

Public Document Pack

Cabinet

Meeting Venue
Hybrid meeting - Zoom - County Hall

Meeting date
Tuesday, 19 December 2023

Meeting time
10.00 am

For further information please contact
Stephen Boyd
01597 826374
steve.boyd@powys.gov.uk



County Hall
Llandrindod Wells
Powys
LD1 5LG

13/12/2023

Mae croeso i chi siarad yn Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg yn y cyfarfod.
Rhowch wybod pa iaith rydych am ei defnyddio erbyn hanner dydd, ddau ddiwrnod gwaith cyn y cyfarfod.
You are welcome to speak Welsh or English in the meeting.
Please inform us of which language you wish to use by noon, two working days before the meeting.

AGENDA

1.	APOLOGIES
-----------	------------------

To receive apologies for absence.

2.	MINUTES
-----------	----------------

To authorise the Chair to sign the minutes of the last meeting held on 21 November 2023 as a correct record.

(Pages 3 - 6)

3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
-----------	---------------------------------

To receive any declarations of interest from Members relating to items to be considered on the agenda.

4.	LLANGEDWYN CHURCH IN WALES SCHOOL CONSULTATION REPORT
-----------	--

To consider a report by County Councillor Pete Roberts, Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys.

(Pages 7 - 198)

5.	TREASURY MANAGEMENT QUARTER 2 REPORT
-----------	---

To consider a report by County Councillor David Thomas, Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation.

(Pages 199 - 214)

6.	DELEGATED DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST MEETING
-----------	---

To note the delegated decisions taken since the last meeting.

(Pages 215 - 216)

7.	FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
-----------	-------------------------------

To consider the Cabinet forward work programme.

(Pages 217 - 218)

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD COUNTY HALL AND ON ZOOM
ON TUESDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2023**

PRESENT

County Councillor M Dorrance (Chair)

County Councillors J Berriman, J Brignell-Thorp, J Charlton, R Church, S Cox,
S C Davies, P Roberts, D Selby and D A Thomas

In attendance: County Councillors J Brignell Throp, Aled Davies and Aled Davies

1.	APOLOGIES
-----------	------------------

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors J Gibson-Watt (Chair) and A Kennerley (Cabinet Assistant)

2.	MINUTES
-----------	----------------

The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the last meeting held on 24th October 2023 as a correct record.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
-----------	---------------------------------

There were no declarations of interest reported.

4.	COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2024-2025
-----------	---------------------------------------

Cabinet considered a report on the Council Tax base for 2024-25. County Councillor Aled Davies, Chair of the Finance Panel reported that the Panel had expressed concerns over the Welsh Government's proposals for changes to the council tax system. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation noted that the proposals were currently out for consultation and that the Council would be monitoring them closely.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the calculation of the Council Tax Base for the whole of its area for the year 2024-25 of 64,536.48 be approved.**
- 2. That the calculation of the Council Tax Base for each Town and Community Council contained within 4.2 above, be approved to meet the legal requirement of the Council to set a Council Tax Base for 2024-25.**

5.	FINANCIAL FORECAST FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2024 (AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2023)
-----------	--

Cabinet considered the revenue report for the second quarter. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation acknowledged the concerns of the Finance Panel over the financial position of schools reported by the Chair of the Panel, County Councillor Aled Davies but noted that this was an issue faced by schools across the country.

Cabinet also noted that pay claims had put pressure on the budget and that the council would have to reshape its service offer and staffing profile to manage within its means.

RESOLVED

- 1. That Cabinet note the current budget position and the projected full year forecast to the end of March 2024.**
- 2. That the grants set out in section 5.1 of the report are noted.**
- 3. The virements set out in section 5.2 are approved, to comply with the virement rules for budget movements as set out in the financial regulations.**
- 4. The virement set out in section 5.3 is recommended to Council for approval to comply with the virement rules in the financial regulations for requests over £500,000.**

6.	CAPITAL FORECAST 2023-24, AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2023
-----------	--

Cabinet considered the capital report for quarter 2. The revised programme at the 30th September 2023 was budgeted at £96.32 million following the successful award of additional grants and the reprofiling of budgets between financial years. Actual spend amounted to £22.85 million, representing 24% of the total budget. Officers would follow up on a request made by the Chair of the Finance Panel for information.

RESOLVED that the report is noted.

7.	THE COUNCIL'S USE OF SURVEILLANCE UNDER THE REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 2022-2023
-----------	--

Cabinet considered a report on the council's use of covert surveillance under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) for 2022-2023 and noted that the council had not undertaken any directed covert surveillance, nor had it authorised the use of a covert human intelligence source.

The report also set out a revised RIPA policy and a newly developed non RIPA policy.

The Council's Senior Manager for Customer Services and Information Governance, Helen Dolman, was thanked for her work.

RESOLVED

- 1. To note that the Council has not utilised RIPA in the financial year 2022/23 and the activity undertaken in response to the Commissioner's report.**

2. To approve the revised RIPA Policy as set out in Appendix A to the report to take immediate effect.
3. To approve the newly developed non-RIPA Policy and procedures as set out in Appendix B to the report to take immediate effect.

8.	CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING BOARD ACTIVITY REPORT
----	---

The Interim Director of Social Services and Housing presented the activity report from the Corporate Safeguarding Board as chair of the Board. The Cabinet Member for a Safer Powys encouraged councillors, officers and the public to take part in the White Ribbon marches taking place on 25th November.

9.	DELEGATED DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST MEETING
----	---

Cabinet noted the delegated decisions taken by portfolio holders since the last meeting.

10.	FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
-----	-------------------------------

Cabinet noted the forward work programme. Cabinet members and Heads of Service were asked to ensure that it was kept updated.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for a Fairer Powys was pleased to report that the Council had provisionally secured over £17.7 million of Levelling Up Funding from UK Government to promote recreational tourism in the county through transport investment.

11.	EXEMPT ITEMS
-----	---------------------

RESOLVED to exclude the public for the following item of business on the grounds that there would be disclosure to them of exempt information under category 3 of The Local Authorities (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007).

12.	ERC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS
-----	---

County Councillor Angela Davies, Chair of the Economy Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee presented the Committee's recommendations on the sale of a property. The Committee had found no grounds for referring the decision back to the Cabinet but had made five recommendations, three of which the Cabinet fully accepted, one which it partially accepted and one which it rejected.

The Chair thanked the ERC Committee for its work.

13.	POWYS OWNED CARE HOMES
-----	-------------------------------

Cabinet considered a confidential report on Powys owned care homes.

RESOLVED to approve the recommendations in the report.

**County Councillor M Dorrance
Chair**

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.**CABINET EXECUTIVE
19 December 2023**

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Pete Roberts
Portfolio Holder for a Learning Powys

REPORT TITLE: Llangedwyn C. in W. School – Consultation Report

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Further to the decision made by Cabinet on the 10th October 2023, the Council has carried out consultation on the following proposal:
- To close Llangedwyn C. in W. School from the 31st August 2024, with pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School
- 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 Governors and Staff
 - Appendix D – Updated Impact Assessments

2. Background

- 2.1 Llangedwyn C. in W. School is a small English-medium primary school located in the village of Llangedwyn in the Llanfyllin catchment area of North Powys.
- 2.2 It currently operates as part of a formal federation with Llanfechain C. in W. School. Ffederasiwn Dwy Afon was established in 2018. The Federation has a single governing body and headteacher that are responsible for both schools.
- 2.3 Pupil numbers at Llangedwyn C. in W. School have decreased significantly over recent years. Current pupil numbers at the school are as follows¹:

¹ Teacher Centre, 30th November 2023

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	7

2.4 In the Summer of 2022, the Council updated and relaunched its Strategy for Transforming Education², and also published a work programme for Wave 2 of implementation of the Strategy. This includes a commitment to restart and conclude the review of the Llanfyllin / North Welshpool catchment, which commenced in 2020. This restarted in April 2023.

2.5 In September 2023, the Council’s Cabinet considered a paper which outlined the findings of the review and presented an indicative preferred way forward. The preferred way forward included the possible closure of Llangedwyn C. in W. School, however this would be subject to the Statutory Process as outlined in the School Organisation Code (2018).

2.6 The paper considered by Cabinet included a recommendation that a proposal paper is prepared in respect of the closure of Llangedwyn C. in W. School, for consideration by Cabinet in October 2023.

2.7 On the 10th October 2023, Cabinet considered a proposal paper in respect of Llangedwyn C. in W. School, and approved the following recommendation:

‘It is recommended that Cabinet approves commencing the statutory process on the following proposal:

- To close Llangedwyn C. in W. School from the 31st August 2024, with pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School.’

2.8 Consultation has subsequently been carried out, as agreed by Cabinet.

The Consultation Period

2.9 Consultation on the proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School commenced on the 12th of October 2023 and ended on the 23rd of November 2023.

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 Available at <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/9344/Transforming-Education-Strategy>

- 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, meetings were held with staff and governors of Llangedwyn C. in W. 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).
- 2.13 In addition, the Headteacher of Llangedwyn C. in W. School spoke with pupils about the proposal. Their comments are included in the Consultation Report (Appendix B).

Consultation Responses

- 2.14 24 respondents completed the online response form which was available on the Council's website. In addition, 6 respondents completed paper versions of the response form. 3 other written responses were received, which included responses from Estyn and the Governing Body of Ffederasiwn Dwy Afon.
- 2.15 Estyn's response to the consultation is provided on page 13 of the Consultation Report (Appendix B).

Consultation Findings

- 2.17 The findings of the consultation are provided in full in the Consultation Report (Appendix B) and are summarised below.
- 2.18 Of the 30 respondents that completed the online and paper version of the response form, 86.67% indicated that they were associated with Llangedwyn C. in W. School.
- 2.19 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 16 onwards, along with the Council's response to those issues.
- 2.20 The issues raised relate to the following headings:
1. Comments about Llangedwyn school
 2. Impact on pupils
 3. Impact on pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups
 4. Impact on staff
 5. Impact on the community
 6. Impact on families
 7. Comments about travel/transport arrangements
 8. Comments about Church in Wales provision

9. Comments about small/rural schools
10. Comments about other schools
11. Comments about finance / funding
12. Criticism of the Council's treatment of Llangedwyn School
13. Comments about the process
14. Comments about the presumption against closing rural schools
15. Comments about the documentation
16. Alternative options
17. Comments about impact on the Welsh language
18. Comments in support of the proposal
19. Other comments

Governing Body response

2.21 The consultation response received from the Governing Body of Ffederasiwn Dwy Afon requested commitment to a number of aspects. These are included and responded to in the Consultation Report (Appendix B), but are also included here:

Governing Body request	Council response
<p>We have highlighted the value that Llangedwyn has provided to ALN pupils over many decades. There is little ALN provision in North Powys, hence the importance of the ALN support given by the school. The withdrawal of that should the school close will cause concern in the community. The Governing body seek assurances that the Authority have plans to address this shortfall and that it will feature in any recommendation made to the Cabinet.</p>	<p>Whilst recognising the support Llangedwyn C. in W. School has provided to pupils with ALN over the years, Llangedwyn is a mainstream school and does not have any specialist facilities to support children with additional learning needs compared with other mainstream schools.</p> <p>All schools are expected to cater to the needs and requirements of learners with Additional Learning Needs, while also ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and ensuring that learners are not discriminated against as per the directions in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Smaller schools with limited resources and personnel may be presented with challenges implementing responsibilities in line with the Equality Act – including providing diverse support systems, accommodations and bespoke services necessary to</p>

	<p>meet the diverse needs of learners. In addition, social interaction is key to development. In small classes, there are fewer opportunities for learners with ALN to interact with a diverse peer group, and experience role modelling from their peers. In essence, the effectiveness of an educational environment for learners with ALN depends on a holistic approach that includes both class size and the availability of appropriate resources and support.</p> <p>The Council recognises that, due to the geographic nature of the county, the current provision of specialist support for pupils with ALN may not be fully accessible to all pupils. To address this, the Council has started providing satellite provision of the main Special Schools in key strategic locations within the county where there is a lack of local provision. The Council's ALN Strategy will be reviewed in early 2024 in order to ensure that it is appropriate to meet the needs of pupils with ALN wherever they are located within the county.</p>
<p>The Authority's future plans indicate that they would wish to consider closing Ysgol Bro Cynllaith at some time in the future and that Ysgol Llanrhaeadr will move along the Welsh language continuum. Should this take place there will be no English primary provision in the Tanat valley. This will mean that parents may choose to take their children to England and in the long term may deter families from moving to the valley. The Governing Body wish to understand how officers</p>	<p>Whilst the Council's preferred way forward for the Llanfyllin catchment includes the closure of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith and supporting Ysgol Llanrhaeadr to move along the language continuum, there are statutory processes which would need to be undertaken to implement both of these changes. The impact on access to English-medium education would be considered at that time, if appropriate.</p>

<p>will deal with this issue in their recommendations to Cabinet.</p>	
<p>If pupils are to be transferred to Llanfechain the Governing Body seek assurance from officers that a commitment to fund additional classroom capacity at Llanfechain prior to the closure of Llangedwyn will be included in recommendations to the Cabinet.</p>	<p>The capacity of Llanfechain C. in W. School is 47, and they currently have 44 pupils on roll. However, Llanfechain have the largest numbers in years 5 and 6, and numbers thereafter per year group are lower.</p> <p>On the basis that projected pupil numbers for Llanfechain are also projected to decrease, we don't anticipate that any additional accommodation would be needed. However if needed, the Council would discuss with the school's governing body to understand how the pupils could be accommodated at the school.</p>
<p>Various Authority Transformation reports have highlighted the maintenance backlog at Llanfechain. Given that the Authority's current proposal for a new build would appear to at the best 5 years away, we would like to have assurance from the Authority that officers will commit to a detailed and funded programme to address the building condition at Llanfechain in their recommendations to Cabinet.</p>	<p>The Authority has a duty to maintain the building condition of all its schools. Llanfechain will be included in the Schools Major Improvements Programme as required. Work to provide additional fencing and lockable access gates is already being prioritised within the Programme.</p>

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 Llangedwyn C. in W. School by publishing a Statutory Notice.
- 3.2 The reasons for the proposal are:

- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School
 - Would increase pupil numbers at Llanfechain C. in W. School
 - Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools
 - Revenue saving to the Council
 - The Council would no longer need to maintain the Llangedwyn building
 - Pupils would attend a larger school where they would be part of a larger cohort of pupils
 - Pupils would transfer to a school they are already familiar with
 - Pupils would continue to access Church in Wales provision
- 3.3 It is anticipated that the Statutory Notice would be published in January 2024, and that a further report, summarising any objections received, will be considered by Cabinet in March 2024.
- 3.4 The target date to implement the closure of Llangedwyn C. in W. School is 31st August 2024.

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 £56.4k. This overall figure comprises a potential saving on Schools' delegated funding of over £91.0k and estimated additional transport costs of £34.6k. The proposal is expected to have no impact on the costs of delivering a catering service.
- 4.2 Llangedwyn C. in W. School is currently projecting a carry forward deficit of £31k at the end of financial year 2023-24 rising to a cumulative deficit of £177k by 31 March 2026.
- 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 and the governing body of the school have been working on a draft agreement which includes spending restrictions. The budget position by September 2024 is estimated to be as follows:

	2023-24	2024-25
In year Surplus/(Deficit)	(20,305)	(26,443)
Bfwd Balance	3,596	(16,709)
Cfwd Balance	(16,709)	(43,152)

- 4.4 Based on the current school condition data report it would cost approximately £90k to bring the building up to current standards, however this figure is expected to rise due to construction industry inflation experienced. If the proposal is implemented this cost would be avoided.
- 4.5 The building is in the ownership of the Diocese of St Asaph. It is likely that there may be some costs related to the building disposal service so that it can be transferred back to the Diocese. This would be in the region of £10k (based on costs of disposing other school buildings recently) and would be a one-off cost funded from the Council's Corporate Transformation budget.
- 4.6 Implementation of the proposal would require involvement from a number of service areas, including staff from the Schools Service, Finance, HR and ICT. These service areas will be kept informed of the development of the proposal throughout the statutory process.
- 4.7 Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) notes the report and supports the recommendations. The spending restrictions included in the deficit recovery agreement will ensure that the deficit is limited as much as possible.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Legal: The recommendations can be supported from a legal point of view
- 5.2 The Head of Legal Services and the Monitoring Officer has commented as follows: "I note the legal comment and support the recommendations."

6. Climate Change & Nature Implications

- 6.1 Implementation of the proposal would impact on travel arrangements for pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School. This could have a negative environmental impact, as additional home to school transport would need to be provided to transport pupils to their nearest alternative school. However, Llangedwyn is not currently the closest school for the majority of pupils attending the school, so the number of pupils impacted by this would be minimal – it is possible that there would be a reduction in travel for some pupils.

6.2 In addition, running a single school site would be more environmentally friendly than running two, due to a reduction in the use of heating and electricity amongst other factors.

7. **Data Protection**

N/A

8. **Comment from local member(s)**

Cllr Aled Davies, Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant / Llangedwyn / Llansilin:

It is always emotionally difficult for a small community when their school is under threat of closure and it is even more difficult when the Councils kicks all planned investment in local schools so far into the future it is impossible to see. This lack of investment will leave another generation of children in schools which are not fit for the 21st Century because of the backlog of maintenance issues and sub-standard facilities that they have. Generations of Llangedwyn children, parents, residents, governors, teachers and vicars have fought for the school over decades, to many to name all but I will mention a couple; John, Maureen, Peter, Debi, Catherine and more recently Norman, the community do thank you for your dedication.

I would like to thank the Head Teacher, Catherine Hart and Chair of Governors, Chris Richards for their leadership during this difficult time, they are passionate about protecting the wellbeing of the pupils and their staff. It is important that the minutes of the Governor/Powys CC officer meeting are noted, it is an honest discussion and assessment of the challenges that we all face. There are comments by the Director of Education about the impact of school size on the care, support and nurture of children and also comments on the provision of the 'national curriculum'. The funding formula is also referenced and its negative impact on Llangedwyn but the reality is that all schools currently face financial challenges, because the overall quantum of funding is insufficient for all of our schools. This was made significantly worse by the Cabinet's deliberate decision not to fund all the pressures within the delegated budget.

The criticism of staff and governors in one or two of the consultation comments are grossly unfair, and I know they are not shared by the majority of the community. There are criticisms made by Estyn flowing out of the consultations which haven't been fully addressed in the report. The analysis of the pupils travel patterns is also lacking.

But now it is time to accept the reality that there are simply not enough children in the Llangedwyn school catchment to sustain the school, with schools less than 4 miles away to the east and to the west, Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant and Llansilin and just over 4 miles away in

the Cain and Vyrnwy valleys there is provision in Llanfyllin, Llanfechain and Llansantffraid. In such a small school it is difficult to deliver the ideal education for our children and places an intolerable burden on the Leadership within that school. Even with financial support for each pupil 3 times the average within Powys it is still not possible to produce a balanced budget. I know change difficult but I have no doubt that such small numbers in a school is not beneficial for the children's education in the long term and that closure of Llangedwyn school is the right decision, I do support the recommendations.

The Cabinet in the previous Council pre May 2022 were committed to school transformation driven by investment in the schools. In the Llanfyllin catchment a series of new builds were planned, a new build in Ysgol Llanfyllin, additional ALN investment with a 'satellite Cedewain' based at Llanfyllin, a new build in Llansantffraid-ym Mechain to deliver extra CiW capacity, investment in the Welsh language. But now the current Liberal Democrat/Labour Cabinet have pulled that investment, where once there was a policy of 'investment and transformation' we now have a policy of 'slash and burn'.

Because of this negative attitude that the current Cabinet has towards education and my lack of trust that I have in the Cabinet who stood on an election platform less than 2 years ago with a promise of fighting for our small rural schools, it is difficult for me to support the recommendation, but it is the right decision as I do trust the analysis of the Education Officer team at Powys CC.

9. Impact Assessment

- 9.1 An initial impact assessment was considered by Cabinet on the 10th of October 2023.
- 9.2 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.
- 9.3 These draft impact assessments have been updated to reflect issues raised during the consultation period, and are attached in Appendix D.
- 9.4 The Overall Summary from the Impact Assessment is as follows:

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 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 Llangedwyn due to loss of educational provision from the village.

10. Recommendation

- i) To receive the Consultation Report in respect of the proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School
- ii) To approve the publication of a statutory notice proposing closure of Llangedwyn C. in W. School from the 31st August 2024, with pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School

Contact Officer:	Sarah Astley / Marianne Evans
Tel:	01597 826265 / 01597 826155
Email:	sarah.astley@powys.gov.uk / marianne.evans@powys.gov.uk
Head of Service:	Georgie Bevan
Corporate Director:	Lynette Lovell

This page is intentionally left blank



Proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W.
School
Consultation Document



Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

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 01686 611553, or e-mail transforming.education@powys.gov.uk

Consultation on the closure of Llangedwyn C. in W. School

Contents

OVERVIEW.....	3
PART A – THE CASE FOR CHANGE	5
1. BACKGROUND	5
2. WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN POWYS	8
3. THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT	10
4. WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN LLANGEDWYN	11
5. OPTIONS CONSIDERED	11
6. PREFERRED OPTION.....	12
PART B – THE PROPOSAL	13
7. OVERVIEW	13
8. REASONS FOR THE PROPOSAL.....	13
9. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES	13
10. RISKS.....	14
11. POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION TIMESCALE	14
PART C – LIKELY IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL.....	16
12. IMPACT ON PUPILS	16
13. IMPACT ON STAFF	17
14. IMPACT ON NURSERY / EARLY YEARS PROVISION	17
15. IMPACT ON GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS.....	17
16. IMPACT ON QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN EDUCATION	17
17. NEED FOR PLACES AND IMPACT ON AVAILABILITY OF PLACES AND ACCESSIBILITY OF SCHOOLS	21
18. RESOURCING OF EDUCATION AND OTHER FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	22
19. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS	22
20. SPECIFIC FACTORS IN THE CONSIDERATION OF SCHOOL CLOSURES	25
21. EQUALITY AND COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS	27
PART D – CONSULTATION DETAILS.....	29
APPENDIX A – KEY DATA.....	32
APPENDIX B – SWOT AND CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR ANALYSIS	40
APPENDIX C – IMPACT OF EACH OPTION ON RURAL SCHOOLS CRITERIA	45
APPENDIX D – REASONS WHY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS HAVE NOT BEEN TAKEN FORWARD	48
APPENDIX E – RESPONSE FORM.....	49

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 01686 611553, or e-mail transforming.education@powys.gov.uk.

Consultation on the closure of Llangedwyn C. in W. School

OVERVIEW

1. The Proposal

Powys County Council is consulting on a proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School. The proposal is as follows:

- To close Llangedwyn C. in W. School from the 31st August 2024, with pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School.

2. How to respond to the consultation

You can respond to this consultation by completing the online questionnaire which is available on our website:

<http://en.powys.gov.uk/article/14855/Llangedwyn-Church-in-Wales-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 **23rd November 2023**.

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: 01686 611553

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 proposals outlined in the consultation document. This is expected to happen early in 2024.

