Closure of this school will impact on those with disabilities in the area, longer journeys to get to school, larger classes.	The Council has recognised that there would be additional travel required for some pupils, should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close. However, the Council does not consider the travel distance or times to alternative schools to be excessive.
16.5.2	The impact of closure of the school and the alternative schools suitability for disabled pupils has not been described.	<p>The alternative schools compliance with the Equality Act 2010 is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crossgates C.P. School – Partially compliant. New hygiene room to be installed by end of summer 2021 so the school will be fully compliant. - Llanbister C.P. School – Not compliant - Ysgol Cefnlllys – Partially compliant - Ysgol Trefonnen – Partially compliant - Knighton C. in W. School – Partially compliant
16.5.3	For children with a disability many need the consistency and security of attending a school which is local, a school that understands local issues and can promote inclusiveness in practice not just as a paper exercise.	All schools are required to be fully inclusive in accordance with the Council's Strategy for SEN/ALN Provision.

16.6 Impact on other protected characteristic group

16.6.1	The proposal could have harmful effects upon children who are currently living in households that are experiencing marital or civil partnership breakdown. The impact upon both groups has not been evaluated.	Children living in households that are experiencing marital or civil partnership breakdown are not a protected characteristic group.
16.6.2	There may be a significant impact on any pupils with gender identity may find moving schools challenging.	Comment noted.
16.6.3	Age - As stated previous you are discriminating children that live in rural areas forcing young children to travel potentially long journeys out of their communities and even families moving to different areas.	The Council disagrees that the proposal is discriminating children living in rural areas. There are places available at alternative rural schools within a ten mile radius of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and free Home-to-School transport would be available for eligible pupils. The Council is of the view that the travel distance/time to these alternative schools is excessive.
16.6.4	Only that I feel you are not treating my children equally, by proposing to close Dolau. This is age discrimination as my older child had more opportunities than my younger children would have.	Comment noted.
16.6.5	This is going to affect young children, and it will affect pregnant women who struggle to travel far to take children to schools further away.	Free home-to-school transport would be provided for all eligible pupils to their nearest alternative school.
16.6.6	In terms of women that live in the village that are pregnant, it would be good for them to be able to rely on their children being able to attend a school in their village or close to where they live. Expectant mothers have to agree childcare places before their child is even born if they need to return to work. Likewise school places need to be agreed well in advance of children starting school. This can be really stressful for new mothers, who need to factor in childcare and school locations to their daily travel to & from work and their working hours. In terms of disability a small community school is a safe introduction to children who need more specialist help. This environment can help them form friendships with children that can help them when it's time to move to a large secondary school.	Comment noted.
16.6.7	Children who attend Dolau school are often part of the local faith organisations	Comment noted.
16.6.8	Council proposing some children from a C.P. school go to a Church of Wales school. This could have a negative impact upon children with a particular religion or belief. The impact of this proposal on such children has not been evaluated.	The Council is proposing that pupils transfer to their nearest alternative schools. For some pupils, this may be Ysgol Trefonnen C.in W. Primary School or Knighton C.in W. Primary School.

		The draft impact assessments will be updated to take account of feedback received during the consultation.
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16.7 Other concerns about the impact on protected characteristic groups

16.7.1	Schools are key places for people in the community to learn about each other and accept people for their differences - taking a school out of a community deprives them of this and places them in a different community miles from home they may not relate to.	Just over half of the pupils attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School in September 2021 are attending their closest school – the rest of pupils travel to the school from other communities.
16.7.2	The closure will have an impact on many of these protected groups due to additional travel, loss of social cohesion	The draft impact assessments have recognised the impact of the proposal on groups with protected characteristics. These will be updated to include information gathered during the consultation.
16.7.3	The logistics of transferring children out of their community on a daily basis is at best inconvenient and at worst extremely unsettling and disruptive for pupils with protected characteristics.	As above.
16.7.4	Due to the rural location the school and the increased mobility issues faced by many of the people with an array of protected characteristics the closure of the school will create more isolation in our rural communities. Isolation leads to further problems and increased pressure on individuals.	As above.
16.7.5	It would adversely impact children who are not able to advocate for themselves and need the community to be their voice	As above.
16.7.6	I believe that the closure of this school will have a greater impact on this group than the council believes.	As above.
16.7.7	What I find ironic is that by closing the school you would damage the very community which at present provides a bedrock of protection and nurturing for protected characteristics. You would hamper it.	As above.
16.7.8	The protected characteristics are not always obviously and there are some concerns over the Councils consideration for the well-being of the community, pupils and staff in the whole proposal.	As above.
16.7.9	I think that the impact of closure of the school would have an effect on all of the pupils; their parents; the staff and the wider local community. Therefore, there may be an impact upon people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.	As above.

16.7.10	The closure of small rural schools such as Llanfihangel Rhydithon is perhaps not seen as a problem for those with private transport and steady employment but delivers another significant contradiction with regard to the statutory responsibilities of local education authorities and others in relation to child poverty. The Child Poverty Act 2010 creates a duty for local authorities to reduce child poverty. As the CCR report points out: "If poverty is to be tackled effectively, it must be a priority to identify and consult with those families who don't know about or are prevented from accessing services."	As above.
16.7.11	I think it would have a negative impact.	As above.
16.7.12	Detrimental for all involved.	As above.

16.8 Other comments

16.8.1	To enforce closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon School to strengthen the Welsh medium and Faith Based provision, when the school is meeting the needs of its pupils' and the wider community alike, does question the equalities agenda and is verging on positive discrimination by the Authority. One of the Welsh Government Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 goals is 'A more equal Wales', creating a society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances.	The reasons for the proposal do not include 'strengthening Welsh-medium and Faith Based provision'. The proposal is to close the school and pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools. These include a mixture of community primary schools, Church in Wales schools. All the alternative schools are English-medium schools with Ysgol Trefonnen being a dual-stream school.
16.8.2	While not on that list for protected characteristics, we would like the report that the current proposals have already caused anxiety amongst the more sensitive pupils	Comment noted.
16.8.3	I am concerned the proposal will have a negative impact on the whole of the community no matter what their characteristics - everyone will be affected by it.	Comment noted.
16.8.4	Only to say that the school and the community would fully be supportive of the characteristics you have listed for any child or family member coming under those definitions.	Comment noted.
16.8.5	The additional travel to alternative schools will make it more difficult for parents, grandparents, friends who have a disability or are unable to drive will make it more difficult to attend school meetings and events. Particularly as public transport is very limited or non-existent.	The Council has recognised in the draft impact assessments that additional travel to alternative schools would be challenging for families. These will be

		updated to take account of information gathered during consultation.
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17. COMMENTS ABOUT IMPACT ON THE WELSH LANGUAGE

17.1 Comments about Welsh at Llanfihangel Rhydithon school

17.1.1	Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School has excellent standards in the teaching of Welsh. As mentioned previously, three members of staff (myself included) have completed the Welsh sabbatical. Another teacher is a fluent Welsh speaker. Pupils are encouraged to speak Welsh as much as possible in the classroom and outside at playtimes. Bilingualism is a big focus.	The Council notes these positive comments about the use of Welsh at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. Should the Council proceed with the proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, pupils would continue to learn Welsh at the alternative schools.
17.1.2	The standards of Welsh are very good at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School. If the school were to close, this would disadvantage the pupils and they would not have the same opportunities at another school.	As above.
17.1.3	Dolau school are already using the welsh language to encourage this language	As above.
17.1.4	I understand that the teaching staff at Llanfiangle Rhydithon CP School have undertaken additional training in order to deliver the Welsh Curriculum and my grandchild tells me that they do lots of lessons in Welsh as well as English.	As above.
17.1.5	The teaching staff in Dolau are excellently placed to teach my children Welsh as a 2 nd language. The smaller class size allows each pupil to have greater staff attention and provides a great opportunity to build confidence in smaller groups.	As above.
17.1.6	We have 3 Welsh speaking teachers in Dolau school. The children are regularly spoken to in Welsh and young children soon pick this up. In a larger school with no Welsh spoken these children would soon lose that talent.	As above.
17.1.7	Children use the Welsh language well in school at every opportunity and it is already treated no less favourably than English.	As above.

17.1.8	Welsh language used and taught daily here so closure will have a poor effect on the growth of the Welsh language	As above.
17.1.9	The school seems a perfect introduction to Welsh. Where it can be learned in such a thriving environment, where children collaborate across ages to work together own their Welsh learning. Each child's ability to and experience of speaking Welsh can be met, and this trickles out into the community to enhance exposure to Welsh language.	As above.
17.1.10	The children are taught bi-lingually, and therefore Welsh is being learnt very easily within their normal conversations in school. The children teach us. I can't say if it would be better or worse in another school, but I know that the way that they learn Welsh at Dolau School is without them knowing that they're learning.	As above.
17.1.11	Through the school, pupils have positive attitudes towards learning Welsh. In the foundation phase, many pupils use Welsh phrases informally, without being prompted. In the Estyn report it was noted that the school needs to 'Improve key stage 2 pupils ability to speak Welsh'. The school is addressing this recommendation brilliantly.	As above.
17.1.12	The small class sizes in Dolau enable the children to receive a more individualised approach to learning Welsh	As above.
17.1.13	We have had Welsh club in school will there be Welsh clubs in the alternative schools.	As above.
17.1.14	Llanfihangel Rhydithon is a school where experiential, child-centred learning is carried out in a friendly and safe environment. The staff are able to interact positively with the children. What better environment could there be for developing and using the Welsh Language? Conversational Welsh Language can best be developed through the experiential learning activities the children enjoy at the school. Estyn praised the use and development of the Welsh Language at Llanfihangel Rhydithon.	As above.
17.1.15	The pupils of Llanfihangel Rhydithon have a high standard of the Welsh language which is evident when they attend secondary school.	As above.
17.1.16	<i>The pupils have good Welsh teaching in the school currently both in formal lesson form and in less formal bilingual chat to the children's benefit</i>	As above.

17.1.17	In our recent inspection, the Powys Welsh scheme of work was heavily criticised for being too worksheet-led and not focused enough on developing pupils' oracy skills. To improve our practice, we make sure we incorporate more real-life meaningful activities linked to our topic. For example, during our 'Sportswear Designer' topic, the Key Stage Two class set up a sports shop with a range of clothes and equipment for sale complete with labels, price lists etc. Pupils learned new vocabulary through carrying out role-play activities in the shop rather than completing worksheet after worksheet. Our Welsh support teacher was very impressed with this and more practical activities such as this have appeared in the scheme. Since changing our practice, we have noticed a huge improvement in the pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment of speaking Welsh. If we were to close, it would have adverse effects on opportunities for children to use the Welsh language.	As above.
17.1.18	We feel that the Welsh education given in a small class size format with different ages provides a less formal basis which works well and provides encouragement. The children are happy to speak Welsh words and phrases in their home environment	As above.
17.1.19	The school has done much to keep the Welsh language alive and takes part in many Welsh heritage events.	As above.
17.1.20	While I was a pupil at Dolau school we had lots of opportunities to learn and speak the Welsh language, to enable this to happen the school arranged for a specialist welsh teacher to visit regularly and work with small groups within the school. Do you think this would be possible at a larger school?	As above.
17.1.21	In Llanfihangel Rhydithon I had an amazing opportunity to learn and speak Welsh. From asking to go to the toilet to asking for help the primary school uses every opportunity to use welsh compared to other primary school. By sending these pupils to a less welsh speaking school they will be less likely to develop these key skills needed in the future	As above.
17.1.22	One of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 goals is 'A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language'. The school is not only very proud and proactive in promoting its own ethos and culture as a school, but also the history and culture of the area and Wales. Through the school, pupils have positive attitudes towards learning Welsh. In the	As above.

	foundation phase, many pupils use Welsh phrases informally, without being prompted. In the ESTYN report it was noted that the school needs to 'Improve key stage 2 pupils' ability to speak Welsh'. The school is addressing this recommendation brilliantly.	
17.1.23	Dolau school is excellent at providing a comfortable place for pupils and parents alike to practice Welsh as a second language. East Radnorshire is not a natural Welsh speaking area of Wales so these questions may be seen as positive discrimination	As above.
17.1.24	I don't know how much the Welsh language is used in the other schools but in Dolau it is used everyday	As above.

17.2 Negative impact on the Welsh language

17.2.1	Closure would most certainly have an adverse effect on the Welsh language. The teachers and staff at LRCP are very supportive of development of the Welsh language and regularly use it in the classroom to encourage children to be comfortable with a second language. My children regularly use Welsh phraseology at home which is a delight to hear.	Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, pupils would have the opportunity to learn Welsh in the alternative schools.
17.2.2	Closing the school would have a negative impact on the Welsh Language. The staff at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School have had excellent Welsh Language training and incorporate the Welsh language in their teaching very successfully. Llanfihangel Rhydithon has 3 teachers that have done the Welsh sabbatical. Welsh is taught on a regular basis and after school Welsh club has been run. Do the other named schools offer this provision?	As above.
17.2.3	The school at the moment include Welsh in all they do, do the schools our children are supposed to go use Welsh?	As above.
17.2.4	The comment I would make is that it is quite likely that the nearest/most appropriate replacement school may be over the border into England. This will severely affect the opportunity for the pupil to practice and use Welsh language and culture.	From the analysis of pupils' home postcodes, all alternative schools are within Powys.
17.2.5	Obviously closure would result in the loss of a Welsh language educational setting. The closure of a school results in people moving away/fewer being attracted to the area. Being so close to the English	As above.

	border, prospective students could end up living in an English speaking area.	
17.2.6	I strongly believe that closing Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School would have a massive detrimental effect on the opportunities for our pupils. The Welsh language is used enthusiastically within our school setting, and bilingualism is celebrated. Many of our pupils enjoy conversing in Welsh, and choose to do so without prompting. Many of our members of staff have been on the Welsh Sabbatical Course, myself included, and this has raised standards of Welsh in our school massively in recent years. Our pupils have the opportunity to attend Welsh club, which has been hugely popular, and so much so that the children often organise Welsh games and activities during break-times.	Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, pupils would have the opportunity to learn Welsh in the alternative schools.
17.2.7	It will result in lesser use of the Welsh language within the local community	As above.
17.2.8	It would have a drastic impact on the Welsh language, look how well the children perform at the local eisteddfod in Llandrindod Wells from Llanfihangel Rhydithon school.	As above.
17.2.9	I feel that the children's education will suffer in view of the Welsh language if the school were to close as pupils from nearby schools are not as capable in Welsh from my experience.	As above.
17.2.10	Both languages should be treated equal, the closer of this school and moving to bigger schools will just make things less equal.	As above.
17.2.11	Welsh language is a dying language, so closing a good Welsh school could impact on the future generations speaking it.	As above.
17.2.12	Closing Welsh schools will have a massive impact on the Welsh language. Particularly in our area where it is not talked enough already.	As above.
17.2.13	Parents may not be able to keep their children in a Welsh speaking school and that would be a massive blow on the community and our history.	As above.
17.2.14	Being able to have one to one support in learning the Welsh language would be lost. Also working in small groups would be lost too.	As above.
17.2.15	There would be no positive impact on the Welsh language by closing Llanfihangel Rhydithon C P School	As above.

17.2.16	It would have a negative effect on the use of the Welsh language. As far as I am aware the school promotes the Welsh language. Therefore, closing it would do away with that.	As above.
17.2.17	I strongly believe that our pupils have a wealth of opportunities to use the Welsh language in our school and local community, and I worry that they would not have the same level of opportunities in other local schools. This would disadvantage our pupils greatly, and in turn, risk attitudes to the Welsh language being negatively impacted. By keeping Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School OPEN, our pupils would be guaranteed to continue flourishing in their Welsh language skills, and this would have only a positive impact on their learning and development.	As above.
17.2.18	Closing a rural school would weaken the Welsh language	As above.
17.2.19	Without schools like this, pupils will struggle to learn Welsh language	As above.
17.2.20	If pupils were to go to a lesser Welsh speaking school they would soon lose this key skill. It is good to speak Welsh in Wales.	As above.
17.2.21	By keeping the school open it keeps the link to the Welsh language throughout the village and surrounding area. Parents and friends of the school can be heard asking the pupils questions in Welsh at many village events.	As above.
17.2.22	The familiarity of the smaller school community is a perfect environment for teaching and learning not only the Welsh Language but also Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig - Welsh culture; the place of Wales in the world; the importance of our identity as Welsh people; the importance of Wales as a vibrant multi-cultural and forward-thinking nation. In a small-school environment, projects and themes can easily take on board these notions of a dynamic 21st Century Wales. It can be done in bigger schools, of course, but the small school will include the whole community in its themes. Perfect opportunities to promote modern Wales.	<p>As all schools need to deliver the Welsh context as part of the new curriculum, there should be no differential between schools.</p> <p>One of the key characteristics of the four purposes in the Curriculum for Wales is to develop ambitious, capable learners who can communicate effectively in different forms and settings, using both Welsh and English. All learners should have appropriate pathways for learning Welsh and English to enable them to develop the confidence to use both languages in everyday life. All Powys schools are well supported with excellent resources from the Athrawon Bro Team to enable teachers to teach Welsh. Staff from nearby schools have attended the sabbatical Welsh language course with further staff attending the sabbatical course</p>

		in Newtown in September 2021. Opportunities to use Welsh within and beyond the classroom (including on digital platforms) support learners to use Welsh confidently and appreciate its usefulness to communication in a bilingual Wales and again all Powys schools are effectively supported with rich resources from the Athrawon Bro Team. Schools, through effective pupil voice forums, known as the 'Cryw Cymraeg' plan a range of activities to increase the use of Welsh outside the classroom. Facilitating the use of Welsh, through planned linguistic progression in every phase of education from ages 3 to 16, and as part of a whole-school approach, offers opportunities for all learners to develop bilingually and this is a key priority for all schools in Wales.
17.2.23	Use and interest in learning of Welsh relies both on the quality of teaching and the interest of the pupils - as young children, this interest comes from their home life. Patriotism runs strongly in small farming communities such as Dolau and drive to learn the Welsh language strong - this will inevitably become diluted in communities where this is not the case and children influenced by their peers.	As above.
17.2.24	Should the pupils of this school be dispersed amongst other larger primaries then those classes also become larger, reducing all children's individual attention time from the teacher. This would impact the children's learning of all subjects and topics, of which learning Welsh is one.	As above.
17.2.25	The proposal to close Dolau school would have a negative effect on the Welsh language because we have a Cylch Meithrin in Dolau that is a registered setting that offers funding via the childcare element. Cylch Meithrin Dolau is a fantastic Cylch and has very close links with the school, we support the transition from Cylch to school and are in constant communication with the leader of Cylch regarding the children. The children are immersed in the Welsh language from the age on two and therefore, have a brilliant understanding of the basics on the language by the time they come to Dolau school, where we speak a lot of Welsh	<p>The Council will update the draft impact assessment to take account of this issue.</p> <p>All the alternative schools named in the Consultation Document have signed up to the Siarter Iaith, and are working towards the Bronze Award.</p>

	<p>throughout the day. The children that attend the Cylch Meithrin in Dolau have a great love for the Welsh language and enjoy speaking and hearing it when they come to school. We have a very strong Criw Cymraeg who promote the Welsh language in the school, they enjoy being part of Criw Cymraeg and enjoy teaching the children all about the language. The children enjoying learning about their topics in Welsh and use Welsh throughout the day in and out of the classroom. We also recently received the Bronze Award for the Cymraeg Campus, something which we worked hard towards, our Criw Cymraeg are now excited to work towards the Silver Award.</p>	
17.2.26	<p>If the school were to close then the Cylch would be affected too, as it wouldn't be able to run, therefore the level of Welsh in the area would reduce dramatically as the closest setting for children under school age is an English medium one, where Welsh is not the focus. In fact, the closest Cylch is in Llandrindod, which would mean extra travel for families who wish for their children to have a Welsh medium under 5 education. The Welsh Government want 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050, however, if Powys close Dolau school then the Cylch will follow, showing that Powys are not that supportive of having Welsh speakers in the county, as the opportunity would leave Dolau for Welsh speakers.</p>	<p>Should there be no school in Llanfihangel Rhydithon, it is likely that there would be an impact on Cylch Meithrin Dolau if parents decided to choose other early years providers that are co-located with any of the alternative schools thereby reducing the number of pupils attending the Cylch, with an impact on its viability. However, this is not a given, as the Cylch could potentially continue to operate in the area if there was sufficient demand. Pupils would still be able to develop their Welsh language skills at their alternative schools and would be able to continue to use this in their homes and communities.</p>
17.2.27	<p>The Welsh medium play group of the school will be lost. As more parents are now able to support Welsh speaking in the home the continuation of Welsh education will be possible. This opportunity to nurture the Welsh language in this small school setting will be missed if the school is closed.</p>	As above.
17.2.28	<p>The school runs a very successful Cylch preschool with pupils being taught Welsh language, if the school shuts the whole idea of teaching Welsh will be lost in the area too. Many adults engage with the children at local events through the Welsh language, ok not huge sentences but a few short phrases</p>	As above.
17.2.29	<p>No Cylch Meithrin at other local schools except for Trefonnen, so a disadvantage.</p>	As above.

17.2.30	In the consultation document you state that the Welsh Language would not be lost by closing Dolau school. The Ti a Fi and Cylch would be lost. They do not have this facility at the next nearest school – Crossgates! Dolau school – use Welsh daily as a second language. We take part in the Llandrindod children’s eisteddfod annually. Crossgates do not.	As above.
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17.3 The proposal would not have a negative impact on the Welsh language

17.3.1	Opportunities for persons to use Welsh Language (should they so wish) are provided at present. Closing the school will neither help nor hamper this.	Comment noted.
17.3.2	I don't believe that there would be any positive or negative impacts to the Welsh language. I don't know but I would assume that Dolau school children are taught Welsh but as far as I am aware there isn't a specific Welsh stream within the school.	Comment noted.
17.3.3	There would be no change if the children were moved to other local schools	Comment noted.
17.3.4	Negligible. All Welsh schools must follow the curriculum	Comment noted.
17.3.5	No adverse affects whatsoever	Comment noted.
17.3.6	All schools need to teach Welsh so no effect	Comment noted.
17.3.7	I don't think this would change as there is a curriculum that is followed across Powys.	Comment noted.
17.3.8	I am not against teaching of any language but because Powys get extra money for Welsh taught pupils shouldn't impact on the little schools such has Dolau	Comment noted.
17.3.9	So few fluent Welsh speakers in Radnorshire this is not a problem.	Comment noted.
17.3.10	Closing the school, and pupils moving to a larger school would only improve the pupils opportunities to converse and practice their languages with a wider variety of staff and peers, all with their own unique experiences.	Comment noted.
17.3.11	It's a Welsh school, with Welsh pupils in a Welsh village in Wales. DOES IT REALLY MATTER THAT WELSH IS NOT THEIR FIRST LANGUAGE.	Comment noted.
17.3.12	To my knowledge, closing it will have no effect on the Welsh language. My child learns more Welsh at home.	Comment noted.

17.3.13	No affect at all. This is not a predominantly Welsh speaking area. Look after the actual community you have not what looks good on paper.	Comment noted.
17.3.14	I can't see that it will make any difference to language	Comment noted.
17.3.15	In my opinion, as learning Welsh is mandatory the children would be doing this in the school anyway. Any parents with a preference for increased Welsh language provision would have considered Welsh medium education for their child. Considering the local area is not a Welsh speaking community, as are the other Radnorshire communities, the level of Welsh language provision is quite adequate. Enhanced Welsh language education can be accessed when they proceed to high school.	Comment noted.
17.3.16	Don't think it would have any effect on the use of the Welsh language.	Comment noted.
17.3.17	I don't believe there would be any negative impact on the Welsh language opportunities. In fact, a larger school would provide many more opportunities to experience different Welsh dialogue and conversation with the variety of staff and pupils present and the opportunity to converse and play with different children, groups and cohorts.	Comment noted.
17.3.18	If anything, teachers in other schools may be more Welsh speaking to help push the Welsh language forward	Comment noted.
17.3.19	In my opinion the closure of Dolau school would have a massive impact on persons to use the Welsh language. The Cylch is in it's infancy and the idea was to introduce Welsh early, so that the teachers who have completed the Welsh sabbatical would build on this to instil the Welsh language in the children before they got to high school. It has been proven that young children have the ability to learn languages easily...and that if they learn in their formative years, they retain it in later life.	Comment noted.

17.4 Other comments

17.4.1	What really does that have to do with this process?	Comment noted.
17.4.2	Talking about Welsh language is not applicable for this proposal.	Comment noted.
17.4.3	You are missing the point by focusing on Welsh language, it is more important that the children's education is relevant and rounded.	Comment noted.

