



Neuadd y Sir / County Hall, Llandrindod, Powys, LD1 5LG

QUESTIONS AT ANY TIME TO CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Response by the Portfolio Holder:

The proposal is to close Churchstoke C.P. School and for pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative school in Powys. This is to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to access the Curriculum for Wales. Pupils living in Churchstoke could also apply for a place at their nearest Welsh-medium school, and transport would be provided to enable them to access this provision, therefore contributing to the aims of the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

Due to Churchstoke's location, it is recognised that some parents may choose for their children to attend alternative provision in England rather than the nearest provision in Powys, which would mean that they would not access the Welsh curriculum. In some cases, this provision may be located closer to a pupil's home than the nearest Powys based provision. Should this be the case, Powys County Council's current home to school transport policy would require the Council to provide free home to school transport for those pupils to their nearest school.

The financial information provided as part of the proposal to close the school was based on the provision of transport to current pupils' nearest school in Powys. It is difficult to estimate how many pupils would qualify for free transport to schools outside Powys, the annual cost of providing a new transport route is estimated at between £32,300 and £43,700.

Many concerns that pupils would access provision in England instead of accessing their closest school in Powys were raised during the recent consultation exercise carried out in respect of Churchstoke C.P. School. A Consultation Report is being prepared which lists and responds to these concerns. This will be published in due course, and will be published by the Council's Cabinet, who will determine whether or not to proceed with the proposal.

The Council intends to review the Transport Policy again in 2022. The Council is committed to retaining as many of its learners in Powys, notwithstanding parental choice.