If the Cabinet decide to proceed with the proposals, a statutory notice would be published, and there would be a period of 28 days for people to submit any

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 a proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School.

The proposal is as follows:

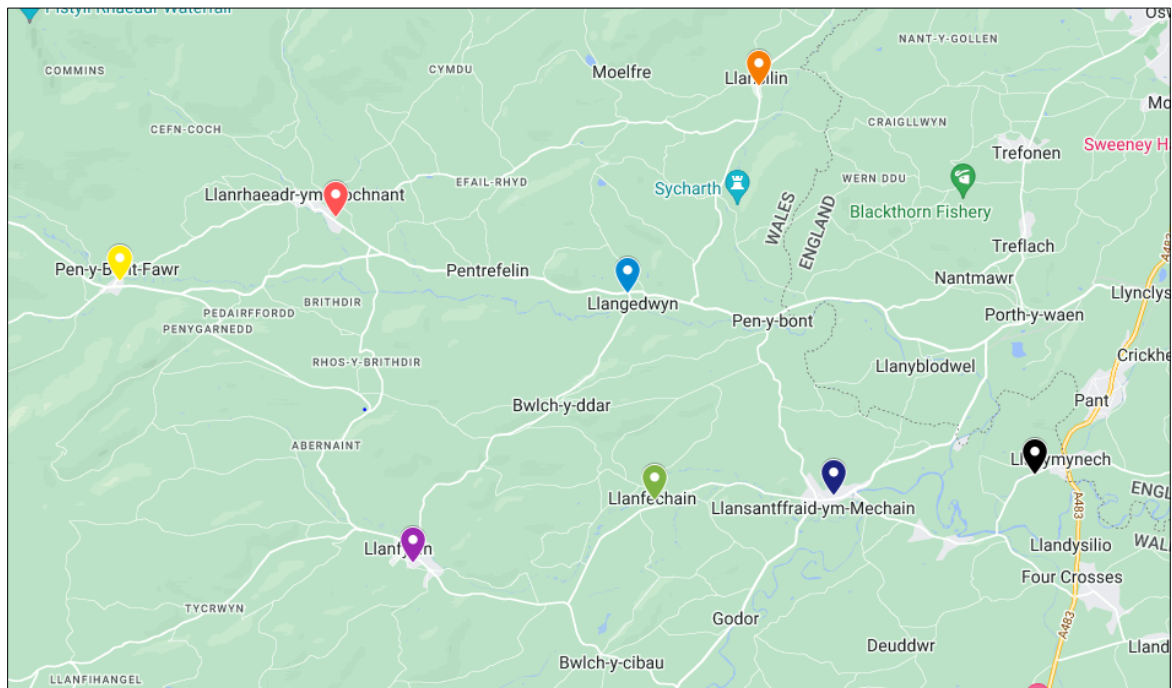
- **To close Llangedwyn C. in W. School from the 31st August 2024, with pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School**

1. BACKGROUND

Llangedwyn C. in W. School is an English-medium Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled primary school located in the village of Llangedwyn in the Llanfyllin catchment area in North Powys. The school primarily serves the village of Llangedwyn and the surrounding area.

The school currently operates as part of a formal schools federation with Llanfechain C. in W. School, Ffederasiwn Dwy Afon, which was established in 2018. The Federation has one governing body and headteacher that is responsible for both schools.

The following map shows the location of Llangedwyn C. in W. School and other schools in the area:



Light Blue – Llangedwyn C. in W. School, Green – Llanfechain C. in W. School, Dark Blue – Llansantffraid Primary School, Black – Carreghofa Primary School,

Orange – Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, Red – Llanrhaeadr Ym Mochnant Primary School, Yellow – Ysgol Pennant, Purple - Ysgol Llanfyllin

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

	School Type	Language Category	Admission Number ¹	Rural School ²
Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School, Llangedwyn, Oswestry, SY10 9LD	Voluntary Controlled Church in Wales In a federation with Llanfechain C. in W. School School building owned by the Wynnstay Estate	English-medium	6	Yes

Current pupil numbers³ at the school are as follows:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Llangedwyn C in W. School	1	0	1	2	1	3	2	10

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. The Strategy was updated and relaunched in July 2022, along with a Work Programme for Wave 2 of the Programme, which includes a commitment to restart and conclude the review of the Llanfyllin / North Welshpool catchment, which commenced in 2020.

In September 2023, the Council's Cabinet considered a paper which outlined the findings of the review and presented an indicative preferred way forward for the area. This included the possible closure of Llangedwyn C. in W. School, however this would be subject to the Statutory Process as outlined in the School Organisation Code (2018).

The Council has subsequently carried out an options appraisal exercise to identify a preferred option for Llangedwyn C. in W. School.

¹ Powys County Council's Admissions Information and Arrangements 2023-24

² 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>)

³ Teacher Centre, 11th October 2023

The following steps have been undertaken:

- Options appraisal exercise
- Recommendation considered and agreed by the Transforming Education Programme Board
- Recommendation considered by the Cabinet

On the 10th October 2023, the Council's Cabinet considered a report in respect of Llangedwyn C. in W. School, and agreed to commence consultation on the following:

'To close Llangedwyn C. in W. School from the 31st August 2024, with pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School.'

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.

The Council's 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, as outlined in the Strategy:

i) High proportion of small schools

Based on PLASC 2021 figures, there were 33 small primary schools in Powys – this is approximately 43% of the primary provision in the county. 15 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 5% by 2026.

iii) High number of surplus places

Based on PLASC 2021 figures, there was 14% 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 schools' 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 £3,512 to £11,689 in the primary sector in 2022-23.

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

The Council's failure to implement a number of high-profile proposals in the past left a legacy in Powys.

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 the 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, and was updated and relaunched in July 2022.

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 Llangedwyn C. in W. School is in line with these priorities.

4. WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN LLANGEDWYN

The following is a summary of the main challenges facing Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School:

i) Low pupil numbers

Current pupil numbers⁴ at Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School are as follows:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Llangedwyn C in W. School	1	0	1	2	1	3	2	10

The Welsh Government defines a 'small school' as a school with less than 91 pupils. Pupil numbers are significantly lower than this, and the latest projected pupil numbers suggest that pupil numbers are not expected to increase significantly over the coming years.

ii) Highest budget share per pupil

Based on the Council's Section 52 Budget Statement for 2023-24, the school's budget share per pupil during 2023-24 was £12,625.92. This is significantly higher than the Powys average of £4,729. Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School is ranked the highest school in Powys by budget share per pupil.⁵

iii) Combined age classes

The small pupil numbers at the school mean that pupils are taught in whole key stage classes, with foundation learners in one class, and older learners in another. Because pupil numbers in each year group are small, it is more difficult to ensure all pupils are appropriately challenged.

5. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

A number of options have been identified which could potentially provide a solution. These are listed in the following table:

Option	Description
1	Status quo – continue as part of a federation with Llanfechain C. in W. School
2	Merge with Llanfechain C. in W. School to establish a new school on two sites

⁴ Teacher Centre, 11th October 2023

⁵ Section 52 Budget Statement 2023/2024

3	Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, but retain the site as part of Llanfechain C. in W. School
4	Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School
5	Close Llangedwyn C. in W. 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:

Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, pupils to attend Llanfechain C. in W. School

The reasons for this are:

- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School
- Would increase pupil numbers at Llanfechain C. in W. School
- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools
- Revenue saving to the Council
- The Council would no longer need to maintain the Llangedwyn building
- Pupils would attend a larger school where they would be part of a larger cohort of pupils
- Pupils would transfer to a school they are already familiar with
- Pupils would continue to access Church in Wales provision

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 Llangedwyn C. in W. School. The proposal is as follows:

- To close Llangedwyn C. in W. School from the 31st August 2024, with pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School

8. REASONS FOR THE PROPOSAL

The Council is proposing to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School for the following reasons:

- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Llangedwyn C. in W. School
- Would increase pupil numbers at Llanfechain C. in W. School
- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools
- Revenue saving to the Council
- The Council would no longer need to maintain the Llangedwyn building
- Pupils would attend a larger school where they would be part of a larger cohort of pupils
- Pupils would transfer to a school they are already familiar with
- Pupils would continue to access Church in Wales provision

9. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

The advantages and disadvantages of the current proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School are summarised below:

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School- Would increase pupil numbers at Llanfechain C. in W. School- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools- Revenue saving to the Council- The Council would no longer need to maintain the Llangedwyn building- Pupils would attend a larger school where they would be part of a larger cohort of pupils- Pupils would transfer to a school they are already familiar with- Pupils would continue to access Church in Wales provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Additional travel for those pupils for whom Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School is currently the closest school- Additional travel costs- Pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School would have to transfer to alternative provision- Loss of provision from Llangedwyn- Impact on the current staff of Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School- Impact on the Llangedwyn community- Loss of C. in W. provision from Llangedwyn

10. RISKS

As with all school reorganisation proposals, there are some risks associated with the proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School.

These are outlined below, along with suggested mitigating actions:

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Actions
Period of uncertainty for Llangedwyn C. in W. 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	12th October 2023 to 23 rd November 2023
Consultation Report to be published, and considered by Cabinet	January / February 2024

If Cabinet decide to proceed:

Publish Statutory Notice (28 days objection period)	February 2024
Objection Report to be published and considered by Cabinet	March / April 2024

If Cabinet approves implementation:

School closes	31 st August 2024
---------------	------------------------------

PART C – LIKELY IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

12. IMPACT ON PUPILS

i) Pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the proposal, Llangedwyn C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School. It is acknowledged that this would have an impact on pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. 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 Llanfechain C. in W. School to ensure a smooth transition.

As Llangedwyn C. in W. School would close with pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, additional transport would be required for pupils for whom Llangedwyn C. in W. 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 the ability of these pupils to access after-school activities, and that there could be increased travelling times to school for some pupils. However, Llangedwyn is currently not the nearest school for the majority of its pupils, so this should not impact on many pupils.

ii) Pupils attending Llanfechain C. in W. School

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the proposal, Llangedwyn C. in W. School would close with its pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School. The proposal could impact on the pupils at Llanfechain as the school would receive additional pupils. However, the total number of pupils attending Llangedwyn C. in W School is small, therefore whilst it is not anticipated that this would have a significant impact on pupils attending Llanfechain, it is acknowledged that it would increase the school's pupil numbers to near its capacity.

iii) Pupils attending other schools

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the proposal, Llangedwyn C. in W. School would close, with its pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School. However, the families of some pupils may choose to transfer to alternative schools. The proposal could impact on the pupils of these alternative schools, as the schools would receive additional pupils. However, the total number of pupils attending Llangedwyn C. in W School is very small, therefore it is not anticipated that this would have a significant impact on pupils of other schools.

13. IMPACT ON STAFF

Should the proposal be implemented, Llangedwyn C. in W. School would close. A staff redundancy process would be necessary for staff currently employed at Llangedwyn C. in W. 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

As there is no nursery or early years provision at Llangedwyn C. in W. School, there would be no impact on nursery or early years provision in the area. Pupils in the Llangedwyn area would continue to be able to access the current providers in the area.

15. IMPACT ON GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Implementation of the proposal would result in the closure of Llangedwyn C. in W. School and Ffederasiwn Dwy Afon, of which Llangedwyn is a part, would need to be dissolved. This would mean that the federation's governing body would be dissolved, and a new governing body would need to be established for Llanfechain C. in W. School.

16. IMPACT ON QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN EDUCATION

The following section mainly considers the impact on quality and standards in education should pupils transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, however it is acknowledged that some pupils could choose to transfer to alternative schools. The Council would expect that the quality and standards of education at these schools would be at least equivalent to that at Llangedwyn C. in W. School.

16.1 Likely impact on standards and progress overall, of specific groups and in skills

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Llangedwyn C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. The preferred option in this case is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School. As Llangedwyn and Llanfechain are already part of Ffederasiwn Dwy Afon, pupils already have strong connections across the two schools and take part in collaborative activities. The Council's view is that Llanfechain C. in W. School would provide education for pupils which is of at least equivalent quality as that provided at Llangedwyn C. in W. School, so it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on standards and progress overall.

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. There are a number of pupils eligible for Free School Meals, a number of pupils with Additional Learning Needs, and a number of Looked after Children at Llangedwyn C. in W. School, however the number of pupils belonging to these groups is very small. It is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on the standards and progress of these pupils. There are currently no pupils for whom English is an Additional Language at Llangedwyn C. in W. School.

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 a larger school, which would provide improved opportunities to share staff expertise and resources, and which have an improved ability to monitor pupil progress in these aspects.

16.2 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 Llangedwyn C. in W. School to Llanfechain C. in W. School. However, Llangedwyn and Llanfechain schools are currently federated, so Llangedwyn pupils are familiar with staff and pupils at Llanfechain C. in W. School, and are familiar with attending the school building to take part in joint activities. This should minimise the impact on pupil well-being.

It is possible that pupils could choose to transfer to other schools instead of transferring to Llanfechain C. in W. School, 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.

Closure of Llangedwyn C. in W. School could result in additional travel for some pupils, particularly those for whom Llangedwyn is currently the closest school. However, Llangedwyn is not currently the closest school for the majority of pupils attending the school, so many of the school's pupils are already choosing to travel further to school. It is evidenced above that the additional travel time to alternative provision would likely not 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 a larger school with a larger cohort of pupils, providing improved social and extra-curricular opportunities.

16.3 Teaching and learning experiences

16.3.1 Quality of teaching

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Llangedwyn C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School.

The Council has no concerns about the quality of teaching at Llanfechain C. in W. School, 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 Llangedwyn C. in W. School.

16.3.2 The breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Llangedwyn C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School.

The Council's view is that Llanfechain C. in W. School would provide a curriculum which is at least equivalent to that currently provided at Llangedwyn C. in W. School. Pupils would be transferring to a larger school, therefore the expectation would be that there would be an improvement in the breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum provided to pupils. Pupils would also be able to work in groups of similar ability pupils.

Llangedwyn C. in W. School is a Church in Wales school, which impacts on some aspects of the curriculum. Llanfechain is also a C. in W. School, ensuring that denominational provision would continue to be available to those pupils who wished to access it.

16.3.3 The provision of skills

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Llangedwyn C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School.

The Council has no concerns about the provision of skills at Llanfechain C. in W. School, 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 Llangedwyn C. in W. School.

16.4 Care, support and guidance

16.4.1 Tracking, monitoring and the provision of learning support, personal development and safeguarding

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Llangedwyn C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School.

It is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on tracking, monitoring, the provision of learning support, personal development, or safeguarding for pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School. This is due to the two schools being federated, with a shared headteacher across both sites. As a result, similar systems are employed across the federation.

16.5 Leadership and Management

16.5.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers, self evaluation processes and improvement planning

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Llangedwyn C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School.

The headteacher of Llangedwyn C. in W. School is also headteacher of Llanfechain C. in W. Primary, therefore there would be no change in leadership and permanent leadership arrangements are already in place at Llanfechain C. in W. School. The Council's view is that leadership and management at Llanfechain C. in W. School would be at least as good as the current arrangements at Llangedwyn.

16.5.2 Professional learning

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

16.5.3 Use of Resources

The school is currently projecting a carry forward deficit of £31k at the end of financial year 2023-24 rising to a cumulative deficit of £177k by 31 March 2026. Finance and school improvement officers are working with the school to identify ways to reduce the deficit, but this is increasingly challenging due to the combination of low pupil numbers and high inflation on running costs that the school is experiencing. When small schools encounter any unexpected pressures such as long-term sickness or building maintenance issues, then the risk of falling into a deficit is higher as they have more limited scope to reduce costs in other areas to compensate.

One of the main challenges facing the Powys schools' infrastructure is the proportion of small schools in the county coupled with significant surplus places, resulting in higher premises related costs per pupil. Llangedwyn C. in W. School is the smallest school in the county in terms of numbers on roll, and the budget share per pupil at the school is therefore higher than any other Powys primary school.

Should the preferred option be implemented, pupils would transfer to a larger school, ensuring a more effective use of both schools' and the Council's resources.

16.6 Impact on vulnerable groups, including children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Implementation of the emerging preferred option would impact on any vulnerable pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School, including any pupils with ALN/SEN.

Based on PLASC 2023 data, 15.4% of pupils at Llangedwyn C. in W. School were on School Action, 15.4% of pupils were on School Action Plus, and no pupils were statemented.

Whilst the emerging preferred option would impact on these pupils, as they would be required to move to an alternative school, there is no reason to believe that Llanfechain C. in W. School would not be able to meet their needs.

Should the option be implemented, the Council would work with Llangedwyn C. in W. School and Llanfechain C. in W. School to ensure an effective transition for any vulnerable children, including children with ALN/SEN and their families.

16.7 Ability of the school/schools which are the subject of the proposals to deliver the full curriculum at the foundation phase and each key stage of education, including the quality of curriculum delivery and the extent to which the structure or size of the school is impacting on this

Should the emerging preferred option be implemented, Llangedwyn C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, therefore Llangedwyn C. in W. School would no longer need to deliver the curriculum to any key stages.

This would also result in an increase in pupil numbers at Llanfechain C. in W. School, which would improve this school’s ability to deliver the curriculum in all key stages. However, depending on the school’s class structure and current breakdown of pupils, it is possible that some adjustments would need to be made to the school’s class structure to accommodate additional pupils.

It is possible that some pupils could choose to transfer to alternative schools rather than Llanfechain C. in W. School. However, the number of pupils transferring to any school is likely to be very small, so it is not anticipated that this would impact on the ability of these schools to deliver the full curriculum to pupils.

17. NEED FOR PLACES AND IMPACT ON AVAILABILITY OF PLACES AND ACCESSIBILITY OF SCHOOLS

17.1 Will the alternative provision have sufficient capacity and provide accommodation of at least equivalent quality for existing and projected pupil numbers?

The preferred option is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School.

The following table provides information on the number of spaces available and building condition of Llanfechain C. in W. School:

School	Capacity ⁶	Current pupil numbers ⁷	Available spaces	Available capacity	Building Condition	Building Suitability
Llanfechain C. in W. School	47	42	5	10.6%	C Poor	B Satisfactory

The estimated pupil forecast (live birth data)⁸ for Llanfechain is as follows:

⁶ MSCW Capacity Jan. 2022 from the Welsh Government Planning of School Places Return – October 2022

⁷ Teacher Centre 11th October 2023

⁸ Powys Schools Service Projections based on PLASC and Birth Rates. Projections are based on PLASC 2022 as projections based on PLASC 2023 are not yet available.

	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025	Jan. 2026	Jan. 2027
Llanfechain C. in W. School	38	39	40	28	30

This information shows that Llanfechain C.in W. School would be slightly over-capacity if all Llangedwyn pupils transferred to the school. Should this be the case, the Council would discuss with the school’s governing body to understand how the pupils could be accommodated at the school. However, pupil numbers at Llanfechain are forecasted to decrease over the next few years.

Llangedwyn and Llanfechain are both rated as ‘C’ for building condition and ‘B’ for building suitability. This means that the standard of accommodation at Llanfechain is of at least equivalent standard to that at Llangedwyn.

17.2 Is the alternative provision sufficient to meet existing and projected demand for schools of the same language category and (if relevant) designated religious character?

As indicated in section 10.1, Llanfechain C. in W. School would be slightly over-capacity if all Llangedwyn pupils transferred to the school. Should this be the case, the Council would discuss with the school’s governing body to understand how the pupils could be accommodated at the school, to ensure that pupils wishing to access Church in Wales provision can do so.

Both Llangedwyn C. in W. School and Llanfechain C. in W. School are English-medium schools.

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

It is not considered that the length and nature of journeys for pupils to alternative provision at Llanfechain C. in W. School would be excessive. This includes journeys for ALN/SEN pupils. One-way journeys to alternative provision would not be in excess of 45 minutes. It’s unlikely that pupils would be able to walk to school should they transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School as this would be further away than 2 miles from their homes.

18. RESOURCING OF EDUCATION AND OTHER FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

18.1 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.

18.2 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 Llangedwyn C. in W. School does not form part of the local authority's Sustainable Communities for Learning (formerly 21st Century Schools) Investment Programme.

However, the review of the Llanfyllin/North Welshpool catchment area carried out recently identified that there are capacity issues in terms of Church in Wales places at Llansantffraid C. in W. School, and that a replacement school building would need to be provided in the area in the future to accommodate projected pupil numbers.

To achieve this, should there be no school in Llangedwyn in the future, the Council would then work with Llansantffraid C. in W. School, Llanfechain C. in W. School and the Diocese of St Asaph to explore the possibility of initially merging the two schools at their existing locations, alongside investigating possible sites for a new school building. However, these developments would be subject to further statutory proposals and Cabinet decisions, and capital investment processes.

18.3 What are the recurrent costs of proposals over a period of at least 3 years and is the necessary recurrent funding available?

The recurrent costs of this proposal would be the potential increased transport costs which are currently estimated to be an additional £34.6k per annum based on current prices. This has been included in the revenue costing and is funded through savings in other areas of the formula in relation to this proposal.

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

It is estimated there would be additional transport costs of £34.6k per annum, based on current prices and pupils' home location.

18.5 What are the capital costs of the proposal and is the necessary capital funding available?

It is not anticipated that capital funding would be required in order to implement the emerging preferred option.

18.6 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 £56.4k. This overall figure comprises a potential saving on Schools' delegated funding of £91.0k and estimated additional transport costs of £34.6k.

18.7 Without the proposals, would the affected schools face budget deficits?

The school is currently projecting a carry forward deficit of £31k at the end of financial year 2023-24 rising to a cumulative deficit of £177k by 31 March 2026.

18.8 Will any savings in recurrent costs be retained in the local authority's local schools budget?

Any savings would be available for reinvestment as part of the Council's corporate budget process and any reinvestment in the schools system would be agreed as part of the annual budget planning cycle.

18.9 Will the proceeds from 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?

Llangedwyn C. in W. School building is not owned by the Council, therefore the Council would not receive any capital receipts following any sale of the site.

19. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

19.1 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 Llangedwyn C. in W. School. All pupils currently attending the school, including any from economically deprived backgrounds, would need to transfer to alternative schools. The proposal is that all pupils currently attending the school would transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, which would mitigate the impact on pupils, including those from economically deprived backgrounds, as they are already familiar with Llanfechain C. in W. School, however it is possible that some pupils could choose to transfer to other schools.

Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to pupils in accordance with the Council's home to school transport policy, it is acknowledged that there could be an impact on the ability of these pupils to access after-school activities, and that there could be increased travelling times to school for some pupils. This could have a greater impact on children from economically deprived backgrounds. However, Llangedwyn is currently not the nearest school for the majority of its pupils, so this should not impact on many pupils.

Based on PLASC 2023 data, 23.1% of pupils attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School were eligible for FSM, therefore there will be some children from economically deprived backgrounds that may be affected.

19.2 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 Llangedwyn C. in W. School and Llanfechain C. in W. School is provided in Appendix A.

Information about any building works necessary to ensure that transferred children can be accommodated

Llanfechain C.in W. School would be slightly over-capacity if all Llangedwyn pupils transferred to the school. Should this be the case, the Council would discuss with the school's governing body to understand how the pupils could be accommodated

at the school. However, pupil numbers at Llanfechain are forecasted to decrease over the next few years.