17.4.4	This question in itself is ridiculous. Welsh is the first language of many in Wales. It should never even been up for discussion whether it is less favourable than English. All pupils in the country should and do learn it, many to the level to that of someone who it is their first language.	Comment noted.
17.4.5	It is not a case of the Welsh language - that's rubbish. It is about shutting a very good school!!	Comment noted.
17.4.6	I don't believe the proposal to close this school can be revised to have a positive effect on the use of Welsh. The closure of the school is a much bigger issue.	Comment noted.
17.4.7	Provide more resources to encourage Welsh as a 2nd language in rural community schools, particularly where English is the dominant language	Comment noted.
17.4.8	Surely the question should be, how can we improve quality in other schools??	Comment noted.
17.4.9	The opportunity to promote the Welsh language is greater in a small school with smaller class sizes. The development of language requires more and not less exposure and attention and smaller schools with smaller classes have greater potential to develop pupils' language.	Comment noted.
17.4.10	Need to make sure the children have equal opportunities to learn wherever they are - even in smaller schools like this.	Comment noted.
17.4.11	The Welsh language needs to be preserved it is part and parcel of the cultural needs	Comment noted.
17.4.12	This area is historically English speaking and this must be respected. However it is very important as part of their cultural heritage that children that learn Welsh, which for them will naturally be as a second language	Comment noted.
17.4.13	My own experience of attending Beguildy C in W primary school - another Powys school with similar numbers - was that our Welsh teaching was vastly superior to pupils from other primary schools on going to secondary school.	Comment noted.
17.4.14	Welsh is favourable in Powys itself. Everyone should have the chance to learn the language. If bigger schools don't have Welsh speaking teachers then the language will be lost.	Comment noted.
17.4.15	How many welsh speaking families live in the catchment area for Dolau school? It would be interesting to know.	Based on information from the 2011 Census, knowledge of Welsh in the Llangunllo ward was as follows:

		Total residents aged 3+: 1231 Understand spoken Welsh only: 30 (2.44%) Only speaks Welsh: 17 (1.38%) Only speaks and reads Welsh: 7 (0.57%) Speaks, reads and writes Welsh: 74 (6.01%) Other combination of skills: 18 (1.46%) No knowledge of Welsh: 1085 (88.14%)
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18. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

18.1 Retain the status quo

18.1.1	I think you should leave Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School to carry on, why fix something that is not broken?	Comment noted.
18.1.2	I urge you to NOT to close my school, my family's school, my community's school. There are other options which have not been given proper consideration.	Comment noted
18.1.3	I feel that Powys Education Department should give Llanfihangel Rhydithon School the chance to continue to educate the children in their own community they should allow The Headteacher, teachers and governors to get on with running our wonderful small Rural school as they have done over the years not to mention the last 16 months of the Pandemic and the challenges it has brought.	Comment noted
18.1.4	I strongly believe that the only option the Council should be considering for Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School is to keep it OPEN. Why close a school with such high-standards, and risk negatively impacting the futures of our young people?	Comment noted
18.1.5	A rural school should only close after councils have done "everything they can" to keep it open. We believe the preferred choice is to abandon the current proposal in respect of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School as, most importantly, pupil numbers are expected to increase and there will be a significant impact of additional travel for some of the pupils if the school were to close.	Comment noted

18.1.6	As I am not really aware of why they want it to shut it is difficult to give alternative options other than to let it to continue to provide excellent education to the community children in this wonderful setting. Financial there are no problems and the teaching standard is excellent and the community love it so I'm not sure what could be better?	Comment noted
18.1.7	if you move or join this school to another, the children will be lost in the system and become part of large class, little disciplines low self esteem, low confidence So any is no other option	Comment noted
18.1.8	Leave it open. Make cuts elsewhere for the sake of the future of education in Powys.	Comment noted
18.1.9	I believe Llanfihangel Rhydithon School should remain open and given the chance to prove just how well they can adapt to and deliver the new curriculum within their small rural school. The idea behind the "Successful Futures" document was to create a curriculum which can ensure all pupils a chieve just that - and I believe, given the chance, that this school can help the pupils thrive and ensure a bright future for the community of Dolau.	Comment noted
18.1.10	Keep the school open take more students from surrounding areas	Comment noted
18.1.11	Keep it open! Market further afield. Hold open days that welcomes not just children but also prospective parents and young families.	Comment noted
18.1.12	Just keep it open. Keep Dolau school open. Save money by not having any more consultations. FOI will reveal in time how much they have cost the Council Taxpayers of Powys!	Comment noted
18.1.13	Keeping it as a school. Maybe programme evening classes here to make extra income.	Comment noted
18.1.14	Keeping the school open. That is the number one priority. Then reinvestment into the infrastructure and technology within the school is also high on the agenda.	Comment noted
18.1.15	Keep it open, offer the community the chance to raise money for upgrades or new equipment	Comment noted
18.1.16	Yes, invest in Dolau school and make this a model of what is an excelled standards of education and how this works well in a small rural school and showcase what is good about education in small rural communities.	Comment noted
18.1.17	Forecast future pupil numbers to see if it warrants staying open.	Pupil number projections are included within the Consultation Document.

18.2 Pause the consultation process

18.2.1	I would suggest a delay	Comment noted.
18.2.2	The council could consider a reprieve if only for three or five years, and then if numbers are not increasing then think again,	Comment noted.
18.2.3	Please keep the local school open. Children have undergone so much disruption due to Covid and more forced change will be detrimental to pupils' wellbeing. At least delay this consideration for another 5 years	Comment noted.
18.2.4	Delay the plans in the interest of the children's mental health and well-being (post COVID recovery - 3 years minimum. 3.	Comment noted.
18.2.5	As stated above, do not close or at least postpone due to the current Covid19 situation which has already affected children's mental health and well-being.	Comment noted.

18.3 Formalise the arrangements with Llanelwedd

18.3.1	The council should strongly consider making the current headship arrangements permanent. This is an arrangement that works very well, efficiently, and is mutually beneficial.	Comment noted.
18.3.2	Llanfihangel Rhydithon School has strong links with Llanelwedd CiW School including their long-term arrangement of a shared Executive Head; would it not be more sensible to foster this link and to allow the schools to develop the link even further with the support of Powys CC?	Comment noted.
18.3.3	You have not even mentioned about federating with Llanelwedd. How could this be a good idea one minute but not the next? I find this quite incredible as again, why not develop something that seems to be working well?	It is not legally possible to federate a community school with a faith school. Generally, when considering federating schools, the Council tends to consider schools that are located within the same geographic locality.
18.3.4	How about Federating with Llanelwedd, with one school on two sites?	As above.
18.3.5	The option to federate / amalgamate with Llanelwedd school has not been given consideration, distance between the two schools does not preclude either of these options as the current Head Teacher has been	As above.

	running both schools quite successfully during the current pandemic, without the need to be physically present in the school at all times.	
18.3.6	You need to be considering how well the partnership with Llanelwedd School already works and encouraging and supporting that	Comment noted.
18.3.7	Make the temporary shared Head leadership with Llanelwedd School a permanent feature, as it is working well!!	Comment noted.
18.3.8	To continue with the current partnership with Llanelwedd and to pursue the option for Llanfihangel Rhydithon school to become a church in Wales Primary School and formally federate with Llanelwedd	Comment noted.
18.3.9	Continuation of the successful collaboration. Further development of the collaboration with a formal agreement in place.	Comment noted.
18.3.10	Focus on the improvement of the governance of the alignment of Llanewedd and Llanfihangel-Rhydithon-C.P schools. This arrangement has worked for 6 years, and made a significant saving for the Authority in 2016.	Comment noted.
18.3.11	We believe the governing body and parents and community have completed a consultation in Dolau with the aim to become a church school. It is our understanding that they have unanimous support for this and the diocese are also in support. They have made representation to the local authority to have this approved. Closing the school therefore would have a negative impact on faith schools in the area.	Comment noted.
18.3.12	Local Authority need to work with Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP school becomes a Church in Wales to Federate/Merge with Llanelwedd. Discussion already underway with church and consultation with parents and community was undertaken in 2019 and submitted to the Diocese of Swansea and Brecon. We are told they have made representations to the Local Authority.	Comment noted.

18.4 Federation / merger with another school

18.4.1	The only other option I see which could benefit the pupils would be Option 5, where we merge with Llanbister over both sites, this would ensure that the children still received the best education at Dolau and that the two schools could work closely together as they are similar schools. We could support each other and understand what it is like to teach in rural, small	Comment noted.
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	schools. Llanbister's most recent Estyn report was Good too, just like Dolau, which was completed in November 2019, one of the most recent Estyn reports in the county. They have worked hard like Dolau to improve the teaching and learning in school and will be a suitable option for the council to consider.	
18.4.2	Federating with Llanbister Primary school as well in order to share resources and staff.	Comment noted.
18.4.3	Allow us to federate with Llanelwedd or Llanbister. Put forward sustainable alternatives.	Comment noted.
18.4.4	I feel the school should be kept as it is but should be strengthening links between schools like Llanbister and Llanfihangel Rhydithon, 2 rural schools with so much to give.	Comment noted.
18.4.5	Please allow us to federate with another school – not Crossgates.	Comment noted.
18.4.6	Perhaps running alongside another small primary school under a dual headship or funding	Comment noted.
18.4.7	Consider merging with another small village school.	Comment noted.

18.5 Make changes to other schools

18.5.1	How about closing Crossgates or reducing resources there to ensure the school is at capacity?	Comment noted.
18.5.2	Rather than close this school, look for alternative uses for the spare capacity in Crossgates.	Comment noted.
18.5.3	Why is Franksbridge not included in this consultation?	This consultation is about a proposal related to Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.
18.5.4	Surely it would make more sense to look on other schools that are not performing as good.	Comment noted.
18.5.5	focusing on closing/amalgamating secondaries to save money and provide a better quality education for Powys' children.	Comment noted

18.6 Develop Welsh-medium provision at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

18.6.1	Make Dolau school dual stream	Comment noted.
18.6.2	The school could become Welsh/English medium	Comment noted.

18.6.3	The school could become a Welsh-medium school	Comment noted.
18.6.4	It would be good to see the Council acting in favour of the Welsh language and culture by piloting a Welsh-medium rural school.	Comment noted.
18.6.5	A rural Welsh-medium school to serve the Ti a Fi / Cylch in Dolau and the Ti a Fi in Llanbister.	Comment noted.
18.6.6	<i>The option to use Llanfihangel Rhydithon school as a Welsh medium school has not been considered. This alternative option would obviously have a positive impact upon the use of the Welsh language.</i>	Comment noted.
18.6.7	Provide more assistance in educating the children in the Welsh Language to give them a better chance of being fluent in Welsh and English. You should provide yourselves with more assistance with being fluent in Welsh and English while you're at it.	Comment noted.
18.6.8	It would make more sense in my opinion to make the school into a dual stream church in Wales school which could serve as a feeder to school for the Cylch Meithrin who already use the school to meet.	Comment noted.
18.6.9	Hold bilingual days or afternoons with a nearby school hosting a range of Welsh activities for pupils to partake in but with the opportunity to practice conversational skills with a wider variety of children and adults, all sharing different skill sets. I believe children would view this as an exciting time which would also have a positive impact on their attitude towards the Welsh language.	Comment noted.

18.7 Develop the provision at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

18.7.1	As previously mentioned I believe that Powys need to be supporting the school to create more spaces at the school building (as projected numbers are to increase) and they also need to stop continually threatening this school with closure.....as these actions alone deter prospective parents	Comment noted.
18.7.2	I believe that potential future rising pupil numbers -that seem not to have been accounted for in the consultation document adequately, could be accommodated in the former kitchen area- as has previously been used before for one to one tuition and peripatetic teaching of subjects from music to pupil assessment	Comment noted.

18.7.3	The mobile classroom has recently been assigned to the registered and popular Clych Meithrin but with a simple adaption, this could be partitioned to provide useful additional classroom space and increase potential pupil capacity	Comment noted.
18.7.4	There is a mobile classroom at the school, and I wondered whether anyone had considered the possibility of better using this space to promote the outcomes favoured by the transforming education team in relation to the promotion of the Welsh language. For example, the 'Caban' classroom provides an opportunity for a mixed-age group classroom for through the medium of Welsh language education, or alternatively / even better as a space to use for Welsh education for every pupil in the school, for each year-group at a specified time in the school day. Rather than increasing the cost per pupil as additional space being built at another school & transport costs (ongoing) to the other setting, why not utilise the existing space.	Comment noted.
18.7.5	I think that Powys County Council should be looking to bring the end of the school building into use to increase capacity to 48 as it is quite obvious to me judging by the numbers wanting to attend the Cylch that school numbers are going to increase dramatically in the next 3 years. We have an estimated 10 children leaving and at least 20 children due to come in. The school is already 1 child over capacity.	Comment noted.
18.7.6	Extending the school could allow more students to experience the and level of education, benefitting the community	Comment noted.
18.7.7	Allow children from beyond the local catchment area to attend the school and provide transport	Comment noted.
18.7.8	Help to encourage others to go there, spend money on ,extend it to accept more pupils	Comment noted.
18.7.9	Consider relocating children from the larger schools to ease their numbers. Some children may benefit from the smaller school. Turn it into a school that offers more of an outdoor, county skills school. Make it a selling point. People are looking for that for their children	Comment noted.
18.7.10	Expanding the school to meet the predicted increase in pupils over the next 3 years.	Comment noted.
18.7.11	The school building could be used out of school hours and terms and there could be a charge for this.	Comment noted.

	School buildings need to be brought up to date in terms of renewable energy in order to reduce running costs for the local authority. As the local authority is aiming for net zero carbon by 2040, funding could be acquired for the necessary infrastructure that could help the school's running costs be reduced.	
18.7.12	Don't be constrained by the surplus capacity in large primary schools or budgets, look at this as an opportunity to put Dolau and excellent education in Powys on the map at Welsh Government level, which has already been seen by Kirsty Williams the retiring SM and Secretary of state for Education stated " <i>an example of a good rural school</i> ".	Comment noted.
18.7.13	The council could partner with non-profit or private sector organisations to deliver other paid for educational opportunities, summer activities or courses for a fee, or find alternative means to diversify the use of the school to bring in additional income or cover costs. The council could make the school a multifunctional space and offer regional services for the community and access alternative gov funding e.g. for community/leisure/health services to help cover costs of the school.	Comment noted.
18.7.14	Put it to Llanfihangel Rhydithon that in order to stay open, what should the cost per pupil be to enable us to achieve this. We can raise funds, we can find alternatives for school dinners and transportation to save money. Surely it makes sense to speak to Llanfihangel Rhydithon about cost savings before it should ever come to this stage?	Comment noted.

18.8 Clustering of schools

18.8.1	Linking rural schools together more, sharing resource	Comment noted.
18.8.2	The cluster schools should be encouraged to support each other, share resources and ensure these children are receiving the best possible education in their own school...without the need to attend elsewhere. All schools benefit from these opportunities, not just village schools.	Comment noted.
18.8.3	It could join with another school and share the economies of scale of a joint SLT and admin function,	Comment noted.
18.8.4	Instead of closing the small community schools, I would suggest that they become linked in clusters at the administration or management level. In outback Australia, many students learning in small community and family	Comment noted.

	schools are managed by a central hub. The hub manages the intake and the majority of administrative tasks. The curriculum and resources (such as topic boxes) are issued out of a central hub when requested and needed by teachers. Though the resources currently requested are specialist equipment and topic resource boxes, that doesn't mean it couldn't be expanded to include jotters, paper and other stationery. To aid in a sense of wider community and to reduce any sense of isolation, the small schools come together a couple of times of year for events such as sports day, science and maths events and other competitions. Linking and clustering the schools also allows teachers to be supported, receive CPD's and aids moderation across the schools.	
18.8.5	Llanfihangel Rhydithon already operates successfully under an executive headteacher. Could this model of executive headteachers covering more than one school be introduced elsewhere in the county? Could it be considered when 'natural wastage' comes along in the form of retirement? Obviously, we would not want to see redundancies, but the sharing of skilled leadership and management personnel could be an option (with a deputy or assistant headteacher overseeing operations on each campus) Is it possible that caretakers might be shared by a number of local schools in order to reduce costs?	Comment noted.

18.9 Support rural schools

18.9.1	We believe a more sophisticated analysis of the economics of school size is required. Small schools bring significant benefits, not just in sustaining rural communities. PCC should see small schools as assets not liabilities. They offer a family-friendly, community-based model for education which is too precious to lose. Llanfihangel recognised the needs of every pupil and used its location to deliver on their needs. It is a school that nurtures the talent of young people, allowing education to be delivered in an appropriate manner in an appropriate rural setting.	Comment noted.
18.9.2	Surely the new post-Covid Zoomshock and interest in rural living from city dwellers has to be a rare opportunity to cut through this cycle of decline and seek a radical new vision. Not to close yet more schools and perpetuate the cycle, but to attract the younger families seeking a better	Comment noted.

	quality of life, offering them high-quality small community schools. And where could be better suited to this than villages such as Dolau, where the Heart of Wales railway line could transport the new once-a-week commuters into Birmingham, Manchester, Swansea or Cardiff in reasonable time?	
18.9.3	During the Covid Pandemic many people have changed and evaluated work and life choices. This is a time for PCC to showcase Dolau school and this rural area as an excellent place to educate children, live and work. We have a great rural school that Estyn agree is categorised “green” the highest education standard in Wales.	Comment noted.
18.9.4	Indeed, as I have suggested, abandoning the proposal to close this and other rural school could be the start of a ground-breaking initiative by Powys CC to attract people looking for a more fulfilling life in a rural environment. Let’s make an asset out of our rural schools, not a burden!	Comment noted.
18.9.5	What is more, this initiative wouldn’t require vast investment, as bringing new industry into Wales would. It would simply require a halt to rural school closures , and some targeted PR extolling the virtues of living in Powys .	Comment noted.
18.9.6	Of course, there are potential dangers to this idea, as with any new concept. Nobody would want an avalanche of new residents to destroy the very characteristics which are attracting people – a sense of community, local culture, the green environment, and so on. So, scale and limits to numbers of new people are important. Nevertheless, some new blood could be the answer to rural decline in some parts of Powys, and Dolau in particular.	Comment noted.
18.9.7	This rural school should not be seen as a problem but supported and fostered to showcase what is great about rural education in Dolau as best described by Estyn <i>“This school is a happy, caring community in which pupils thrive as confident, capable learners. Their behaviour in and around the school is exemplary.....Pupils enjoy belonging to the school and rates of attendance are consistently high. Teachers provide pupils with valuable activities that engage them and excite their curiosity. Most pupils have positive attitudes to their learning, and they are curious and eager to gain new knowledge and skills”</i> .	Comment noted.

18.9.8	I think Powys county council really need to take a step back & look at these small rural schools as a real asset to our county not a financial drain. Why can you not work with this school to find a way forward instead of spending thousands of pounds on consultation processes which more often than not prove that you use inaccurate figures. This school has proven that it can find alternative methods of moving forward they have a very successful shared headship with Llanelwedd & have embraced this new way of moving education forward in rural communities.	Comment noted.
18.9.9	Why not promote rural schools and the positive effects of smaller class sizes? Given how technology has been used this past year to keep in touch and keep education and businesses going I wonder if it's increased use could allow smaller schools to benefit from expertise of others without the need to physically close the school?	Comment noted.
18.9.10	There have been more than enough closures in this county and now the council should be promoting and encouraging the small schools which are left to thrive and encourage parents to be able to choose a school for their children. They have already had cost cutting measures school meals being brought in and a joint head.	Comment noted.
18.9.11	Invest in this thriving hub of the community. Support rural schools and prioritise longevity over brief short term pocket gains that would leave an inevitable scar in such a currently strong community.	Comment noted.

18.10 Other

18.10.1	Powys CC needs to rethink their strategy to recognize the how rural communities work.	Comment noted.
18.10.2	Perhaps share good practice from Llanfihangel Rhydithon school within local authority to help to raise standards.	Comment noted.
18.10.3	Maybe spend the thousands this consultation costs on the schools that are so needed.	Comment noted.
18.10.4	Making cuts elsewhere to make sure you provide the children of this school the future they deserve and that's to go to school where they are used too.	Comment noted.

18.10.5	Time and money would be better spent on bringing the alternative schools up to the same category as Llanfihangel Rhydithon rather than wasting time and money on this proposal!!!	Comment noted.
18.10.6	Further consideration of options 1 to 7 would prevent the impact witnessed in the Beguildy and surrounding area communities from happening in another rural Powys community.	Comment noted.
18.10.7	Perhaps Powys county council needs to revisit its Funding Formula?	Comment noted.
18.10.8	Put your energy into a coordinated strategy and community redevelopment plan, providing affordable homes in key locations and communities across Powys - creating cohesive and connected communities.	Comment noted.

19. COMMENTS IN FAVOUR OF THE PROPOSAL

19.1	The consultation report demonstrates comprehensive reasons for closing Llanfihangel Rhydithon school.	Comment noted.
19.2	The consultation paper refers to surplus places in local rural schools and presents a strong case that all viable alternatives to closure have been conscientiously considered, including federation.	Comment noted.
19.3	Very small schools are financially unsustainable and continue at the detriment of all other learners. Small school closures across Powys are therefore necessary as part of the Council's responsibility to ensure fairness to all learners.	Comment noted.
19.4	Primary schools in Powys are funded on the basis of 1 class teacher per 30 pupils. Yet in the case of Llanfihangel Rhydithon the current capacity of the school does not allow for class sizes of 30.	Comment noted.
19.5	The report indicates that the school's budget share per pupil in 2020/21 is £2040 more than the Powys average. This level of disparity is unjustified. The children in small schools are ultimately consuming other children's money at a rate of knots.	Comment noted.
19.6	Going forward, demographic change is likely to increase the already high cost of running small schools in rural areas and demand for adult social care is likely to grow significantly, placing pressure on an already overstretched Powys County Council budget.	Comment noted.

19.7	A school with a larger pupil population can enable more effective delivery of the whole curriculum and prevent the need for mixed age classes over more than 2 year groups. They provide greater opportunities for peer interaction and the development of social skills and provide more opportunities for team sports and extra-curricular activities.	Comment noted.
19.8	The school is in the privileged position of having their children taught in a class ratio that aligns with a private education. With such small numbers and Teachers and Teacher assistants for all classes they have a position not available to the majority of the pupils in the rest of the area. If everyone was offered the same class sizes AND every school given the same funding for each pupil then fantastic. Unfortunately, this is not the case and the council should be focused on providing a level playing field for all their pupils across the county. This is especially important if you look at the schools with a far greater percentage of pupils who qualify for free school meals, a far greater percentage of looked after children and a far greater percentage of children in need and at risk all receiving a lower funding per pupil.	Comment noted.
19.9	I believe that the teaching standards across all the schools in this part of Powys are very good and all schools have a caring and welcoming policy to all pupils. I believe that to keep this school open is beneficial to a few, and takes up an amount of money which could be best shared more evenly. Closing schools is never a nice option, but unless the class ratios and staffing and funding can be given equally to all schools then it is essential.	Comment noted.
19.10	The school should be closed. It is a very small school. Children will benefit from mixing in larger environment. Money could be used to better effect.	Comment noted.
19.11	Our huge council tax rises over last few years mean we simply cannot afford to keep very small rural schools open. The cost per head is almost double that of next nearest school. The building is in need of money spent on it. The aging population of Dolau, with no new housing estates being built means school population unlikely to rise over next few years. Closing the school is the right thing to do.	Comment noted.
19.12	A shame but it's understandable with costs of running.	Comment noted.
19.13	I think closure is the best option and should be approved.	Comment noted.

19.14	These small schools cost too much money to run. Better to have larger, more efficient and better funded schools then having lots of small, underfunded schools.	Comment noted.
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7. FURTHER ASSESSMENT 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.	There would be no impact on the community – provision would continue to be available in Dolau.	There would be no impact on travel arrangements – pupils would continue to attend school in Dolau.
Option 2: Federation with Crossgates C.P. School	The impact on quality and standards would be minimal. Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to operate as a stand alone school, however the school would be federated with Crossgates C.P. 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.	The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Dolau. 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.	There would be no impact on travel arrangements – pupils would continue to attend school in Dolau. However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.

