



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

QUESTIONS AT ANY TIME TO CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Response by the Portfolio Holder:

Nobody in a role within the council is saying that “small schools cannot deliver the new curriculum” or even implying that. What is being said is that it will be more challenging for a teacher who teaches 3 or 4 year groups at a time to deliver the change that is needed. We are yet to meet a professional who would not concur with this view – and our trades unions are concerned about the workload in schools with teaching heads and multiple year groups in each class. The local authority has put in place a structure to support all of our schools – of whatever size – and we are getting on with that job. However, it is far more challenging for our smallest schools to engage, compared with those schools that have an individual member of staff responsible for a single area of learning and experience for the whole school, rather than a single teacher leading on all six AoLEs for an entire key stage (as schools are currently configured).

The Strategy sets out the council’s ambition to move to 13 all-through schools (one in each locality), however, it recognises that there are a number of phases to move through to achieve this vision.

The school organisation code has been and continues to be followed for all proposals (part of our phasing to deliver the strategy) including the options that have been considered.

Brecon Programme Business Case (PBC) was considered by Cabinet on the 29th September 2020. Link to the papers: [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 29th September, 2020, 2.00 pm Cyngor Sir Powys County Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

The Brecon PBC is item 8 on the agenda; link to the actual business case document:

<https://powys.modern.gov.co.uk/documents/s53100/Appendix A - Brecon Catchment PBC.pdf>

Within section 3.4 the long-list of options includes options to establish an all-through school in Brecon – see options 5A, 5B and 5C. You will see that option 5A, which included establishing an all-through school in Brecon, was carried forward as a shortlisted option, however this was not the preferred option at that time. The business case does suggest though that the all-age model could be adopted at a later date (see the last paragraph of section 3.9.2).

The long-list of options in section 3.4 also includes options to rebuild a school in Cradoc.

Therefore regarding consideration of options as part of the process, options were identified and considered when developing the proposal, these are listed in the

consultation document. There was then an opportunity for consultees to suggest alternative options during the consultation period. New options were suggested during this phase of the process, and these were considered in the consultation report. The option to establish a 'classroom in the country' was not suggested during this phase.

There is no difference of a 'classroom in the country' to having a 'small rural school'; the pressures heading up small schools with lack of numbers to specialise, dealing with leadership, management, additional learning needs is overwhelming without the increased expectations around the new curriculum. Once again it will be more challenging for a teacher who teaches 3 or 4 year groups at a time to deliver the change that is needed. Furthermore, building stock is old, getting worse and we need to reduce the number of buildings.

To conclude, decisions are made by the Cabinet following consideration of the evidence presented and advice given by officers who have spent careers managing the learning and well-being of children and young people. These officers are not working in isolation and continue to work with Head Teachers from across Powys to deliver the cohesive vision for learning and well-being which was developed after extensive engagement with the schools' community.