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 transferred back to their owners.

Whether the school / schools involved are 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.

Llangedwyn C. in W. School is owned by the Wynnstay Estate. Should the school close, the building would be handed back to the Estate, who would be responsible for disposal of the site.

19.3 Walking routes to school

Should the proposal be implemented, it is unlikely that pupils transferring to Llanfechain C. in W. School would be able to walk to school, unless this was their closest school. Llangedwyn C. in W. School is not currently the closest school for the majority of pupils attending the school, so the majority of pupils currently attending the school would not be able to walk to school.

19.4 School Admissions

Should the proposal be implemented, admissions to alternative schools would be administered by the Council in accordance with the Council's Admissions Policy, which is available online at: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/1158/Applying-for-a-School-Place>.

19.5 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

20.1 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 Llangedwyn C. in W. School, these are outlined in section 4 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 Llangedwyn C. in W. School are very low, and are projected to continue to decrease over the coming years. Establishing a multi-site school would not address this issue.

20.2 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

Llangedwyn C. in W. School is already part of a federation with Llanfechain C. in W. School, known as the Federasiwn Dwy Afon. Continuing to operate as part of this federation is one of the options considered earlier in this document. An assessment of this option has been carried out, which includes a summary of the weaknesses / threats associated with this option.

Pupil numbers at Llangedwyn C. in W. School are very low, and are projected to continue to decrease over the coming years. Clustering, collaboration or federation would not address this.

20.3 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 Llangedwyn C. in W. School.

Pupil numbers at the school are very low, and are projected to decrease further over the coming years.

20.4 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 Llangedwyn. It is acknowledged that this would have a negative impact on the Llangedwyn community, including the loss of primary provision from the village of Llangedwyn, and a possible loss of any community facilities associated with the school from the village.

A draft community impact assessment, with input from the school, has been carried out. This has been published as part of the consultation documentation. This would be updated throughout the process to reflect any feedback received, and would be considered by the Council's Cabinet as part of the decision making process.

20.5 How parents' and pupils' engagement with the alternative school and any facilities it may offer could be supported

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, support would be provided to pupils and their parents as part of the transition process, thereby ensuring full engagement with their new schools. The nature of this support will depend on the needs of the parents/pupils; however, this could include effective transition arrangements with the receiving school to ensure pupils transition is positive.

The preferred option is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School which would provide continuity for pupils and their families and would ease transition arrangements, and would support parents' engagement with the 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/14855/Llangedwyn-Church-in-Wales-School>

A summary of the assessments are provided below:

i) Equalities impact assessment

Should the proposal be implemented, Llangedwyn C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School.

This would have a significant impact on pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. 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, it is to be noted that Llangedwyn is currently not the nearest school for the majority of pupils that attend provision there. Therefore the impact of additional travel is likely to be minimal. In addition, there is no reason to believe that Llanfechain C. in W. School 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 eligible for Free School Meals, and Looked After Children.

ii) Impact on the community

Should Llangedwyn C. in W. School close, there would be an impact on the village of Llangedwyn as there would no longer be a school in the village. However, the impact of school closure on the village would likely be minimal, particularly as most pupils that currently attend the school don't live in Llangedwyn.

In addition, information received from the school indicates that whilst there are links between the school and the community, community use of the school building is minimal. There is a Village Hall in Llangedwyn which is already used more widely by the local community, so any events / meetings etc which are currently held at the school could be located to the Village Hall.

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 Llangedwyn C. in W. School, Llanfechain C. in W. School and other schools which may be affected by the proposal
- Governors at Ffederasiwn Dwy Afon and other schools which may be affected by the proposal
- Staff at Llangedwyn C. in W. School, Llanfechain C. in W. School and other schools which may be affected by the proposal
- Pupils at Llangedwyn C. in W. School, Llanfechain C. in W. 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 Member of the Senedd for Montgomeryshire and Members of the Senedd for the Mid & West Wales region
- The MP for Montgomeryshire
- Estyn
- Teaching and staff trade unions
- Mid Wales Education Partnership
- The Police and 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 standards⁹.

The consultation period

The consultation period will commence on the 12th October 2023 and will end on the 23rd November 2023.

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:

i) Consultation

⁹ <https://gov.wales/children-and-young-peoples-national-participation-standards>

Consultation will start on the 12th October 2023 and will end on the 23rd November 2023. 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 early in 2024.

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 April / May 2024.

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/14855/Llangedwyn-Church-in-Wales-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 **23rd November 2023**.

If you have any further questions about this proposal, you can contact the Transforming Education Team using the above contact details, or by phoning (01686) 611553.

APPENDIX A – KEY DATA

Key data about the affected schools is provided below:

1. Llangedwyn C. in W. School

General information

	School Type	Language Category	Admission Number ¹⁰	Rural School? ¹¹
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	Voluntary Controlled Church in Wales In a federation with Llanfechain C. in W. School School building owned by the Wynnstay Estate	English medium	6	Yes

Pupil numbers

i) Current pupil numbers¹²

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Llangedwyn C in W. School	1	0	1	2	1	3	2	10

ii) Historical pupil numbers¹³

	Jan. 2016	Jan. 2017	Jan. 2018	Jan. 2019	Jan. 2020	Jan. 2021	Jan. 2022	Jan. 2023
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	31	26	28	31	18	23	17	13

iii) Projected pupil numbers¹⁴

¹⁰ Powys Admissions Information and Arrangements 2023-24

¹¹ 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.

¹² Teacher Centre, 11th October 2023

¹³ PLASC

¹⁴ Powys Schools Service Projections based on PLASC & Birth Rates. Based on PLASC 2022 as projections based on PLASC 2023 are not yet available.

	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025	Jan. 2026	Jan. 2027
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	15	16	13	8	8

iv) Projected pupil numbers (Finance projections)¹⁵

	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	13	12

Building Capacity and Condition

i) Capacity

	Current Capacity ¹⁶	Currently Filled	Surplus Capacity
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	47	10	37 (78.7%)

ii) Building condition¹⁷

	Condition	Suitability	Sufficient
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	C Poor	B Satisfactory	No

Quality and standards of education

i) Estyn

	Llangedwyn C. in W. School
Date of Inspection	January 2020
Standards	Adequate and needs improvement
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good

¹⁵ Powys Finance Projections based on data provided by the school. Provided by the Finance team in August 2023

¹⁶ MSCW Capacity Jan. 2022 from the Welsh Government Planning of School Places Return – October 2022

¹⁷ Condition, Suitability and Sufficiency – The Transforming Education PowerBI Dashboard – 2022

Teaching and learning experiences	Adequate and needs improvement
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Adequate and needs improvement
Follow up activity	<p>The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will review the school's progress.</p> <p>Outcome of Estyn review 2021:</p> <p>The school is judged to have made sufficient progress in addressing the recommendations from the Section 28 inspection. The school has been removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn review. There will be no further monitoring activity in relation to this inspection.</p>

Financial information

Cost per pupil¹⁸

	Budget share per school	Budget share per pupil	Notional SEN budget	Non ISB funds devolved to the school
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	£164,000	£12,625.92	£12,000	£0
Powys average (Primary)	N/A	£4,729	N/A	N/A

Equalities information

i) National identity¹⁹

	British	English	Irish	Scottish	Welsh	Other	Not supplied	Refused
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	69.2%	15.4%	0%	0%	15.4%	0%	0%	0%

¹⁸ Section 52 Budget Statement, 2023/24

¹⁹ PLASC 2023

ii) **Ethnic Group²⁰**

	White British	Other known ethnicity	Information not yet obtained
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	100%	0%	0%

iii) **English as an Additional Language²¹**

	% EAL	% EAL A/B/C
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	0.0%	0.0%

iv) **Free School Meals²²**

	% Eligible for FSM
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	23.1%

v) **Looked after children²³**

	Looked after children
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	15.4%

vi) **Additional Learning Needs (ALN)²⁴**

	School Action	School Action Plus	Statement	IDP School	IDP LA
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	15.4%	15.4%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%

2. Other schools that could be affected

The proposal is to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School with pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School. Information about Llanfechain C. in W. School is provided below.

²⁰ PLASC 2023

²¹ PLASC 2023

²² PLASC 2023

²³ PLASC 2023

²⁴ PLASC 2023

Whilst it is possible that some pupils may choose to transfer to alternative schools, the numbers would be very small, and therefore the impact on these schools would not be significant.

	School Type	Language Category	Admission Number ²⁵
Llanfechain C. in W. School	Voluntary Controlled Church in Wales. In a federation with Llangedwyn C. in W. School. School building owned by the Diocese.	English medium	6

Pupil Numbers

i) Current pupil numbers²⁶

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Llanfechain C. in W. School	6	1	3	7	3	13	9	42

ii) Historical pupil numbers²⁷

	Jan. 2016	Jan. 2017	Jan. 2018	Jan. 2019	Jan. 2020	Jan. 2021	Jan. 2022	Jan. 2023
Llanfechain C. in W. School	40	44	39	39	44	39	36	34

iii) Projected pupil numbers (Birth rate)²⁸

	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025	Jan. 2026	Jan. 2027
Llanfechain C. in W. School	38	39	40	28	30

²⁵ Powys Schools – Powys County Council Admission Arrangements and Information 2024/25

²⁶ Teacher Centre, 11th October 2023

²⁷ PLASC

²⁸ Powys Schools Service Projections (R – Yr6) based on PLASC 2022 & Birth Rates. Projections are based on PLASC 2022 as the projections based on PLASC 2023 are not yet available.

Should the proposal be implemented, it is likely that there would be an increase in pupil numbers at Llanfechain C. in W. School. This is not reflected in the current projections for Llanfechain C. in W. School. Should the Council proceed with implementation of the proposal, it is currently unknown whether pupils would transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School or would transfer to alternative schools closer to their homes.

iv) Projected pupil numbers (Finance projections)²⁹

	January 2024	January 2025
Llanfechain C. in W. School	44	49

Building Capacity and Condition

i) Capacity

	Current Capacity ³⁰	Currently Filled	Surplus Capacity
Llanfechain C. in W. School	47	42 (89.4%)	5 (10.6%)

ii) Building condition

	Condition	Suitability
Llanfechain C. in W. School	C Poor	B Satisfactory

Standards of Education

i) Estyn

	Llanfechain C. in W. School
Date of Inspection	13/07/2016
The School's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Good
How good are outcomes?	Good

²⁹ Powys Finance Projections based on data provided by the school

³⁰ MSCW Capacity Jan. 2022 from the Welsh Government Planning of School Places Return – October 2022

How good is provision?	Good
How good are leadership and management?	Good
What happens next?	School to produce an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations

Financial information

i) Cost per pupil³¹

	Budget share per school	Budget share per pupil	Notional SEN budget	Non ISB funds devolved to the school
Llanfechain C. in W. School	£230,000	£6,983	£22,000	£0

Equalities Information

i) National identity³²

	British	English	Irish	Scottish	Welsh	Other	Not supplied	Refused
Llanfechain C. in W. School	73.5%	11.8%	0%	0%	8.8%	5.9%	0%	0%

ii) Ethnic Group³³

	White British	Other known ethnicity	Refused/Information not yet obtained
Llanfechain C. in W. School	94.1%	5.9%	0%

iii) English as an Additional Language³⁴

	% EAL

³¹ Section 52 Budget Statement 2023/2024

³² PLASC 2023

³³ PLASC 2023

³⁴ PLASC 2023

Llanfechain C. in W. School	0.0%
------------------------------------	------

iv) Free School Meals³⁵

	% Eligible for FSM
Llanfechain C. in W. School	8.8%

v) Pupils in care³⁶

	Number of pupils in care
Llanfechain C. in W. School	0%

vi) SEN/ALN³⁷

	School Action	School Action Plus	Statement	School IDP	LA IDP
Llanfechain C. in W. School	11.8%	0%	2.9%	5.9%	0.0%

³⁵ PLASC 2023

³⁶ PLASC 2023

³⁷ PLASC 2023

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 part of a federation with Llanfechain C. in W. School

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Llangedwyn - There would be no additional transport costs - No requirement for a reorganisation process - No change for staff - No impact on pupils - Would retain Church in Wales places in the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Llangedwyn C. in W. School would continue to be very low - Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision - Would still need to maintain the Llangedwyn building - Would not reduce surplus places - Would not lead to a financial saving - Would not address the high budget per pupil
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"> - The school would continue to be a very small school

Option 2: Merge with Llanfechain C. in W. School to establish a new school on two sites

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Llangedwyn - Would build on the federation which is already in place - There would be no additional transport costs - All staff would have the opportunity to secure positions in the new school - Pupils would continue to attend school in the same location - Would retain Church in Wales places in the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small numbers would remain on the site at Llangedwyn - Llangedwyn pupils would still be taught separately - Would not reduce surplus places - Would still need to maintain the Llangedwyn building - Additional costs associated with establishing a new school would be incurred by the Council

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More officer support would be required to support the establishment of new school - Both schools would lose their individual identities
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to develop a new school identity - More opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring equal opportunities to all pupils due to age range of pupils in mixed age classes

Option 3: Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, but retain the site as part of Llanfechain C. in W. School

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Llangedwyn - Would build on the federation which is already in place - There would be no additional transport costs - Pupils would continue to attend school in the same location - Minimal impact on staff employed at Llanfechain School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small numbers would remain at the Llangedwyn - Llangedwyn pupils would still be taught separately - Would still need to maintain the Llangedwyn building - Would not reduce surplus places - Negative impact on staff employed at Llangedwyn School
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring equal opportunities to all pupils due to age range of pupils in mixed age classes

Option 4: Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Llangedwyn - Would increase pupil numbers at Llanfechain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional travel for those pupils for whom Llangedwyn is currently the closest school

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools - Revenue saving to the Council - The Council would no longer need to maintain the Llangedwyn building - Pupils would attend a larger school where they would be part of larger cohorts of pupils - Pupils would transfer to a school they are already familiar with - Continued provision of Church in Wales education in the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of primary provision from the Llangedwyn area - Impact on the current staff employed at Llangedwyn - Reduction of Church in Wales places in the area - Llanfechain C. in W. School would be at or slightly over-capacity if all pupils from Llangedwyn transferred to the school – capacity is currently 47 with 39 on roll.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to explore linkages between Llanfechain C. in W. School and Llansantffraid C. in W. School in the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some families may be choose other schools that offer non-denominational provision, meaning that some pupils may not benefit from a Church in Wales provision

Option 5: Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Llangedwyn - Would increase pupil numbers at Llanfechain - Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools - Revenue saving to the Council - The Council would no longer need to maintain the Llangedwyn building - Pupils would attend a larger school where they would be part of larger cohorts of pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional travel for those pupils for whom Llangedwyn is currently the closest school - Loss of primary provision from the Llangedwyn area - Impact on the current staff employed at Llangedwyn - Reduction of Church in Wales places in the area
Opportunities	Threats
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Families may choose for their children to transfer to a number of

	<p>different schools, which could be more difficult in terms of transition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some families may choose other schools that offer non-denominational provision, meaning that some pupils may not receive Church in Wales provision
--	---

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

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
<p>Option 1: Status quo – continue as part of a federation with Llanfechain C. in W. School</p>	<p>There would be no impact on quality and standards – pupils would continue to access the current provision at Llangedwyn.</p>	<p>There would be no impact on the community – provision would continue to be available in Llangedwyn.</p>	<p>There would be no impact on travel arrangements – pupils would continue to attend Llangedwyn C. in W. School.</p>
<p>Option 2: Merge with Llanfechain C. in W. School to establish a new school on two sites</p>	<p>This option would retain provision in Llangedwyn, building upon the federation which is already in place.</p> <p>There would be enhanced opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff, however, ensuring equal opportunities to all pupils in mixed age range age classes would continue to be difficult.</p> <p>Merging the two schools to establish a new school is likely to result in a school where quality and standards are at least as good as the current provision.</p>	<p>The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Llangedwyn.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school in the same location, thus there would be no additional transport costs.</p> <p>Some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>
<p>Option 3: Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, but retain the site as part of</p>	<p>This option would retain provision in Llangedwyn, building upon the federation which is already in place with Llanfechain C. in W. School.</p>	<p>The impact on the community would be minimal. Provision would continue to be available in Llangedwyn. However, the site would be</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current site of Llangedwyn C. in W. School.</p>

<p>Llanfechain C. in W. School</p>	<p>There would be enhanced opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff, however, ensuring equal opportunities to all pupils in mixed age range age classes would continue to be difficult.</p> <p>It is anticipated that implementation of this option would mean that pupils attend provision where the quality and standards are at least as good as the current provision.</p>	<p>managed by Llanfechain C. in W. School, so there could be a perceived reduction in community involvement in the management of the school.</p> <p>In addition, it is possible that joint school activities would take place on the larger Llanfechain site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Llangedwyn site.</p>	<p>Some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>
<p>Option 4: Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School</p>	<p>Pupils would transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, which is a larger school where they would be part of larger cohorts of pupils. This would also have a positive impact on the pupils currently attending Llanfechain C. in W. School as it would result in an increase in pupil numbers at that school.</p> <p>It is anticipated that implementation of this option would mean that pupils would attend provision where the quality and standards are at least as good as the current provision.</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Llangedwyn as there would be no provision in Llangedwyn.</p> <p>The Llangedwyn school building is not owned by the Council. Should the school close, the building would be transferred back to its owners, who would need to determine its future use, and therefore whether or not facilities would remain available to the community in Llangedwyn.</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School, particularly those for whom Llangedwyn is currently the closest school.</p> <p>However, Llangedwyn is not currently the closest school for the majority of pupils attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School, so many of the school's pupils are already choosing to travel further to school.</p> <p>Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to</p>

			School Transport Policy, there would also be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities / events.
Option 5: Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools	It is anticipated that implementation of this option would mean that pupils would attend provision where the quality and standards are at least as good as the current provision at Llangedwyn.	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Llangedwyn as there would be no provision in Llangedwyn.</p> <p>The Llangedwyn school building is not owned by the Council. Should the school close, the building would be transferred back to its owners, who would need to determine its future use, and therefore whether or not facilities would remain available to the community in Llangedwyn.</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. 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>

APPENDIX D – REASONS WHY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS HAVE NOT BEEN TAKEN FORWARD

Option	Description	Reason for discounting
1	Status quo – continue as part of a federation with Llanfechain C. in W. School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School would continue to be very low - Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision - Would still need to maintain the Llangedwyn building - Would not reduce surplus places - Would not lead to a financial saving - Would not address the high budget per pupil
2	Merge with Llanfechain C. in W. School to establish a new school on two sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Llangedwyn would continue to be low - Llangedwyn pupils would still be taught separately - Would still need to maintain the Llangedwyn building - Additional costs associated with establishing a new school would be incurred by the Council - More officer support would be required to support the establishment of the new school - Would not lead to a financial saving
3	Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, but retain the site as part of Llanfechain C. in W. School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small numbers would remain on the Llangedwyn site - Llangedwyn pupils would still be taught separately - Would still need to maintain the Llangedwyn building - Would not reduce surplus places
5	Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would not promote access to alternative Church in Wales provision - Transition would be more difficult for pupils – pupils are already familiar with Llanfechain C. in W. School.

APPENDIX E – RESPONSE FORM

PROPOSAL TO CLOSE LLANGEDWYN C. IN W. SCHOOL

Powys County Council is consulting on a proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School. The proposal is as follows:

- To close Llangedwyn C. in W. School from the 31st August 2024, with pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School

A consultation document which provides more information about the proposal 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 **23rd November 2023**. 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"/> | Llangedwyn C. in W. 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: _____

- 7. 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.

8. How old are you?

 Under 16 16-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65-74 75-84 85+ Prefer not to say

9. What is your gender?

 Male Female Gender Fluid Non-Binary Gender neutral Prefer not to say

10. Can you understand, speak or write Welsh?

 Yes No Prefer not to say

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

 Yes No Prefer not to say

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

 Yes No Prefer not to say

13. Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

14. What is your ethnic group?

White

Asian

Black, African or Caribbean

Mixed

Gypsy/Traveller

Other

Prefer not to say

Part 4 – Impact on the Welsh language (Optional)

We are required by the Welsh Language Standards to consider the effects of any policy decisions on the Welsh Language. Please note these questions are optional.

15. In your opinion, what positive or adverse effects would the proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School have on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

16. How do you think the proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. 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?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

Completed questionnaires should be sent to the following address, to arrive **no later than the 23rd November 2023.**

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

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



Closure of Langedwyn C. in W. School
Consultation Report



Consultation on the closure of Llangedwyn C. in W. School

Contents

1. OVERVIEW OF THE CONSULTATION	3
i) Consultation methods	3
ii) Responses received	3
iii) Summary of issues raised.....	3
2. CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM	5
3. CONSULTATION WITH PUPILS	8
4. CONSULTATION MEETINGS WITH STAFF AND GOVERNORS.....	10
i) Consultation meeting with Staff of Llangedwyn C. in W. School	10
ii) Consultation meeting with Governors of Llangedwyn C. in W. School	11
5. ESTYN	13
6. ISSUES RAISED DURING THE CONSULTATION PERIOD.....	16
7. FURTHER ASESMENT AND CONCLUSION.....	66

Consultation on the closure of Llangedwyn C. in W. School

1. OVERVIEW OF THE CONSULTATION

Powys County Council consulted on a proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School. The proposal is as follows:

- To close Llangedwyn C. in W. School from the 31st August 2024, with pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School

The consultation took place between the 12th of October 2023 and the 23rd of November 2023.

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). Separate versions for children and young people were also available on the Council's website throughout the consultation period.

Consultees were invited to respond to the consultation by either completing an online response 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 with the following:

- Staff of Llangedwyn C. in W. School – 16th November 2023
- Governors of Llangedwyn C. in W. School – 16th November 2023

In addition, the school's Headteacher discussed the proposal with pupils.

ii) Responses received

24 respondents completed the online response form and 6 respondents completed the Word version of the consultation response form. 3 other written responses were received, which included a response from Estyn and from the Governing Body of Ffederasiwn Dwy Afon.

The response received from Estyn is provided on page 13, in-line with the requirements of the School Organisation Code.

iii) Summary of issues raised

The issues raised in the consultation responses are listed in detail in section 6 on page 16 onwards. This includes the Council's response to each issue.

The following is a summary of the issues raised:

1. Comments about Llangedwyn school
2. Impact on pupils
3. Impact on pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups
4. Impact on staff
5. Impact on the community
6. Impact on families
7. Comments about travel/transport arrangements
8. Comments about Church in Wales provision
9. Comments about small/rural schools
10. Comments about other schools
11. Comments about finance / funding
12. Criticism of the Council's treatment of Llangedwyn School
13. Comments about the process
14. Comments about the presumption against closing rural schools
15. Comments about the documentation
16. Alternative options
17. Comments about impact on the Welsh language
18. Comments in support of the proposal
19. Other comments

2. CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

30 respondents completed the consultation response form. All respondents responded in English.