	<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>Federating two self-improving schools would provide a solid foundation for both schools to provide high quality education.</p>	<p>In addition, it is possible that joint activities would take place on the Crossgates site as the larger site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Dolau site.</p>	
<p>Option 3: Federation with Llanbister C.P. School</p>	<p>The impact on quality and standards would be minimal. Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to operate as a stand alone school, however the school would be federated with Llanbister C.P. 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>Federating two self-improving schools would provide a solid foundation for both schools to provide high quality education.</p>	<p>The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Dolau.</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 Dolau site.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>

<p>Option 4: Merge with Crossgates 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 shared across both sites.</p> <p>Merging two self-improving schools would provide a solid foundation for a new school to provide high quality education.</p>	<p>The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Dolau.</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 governing body.</p> <p>In addition, it is possible that joint school activities would take place on the Crossgates site as more pupils attend this site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Dolau site.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current Dolau site.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>
<p>Option 5: Merge with Llanbister 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 shared across both sites.</p>	<p>The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Dolau.</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 governing body.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current Dolau site.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>

	<p>Merging two self-improving schools would provide a solid foundation for a new school to provide high quality education.</p>		
<p>Option 6: Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, retain the site as part of Crossgates C.P. School</p>	<p>Implementation of this option would result in closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, however provision would continue on the current site.</p> <p>Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School is currently in the green support category based on the 2019 categorisations whilst Crossgates C.P. School is in the yellow support category. However, there are no concerns in relation to quality and standards at Crossgates C.P. School, and the Council's view is that provision for pupils would be at least equivalent to the current provision.</p> <p>In addition, 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. 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</p>	<p>Provision would continue to be available in Dolau. However, the site would be managed by the current governing body of Crossgates 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 Crossgates site as more pupils attend this site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Dolau site.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current Dolau site.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>

	expertise and resources to be shared across both sites.		
Option 7: Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, retain the site as part of Llanbister C.P. School	<p>Implementation of this option would result in closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, however provision would continue on the current site.</p> <p>Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School is currently in the green support category based on the 2019 categorisations whilst Llanbister C.P. School is in the yellow support category. However, there are no concerns in relation to quality and standards at Llanbister C.P. School, and the Council's view is that provision for pupils would be at least equivalent to the current provision.</p> <p>In addition, 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. 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>Provision would continue to be available in Dolau. However, the site would be managed by the current governing body of Llanbister 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 Llanbister, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Dolau site.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current Dolau site.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>

<p>Option 8: Merge with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school on the Crossgates 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 improved opportunities to share staff expertise.</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Dolau as there would be no provision in the village.</p> <p>However, merging with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school would provide opportunities for the Dolau community to be involved in the process of establishing the new school, and would aid community involvement in the new school.</p> <p>Should the school close, the Council would need to determine the future use of the building. Should the Council declare the building to be surplus to requirements and seek to sell the building, this would mean that the school's facilities would no longer be available to the community.</p> <p>The school is co-located with a community hall. Should the school close, the community hall would continue to be available for community activities. Whilst the proposal would not impact on the community hall, it is acknowledged that the potential loss of income to the hall from school activities no longer needing to take place could impact on the community hall. Respondents suggested that the loss of the school would mean the loss of the hall, and that a number of extra-curricular and</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School for whom this is currently the closest 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>
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		<p>community activities would disappear, impacting on social cohesion and the wellbeing of residents in the area.</p> <p>Responses received during the consultation expressed a strong view that the loss of the school would have a detrimental impact on the community, and this is identified in the Community Impact Assessment. Many respondents noted that the school was the heart of the community and that it was especially important to retain a school in a rural area such as Dolau.</p> <p>It was also suggested that closure of the school would have a direct impact on the viability of Cylch Meithrin Dolau that currently delivers early years provision on the Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School site. Respondents suggested that this would have a detrimental impact on the wellbeing of families and also on the Welsh language. The nearest Welsh-medium early years provision is at Ysgol Trefonnen.</p>	
<p>Option 9: Merge with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school on the Dolau 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</p>	<p>There would be a positive impact on the Dolau community as this option would retain provision in Dolau and would lead to a significant increase in pupil numbers, safeguarding provision in the village for the future.</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Crossgates C.P. School. This would affect more pupils due to the larger number of pupils on roll at Crossgates C.P. School.</p>

	<p>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 Dolau 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 Dolau building.</p>	<p>However, there would be a negative impact on the Crossgates community as there would no longer be provision in Crossgates. Whilst merging the two schools to establish a new school would provide opportunities for the Crossgates community to be involved in the process of establishing the new school to aid community involvement in the new school, however as Crossgates is the larger village with a significantly larger school, it is likely that the Crossgates community would consider this option to be disproportionate.</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>Option 10: Merge with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school on the Llanbister 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 Llanbister site would be able to accommodate all pupils, therefore there would be a negative impact on the quality of provision should all</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Dolau as there would be no provision in the village.</p> <p>However, merging with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school would provide opportunities for the Dolau community to be involved in the process of establishing the new school, and would aid community involvement in the new school.</p> <p>The school is co-located with a community hall. Should the school close, the community hall would continue to be available for community activities. Whilst the</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School for whom this is currently the closest 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>pupils be taught in the current Llanbister building.</p>	<p>proposal would not impact on the community hall, it is acknowledged that the potential loss of income to the hall from school activities no longer needing to take place could impact on the community hall. Respondents suggested that the loss of the school would mean the loss of the hall, and that a number of extra-curricular and community activities would disappear, impacting on social cohesion and the wellbeing of residents in the area.</p> <p>Responses received during the consultation expressed a strong view that the loss of the school would have a detrimental impact on the community, and this is identified in the Community Impact Assessment. Many respondents noted that the school was the heart of the community and that it was especially important to retain a school in a rural area such as Dolau.</p> <p>It was also suggested that closure of the school would have a direct impact on the viability of Cylch Meithrin Dolau that currently delivers early years provision on the Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School site. Respondents suggested that this would have a detrimental impact on the wellbeing of families and also on the Welsh language. The nearest</p>	
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		Welsh-medium early years provision is at Ysgol Trefonnen.	
Option 11: Merge with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school on the Dolau site	<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 Dolau 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 Dolau building.</p>	<p>There would be a positive impact on the Dolau community as this option would retain provision in Dolau 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 Llanbister community as there would no longer be provision in Llanbister. Whilst merging the two schools to establish a new school would provide opportunities for the Llanbister community to be involved in the process of establishing the new school to aid community involvement in the new school, however as Llanbister School is larger, it is likely that the Llanbister community would consider this option to be disproportionate.</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llanbister C.P. School. As the school already serves a very large, rural catchment area, it is likely that this would result in very long journeys to school for pupils.</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>
Option 12: Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools	Implementation of this option would mean that pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would transfer to their nearest alternative schools. For the majority of pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, the closest alternative school would be Crossgates C.P. School.	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Dolau as there would be no primary provision in Dolau.</p> <p>The school is co-located with a community hall. Should the school close, the community hall would continue to be available for</p>	Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C. in W. School for whom it is currently the closest school. 29 pupils would be eligible for free home-to-school transport if they chose to attend their closest alternative school. This compares with at least 24 pupils who are transported to Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. school currently,

	<p>Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School is currently in the green support category based on the 2019 categorisations whilst Crossgates C.P. School is in the yellow support category. However, there are no concerns in relation to quality and standards at Crossgates C.P. School, and the Council's view is that provision for pupils would be at least equivalent to the current provision.</p> <p>In addition, Crossgates C.P. School is 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>Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, a small number of pupils would live closer to other schools, in particular Llanbister C.P. School, Knighton C. in W. School and Llandrindod C.P. School. These schools are all in the yellow support category based on the 2019 categorisations, therefore there are no concerns about the provision pupils would receive should they transfer to these schools.</p>	<p>community activities. Whilst the proposal would not impact on the community hall, it is acknowledged that the potential loss of income to the hall from school activities no longer needing to take place could impact on the community hall. Respondents suggested that the loss of the school would mean the loss of the hall, and that a number of extra-curricular and community activities would disappear, impacting on social cohesion and the wellbeing of residents in the area.</p> <p>Responses received during the consultation expressed a strong view that the loss of the school would have a detrimental impact on the community, and this is identified in the Community Impact Assessment. Many respondents noted that the school was the heart of the community and that it was especially important to retain a school in a rural area such as Dolau.</p> <p>It was also suggested that closure of the school would have a direct impact on the viability of Cylch Meithrin Dolau that currently delivers early years provision on the Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School site. Respondents suggested that this would have a detrimental impact on the wellbeing of families and also on</p>	<p>either on free transport or by private arrangement.</p> <p>There are two home-to-school transport routes that transport pupils to Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School – the LW14 and LW15. The LW14 is a 16 seat minibus and the LW15 is a 16 seat minibus, but could also be a 21 seat minibus. However, it is not anticipated that there would be additional transport costs, based on the analysis of pupils' postcodes (PLASC Jan 2020), as pupils can be accommodated on existing transport routes to their nearest alternative school. There may be a situation in the future where additional transport routes may be required for additional children (i.e. children starting school for the first time or children who move into the area) which would depend on where they lived. However, at this point in time, it is not possible to know the exact cost of this but it is anticipated that it would be a minimal cost.</p> <p>If there was no school in Dolau, the average travel distance for all pupils on roll to attend their closest alternative provision would be 3.6 miles. Of these pupils, if there was no school in Dolau, the furthest travel</p>
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		<p>the Welsh language. The nearest Welsh-medium early years provision is at Ysgol Trefonnen.</p>	<p>distance to the nearest alternative provision would be 6.4 miles.</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, the Council recognises that there would potentially be an impact on the ability of some pupils to attend after-school activities if they were dependent on home-to-school transport. There would also be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities / events. This would impact on pupils for whom Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is currently the closest school.</p> <p>It must also be noted that just under half of the pupils at the school in September 2021 live closer to other schools and are already being transported to Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. It can therefore be argued that some of the families of pupils at the school already deal with this issue.</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 18 of the 'issues raised in the consultation period' section of this report, including the Council's response to these alternatives. These are as follows:

- 18.1 Retain the status quo
- 18.2 Pause the consultation process
- 18.3 Formalise the arrangements with Llanelwedd
- 18.4 Federate/merge with another school
- 18.5 Make changes to other schools
- 18.6 Develop Welsh-medium provision at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School
- 18.7 Develop the provision at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School
- 18.8 Clustering of schools.
- 18.9 Support rural schools
- 18.10 Other

The assessment of 18.1, 18.2, 18.7 and 18.9 is as per the assessment of 'Option 1 – Status Quo' in the table in section 7.1 above.

18.3 'Formalise the partnership with Llanelwedd'. Comments received suggest a view that the current arrangement of a shared headship could be 'formalised'. As stated previously in the Consultation Report, a 'collaborative partnership agreement' could be made between both schools. However, this isn't a binding agreement and therefore the arrangement would continue to be temporary. Therefore, for the purposes of further assessment of an alternative option, it is the Council's view that 'formalising' in this context is defined as bringing the two schools under a single governance model in order to provide a permanent arrangement. Federation between Llanelwedd C.i.W School and Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School has not been assessed as it is not possible to legally federate denominational schools with community schools. However, a single governance model could be established in other ways as follows:

- **By merging Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and Llanelwedd C.i.W. School to establish a new school on two sites;**
- **By closing Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and open as a site of Llanelwedd C.i.W. School (or vice versa).**

18.4 'Federate/merge with another school' – most of the comments under this heading refer to Llanbister C.P. School and are included within the original table at Section 7.1 and will be reassessed.

- 18.5 Making changes to other schools is not considered a reasonable alternative to address the challenges faced by Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.
- 18.6 Most of the comments received suggest either establishing a dual-stream or Welsh-medium school in Dolau. Some comments suggest improving pupils' Welsh language skills which is expected of all schools.
- 18.8 Clustering of schools. Schools in Powys already operate on a 'cluster' basis with significant collaboration happening on all levels (e.g.) . The Council is planning the implementation of cluster business managers to provide additional business and administrative support to schools. Therefore, on this basis, this alternative option won't be evaluated further.
- 18.10 'Other' is not considered a reasonable alternative as the comments under this heading don't address the challenges faced by Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.

Therefore the reasonable alternatives that will be assessed are

- 18.3 Formalise the arrangements with Llanelwedd**
18.6 Develop Welsh-medium provision at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

Option	Likely impact on quality and standards	Likely impact on the community	Likely impact of different travelling arrangements
<p>18.3 Formalise the arrangements with Llanelwedd</p> <p>a) Merge Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and Llanelwedd C.i.W School to establish a new school on two sites. (The</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</p>	<p>The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Dolau.</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 governing body.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current Llanfihangel Rhydithon site.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events. The distance between both schools is approximately 14 miles, which is the furthest distance of all the merger options considered.</p>

<p>category of the school would need to be agreed – either a C.i.W school or a community school.)</p>	<p>resources to be shared across both sites.</p> <p>Merging two self-improving schools would provide a solid foundation for a new school to provide high quality education.</p>	<p>In addition, it is possible that joint school activities would take place on the Llanelwedd site as more pupils attend this site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Llanfihangel Rhydithon site.</p>	
<p>b) Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, retain the site as part of Llanelwedd C.i.W School</p>	<p>Implementation of this option would result in closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, however provision would continue on the current site.</p> <p>Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School is currently in the green support category based on the 2019 categorisations whilst Llanelwedd C.in W. School is in the yellow support category. However, there are no concerns in relation to quality and standards at Llanelwedd C. in W. School, and the Council’s view is that provision for pupils would be at least equivalent to the current provision.</p> <p>In addition, 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. Whilst pupils would continue to attend separate sites, therefore would not benefit from all being taught together, this option would provide</p>	<p>Provision would continue to be available in Dolau. However, the site would be managed by the current governing body of Llanelwedd C. in W. School, therefore there could be a perceived reduction in Dolau community involvement in management of the school.</p> <p>In addition, it is possible that joint school activities would take place on the Llanelwedd site as more pupils attend this site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Llanfihangel Rhydithon site.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current Dolau site.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events. The distance between both schools is approximately 14 miles, which is the furthest distance of all the merger options considered.</p>

	additional opportunities for staff expertise and resources to be shared across both sites.		
c) Close Llanelwedd C.i.W School, retain the site as part of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	<p>Implementation of this option would result in closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, however provision would continue on the current site.</p> <p>Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School is currently in the green support category based on the 2019 categorisations whilst Llanelwedd C.in W. School is in the yellow support category. However, there are no concerns in relation to quality and standards at Llanelwedd C. in W. School, and the Council's view is that provision for pupils would be at least equivalent to the current provision.</p> <p>In addition, 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. 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</p>	<p>Provision would continue to be available in Dolau. However, the site would be managed by the current governing body of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, therefore there could be a perceived reduction in Llanelwedd community involvement in management of the school.</p> <p>In addition, it is possible that joint school activities would take place on the Llanelwedd site as more pupils attend this site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Llanfihangel Rhydithon site.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current Dolau site.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events. The distance between both schools is approximately 14 miles, which is the furthest distance of all the merger options considered.</p>

	<p>expertise and resources to be shared across both sites.</p>		
<p>18.6 Develop Welsh-medium provision at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School)</p> <p>a) Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School – open a new Welsh-medium school on a phased basis</p>	<p>Given that Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is currently an English-medium school with no experience of providing immersive Welsh-medium education at all, it is likely that there would initially be a negative impact on quality and standards of education.</p> <p>It is unclear whether staff at the school have the appropriate language skills to deliver the curriculum through the medium of Welsh. If they don't have the necessary skills and experience of teaching through the medium of Welsh, then this could have a negative impact on quality and standards of education.</p>	<p>The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Dolau.</p>	<p>There would be no additional travel required. Pupils would continue to attend school on the current Llanfihangel Rhydithon site.</p>

<p>b) Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School – open a new dual-stream school</p>	<p>Given that Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is currently an English-medium school with no experience of providing immersive Welsh-medium education at all, it is likely that there would be a negative impact on quality and standards of education.</p> <p>It is unclear whether staff at the school have the appropriate language skills to deliver the curriculum through the medium of Welsh. If they don't have the necessary skills and experience of teaching through the medium of Welsh, then this could have a negative impact on quality and standards of education.</p> <p>A very small two class school would be impacted by a further split into streams. This would increase the challenge for teachers to deliver education.</p>	<p>The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Dolau.</p>	<p>There would be no additional travel required. Pupils would continue to attend school on the current Dolau site.</p>
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7.3 Conclusion

The Council has considered the issues raised in the consultation exercise and has also carried out a further assessment of the proposal, the original options and alternative options identified during the consultation with consideration of the likely impact on quality and standards in education, the likely impact on the community and the likely effect of different travelling arrangements. The Council's view is that none of the original options or the alternative options address all of the challenges facing Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School which are

- Low pupil numbers
- High budget per pupil
- Combined age classes
- Leadership

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

The reasons for this conclusion is that implementation of the proposal will ensure improved management of the Powys schools estate, ensuring that the best possible educational opportunities can be provided to pupils living in the Dolau area and across Powys in the future. As stated in the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-30, the Council faces a challenge due to the high proportion of small schools in the county and the lack of equity amongst schools. Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School teaches children in two classes of mixed aged groups. With such low pupil numbers the teacher-pupil ratio is notably different to many other schools in the area, and due to the Council's funding formula, the school's funding per pupil is higher than the Council's average. This does not provide equity across the education system - teachers in larger schools are required to provide the same education as smaller schools for less funding per pupil. Powys' Strategy is intended to improve equity across the education system and to ensure an improvement for every pupil's learning entitlement and experience.

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

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1. Consultation meeting with staff of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

4th May 2021

Present

Staff:

Adam Shearman, Headteacher
Staff members of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

Officers:

Emma Palmer, Head of Transformation and Communications
Lynette Lovell, Interim Chief Education Officer
Marianne Evans, Service Manager 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

Emma Palmer welcomed all to the consultation meeting. All officers attending the meeting introduced themselves. Emma Palmer explained that the meeting would be recorded, for minuting purposes but will be deleted once completed.

Marianne Evans gave a Powerpoint presentation and explained that in February 2021, Cabinet gave approval to proceed with consulting on the proposal relating to Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. The consultation commenced on 14th April 2021 and will finish on 2nd June 2021.

Marianne explained that this part is extremely important, and that it's important that everyone's view is heard so that this will be considered by Cabinet when making their decision.

The proposal for Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is:

- To close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School from 31st Augusts 2022, with pupils to attend their nearest alternative schools.

Emma Palmer invited staff to ask any questions or to make any comments they have on the matter.

Staff: The one main question staff have got is concerning the reason for closure, considering the school is green. Estyn have deemed us as good and comparing to other schools that aren't the subject of a consultation or being proposed to being closed, we are a higher standard rating than them. What therefore is the reason this

consultation is hitting us? Why us, and then sending our children to schools that are not green?

Marianne Evans: We have a strategic objective in the strategy to rationalise primary provision, and one of the big things that came out of the engagement that we did last year with schools is the fact that Powys has too many small schools. We have taken the approach of looking at the smallest schools – below 60 in pupil numbers – and will continue to do so going forward. We look at several issues, and one concern is the low pupil numbers – you have had numbers in the low 30s over the past few years. One of the next things we look at is the cost per pupil and how it compares against the Powys average. We look at leadership arrangements, and the fact that there are combined age classes in small schools.

Lynette Lovell: In terms of the schools, we know that the last categorisation was September 2019, and the categorisation was around the amount of support schools required. We know in relation to schools in the area that some were yellow, and we are not undertaking categorisation during Covid-19 and we can report that throughout this year the improvements in these schools are good. In terms of the standards going forward, we are confident from the reports this year.

Eurig Towns: The categorisation has not been in place since Autumn 2019, and schools are in a very different place to where they were at that point in time. Over the course of the lockdown period, I have worked with Adam at Llanfihangel Rhydithon and other schools, so I understand the levels of education that took place in that time. We have done visits in the autumn as well, so we are confident that schools are providing high quality education.

Staff: Obviously, there are several small schools in Powys, and we have found ourselves in this position again after only a few years since the council decided to keep us open. So, the question from the staff is why us again?

Marianne Evans: As I said, we are looking at a number of small schools, from the lowest numbers up. There have already been consultations started on other small schools, and more are planned for the autumn term. It is challenging for you having already been in this position five years ago, however we do have to take a view on the number of small schools that we have, and Welsh Governments definition of small schools is anything below 91 pupils. We have monitored your pupil numbers over the past few years and I know you are projected to increase over the next few years as well, but at the end of the day the council has to look strategically over the whole County, and look at those schools where there are issues.

Staff: The cost per pupil has obviously gone up because of the change to the funding formula. It would be interesting to compare the cost per pupil 2 years ago to the cost now, and I understand that is because of the funding formula that is in place but it is working against us now.

Marianne Evans: Thank you, I will take your point.

Mari Thomas: Yes, so you are right, the change in the funding formula has provided some protection for the smaller schools and that is showing through in the cost per pupil. We are now kicking off the next formula review, so we can get a funding formula that is fit for the whole of Powys schools after the transformation programme, so there could be significant changes around that. The current funding formula was put in place to try and ensure that all schools had that minimum level of funding they needed to operate and stabilise the current configuration of schools, as we found a few schools were heading into a deficit position before we made that change.

The formula is constantly under review, but that is what was behind that change, the need to stabilise the system rather than see a lot of small schools head into a deficit that they could not really avoid.

Staff: I think it would be good to look at what the cost per pupil was, as we weren't heading into a deficit, we were budgeting, which means we have got ourselves a very healthy surplus and we are now being penalised if one of the issues you've looked at is finance. I think that if the funding formula wasn't changed in that way, would we still be here now is the question. If we could look at our cost per pupil before and after that change, that would be great.

Emma Palmer: If I can just come in on there with regards to the strategic perspective. When we did the analysis of the data rather than looking at this as an individual school's perspective, we were looking at this across the county. Overall, from a financial perspective there's enough money in the envelope for education in Powys, when you compare our education with other authorities. The issue we have is the infrastructure that is in place which is basically too large. There are too many schools and what that then leads to is inequitable provision across the county, so some schools will fit very well financially, and others won't. The significant amount of primary schools we have comes at a cost to the secondary provision, so when the children are in primary they can be having excellent education and then what we are not able to do is have a sustainable secondary provision, because so much has gone into sustaining the infrastructure of the primary.

From a strategic perspective, we have had to look at the number of primary schools, the cost, and although within the report and proposal it says there is a saving, it isn't really a saving we will take away, we have had a commitment from Cabinet that with that money we will continue to fund the education of children in Powys, in line with the Welsh average which is a really positive statement from the Cabinet whereby they are not looking at closing schools and saving money. They will reinvest that into the children, into front line provision or alternatively if we find the funding is already at a surplus, that surplus will go into reduce the borrow from capital and create newer schools. Whilst this can feel very personal for you, the way the local authority is looking at this is not because your school has done anything wrong, and I want

you to be aware of that. The reality is when you look at this is that we have a number of schools within a commutable distance, but it is absolutely nothing personal it is far more a strategical picture.

Staff: How can the authority guarantee that the children will get the same level of provision and opportunities, such as extra curriculum trips, classroom support and the extra things you can give in a small school?

Lynette Lovell: In terms of that what we are looking to do, the vision across the whole of Powys is the new curriculum offering a broad experience for all of our children and it is an expectation that it is the norm going forward that we have all the extra activities, centres where we have wrap around care and provision for learners which we really want to embrace in Powys. One aspect around that is that it will be essential for further collaboration going forward, the new curriculum won't happen without collaboration. It is our expectation to work with schools in the authority to ensure those extra activities and to be even better than we have now, so they can engage with better opportunities across Powys.

Eurig Towns: Again, it goes back to the work that we have done across the cluster, ensuring there is continuity in the blended learning we have provided. We have got a good working relationship between our schools, which we need to maintain and improve. We don't want any child to have a negative impact on their education, so if they do need to go to a new school, they have those opportunities there.

Staff: The consultation says the children will go to the nearest school, but that could see ours going to 6 or 7 different places. The concern is how will it work, what support will the children have in their move, as some will have one going to a school on their own, what provision will be put in place to support them?

Marianne Evans: Once a decision has been made and should the school close, parents will need to make the decision on where their children will go. As you say, there could be a variety of choices in the area. Once the application has been made to the school, we would work with the receiving schools to ensure they support the parents and pupils during that transition stage. We know how challenging it can be to both the parents and pupils when moves happen, but we have carried this out in the past and we work with the schools and the relationship between the receiving school and closing school is important, in terms of well-being.

Staff: Out of all the schools in the area, there are only two that aren't over capacity, so will they be allowed to go to their nearest schools that are over capacity or will they need to go elsewhere?

Marianne Evans: Yes, there are schools that are over capacity such as Llanbister, and we are working with them as they are growing and expecting them to grow further. When a pupil applies for a new school, the admissions process begins and if a pupil isn't given a place, there's an opportunity to appeal that decision. We believe

there is sufficient places in Crossgates and the majority of pupils are closest to Crossgates.

Staff: The feedback we are getting from quite a few of the parents is that they aren't wanting their children to go to Crossgates.

Marianne Evans: That is fine as it is a parental decision, and we will have to see what decisions they make should the proposal be supported.

Staff: Considering the class sizes children will be going into, they will find that tricky, and whilst you are working with Llanbister with them increasing their capacity which isn't that far apart, could we not work here or the two schools working together and maintaining the education across the two sites? I know the consultation document discounted that, but long-term teaching heads is a challenging role. The third issue is we have pupils struggling with Covid at the moment, and I think we need to be careful discussing with those and the school council.

Marianne Evans: Yes, it was an option, and the reason for it being discounted is included in the document. Because you are a rural school, when we bring back the report there are additional steps required which is to re-assess all the options which were put forward, and take account of anything that has come through strongly in the consultation, and consider whether or not the preferred option is still valid. If that is something you feel strongly about, make your case and we will have to consider all options again.

In terms of plans with Llanbister, the discussions started before any discussions on the future of Llanfihangel Rhydithon.

Lynette Lovell: I am just happy to come in there on class sizes, and just to say that we recognise that a class of 17 going to a class of 30 is a shock to many pupils. However, it will be right for me to say the average class size is 30 and there is an expectation that children are in a class of that size generally. With you mentioning the School Council, we have had this over the last few weeks with other schools and had the comment made around the well-being of staff and pupils, so we are doing everything we can to support you. In terms of the support, there is support for our learners in terms of well-being and if you have any concerns please contact us, but we are working within the legality of this and ensure that we do it as decently as possible, but we want to work with our schools in this process.

Emma brought the meeting to an end and thanked everyone very much for their thoughtfulness and comments. She explained they are more than welcome to respond to the consultation, through the response form, written responses or email.

2. Consultation meeting with governors of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

4th May 2021

Present

Governors:

Kath Bufton (Chair of Governors)
Nigel Bufton (Parent Governor and Vice-chair of Governors)
Nikki Lawrence
Jo Bradford
Adam Shearman
Edward James (Parent Governor)
David Lewis (Community Council Representative)
Mary Lomax

Officers:

Emma Palmer, Head of Transformation and Communications
Lynette Lovell, Interim Chief Education Officer
Marianne Evans, Service Manager 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:

Cllr Phyl Davies – Education Portfolio Holder (Observing)

Emma Palmer welcomed all to the consultation meeting. All officers attending the meeting introduced themselves. The governors of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School introduced themselves. It was explained that there would be a brief presentation with an opportunity for discussion, comments, and questions for the officers. Emma explained that the meeting would be recorded, for minuting purposes but the recording would be deleted once completed.

Marianne Evans gave a Powerpoint presentation and explained that in February 2021, Cabinet gave approval to proceed with consulting on the proposal relating to Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. Marianne explained that this part is extremely important, and that it's important that everyone's view is heard so that this will be considered by Cabinet when making their decision.

The proposal is:

- To close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School from 31st August 2022, with pupils to attend their nearest alternative schools.

The consultation began on the 14th April, and will end on the 2nd June 2021.

Emma Palmer then gave governors the opportunity to ask any questions or make any comments they wished.

Governor: Why are you proposing to close a good, green school, when there are numerous schools in Powys failing, but you again are targeting a green school, with a good Estyn report which you are ignoring. Why after the last 5 years are you targeting us again when you have other schools which are spiralling out of control debt wise, with hundreds of thousands of pounds of debt. Why target us and not focus on these other schools which are losing you money?

Marianne Evans: When we engaged with schools and Governors in 2019/2020, it became clear that we have too many small schools. This was included in the strategy and as part of the work we needed to take forward. We are looking at all schools. We started work looking at the smallest schools and secondary provision, but in terms of the small schools we look at a number of issues. In Llanfihangel Rhydithon's case, we know there are no issues with the quality of education, but there are issues we need to take account of including low pupil numbers. We are looking at high cost per pupil, leadership arrangements and combined age classes. We are not targeting Llanfihangel Rhydithon, it is part of a wider programme, and we are looking at a number of schools.

Governor: We have been in consultation twice in five years, how many other schools have been in consultation twice in five years?

Marianne Evans: There are several schools which are coming up in the autumn which would have been part of a consultation previously. But on the issue around standards, with you being a green school and others yellow, Lynette would you like to come in on this point?