Information about those that completed the consultation response form is provided 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	8	24.24%
Prospective parent, carer or guardian	1	3.03%
Governor	1	3.03%
Member of staff	1	3.03%
Member of the community	17	51.51%
Organisation	5	15.15%
Pupil	0	0.00%
No association	1	3.03%
Other	0	0.00%
Not Answered	0	0.00%
Total responses	33	

2. Please specify which school you are associated with:

Response	No.	%
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	26	86.67%
Another school	2	6.67%
No association with any school	2	6.67%
Not Answered	0	0.00%
Total responses	30	

3. Please provide your postcode:

Response	No.	%
Llanrhaeadr-Ym-Mochnant	2	6.67%
Dolafon	1	3.33%
Llansilin	2	6.67%
Nantmawr	2	6.67%
Pen-Y-Bont	2	6.67%

Llangedwyn	12	40%
Oswestry	3	10%
St. Martin	1	3.33%
Gobowen	1	3.33%
Llanymynech	2	6.67%
Ilanwddyn	1	3.33%
Penbontfawr	1	3.33%
Total responses	30	

Part 3 – About you

12. How old are you?

Response	No.	%
Under 16	0	0.00%
16-24	2	6.67%
25-34	3	10.00%
35-44	4	13.33%
45-54	7	23.33%
55-64	6	20.00%
65-74	7	23.33%
75-84	0	0.00%
85+	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Not answered	1	3.33%
Total responses	30	

13. What is your gender?

Response	No.	%
Male	11	36.67%
Female	18	60.00%
Gender Fluid	0	0.00%
Non-Binary	0	0.00%
Gender neutral	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Not answered	1	3.33%
Total responses	30	

14. Can you understand, speak or write Welsh?

Response	No.	%
Yes	9	30.00%
No	16	53.33%
Prefer not to say	3	10.00%
Not answered	2	6.67%
Total responses	30	

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

Response	No.	%
Yes	6	20.00%
No	11	36.67%
Prefer not to say	2	6.67%
Not answered	11	36.67%
Total responses	30	

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

Response	No.	%
Yes	4	13.33%
No	9	30.00%
Prefer not to say	2	6.67%
Not answered	15	50.00%
Total responses	30	

17. Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

Response	No.	%
Yes	3	10.00%
No	20	66.67%
Prefer not to say	4	13.33%
Not answered	3	10.00%
Total responses	30	

18. What is your ethnic group?

Response	No.	%
White	28	93.33%
Asian	0	0.00%
Black, African or Caribbean	0	0.00%
Mixed	0	0.00%
Gypsy/Traveller	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	1	3.33%
Not Answered	1	3.33%
Total	30	

3. CONSULTATION WITH PUPILS

No written consultation responses were received from pupils.

The Headteacher of Llangedwyn C. in W. School discussed the proposal with pupils at the school. The following is a summary of the discussion:

What do you like about Llangedwyn School?

- happy and colourful
- always get supported by teachers
- maths, inside break
- lots of people to help
- nice teachers
- friends and lots of nature
- really fun and like to play

Is there anything you don't like about Llangedwyn School, or that could be better?

- zip wire is broken
- getting up early
- not allowed to go on survival Minecraft
- barely any people
- that it might be shutting
- not allowed on field when muddy

If the school closed, the Council would like you to go to Llanfechain School, which has the same Headteacher as Llangedwyn. What do you think would be good about this?

- not happy about going to Llanfechain – want to stay at Llangedwyn
- want to see friends at Llanfechain but also would like to make new friends at another school
- wouldn't be scared to go because they know friends there already and scared about going to a completely new school
- nice teachers there

What do you think wouldn't be good about this?

- don't know everyone there
- there would be things they didn't know about
- we know everyone and everything about Llangedwyn

If there was no school in Llangedwyn, you would go to a bigger school. Is there anything you think would be better about being in a bigger school?

- more friends and would be more friends to go to high school with
- at Llangedwyn there aren't many people

Is there anything you think would be worse about going to a bigger school?

- too many people
- not knowing where everything is

What do you think the impact would be on the community in Llangedwyn if there was no school here?

- the village would be destroyed
- people would move out of the village to be nearer other schools
- lots of things would break in the village

Do you have any other questions / comments?

There were no other questions or comments.

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 Llangedwyn C. in W. School

- Concerns about communication. Commitments were made that communication would be better, however this hasn't been the case.
- In the Llanfyllin Catchment review, it was very difficult seeing information about the school on the screen without any prior warning. Several members of staff reported that they felt like everyone looked at you in a big room of people, and it caused people a lot of anxiety.
- Concern about the way information about the proposal was originally shared. It was leaked out locally on social media, so some members of staff found out via social media, friends, their children's school's apps.
- Concerns about the timing of information being shared. Staff found out about the proposal during the school day, and then had to continue while upset.
- Larger schools, unaffected by the proposals, shared information on their social media, which led to staff at Llangedwyn finding out about it before the governors and leadership had had a chance to discuss the situation with them.
- Concern that staff found out about the Cabinet decision two days before they received a letter from Lynette Lovell.
- A request for information about redeployment and redundancy processes.
- How much notice needs to be given before closing a school?
- What would happen to the school and its contents?
- It has been difficult to shield pupils from comments about the school closing from members of the public.
- The process has been difficult for pupils.
- It can be very difficult for staff when they are asked questions by pupils about the process, and staff don't have all the answers.
- As well as supporting the pupils, staff need to support parents, which is difficult without having all of the information.
- Concern that Llangedwyn feels like an underdog in the federation compared to Llanfechain, and that staff can feel the differences between how the schools are perceived/treated. These differences have made it difficult for staff to work with staff of the other schools.
- Concern that the schools in the federation have been unequal partners.

- The Llangedwyn pupils are currently in a safe and secure environment, moving to a larger community may be challenging for them.
- The transition will be difficult for pupils.
- Parents need support with transition as well as pupils.
- What transition support will be provided?
- Queries about the transport policy.
- Questions about transition for ALN pupils.
- Are pupil numbers likely to continue to drop – four pupils have left since the announcement was made about the consultation.
- When are staff likely to learn about the decision made following consultation.
- Could someone ring the school to let them know what the decision is once it has been made?

ii) Consultation meeting with Governors of Llangedwyn C. in W. School

- In this meeting, governors will summarise the written response which will be submitted by the governing body.
- The governing body are disappointed to find themselves in this situation.
- After initiating the federation themselves, they believe that it has strengthened both schools and the pupils have benefited from that.
- The governing body feels that the transformation programme has impacted significantly on pupil numbers at the school, as it reduces parents' faith that the school will continue to stay open.
- The funding formula is designed to punish small schools, as it makes them unsustainable.
- The governing body believes it has done an excellent job of managing the little money that the school receives, but the combination of the deficit and reduction in pupil numbers are causing difficulties.
- These difficulties can lead to safeguarding issues. The low numbers of staff means that the school is at the point where if a single member of staff is unavailable, they have to consider closing the school.
- The school and governing body understand the needs of the new Welsh Curriculum, and clearly the number of children at Llangedwyn presents all sorts of challenges for the Headteacher.
- Two potential closures, reducing pupil numbers, and unmanageable budgets has had a massive impact on the wellbeing of staff.
- The county council is thanked for its level of engagement this time, as the time before it was outrageous. However, there has still been a significant impact.
- Llangedwyn has a reputation for supporting the most vulnerable children. It is a risk for ALN pupils to attend bigger schools. The governing body seeks assurance that ALN pupils will be supported.

- Concern about English language provision in the valley if both Llangedwyn and Ysgol Bro Cynllaith were to close. The fact that Church in Wales places are being preserved is welcomed.
- Assurance is sought that admissions will be managed properly for pupils moving to Llanfechain as space there is limited.
- A request for additional space to be provided at Llanfechain.
- The proposal is to eventually build a new school in the Llansantffraid/Llanfechain area, but at best that's 5 years away. It is questioned how this will work when Llanfechain has a £500,000 maintenance backlog.
- The governing body would like assurance in the recommendation to Cabinet that the authority will develop a funded maintenance programme to get Llanfechain back to a reasonable standard
- The current situation at Llangedwyn is unsustainable.
- The impact of the proposal on parents, staff, and especially pupils is emphasised.
- Questions about the make up of the new governing body at Llanfechain should Llangedwyn close.
- Many Llangedwyn parents associate small schools with good provision. If there are no small schools left, then parents associate that with there not being any nurturing care available.
- The governing body is looking for a recognition of the strength of Llangedwyn as a nurturing care provider in the recommendation to cabinet, and work to be done on the ability of larger schools to be as caring and nurturing.
- Extra support from receiving schools needs to be offered to vulnerable learners.
- Questions about the future of English medium education in the area.
- Concern about the school's ability to develop the four purposes with so few pupils; challenge comes from peers as well as school staff.

5. ESTYN

Estyn's response to the consultation is provided below:

This report has been prepared by His 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.

The proposal is to close Llangedwyn Church in Wales Primary School from the 31 August 2024, with pupils to transfer to Llanfechain Church in Wales Primary School.

Summary/Conclusion

Estyn considers that the proposal is likely to, at least, maintain the standard of education provision in the area.

Description and benefits

The local authority has demonstrated a suitable rationale for its proposal. It outlines the challenges currently facing the school, including very small pupil numbers and an unsustainable deficit budget.

The local authority has provided a detailed description of the proposal and the projected timetable for statutory procedures and for implementation of the proposal.

The local authority has considered four suitable alternatives and given sound reasons as to why these have been discounted. Whilst the local authority sets out clearly and fairly the expected benefits and disadvantages when compared with the status quo, there is no recognition of the fact that, under the proposal, pupils will be moving from a building deemed to be in "poor" condition to one that is identified as being likewise. The proposer does not identify how the facilities at Llanfechain will be improved, and the proposal states that no capital funding will be required to facilitate the proposal.

The local authority notes rightly that the transfer of provision from Llangedwyn to Llanfechain will result in additional travel time for pupils and their families, and that transport will be provided for those who are entitled to it. It also suggests that Llangedwyn is not the closest school for most pupils who currently attend. However, as it is not clear how far these pupils are already travelling to Llangedwyn, it is unclear as to whether travelling to Llanfechain would be realistic in these cases. As a result, it is not possible to suggest that all pupils will automatically move to Llanfechain. Whilst the numbers may be very low, the proposal does not recognise the potential impact on the wellbeing of pupils who may not ultimately attend the same school as their current classmates sufficiently.

The local authority shows successfully how the proposal will reduce the number of surplus places in the locality. This is in-line with the council's 'Strategy for Transforming Education'. However, should the proposal be successful the potential number of pupils in Llanfechain could be above the school's capacity and the proposal is not clear enough in how this will be addressed should it be the case. The proposal also includes reference to a potential future merger of Llanfechain with Llansantfraid Church in Wales Primary School. Whilst no time frame is mentioned, this does suggest the possibility of further upheaval for pupils currently attending Llangedwyn.

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 and would not expand or reduce the availability of Welsh language provision.

The local authority has identified a potential annual saving of £91,000 and additional annual cost of £34,600 for transport. The local authority has provided a Community Impact Assessment as part of this proposal.

Educational aspects of the proposal

In general, the local authority considers well the impact of the proposals on the quality and standards in education should pupils move to Llanfechain. It recognises the working relationship that already exists between the two schools through the formal federation and how pupils will already be familiar with staff at Llanfechain. There is appropriate recognition of the potential impact on the quality and standards in education, including pupils' learning, wellbeing, teaching and learning experiences, care support and guidance and leadership and management. For example, it identifies that pupils will have access to more staff and resources and a better range of extra-curricular activities following the potential move. However, the general assumption that pupils will automatically move to Llanfechain means that the implications of pupils moving to different schools is not considered or explored well enough in the proposal.

The local authority states that it has no concerns about the quality of provision at Llanfechain, and that as a result there should be no negative impact on pupils' learning should they transfer.

The local authority highlights the fact the headteacher of Llanfechain is the headteacher of the current federation arrangement. This would mean no changes to current leadership and management systems within Llanfechain would be required.

The very small number of pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) means that, whilst their transition would need to be managed carefully, provision for their needs at Llanfechain should be manageable. The local authority notes that it will need to work closely with both schools to ensure that the needs of all ALN pupils are met.

The local authority has recorded the outcome of both schools' most recent inspections in its proposal. Neither school is currently subject to any follow-up activity by Estyn. However, Llangedwyn was removed from Estyn Review in 2021 and Llanfechain has not been inspected since December 2016. Whilst the local authority emphasises its confidence in leadership, teaching and learning at Llanfechain, they provide no up-to-date information to support this.

The local authority recognises the potential disruption and uncertainty caused by a school closure. It records the need for effective transition arrangements to be put in place should the proposal be approved. The preferred option in this case should ease transition concerns given the relationship that already exists between the two schools and communities.

Llangedwyn Church in Wales Primary School is designated by Welsh Government as a 'rural school'. Therefore, there is an automatic 'presumption against' its closure. However, it appears that the local authority has demonstrated that it has explored alternatives to closure.

The community impact assessment shows that the school building is not used as or seen as a community hub and that most of the school's pupils do not live in the village.

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 Llangedwyn C. in W. School

1.1 Positive comments about the school

Ref	Comment	Council Response
1.1.1	Llangedwyn School is a fantastic setting.	The council notes these positive comments about Llangedwyn C. in W. School.
1.1.2	Pupils have been welcomed to the school and helped to feel comfortable.	As above.
1.1.3	Llangedwyn School has provided us a sense of community and made us feel welcomed and involved within the school.	As above.
1.1.4	The school provides an excellent standard of learning.	As above.
1.1.5	Llangedwyn ensures that my child doesn't feel held back or disadvantaged after the trauma they experienced elsewhere.	As above.
1.1.6	The school should stay open as it's an amazing school. They have great teachers there that treat everyone equally and prevent bullying.	As above.
1.1.7	The nurturing aspect of our pupils within the school has been frequently commented upon by villagers, visitors, and professional educators.	As above.
1.1.8	Our attractive Victorian-era school stands safe and smart and compares favourably against the mid-twentieth-century buildings.	As above.
1.1.9	The school has recently been lauded in the Senedd for an innovative history project about Owain Glyndwr. This only went ahead because of Llangedwyn School's location at the centre of the	As above.

	heritage area and would not have got off the ground without the school.	
--	---	--

1.2 Comments relating to the school’s provision for pupils with ALN or any other protected characteristics

1.2.1	Llangedwyn School has provided extra support for pupils with additional learning needs ensuring they meet their full potential.	<p>Whilst recognising the support Llangedwyn C. in W. School has provided to pupils with ALN over the years, Llangedwyn is a mainstream school and does not have any specialist facilities to support children with additional learning needs compared with other mainstream schools.</p> <p>All schools are expected to cater to the needs and requirements of learners with Additional Learning Needs, while also ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and ensuring that learners are not discriminated against as per the directions in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Smaller schools with limited resources and personnel may be presented with challenges implementing responsibilities in line with the Equality Act – including providing diverse support systems, accommodations and bespoke services necessary to meet the diverse needs of learners. In addition, social interaction is key to development. In small classes, there are fewer opportunities for learners with ALN to interact with a diverse peer group, and experience role modelling from their peers. In essence, the effectiveness of an educational environment for learners with ALN depends on a holistic approach that includes both class size and</p>
-------	---	---

		<p>the availability of appropriate resources and support.</p> <p>The Council recognises that, due to the geographic nature of the county, the current provision of specialist support for pupils with ALN may not be fully accessible to all pupils. To address this, the Council has started providing satellite provision of the main Special Schools in key strategic locations within the county where there is a lack of local provision. The Council's ALN Strategy will be reviewed in early 2024 in order to ensure that it is appropriate to meet the needs of pupils with ALN wherever they are located within the county.</p>
1.2.2	Various children have moved to Llangedwyn School as their needs weren't being met at other schools.	As above.
1.2.3	The provision for special needs has been provided by Llangedwyn for many years and should be recognised for the excellence it has provided.	As above.
1.2.4	I understand that the pupils who attend Llangedwyn school have particular needs which are readily met in their current situation.	As above.
1.2.5	The school has been recognised for providing outstanding provision for those with protected characteristics.	As above.
1.2.6	The school has had a good reputation over a long period. It has a status to provide an enriching and stable environment for those pupils with protected characteristics, alongside main-stream pupils.	As above.
1.2.7	Llangedwyn is inclusive of all disabilities and characteristics that are protected under the Equality Act 2010, including pupils that have to use a wheelchair and pupils with other additional needs.	As above.

	The school makes sure pupils have the support they need without feeling not included.	
1.2.8	I believe that the school can help those with additional learning needs, as with low pupil numbers, the individual tuition needed can be given to ensure that these children reach their full potential.	As above.
1.2.8	Llangedwyn has a proven track record of catering to children of primary school age with a wide range of ALNs including disability, only recently has this been an issue and seems to be linked to the proposal to close the school.	As above.
1.2.9	Llangedwyn being a smaller school has the ability and opportunity (and has previously) been a promoter of equality and diversity, catering to all needs.	As above.
1.2.10	The school over the past two decades has accepted many children who have had a more difficult start in life, many of whom have gone on to enjoy a fulfilling life ahead.	As above.
1.2.11	It has a long track record of supporting the most vulnerable of children, indeed many parents bring their children to the school because of this reputation.	As above.

1.3 Comments about the school's connection with the community and the church

1.3.1	The school is a central hub for the community.	The council recognises the school's role within the local community and its links with the church. A Community Impact Assessment has been prepared which considers the proposal's impact on the community, this will be updated to reflect information received during the consultation and will be considered by Cabinet when deciding whether or not to proceed.
1.3.2	The school is a strong focal point within the local community.	As above.

1.3.3	The school has a particularly close relationship with the church and holds services there throughout the year to which we are all invited. Artwork of various kinds which the children make in school is displayed in the church and they perform musical items on occasion. The vicar visits the school on a regular basis. The school children have entertained us at the Jubilee club – a luncheon club for the elderly, and during lockdown the children made cards for us. The school puts on coffee mornings and sales of work to raise money for charity and school funds. The school concerts are much enjoyed by the community, all going to show what a big part the school plays in village life and what a loss it would be. The school provides a warm, nurturing environment in which children can thrive, encouraging a good work ethic and an ethos of kindness, thoughtfulness, and service to the community.	As above.
1.3.4	The school has been at the heart of the Llangedwyn Community for nearly two hundred years, and throughout has provided a loving and nurturing education emphasising Christian values.	As above.
1.3.5	The close link between school and church has been to the betterment of both, plus the community at large. Our congregations regularly witness the high standards of care, education, and social ability during their frequent visits to our church. To lose this fruitful and delightful link will be to the detriment of the village.	As above.

1.4 Comments on the impact of the current low pupil numbers at the school

1.4.1	The national curriculum in Wales has dramatically changed in recent years and preparation for this change has been an important part of Llangedwyn's school development priorities. Whilst the school is able to deliver the content of the curriculum effectively, although requiring a huge amount of work from the teacher, it is becoming increasingly difficult to do so with the	The council recognises these concerns about the impact of the current low pupil numbers at Llangedwyn C. in W. School on the provision offered at the school.
-------	--	---

	appropriate pedagogy due to low numbers. With only one child in most year groups, peer collaboration, development of independent learning and delivering effective challenge is becoming increasingly difficult.	
1.4.2	The low number of pupils at the school means that discussion, sharing ideas and considering differing viewpoints is limited, and this impacts pupil progress. This is true of all year groups but has a particularly negative impact on the youngest children, learning about working with others is critical to future learning and social confidence.	As above.
1.4.3	The adult:learner ratio at Llangedwyn is very high (over 1:3) and this makes independent working more challenging, as learners tend to rely on staff for support, discussion and idea bouncing, rather than their peers or resources in the classroom.	As above.
1.4.4	With such small numbers at the school, it is very difficult to take part in learning activities that require more participants, for example games in PE and performances. Whilst this is mitigated as far as possible by working as a federation, it does not cover everything.	As above.
1.4.5	An important element of the curriculum is the development of social skills and confidence of all learners which is expressed through the Four Purposes. Whilst staff at the schoolwork very hard to do this, the limited number of people to interact with, does not give the children a sufficient range of relationships to build their skills with.	As above.

1.5 Comments on Ffederasiwn Dwy Afon

1.5.1	Federating the school in my opinion has had an adverse effect on Llangedwyn CiW. The school's status has been diminished with emphasis being given to Llanfechain CiW, thus creating an	Ffederasiwn Dwy Afon was established in 2018 in accordance with the requirements of the 'Federation process of maintained schools in
-------	---	--

	imbalance and lack of positivity which has had far reaching implications for Llangedwyn CiW school.	<p>Wales¹. The proposal was taken forward by the governing bodies of the two schools, not the local authority. The governing bodies of both Llangedwyn C. in W. School and Llanfechain C. in W. School agreed to proceed with establishing the Federation.</p> <p>The aim of the process included ensuring stability in leadership across the two schools, enabling the sharing of good practice across the schools and improving opportunities for pupils and staff.</p> <p>The Council does not agree that establishing the Federation has directly led to the current proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School.</p>
1.5.2	Although federations can work in many cases it seems to have failed in the case of Llangedwyn School where the federation has been put in the position of choosing one school over the other.	As above.
1.5.3	The federation's focus is only on Llanfechain School with no care or effort to ensuring that Llangedwyn is given equal attention. This has been the reason for the decline.	As above.
1.5.4	Llangedwyn feel like an underdog in the federation compared with Llanfechain.	As above.
1.5.5	The school became part of a federation linking it to Llanfechain, which had very low pupil numbers. The joint governing body has succeeded in reversing the pupil numbers with Llanfechain near capacity and Llangedwyn low. This was despite Llangedwyn having an excellent educational standard and good facilities. The	<p>As above.</p> <p>Historical PLASC information relating to the pupil numbers at both Llanfechain C. in W. School and Llangedwyn C. in W. School are included in the Consultation Document published as part of the</p>

¹ [The Federation of Maintained Schools \(gov.wales\)](http://gov.wales)

	disparity of representatives connected to the two schools is obvious, with Llangedwyn being mutilated by this governing body.	proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School. This information shows that in January 2018, there were 28 pupils at Llangedwyn C. in W. School, whilst there were 39 pupils at Llanfechain C. in W. School. This does not support the statement that 'The joint governing body has succeeded in reversing the pupil numbers'.
1.5.6	After initiating the federation themselves, the governing body believe that it has strengthened both schools and the pupils have benefited from that.	Comment noted.

1.6 Comments on leadership at the school

1.6.1	The governing body and Headteacher have been working to reduce pupil numbers for a long period of time at Llangedwyn school. The Church in Wales places that should be being maintained are being reduced by bad management of Llangedwyn school and children are being lost to English schools. The Welsh government pledged to increase Welsh language use in Wales however due to the policies of Powys County Council this are being lost.	The Council does not agree with the statement that 'the governing body and Headteacher have been working to reduce pupil numbers for a long period of time at Llangedwyn school', nor that the current proposal has been caused by 'bad management' of the school.
1.6.2	The school has had bad management under the headteacher and governing body for years and this has resulted in a reduction in pupil numbers and admissions.	The Council does not agree that 'the school has had bad management under the headteacher and governing body for years'.
1.6.3	Having absent heads through long term leave has had a negative affect on the whole school.	Comment noted.
	Llangedwyn school has for many years been considered an outstanding school with high standard of teaching and has only been let down by the headteachers and governors.	The Council does not agree that the current proposal has been caused by the school's headteachers and governors.
1.6.4	The Headteacher and the governing body have only been interested in Llanfechain school since they were federated in Oct	The Council does not agree with this statement. Admissions for both Llangedwyn C. in W. School

	<p>2018 during this time they have stopped children going to Llangedwyn or told parents you can only send kids to Llanfechain school. This is wrong and should be stopped.</p>	<p>and Llanfechain C. in W. School are administered by the Council in accordance with the Council's Admissions Policy. Pupils have been free to apply for places at either school.</p>
--	--	--

1.7 Concerns about the school's financial position

1.7.1	<p>The school's budgetary deficit at the end of year 23/24 is estimated to be £32,803 and by 25/26 £189,860. This is an irretrievable situation for the school and the lack of funding impacts on the future of the school</p>	<p>The Council notes this comment about the school's current financial position.</p>
1.7.2	<p>As a result of the large funding deficit at the school, the staffing budget is highly restricted allowing only for the employment of one full time qualified teacher and two support staff. One qualified teacher on contract provides cover when required. In order to provide adequate safeguarding for the pupils, three members of staff, one of who must be a contracted, qualified teacher, must be on site at all times. If this is not possible, the school must close. During the first half of the autumn term this happened on one occasion, there is no guarantee that it will not happen again. Clearly this is disruptive to both pupils and parents and impacts on the educational experience offered at the school.</p>	<p>The Council notes this comment about the school's current financial position, and the impact of this on staffing arrangements at the school.</p>
1.7.3	<p>Working in these conditions puts pressure on the staff who have the challenge of maintaining adequate levels of safeguarding at all times and providing an appropriate educational experience for pupils with a wide range of ages and abilities with such a small team. Particularly, in the need to ensure that there is cover for planned and unplanned absences as there must be a minimum of three members of staff on site at all times. Normally, any such absences would be filled by a supply teacher, but safeguarding rules do not allow this to happen, as one person must be a contracted qualified teacher, so considerable amounts of time can</p>	<p>As above.</p>

	be spent making arrangements at very short notice to ensure that the school can remain open. On occasion this is not possible, and the school is forced to close which puts extra stress on staff members.	
--	--	--

1.8 Other comments

1.8.1	The UK population is increasing fast due to immigration. Some of that migration is being absorbed locally, and this will only increase. The long-term fact for almost all areas of the UK, including Wales, is population increase, so Llangedwyn School will be needed to accommodate this increase.	Current projections are that pupil numbers in Powys schools will continue to decrease over the coming years. There is no current evidence of any significant increased demand for places in Llangedwyn over the coming years.
-------	---	---

2. Impact on pupils

2.1	It is unfair to the pupils and impacts severely on their mental health and wellbeing.	<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> <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. In</p>
-----	---	---

		this case, the proposal is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, which is federated with Llangedwyn. Pupils are familiar with the staff and pupils at Llanfechain, and are familiar with the school building. This should minimise the impact on pupil well-being for those pupils transferring to Llanfechain.
2.2	Concern that pupils would have to move to different schools which will cause anxiety and will mean they have to adjust to a different school environment	As above.
2.3	Concern about pupils being uprooted and taken away from the teachers they trust, who understand their needs. This will have a negative impact on their ability to learn.	As above.
2.4	It is an educationally recognised fact that pupils who change schools will regress and or their progress will be inhibited by two terms.	As above.
2.5	Pupils have already undergone the impact of COVID and a threat of closure at the same time. They now face almost certain closure of the school. We seek assurance that a commitment to suitable transition arrangements, particularly in relation to wellbeing, will be made for those pupils transferring from Llangedwyn to Llanfechain and that these commitments will be made in recommendations to the Cabinet.	As above.
2.6	Pupils would have to move to different schools where they don't know people and don't know where everything is.	As above.
2.7	The process has been difficult for pupils.	As above.
2.8	The Council aren't considering the effect of closing Llangedwyn School on the children's social skills	Should the Council proceed with the current proposal, pupils would transfer to larger schools, where they would be part of larger groups of pupils, which should have a positive impact on their social skills.

2.9	They would be singled out as they couldn't attend after school club which would be denying them social skills and depriving them of out of school activities which would be detrimental to the mental health	Llangedwyn C. in W. School is currently not the closest school for the majority of the 7 pupils that attend. Whilst acknowledging that access to after school club may be more difficult for the few pupils for whom the school is the closest school, the numbers affected are very small.
2.10	The proposal would mean moving children from the stable caring secure place they currently attend to a larger school with bigger classes and teachers that will have less time to spend with them, which will impact on their progress	<p>If Llangedwyn C.in W. School closes, then pupils would transfer to Llanfechain C.in.W School (or other schools if that was the parental preference). As the smallest school in the county, it is recognised that pupils would move to larger schools and be taught in larger classes – there would be more opportunity for interaction with a wider group of peers, and this would be beneficial in both an educational and social sense.</p> <p>However, it must be noted that the named receiving school – Llanfechain C.in W. School –is significantly below the Welsh Government's definition of a small school even though it is larger than Llangedwyn C.in W. School.</p>
2.11	Without Llangedwyn School, a lot of children's education will suffer.	As above.
2.12	What transition support will be provided by the receiving school?	Transition support will be provided by the receiving school(s) through a variety of means: children would be able to attend for familiarisation days and activities, parents would be able to meet the headteachers and teachers and also familiarise themselves with the school.

3. Impact on pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups

3.1	<p>Llangedwyn has met the needs of ALN pupils over many decades. There is little ALN provision in North Powys, hence the importance of the ALN support given by the school. The withdrawal of that should the school close will cause concern in the community. Assurance is needed that the Authority have plans to address this shortfall and that it will feature in any recommendation made to the Cabinet.</p>	<p>Whilst recognising the support Llangedwyn C. in W. School has provided to pupils with ALN over the years, Llangedwyn is a mainstream school and does not have any specialist facilities to support children with additional learning needs compared with other mainstream schools.</p> <p>All schools are expected to cater to the needs and requirements of learners with Additional Learning Needs, while also ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and ensuring that learners are not discriminated against as per the directions in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Smaller schools with limited resources and personnel may be presented with challenges implementing responsibilities in line with the Equality Act – including providing diverse support systems, accommodations and bespoke services necessary to meet the diverse needs of learners. In addition, social interaction is key to development. In small classes, there are fewer opportunities for learners with ALN to interact with a diverse peer group, and experience role modelling from their peers. In essence, the effectiveness of an educational environment for learners with ALN depends on a holistic approach that includes both class size and the availability of appropriate resources and support.</p>
-----	---	--

		The Council recognises that, due to the geographic nature of the county, the current provision of specialist support for pupils with ALN may not be fully accessible to all pupils. To address this, the Council has started providing satellite provision of the main Special Schools in key strategic locations within the county where there is a lack of local provision. The Council's ALN Strategy will be reviewed in early 2024 in order to ensure that it is appropriate to meet the needs of pupils with ALN wherever they are located within the county.
3.2	Local smaller schools are still needed and could be used for special education for pupils with learning difficulties	As above.
3.3	Children with special needs require an environment in which education can be individually tailored to support them. Small, friendly classrooms are more conducive to this obligation.	As above.
3.4	The closure of a small rural school will always have an impact on local children, however in this case it will deny places to children that need a smaller school (either through physical disabilities or social anxiety from having developmental delay caused by early life trauma) to allow them to integrate more fully in mainstream education	As above.
3.5	The proposal would increase the number ALN children in other schools, which would reduce the availability of existing staff to spend the time required for each child as they 'cope' with a larger pool of children needing their attention.	As above.
3.6	Concern about the impact on LAC children	As above.

		<p>The Council would ensure that any Looked After Children affected by the proposal would be fully supported in transitioning to a new school.</p> <p>If there were any additional support required, the Council would work with the receiving school to ensure that this is provided.</p>
3.7	LAC children require some sort of additional support, be that educational, therapeutic or socially. From experience that is only available in smaller schools. In larger schools there is a tendency that they get lost in the system and get labelled as disruptive or 'naughty'.	<p>As above.</p> <p>Schools of all sizes are able to successfully support pupils, including looked after children. The current proposal in respect of Llangedwyn C. in W. School is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School. This is also a small school.</p>
3.8	If there are village children whose disabilities or additional learning support needs hinder their travelling long distances to get to school, then closing Llangedwyn School will have a severe detrimental effect on their education and lifelong development.	Llangedwyn C. in W. School is not the closest school for the majority of the 7 pupils that currently attend. Whilst acknowledging that implementation of the proposal would result in additional travel for pupils for whom Llangedwyn is currently the closest school, many of the school's pupils already travel long distances to get to the school.
3.9	With the proposed closure it has de-stabilised the whole learning environment of the school, impacting severely on all those involved, thereby having a detrimental effect on those with protected characteristics.	The Council recognises that any school reorganisation process creates a period of uncertainty for all involved, including any pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups. 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>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. This would include schools receiving any pupils that belong to the protected characteristic groups. In this case, the proposal is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, which is federated with Llangedwyn. Pupils are familiar with the staff and pupils at Llanfechain, and are familiar with the school building. This should minimise the impact on pupil well-being for those pupils transferring to Llanfechain.</p>
--	--	---

4. Impact on staff

4.1	It's unfair to staff and will impact on their mental health and well-being	The Council recognises that any school reorganisation proposal creates a period of uncertainty for staff. The Council's HR team have met with staff to provide support.
4.2	The current proposal and consultation is having an impact on staff well-being	As above.
4.3	Staff have been asked questions about the process by pupils and parents but don't have the answers to give them.	As above.
4.4	The Llanfyllin Catchment review meeting caused anxiety for staff as information about the school was displayed on the screen.	Information about all schools in the catchment was shared at the Llanfyllin Catchment review meeting. This information is already available online on the Council's website.

4.5	Staff found out about the proposal during the school day, and then had to continue working when upset.	There was an agreed communications plan that was communicated with all schools, however unfortunately the information appeared on social media before some parents and staff had received copies of the letter that had been issued. As a result, the press release that had been due to be issued at 3pm was issued earlier in the day.
4.6	Request for information about redeployment and redundancy processes	Information about staffing processes was shared with staff at the consultation meeting held with staff. HR are also available to provide additional information and support to staff as needed. Should the Council proceed with the process, further information would be shared with staff if and when decisions are made.

5. Impact on the community

5.1	The closure of Llangedwyn School would be negative for the community.	The Council recognises that the closure of any school would have an impact on the local community. A draft Community Impact Assessment has been prepared which considers the impact of the proposal on the community. This will be updated to reflect feedback received during the consultation period.
5.2	The closure of Llangedwyn School would be a sad day for our community. It plays a large part in our village life, as it has always done.	As above.
5.3	Closure of the school will detract from the Tanat Valley community as a whole. Once it has closed, it will have gone for good. The school should remain open as a vital part of the community infrastructure for the future.	As above.

5.4	School ethos and links with the community have been the centre of the village and these links will be lost forever. Many of the locals are elderly and cannot drive so having local events and links with younger children are vital to their well being.	As above.
5.5	Concern about the impact on the cohesiveness of the local community	As above.
5.6	Some people would look at moving out of the area if the school was to close	As above.
5.7	A parallel can be drawn between the closure of rural railway lines and stations in the 60's where the only remit was financial, 'if it doesn't pay, take it away' which has been followed by years of regret for local opportunities that were not considered as part of the original remit and the closure plan for small rural schools risks suffering in the same way, leading, as it surely will to the decimation of local communities.	As above.
5.8	Any village school is a focal point in the community. Young children, especially, develop and feel a sense of security being in familiar surroundings. Closure of a village school and the transfer of children to other schools outside of their normal neighbourhood can have a diluting effect on the community as a whole.	As above.
5.9	Llangedwyn school is a short walk away from St. Cedwyn's Church and attendance by the school children, and their teachers, to celebrate Christian religious occasions also draws resident members of the village community. This important connection will be lost if Llangedwyn Primary School is closed.	As above.

6. Impact on families

6.1	The uncertainty caused by the possible closure of the school is causing severe anxiety and is detrimental to the mental health of parents of pupils attending the school as well as the pupils themselves.	The Council recognises that any school reorganisation process creates a period of uncertainty for all involved, including the families of pupils affected by any proposals.
-----	--	---

6.2	There will be an impact on those families wishing to have a Christian-orientated education for their children. The costs both financial and emotional of being taken away from the church and community they belong to will be damaging.	As above.
6.3	Young mothers coming to the area make contacts through the school. This is particularly important for single parents. The loss of the school would further impoverish the lives of the elderly.	The council acknowledges that schools provide an important function in the social lives of parents as well as pupils. However, the majority of the 7 pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School don't live in Llangedwyn. Parents would be equally able to make contacts at schools that their children might transfer to, and a larger school may provide a greater opportunity for this.

7. Comments about travel/transport arrangements

7.1	Attending Llanfechain would add a large amount of travelling time making it virtually impossible to work a full day and collect the children in time.	The Council acknowledges that attending Llanfechain School would require additional travel for pupils for whom Llangedwyn is currently the closest school. However, Llangedwyn is not currently the closest school for the majority of the school's 7 pupils. Whilst the proposal is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, pupils could choose to transfer to alternative schools closer to their homes, which would reduce their travel time to school.
7.2	The council aren't considering the effect that closing Llangedwyn school will have on travel for the parents.	As above.
7.3	Travel to alternative schools would be further.	As above.
7.4	Very little thought has gone into getting children to other schools and how parents will have to sacrifice extra time and expense on getting their children there.	As above.

7.5	Parents would have to drive a lot further to get their children to school, some parents are unable to send them to their closest school because of previous experiences.	As above.
7.6	Transporting children over long distances to attend non-local schools must have a large impact on both the environment and actual transport costs. With the current cost of living situation and the current drive to a cleaner, greener environment, I cannot find any reference to either of these points as having been considered by your proposals. Given that transport whether by private car, taxi, minibus or coach, is going to be costly on an increasing scale I am surprised that this has not been an important part of the consideration.	As above. The environmental impact of the proposal is considered in the impact assessments.
7.7	The nearest school that would continue to teach my child Welsh as a second language is a 30-minute drive which in turn means they would have such a long school day and there would be no transport provided to my child/children as they can't go to their local school.	Comment noted. It is acknowledged that implementation of the proposal could result in additional travel for some pupils, however Llangedwyn is currently not the closest school for the majority of 7 pupils that attend.
7.8	At the cabinet meeting of September 26th, a question was asked about the provision of school transport for children displaced by the proposals, a comment was made that the answer had been 'fudged' in response to a query from Scrutiny, the answer then given was that Powys has a legal responsibility to provide transport for children being displaced to their nearest school or the school for their catchment area (this answer was really in itself a further 'fudge' as it didn't really answer the question that was asked). Transport to alternative schools is a very important question, especially to people like myself who deal primarily with LAC children with their associated additional learning needs.	Should the Council proceed with implementation of the proposal, home to school transport would be provided for eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy. This means that pupils for whom Llangedwyn is currently the closest school or for whom Llanfechain is the closest school and who live more than 2 miles from the school would be entitled to home to school transport. Alternatively, pupils for whom Llangedwyn is not currently their closest school would be eligible for home to school transport to their nearest schools if they live more than 2 miles from the school.

7.9	Other schools in the area have transport for their students but Llangedwyn doesn't, if it did there would be more people willing to send their children there. This would make the school more viable.	Any home to school transport provided to other schools in the area is provided in accordance with the Council's home to school transport policy, which provides transport to primary pupils to their nearest school or their nearest Welsh-medium schools if this is more than 2 miles from their home.
7.10	You are expecting us to take our children to a school further away but not offering to transport them, yet there are busses passing Llangedwyn school.	As above.
7.11	If you look at the local catchment area, you should realise how much time and money is being spent on providing transport to other schools only because Powys have said for many years that it is due to close the school at Llangedwyn.	Parents can apply for a place at whichever school they choose. Any applications are dealt with in accordance with the Council's Admissions Policy. Transport would only be provided to pupils in accordance with the Council's home to school transport policy.
7.12	Another serious implication of the preferred option is that pupils who then have to travel to their 'new' school by arranged transport would be denied the right to interact socially with their peers by joining in things such as breakfast clubs or after school clubs, particularly (as in our instance) where this is not on a regular fixed basis.	The Council acknowledges that attending Llanfechain School would require additional travel for pupils for whom Llangedwyn is currently the closest school, and that this could impact on their ability to access breakfast clubs or after school clubs. However, Llangedwyn is not currently the closest school for the majority of the school's 7 pupils. Whilst the proposal is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, pupils could choose to transfer to alternative schools closer to their homes, which would reduce their travel time to school.
7.13	What will English-medium pupils do if Llangedwyn closes and their nearest school is Welsh-medium? Will they be able to get transport to their nearest English-medium school?	The Council's current Home to School Transport Policy provides transport 'for learners who ordinarily reside in Powys to attend their nearest suitable school or catchment school', and also

		includes the provision of home to school transport policy to enable pupils to access a Welsh-medium school or stream if this is not their closest school. However, the policy doesn't currently provide transport to enable pupils to access English-medium provision if their closest school is Welsh-medium.
--	--	--

8. Comments about Church in Wales provision

8.1	I would like to see the preservation of a Church in Wales school.	The proposal is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, which would ensure that they could continue to access Church in Wales provision.
8.2	The closure of Llangedwyn C. in W. School will result in the loss of an establishment that continues to demonstrate the high ethical Christian values our community desires.	As above.
8.3	The proposal will impact on families in the area who want their children to be educated in a church school environment with links to the local church.	As above.
8.4	The main failure is that the majority of pupils have not or will elect not to attend the proposed school for them to move to, leading to a loss of a number of Church in Wales places.	The proposal is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, which would ensure that they could continue to access Church in Wales provision. However, it is acknowledged that some pupils may choose to alternative schools which would mean that they would no longer access Church in Wales places.
8.5	The equal right to Church in Wales places for children will and is being removed, the reduction of places from two schools with capacity of 47 pupils in each school is being reduced to only 47 in one school, no extra places are being created and the remaining	As above.

	children are being forced out of Church in Wales schools as Llanfechain school is already full with no places available before the closure of Llangedwyn has taken place. There are also several pre school children in Llangedwyn village within walking distance that will need to be transported to another school. They will not get the chance to be offered a place in a Church in Wales School place.	
8.6	Church in Wales places are being reduced. This is forcing young families out of our area and into England.	As above.
8.7	We welcome the recognition of the need to retain Church in Wales places by keeping Llanfechain School open, and look forward to working with the Authority to develop its long-term plans for Church in Wales provision in the catchment, particularly in terms of capacity, as Llanfechain is at capacity and Llansantffraid is over capacity.	Comment noted.
8.8	There is not another Church in Wales School in the Tanat Valley, I am given to understand that the next nearest CIW school is almost at capacity.	<p>The proposal is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School. Whilst the current figures indicate that the school is close to its current capacity, the Council would work with the school and the governing body to ensure pupils wishing to access Church in Wales provision at the school could be accommodated.</p> <p>The Council's preferred way forward for the catchment, which was considered by Cabinet in September 2023, recognises this, and states that 'Once the way forward for Llangedwyn is clearer, the Council will work with Llansantffraid C. in W. School, Llanfechain C. in W. School and the Diocese of St Asaph to explore the possibility of merging the two schools to establish a dual sited</p>

		school, with the intention of moving them to a new building within the next ten years.'
--	--	---

9. Comments about small/rural schools

9.1	Small village church schools provide a great learning/family/community environment for the children's education.	The Council notes these comments about the benefits of small and rural schools. However, as stated in the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2022-32, the Council faces a challenge due to the high proportion of small schools in the county and the lack of equity amongst schools. Llangedwyn C. in W. School currently has only 7 pupils, which means that it is increasingly difficult for the school to deliver education.
9.2	Smaller classes, smaller groups, smaller schools all tend to be able to cope with and cater for the wide range of children's needs and abilities.	As above.
9.3	Rural schools play an important part in the education of rural children and children moving to the area.	The Council recognises the role that rural schools have in their local communities. The draft Community Impact Assessment has already recognised the negative impact on the community should the school close. This will be updated to take account of issues raised during consultation. However, it remains the case that the Council is concerned about the challenge facing very small schools in delivering education.
9.4	Concern about the impact of closure of small, local schools on local history and heritage – local schools are one of the main avenues for preserving local history.	As above.

9.5	<p>Closing smaller schools and giving pupils only the option to attend larger schools with larger classes discriminates against them and is against the UNCRC in particular the section dealing with a child's rights concerning education that states: 'the local authority must do everything possible to minimise disruption to their education.'</p>	<p>The Council is not required to provide a choice of schools according to size. The Welsh Government's definition of a small school is a school with 91 pupils or less. Llanfechain C. in W. School, which is the named receiving school in respect of this proposal, also meets this definition.</p> <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> <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. In this case, the proposal is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, which is federated with Llangedwyn. Pupils are familiar with the staff and pupils at Llanfechain, and are familiar with the school building. This should minimise the impact on pupil well-being for those pupils transferring to Llanfechain.</p>
-----	--	---

9.6	Concern about pupils attending larger schools – concern that 'larger' schools who have quite robust safety policies simply ignore them leading to all sorts of problems.	The Welsh Government's definition of a small school is a school with 91 pupils or less. Llanfechain C. in W. School, which is the named receiving school in respect of this proposal, also meets this definition.
9.7	Concern about larger schools – pupils picking up swear words, behaviour problems, inability of staff to cope with the larger numbers.	As above.

10. Comments about other schools

10.1 Llanfechain

10.1.1	The named receiving school (Llanfechain) is full, so the proposal that all Llangedwyn pupils would transfer there is not plausible in the short term and is based on the assumption by PCC that no additional children will move into the area.	<p>The capacity of Llanfechain C. in W. School is 47, and they currently have 44 pupils on roll. However, Llanfechain have the largest numbers in years 5 and 6, and numbers thereafter per year group are lower.</p> <p>On the basis that projected pupil numbers for Llanfechain are also projected to decrease, we don't anticipate that any additional accommodation would be needed. However if needed, the Council would discuss with the school's governing body to understand how the pupils could be accommodated at the school.</p>
10.1.2	Siting a demountable at Llanfechain has been mentioned to provide additional places, however if this was a realistic or planned answer, then it would have been mentioned in the proposal to provide additional capacity.	As above.

10.1.3	There is no capacity at Llanfechain meaning that the preferred option for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain is not viable without further explanation of how additional capacity at Llanfechain would be created.	As above.
10.1.4	At the Cabinet meeting held on October 10th 2023, a discussion took place about the concerns about capacity at Llanfechain. This was addressed with the comment 'the council would work with the school and the governing body to address this', hinting that the school and/or governors can somehow magic up some spare places? Hardly realistic or of any comfort to parents.	As above.
10.1.5	If pupils are to be transferred to Llanfechain assurance is needed that a commitment to fund additional classroom capacity at Llanfechain prior to the closure of Llangedwyn will be included in recommendations to the Cabinet.	As above.
10.1.6	Should the proposal be successful the potential number of pupils in Llanfechain could be above the school's capacity and the proposal is not clear enough in how this will be addressed should it be the case.	As above.
10.1.7	The proposer does not identify how the facilities at Llanfechain will be improved, and the proposal states that no capital funding will be required to facilitate the proposal.	The Authority has a duty to maintain the building condition of all its schools. Llanfechain will be included in the Schools Major Improvements Programme as required. Work to provide additional fencing and lockable access gates is already being prioritised within the Programme.
10.1.8	Various Authority Transformation reports have highlighted the maintenance backlog at Llanfechain. Given that the Authority's current proposal for a new build would appear to at the best 5 years away, we would like to have assurance from the Authority that officers will commit to a detailed and funded programme to address the building condition at Llanfechain in their recommendations to Cabinet.	As above.