Lynette Lovell: Just to say, the point around the green schools, from September 2019 the national categorisation of schools has no longer existed. Over the last year we have been in a period of Covid lockdown, but we have been working very closely with the Calon Cymru cluster. The categorisation we know was the amount of support a school needed to be a self-improving school, the yellow schools as well were called self-improving schools. Over the last year the challenge advisors have been out monitoring the schools, and even though the national categorisation for schools no longer exists which was a Welsh Government decision, and they have produced a report on the provision for each school and in terms of the Calon Cymru cluster the provision in all schools has been good. The co-operation between schools has also been good.

Going forward, it is likely that there will be no classification and the things that were considered in the classification will be considered in other ways.

Governor: But it was there in 2019, which is what we judged our school's performance on. It will not matter of going forward if you carry on doing what you are. What I don't like is that you mention our dwindling pupil numbers. Our numbers are rising, our budget is healthy even without the extra load your funding formula put on our school, you can have that extra money back. We are not the eighth most expensive school in Radnor. We can run with the rest of them. I see this as a means to corner a small school by giving them more money. We can't win, can we?

Emma Palmer: In addition to providing your views tonight, we would encourage you to put your views in writing through the consultation process. We have a duty legally to consider the consultation responses, and they will be made available publicly in a document. The report then goes forward to Cabinet for them to consider when making their decision. The strategy for the organisation, and the way officers come at this isn't looking at an individual school, but I do realise this is governors and parents, this is emotive for you and your children in this school.

There are too many schools in Powys. There is enough money in the financial envelope for education in Powys, but it is spread too thinly because of the number of schools which means there is a difference in provision which isn't fair on our children. The Cabinet have given us a commitment not to take money out of education, so when we refer to savings it is savings that will be reinvested into education. The Cabinet have also made the commitment that they will fund each child in Powys equivalent to the average across Wales, and anything above that will be reinvested in capital so we can keep investing in the infrastructure and buildings for our children which will help with the new curriculum.

Governor: I would like to talk about capacity, and surplus school places. Crossgates School, they have a capacity of 210 and as you are all aware that they have a satellite class going into that school supporting Brecon and Newtown. That 210 capacity, does that include that satellite class, does it include the mobile that children will be taught in?

Marianne Evans: The 210 doesn't include the satellite class, but the satellite class will take 30 places out of the 210, therefore we are left with sufficient places for the children at Llanfihangel Rhydithon.

Governor: So, is that your intention, that they all go to Crossgates School?

Marianne Evans: No, parents can choose whichever school they wish.

Governor: As you know the children shouldn't be split, they should go as a unit, are they all going to Crossgates School?

Marianne Evans: All parents can choose whichever school they would wish their children to go to.

Governor: They choose to send their children to Dolau school but you are taking that choice away from them the alternative school will be Crossgates, is that right?

Marianne Evans: No, we are not naming a receiving school. The proposal states that children would go to their nearest alternative schools.

Governor: The satellite class is running for 12 months as a trial, what happens if it is a success, are you going to extend it to make it two classes? I feel it is a really good idea with where it is situated, as we do fail for those children in that area. So, what happens if you do want to grow that satellite class?

Marianne Evans: That is something we will need to look at, at that time. At the moment we are not expecting huge numbers in the satellite class, but we do need one classroom space for those pupils.

Governor: Will the 210 include the mobile classroom?

Marianne Evans: Yes, it does.

Governor: So, you are taking children out of solid buildings, and putting them into mobiles?

Marianne Evans: Well, if children chose to go to Crossgates that would be their choice, it is a good school.

Governor: I am talking about children going from solid buildings to mobiles.

Marianne Evans: There is one mobile classroom.

Governor: Is it a yes or no, are they going from a solid building to a mobile classroom?

Marianne Evans: Well, if they choose to go to Crossgates they will be attending a school that is categorised as a good building with one temporary classroom.

Governor: How many children do you transport at Dolau school?

Marianne Evans: I have been told 11 pupils are being transported to Dolau school, that information came from the transport unit today.

Governor: So how many children will need transport should they need to go to their nearest alternative school?

Marianne Evans: Again, that depends on where parents choose to go.

Governor: In the worst-case scenario then, how many are you anticipating will need transport?

Marianne Evans: At the moment, more than half the pupils in Llanfihangel Rhydithon are closer to alternative schools, so until the time comes, where we know exactly where pupils will go to, we can only have an estimate, as we won't know, as they could go to any school.

Governor: We have calculated that there will be at least 24 children, in addition to what you say is 11 that will need transport. I know that there are buses already on those routes to other schools, however they are buses attached to secondary schools. There would therefore need to be buses that are for these children to go to their nearest alternative schools.

Emma Palmer: The logistics will be looked at with the transport department. Once we have looked at attendance and the transport requirements, the appropriate provision is put in place. Some families will choose to make their own arrangements to travel to school, but it will all be looked at.

Governor: So, basically you haven't calculated that, and there have been no calculations to say you will have those extra funds to run the children to their new alternative school?

Marianne Evans: At the moment, our estimation, as it says in the consultation document is that there won't be additional transport costs.

Governor: But in the consultation document you do contradict yourself quite a few times by saying there will be transport costs, there won't be transport costs. The other thing is, because of the school transport the children will not be allowed to have the after-school activities which they have now at Dolau school. Crossgates do not offer these after school clubs and because they are on school buses, they will not be able to use them as you are taking them home on school transport.

Emma Palmer: Have you got any questions, rather than statements?

Governor: Quite a lot of the time you do talk about larger schools, that children are being moved from rural schools to the larger schools because they will get a better education, equipment, and use of new curriculum ideas. Does that mean you are intending on closing all rural schools?

Emma Palmer: No.

Lynette Lovell: In terms of the vision for the future, with the new curriculum coming in we do see an enhanced provision throughout the county as part of our longer-term

strategy and plan. In terms of the wrap around care and after school activities, going forward there would be an expectation on our schools to have those experiences, and we want to invest in the future in providing better sports facilities and performing arts facilities, all the things that our Powys learners should have, the same as anyone in Wales. Our vision is to have schools offering a broad and balanced curriculum for all our children. That really forms a major part of our strategy for transformation in Powys over the next 10 years.

Governor: Just on your point of combined age classes, if combined age classes are so bad, why do Dolau pupils excel so well when going on to the high schools? 3 out of 10 members of Llandrindod High school council are from Dolau school, the pupils voice which is used for the curriculum there has 12 pupils and 3 of these are from Dolau school. Why are combined age classes so bad?

Lynette Lovell: You have already spoken about the school and the way it was categorised as green in 2019, part of the categorisation is standards, teaching and learning and leadership. If we think about teaching and learning, for combined classes it is more preparation for teachers, but skilled teachers are able to deal with that. I think as you say it is excellent that your pupils have gone on to represent the school council, it is encouraging and building confidence in our pupils which is what we want to do. In terms of the quality of teaching and learning it has already been identified at your school and others in the area. Single age classes are obviously easier to plan for, as the new curriculum is very much in stages and ages.

Governor: Can you name a school that doesn't have a combined age classroom that is on this consultation document – the alternative schools?

Lynette Lovell: In the Calon Cymru area?

Governor: No, on this consultation document, the alternative schools you are sending them to.

Lynette Lovell: What I am saying is not that. I am saying if you have good teaching and learning you can have combined classes, as you have. The difference is the class size, and the class sizes in your school are around 17, and not all schools are able to have classes of 17. It is about the quality of teaching and learning in those classes that actually makes the differences to those learners.

Governor: Why do you say in the consultation document about the shared headship with Llanelwedd, but then option 1 is status quo? We are a single school. Last time we were in consultation, Cabinet wanted to put forward a formal agreement to be put between us. We are still wanting to become a Church in Wales school so that we can federate with Llanelwedd to make it a stronger school. You continue, in this consultation document, not even to mention that it is happening. Just the fact that there is a shared head, and he cannot manage two schools on two sites. But, in the Estyn inspection they praise the fact we do that as it gives the teachers

encouragement to learn management skills. Why is that not in the consultation document, that we do have the shared head arrangement that we have had for the last 6 and a half years?

Marianne Evans: In terms of the options and arrangements with Llanelwedd, it is an arrangement to share the headteacher, it isn't a governance arrangement. We didn't include it in the options appraisal, as when we are looking at option to federate or merge with other school's we look at the geographical locality, and we would argue that Llanelwedd isn't in the geographical locality of Llanbister. One of the other issues why we didn't include it is, as you know, Llanelwedd is a Church in Wales school and we can't federate a community school with a Church in Wales school.

I will say, as part of the consultation, anybody can propose alternative options that they think may be better than what we are putting forward. As you are a rural school, we need to take further steps in the consultation and look at the concerns carefully that come through in the consultation responses. If that is something you think is valid and would help address the issues in Llanfihangel Rhydithon, then please put that forward, and we'd have to look at it.

Governor: As Marianne highlighted, lots of our pupils at Dolau are in the Crossgates catchment. Why do you think people drive past Crossgates school to come to Dolau school?

Marianne Evans: I am not going to second guess why any parent chooses a particular school, but I would also say having been around this agenda for a long time, parents choose schools for a variety of different reasons. One being the size of a school, and the quality of education. Parents sometimes choose a school that is more rural, and that comes through a lot in our consultations. I would say it's a combination of those aspects. Why do you feel they drive past Crossgates to Dolau?

Governor: For many reasons, some of what you have highlighted. One reason is because of the community feel, the better education, the one on one they have and the support system such as the friends of Dolau school who are very supportive providing pretty much every child with a laptop, and after school clubs.

My second question is, if people are driving past these schools to get to our school, can you really expect them to go to your named receiving school? We all know it's Crossgates. If they are driving past it now and not taking the public transport because they can't, can you expect them to want to go to a larger school if they are already driving across country to a rural school with better standards and community feel?

Marianne Evans: That would be up to the individual parents in terms of where they chose, should there be no school in Dolau. Some parents won't want to go to Crossgates and some will, there are a whole range of opinions out there.

Governor: I find it confusing what Emma said, regarding there being plenty of money in the financial envelope for education. Firstly, if there is enough money there why close these schools? Secondly, you are saying this money that is proposed to be saved will help other schools develop. Are these other schools lacking? And a question for Lynette, you said there would be money for performing arts and sports. We have had these false promises in the past. For the last 20 years we have had support at Dolau by Dolau parents and volunteers for performing arts and after school clubs, football clubs and so forth, which has saved a lot of money for Powys and has worked very well. Why change this?

Emma Palmer: The financial envelope is a budget which is available for education in Powys. There is enough money in the system to support the provision of good education. The issue we have is it is spread too thinly because of the number of schools we have in Powys. What is happening, and I can say this after doing extensive analysis across the county, is that children are getting great provision in primary, but we are not seeing the same level of provision in secondary education because so much of the funding is going on primary schools.

It is not a financial saving; we want to continue to fund education on a par with the rest of Wales. If we can keep that total amount of money which is available for education over a smaller infrastructure, the money then isn't going to bricks and mortar, it is going into education.

We also heard from teachers, when we did our engagement in 2020, about how difficult it is going to be to provide the new curriculum in smaller schools. At the moment the infrastructure means we haven't got equality across the county, and the good education children have got in primary, is not happening in the secondary. We have to try and balance things so that children have a good education all the way through.

Governor: So, what you are saying is that there are sufficient funds in the primary sector, but not in the secondary is that correct?

Emma Palmer: No, there is sufficient funds in the budget for education, but a significant proportion is being spent on primary provision and small schools.

Governor: So, what you have just said there is sufficient funds in primary but not enough money in secondary to provide a good education? Correct?

Emma Palmer: No, the total budget and money in the pot is sufficient for education in Powys when you look at it on a county level. What we are seeing, is that a significant proportion of it is going into maintaining small schools, based on a definition given to us by Welsh Government. Welsh Government's definition of a small school is those with less than 91 pupils. The funding in those areas and good education in those areas is difficult to continue to provide when children are moving into secondary education. The current infrastructure we have in place is not

sustainable for the future. The number of pupils in the county is reducing, and we have already been challenged by Estyn to reduce the number of surplus places we have in schools. We need to reduce surplus places. We need to invest in less schools but ensure that we are investing in quality education for learners.

Lynette Lovell: In terms of your question regarding facilities, what we are looking to do as part of the vision document is to ensure pupils in Powys, in line with the new curriculum have the opportunities they are currently having in your own school. We want to see those opportunities enhanced across Powys as part of our vision statement. We know that we want pupils to have opportunities to be for example on school councils, having opportunities to be part of performing arts. I am a Powys person, having grown up in Radnorshire and my children have had education in Powys and there are facilities which I would have liked my children to have had the benefit of, be it performing art facilities, facilities for sport and having those opportunities enhanced across Powys, so that they can develop their own skills. Our vision statement for the next 10 years is about ensuring that our learners have the opportunities to develop their own skills and we need the infrastructure as well to be able to deliver that going forward and investment as part of our 10 year plan.

Governor: I can remember that Powys had these fantastic visions 20 years ago. What happened? 20 years is a long time.

Lynette Lovell: You are correct, 20 years is a long time, and Estyn said that we needed to change and transform in Powys to ensure that we have an estate that is fit for the future. We need to look towards the future now and actually do something this time. The Estyn report was very clear in that it expected the Council to be able to make these decisions and move things forward in Powys. We are 20 years behind and we need to move forward.

Governor: But if it hasn't happened in the last 20 years, how is it going to happen in the next 20 years? What guarantees have you got?

Lynette Lovell: It has to happen in the next 20 years.

Governor: Who says?

Emma Palmer: If we don't move forward as an organisation and the Cabinet don't make decisions, we are still under a form of monitoring with Estyn, and Estyn have the ability to call in the commissioners working with Welsh Government, so if the organisation itself does not move forward and make the changes that are needed in respect of education across the county – and the recommendations are quite broad, there is not one element of education that is not touched by this – they will actually come in and take over.

Governor: You focus very much on what Estyn tell you in relation to where you need to improve. But if you are looking to improve learning entitlement and experience,

why are you not looking at the Estyn inspection reports for the schools? Dolau school has a good Estyn inspection report, and all other schools are only adequate. So why move children from a good school to adequate schools. You are very focused on what Estyn is saying as part of your School Transformation Strategy, but when it comes to this consultation you ignore them.

Eurig Towns: Some of the schools in the area have had Estyn inspections more recently than Dolau. Llanbister had one in November 2019 and it was judged Good. Knighton has had a good inspection report. In 2013 Trefonnen had its inspection, and that school has changed considerably since that time. Cefnlllys inspection report was some considerable time ago and that school has changed considerably under new leadership. Also, Crossgates had an Estyn report in 2016 and the headteacher was new in the post at the time and the school moved out of Estyn categories in 2018 and it is now classed by Powys in 2019 as a self-improving school.

We don't have any concerns since the time when Estyn have made those reports to where the schools are now. Those who had adequate reports are very much in different positions and the schools deemed as good, have maintained those levels.

Marianne Evans: We are required by the School Organisation Code to provide information in relation to the Estyn inspection reports of schools affected by the proposal and that's what you have in the consultation document, and they are at a point in time. So that's a requirement of the Code.

Governor: Do you think that capacity and space in other schools in the area is a justifiable reason to close our good rural school, just to fill another school. We have all the facilities that we need, and you really are not going to save any money by closing Dolau because of the transportation costs. Do you realise that between Crossgates and the eastern border there is no school at all to give people a rural school?

If you are going to remove these rural schools, how do you think it will affect families – will they stay or come to the area and enhance employment, and the community?

There is a survey which shows the demographics of each community which have lost their rural schools over the last 20 years have changed, and there are no children in those villages and that is worth much more than the £36,000 that you are going to save. That is everybody's rural life going down the drain.

Marianne Evans: I look forward to you submitting that piece of work. It will be useful in terms of providing evidence to the Cabinet as part of the consultation report.

Can I also thank the school for providing us with information around the impact of the school on the community and how the school operates within the community? That is a very key part of the documentation and that went to Cabinet at the start when Cabinet decided to proceed with the consultation. That very clearly states the impact

of the removal of Llanfihangel Rhydithon school on the community and the wider community and I think that we have included in the economic assessment as well, that having no school could have an economic impact as young families are not attracted to live in areas. That is information that we will use to populate the community impact assessment as we take matters to the next stage so that Cabinet has all the information and the full impact in front of them.

In terms of surplus places, that in itself isn't an issue for Llanfihangel Rhydithon school.

Governor: But it is in the school you want to move the children to.

Marianne Evans: We need to be sure when closing a school that there are sufficient places available for pupils in the geographical area. It would be difficult to take a proposal forward to close a school if nearby schools had no free places.

Governor: What I'm saying is do you think it is justifiable, seeing that Dolau school is not a failing school, is it justifiable to close it and to disrupt children and the whole community just to fill up another school.

Marianne Evans: I don't think that the reason behind the proposal to close Dolau school is just to fill in places.

Governor: What is the reason then, because nothing else is failing?

Marianne Evans: The reasons are there and include low pupil numbers.

Governor: There will be 43 pupils by next year. The cost of transporting children to another school is going to practically wipe out what you will save. The figures you have in front of you are not true.

Emma Palmer: Even if the figures rise to 40, anything under 91 is considered a small school by the Welsh Government.

Governor: But this is a rural area, isn't it?

Emma Palmer: The consultation document has additional requirements for small schools, in accordance with the School Organisation Code. The criteria that is used is set out by Welsh Government, and we have to address certain factors in relation to small schools. The Community Impact Assessment is very important and the Impact Assessment that is with the consultation documentation now is not the final one and what will happen, once all responses have been received, is that all of that documentation will continue to be updated until the point the matter goes to Cabinet.

If Cabinet then decides to proceed with the proposal and issue a Statutory Notice, there is then a 28 day period once the Statutory Notice is published for objections to

be made. Those objections need to be considered, and a further report goes to Cabinet together with a further updated assessment. Therefore, I just want to make you aware that any information you submit will be included when relooking at the options and in updated documentation before Cabinet.

Governor: I think that's very important. I recently did my own survey to establish how many schools have been closed in Radnorshire in the past 40 years since they first tried to close Dolau school. I have counted 19 schools that existed in the last 40 years which have now gone. If you look at the position of Dolau now, if Dolau closes it's another 6 miles to Crossgates – West. There is nothing between the border and us. Beguildy, Felindre, Bleddfa and Dolfor have all gone.

So many of the schools in the less populated areas have gone because naturally they are holding the least children. However, you have to remember that is a large chunk of our very rural County which constitutes the way the County is. Those villages are not community villages anymore.

Governor: If you close schools too close to the border you will lose pupils over the border. It's already happening, and it will happen more.

Governor: It's quite shocking when you add them up, when they go a little bit at a time, and your population in the area now just has to rise.

Emma Palmer: I hear what you say in relation to those schools. From memory we have dropped from 20,000 children to 16,000 children and I think in the next year or two it will drop further to 15,500 and even from then it reduces down again.

However, because of Covid, there might be an influx of population from the cities to rural areas. That's why we check the information and do an analysis constantly so that we understand what is happening in those areas.

Governor: My closest school already exceeds capacity. Are you therefore proposing that my child moves to a school that is already exceeding capacity?

Also, how can I reassure other parents that if their children move to other schools, that the children will have these additional opportunities for sport and performing arts.

Marianne Evans: If your closest school is full and is one of those named in the Consultation document – Llanbister is full and Trefonnen is full – when the time comes, should the proposal go forward, then you as a parent can decide to apply to whichever school you wish to apply to. If that school is full your application will be treated the same as any other parent applying for that school and then the admissions policy would kick in in terms of allocating places. Should you not have a place because the school is full, there is also the appeals process available.

Lynette Lovell: As of September 2022, we will be starting the new curriculum. Even through Covid there has been no halt on that, and it is expected that all schools across Wales will be ready for the new curriculum from September 2020.

There is ambition in the Welsh curriculum and in the Powys vision statement about improving provision and ensuring that the new curriculum for Wales is delivered in all of our schools and in the secondary as well. In order to do that, all schools will have to ensure that they follow the four core purposes.

The work of the local authority then will be working with schools to ensure that they can provide those extended opportunities to all our learners throughout Powys in the new curriculum.

Our ambition is to make sure that all our learners in Powys have extended opportunities in line with the national curriculum and our vision statement.

In terms of our facilities and buildings to support this going forward that is also part of our vision. We haven't got all the facilities we need in all of our schools.

Having equity across the local authority is very important so that it isn't a postcode lottery, that where you live depends on what provision you have.

Our ambition is to make sure that all our learners have opportunities in line with the national curriculum and our vision statement, that they are entitled to and they have those experiences going forward in line with the new curriculum for Wales.

Governor: I just wanted to say that I am pleased to hear that your ambition is to provide those kinds of offerings to pupils in all schools. But I would still like to know when I talk to parents of children in Dolau school how can I specifically reassure them that when their children move to alternative schools, they will have these enhanced opportunities? To say that it is an aspiration is not good enough. For me to be able to persuade them that this is the correct thing for them to do, I have to be sure in my own mind that those opportunities are going to be there for their children when they move school. I can't do that simply on the basis of your aspiration.

Lynette Lovell: I fully appreciate that. However, our aspirations and high expectations are there and that's what we're working towards in respect of schools in the area to ensure that there is equity and that there is assurance behind what we are saying in terms of those opportunities going forward.

Eurig Towns: It goes back to providing equity for all. We're trying to ensure that all of our schools across Powys provide a quality education. During the pandemic I have worked very closely with the Calon Cymru cluster, including Llanfihangel Rhydithon. I have been trying to work for that consistency of approach. We are a long way forward from where we used to be in relation to working collaboratively, but there is more to be done. But the foundation is there for us to build upon, and we are

aspiring to get people to work together and collaborate. That has had benefits over the pandemic period, and I'm hoping that we can build on that.

Governor: I just want to recap on the reason why Llanfihangel Rhydithon has been brought into this consultation. Number one is the low pupil numbers, and they continue to be low – is that correct?

Emma Palmer: Yes

Governor: Surplus capacity – so closing a small rural school to bump up the capacity of larger schools. Is that correct?

Emma Palmer: Yes, in terms of dealing with surplus capacity, but it's not just about closing rural schools in terms of the surplus capacity. We're working right the way across the county.

Governor: I'm talking about this consultation now, not about your other schools. So, this consultation now is about reducing the Council's overall surplus capacity, so closing a small rural school and putting it into a larger school.

Revenue saving to the Council?

Marianne Evans: Yes

Governor: Who actually defines our budget? It is defined by the local authority and the fair funding formula. Is that correct?

Marianne Evans: Yes.

Governor: And that then governs our budget?

Emma Palmer: Yes. But it is dependent on the Revenue Support Grant from the Senedd.

Governor: Powys defines our budget. They are the one which have a fair funding formula which defines our budget and cost per pupil?

Emma Palmer: Yes.

Governor: And pupils would again attend a larger school because this would enhance their education?

Marianne Evans: Reading from the proposal "pupils would attend larger schools which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum and which could provide a wider range of extra-curricular activities". This is what's stated in the consultation document as a reason for the proposal.

Governor: So again, going to a larger school would give pupils a better education?

Marianne Evans: That's what we say is a reason for the proposal.

Governor: So again, you're saying that pupils would attend a larger school with a permanent headship. Is that correct?

Marianne Evans: Yes

Governor: If this proposal does go ahead, as a governing body, how can we recommend to parents which alternative school children should go to when you don't even look at the Estyn Inspections.

Emma Palmer: It is not for you to recommend the alternative school.

Governor: We have a duty of care to the children. They will speak to us because we are a community.

Emma Palmer: But it's not your role to recommend which school children go to.

Governor: Ok then, so we tell them to come back to you?

Emma Palmer: That's fine.

Governor: If you look at the consultation document and you mention the Estyn inspections and things like that, and a lot has happened since 2019. So, has anybody visited those schools now since Covid and when children have come back into school, and how they are doing and what their education levels are? We have had to rely on parents to do the digital online learning. Has anybody been monitoring that to make sure how that has been going? How has that happened in the larger schools? Have pupils had the same feedback that pupils have had in the smaller schools?

The rural school policy does say 91 is a small school, but it doesn't say that it should be discriminated and closed just because it is classified as a small rural school.

Eurig Towns: We have been working with our schools right through the pandemic. We have been very closely monitoring what has been happening, so we hopefully have a very clear understanding as to what has been happening in our schools. You should have received your Autumn term report. You should also have had a spring term report as well.

We have kept in regular contact with all schools in Powys and met up with the clusters as well in order to ensure consistency of approach and I would hope that there is no school in Powys where we are not aware of where they are at the

moment. As we have said before, although we don't classify schools, we are still very aware of their standards. So hopefully we have been able to provide a quality support but also an understanding so that we also know where our schools are.

Governor: If the children are going to have to transfer to another school and we decided to go to Crossgates, we would have large numbers in year groups, and I was just wondering how that is going to be accommodated if there are classes of 30 already.

Lynette Lovell: That will be a consideration. The way the funding formula works is that if class sizes go up there are certain cut off points in the current formula. Every 30 pupils for example kicks in for another teacher post. So, if there are 121 children in a school, that will kick in funding for that extra teacher.

Governor: So, you would be looking at two classes for one year group?

Lynette Lovell: Possibly, but there are other possibilities. It can be that you have a 5/6 class for year 6 and year 5. It really does depend on where the year groups are and where the year groups are bigger.

Governor: You say that you will be implementing the new curriculum in all of your schools from September 2022. We have been using the new curriculum as a template for a number of years. The curriculum suits small schools. I want you to know that is a reason why we have a very high standard school.

Eurig Towns: Yes, we understand that a lot of schools are working on it. The reason why we have set September 2022 is because that is when it officially becomes statutory. All primary schools are definitely working on that now, obviously at different stages.

Governor: What do I say to my 8 year old who wants to go to the same school to follow friendship groups to Crossgates. However, that school doesn't compare with Dolau, and the nearest alternative in terms of standards is Trefonnen which is full. What choice am I left with?