10.1.9	Interesting to note that there is no guarantee given in the proposals that the maintenance required to Llanfechain will be carried out in the near future/in time for the additional pupils?	As above.
10.1.10	Some parents at Llansantffraid want to move their children to Llanfechain.	Any parents of pupils currently at Llansantffraid could apply for a place at Llanfechain C. in W. School. Any such applications would be considered in accordance with the Council's Admissions Policy.
10.1.11	Whilst the local authority emphasises its confidence in leadership, teaching and learning at Llanfechain in the consultation document, they provide no up-to-date information to support this.	The Council holds termly meetings with schools to monitor progress in learning, provision and leadership. During the latest visit in October 2023, there is strong evidence of learner progress, high expectations of pupils by all staff and strong leadership exhibited by the headteacher, teacher in charge and governors.

10.2 Llansantffraid

10.2.1	Why is Llansantffraid over capacity when there are places at Llangedwyn? The building is structurally sound with plenty of room to grow inside and in the grounds.	<p>Llansantffraid is a voluntary aided school and is responsible for its own admissions arrangements. Any applications for places at the school are made to the school and considered by the school in accordance with their policy.</p> <p>Applications for places at Llangedwyn C. in W. School are made to the Council, and have been dealt with in accordance with the Council's Admissions Policy.</p>
--------	--	---

10.3 Llanrhaeadr

10.3.1	The nearest option is Llanrhaeadr however there is no after school club there.	It is correct that there is currently no after school club at Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant to provide childcare, however the school is in the process of assessing demand for this type of provision. There are also opportunities to attend extra-curricular after-school clubs at the school.
--------	--	--

10.4 Other

10.4.1	Other schools in the area are oversubscribed, and therefore unable to take in the children from Llangedwyn when it closes. There are currently insufficient places, and your document does not give adequate answers on how that situation will be addressed.	Information about alternative schools in the area and their capacities is provided in the Consultation Document.
10.4.2	Closure of this school will place unnecessary pressure on neighbouring schools, both in Powys and on the border with North Shropshire.	Comment noted. Whilst the proposal is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, pupils can apply for places any alternative school they choose. However, there are currently only 7 pupils attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School, so the number of pupils seeking places in alternative schools would be very small.

11. Comments about finance/funding

11.1	I believe that the main reason for the closure is financial. Figures have been drawn up that indicate that educating children at Llangedwyn school is several times more costly than the Powys average. However there are several aspects that may have been omitted from the figures. Taking the full facts into consideration, the disparity in costs between Llangedwyn and elsewhere may be	The reasons for the proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School are outlined in the Consultation Document. The school currently has just 7 pupils, and is currently the highest school in Powys by budget share per pupil, with a cost per pupil of
------	---	--

	much less significant. I refer to examples like transport costs, and education grants for children with additional needs.	£12,625.92 compared with a Powys average of £4,729.
11.2	The funding framework employed by Powys County Council is based on the legislative provisions in sections 45-53 of the Welsh Assembly Governments' School Standards and Framework Act 1998. In effect this allocates funds per pupil instead of per class. This has a disproportionate effect on small schools, and essentially, given the level of fixed costs and overheads calculated by the local authority, and which each school must bear, effectively put them all into an immediate deficit position.	The Council's funding formula for schools recognises the additional cost pressures on small schools and includes a number of top-ups to offset these pressures. However, in the case of a school with such low pupil numbers, the funding is insufficient to meet the costs of running the school, even with the add-ons and any other grant funding.
11.3	LAC children attract a regular sum of funding to their educational establishments, known as Pupil Premium Plus, this is currently £550 per term per child, so £1650 pa, in addition there are top ups available (which in our case have almost always been claimed) and as well as this their families support the school financially in other ways. This would be lost.	This funding would transfer with the pupils to whichever alternative school they chose to transfer to. However, it is recognised that families would no longer be able to support the school financially in other ways.

12. Criticism of the Council's treatment of Llangedwyn School

12.1	Over a number of years there have been several attempts by the local Authority to close Llangedwyn School. This has had an adverse effect on numbers as parents generally wish their children to have a continuity of education at the same school for their primary years, and it has not been possible to give any assurance of this at Llangedwyn. Consequently, the pupil numbers have decreased steadily. In January 2012, prior to the proposed Transformation programme there were 35. In 2019 when there was yet another proposed Transformation programme flowing from the adverse Estyn report there were 29. At the October 2023 PLASC date (now moved from January 2024) the	<p>Pupil numbers have been decreasing for a number of years across Powys as a whole and the Council has a duty to ensure the cost-effective provision of education.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that there have been discussions about the future of Llangedwyn C. in W. School for a number of years. Whilst acknowledging that this could have had an impact on pupil numbers at the school, the historical pupil numbers included in the consultation document</p>
------	--	---

	pupil numbers will be 7, and as such Llangedwyn is the smallest primary school in Powys. Much of this decrease can be attributed to the threat of closure undermining parents' confidence in the future of the school.	shows that Llangedwyn pupil numbers have fluctated from 31 in 2016 to the current number of 7 pupils.
12.2	Over the last few years the council has tried to close the school leading to other parents taking their children out of the school causing the numbers to dwindle.	As above.
12.3	Since the county boundary change of 1996 when we were moved from Clwyd to Powys this is the fifth attempt to close our school. Each time the threat has arisen our pupil numbers have declined, which is the case this time with the closure being threatened since 2020. The last attempt 15 years ago was defeated as our numbers had risen to over 30.	As above.
12.4	It is clear that there have been earlier attempts on the part of Powys Council, to close Llangedwyn school down. For such an attempt to become a reality, due process has to be gone through. One of the parts of due process is a consultation. The purpose of such a consultation is normally so that due process can be shown to have been done, rather than it be a genuine intention to act upon the points raised. I am of the opinion that the council has the intention to close the school, and there are several reasons to back that opinion. One is that the school has been run down over the last few years with little regard for its advertisement, its website. or the upkeep of its premises and grounds. Another is the apparently deliberate running down of pupil numbers by hinting that the school has an endangered future, such that parents have located their children elsewhere.	The current consultation is being carried out in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code. At the end of the consultation period, a consultation report will be prepared which summarises the responses received, which will be considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with implementation of the proposal.

13. Comments about the process

13.1	A letter had arrived in the school which was discussed by the governing body on the 13 th September 2023. This was embargoed until 3.30 the following day to allow staff and parents to be informed, however the news was 'leaked' in the early hours and was all over social media by early the next morning, meaning that parents and some staff found out about the proposals from friends, family and/or social media sites, hardly the correct way for such information to be made public.	There was an agreed communications plan that was communicated with all schools, however unfortunately the information appeared on social media before some parents and staff had received copies of the letter that had been issued. As a result, the press release that had been due to be issued at 3pm was issued earlier in the day.
13.2	The way the news was broken caused distress and panic amongst parents of children at the school and had a very negative impact on the children themselves which resulted recently in the staff having to talk to the remaining children to try and explain why all their friends were leaving. Parents were panicked into chasing the few places available at the named receiving school for fear of finding their children with no available placements should the proposal go ahead. This was compounded by places being taken up by children whose parents requested places at Llangedwyn but who were given places at Llanfechain. This of course resulted in artificially (and deliberately) reducing the numbers of children attending the school at Llangedwyn.	As above.
13.3	Concerns about communication with the school. Commitments were made that communication would be better, however this hasn't been the case.	As above.
13.4	The process of closure has not been handled well, which has had a negative and detrimental impact on all those involved – pupils, parents, staff and the wider community.	As above. The Council recognises that any school reorganisation process creates a period of uncertainty for all involved, including pupils, parents, staff and the community.

13.5	Whilst the present proposed closure is part of the School Transformation process, it should be borne in mind that closure under the School Organisation Code due to the low pupil numbers would be a strong possibility in any event as pupil numbers are below 10.	Comment noted. It is correct that given the current pupil numbers in the school, the shorter process for closure of small schools which is outlined in the School Organisation Code would apply should numbers remain the same in January 2024.
13.6	The parents of children presently in Llangedwyn school were told in July 2023 that Llangedwyn school was closing and to move their children to Llanfechain. In a public meeting the Chairman of the governing body told a whole room of people that the governing body were only informed on the 12th Oct 2023.	The Council did not make a decision to commence the statutory process to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School until October 2023.
13.7	What would happen to the school and its contents if the school closed	The building would be cleared and would be returned to its owners, who would need to decide on its future use. As much as possible of the contents would be redistributed to other schools.
13.8	Request for staff to be informed when decisions are made	The Council will ensure that the school is kept informed of any developments in respect of the process.
13.9	How much notice needs to be given before closing a school?	We aim to provide at least a term's notice of closure after a final decision is made, however this is not a requirement.

14. Comments about the presumption against closing rural schools

14.1	You are going against Welsh Government policies on rural schooling.	<p>The Welsh Government's School Organisation Policy 2018 includes a section entitled:</p> <p><i>1.8 Presumption against the closure of rural schools.</i></p> <p>This outlines the additional considerations that local authorities/proposers need to carry out when</p>
------	---	---

		<p>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>Llanfechain C. in W. School is also classed as a 'rural' school, as are many other schools in the local area.</p>
14.2	The Welsh Government recently spoke about an initiative to preserve and regenerate small rural communities which of course your proposal goes completely against as it will lead to the complete demise of such areas.	As above.
14.3	The proposal doesn't fit in with the Welsh Government's intention to preserve and rejuvenate rural communities to attract young people who have moved away for work to return 'home' when they start their families, they will never consider coming back if all of the local facilities, of which schools are the primary consideration, have been decimated.	<p>As above.</p> <p>The Council recognises that the closure of any school would have an impact on the local community. A draft Community Impact Assessment has been prepared which considers the impact of the proposal on the community. This will be updated to reflect feedback received during the consultation period.</p>
14.4	The Welsh Government are trying to reverse the trend where young people leave the valleys and rural areas to find better employment, however the loss of local schools (which then has a knock on effect to other local facilities such as shops, village halls, pubs etc) will result in there being no attractive initiatives for those same young people to move back 'home' once they decide to	As above.

	start a family, with no local schools whole areas will become defined by aged populations and eventually whole communities will die out.	
--	--	--

15. Comments about the documentation

15.1	There are a number of assumptions made throughout the proposal stating that there will not be any additional children coming into the Llangedwyn catchment area, that the parents of all children currently at Llangedwyn will want to transfer their children to Llanfechain, and that there will not be any increase in pupil numbers in both Llangedwyn and/or Llanfechain in the foreseeable future.	The Council does not agree with this statement. The latest projections available to the Council suggest that no significant increase in pupil numbers is expected at Llangedwyn or Llanfechain in the coming years. Whilst the proposal is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School the consultation document fully acknowledges that some pupils may choose to transfer to other schools.
15.2	There is no reference in your proposal to demonstrate that the closure of primary schools in other rural areas has been a positive move, if there is such evidence then it should be included in the proposals and if there is not, why not and surely this would be a necessary step to look at the effects that closing small rural schools have had on the communities that they stood at the heart of. Parents, community members and business people from these areas should be talked to so that the true effects of closing their schools can be evaluated.	The Council notes this comment. A community impact assessment is carried out as part of this process, however, the Council has a duty to ensure the cost-effective provision of education and has to balance this against a number of different factors.
15.3	There is no evidence in your proposals to demonstrate that any consultation or even discussion has been carried out with communities that have already had their primary schools closed to evaluate the overall impact on that community and the surrounding area. Something that I think would be imperative in allowing you to evaluate your chosen path.	As above.

15.4	I can only emphasise that for there to be a full and fair set of proposals every avenue should be explored, rather than starting with a known end result and trying to make everything fit.	The Council's proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School began with a review of the whole Llanfyllin catchment to identify a preferred way forward for the whole catchment, before carrying out a separate options appraisal relating to Llangedwyn C. in W. School. The process did not 'start with a known end result'.
15.5	The proposals are not a carefully worked up plan starting from a current situation and ending with a well thought out conclusion but rather a plan that had started with a known end result with all the intermediate facts being fitted in.	As above.
15.6	The proposal seems to have relied only on new build information with no credence being given to the large number of rental properties in the area any of which have the potential to attract families to the area, there are also a number of houses for sale which again could attract families to move into the area, closing the school would make all of these properties less attractive to families	<p>Information about new housing developments in the area was included in the Llanfyllin Catchment Review paper to understand any possible future increase in pupil numbers in the area, which could lead to an increase in the area's population. These would have included any developments which would be for rental.</p> <p>The latest projections available to the Council indicate that no significant increase in demand for places at Llangedwyn is expected over the coming years.</p>
15.7	The proposal fails to meet 4 of the main points cited in the Youtube video as reasons for proposing the closure.	<p>The Youtube video summarising the proposal for Llangedwyn C. in W. School lists three challenges relating to Llangedwyn C. in W. School, which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low pupil numbers • High budget share per pupil • Combined age classes

		The Council's view is that the current proposal addresses these three challenges.
15.8	Disagreement with the content of the SWOT assessments	The SWOT assessments have been carried out based on the Council's view of the proposal, and reflect the views of a cross section of professionals from across the Council, e.g. School Improvement, Finance, Transforming Education.
15.9	The general assumption that pupils will automatically move to Llanfechain means that the implications of pupils moving to different schools is not considered or explored well enough in the proposal.	It is the Council's preference that Llanfechain C.in.W. School is the named receiving school for the Llangedwyn C.in W. pupils due to the fact that both schools are part of a federation, and that both schools offer Church in Wales provision, plus pupils are familiar with Llanfechain school staff and pupils. However, it is recognised that parents may choose other schools for their children to attend, rather than Llanfechain but it is not possible to consider this as the specific details are not known.
15.10	The proposal includes reference to a potential future merger of Llanfechain with Llansantffraid Church in Wales Primary School. Whilst no time frame is mentioned, this does suggest the possibility of further upheaval for pupils currently attending Llangedwyn.	The Council notes this comment. Should the Council proceed with the implementation of the current proposal in respect of Llangedwyn C. in W. School, and should the Council then proceed with any further developments in respect of merging Llanfechain C. in W. School and Llansantffraid C. in W. School in the future, the impact on any pupils that had already transferred from Llangedwyn to Llanfechain would be considered at that time.
15.11	Whilst the documentation suggests that Llangedwyn is not the closest school for most pupils who currently attend, it is not clear how far these pupils are already travelling to Llangedwyn, so it is unclear whether travelling to Llanfechain would be realistic for these pupils.	As indicated in previous papers in respect of Llangedwyn C. in W. School, the closest provider for the 17 pupils that were attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School in January 2022 was as follows:

		<p> Llangedwyn C. in W. School – 17.6% of pupils Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant CP School – 35.3% of pupils Ysgol Llanfyllin – 11.8% of pupils Ysgol Meifod – 11.8% of pupils Llanfechain C. in W. School – 5.8% of pupils Ysgol Bro Cynllaith – 5.8% of pupils Bryn Offa Primary School (Shropshire) – 5.8% of pupils Weston Rhyn Primary School (Shropshire) – 5.8% of pupils </p> <p>The closest school for these 17 pupils should there not have been a school in Llangedwyn was as follows:</p> <p> Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant CP School – 47.1% Ysgol Llanfyllin – 11.8% Ysgol Meifod – 11.8% Llanfechain C. in W. School – 11.8% Ysgol Bro Cynllaith – 5.9% Bryn Offa Primary School (Shropshire) – 5.9% Weston Rhyn Primary School (Shropshire) – 5.9% </p> <p>There are currently only 7 pupils attending the school. Llangedwyn C. in W. School is not currently the closest school for the majority of these pupils. Whether or not travelling to Llanfechain School would be realistic would depend on the individual circumstances of these pupils, however many of the school's pupils are already making a choice to</p>
--	--	---

		attend Llangedwyn C. in W. School, which already requires significant additional travel compared with them attending their closest school.
15.12	Some pupils may not choose to transfer to Llanfechain – the proposal does not recognise the potential impact on the wellbeing of pupils who may not ultimately attend the same school as their classmates sufficiently.	Comment noted. It is recognised that some parents may choose other schools rather than Llanfechain C.in. W School and there could potentially be an impact on the wellbeing of pupils who are transferring to other schools without their classmates. If the proposal to close the school is approved, then parents would be able to apply for a place at Llanfechain C.in W. School or any other school of their choice. Once it is known which school pupils would be transferring to, the Council would work with the receiving school to ensure a smooth transition process.

16. Alternative options

16.1 Status Quo

16.1.1	Keep the school open	Status quo is one of the options considered in the options appraisal carried out in respect of Llangedwyn C. in W. School, however this option would not address the challenges identified. There are currently only 7 pupils attending the school.
16.1.2	The Council should stop trying to close the school	As above.
16.1.3	The Council should reconsider closing the school	As above.
16.1.4	The school should remain open and promote its excellent standards of education and care.	As above.

16.1.5	The proposal to close the school should be stopped and children should be allowed to remain in the school that they know with teachers that they trust.	As above.
16.1.6	Keeping the school open and looking for savings elsewhere.	As above.
16.1.7	Allow the school to stay open and continue its fantastic work with smaller groups and classes	As above.

16.2 Develop the provision at Llangedwyn

16.2.1	Invest in this type of school which would provide a better learning environment for children in the area	Llangedwyn C. in W. School is not currently the closest school for the majority of the 7 pupils attending. There is no evidence of additional demand for places in Llangedwyn.
16.2.2	Add a bus service to the school to increase pupil numbers	Transport to the school would already be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport. Currently Llangedwyn is not the closest school for the majority of the 7 pupils that attend. Home to school transport would not be provided to pupils for whom Llangedwyn is not the closest school.
16.2.3	The school website should be updated, the school promoted, and it may even be possible to encourage attendance if the clear position is made that the school will be preserved. Parents may even feel moved to transfer their children from oversubscribed schools in the area.	The Council is not responsible for updating the school's website or promoting the school.
16.2.4	The primary school needs more publicity, unless people know this area they don't even know the school exists. The online website did need updating but the governors have now removed the website. It is a beautiful school and people with kids need to see that when they are searching for a primary school.	The Council is not responsible for publicising the school, or updating the school's website.

16.2.5	Form better cross border links, promote the school better across the border.	It is not the local authority's role to promote the school.
16.2.6	The local authority should encourage other children to attend the school rather than seek to close it.	It is not the local authority's role to 'encourage other children to attend the school'. Any applications for places at Llangedwyn made to the Council would have been dealt with in accordance with the Admissions Policy.
16.2.7	Look into improving the school	The Council provides regular school improvement support to the school, as it does to all other schools. Despite this, pupil numbers at the school have continued to decrease.

16.3 Dissolve the Federation and allow Llangedwyn to exist as a standalone school

16.3.1	Remove Llangedwyn from the federation and allow it to promote itself and demonstrate what an unfettered school can accomplish even giving a 2 year period of grace to see what the school could achieve would allow the local community working with the school staff and dedicated Llangedwyn governors to demonstrate the viability of the school	The proposal to federate Llangedwyn C. in W. School and Llanfechain C. in W. School was led by the governing bodies of the two schools, and both governing bodies agreed to establish the federation. 'The Federation Process of Maintained Schools in Wales' does allow for schools to leave federations, however neither school has done this.
16.3.2	De-couple the school from the disastrous federation with Llanfechain giving it its own governing body which would lead the promotion taking it back to capacity.	As above.
16.3.3	Stop the threat of closure of Llangedwyn school, allow it to stand alone and not part of a federation with a fixed budget and allow the local community the chance to help finance the school via	As above.

	private support if this does not work for two years and pupil numbers are still below 10 then close the school.	
16.3.4	In order to be able to make a balanced decision about the future of Llangedwyn PCC should dissolve the federation and free Llangedwyn to demonstrate its viability, this could be done for a specified period of time, for example 2 or 3 years, Llangedwyn could then have its own board of dedicated governors, operate for that time with an acting head teacher and be given the chance to determine its own future	As above.
16.3.5	Dissolve the current federation and set Llangedwyn CinW school 'free' to determine its own future, give it a set period to prove itself, e.g. 2-3 years after which a true balanced decision, unaffected by other outside influences could be made, the school could operate during this period under an acting head teacher and elect its own dedicated board of governors who would be able to concentrate on the one school without any conflict of interests or having to make decision that favour one school over another, although federations can be a good thing in this case it does not seem to have worked and Llangedwyn should be given the opportunity to determine its own future and the ability to prove its viability unfettered from outside influences of choice	As above.
16.3.6	End Federation, this federation is only acting for the interests of Llanfechain school. Allow Llangedwyn more time to get more Welsh speaking pupils into the school without the governors and headteacher stopping them.	As above.
16.3.7	The council need to provide better funding for the school and better advertisement for the school. If more people were aware of what the school had to offer and how it is supporting the educational welfare of children, it would have more pupils.	The school is funded in accordance with the Council's funding formula. Promotion of the school is not the responsibility of the Council, this would be in the hands of the school itself.