Eurig Towns: Actually, the standards at Crossgates are not inadequate now from the work we have done with them, I would not agree with that as a judgment. That was a judgment made by Estyn in 2016. Since then, there has been significant change at the school. In terms of classification when they were yellow in 2019 that is a self-improving school and that is not a school which is inadequate.

Governor: In the consultation papers it says adequate, inadequate, inadequate, so you have published something which you are saying is incorrect.

Eurig Towns: We have to publish that because it is the last Estyn report which is 2016. However, it is misleading in that respect as that school has moved on since that time. Similarly, in relation to Trefonnen, their Estyn inspection was in 2013, 8

years ago. There has been significant change there, but we have to publish the Estyn reports. So, it is unfair to those schools to say that they are at that point, and that's why we are happy to say that they are not at that point now. They are actually good schools.

Governor: Until I see the next Estyn inspection, that is the only thing I can go by. They are the only body in that role.

Eurig Towns: That is not the local authority's view.

Governor: That is Powys' opinion. Powys have been in special measures in the past haven't they, so what are we to go on?

Eurig Towns: We do the same categorisation and support for Llanfihangel Rhydithon as we would for other schools so we would categorise and support them in the same way, and I would say that we are consistent in our approach. I would hope that if you are willing to accept that we believe that you are a good school I would hope that you believe that we are judging the same schools with the same standards.

Marianne Evans: This is an issue which doesn't make the consultation process any easier. The fact is that the Code requires us to publish Estyn inspections which are at a point in time and things move on. Estyn will be sending in their response to this consultation as a statutory consultee, so they will be commenting on this proposal as well and this will be taken into account by Cabinet as part of the overall consultation report as well.

Governor: Are you happy therefore for friendship groups to be split up then as the school can't move as one group?

Marianne Evans: It will be up to parents to decide which school they want their children to attend.

Emma Palmer brought the meeting to an end and thanked everyone for their attendance and questions. She explained that everyone is encouraged to respond to the consultation, through the online response form, email or by writing. A consultation report will be published and made available and will form the next part of the process before the matter is considered by the Cabinet or a decision on the proposal.

Governor: The last time there was a mediator or a third party coming in to make sure that a fair and robust consultation was done. Will this happen this time?

Marianne Evans: No, not this time. The reason we had them before was because we were consulting on a large scale secondary consultation at the same time as the primary ones. The analysis will be done in-house by our team.

Governor: So, we will have nobody to make sure that we are having a fair and robust consultation?

Marianne Evans: We are not using a third party to do any analysis.

Emma Palmer thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

3. Meeting with the School Council of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

19th May 2021

Present

Marianne Evans – Powys County Council
Sarah Astley – Powys County Council
Huw Rowlands – Powys County Council

Adam Shearman, Headteacher – Llanfihangel Rhydithon School
Mary Lomax, Governor – Llanfihangel Rhydithon School

Officers from Powys County Council met virtually via Microsoft Teams with representatives from the School Council of Llanfihangel Rhydithon School to discuss the consultation to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon school with pupils to attend their nearest alternative schools.

The School Council group consisted of 7 pupils, one in year 2, two in year 3, two in year 4 and two in year 6.

Officers explained that Powys County Council was reviewing the future of Llanfihangel Rhydithon school and is wondering whether or not to close the school. It was explained that there was now a period of consultation where people were being asked what they thought. It was emphasised that this was only an idea at this time, and no final decision had been made. Hearing the views of pupils at Llanfihangel Rhydithon school is a very important part of the process.

The pupils were asked several questions and their responses are summarised below:

Do you understand why we are here?

- Yes

Tell us about Dolau School. What do you like about Dolau school, what's good?

- The education is really good here and there are lots of after school clubs as well – craft clubs, football, swimming galas, cross country, hockey team, eisteddfod, lots of outside activities
- Lots of education and attention by teachers because we are a small school and there are less pupils
- Lots of people here are nice
- Everyone gets along well with other pupils
- Everyone is really friendly

- Teachers help a lot
- Quality of the work is good
- We have ALN support for children with additional needs.

Are you all friends, do you all know each other in school?

- Yes, we are all friends.

What about how the school works with the local community? Is there a good relationship between the school and the community?

- Yes

What kind of things happen between the school and the community?

- There is a good relationship between the school and the local Community Hall and Church
- We have school plays in the Community Hall and the community come to watch, PE in the hall, also carols around the tree, harvest festival, choir, and lots of events such as tractor runs, fun rides

There are lots of things you like about the school. What could be better? Is there anything you don't like?

- No, it's a perfect school

If the school would close and there was no school in Dolau, what would be different for you?

- Not all the children would go to the same school, so their friendship groups would split
- The teachers wouldn't come with us, and we would have to get used to new teachers, different teaching methods
- New students

How do you get to school? Do you go in the car or walk?

- Some of us come to school on bus, others in cars

How would you feel about going on a bus further to another school? How would it affect you?

- If we had to go to a different school, I would have to travel further. My house is closer to this school than another school
- We could be running late for our classes and would have to catch up and travel further

- We live closer to Crossgates than Dolau but mum and dad have driven us to Dolau for 10 years. We would have to go on a bus to Crossgates, and more travel
- I would probably walk because I live closer to Crossgates
- We live within half a minute to Dolau but would have to get a bus and it would take much longer to go to another school.
- It only takes 5 minutes for me to go to Dolau school
- Lots walk to school.

Crossgates is a larger school as are all other schools that could be available to you. What is good or bad being in a larger school?

- In a smaller school, teachers have time to get around all of us in a lesson. In a larger school, if there are 30 pupils in a class it is much more difficult for the teacher to get around everyone
- In a bigger school, lots of people are talking and it's more difficult to concentrate.

What are the good things about being in a larger school?

- Nothing. No

Would there be more opportunities to be part of sports clubs or not?

- No
- If they have bronze ambassadors, there would be less chance of you being picked or if there is a class football trip, you would also be less likely to be picked.
- My cousin goes to Knighton and can't go to after-school clubs as they are all full
- More attention in smaller schools, and you learn quicker and better, I think that I will struggle more in larger school as less teacher attention.

At the moment you are in mixed classes. If you were in a bigger school, the number of year groups would be smaller within a class. What do you think about that? Is that a good thing or are there problems with that?

- I would rather mix with other years so I can talk to different pupils and it's good to mix and work together with younger groups, for example if doing a class project
- Might get bored, as there wouldn't be people to help you
- Will not know everyone in school, here with a mixed age class, we know everyone in school

What would be different for the community if there was no school?

- There would not be as many events on, and less children attending community things. Not every child could attend, and there would be less knowledge of things on.
- Things such as the tractor run would not happen, as the school helps to organise them.

If there was no school at Dolau, what impact would that have on teachers and staff?

- They enjoy teaching us here. They would not know everyone in a bigger school as well, so they wouldn't enjoy as much.

Is there anything else concerning you about these plans, or do you have any other questions?

- Is there ALN in other schools?

Yes.

- Can you guarantee enough supplies and pencils and pens in different schools?

Yes, every school would have enough supplies.

- In our class we have a laptop each e.g. if playing a spelling game, but we probably wouldn't in a larger school

There would be IT equipment in a larger school, but I can't say for definite that there would be one each.

- Can you guarantee that teachers can get around all pupils in one lesson and would we be ready for high school?

All the schools around you are good schools, performing at the same level, so yes you would be ready for high school.

When the Council has to look at the future of schools and changes, it can be a very difficult time. How do you feel about all of this?

- Upsetting, angry, community won't be the same without Dolau school. Dolau school keeps families in the community. It's a family community.
- Some people live next door to the school, so it's easier to get here than other schools
- In a bigger school could we have an induction week?

If the plans did go forward, then whichever school you went to, you could go to the school and meet the teachers at the schools and your classmates.

- Do other schools have swimming lessons as well?

Yes.

- Would you have to share equipment like pens and pencils in a bigger school?

There would be enough pens and pencils for everybody.

- Would there be someone to support pupils with dyslexia?

Yes, there would be teachers and staff in the school to support pupils with dyslexia and other matters.

- In bigger schools would there be as much opportunities to do outdoor activities and trips?

There would still be opportunities in larger schools as well. The one issue that you have mentioned is that if you live further away from school, it may be more difficult to go to after-school activities. That's something we think is an issue. Do you think that's an issue?

- Yes
- In Dolau we also have sports people coming in e.g. to teach tennis and hockey. Will that happen in other schools?

That would happen in other schools as well.

- Would there be more bullies in a bigger school?

There wouldn't be more bullies. Is that something you would be worried about?

- Would you know everyone in the school and would you have as much equipment if you moved to a bigger school?

If it was a bigger school, I'm not sure that you would know everybody in the school, but you would know people in your class, your friends and people from Dolau, you would know quite a lot.

- So you're saying that we wouldn't know as much people in a different school?

It depends which school you would go to. If it's a larger school you might not know everyone, it would depend on the size of the school.

- The year 4's, if the school did close, they would have to get used to the new school and they would be year 6 by then and would have to get used to their new high school

There's a kind of double impact on them, because they will have moved once and they will have to move again? Is that what you're saying?

- Yes
- We want to go to the best school and we think that Dolau is the best school
- There are lots of lovely people in Dolau school

From what you tell us, the fact that you are in a small school gives you more of a family feel?

- If we are upset we feel that we can tell the teachers, anyone, because we are basically one big happy family

Do you feel well supported in Dolau school?

- Yes
- We also have buddies
- If we were in a bigger school, would we have a buddy?

It would depend on the school, but I would expect that there would be some kind of buddy system in every school.

Is there anything else you would like to say? What you tell us is very important. We need to listen to your views.

- If we move to a different school, not all our friends would be with us, and we would feel upset about that
- It would take us a while to make more friends
- I am concerned that if we move school we would have to move to high school again soon, and it could be overwhelming

What you're telling us is that there would be a big impact on you if you moved to a bigger school?

- Little ones would be upset and not understand what's going on, and they'd be leaving their friends
- Reception class pupils would just have settled at Dolau and will have to move again

Officers explained what happens next, and that at the moment, Powys County Council is asking what people think about Llanfihangel Rhydithon school

being closed. All of the information from parents, governors, staff and pupils would then be put in a report which would then be prepared and the Council would then consider the report and decide whether or not to carry on with the plan to close the school. There is no decision yet to close the school. If it is decided not to carry on, then that would be the end of the matter. If the Council do decide to carry on, then what's known as a Statutory Notice would have to be published. That is a notice put up outside the school telling everyone that the Council is planning to close the school. There is then another opportunity for people to say if they do not agree with that and why the school should not close. There would then be another report and the Council's Cabinet would consider this and make a final decision. If we carry on with the process, a final decision would be made around December, and if the Council does decide to close the school it would close in September 2022.

- If we moved to a different school could our teachers come with us?

No, I don't think so. Is that something you would like to happen?

- Yes

Is there anything else you would like to say?

- I don't think it's fair that the Council want to close our school because of its size. The education is really good. The Council needs to judge on the education and not the size of the school
- The letter you sent to us to try and explain things is not child friendly and we couldn't understand it. There were some long words.

That's a document that we've always used for meetings with pupils, but the important thing is that we're here to explain to you and hear your views.

We've had lots of useful comments from you today, but if after today there is anything else you or your friends think of, you can send them to us by 2nd of June. Your teachers will be happy to arrange to pass things on.

- In a bigger school would we get the chance to get to know postcodes and would we get a chance to write a letter to our teachers.

Teachers would be able to mark all your work, yes.

- If a teacher had a baby, how long would it take to get a replacement?

That would depend on the school and the situation and a lot of things would have to be taken into account. Is that something you are worried about?

- Kind of
- We are also worried about leaving our teachers and school behind
- Even if two or three children moved school with us it wouldn't be the same because you would only know three people in the school
- The school has been under threat before, and it's almost a hundred years old
- Education here is around everybody, that's not possible in a bigger school
- Would there be enough sports equipment in a bigger school?
- We play lots of sports

Can you describe the outdoor spaces you have in Dolau school?

- Climbing frame, slide, grass, Teletubby house, a little shop, a space to play on with a basketball hoop, around the front a football pitch, a map of the UK on the floor, hopscotch, building blocks, sand pit,
- The younger class have an outdoor pen
- We have a conservation area and a pond
- A clock
- Would we have enough pegs for our bags and coats in a bigger school?

Yes, there would be enough pegs for everyone.

If you went to a larger school what do you think would be the impact on you in terms of sports activities and equipment?

- It would be worse because there would not be a chance to play on the play equipment every playtime
- Sports activities would all be full
- We have a choir and a Christmas play
- In Dolau school we have clubs such as a School Council and every single child in the school has a chance to go to each club and pick which one
- In a bigger school would there be lots of friendly people or would they be mean people?

Every school would be different. A larger school doesn't mean that everyone is mean.

- Everyone in our school gets to be on the School Council and coding club while in a larger school there wouldn't be that opportunity because of more pupils
- In a bigger school could you guarantee that we would have as good a quality education

In your area, the education in all the schools is good.

We have to be sure that all your opinions go the Council Cabinet, who make the decisions, so it's important that we tell the Cabinet what you think, and the Council will need to read your views before making a decision.

What you're telling us is that you have more opportunities in a smaller school?

- Yes
- Dolau school is the heart of our community
- In a bigger school would you have the opportunity for a whole school and class photo

Yes, you would have the opportunity of a whole school photo and a class photo.

- Would you have sibling photos?

Yes, you would have sibling photos.

- Would you have a breakfast club and after school club?

Yes, but it would depend which school you go to.

- Would you have a pom pom reward system in a larger school

Yes, a lot of schools have awards for good work and good behaviour.

- Would there be an assistant that would help everyone and could you pour water into glasses?

In all the schools there would be dinner-ladies helping children at dinner time. It will depend on the school what the actual arrangements are.

The children were thanked for their contribution, and reminded again that if they thought of anything else to send them to Powys County Council via their teachers.

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Proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

Updated Impact Assessments

Updated September 2021

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Proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

Updated Impact Assessments

1. Introduction

Powys County Council has consulted on a proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. The proposal is as follows:

- To close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools

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.

These impact assessments were provided in draft form during the consultation period and have been updated following the consultation. The Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out based on the latest PLASC information available. The Community Impact Assessment has been carried out with input from the affected school.

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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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	RW – Transforming Education Programme Officer	January 2021
2	ME – Senior Manager Schools Transformation	January 2021
3	SA / ME – Amended following consultation	August 2021

2. Profile of savings delivery (if applicable)

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	TOTAL
£	£	£34,416.67	£24,583.33	£	£59,000.00

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 between 14 th April 2021 and 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 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 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	<p>Implementation of the proposal would have an impact on employment opportunities in the village of Dolau as there would no longer be a school in the area. It is also possible that there would be an impact on local businesses in Dolau and the surrounding area, should there be less people in the area.</p> <p>Comments received during the consultation expressed concern that the proposal would mean that Dolau would be less attractive to new / young families which would impact on the economy. However, pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon have been low for a number of years, which does not suggest that significant numbers of families have moved to the area in recent years, even though the school has been in existence.</p> <p>Comments were also made which suggested that the Mid Wales Growth Deal would increase the</p>	Poor		Poor

	number of families in the area. The Mid Wales Growth Deal is intended to boost the Mid Wales economy, however it is unlikely that this would directly increase the number of young families in the Dolau area.			
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	<p>As stated in the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-30, the Council faces a challenge due to the high proportion of small schools in the county and the lack of equity amongst schools. Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School teaches children in two classes of mixed aged groups. With such low pupil numbers the teacher-pupil ratio is notably different to many other schools in the area, and due to the Council's funding formula, the school's funding per pupil is higher than the Council's average. This does not provide equity across the education system - teachers in larger schools are required to provide the same education as smaller schools for less funding per pupil. Powys' Strategy is intended to improve equity across the education system and to ensure an improvement for every pupil's learning entitlement and experience.</p> <p>It is the Council's view, as confirmed by it's education specialists, that delivering the new curriculum will be significantly more challenging and place greater demands on teachers in very small 2 class schools. This does not mean that it</p>	Good		

	<p>would be impossible to deliver the curriculum in these schools, but it is clear that the skills required by teachers will need to be very wide ranging to support the full and effective fulfilment of the curriculum’s high ambitions.</p> <p>Implementation of this option would mean that pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would transfer to their nearest alternative schools. For the majority of pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, the closest alternative school would be Crossgates C.P. School, however some pupils would live closer to other schools, including Llanbister C.P. School, Ysgol Trefonnen, Cefnlllys, Rhayader C. in W. School and Knighton C. in W. School.</p> <p>Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School was in the green support category based on the 2019 categorisations whilst Crossgates C.P. School was in the yellow support category. No categorisations have been carried out since 2019 therefore. However, there are no concerns in relation to quality and standards at Crossgates C.P. School, and the Council’s view is that provision for pupils would be at least equivalent to the current provision. The overall aim of the proposal is to improve learning opportunities for pupils.</p> <p>In addition, Crossgates C.P. School is a larger school, with a larger number of pupils and a larger team of staff, which could have a positive</p>			
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	<p>impact on the opportunities available for pupils and staff.</p> <p>Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, a small number of pupils would live closer to other schools, in particular Llanbister C.P. School, Knighton C. in W. School and Llandrindod C.P. School. These schools are all in the yellow support category based on the 2019 categorisations, therefore there are no concerns about the provision pupils would receive should they transfer to these schools.</p> <p>Concerns were raised during the consultation period that the quality of provision in the alternative schools would not be as good as the quality of provision at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. The Council is of the view that all the alternative schools are self-improving schools and provide education to a standard that is equitable. Estyn's response to the consultation stated that 'The proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education in the area.'</p>			
<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 Dolau as there would be no provision in the area, and therefore potential loss of any community facilities associated with the school.</p> <p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport</p>	Very Poor		

	<p>Policy, there would also be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities / events.</p> <p>Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is co-located with a community hall. Should the school close, the community hall would continue to be available for community activities. Whilst the proposal would not impact on the community hall, it is acknowledged that the potential loss of income to the hall from school activities no longer needing to take place could impact on the community hall.</p> <p>Numerous concerns about the proposal's impact on the community were raised during the consultation, these included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General concern about the impact on the community / village - The school is the heart of the village - Comments about impact on the community centre - Reference to other community activities/organisations - Closure of the school would mean that pupil would not want to live in Dolau - Reference to previous generations of families that have attended the school - Queries about what would happen to the school building should the school close - Comments about the impact of previous school closures on communities - Comments about community well-being 			
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comments about community impact beyond the village of Dolau - Comments about the role of the community during the Covid pandemic <p>Responses to all of these issues are provided in the consultation report.</p> <p>A separate draft community impact assessment has been carried out which includes input from the school. This has also been updated to reflect comments made during the consultation.</p>			
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Source of Outline Evidence to support judgements
Consultation report

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>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, to ensure that resources are used efficiently and proportionately across Powys schools, ensuring better strategic management of the Powys schools estate.</p>	Good		

<p>generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.</p>	<p>Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, all the alternative schools are prepared to deliver the new, innovative curriculum for Wales from September 2022. This should lead to developing a skilled and well-educated population.</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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School for whom this is their closest school. However, pupils could be accommodated on current transport routes, therefore no additional transport would be required.</p> <p>Currently, a high proportion of pupils attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School are transported by private arrangement as the school is not their closest school. This means that additional transport is currently being used to transport pupils to the school, which would not be required if pupils transferred to their nearest alternative schools.</p>	Neutral		
<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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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>A significant number of comments were received during the consultation about the impact on pupil</p>	Poor	<p>An experienced member of staff from the Council is supporting school leaders effectively to help them manage possible changes for pupils. The Council would also expect pupils to be fully supported by their teachers and other staff at the school during any period of uncertainty, to minimise the impact on their well-being.</p> <p>Support will be provided to pupils during the transition period to enable them to transfer effectively to their new schools. The receiving school would work closely with the closing school during</p>	Neutral

	<p>well-being due to the consultation taking place during the current pandemic, creating an additional pressure on their well-being during a difficult time. Some of the current pupils at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School were also pupils at the school during the previous consultation process on closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School in 2016.</p> <p>Some comments were received by people who had experienced school closures in Radnorshire in the past, stating that they had not been supported through the change.</p>		<p>the transition to identify and address areas of concern amongst pupils and families. The headteacher of the receiving school would be able to meet with families to discuss concerns, and there would be opportunities for families to visit the receiving schools and meet teachers and other pupils.</p> <p>Process to be concluded as quickly as possible to minimise the period of uncertainty for pupils, staff and other stakeholders.</p>	
<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 Dolau as there would be no provision in the area, and therefore potential loss of any community facilities associated with the school.</p> <p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. 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>Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is co-located with a community hall. Should the school close, the community hall would continue to be available for community activities. Whilst the proposal would not impact on the community hall, it is acknowledged that the potential loss of</p>	Very Poor		Very Poor

	<p>income to the hall from school activities no longer needing to take place could impact on the community hall.</p> <p>Numerous concerns about the proposal's impact on the community were raised during the consultation, these included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General concern about the impact on the community / village - The school is the heart of the village - Comments about impact on the community centre - Reference to other community activities/organisations - Closure of the school would mean that pupil would not want to live in Dolau - Reference to previous generations of families that have attended the school - Queries about what would happen to the school building should the school close - Comments about the impact of previous school closures on communities - Comments about community well-being - Comments about community impact beyond the village of Dolau - Comments about the role of the community during the Covid pandemic <p>Responses to all of these issues are provided in the consultation report.</p> <p>A separate draft community impact assessment has been carried out which includes input from</p>			
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	the school. This has also been updated to reflect comments made during the consultation.			
<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 pupils, ensuring that all affected by the plans have had the opportunity to give their views.</p>	Neutral		

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>	Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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	Neutral		

	<p>Welsh language, or on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.</p> <p>Comments were received during the consultation which suggested that pupils would not have access to the same opportunities to use Welsh in the alternative schools compared with their current experience at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and all the other alternative schools are taking part in the Siartr Iaith initiative, and all schools are currently working towards the bronze award.</p> <p>Comments were also received which expressed concern about that closure of the school would lead to closure of the Cylch Meithrin which operates from the school site, and that this would impact on the opportunity for pupils to access Welsh-medium pre-school provision. Should the school close, the Cylch could continue to operate in the area should there sufficient demand. Pupils would still be able to develop their Welsh language skills in the alternative schools, and would be able to use this in their homes and their communities.</p>			
<p><i>Opportunities to promote the Welsh language</i></p>	<p>Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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>See additional comments above.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>		

<p><i>People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation.</i></p>	<p>Implementation of the proposal would lead to the closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, with pupils transferring to their nearest alternative schools. 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>The comments received during the consultation period suggest that there a number of extra-curricular activities happening at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, including after school clubs. The comments received also suggest that due to the size of the school, pupils have more opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities and whole school activities than in larger schools. However, all the other alternative schools provide a range of extra-curricular activities that are teacher-led. There is also the availability of extra-curricular activities within the Llandrindod catchment area which are delivered by other organisations.</p> <p>The Council has acknowledged that it may be difficult for some pupils to access after school activities due to reliance on home to school transport, however the alternative schools also have pupils that rely on home to school transport, and they are experienced in ensuring that all pupils are able to take part in activities.</p> <p>It must also be noted that just under half of the pupils currently attending the school live closer to other schools and are therefore reliant on private</p>	<p>Good</p>		
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	transport arrangements to access after school activities and are able to manage.			
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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 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>Age</i>	The proposal would impact on primary aged pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. The proposal aims to provide improved educational opportunities for all affected pupils.	Neutral		
<i>Disability</i>	The proposal would impact on any pupils with disabilities currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. The proposal aims to provide improved educational opportunities for all affected pupils, including any pupils with disabilities. Comments received during the consultation expressed concern about the impact on pupil with ALN if they had to be taught in larger cohorts, with the view that small schools / classes enable more 1:1 support. The Council's view is that pupils with additional learning needs would be fully supported at any of the alternative	Neutral		

	schools. There is very good support across the Calon Cymru cluster for pupils with ALN.			
Gender reassignment	No impact.	Neutral		
Marriage or civil partnership	No impact.	Neutral		
Race	The proposal would impact on all primary aged pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon School, regardless of their religion or belief. Some of the alternative schools named in the consultation document are Church in Wales schools. A comment was received which suggested that attending a faith-based provision would be detrimental to children. However, it is the view of the Council that there would be no impact.	Neutral		
Sex	The proposal aims to provide improved educational opportunities for all pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.	Neutral		
Sexual Orientation	The proposal aims to provide improved educational opportunities for all pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, regardless of their sexual orientation.	Neutral		

<i>Pregnancy and Maternity</i>	No impact.	Neutral		
<i>Socio-economic duty</i>	<p>The aim of the proposal is to provide improved educational opportunities for all pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, including any eligible for Free School Meals, however based on PLASC 2020 information, no pupils at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School were eligible for Free School Meals.</p> <p>Should the proposal be implemented, there would be no school in Llanfihangel Rhydithon. This would mean that pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would need to travel to their nearest alternative provision. 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. The school is not the closest school for a number of pupils that currently attend, therefore transferring to their nearest alternative school would reduce the transport requirements for these pupils and their families.</p>	Neutral		

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
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>	Pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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, to ensure that resources are used efficiently and proportionately across Powys schools, ensuring better strategic management of the Powys schools estate.	Good		
Collaboration: <i>Working with others in a collaborative way to find shared sustainable solutions.</i>	Full consultation has been carried out, which has enabled all interested parties to give their views. This included an opportunity to suggest any alternative solutions for the catchment.	Neutral		
Involvement (including Communication and Engagement): <i>Involving a diversity of the population in the decisions that affect them including:</i> Unpaid Carers: <i>Ensuring that unpaid carers views are sought and taken into account</i>	Full consultation has been carried out in accordance with the School Organisation Code. This provided an opportunity for all interested parties to give their views on the proposal. A Consultation Report has been prepared which outlines the issues raised in the consultation responses, and this will be considered by Cabinet when determining how to proceed. Concerns were raised during the consultation period about the consultation taking place during the pandemic, and that this meant that some members of the community were unable to give	Good		

	their views. However, a significant number of responses were received to the consultation which does not support this view.			
<p>Prevention: <i>Understanding the root causes of issues to prevent them from occurring including:</i></p> <p>Safeguarding: <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></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, to ensure that resources are used efficiently and proportionately across Powys schools, ensuring better strategic management of the Powys schools estate.</p> <p>All schools are required to have appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place.</p>	Good		
<p>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></p>	No impact.	Neutral		
<p>Powys County Council Workforce:</p> <p>What Impact will this change have on the Workforce?</p>	<p>Implementation of the proposal would impact on all current staff at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School as there would no longer be a school in Llanfihangel Rhydithon, therefore staff would be subject to a Management of Change process.</p> <p>Full consultation has been carried out in accordance with the School Organisation Code. This process was supported by relevant LA teams (e.g. HR), and included a consultation meeting with staff, which ensured that they had an opportunity to give their views.</p>	Poor		

	<p>A member of the HR team met with the staff informally at the start of the process.</p> <p>There would be an impact on staff at Llanelwedd C.i.W Primary School as the current arrangement of a shared headteacher would come to an end. Llanelwedd C.i.W Primary School would need to review its staffing structure as the headteacher would return to his substantive role.</p>			
<p>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?</p>	<p>Implementation of the preferred way forward could impact on salary arrangements for current staff at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.</p>	Neutral		
<p>Welsh Language impact on staff</p>	<p>Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is an English-medium school, therefore it is not anticipated that there would be a Welsh language impact on staff.</p> <p>Some of the staff at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School have attended Welsh language Sabbatical courses in order to improve their Welsh language skills. There would be opportunities for these staff to continue to use their Welsh language skills in any other future employment opportunities.</p>	Neutral		
<p>Apprenticeships:</p>	<p>No impact.</p>	Neutral		

Has consideration been given to whether this change impacts negatively, or positively on Apprenticeships within the service?				
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Source of Outline Evidence to support judgements

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
Dolau	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Dolau as there would be no provision in the area, and therefore potential loss of any community facilities associated with the school.</p> <p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. 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>	Major		Major	

	<p>Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is co-located with a community hall. Should the school close, the community hall would continue to be available for community activities. Whilst the proposal would not impact on the community hall, it is acknowledged that the potential loss of income to the hall from school activities no longer needing to take place could impact on the community hall.</p> <p>Numerous concerns about the proposal's impact on the community were raised during the consultation, these included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General concern about the impact on the community / village - The school is the heart of the village - Comments about impact on the community centre - Reference to other community activities/organisations - Closure of the school would mean that pupil would not want to live in Dolau - Reference to previous generations of families that have attended the school - Queries about what would happen to the school building should the school close 				
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comments about the impact of previous school closures on communities - Comments about community well-being - Comments about community impact beyond the village of Dolau - Comments about the role of the community during the Covid pandemic <p>Responses to all of these issues are provided in the consultation report.</p> <p>A separate draft community impact assessment has been carried out which includes input from the school. This has also been updated to reflect comments made during the consultation.</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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 whilst the process is ongoing	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	An experienced member of staff from the Council is supporting school leaders effectively to help them manage possible changes for pupils. The Council would also expect pupils to be fully supported by their teachers and other staff at the school during any period of uncertainty, to minimise the impact on their well-being.	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 Dolau due to loss of educational provision from the area, and the associated additional travel requirements for pupils, and the impact on general well-being, particularly due to the consultation having taken place during the pandemic.