16.3.8	Sharing of resources to make savings	The school is already part of a federation, which has provided an opportunity to share resources to make savings.
--------	--------------------------------------	---

16.4 Retain Llangedwyn School as an ALN school

16.4.1	<p>To retain Llangedwyn school as an independent school but focus on providing an educational experience for those children with specific ALN's that would require more than just occasional staff intervention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This would cater for LAC children with multiple ALN's who would be sidelined in other larger schools. • Llangedwyn have a proven ability to care for and look after such children, bringing the best out and allowing them to reach their true potential • It would lower potential disruptions in larger classes/alternative schools • It could be promoted as a school for children with ALN's (not a special school) just a school with the ability to give that little bit extra • It would provide an educational setting that could go that extra mile when it came to transition to secondary placements • There could be the opportunity to allow children to work with their chosen secondary educational placement alongside Llangedwyn during their first year of secondary education (the only other specialist education placements are both in Newtown and both cater for children with quite severe behaviour problems, there is no provision for children who fall between usual behaviour and severe behaviour problems) this would 	<p>Based on the current pupil numbers, the school would be unsustainable even as an ALN school. The Council delivers support for pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream schools and in 2 special schools, and some satellite centres. The special schools are staffed with specially trained teachers, who are proficient in the delivery of education to pupils with additional learning needs. The location of Llangedwyn is not suitable for an ALN school.</p>
--------	--	---

	<p>give an opportunity to be inclusive and give every child the chance to reach their full and true potential)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For minimal cost it would provide an almost unique school and at the same time retain the ability to promote the heritage and history of the local area • Current staff at Llangedwyn would be more than likely to support such an initiative. • It would not affect the future proposals for Llanfechain at all in fact it may well support them when the time is right. • It would provide continuing C in W placements meaning that the Diocese of St Asaph may well support such an initiative • The buildings are already in place ready to go • It would have the support of the local community • It would provide capacity going forward which would allow the school to promote its services across a wider area and attract children from across the border. 	
16.4.2	<p>The Council should retain Llangedwyn C in W school as a separate school but with the focus of providing educational placements for those children with ALN's who require more than occasional additional support, (so not special needs just additional needs) Llangedwyn C in W school have a proven record of managing such children and bringing out the very best in them allowing them to reach their maximum potential, this would provide an educational facility in North Powys that is currently sadly lacking and will not be covered by just transferring all children to a different school with larger pupil numbers, in fact this may have the exact opposite especially in the case of children who may require additional support throughout their day or those with developmental delays caused by early life trauma.</p>	As above

16.4.3	Look at different ways to keep the school open. It would make an ideal ALN setting for children who do not need 'special' education but do need that little bit of extra help on an ongoing basis, this is something that from experience does not happen in larger schools where the teachers are limited in the amount of time they can spend with individual children, this means that those children with ALN get the additional help only when it is available and not necessarily when it is needed, there is no provision of this type in North Powys, hence why if Llangedwyn closes we will look to relocate to schools over the border.	As above
16.4.4	The school could become a centre of excellence catering for those with protected characteristics.	As above

16.5 Close Llanfechain and relocate all children to Llangedwyn

16.5.1	<p>Closing Llanfechain and relocating all children to Llangedwyn hasn't been considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Llanfechain has a back log of maintenance and repairs heading for £500k, closing the school would mean that this money would be saved, part of it could be used to place 2 demountables at Llangedwyn to provide current and future capacity. • Any comment that this may not be acceptable to staff/the school at Llanfechain is negated by the same argument in reverse • Ongoing maintenance costs would be much lower at Llangedwyn with new demountables than at Llanfechain where maintaining the old buildings would be ongoing and costly • Pupils would be transferring to a school that they already know, thanks to the federation. 	<p>This option was not considered as part of the current process as the issue that the Council is trying to address is the very small number of pupils in Llangedwyn. Regarding the specific points in this response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recognised that there is a higher backlog maintenance cost at Llanfechain C.in W. School than at Llangedwyn. However, the current cost of installing double-classroom demountables is ? • Point accepted regarding the acceptability by staff/school at Llanfechain is negated by the same argument in reverse • As first point
--------	--	---

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land for future expansion at Llangedwyn may be easier to source than at Llanfechain • The Llanfechain site could be sold giving the council a handsome revenue return whereas the land at Llangedwyn cannot • Numbers at Llangedwyn could then be increased through promotion and when the time came for the new 'super school' to be built covering the Llansantffraid and Llanfechain areas new pupils could start at the new school whilst those still at Llangedwyn would complete their education in a school that they knew • This would provide a number of additional opportunities for the school to undertake to increase its presence and community involvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point accepted – pupils would be transferring to a school that they already know, within the federation • Considering pupil projections at both school, it is unlikely that land would be required for future expansion at either school • The Council does not own the Llanfechain site, therefore this would not result in a capital receipt. • It is unclear how pupil numbers could be increased through promotion as the figures suggest that neither school is expected to increase their pupil numbers and the demographic projections for children generally across the county show a decrease. • It is unclear how this option would provide a number of additional opportunities for the school to increase its presence and community involvement, particularly as the majority of pupils currently attending Llanfechain C.in W. School live closer to Llanfechain than Llangedwyn, and many pupils attending Llanfechain currently live closer to other communities. <p>However, this option will be be further assessed an alternative option in accordance with the</p>
--	--	--

		requirements of the 'Presumption against closure of Rural Schools' in section 7 of this report.
16.5.2	The second option that appears to have been overlooked is to close Llanfechain school and relocate all the pupils from there to Llangedwyn, the financial savings alone make this an option that should be considered and in addition the current Llanfechain site could be sold to give the council an increase in capital, i give more suggested details how this could be achieved in 4 above and in order to be fair and present a balanced view of options i feel that this option should have been considered.	As above
16.5.3	It would surely be cheaper to place 2 (poss 3) demountables at Llangedwyn and close Llanfechain where the land is owned by the council and could be sold so not only a saving in maintenance, but also a cash input from sale of the land and lower ongoing maintenance costs due to the majority of buildings at Llangedwyn being new.	As above
16.5.4	On Financial grounds it would make more sense to close Llanfechain school and keep Llangedwyn school open and move all staff and pupils to Llangedwyn school however the governing body which are mostly Llanfechain School governors would not agree to this so they have ensured all pupils go the Llanfechain before Llangedwyn.	There would be additional home-to-school transport costs as Llanfechain C.in.W. primary school currently has 44 pupils on roll compared to the 7 pupils on roll at Llangedwyn.

16.6 Other

16.6.1	Retain a bilingual school in the Tanat Valley	Whilst pupils learn Welsh as a second language at Llangedwyn C. in W. School, it is an English-medium school, not a bilingual school.
16.6.2	As our population is aging, it could become a centre for life-long learning. E.G. Computer skills, language tuition, or arts and crafts. Our community is scattered, and it would provide a hub.	The building is not owned by the Council. Should the current proposal be implemented, the building would eventually be returned to its owners, who

		would be responsible for determining its future use.
16.6.3	It could make an excellent nursery school; the basic infrastructure is there, and the school is surrounded by fields and a dedicated playground. It would help young parents who wish to return to work.	As above.

17. Comments about impact on the Welsh language

17.1	The children have excellent opportunities to learn and use Welsh in their day to day work	The Council is confident that pupils would continue to be able to access equivalent opportunities to learn and use Welsh in any of the alternative Powys schools they may choose to transfer. It is however acknowledged that some pupils may choose to transfer to schools in England, which would mean that they would no longer learn Welsh.
17.2	Parents would have to choose different schools and they might choose English schools where no Welsh is taught, which would be detrimental to the Welsh language.	As above.
17.3	In our family there has been an increase in children learning and using Welsh in all aspects of their lives which would not have happened without the existence of Llangedwyn School, so the proposal would lead to a decrease in the opportunities for children to learn Welsh at its most basic level.	As above.
17.4	Incidental Welsh is taught at the school as with other schools in the area	As above.
17.5	I don't see how closing the school can benefit the use of the Welsh language as the children are introduced to Welsh in the school.	As above.
17.6	No Welsh will be spoken as there will be no school to teach it	As above.

17.7	There will be an adverse effect as Welsh is currently taught in small groups	As above.
17.8	The progress of Llangedwyn pupils in their Welsh language has been noted, and it is unlikely that this level of achievement will be sustained.	As above.
17.9	Llangedwyn school has made great progress to promote the Welsh language within the school and with the local Church community, this loss would be so bad for the area and would promote the return of the English language over the Welsh language. With the hard work for many years to promote the Welsh language within the Llangedwyn area why should it be lost, this is very negative and goes against what every government body Wales and Powys stands for.	As above.
17.10	Closing the school would have a negative effect on the Welsh language, the school provides a good balance of Welsh and English, with children from English speaking families. The school offers a great learning platform, more so than some of the other schools in the area.	As above.
17.11	Many parents would due to the travel issue have to send their children to English speaking schools, meaning less children would have Welsh as a second language as their family don't speak Welsh fluently and would be unable to teach their child the Welsh language at home.	It is acknowledged that some pupils may choose to transfer to schools in England, which would mean that they would no longer learn Welsh.
17.12	Pupils would still access Welsh language teaching if they stayed in the cluster	Comment noted.
17.13	The children will have better opportunities to learn Welsh in other schools	Comment noted.

18. Comments in support of the proposal

18.1	Although it is sad to see a school close, I feel that it is inevitable due to the very low pupil numbers.	Comment noted.
------	---	----------------

18.2	The school should have closed years ago it's wasted Powys money for too long.	Comment noted.
18.3	It should be closed sooner, this would support children in gaining a better education.	Comment noted.
18.4	Due to the uncertainty caused by the constant threat of closure and the impact of the Powys County Council funding formula, we reluctantly accept Option Four in the best interests of the pupils and staff.	Comment noted.

19. Other comments

19.1	The Authority's future plans indicate that they would wish to consider closing Ysgol Bro Cynllaith at some time in the future and that Ysgol Llanrhaeadr will move along the Welsh language continuum. Should this take place there will be no English primary provision in the Tanat valley. This will mean that parents may choose to take their children to England and in the long term may deter families from moving to the valley. The Governing Body wish to understand how officers will deal with this issue in their recommendations to Cabinet.	Whilst the Council's preferred way forward for the Llanfyllin catchment includes the closure of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith and supporting Ysgol Llanrhaeadr to move along the language continuum, there are statutory processes which would need to be undertaken to implement both of these changes. The impact on access to English-medium education would be considered at that time, if appropriate.
19.2	It is wrong that the council are proposing to bring Welsh only education to the Tanat Valley, this will lead to a reduction of families moving in to our valley and will eventually see a decline in pupils.	As above.
19.3	Birth rate has gone up during covid, will there be enough school places available in this area to cope with this in the near future?	Current projections are that pupil numbers in Powys schools will continue to decrease over the coming years. There is no current evidence of any significant increased demand for places in Llangedwyn over the coming years.
19.4	What will the make-up of the new governing body at Llanfechain be should Llangedwyn close?	A new governing body would need to be established at Llanfechain C.in W. School and this would be based on The Government of

		Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005 for Voluntary Controlled Schools. This would include: 3 parent governors, 2 LEA governors, 1 teacher governor, 1 or 0 staff governor, 2 foundation governors, 1 community governor as well as the headteacher of the school.
--	--	--

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 assessments have been reviewed to take account of any further information that came forward through the consultation, however it is not considered that any information emerged which requires the assessments to be amended. The assessments 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 part of a federation with Llanfechain C. in W. School	There would be no impact on quality and standards – pupils would continue to access the current provision at Llangedwyn.	There would be no impact on the community – provision would continue to be available in Llangedwyn.	There would be no impact on travel arrangements – pupils would continue to attend Llangedwyn C. in W. School.
Option 2: Merge with Llanfechain C. in W. School to establish a new school on two sites	This option would retain provision in Llangedwyn, building upon the federation which is already in place. There would be enhanced opportunities for networking and	The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Llangedwyn.	Pupils would continue to attend school in the same location, thus there would be no additional transport costs. Some additional travel may be required between schools in

	<p>sharing good practice between staff, however, ensuring equal opportunities to all pupils in mixed age range age classes would continue to be difficult.</p> <p>Merging the two schools to establish a new school is likely to result in a school where quality and standards are at least as good as the current provision.</p>		<p>order to access activities and events.</p>
<p>Option 3: Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, but retain the site as part of Llanfechain C. in W. School</p>	<p>This option would retain provision in Llangedwyn, building upon the federation which is already in place with Llanfechain C. in W. School.</p> <p>There would be enhanced opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff, however, ensuring equal opportunities to all pupils in mixed age range age classes would continue to be difficult.</p> <p>It is anticipated that implementation of this option would mean that pupils attend provision where the quality and standards are at least as good as the current provision.</p>	<p>The impact on the community would be minimal. Provision would continue to be available in Llangedwyn. However, the site would be managed by Llanfechain C. in W. School, so there could be a perceived reduction in community involvement in the management of the school.</p> <p>In addition, it is possible that joint school activities would take place on the larger Llanfechain site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Llangedwyn site.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current site of Llangedwyn C. in W. School.</p> <p>Some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>

<p>Option 4: Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School</p>	<p>Pupils would transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, which is a larger school where they would be part of larger cohorts of pupils. This would also have a positive impact on the pupils currently attending Llanfechain C. in W. School as it would result in an increase in pupil numbers at that school.</p> <p>It is anticipated that implementation of this option would mean that pupils would attend provision where the quality and standards are at least as good as the current provision.</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Llangedwyn as there would be no provision in Llangedwyn.</p> <p>The Llangedwyn school building is not owned by the Council. Should the school close, the building would be transferred back to its owners, who would need to determine its future use, and therefore whether or not facilities would remain available to the community in Llangedwyn.</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School, particularly those for whom Llangedwyn is currently the closest school.</p> <p>However, Llangedwyn is not currently the closest school for the majority of pupils attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School, so many of the school's pupils are already choosing to travel further to 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>Option 5: Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools</p>	<p>It is anticipated that implementation of this option would mean that pupils would attend provision where the quality and standards are at least as</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Llangedwyn as there would be no provision in Llangedwyn.</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School.</p>

	good as the current provision at Llangedwyn.	The Llangedwyn school building is not owned by the Council. Should the school close, the building would be transferred back to its owners, who would need to determine its future use, and therefore whether or not facilities would remain available to the community in Llangedwyn.	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.
--	--	---	---

7.2 Further reasonable alternatives

The other alternatives which were suggested in the consultation responses received are outlined in section 16 of the 'issues raised in the consultation period' section of this report, including the Council's response to these alternatives. These are as follows:

- i) Retain the status quo
- ii) Develop the provision at Llangedwyn
- iii) Dissolve the federation and allow Llangedwyn to exist as a standalone school
- iv) Retain Llangedwyn as an ALN school
- v) Close Llanfechain and relocate all children to Llangedwyn
- vi) Retain a bilingual school in the Tanat Valley
- vii) Retain the school building as a centre for lifelong learning
- viii) Retain the school building as a nursery school

i) and ii) are included within Option 1 – Status Quo in the above table, and are therefore not subject to a separate assessment.

iii) Dissolve the federation and allow Llangedwyn to exist as a standalone school – this will be subject to a further assessment.

iv) Retain Llangedwyn as an ALN school – this is not subject to further assessment due to the reasons outlined in 16.4.1 above.

- v) Close Llanfechain and relocate all children to Llangedwyn – this will be subject to a further assessment
- vi) Retain a bilingual school in the Tanat Valley – Llangedwyn is an English-medium school, not a bilingual. Welsh-medium education continues to be available to pupils living in Llangedwyn at Ysgol Llanrhaeadr for pupils wishing to become bilingual. This will not be subject to a further assessment.
- vii) Retain the school building as a centre for lifelong learning – should the school close, the building would be returned to its owners, who would then need to decide its future use. For this reason, this option will not be subject to a further assessment.
- viii) Retain the school as a nursery school – this would move away from the Council’s plans to reduce the number of transition points in a child’s education by developing all-through primary provision. For this reason, this option will not be subject to a further assessment.

The reasonable alternatives that will be subject to further consideration against the factors outlined in the School Organisation Code for rural schools are:

- iii) **Dissolve the federation and allow Llangedwyn to exist as a standalone school**
- v) **Close Llanfechain and relocate all children to Llangedwyn**

These reasonable alternatives are considered in the following table:

Option	Likely impact on quality and standards	Likely impact on the community	Likely impact of different travelling arrangements
iii) Dissolve the federation and allow Llangedwyn to exist as a standalone school	This option would result in instability across the two schools that are currently part of Ffederasiwn Dwy Afon in the short term. Dissolving the federation would mean that there would be a need	There would be no impact on the community – provision would continue to be available in Llangedwyn.	There would be no impact on travelling arrangements. Pupils would continue to attend Llangedwyn C. in W. School.

	<p>to re-establish separate governing bodies at Llangedwyn C. in W. School and Llanfechain C. in W. School. In addition, the schools currently have a shared Headteacher. This arrangement would also need to be reviewed.</p> <p>Whilst the staff currently employed at Llangedwyn C. in W. School would continue, the school would remain a very small school, at least in the short term. The Council would have significant concerns about the ability of such a small school to offer appropriate, high quality provision to pupils.</p> <p>Due to Llangedwyn's very small size, being part of a federation enables additional opportunities to be provided to its pupils, through joint activities with Llanfechain. Dissolving the federation would make it more difficult for these types of additional opportunities to be provided, which would have a negative impact on Llangedwyn pupils.</p>		
--	--	--	--

<p>v) Close Llanfechain and relocate all children to Llangedwyn</p>	<p>Pupils attending Llanfechain C. in W. School would transfer to Llangedwyn, which would provide an opportunity to increase pupil numbers at Llangedwyn. However, it is possible that pupils would choose to attend other schools, which may be closer for them.</p> <p>for many of the pupils currently alplementation of this option would mean that pupils currently attending Llanfechain C. in W. School would transfer to their nearest alternative schools. For the majority of pupils currently attending Llanfechain C. in W. School, the closest alternative schools would be Llansantffraid C. in W. School, Llangedwyn C. in W. School and Ysgol Llanfyllin. The Council's view is that all of these schools would provide education for pupils which is of at least equivalent quality as that provided at Llanfechain.</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Llanfechain as there would be no provision in Llanfechain.</p> <p>The Llanfechain school building is not owned by the Council. Should the school close, the building would be transferred back to its owners, who would need to determine its future use, and therefore whether or not facilities would remain available to the community in Llanfechain.</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llanfechain C. in W. School. Llanfechain C. in W. School currently has significantly more pupils than Llangedwyn C. in W. School. This option would have a significant impact on travel for the majority of pupils. This would impact on their ability to access any after-school activities, and would also have an impact on parents in terms of their ability to access to school activities.</p> <p>There would also be a significant additional cost to the Council in order to transport pupils from Llanfechain to Llangedwyn.</p>
--	---	--	---

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 other original options or the alternative options address the challenges facing Llangedwyn C. in W. School which are

- Low pupil numbers
- High budget per pupil
- Combined age classes

As outlined in the Consultation Document, the reasons for the proposal are as follows:

- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School
- Would increase pupil numbers at Llanfechain C. in W. School
- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools
- Revenue saving to the Council
- The Council would no longer need to maintain the Llangedwyn building
- Pupils would attend a larger school where they would be part of a larger cohort of pupils
- Pupils would transfer to a school they are already familiar with
- Pupils would continue to access Church in Wales provision

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 Llangedwyn and wider 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. Llangedwyn C. in W. School currently has only 7 pupils, with all children taught in one mixed-age class for much of the time. 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 significantly 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.

The Council's Strategy is intended to improve equity across the education system and to ensure an improvement for every pupil's learning entitlement and experience.

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix C – Minutes of meetings with Staff and Governors

Contents

Consultation meeting with Staff of Llangedwyn C. in W. School.....	2
Consultation meeting with Governors of Llangedwyn C. In W. School	15

Consultation meeting with Staff of Llangedwyn C. in W. School

16th November 2023

Present

Staff:

Catherine Hart, Headteacher

Haf Pugh, Teacher

Sammy Jones, Teaching Assistant

Tracey Jones, Cleaner

Sarah Hughes, Breakfast Club and After School Club

Emma Williams, Administrator

Diocesan Representative

Barry Wilson, Archdeacon of Montgomery, on behalf of the Diocese of St Asaph

Officers:

Marianne Evans, Service Manager Schools Transformation

Eurig Towns, Service Manager for School Improvement

Rachel Hudson, HR Business Manager (Schools)

Sarah Astley, Strategic Programme Manager, Transforming Education

Marianne Evans welcomed all to the meeting. Everyone in attendance introduced themselves.

It was explained that there would be a brief presentation with an opportunity for discussion, comments, and questions to the officers afterwards. It was explained that the meeting would be recorded for minuting purposes but the recording would be deleted once the minutes had been completed.

Marianne Evans gave a Powerpoint presentation which outlined the background to the current proposal and explained that in October 2023, Powys County Council's Cabinet gave approval to proceed with a proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School. The consultation commenced on 12 October 2023, and it will continue until the 23 November 2023.

The proposal is:

- To close Llangedwyn C. in W. School from 31st August 2024, with pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School.

Following the presentation, staff were given the opportunity to ask any questions or to make any comments in relation to the matter.

Teacher: Staff were discussing before the meeting about communication. I know Councillor Pete was very passionate and very strong in saying that he wouldn't make the same mistakes as the previous Cabinet in terms of communication. As staff members we feel the communication hasn't been transparent or appropriate, and I wanted to share some examples with you. Firstly in the Llanfyllin Catchment review, all the small schools arrived there first before any other schools. As members of staff it was very difficult seeing that information on the screen without any prior warning. I understand why that would be done but it was difficult, and several members of staff reported that they felt like everyone looked at you in a big room of people, and it caused people a lot of anxiety.

Marianne Evans: We did get that feedback from the session, so we have acknowledged that.

Teacher: The other one was the way in which the original consultation news was told. It was leaked out locally on social media so some members of staff found out via social media, friends, their children's schools apps.

This resulted in staff being told during the school day, then being very upset and having to carry on a school day and work with the children which was a very challenging situation, having to send staff off to take some time for their well-being to actually be upset, but then expecting them to return and being able to work with the children. That was a difficult situation to manage.

Marianne Evans: I can understand that, we did have an agreed protocol in terms of letters coming out, unless there was a timing issue in terms of when things appeared on social media and some people hadn't had the letters.

Headteacher: I think the letter came out in the morning and it went to all schools in the catchment, but for some schools in the catchment it was more significant than others and bigger schools just threw it onto their social media straight away whereas obviously for us it was discussed at the governors meeting the night before. We were going to take the time to talk to staff but that was taken out of our hands because obviously with social media and things these days people information can be shared quickly.

Member of staff: I got it on my child's app, my child goes to a different school, but thankfully I hadn't opened it. Had I opened it I would have found out before other people.

Marianne Evans: It was quite challenging to try and manage that communication across the whole catchment, and as you say, the impact on some schools was very different, we can understand that.

Teacher: With part-time staff it was very challenging for Catherine trying to communicate to everyone and stay in the procedures.

Marianne Evans: We were having communication problems at that time anyway as Catherine was in Bulth Wells.

Teacher: The final point on communication is that recently we as staff were impacted by finding out the Cabinet decision two days before the letter from Lynette Lovell was written and sent out to schools. This was also detrimental to a few members of staff.

We just want to communicate that in terms of sharing information going forward, transparency is important, and ensuring staff members are communicated with. I know that they are public meetings, but we expected communication from Powys, especially after Cllr Pete's promise that he wouldn't make the same mistakes. Sadly we feel those same mistakes have been made, and they have impacted people negatively.

Headteacher: I think it's very difficult because the meeting went on during the school day.

Teacher: Yes, and a letter coming out on the same day would have been far more appropriate than having it on social media for two days before the letter.

Marianne Evans: The issue is that in the past Council meetings, Cabinet meetings would be in person, however now they are broadcast online. I think the broadcasting causes us more problems actually, because journalists could be watching it live – previously we've had live tweeting during sessions which doesn't help. It's a tricky one to manage and I do apologise if you felt not supported or not communicated well with. Thank you for telling us. Is there anything else?

How are you all feeling? Let's start with that.

Member of staff: Not great, but I think it's just you go into almost robotic mode when you are with the children, you just keep going don't you, and you just push that to the back as you've just got to be happy for the children.

Eurig Towns: We do understand, it is an emotional time, but we want you to know that you are able to share and express how you feel to us.

Marianne Evans: Is it worth here bringing Rachel from HR in? Rachel will explain to you more about the process, if the decision is to close Llangedwyn school.

Rachel Hudson: There's a few things we can do to help and support you before any decision is made. If you want to have HR drop in sessions or one to one meetings, or staff meetings, then we can do that, we can come to the school and sit with you and

we can answer any questions that we're able to answer about your own personal situations – that's before the decision is made. We can meet with you on a group basis if that's what you'd like to do.