11. Is there additional evidence to support the Impact Assessment (IA)?

What additional evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

Full consultation has been carried out on the proposal. The impact assessment has been updated to reflect the feedback received.

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
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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	28 th September 2021
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3. Equality Impact Assessment

Powys County Council

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)



Proposal	To close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools
Service Area	Schools Service
Date of Assessment	February 2021 Updated September 2021
Lead Person undertaking the assessment	RW / SA / ME
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

In April 2020, the Leader approved a new Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys, which sets a number of aims and objectives to transform the Powys education system over the next few years. One of the objectives is to ‘Reconfigure and rationalise primary provision’.

Powys County Council has consulted on a proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. The proposal is as follows:

- To close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School for the following reasons:

- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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
- Pupils would attend schools with permanent leadership arrangements
- 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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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
- Pupils would attend schools with permanent leadership arrangements

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?

Yes ✓

Please state the gaps:

- No qualitative data is currently available

How will the gaps be addressed going forward?

- Qualitative data will be collected as part of the forthcoming consultation process.

No

6. DATA ANALYSIS

<p>6.1 Quantitative Summarise the key quantitative data analysis results, providing key headline statistics. 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><u>PLASC January 2020</u></p> <p><u>Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School</u></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: 0.0% of pupils are eligible for Free School Meals- ALN: 6.1% of pupils have special educational needs. Of these, 3.0% of pupils are on School Action, 3.0% of pupils are on School Action Plus and 0.0% of pupils have statements.- Disabilities: 6.1% of pupils have additional learning needs- English as an Additional Language: 0.0% of pupils are identified as EAL pupils.- Ethnicity: The ethnic group of 72.7% of pupils in the school is White British. 0.0% of pupils belong to ethnic groups other than White British.- Looked after Children: 0.0% 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">- 0.0% of pupils at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School are eligible for Free School Meals. This is significantly lower than the Powys average for primary schools (12.7%)- 6.1% of pupils at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School have additional learning needs. This is lower than the Powys average for primary schools (18.8%) <p>In addition, there are no pupils belonging to ethnic groups other than White British, no EAL pupils and no Looked After Children at the school.</p>
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	<p>The proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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. 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>Full consultation has been carried out on the proposal relating to Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, which will include consultation with pupils at the school. This has provided qualitative data in respect of the proposal, and any additional impact on pupils that belong to protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>The following comments were raised about the proposal’s impact on the protected characteristic groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Benefits of Llanfihangel Rhydithon / small schools for pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups - Concern that moving to larger schools would have a negative impact on pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups - The proposal wouldn’t impact on pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups - Impact on pupils with additional learning needs - Impact on disabled pupils - Impact on other protected characteristic groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pregnant women / new mothers - Religion - Gender identity - Age <p>Responses to all of the issues raised are provided in the consultation report.</p>

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.

The proposal does not present any adverse impact on equality. [Proceed to question 10]	✓
The proposal presents some adverse impact on equality. [Proceed to question 8]	
The proposal presents significant impact on equality [Proceed to question 8]	

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? ii) Will people on low incomes be affected? iii) Will Welsh speakers be affected?</p>	<p>i) The protected characteristic group most affected by the proposal would be pupils with additional learning needs. However, the proportion of pupils with ALN at the school is lower than the Powys average. Comments received during the consultation expressed concern about the impact on pupils with ALN if they had to be taught in larger cohorts, with the view that small schools / classes enable more 1:1 support.</p> <p>ii) None of the pupils attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School are eligible for Free School Meals. This is significantly lower than the Powys average.</p> <p>iii) Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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>Should the proposal be implemented, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would close, and pupils transfer to their nearest alternative school.</p> <p>This would have a significant impact on pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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>
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<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>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. The number of pupils belonging to the protected characteristic groups currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is very small.</p> <p>The protected characteristic group most affected by the proposal would be pupils with ALN. However, the Council’s view is that pupils with additional learning needs would be fully supported at any of the alternative schools. There is very good support across the Calon Cymru cluster for pupils with ALN.</p> <p>The proposal does not require modification to reduce or remove the impact on protected characteristic groups.</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:</p> <p>Need was not identified at time of writing Service Strategy</p>
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4. Draft Community Impact Assessment – Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

i) Information on the proportion of pupils from the catchment area that attend the school

January 2020

The closest provider for pupils attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School in January 2020 was as follows:

School	% of Pupils
Crossgates C.P. School	36.4%
Knighton C. in W. School	6.1%
Ysgol Cefnlllys	9.1%
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	48.5%

This suggests that 48.5% of pupils attending the school were attending their closest primary school, whilst 51.5% of pupils attending the school live closer to other primary schools.

Updated information – September 2021

This information has been updated for the pupils that were attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. The closest provider for pupils attending the school in September 2021 was as follows:

School	% of Pupils
Crossgates C.P. School	28%
Knighton C. in W. School	5%
Ysgol Cefnlllys	11%
Rhayader C. in W. School	3%
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	53%

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:

- Weekly Key Stage 2 club featuring ICT, Art and Cooking
- Weekly Welsh club
- Weekly Sports club
- Football Club
- Choir
- Weekly drop in sessions for reading and educational development
- Clwb Cymraeg
- Eco Club
- School Council
- Criw Cymraeg
- Music lessons

Whilst some of these clubs are run by staff and governors, some are run by community volunteers / parents and outside organisations.

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:

- Daily Breakfast Club
- Dolau Ti a Fi Club held on the site
- Cylch Meithrin which is held on the site and has good links with the Foundation Phase
- Community Library Bus
- Young Sports Ambassador Scheme
- Youth Club relies on pupils from the school

The school also provides a rural play space as the village has no communal play space other than the school.

iv) Other use by the community of the school building

The school building is used by the community to provide the following activities:

- Local YFC use the school grounds and community hall
- Community hall use the school grounds and car park
- Youth Club use the school grounds

- The community hall uses the school as a 'green room' for local shows and entertainment
- The school's conservation area is used by all user groups and members of the community. The local WI and YFC hold meetings and the Youth Club, Cylch Meithrin and Ti a Fi use the grounds to learn about wildlife and the environment

v) Other links between the school and the community

- Harvest festival is held every September in the community hall. This involves the local vicar, members of the community and the pupils and staff of the school
- Christmas Carols around the Christmas Tree is held every year in the school playground
- Dolau Christmas Fayre is held annually in the community hall. The pupils make items to sell at the event and pupils record songs and poems to sell
- Annual Christmas Concert is held by the school in the community hall. It is a very popular and well attended event
- Dolau Summer Fayre
- Annual Sport Day which is held in a local farm field. This is well attended by the community, parents and governors
- The school participates in DRA events throughout the year e.g. games evenings quizzes, cinema
- The school has close links to local businesses such as horse riding
- Links with the local church magazine
- Links with the local vicar who leads collective worship at the school
- Liaisons with Dyfed Powys Police through the School Community Police Officer
- Liaisons with Mid & West Wales Fire Service through visits from local firefighters
- Links with the local Eisteddfod in Llandrindod Wells
- Friends of Dolau School which work tirelessly to raise funds for the school to support buying resources to enable a full 21st Century curriculum
- Links with local concerts, singing, poetry, instrumental etc.
- Links with local History Group and arts projects
- Dolau YFC & Dolau Youth club rely heavily on Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School for the vast majority of their new members, the majority of who go on to take up senior roles in the club, Chairman, Vice-Chair, Secretary etc
- Llandrindod Junior Silver Band consists of 14 members, a majority of those band members have been taught in Dolau School. The band attend and support lots of local events held within Llandrindod, Rhayader and Builth Wells.

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, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would close and pupils transferring to their nearest alternative schools and there would no longer be a school in Dolau. It is acknowledged that this would mean that there would be no school in Dolau, meaning that any community facilities provided by the school would no longer be available.

There is a community hall in Dolau which is located next to school, and which provides facilities and services, which are complemented by the school. Should there be no school in Dolau, the community hall would continue to be available for community events and activities. However, the school has indicated that the loss of income provided by the school to the community hall could have a significant impact on the ability for the hall to continue to run.

vii) Distance and travelling time involved in attending an alternative school of the same language category

Should the proposal be implemented, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would close and pupils would transfer to their nearest alternative schools. There would therefore be an impact on distance and travelling times for pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School for whom this is currently their closest school.

Home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the home to school transport which is in operation at that time. Whilst free transport would be provided to eligible pupils, 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.

January 2020

The closest alternative school for the pupils that were attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School in January 2020 is as follows:

	Pupils' closest school should there be no school in Dolau
Crossgates C.P. School	75.8%
Llanbister C.P. School	9.1%
Llandrindod Wells C.P. School	9.1%

Knighton C. in W. School	6.1%
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An analysis of pupils attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School in January 2020 suggests that the furthest distance to the nearest alternative school for pupils for whom Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is currently their closest school would be 6.4 miles.

Updated information – September 2021

The closest alternative school for the pupils that were attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School in September 2021 is as follows:

	Pupils' closest school should there be no school in Dolau
Crossgates C.P. School	67%
Llanbister C.P. School	14%
Llandrindod Wells C.P. School	11%
Knighton C. in W. School	5%
Rhayader C. in W. School	3%

An analysis of pupils attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School in September 2021 suggests that the furthest distance to the nearest alternative school for pupils for whom Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is currently their closest school would be 6.4 miles.

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 closest alternative schools.

ix) Any wider implications e.g. impact on public transport provision, wider community safety issues

- Concern about extended journeys for pupils to their closest alternative school, which would contribute to the environment and have a significant impact on daily traffic
- Concern that young pupils would be unsupervised on journeys to school

- Concern that the length of the journey to school would be too long and have a detrimental effect to their learning focus whilst at school
- There would be an impact on local employment as most staff at the school are local people
- School car park is used by local residents to park safely in the evenings limiting cars parked in the country lanes.
- A significant number of young families have moved back to the area and are preparing to make the area their home and have strong ties with the school & community. Many children from these young families that have returned to the area are 2nd & 3rd generations attending the school
- Being in a rural setting is safer for the children and staff. 1 in 3 of the schools in Powys not to be subjected to the COVID-19 virus.
- The hall committee and Community Council have installed a defibrillator on the outside wall of the community hall. If the community hall loses its users groups, social events not supported well, funding will not be available to maintain the defibrillator. Therefore, the community would lose the valuable lifesaving equipment.

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 Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. 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 a wide range of services and activities are provided by the school, including some facilities which could be attractive to families and which increase the attractiveness of the community to potential young families. Cylch Meithrin and Ti a Fi settings meet on the school site.

Should there be no school in Dolau, it is likely that there would be an impact on the other associated facilities available in the village, which could have an impact on families with school-age children, and which could encourage these families to leave the community or discourage young families from moving to the community.

- **What impact closure might have on other services provided locally, for instance if the school is the only remaining public building in a community**

Information received from the school suggests that a wide range of services are provided in the school, and it is regularly used as a village meeting and performance place.

There is a community hall in Dolau which would continue to be available should there be no school in the village, therefore community activities, events and other services could be provided here. However, it is acknowledged that the Hall relies on the support of the school, and that closure of the school could have a significant impact on the viability of the hall in the longer term.

- **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 a wide range of events take place in the community events and activities take place in the school, as indicated in sections (iii), (iv) and (v) above. It is anticipated that that these events and activities would take place in the community hall should there be no school in Dolau. However, it is acknowledged that the Hall relies on the support of the school, and that closure of the school could have a significant impact on the viability of the hall in the longer term.

- **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, and potentially the loss of families from Dolau could have some impact on local business in Dolau and the surrounding area should there be less people in the area. Information received from the school suggests that the possible loss of the school would also have an impact on the rural lifestyle of the area. Implementation of the proposal could eventually lead to a reduction in employment opportunities in the village of Dolau.

- **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)**

As indicated in section (viii) above, 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 closest alternative schools.

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 is currently extensive use of the Dolau building, and significant links between the school and the local community. It is therefore likely that the proposal to remove school provision from the village of Dolau would have a significant effect on the local community.

Should the Council proceed with the proposal, it is anticipated that these services would be provided in the community hall should there be no school in Dolau. However, the school has indicated that the loss of income provided by the school to the community hall could have a significant impact on the ability for the hall to continue to run. Should the Council proceed with the proposal, it would endeavour to work with the community in Dolau to identify a suitable alternative.

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 additional travel costs
- Concern about the impact on the environment
- Concern about impact on pupils' access to after school activities
- Other comments

- **Impact on the community**

- General concern about the impact on the community / village
- The school is the heart of the village
- Comments about the impact on the community centre
- Reference to other community activities / organisations

- Closure of the school would mean that people would not want to live in Dolau
 - Reference to previous generations of families that have attended the school
 - Queries about what would happen to the school building should the school close
 - Comments about the impact of previous school closures on communities
 - Comments relating to community well-being
 - Comments about community impact beyond the village of Dolau
 - Comments about the role of the community during the Covid pandemic
- **Comments about early years provision**
- Comments relating to the Cylch Meithrin at Dolau
 - Concern about the future of the Cylch Meithrin at Dolau
 - Comments about funding of the Cylch Meithrin
 - Comments about registration
 - Comments relating to Dolau Parent and Toddlers Group
 - Comments about early years provision at other locations
 - Other comments

4.2 Conclusion

It is clear that a wide range of extra curricular activities are available to pupils at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. Should there be no school in Dolau, 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 for pupils for whom Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is currently the closest school, additional travel would be required to enable pupils to access their closest school. This could impact on their ability to access activities, particularly where these take place after school.

The information received by the school and during the consultation period suggests that there are extensive links between the school and the local community, and that many community activities are arranged in the school which are accessed by the community. It is therefore acknowledged that closure of the school could have an impact on the community in terms of the services and activities available.

Should the Council proceed with the proposal, it is anticipated that facilities and services would be provided in the community centre should there be no school in Dolau. However, comments have been received which indicate that the loss of income provided by the school to the community centre could have a significant impact on the centre's ability to continue to run.

It is also acknowledged that implementation of the proposal would result in additional travel to school for pupils for whom Dolau 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.

Concerns were raised during the consultation period about what would happen to the school building should the school close, and references were made to other closed schools in Radnorshire which have been left derelict. The Council's policy is to dispose of any surplus assets in accordance with the Council's Asset Management Policy. Once the asset has been transferred to a third party, the Council has no control over what happens to it. Some schools that have been closed have been transferred to other service areas, e.g. housing or to a community and should the school close, there would be an opportunity for the community council to discuss the future of the building with the Council.

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Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School Impact Assessment

May 2021



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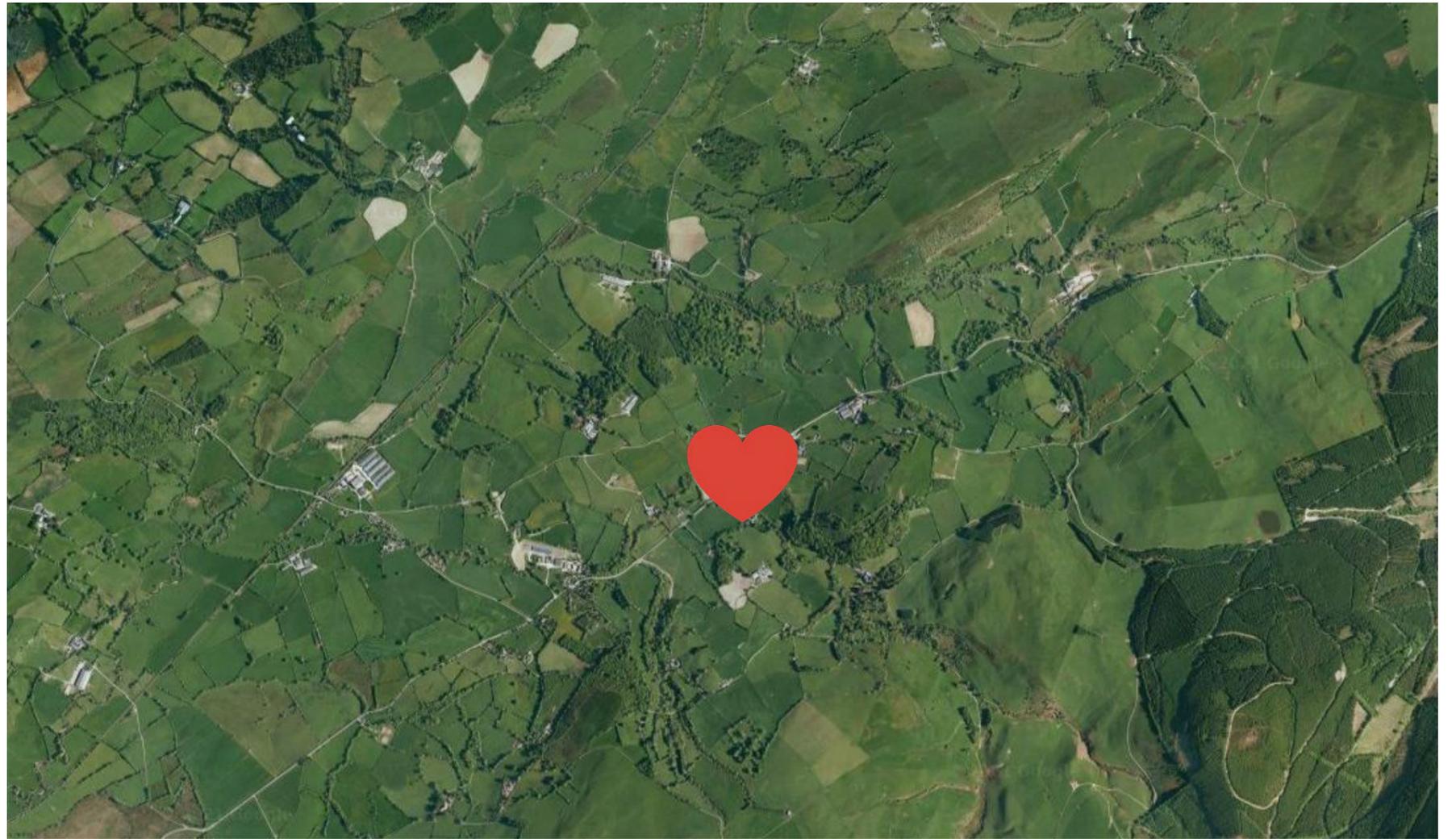
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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT DOLAU SCHOOL

Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School, affectionately known as Dolau School, is a small rural school in beautiful Mid Wales.

The school has currently 37 children on roll and they are taught in two mixed aged classes.

The school has close links with the community through the Friends of Dolau School (FoDS), Dolau Community Centre and St Michael's Church in the village.

The school prides itself as being a friendly school with a strong "family feel" and an integral part of the community.



INTRODUCTION

ESTYN 2019 INSPECTION

“The school is a **happy, caring community** in which pupils thrive as confident, capable learners. Their behaviour in and around the school is exemplary. Most pupils make good progress in developing their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). **Pupils enjoy belonging to the school** and rates of attendance are consistently high. Teachers provide pupils with valuable activities that engage them and excite their curiosity. Most pupils have positive attitudes to their learning, and they are curious and eager to gain new knowledge and skills. **Leaders and managers have a clear vision** for the future of the school. They set high standards and ensure that they deploy the school’s resources efficiently”.

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Powys County Council has again brought forward a proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon school, this was last put before the Authority's Cabinet in 2016 and the proposal was rejected by full Council. It is very concerning that the whole world is emerging from the Covid 19 pandemic and Powys County Council feel the timing of this decision to consult on this proposal is correct. This is very questionable, can this be a full and robust process when reliant on a digital consultation, when there will be many people in the community who will have poor internet connectivity or no access whatsoever?

The current proposal is "To close Llanfihangel Rhydithon School from the 31st of August 2022 with Pupils to transfer to nearest alternative schools." Following the rejection of the proposal to close the school in 2016, the Welsh Government's Minister for Education amended the School Organisation Code, a statutory code. It states that the "Presumption against the closure of rural schools."

This second edition of the Code makes special arrangements for rural schools (defined within the Code), establishing a procedural presumption against the closure of rural schools. 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." This means that closing a rural school should only happen after councils have done "everything they can" to keep it open. Llanfihangel Rhydithon is listed as a rural school within this document.

Having studied Powys County Council's proposal from 2016 and the proposal being put forward now at length, there is no new information or redefined need to continue with the proposal at this stage. Welsh Government have also used Llanfihangel Rhydithon School as an exemplar rural school, fully supported by Powys County Council.

Llanfihangel Rhydithon school has increased in pupil numbers and is projected to continue to do so. It was inspected by ESTYN in 2019 and was categorised as good in all elements of the inspection. All the schools listed by the local Authority as "the nearest alternative school" are consistently achieving lower ratings than our school, with poorer attendance and lower achievements.

In 2019, ESTYN inspected Powys County Council Education Services and concluded that Powys local government education services were causing significant concern and progress was slow, and therefore required follow-up. 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 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 'Transforming Education Vision Statement' (March 2020) 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.

Llanfihangel Rhydithon School is achieving everything that the Authority aspires to in its vision. As a County, Powys has an aging population and has difficulty in retaining its young people with little or no higher education facilities such as universities, it is also proving difficult to encourage the leavers to return. As an Action Group we have approached surrounding communities to explain the effect they have felt going through the process of enforced school closure.

The past pupils of Llanfihangel Rhydithon School had a solid, inspired and most importantly an enjoyable educational base to build on. Many have returned to the County and there are a high percentage of professional, economically productive, and socially responsible members of the Powys population. In comparison with other rural areas where their school has been forced to close. The current and future pupils will also benefit from the proven overall ethos of the school.

Llanfihangel Rhydithon school has past pupils working throughout Powys as Entrepreneurs running their own businesses and employing local people supporting the local circular economy. There are Civil Engineers, Solicitors, Architects, Police Officers, Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors working within the Public and Private sectors in the County. Past pupils volunteer in many varied roles across the County and some have also undertaken socially responsible roles within Powys's political structure at a Local and County level.

ALIGNMENT WITH POLICIES OF POWYS CC VISION 2025

Introduction

In July 2017 Powys County Council launched Vision 2025 identifying four priority areas of work: Economy, Health and Care, Learning and Skills, Residents and Communities, and six equality objectives in line with the well-being goals set out by the 'Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015'

“By 2025 Powys will be widely recognised as a fantastic place in which to work, live and play”.

Dolau is a fantastic place to work, live and play as are the six surrounding Community Council wards served by Llanfihangel Rhydithon School. This area is popular and competitive within the housing market in comparison to areas with no primary school provision.

The Economy - We will develop a vibrant economy.

The enforced closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon School will have a detrimental effect on the local and wider economy in Powys. Local Estate Agents have stated that children's good early years education is a highly sought-after requirement when professional people are looking to relocate themselves or their businesses to Powys.

Many of the residents of this area work in the larger towns such as Llandrindod Wells or Newtown. Closure of the school will have a detrimental effect on the housing market as well as the potential workforce in a significant area of Mid and East Radnorshire.

Powys County Council's booklet "Move to Mid Wales, Discover Powys" supports the Council's vision to encourage people and businesses to relocate to the County, citing high quality education as "There are many nursery, pre-school and childcare options in Powys to suit your needs. Throughout their learning, Wales' Curriculum encourages your child to develop their interest, build on their strengths, and learn in creative and encouraging settings". Yet Llanfihangel Rhydithon school is under threat, being categorised by ESTYN as good school in all categories and highly commended Welsh Government.

Growing Mid Wales is a transformational project for the Council and will see the development of a Mid Wales Growth Deal, circa £200m. Llanfihangel Rhydithon and the border areas lends itself well to integrated schemes with partners on the English side of the border such as the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership to develop tourism and other opportunities, although no educational provision may hinder any aspirations.

It is a proven fact that more people, post COVID, are seeking a rural life, at a younger age rather than when they are 65. It is hard to see people being encouraged to move to East Radnorshire without a rural school.



ALIGNMENT WITH POLICIES OF POWYS CC VISION 2025

Health and Care - We will lead the way in providing effective, integrated health and care in a rural environment.

Although this well being objective is focussed on social care, it is actually very relevant to the health and wellbeing of the current pupils. They are currently going through the Covid pandemic and now the potential of being removed from their friendship groups and familiar surroundings to be placed in an alien environment, expected to make new friends, and establish new relationships with their teachers and the support staff as the nearest receiving school proposal will impact greatly on the individual pupils. This proposal is based on the location of the family home.

School closures also lead to an aging community as younger people and families look to locate in vibrant communities and these are those with the school at the heart of the Community. This will have a long term budgetary cost to the Authority with additional supportive social care.

It is difficult to assess the impact on mental health and wellbeing of the wider community, as the effects of the school closure can be felt over the months and years that follow. No long-term assessment of the implications has been undertaken by the Council.

To raise awareness of the proposal to close Llanfihangel School and in an effort to highlight the number of small schools which have been closed in Radnorshire in recent years, The Dolau School action group, with the help of children from Llanfihangel Rhydithon Primary School have

created scarecrows as visual props to spread the plight of the school, far and wide.

Learning and skills - We will strengthen learning and skills.

If the Authority implement the enforced closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon school, it will mean that pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would transfer to their nearest alternative schools. Dolau school has been categorised as good in all elements by ESTYN in 2019. All schools named as the nearest school and as such the potential receiving schools within the proposal documents are all categorised lower than Llanfihangel Rhydithon School.

It is concerning that the proposal papers are dismissive of this fact, stating that there are no concerns in relation to quality and standards, and the Council's view is that provision for pupils would be at least equivalent to the current provision. Surely if this were factually correct the schools listed would be categorised the same as Llanfihangel Rhydithon school, this is misleading and raises great concerns that the Authority does not take ESTYN and its requirements seriously.

It also suggests that Powys County Council has little or no regard for the educational achievements of the County's schools.



ALIGNMENT WITH POLICIES OF POWYS CC VISION 2025

The proposal paper states that larger number of pupils and a larger team of staff, could have a positive impact on the opportunities available for pupils and staff.

A school like Llanfihangel Rhydithon allows all pupils the opportunity to participate in team sports or other activities and each pupil is given the chance to shine on the sports field and the stage, giving a solid grounding of self-esteem and self-worth, holding the individual pupil in good stead to take on life's challenges.

A smaller school does not choose the best footballers, actors or musicians but encourages all pupils to participate. The community impact assessment details all the activities undertaken at the school, that are equal to or more than other schools in the area.

Residents and Communities - We will support our residents and communities.

The proposal to enforce closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon school does not support the residents and communities of Dolau and the surrounding area. This action will have an impact on the community over many years to come. Villages in the area, who had their schools closed many years ago, are now mainly aging populations, with issues of rural isolation and little or no community activity.

Dolau school is the last remaining rural school in a large area of Powys, covering East Radnorshire. This area seems to have been historically chosen for the forced closure of its

schools in comparison with other areas across the County. Removing the school provision in Llanfihangel Rhydithon will leave East Radnorshire as a remote area of the County that will require interventions to reduce the rural deprivation and increased social care needs over years to come.

Llanfihangel Rhydithon school is the heart of the Community and this is reflected in the fundraising achievements of the PTA, Friends of Dolau School (FODS).

In comparison to the named nearest receiving school, Crossgates, there has been significantly more monies raised in Dolau. For a school approximately a third of the size, the Community actually raised three times the funding to support the school, in 2018, there was £5,400 raised in Crossgates and £13,950 in Dolau.



ALIGNMENT WITH POLICIES OF POWYS CC TOWARDS 2040 - THE POWYS WELL-BEING PLAN

This is the plan setting out what the Public Service Board wants Powys to look like in 2040, contains 4 local objectives and 12 well-being steps to achieve those objectives.

The document emphasises the need to retain Llanfihangel Rhydithon school as a key rural school in Powys. Its ethos and attitude towards the pupils, staff and wider community are actually already fulfilling the future aspirations of this policy in so many ways:

- More people will move to Powys recognising it as a great place to live and raise their families boosting our school pupil numbers and community capacity.
- Children will enjoy a positive childhood experience and are ready to learn when they enter school.
- Schools will offer pupils, of all abilities, a more flexible teaching approach ensuring everyone has the best possible school experience, achieves their potential, and can move forward with their lives.

In the 'Towards 2040, the Powys Well-being Plan' it is stated 'People in Powys will experience a stable and thriving economy' by 2040. We cannot see how 'Powys will be a prosperous county with a well educated and skilled local workforce where opportunities exist for all and everyone can reach their full potential, reducing poverty and deprivation.

Powys wants to experience a stable and thriving economy and to be prosperous with a well-educated and skilled local workforce, where opportunities exist for all and everyone can reach their full potential.

We need to strengthen our economy, our high streets, and showcase fantastic local products and skills, and support local pubs, shops and cafés.

It was noted in the report that Powys should be 'recognised as a great place to live and to raise families, therefore boosting school pupil numbers and community capacity'. It is hard to imagine young professionals coming back to Powys, settle down and start families, if you close the small rural schools that are the heart of many communities.



ALIGNMENT WITH POLICIES OF POWYS CC

21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

Powys County Council's 21st Century Schools and Education Programme represents a £200 million investment programme. The funding is made up of Welsh Government grant and Powys County Council capital borrowing and the sale of any potential surplus assets.

Llanfihangel Rhydithon School will become a surplus asset if the enforced closure goes forward. However, Dolau Recreation Association has a 99-year lease, signed in 1997 with 75 years remaining. This lease gives the users of the Community Hall access to the area around the school and the playground as a car park. There is no defined area that cars need to park away from the school building or any time restrictions, but the Community and school have an understanding that works very well.

The Building itself does not lend itself to alternative use as living accommodation easily. It may be suitable a workshop site, although the Council appears to be rationalising its workshop portfolio. Similar buildings have been historically given to the Community for £1 or sold for minimal amount on the open market and have then left to decay. There will be little or no investment for the 21st Century Schools program from this proposal.

The primary aims of the programme are to:

1. Reduce the numbers of poor condition school buildings
The Council has openly stated that Llanfihangel Rhydithon School is in a good condition. Therefore, it does not meet this aim of the programme and perhaps the focus should

be turned to those schools that have structural issues in comparison.

2. Reduce surplus capacity

Llanfihangel Rhydithon does not have surplus capacity and it is slightly over its allocated number of pupils, and pupil number are profiled to continue to risk of forthcoming years. The school actually reduced the allocated teaching space by making an area of the classroom into a storage/administration area. This was on the questionable advice of Council Officers to reduce the vacant pupil numbers, this can easily be rectified and returned to its original usage by the Friends of Dolau School at no cost to the Authority. The school numbers rise in forthcoming years so this will be needed.

The documentation produced by the Council, shows that the nearest alternative schools as the receiving schools do have surplus places, it seems very dubious to enforce a school that has a high standard of education, full capacity and a solid and sound building to close to help support the reduction of the Council issues in other areas of the County.

If you look closer at the pupil numbers at these receiving schools, Llanbister school is over capacity of 135.6% and is anticipated to rise in next few years and Trefonnen is at 110.1%. This makes it unviable for our children to attend their nearest alternative school. By the Council's own admission Crossgates C.P. School is the only school with sufficient capacity. There appears to be alternative plans to increase the pupil numbers in this school and it is fundamentally



ALIGNMENT WITH POLICIES OF POWYS CC

21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

wrong to give the perception that there is parental choice if the enforced closure goes ahead. Crossgates C.P School is constantly achieving lower results and is categorised lower than Llanfihangel Rhydithon by ESTYN.

3. Reduce running costs to maximise resources available to target improvements to learner outcomes

The figures produced by the Authority show Llanfihangel Rhydithon School is slightly higher than the average cost per pupil but there are no two schools the same. Llanfihangel Rhydithon School has a very competent Governing Body, that work closely to the Authority and has consistently produced a surplus budget that provides a good education and environment for all the pupils and staff at the school.

Schools receive their budget allocation based on their local authority's formula. It was stated in the Llanfihangel Estyn report in March 2019 that 'The executive headteacher and governors work closely together to provide strong financial management and ensure that the school receives good value for money in the purchases it makes'.

Following the last attempt to enforce closure of the school, Llanfihangel Rhydithon school has been affiliated with Llanelwedd School under the leadership of one Headteacher. This has worked very well and is something the school would like to formalise, but Council Officers seem reluctant to do so.

The SWOT analyses within the Authority's consultation document describes, Llanfihangel Rhydithon is as a standalone school and a threat shown is the ability to recruit/secure headteacher in small school. This does not reflect the true position of the school's management and the substantial savings made in 2016.

4. Address specific demand for place in Welsh medium and Faith Based provision – East Radnorshire is not an area that uses the Welsh Language as its first language.

Through the school, pupils have positive attitudes towards learning Welsh. In the foundation phase, many pupils use Welsh phrases informally, without being prompted. In the Estyn report it was noted that the school needs to 'Improve key stage 2 pupils' ability to speak Welsh'. The school is addressing this recommendation brilliantly.

Llanfihangel Rhydithon is a second language Welsh school, the teachers and support staff integrate the Welsh Language into the school day, and it is a proven solid basis for pupils to continue with the Welsh Language throughout their further education and career paths.

To enforce closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon School to strengthen the Welsh medium and Faith Based provision, when the school is meeting the needs of its pupils' and the wider community alike, does question the equalities agenda and is verging on positive discrimination by the Authority.



ALIGNMENT WITH POLICIES OF WELSH GOVERNMENT

EDUCATION IN WALES: OUR NATIONAL MISSION, ACTION PLAN 2017–21

One of the key actions in Education in Wales: Our national mission, Action plan 2017–21 was to 'reduce infant class sizes, targeted at those who will most benefit, supporting teachers to raise standards for all', which appeared very successful. It's a matter of logic: smaller schools typically have smaller classes, and low teacher-student ratios translate into more focus on your child and his education.

Long-term close relationships between pupils and teachers allow for closer match of the learning to the child and for greater commitment by both the child and the teacher to each other. This in turn helps with closely focussed revisiting. Parents want their children's confidence to grow in a small rural school, rather than in a larger hub primary where children travel miles on public transport to larger classes and year group segregated teaching. Children thrive in small schools and the teachers provide 1:1 guidance.

The Welsh Government stated it was committed to 'raising education standards in rural areas', in the Rural Education action plan 2017. As parents and community members, we are in agreement with the Welsh Government that every learner in Wales, wherever they live, has the right to benefit from high-quality education and the opportunity to reach their full potential. The School Organisation Code was strengthened in respect of a presumption against the closure of rural schools.

In the 'Rural education plan' 2017 there are three themes stated:

- Theme 1: Strengthened organisation and support for rural schools
- Theme 2: Supporting equity and excellence in rural schools
- Theme 3: Supporting rural schools as community and educational spaces

Theme 1: Llanfihangel Rhydithon had a part time (half day per fortnight) business manager for one academic year, as part of a pilot. As her time was diluted due to being shared with 5 other schools this had very little impact.

Theme 2: Llanfihangel Rhydithon were successful in a bid for 2 terms of increasing responsibility for a member of staff to be promoted to acting assistant head. However, this grant was not sustained, and it was not continued.

Theme 3: Llanfihangel did benefit from improved connectivity. They use HWB (as do all primary schools in Wales) and Google for Education. Lastly they also have access to behavioural/pastoral support worker (shared with 10 other schools). This was largely accessed by larger schools and was cut short due to the post holder leaving to take up a post elsewhere.



ALIGNMENT WITH POLICIES OF WELSH GOVERNMENT

WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

The Welsh Government Well-being of Future Generations Act requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities, and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

There are seven Welsh Government Well Being Goals.

A prosperous Wales - An innovative, productive, and low carbon society.

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Llanfihangel Rhydithon school is proud to be a green ECO school, and has for many years has educated their pupils on the effects of climate change and its carbon footprint. Since 2015, the school has been recognised for its achievements, most recently the school was categorised as green, the highest Welsh Government standard, even Covid has not stopped the school's commitment with the Children home working on Eco topics.

A resilient Wales

Welsh Government sees a nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment. The proposal to enforce the school closure adds to the County's carbon footprint as many more pupils will have extended journeys to school, this contradicts the fact that Council declared a climate emergency on 24th September 2020 setting an ambition to reduce its carbon emissions to net zero, in line with the Welsh public sector. Additional travel by parents

who require their children to attend the out of hours school activities also increases the cost of individual families, increasing fuel poverty and the counties carbon footprint.

A healthier Wales and A Wales of cohesive communities

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 within attractive, viable, safe, and well-connected Communities.

The implementation of the proposal to enforce closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, with pupils transferring to alternative schools would have a negative impact on the mental well-being of pupils, staff, and the wider community. There is no understanding of the long-term effects of the enforced closure of a rural school on the pupils, staff, and local and wider community as no study on either the long or short-term impacts has been undertaken.

As an Action Group we have contacted Communities who have had their schools closed and the impact is a slow decay of community cohesion, sense of place and wellbeing that can be felt decades after the enforced closure.

Although, Powys County Council states it will provide support through the process, there has been no evidence of a pro-active approach to the issues of the communities left behind once the school has been removed.



ALIGNMENT WITH POLICIES OF WELSH GOVERNMENT

WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

Llanfihangel Rhydithon school is the heart of the Community, should the school close then many other communities' activities would cease instantly. There is a strong parent and toddler group, and the preschool Cylch Meithrin which is held on the site and has good links with the Foundation Phase.

These are vital to the success of the school but would naturally disperse as the children would have to attend their nearest school as their receiving school. Again, some of the facilities and activities at the nearest school or receiving school actually rate as lower than Llanfihangel Rhydithon by the relevant governing body.

Dolau Recreation Association manages the community hall, the hall would struggle very quickly given the loss of income from the school use and the income from associated groups such as pre-school and the Friends of Dolau School. Community cohesion would soon be under pressure and issues of rural isolation and wellbeing would escalate as other activities would be limited as the Friends of Dolau school are a driver in organising social fundraising events in the hall.

A globally responsible Wales

This well being goal focuses on improving the economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales. Fundamentally the Councils statement that "the principle of implementing the proposal is to provide the best possible opportunities to learners, enabling them to reach their full potential" is incorrect as each school named as the nearest

school or receiving school has a lower record of attainment, lower attendance, and lower ESTYN inspection status. Leaving the pupils in their current environment, with high quality education in secure and safe surroundings should be a priority for the Council.

The socio-economic effect of an enforced closure will be detrimental to the local housing market, employment opportunities and the uniqueness of the East Radnorshire way of life will be further weakened.

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is classed as an English medium school; however, it is committed to educating its pupils with Welsh as a second language. Teachers, support staff and pupils integrate the Welsh language into the school day as a natural part of their activity and this approach has led to parents also undertaking Welsh classes to support their children. This approach gives the pupils a solid basis to further develop their abilities.

The school is not only very proud and proactive in promoting its own ethos and culture as a school, but also the history and culture of the area and Wales.

There appears to be a perception that larger schools potentially give additional opportunities for pupils to take part in sport, art, and other extra-curricular activities.



ALIGNMENT WITH POLICIES OF WELSH GOVERNMENT

WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

However, this is not the case Llanfihangel Rhydithon as other smaller schools, provides a wide and varied programme of extra-curricular activities and being a pupil at a smaller school gives the opportunity to all, it is not competitive choosing only the strongest netball or football player, the best singer or most confident speaker for the Christmas play but allows all pupils to gain confidence and skills by giving all the opportunity to take part in all activities.

Smaller schools operate more like a community than a corporation. We have a greater sense of unity and belongingness, shared by the parents and staff/committee members/governors alike. Children do not go unnoticed.

This close-knit feel enables more opportunities for kids to participate. In larger schools and clubs, competition is fierce for the sought-after few spots on teams; those pupils/members who make the team gain a personal investment in the school, while those who don't make the teams—and their families, by extension—can feel side-lined.

In smaller schools the chance for student participation is recurrently higher because students are required rather than redundant; as a result, children in smaller schools/clubs and their families have more of a stake in their school/club.

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). This document has incorporated the key protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, sex, and sexual orientation.

The small rural school of Llanfihangel beneficial from a social standpoint—fewer students in the room make class participation inescapable, but also usually less intimidating.

The size of Llanfihangel promotes belongingness and it becomes difficult for kids to go unnoticed and slip through the proverbial cracks. The school encourages pupils to be accepting of the way people are such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. The school does not have a tiny mind. Its inclusive of protected characteristics and promotes different learning styles and abilities. Smaller numbers of students, a more intimate and personalised learning environment, and a cohesive vision among teachers.

Having read in detail the Council's draft assessment, April 2021, each and every answer to the key characteristics is a rewording on the statement "The proposal aims to provide improved educational opportunities for all affected pupils."



ALIGNMENT WITH POLICIES OF WELSH GOVERNMENT

WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

The statement is fundamentally flawed as each of the nearest schools or potential receiving schools have a lower educational attainment through ESTYN reports including lower attendance. The enforced closure will also affect the health and well being of all pupils, separating friendship groups and each child will have to form new relationships with Teachers, support staff and new class structures.

The consultation document identifies mixed age classes as a weakness in Llanfihangel Rhydithon School, however this is normal practice throughout the majority of the named potential receiving schools, even the larger ones such as Crossgates and Trefonnen.

New curriculum

It is stated in the consultation document that the alternative receiving schools such as Crossgates and the other schools are 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.

It is as wrong to assume that a small school cannot meet the full range of requirements of the National Curriculum as it is to assume that a large school can. Llanfihangel is at the forefront in implementing the new curriculum and is more than equipped to deliver the requirements of the new curriculum in the future.

Additionally, the categorisation system gives a clear and fair picture a school is performing compared with other schools across Wales. It also helps to identify the schools that need the most help, support and guidance to improve.

The support category for the potential alternative receiving schools Crossgates, Knighton, Llanbister, Cefnlllys are all yellow and Llanfihangel is green.



COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

BACKGROUND

The following is a Community Impact Assessment on the effect of the proposal to enforce closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon School

Powys County Council has brought forward a proposal to enforce closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon School in August 2022. This would have a detrimental effect to individuals, families, and the wider surrounding community. Llanfihangel Rhydithon School is the heart of the Community of Dolau and the surrounding area. It is a vibrant community with forward thinking, positive residents who support each other and have a strong community spirit.

Llanfihangel Rhydithon School is the last remaining rural school in East Radnorshire, to remove this educational facility, there would be a vast area of East Radnorshire with no options for educational opportunities.

This would result in a negative impact on the local economy and housing market. It is a recognised fact that a successful and vibrant school in the Community encourages young families into the area. Powys as a County has an aging population and young people leave the County for further Education and do not return.

However, the past pupils of Llanfihangel Rhydithon School had a solid inspired and most importantly enjoyable educational base to build on and have returned to the county and produce a high percentage of professional, economically productive, and socially responsible members of the Powys population, in comparison with other rural

areas where their school has been forced to close. The current and future pupils will also benefit from the proven overall ethos of the school.

Llanfihangel Rhydithon school has past pupils working throughout Powys as Entrepreneurs running their own businesses and employing local people supporting the local circular economy. There are Civil Engineers, Solicitors, Architects, Police Officers, Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors working within the Public and Private sectors in the County. Past pupils volunteer in many varied roles across the County and some have also undertaken socially responsible roles within Powys's political structure at a Local and County level.

The pupil numbers have increased since 2016, when the Authority last tabled this proposal, and the projection is for the number to continue to rise over the next 5 years.

The school is actually slightly above capacity, however on the advice of Council Officers an area of the school was refurbished into a storage/administrative area. This can be returned to its original condition by the Friends of Dolau School with no cost to Powys County Council.



COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

ACTIVITIES & FACILITIES

Within the consultation document it is stated that there would be 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'. It is clear that a wide range of extra-curricular activities are available to pupils at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.

The school provides the following after-school clubs and extra-curricular activities

- Weekly Key Stage 2 club featuring ICT, Art, and Cooking
- Weekly Welsh club
- Weekly Sports club and football club
- Choir
- Weekly drop-in sessions for reading and development
- Clwb Cymraeg
- Eco Club
- School Council
- Criw Cymraeg
- Music lessons

Whilst some of these clubs are run by staff and governors, some are run by community volunteers / parents and outside organisations. One of the primary arguments for large schools is the extracurricular diversity, or variety of classes, they offer, however is a wider diversity required at Llanfihangel?

The school accommodates or provides the following other facilities or services:

- Daily Breakfast Club
- Dolau Ti a Fi Club held on the site.
- Cylch Meithrin which is held on the site and has good links with the Foundation Phase.
- Community Library Bus
- Young Sports Ambassador Scheme
- Youth Club relies on pupils from the school.



COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

LINKS BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY

The school also provides a rural play space as the village has no communal play space other than the school.

The Community Hall is co-located on the same site as the School, the Community supported the school by fundraising and managing the build of the building to give the school much need indoor space for physical activity and lunch arrangements.

Dolau Recreation Association has 75 years of a 99-year lease remaining, giving the hall and its users access to the school grounds whilst an event is going on.

Other community activities that the school is involved in include:

- Local YFC use the school grounds and community hall.
- Community hall use the school grounds and car park.
- Youth Club use the school grounds.
- The community hall uses the school as a 'green room' for local shows and entertainment.
- The school's conservation area is used by all user groups and members of the community.
- The local WI and YFC hold meetings and the Youth Club, Cylch Meithrin and Ti a Fi use the grounds to learn about wildlife and the environment v)

Other links between the school and the community

- Harvest festival is held every September in the community hall. This involves the local vicar, members of the community and the pupils and staff of the school.
- Christmas Carols around the Christmas Tree is held every year in the school playground
- Dolau Christmas Fayre is held annually in the community hall. The pupils make items to sell at the event and pupils record songs and poems to sell.
- Annual Christmas Concert is held by the school in the community hall. It is a very popular and well attended event.
- Dolau Summer Fayre30
- Annual Sport Day which is held in a local farm field. This is well attended by the community, parents, and governors.
- The school participates in DRA events throughout the year e.g., games evenings quizzes, cinema - The school has close links to local businesses such as horse riding.
- Links with the local church magazine and with the local vicar who leads collective worship at the school.
- Liaisons with Dyfed Powys Police through the School Community Police Officer



COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

LINKS BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY

- Liaisons with Mid & West Wales Fire Service through visits from local firefighters
- Links with the local Eisteddfod in Llandrindod Wells
- Friends of Dolau School which work tirelessly to raise funds for the school to support buying resources to enable a full 21st Century curriculum.
- Links with local concerts, singing, poetry, instrumental etc.
- Links with local History Group and arts projects
- Dolau YFC & Dolau Youth club rely heavily on Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School for the vast majority of their new members, the majority of who go on to take up senior roles in the club, Chairman, Vice-Chair, Secretary etc
- Llandrindod Junior Silver Band consists of 14 members, a majority of those band members have been taught in Dolau School. The band attend and support lots of local events held within Llandrindod, Rhayader and Builth Wells.

This is not an exhaustive list and local organisations have been asked to provide statements on the effect that the enforced closure would have on their activities. These statements are detailed at Appendix 2.



THE EFFECTS OF THE CLOSURE OF NEIGHBOURING SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

In an effort to highlight the number of small schools which have been closed in Radnorshire in recent years, The Dolau School action group, with the help of children from Llanfihangel Rhydithon Primary School have created scarecrows as visual props to spread the plight of the school, far and wide. 'Have you seen the scarecrows across Powys?' was published in the Brecon and Radnor 12th May.

Small school closures on rural community's research found that closures not only create divisions between communities but lead to a reduction in parental and community involvement in school life. They diminish children's sense of community identity and result in a loss of community confidence and general decline in the quality of life.

We would think it only right and part of the Councils duty of care to those communities for research to have been carried out into the effect that their actions have had on communities and not least the effect that this has had on the pupils that are moved as a result of their policies and decision.

The following pages show the responses from the neighbouring communities of Beguildy, Nantmel and Llangunllo.



THE EFFECTS OF THE CLOSURE OF NEIGHBOURING SCHOOLS

THE EFFECTS OF THE CLOSURE OF BEGUILDY SCHOOL

The following is a statement from Beguildy Community Council

When the doors finally closed on Beguildy Church-in-Wales School on 31st December, 2013, it was the end of a vigorous campaign fought not just to save our school but to save our community. The official Community Impact Assessment (CIA) from the County Council (extracts quoted in table below) brushed aside arguments from Governors, Parents, Community councillors and the wider community that the closure of our rural school would mean that the community was losing not only its heart but its future.

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Former pupils scattered to five different schools, some across the border into England, not to the one school designated by the LA. The equation had seemed simple to the officials looking for a neat solution on paper; we had a small school and six miles away was a larger school in a less rural setting with surplus places so why not simply transfer those children as a block. For so many parents, themselves educated in a small rural school, the choice was understandable and simple: they wished their own children to have that unique experience and consequently, the neat solution, envisioned by the accountants and bureaucrats, was side-lined and thus began the breakup of the community as we knew it.

Our close-knit community where youngsters went to school together, grew together and shared their social lives has now fragmented. New friendships have formed in different catchment areas, pupils moved through the primary schools to different secondary schools, with their new friends, in areas further afield and alien to the previous generations.



THE EFFECTS OF THE CLOSURE OF NEIGHBOURING SCHOOLS

THE EFFECTS OF THE CLOSURE OF BEGUILDY SCHOOL

Social links outside school drew these young people away from previously thriving organisations in the valley, such as YFC, as new alliances were formed, leading to the predicted decline in membership.

The loss of the school has left a hole in our community. Social isolation, especially amongst the elderly, has increased. The physical buildings provided opportunities for cross generational mixing which was beneficial to old and young alike. The Cosy Café set up within in the school allowed senior citizens to mingle with young people, reducing their loneliness, keeping them young at heart and enabling the next generation to learn tolerance and understanding of their older neighbours. Fund raising events were also social opportunities which encouraged people to get to know one another, as were the celebrations of national events. The school grounds, as the only publicly owned land in the upper valley and offering catering and toilet facilities, were invaluable for communal activities.

Seven years on, the rapid deterioration of the school buildings and grounds, untended, unloved, derelict and silent, is a painful daily reminder of what we have lost. The school and its children brought life into the village. Officials, whether in Cardiff Bay or County Hall, must realise that a community is not represented by maps or statistics but by inter-related lives. We wonder what future our community now has. There is plenty of land available for development but, knowing that their children will have to travel out of the community for their education and may have less access to the broader after-school activities which enhance educational opportunities,

why would any young family choose to come and live amongst us?

The following is a review of the community impact statement comments and the reality

Statement 1

'Communities can remain vital and viable places even when their school closes - less than half of the pupils come from the village of Beguildy so the immediate impact on Beguildy itself is reduced.'

The reality

Our concerns about the future viability of the community to attract people with children and of working age were dismissed but have proved to be all too true. The last phrase betrays a wilful ignorance of a rural community which, by definition, draws its members from the homes and farmsteads scattered around the core settlement.

Statement 2

'The closure of the school will mean the loss of a community facility and an impact on village life. There are however other community facilities such as the church, the shop and the pub. Subject to the views of the Church in Wales, the school building could still be retained for community use if the school was to close.'

The reality

Our once thriving church is now open for occasional services and has an increasingly elderly and dwindling congregation. As a Church in Wales school, there had been close links between the school and the church. Harvest Suppers were

held in the school hall which was conveniently located for the church. The children contributed to all major festivals and this, of course, brought the parents and grandparents, who might not otherwise have considered themselves to be church-goers, through the doors.

The village shop benefited greatly from customers dropping in as they dropped off or collected pupils from school and, in turn, the community benefited from the opportunity the shop provided as a meeting place. That now has been lost and trade has declined. When the current owners retire it may signal the end of the shop as a going concern. The Church was clear that it had to deal with any disposal of its assets held in trust in accordance with the Charities Act which meant obtaining the best price and consequently the building and land were advertised for public sale.

Statement 3

'The Parent and Toddler Group could continue in the building or locally if the school closed.'

The reality

The central location of the school as a base for the Parent and Toddler Group was a unifying feature in the valley. Retaining use of the building was not possible as our expression of interest was ignored and there is no suitable alternative building in the village. Now, those parents from the southern end of the valley choose to send their pre-school children to Knighton rather than journey further up the valley to Felindre, thereby weakening the links between the upper and lower valley.

THE EFFECTS OF THE CLOSURE OF NEIGHBOURING SCHOOLS

THE EFFECTS OF THE CLOSURE OF NANTMEL SCHOOL

The following is a statement from a parent of an ex-Nantmel pupil

When Nantmel School closed in 2016 my two sons had to transfer to another local school. They settled after some time but that was not without huge emotional upheaval and a great deal of stress on our whole family. One of my son's maths levels went down on their report as he already found school difficult whilst my other son maintained his levels but found the whole situation difficult to deal with becoming very quiet and on one occasion in tears of sadness at the closure of the place where he really thrived.

Nantmel was already without a pub, shop or post office and so the school was the only place in the community providing social opportunities across the generations. Once the school shut those social opportunities stopped because there was no one left to organise them. The community essentially had to split depending which school they chose to send their child. Grandparents and other extended family members supported school events both practically and financially.

There were more extracurricular activities than there are now because of the time people were willing to give to their community. There are now no social gatherings in Nantmel leaving some of our older generation socially isolated and less opportunities for those extracurricular activities that enhanced learning opportunities. The same is likely to happen at Dolau.



THE EFFECTS OF THE CLOSURE OF NEIGHBOURING SCHOOLS

THE EFFECTS OF THE CLOSURE OF NANTMEL SCHOOL

A child-centred approach is key, but Nantmel School children said they wanted to stay at Nantmel, yet they were not listened to. Even though we are nearly 4 years on from Nantmel School closure my sons still both talk about the school and how they miss it. For the purposes of this I asked them why. One son said "there just weren't as many fights and arguments and the teachers always heard you. He explained further that since being in their new school he would have to ask the teacher for help more often because of the general noise level in the classroom so it has had a direct impact on his learning. When I asked my other son what he liked so much about Nantmel School he simply said, "Everybody knew one another, and everyone got on". It was village life, a strong community and a good school that we had, that we chose to be part of, which was creating happy, healthy, confident learners who had respect for each other and everyone around them. I can't understand why anyone would want to take that away.

Parent

The following is a statement from a Powys Teacher and parent of an ex-Nantmel pupil

I have read the proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon School with great sadness. My daughter Rose attended the school and I am a Secondary School teacher in Wales. The proposed closure seems to rest on two key reasons; financial and the low level of SEN provision in small Powys primary schools.

Financially I can appreciate that stretched resources put

pressure on smaller, older schools with low pupil numbers. But it is such a short term solution to the situation, and once taken is frighteningly irreversible. Like small cottage hospitals in the area there are strong arguments for closure but the reality produces a wasteland of provision and fails to cater for the needs of this specific rural community. Small schools are unfashionable at the moment, finances mean everything and the long term success of pupils from these schools seems lost in a plethora of data that hides the simple fact that pupils thrive and do better with smaller classes and closer relationships with other year groups, as in small primaries.

What is not unfashionable at the moment is a realisation that child confidence is at the heart of all child future attainment. These small schools build confidence far better than larger hub primaries where children travel miles on public transport to larger classes and year group segregated teaching. It is my firm opinion that even the data will prove soon that these schools provide a far better service than is currently acknowledged, and there will be a drive back towards smaller, more local educational policies. But by that time it will be too late.

Nantmel School closed and I see the loss of community that has occurred as a result. The complex web of social interactions that a local school provides is incalculable and it is shameful that this is not being taken into account on any level while these decisions are being made.

Provision of SEN is deemed to be inadequate in these small

schools. I would question the entire premise of this. SEN provision is patchier throughout the Welsh education sector than anyone will admit, funding levels mean the wrong pupils are targeted while those in need get left without support. In a small school such as Llanfihangel Rhydithon the teacher:pupil ratio mitigates the need for as many SEN staff and means the teachers know the pupils' needs in far greater detail and crucially, have the time to help them, which in classes of 30+ simply does not happen. I have seen this at first hand.

Finally the truth is that children thrive in these small schools. Closing them purely on financial grounds is short-sighted and ignores the needs of communities in a way that seems breathtakingly arrogant. If Covid 19 has taught us anything, surely it is the need for more local, small scale connections and institutions, not fewer?

THE EFFECTS OF THE CLOSURE OF NEIGHBOURING SCHOOLS

THE EFFECTS OF THE CLOSURE OF LLANGUNLLO SCHOOL

The following is a statement from residents / past pupils of Llangunllo School.

Llangunllo Community Impact Assessment

following closure of the school in 1984 Llangunllo School was closed by Powys County Council in 1984. There were 9 pupils studying there at the time of closure. All pupils were settled and happy. There were 2 additional children set to join the school at the time of closure. The nine children that were moved all went in different directions to new schools.

The effect this had on the children

One child went onto Llanbister School and did not settle well. Everyone had their own little groups and she always felt left out. At Llangunllo School they had not yet studied times tables, in Llanbister they already had and did not cover them again. This is something that she has always struggled with. You may say that this was insignificant, but it wasn't for this child, who always felt as though she were on the fringe of things at Llanbister. This has had long term impacts for this child.

One child went to Whitton School following closure. This was not a happy time, she took a long time to settle in and did not cope with the change well. She has not coped with change well since and struggles to deal with change in her work and home life. She was bullied, did not make good new friends and struggled to fit in. Since then she has struggled to integrate into new groups, always wanting to sit on the outside, where it is safe. Children do not adjust quite as the experts say they do. We have evidence of this right here.

There was no effort made by the Local Authority to adjust us to the change, there was no settling in period. Children do not just ADAPT.

Economic impacts

3 job losses due to the closure of the school.

Although the council saved money initially by closing the school, the retirees who moved into the village and required home help and social care in the years following surely outweighed the costs of the school running, which were in actual fact only transferred to Whitton school and in transporting children to Whitton and Llanbister schools. Short term effects on the community of Llangunllo

The school used to hold events in the church next door, this ceased when the school closed. The events used to attract more people than to usual services and therefore more collection money and participation. Numbers attending church dwindled. Community events such as the summer and Christmas fetes had less attendance. But the older generation (our grandparents generation) did all that they could to keep things going.

Medium term effects on the community of Llangunllo (5-10 years after closure)

Participation at the events list above decreased. It wasn't that families moved away, but young married couples didn't look for property in the village, instead moving to Knighton, Presteigne or Llandrindod Wells where their work was. There was no school to encourage them to stay in the village. The

only families that did stay were those who were able to build of family ground or on farms. These young families sought social groups and events in other communities and had less community involvement in Llangunllo.

Available property was snapped up by retirees, who could afford to pay more than local people. Most of these had very little community involvement.

Long term effects on the community of Llangunllo (ten to twenty years after closure)

Our grand parents generation had passed away, they were the ones that kept the village event going as long as they could. The church summer and Christmas fetes ceased. The Llangunllo summer show stopped due to poor attendance.

The Evergreen and WI clubs dwindled in numbers. Church attendance was at an all-time low. The Youth club was still going, but only as the club attracted children from as far as Knighton, Whitton and Bleddfa.

During the summer of 2012 the Diocese of Brecon called a community meeting on the proposed closure of Llangunllo church as the church committee felt they could not keep going. The community did rally and it is still open, but only because of the hard work of a few. The church wanted to sell the church hall.

The Hall committee had to take on the lease or the community would have lost it forever. This is what would happen in Dolau should you close the school. It has happened in other places also as stated in various papers.

WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

DOLAU PARENT AND TODDLER GROUP

The following is a statement from Dolau Parent and Toddler Group

On behalf of Dolau Parent and Toddler, we feel there will be a great impact on our group of Llanfihangel Rhydithon school closes and we have outlined our concerns below for you, your colleagues and councillors to take into consideration when making the decisions on the future of the school

- Isolation and loneliness is a growing problem in rural areas and particularly after having a new baby or moving to a new area. The group offers friendship and peer support and a chance to socialise and play.
- Feeling of isolation can leave you more susceptible to mental health problems like depression.
- Public transport in our rural location is a problem, therefore a local group is very important.
- Parents and grandparents bring their children to this group so they are familiar with the setting; they naturally step into Playgroup which is also run in the same Community Hall. It is a seamless transition from this group into Cylch Meithrin and onto the school.
- We arrange trips and have group outings which leads to social inclusion and provides parents with support they may need at difficult times

- If Llanfihangel Rhydithon School closed this will impact on our group as people will not feel the same allegiance to the community, older children will attend other schools meaning it is difficult to collect older children at the end of the school day as our group runs 1.30-3.30 pm.
- We are concerned for this groups future and the social and emotional benefits we provide for new and young mothers
- As the parents of preschool children, we feel we should be offered the choice of where our children are educated and small school should be part of this choice.



WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

CYLCH MEITHRIN DOLAU

The following is a statement from Cylch Meithrin Dolau

Cylch Meithrin Dolau provides seamless natural progression from Ti a Fi (Parent and Toddler Group 0-school age) to Cylch (pre-school), and then into the Reception class at Llanfihangel Rhydithon School

Due to high demand we have started a specific day just for 2 year olds to come to the setting, to gain independence, make friendships and begin learning through play in a structured setting. We have the capacity for 8 children and this is fully booked, with a waiting list.

Once the child turns 2 and half, and depending on if we have the capacity, they can attend Cylch Meithrin Dolau for 2 half days a week and can access the 3+ funding the term after they turn three. We currently have 8 children attending, 2 with 3+ Funded places.

5 of the 8 children currently attending our Cylch, have older siblings in Dolau School already, so if the school were to close, Cylch would lose those children to the receiving school / pre-school setting.

We have a great community support which has allowed us to set up this committee led provision, which has not been easy, but through it all we have provided a childcare service to the community.

We have been successful in gaining £10,000 grant from Powys County Council last year, for Cylch to make



WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

CYLCH MEITHRIN DOLAU

alterations to the portacabin on site at Dolau school. This brought us out of our temporary location at the village hall. This has meant that we now have a fully established and CIW registered setting in Dolau, providing friendly childcare, and introducing the children to the Welsh language with 100% of families having no Welsh spoken at home.

Cylch Meithrin Dolau employ 2 members of staff to run the setting, adding more money to the local economy. What is the future for these ladies, should the setting close as a result of the school closure?

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As soon as we were able to re-open after the initial COVID lockdowns, the children were so excited and desperate to return; and the parents happy to trust that their children were returning to a safe and nurturing bubble.

We operate the setting to coordinate with breakfast club at the school, this is working really well as parents/carers can do one drop off in the morning and carry on their day. We are mindful as a committee that parents are busy working, more than ever before, and we are trying to provide them with the tools to make life that bit easier.

Local residents and those from further away are supporting our Cylch Meithrin setting, by choosing to send their children, as we are a rural area. Although Crossgates School has a provision, they don't take children until they turn 3 years old, so there is a childcare gap. If you are unable to get to a nursery in town there were no other options for childcare. Parents are happy to pay for the sessions

compared to keeping them at home, as they can see benefits on the child's' personal development. It also may allow the parents/carers time to work child free and provides some adult interactions at the drop off and pick up times. When living rurally you may not see anyone else from day to day. Mental health and happiness, especially after a year of lock down, is not to be underestimated for our rural parents and carers, and the children who may lose out if this provision is affected by the closure of Dolau School.

The setting, although it's new, is flourishing and to see the waiting list in double numbers is a remarkable achievement. Looking at the babies in "Ti a Fi" only shows that the future is promising for our area. Dolau is a vibrant young community with lots of people willingly giving up their time to organise community events, and run community businesses like Cylch, and the village school really is the heart of it all. Without the school, young people will simply move to where school runs can be facilitated easier. At Dolau, children can participate in after school activities and are able to play with friends at school social events.

The closure of the school may not have an immediate effect on Cylch Meithrin Dolau, but I can guarantee with no footfall to school it will eventually be another nail in the community coffin.



WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

DOLAU YOUTH CLUB

The following is a statement from Dolau Youth Club

We are a group of children aged between ten and fifteen, who belong to Dolau Youth Club. All of us live in the village or the surrounding community, and every one of us apart from a few exceptions has been educated at Dolau Primary School. Our Youth Club has been in existence for nearly twenty five years, soon after the Dolau Community Centre was built, part funded by the children, parents and the outlying community.

Meeting twice a month, we enjoy a whole range of activities and learn many new skills, such as cooking, first aid, gardening and orienteering. We also get lots of physical exercise which includes bike rides, walks and sports evenings in the summer. All within a safe and nurturing environment.

All the children get a say in how the club is run, organising our own programme of activities and events. During the past few years we have successfully applied for grants obtained through PAVO, which we have used to develop and expand our club. Amongst other activities we were fortunate to have a workshop which took place through the summer months where we were all able to take part in silver jewellery making. Others skills that we have enjoyed taking part in, a first aid course run by St John's ambulance.

We are all aware how very lucky we are to live in Dolau and to have a Youth Club right on our doorstep. Our parents are very supportive, through supervision of our sessions and

support in running the club and without the local and wider community all our fundraising efforts would be in vain. We need to know how the club is going to survive if you take our school away? There is no Youth Club at Crossgates with the nearest been Llandrindod Wells nearly ten miles away. Many children who attend Crossgates are from outside that community therefore they have no ties to the local area after school has finished, no child or parent feels part of the community. We do not have that problem in Dolau. The school at Llanfihangel Rhydithon is and always will be an integral part of the community, every child that has been educated at Dolau school has then moved into Youth Club and then onto other Youth organisations within the village. The closure of the school will have a devastating and irreversible impact on both our club and the village.



WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

DOLAU YOUNG FARMERS CLUB

The following is a statement from Dolau YFC

We are a group of young people aged 10 to 28 years, who are members of Dolau Young Farmers Club. We all live in the village or surrounding areas, meeting on a weekly basis to develop a wide range of skills, including public speaking, team building, educational and life skills. We also compete regularly in county, Wales, and National competitions against other young people. Our Young Farmers club has been at the centre of the community for the past 71 years and is supported greatly by a wide variety of the local community. The majority of our 40 members are past Dolau School pupils.

The club is run by our members, who plan a wide range of activities, training, and trips. We have been greatly impacted by the Covid pandemic over the past 15 months as we have been unable to meet as a club, organise any training or hold any fundraising events. As we are still yet to meet in person, we are unsure of the impact the pandemic has had on our member's mental health and wellbeing.

Should the school close, this would have a greater impact on our club, with members naturally progressing through the school and onto their local young farmers group.

We are concerned that should the school close, younger children will attend school elsewhere, make friendships in those areas and then go to other young farmer's clubs available. Without a school in the village, young families are less likely to move to the area as there will be nothing in Dolau to draw them to the local community.

With no school in the community, those with children are likely to move out of the village, leaving fewer young people to become members. As homes become available in the area, they are more likely to be occupied by older people who will not be of an age to attend either. The school pupils regularly support the club by making crafts for our carnival float, being on our carnival float and supporting our events.

As a club, we regularly use the school's outside space for sports and community activities. Without a school there, there is a risk we will not have the outdoor space to use. We also use the school carpark for our members to park for meetings, which may not be available to us in the future.

In conclusion, we really implore you to reconsider the future of our school in Dolau as it really is a valuable part of our community and the future of our club.



WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

DOLAU MIXTURES

The following is a statement from Dolau Mixture

The Dolau Mixture is a mixed choir with twenty-four members. The choir meets once a week in Dolau Community Hall within the curtilage of Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School.

All members of the choir are very concerned at the County Council's proposals to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon School which sits at the heart of our small community.

The choir has held its weekly practice in the Community Hall since its construction in 1997 and pays a weekly hire charge for the Hall. Powys County Council promoted a very successful partnership between the community and school that enabled the multi-use community hall to share its accommodation with the school and satisfy the statutory requirements for hall accommodation for the school.

This partnership between the school and the community has enabled a very successful choir to hire excellent accommodation within the community at an affordable price.

The choir fears that if the school were to close there would be significant reduced use of the hall during the day – a time when community use demand is low. This reduced use and income will inevitably lead to significant demands for existing users to pay greatly increased hire fees – probably at a figure that would no longer be affordable and thereby leading to the disbandment of the choir.

The Choir considers that the County Council in its Consultation Document has failed to identify the social costs of closing a well-established and successful community school in a sparsely populated but socially active area. Closure would have a significant detrimental impact on the whole community and not just families with young children.



WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

FRIENDS OF DOLAU SCHOOL

The following is a statement from Friend of Dolau School

Friends of Dolau School(FODS)are a fundraising committee for Llanfihangel Rhydithon (Dolau) school.

As a committee we work tirelessly to raise funds for the children to enjoy things not covered by the school budget. We have purchased several items and supported many trips, some examples of what we have purchased are:
Interactive white boards, Ipads, laptops, playground equipment, Christmas trips, subsidise the swimming bus, educational trips, Christmas gifts, easter eggs and extra resources needed by the school.

The committee is made up of parents of the children in the school, we have raised a considerable amount of money over the years.

In 2017/18 - £13,949

In 2018/19 - £8005

In 2019/20 - £2352 (due to covid less money was able to be raised this year.)

The community in Dolau is fantastic and as a committee we are saddened and disappointed to hear of your closure plans, the community and committee work closely and always pull together to run events and provide for our children in Dolau school. Due to our fundraising efforts we have saved the school a considerable amount and ensured our children get all the items they need to assist the teachers in delivering first class education such as a laptop per child and interactive white boards.

FODS also maintain the grounds and eco garden at the school, which enhances the learning environment for the children. We provide support and refreshments at school events where needed, for example at sports day.

As mentioned before Dolau is a very close community and over the years FODS have provided many social events for the children and their families. This provides a sense of community ownership to them all, something which will be greatly missed should you go ahead with your proposal.

Due to covid restrictions we were unable to fundraise much throughout 2020 but we have held 3 fundraising events this year since lockdown restrictions were eased and raised a considerable amount of money, a testament to just how committed our committee and community are in raising funds for our children.



WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

WEST RADNOR MINISTRY AREA

The following statement is from Rev. Andrew Perrin
Ministry Area Leader for the West Radnor Ministry Area.

I write to give my wholehearted support for Llanfihangel Rhydithon School in its aim to become a Church in Wales school.

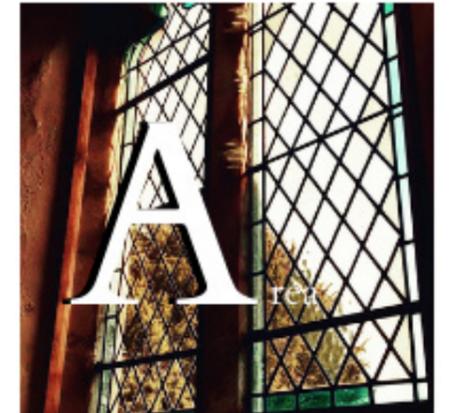
Since my arrival as the priest of the parish, some seven years ago, in which the school resides, I have been impressed, moved and humbled by its place as a focal point for the community that it serves. To use the words of the Estyn report "The school is a happy, caring community in which pupils thrive as confident, capable learners. Their behaviour in and around the school is exemplary." I have had the honour to experience this first-hand through my leading of assemblies in the school, working with the children in a number of the parish churches and many of them attend the Sunday School at St. Tecla's Church, Llandegley.

Its place in the community brings people together as a family, and I do not say that lightly, many of the children's parents and grandparents attended the school and this really comes to the fore when community and school come together. I have been fortunate to witness the sharing of knowledge, joy and togetherness and this contributes greatly to a "happy, caring community" in which all thrive in every way.

I feel as a Church we have a duty to foster and maintain communities, my prayer, is that we can continue to do this by helping this school to maintain its place in the community it serves. I cannot stress enough the importance of this school to the children in their learning, development and awareness of community in every way.

The school motto "Developing Our Learning And Understanding" DOLAU

Let's not lose this opportunity to make a difference, to Learn, to Develop our Understanding of the significance of what this school dose for the children and the community, so I encourage to approve their application.



SUMMARY

This impact assessment was undertaken by the Llanfihangel Rhydithon C P School Action Group on behalf of the Dolau community. It was conducted because the proposals presented by Powys County Council (PCC) lacked a full assessment of the potential impact of closing Llanfihangel Rhydithon C P School on the community of Dolau.

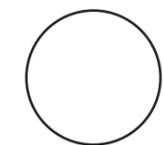
Having studied Powys County Council's proposal from 2016 and the proposal being put forward now at length, there is no new information or redefined need to continue with the proposal at this stage. Welsh Government have also used Llanfihangel Rhydithon School as an exemplar rural school, fully supported by Powys County Council.

Llanfihangel Rhydithon school has increased in pupil numbers and is projected to continue to do so. It was inspected by ESTYN in 2019 and was categorised as green in all elements of the inspection. All the schools listed by the local Authority as "the nearest alternative school" are consistently achieving lower ratings than our school, with poorer attendance and lower achievements.

The document has outlined the strong, well established links between the wider Dolau community and Llanfihangel Rhydithon School. This clearly promotes supports and reinforces much that is represented by the criteria set out in Welsh Government and Powys CC policies.



MAP OF LOCAL SCHOOLS (WITHOUT DOLAU)
A large area of East Radnorshire will become an educational wilderness.

 **5 mile radius from school**

SUMMARY

Llanfihangel Rhydithon School is a warm and welcoming environment where children thrive not only educationally but socially creating confident and well round pupils. They are receiving a high standard of education with the attendance rate being one of the highest in Powys. The past pupils of Llanfihangel Rhydithon School had a solid inspired and most importantly enjoyable educational base to build on. The Dolau School Action Group has produced a video outlining the success of past pupils to sit alongside this document.

We have shown robust evidence from the experience of other local school closures in Nantmel, Beguildy and Llangunllo that closures not only create division between communities but lead to a reduction in parental and community involvement in school life. They diminish children's sense of community identity and result in a loss of community confidence and general decline in the quality of life.

To conclude, following an analysis of the information collected above, it is abundantly clear that the closure and loss of Llanfihangel Rhydithon School would have an irreversible and detrimental effect on the social, environmental and economic well-being of the village of Dolau and surrounding area.

Llanfihangel Rhydithon School is a forward thinking proactive exemplar of a Powys School and its at the heart of the Dolau Community. Powys County Council proposals should exist to strengthen communities such as Dolau and not to diminish them.





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We are Dolau, We are Proud



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