Of course you have the support of your trade unions as well, we work with them kind of hand in hand all the time and they provide us with really good challenge around these processes, so that's a really valuable part of the process.

Marianne has asked me to talk about what happens if the decision is made to close the school. We are in a formal consultation at the moment, that is a different kind of consultation to the one that we would then do with you in the event that the decision was made to close. If that happened, we would start a formal consultation process with you all with the trade unions. Usually, that process is to do with getting feedback and alternative proposals, but that's what this part of the process is for. So now is the time to share your thoughts, share your ideas, share your feelings around what's being proposed.

If we get to the formal HR consultation, that will be after the decision has been made and so the staffing consultation would be about what you want as individuals in your own personal situations. Again, we can come to you, we can talk about having group meetings, we can have one to ones. You're all entitled and encouraged to take up the offer of a one to one consultation meeting, which would be you, your union rep if you have one, or a colleague if you prefer, and someone from HR to ask any questions and make any points that you want to make in relation to your own personal situation, because there are a number of options that you might have. And again, this is all if the decision is taken.

If the school is going to close with effect from the end of August next year, then either we can look to redeploy you to other suitable roles either in schools or elsewhere in the Council. That is a possibility and we will work very hard with you to try and identify any suitable vacancies for you. If you wish, you have the option to take redundancy because your post will no longer be there. If you don't want that to happen, then we will work with you to do everything we can to avoid that happening. In the last school closure we had we were very successful in redeploying people to other schools in the area. I think nearly everybody got the outcome that they wanted out of that process. We appreciate that it is a horrible thing to be happening to your school and we are here to support you in any way that we can.

There is also the Employment Assistant Programme, Vivup, which can provide support such as counselling. Other things we can offer to you if you want it are things like support with writing CVs, support with interview techniques. If we get to the formal HR consultation, it's more about what you want it to be by that stage.

What we want to do is support you within this process as much as we possibly can, appreciating that it is a horrible time for you.

Marianne Evans: Thank you. Has anyone got any specific questions about the process should we get that far?

Teacher: I'm under the impression that if you were to choose redeployment and were unsuccessful at interview, you would no longer have your redundancy rights because you have chosen redeployment. Am I correct in thinking that?

Rachel Hudson: No, if you apply for a role and you are unsuccessful at interview and that happens to the extent that you don't have an alternative role to go to by the 31st August, then you would get your redundancy, yes. I think what you might be thinking of is a bit of legislation that says that if you are offered a suitable alternative employment then you may forfeit your right to a redundancy payment. I think that might be what you're thinking of, however I don't believe Powys has ever actually used that. If what you want out of this process is to come out with a bit of a redundancy package then in all likelihood that is what you will get. If anyone would like indicative figures of what that settlement might look like, just let us know. I'll give you my contact details before the end of the meeting.

Member of Staff: I was going to ask about calculated redundancy next.

Rachel Hudson: It can take a couple of weeks to get them back. If you can let me know as soon as possible if you do want them, I can get them from payroll. It is important to say that they are estimates. The other thing you need to think about is if you do have an estimate, you need to ensure that it's got the correct continuous service date on the amount.

Marianne Evans: There was a question asked before about how the redundancy is calculated?

Rachel Hudson: It is calculated based on your length of service, your age and your weekly salary.

Member of Staff: Is the amount of weeks calculated based on your age?

Rachel Hudson: There are statutory tables around that, that's Payroll's department. I will ask Payroll to make those calculations for you. There are statutory tables that you could look at in the meantime if you wanted to, but bear in mind that those are probably based on the statutory maximum pay per week, which I think is about £280 off the top of my head. In Powys we base it on your actual weekly pay depending on if you're of pensionable age, in which case it's slightly different. We can talk about this on a one to one basis though.

Rachel Hudson: Would you like us to come out and do a drop in session this side of Christmas?

Member of Staff: I think it would be good.

Rachel Hudson: It will either be myself or Sarah Jones. I will get in touch with the Headteacher about that.

Marianne Evans: Any further issues, concerns or questions?

Headteacher: Would the end of employment day be the 31st of August?

Rachel Hudson: We have to follow a statutory process in terms of consultation. That's what our intention would be but in the event that consultation took longer or we weren't in a position to start consultation until a later date than has been estimated, then it might be that we either extend people's employment or we do a payment in lieu of notice. This would be discussed with you at the time. If we don't get to a certain point before we need to give notice, we will look to either extend your employment which we've done in other schools where we've not managed to hit the deadlines, or we would seek your agreement to do a payment in lieu of notice, which means you would finish on the 31st August but you would get extra pay to compensate the fact that you didn't get your full notice period.

Teacher: What is the official notice period after your cabinet decisions? From my reading previously it was six months, but that was old information so I just wanted some clarity on that. If the consultation goes through and the school closes, what is the official notice period that will be given to the school?

Marianne Evans: As it stands now, the school would close on the 31st August 2024. The HR processes would come in after a final decision was made.

Sarah Astley: We try to give at least a term's notice of closure of a school after the final decision is made where possible, but this is not a requirement.

Member of Staff: What happens to the school and to all of the belongings?

Sarah Astley: We try and redistribute as much as we can to other schools. There would be archiving that would need to be done of personal information. Then for the other resources, we work with receiving schools primarily, so we look at where the pupils transferred to and offer those schools the opportunity to have whatever resources they want, then we open it out more widely. We try and ensure as much as possible is redistributed to either schools or community groups.

In terms of archiving normally the school does the archiving, however there are other situations where we have done things a bit differently. We can provide additional funding for additional hours if needed. We then pick up the distribution of the other resources – we wouldn't be asking you to clear everything before the end of the term. We would be looking at working with the other schools from September onwards, to keep things as normal as possible for the pupils.

In the past there was a push to clear schools by the end of the term, which was difficult for the staff and the pupils so we've moved away from that and we're very much trying to keep things as normal as possible.

Once the archiving has been completed, we'll transport the boxes down to Llandrindod. As I said, there have been situations where things have happened differently, but generally we do ask the school to sort the boxing of the archiving. We'll provide the boxes and guidance as to what needs storing.

Marianne Evans: In terms of the building, the building will be emptied. We don't own the building, so we will be working with the Diocese and the Llandedwyn Estate to transfer it back. We want that to happen as soon as possible as we don't want an empty building.

Sarah Astley: Normally, we aim for half a term or a term at most, so if we're starting to redistribute resources in September, we would be looking at handing the building back by half term if possible, or the end of term at the latest.

Marianne Evans: How is it in the community here?

Member of Staff: There is a good community here and it is difficult. In the past there's always been lots of children. Now we don't have the children and it's heartbreaking. I think some members of the community probably understand, but for others it is very difficult. I'm not here all the time but other members of staff are here all the time and it's difficult.

Teacher: The community seems supportive but upset would be my views. The difficulty I have found with the children is members of the community such as bus drivers, local visitors and others saying in front of the children 'Oh your school is closing'. That isn't appropriate and has been quite challenging for us as staff.

Member of Staff: The children have really struggled. We've tried to support them, which is quite hard as they're getting told different things from different people.

Teacher: It's quite awkward when someone says that in front of the children or to the children, where do you go with that?

Marianne Evans: Sometimes people don't think do they.

Teacher: It's not just adults, children will do it too. We had a report from a child that had been bullying another child with the taunt of 'your school is closing'.

Member of Staff: It is just a very difficult time, especially when you don't know the answers. If the children ever say anything to me I always change the subject.

Member of Staff: It can be very difficult as the children look to us, but at this moment we don't have all of the information.

Teacher: You don't want to lie, but currently we don't have the information to give them.

Marianne Evans: Is there any additional support you need for the children?

Teacher: It's very difficult as parents feel upset and concerned about the process. It's really hard to know what we should and shouldn't be saying to the children. Obviously, we're not really saying anything, we're just saying 'they're talking about lots of ideas'

Marianne Evans: That is the situation at the moment. As the process goes forward and depending where it goes, there will be different messages and the children will probably need to be communicated with in a different way at each stage, which is difficult.

Eurig Towns: We know it's difficult for the children, and it often comes back onto the staff, as you know the children so well then you work with them. You are often the ones providing that support. I'll go back to what Rachel said, it's what support you need as well as staff, because you provide day to day support. It does take it out of you to stay strong. So we need to provide support for you as well, so that you have somebody that you can rely on and talk to, so you feel supported. You're probably in the best place to support the children as you know them. However, we don't want you to think all the pressure is on you, you need support too, and that's why Rachel is offering that support. If there is anything else we can do to support you, please let us know as we understand it is a difficult situation. I know we're not living it, you are living it, but we've been through this situation before supporting other schools, supporting other teachers through this, so we do understand some of what you're going through.

Headteacher: I think it's also important to recognize that you're not just supporting the children, you are here every day supporting the parents as well. They come in as well looking to you for support and that's a burden to carry, especially when you're struggling with the uncertainty yourself and you don't have it. You're getting it from every angle basically, as well as the uncertainty of your own position.

Marianne Evans: Make sure to support each other as well, that's key as staff. I know you're part of the federation with Llanfechain, have there been any issues there since this proposal came out or are the relationships between both schools strong?

Member of Staff: From this school, you do sort of feel like the underdog, we're being kicked and kicked and they're getting bigger. Going from one school to another you can definitely feel it.

Teacher: It is a very us and them situation, which is very sad and has limited some of the work and progression we can do together.

Headteacher: I think in terms of the federation up to the point where the decision was made, there was an equality, there's now an inequality. An inequality upsets the balance doesn't it. I think we can see that with parents as well, not so much for the parents there as nothing has changed but more about the parents here. It's hard and it puts up barriers and that's the opposite of what we want to have. Unfortunately, with the process as it is, it is inevitable.

Marianne Evans: In terms of the proposal, we could see the strengths of the federation, pupils already know the staff at Llanfechain, they know their peers. So we thought it would be best for the children. But I can see from the situation that it could be challenging for yourselves. I hope when the children go to Llanfechain that they're treated right.

Teacher: It has been more inclusive. At times in the past we have eaten our lunch separate and things, and that has been really uninclusive. We discussed that to move forward and work together to create solutions.

Headteacher: I think there is a difficulty when you're part of a very small community and you go into a larger community, the dynamics can seem quite challenging. You've got lots of children coming from lots of different backgrounds, different cultures, but are coming together, and misunderstandings do occur. It doesn't happen here very much as they all know each other. However this is different in a larger environment. Wherever they are going it's really important they're supported. One of the risks that these children here have at the moment is that everything is so safe and so secure that anything else is going to seem too challenging.

Marianne Evans: Should the proposal go forward, we should be working with Llanfechain and any other school, should the child choose another school. We work with that school then to provide support for the transition and to make it as easy as possible for not only the child but also the family. It's all difficult, but it's manageable.

Member of Staff: Most of the children that come here aren't from here, some are from England so the transitions are going to be different.

Headteacher: You also have the added complication of not wanting to move, so the alternative isn't a welcome alternative and you're hypervigilant in that situation, as anybody would be. I think it's a very complicated and very grown-up dynamic that these very young, immature children have to get their heads around and they're impacted by their peers around them. They're impacted by what they're hearing at home, there's a lot of things impacting them and it's not as simple as picking them up from one place and putting them into another place.

Marianne Evans: That's where it's important that there is support, from us and the school improvement team, HR and the ALN team. We're all here to support if this goes forward.

Member of Staff: I think the parents will need support with moving their children or what happens next. The parents don't really understand what's going on, but I think they're seriously going to need as to what they do next. Some of them are in Reception and that's the first time they've been in School, they don't really know what they're doing. Also, children settling from a school of seven where you're all friends and everybody knows each other to maybe a school of 100. That's a massive transition for a child, and there are never not going to be problems. If it all goes forward do they get transition days in the summer and things like that?

Marianne Evans: A lot depends on the receiving school and the headteacher.

Sarah Astley: The first part to work through if we get there is the admissions arrangements, and securing places in alternative schools, as everyone's situation will be slightly different in terms of transport entitlement and so on. Once parents have worked through that stage and we know where the pupils are going, then it's the transition to the receiving schools.

Headteacher: I think there's a lot of work to be done between the receiving schools and parents to help them feel confident, because at the moment their confidence has been shattered. You also talked about transport, will all of the pupils here get transport and where will they get it too?

Marianne Evans: We will have to follow the Council Policy which is that if the child lives more than 2 miles away from their closest school, then they get transport. So we wouldn't be providing transport to children who live closer to Pontrobert, or if they live in England, we wouldn't be able to provide transport for those pupils.

Headteacher: What about if pupils live closer to Llangedwyn but Llanfechain isn't their next closest school, would you provide transport to them?

Marianne Evans: We would provide transport to Llanfechain.

Teacher: On the Pontrobert example, Pontrobert is a Welsh Language School. Say hypothetically if somebody lived in Pontrobert and that was their closest school, would they get transport to their closest English medium school?

Marianne Evans: No, because the new Council policy came in in 2020. So we only transport to the closest school. In the last previous version of the transport policy, we transported to the closest school in the language of choice, now that's changed in the latest policy.

Teacher: I have a question linked to transition and ALN. Is there any consideration for children with additional learning needs as an extra within this procedure to help the process of what's going on but also in terms of the transitions of those children and those learners?

Eurig Towns: Yes, we will work with the receiving school, so they can understand the needs of the pupils and they can then set them up ready for that transition. That might include additional transition days. We might work more with the school prior to them starting so they get to know the pupil and their needs. If there is funding attached to that pupil, then the funding will go with that pupil.

Teacher: A lot of our children with ALN have discussed transferring to Ysgol Llanfyllin for transition purposes and secondary school, that might be more appropriate to their needs. There are a few parents with those thoughts at the moment.

Eurig Towns: It might be that some of the parents would like to go out and see some of the schools, it's a big decision for them if they need to make it. They want to make sure the next move for the pupils is the right one, they need to take that time. It's better to do that and go and visit the schools.

Barry Wilson: From your experience, when the uncertainty occurs, which there is now, does there tend to be a drift in pupil numbers before the decision is made and when the decisions is then made does the 7 pupils suddenly become 3 in the final term?

Marianne Evans: In the last consultation the numbers stayed the same in the schools, sometimes there have been a few cases where pupils have chosen to go early but that hardly happens. The school body stays the same from the beginning of the process to the end mostly.

Teacher: We've lost 4 children since the announcement of the consultation.

Marianne Evans: It could be different here as you're in a very small school, others we are talking about were schools with 36 pupils. We have a similar situation in Mid Powys where a Primary School which had around 30 pupils at the beginning of the year started losing pupils quite suddenly. Parents started taking their children out, not because of the school but more because there was no after school club. As the numbers then fell, the parents started to get concerned about friendship groups etc. It got to the point where they are now down to 19.

Eurig Towns: It fell to 19 within about 6 – 8 months.

Marianne Evans: It does sometimes happen, but in others where there have been proposals numbers have stayed the same through to the end.

Eurig Towns: In one school in the South, the parents said they were going to keep the pupils there because it's their school, they wanted to make sure that their experience was positive, and that when they did go it was positive.

Marianne Evans: In that school, most if not all of the pupils ended up transferring to the same school.

Are there any further questions? The Consultation finishes next week, so you can still send your thoughts and views over.

Sarah Astley: If there's anything else you can think of or anything you want to ask, or written comments you want to provide please send them onto us. After the meeting tonight we'll type up the notes and we'll send them onto Catherine. We will try and get them to you in the next couple of weeks.

Barry Wilson: Will the Staff here hear the decisions beforehand, are they going to be reading it on social media? Or will they be told before it goes public?

Sarah Astley: The next thing that will go out will be the Cabinet papers, they will be published with the consultation report, which will include a recommendation. We'll make sure you know what the recommendation is before the papers are published.

Marianne Evans: Once the papers are published, that's when we can send you the link. We'll tell you what the recommendation is, so you're ready.

Headteacher: Once the decision has been made, would it be possible for somebody to ring the school to let us know what the decision is? It would make a difference, it's still not easy to hear.

Barry Wilson: When they consider a recommendation, we all know nothing is 100% but in what percentage does the recommendation tend to be agreed, is it 80% chance?

Eurig Towns: That's a hard one as previously there was a proposal that went forward, the case was strong but it was decided not to go forward with the proposal.

Barry Wilson: So the recommendation isn't guaranteed?

Eurig Towns: Not guaranteed no.

Marianne Evans: We will be considering all views and preparing a consultation report then the recommendations are put forward, however we won't know what the recommendation is until we've done all of the work.

Sarah Astley: Once there is a recommendation, normally the recommendation is supported by Cabinet, but not always, there have been situations where the

recommendation has not been supported. In this case, the recommendation this time will be about proceeding with the process, so the recommendation will be either to carry on with the process through publishing a statutory notice, or not to carry on. So whatever the recommendation is, it's still not going to be a final recommendation or decision. It's going to be a recommendation to carry on or not to carry on. The following cabinet decision would then be the final decision, if the process was to carry on.

Headteacher: So the final decision is not going to be made until the Spring?

Sarah Astley: Yes that is correct.

Marianne Evans: Thank you very much for the meeting, your comments, your views and I think we've had some very important things come through which we will be taking into account.

Consultation meeting with Governors of Llangedwyn C. in W. School

16th November 2023

Present

Governors:

Chris Richards, Chair of Governors

Alison Alexander, Governor

Catherine Hart, Headteacher

Jo Moller, Governor

Mark Hamer, Governor

Officers:

Lynette Lovell, Director of Education

Marianne Evans, Service Manager Schools Transformation

Eurig Towns, Service Manager for School Improvement

Sarah Astley, Strategic Programme Manager, Transforming Education

Mari Thomas, Deputy Head of Finance (via Teams)

Fracis Hydes, Finance Manager (via Teams)

Lynette Lovell welcomed all to the meeting. Everyone in attendance introduced themselves.

It was explained that there would be a brief presentation with an opportunity for discussion, comments, and questions to the officers afterwards. It was explained that the meeting would be recorded for minuting purposes but the recording would be deleted once the minutes had been completed and agreed.

Marianne Evans gave a PowerPoint presentation which outlined the background to the current proposal and explained that in October 2023, Powys County Council's Cabinet gave approval to proceed with a proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School. The consultation commenced on 12 October 2023, and it will continue until the 23 November 2023.

The proposal is:

- To close Llangedwyn C. in W. School from 31st August 2024, with pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School.

Governors were then given the opportunity to ask any questions or to make any comments in relation to the matter.

Chair of Governors: We spent a lot of time at our governors meeting last night agreeing our our written response, it won't be any different to what we will say tonight.

Governor: Is the timeline you shared in the presentation included in the consultation document?

Marianne Evans: Yes, it is, and it could go either way depending on the level of responses, but that is the general timeline.

Governor: I would prefer if it we can email over our written response, rather than fill out the form. I will summarise the key point tonight.

The first thing I would like to say is, we are really disappointed to be in this position, it's really sad for us. Collectively the Governors have got dozens if not hundreds of years of experience and it is a really difficult place for us to be. We have discovered that the school has been here for nearly 200 years and we believe it's a wonderful school. It provides an excellent start for Children's lives.

We recognise the strengths of the federation, we insitiagted the federation ourselves and we believe that strengthened both schools and the pupils have benefited from that. So we've been proactive and the issue is clearly pupil numbers. We strongly feel that the current transformation programme and the previous transformation in 2020 has had a significant impact on numbers, because it reduces parents' confidence when they hear at least twice that the school may be closed and if they have been around long enough for three times and if they've been around even longer maybe four or five times. We believe that has had a major impact on the school numbers. It didn't help that the previous transformation started and then fizzled out, so we think that is a major factor.

We also think that the second blow is the funding formula, it feels as if it was designed to punish small schools, to move to a per child formula so you're almost in a spiral, when we look at our potential deficit, it's just unsustainable. It's nearly £200,000 and that is not a result of poor management.

I would argue that our governing bodies, in the past and since we federated, have got an excellent track record of managing the very little money we get. But clearly a cost per pupil of £12,000 per head and potential deficit of £180 – £190,000 is unsustainable. We feel the funding deficit and the reduction in numbers have combined. These also lead to safeguarding issues. The low numbers of staff we can afford, means that we're at the point of a single point of failure, in other words if we lose a single member of staff we have to consider closing the school that cannot be acceptable.

We understand about the Welsh Curriculum, we have some views, we still have those views about what you might call a small school of 91, but clearly the number of children here presents all sorts of challenges for the Headteacher.

What we have found as well is that two potential closures, reducing pupil number and budgets that aren't manageable have had a massive impact on the wellbeing of our staff. I have been the wellbeing governor and I have seen it first-hand.

I would like to say thank you for your level of engagement with us this time as the time before it was outrageous. You will recall that at the time I wrote to the Authority and we received an apology, but the engagement this time in fairness to the authority has been much more effective, but there's still been a massive impact.

We are trying to manage that, and would look to the authority for support. We also understand that pupil numbers are at the point that this school can be closed without the transformation process as we're under 10, we can understand that. There are a few things we would like you to consider, and we would like some assurance that these can be taken to Cabinet.

The school has a reputation for supporting the most vulnerable children. What are the authority's proposals around ALN as schools get bigger and bigger? There's evidence that small schools can support the most vulnerable children, they provide a nurturing, family environment. If there are no schools like that left what are the other proposals to support those children? We think it's a risk for those children to go to bigger and bigger schools. What proposals does the authority have to deal with that?

If you are going to close the school and Ysgol Bro Cynllaith there would be no English language primary education in the valley given that the intention is to move Llanrhaeadr along the language continuum. That is a risk, and we'd like to see what your proposals are. We've done everything we can in terms of federating these schools. We welcome the fact you've recognised the need to retain some of the Church in Wales places that are currently here, they won't all be retained but some will. Previously, in 2020 the Authority proposed to remove them all.

But the background is the capacity and if we move the children today, there is no space for them at Llanfechain. We would like to see an assurance in the recommendation to Cabinet that additional accommodation would be provided in Llanfechain. We would also like to see the transition managed properly in terms of admissions; we want an assurance that no-one will be rejected.

The other big one for us is your proposal is to eventually build a new school in the Llansantffraid/Llanfechain area, but at best that's 5 years away. Your own reports say Llanfechain has a £500,000 maintenance backlog. If you've been to the school, parts of the school haven't been painted since I started as a governor, apart from the bits that have been painted by parents. We would like assurance in the recommendation to Cabinet that the authority will develop a funded maintenance programme to get Llanfechain back to a reasonable standard. You are saying you want it to stay open, to provide Church in Wales places, however we would like to see a commitment to see some funding given to make sure Llanfechain has enough capacity. We also know that parents from other schools want to bring their children

to Llanfechain, we know that Llansantffraid is over capacity, so we would like to see a commitment to extra capacity and get the building to a better standard.

The conclusion is we've run out of road in Llangedwyn, it's unsustainable. We reluctantly accept the fact that despite all of our efforts from all of the parents, pupils and governors over the years, we've reached the end of the road that we have to accept the options being proposed, with the caveats that you have to commit to the things we have asked for. We will be submitting our written response shortly.

Marianne Evans: I have made a note of your points and we will start to address a few things. First of all, thank you for your response. We understand how difficult this is for you. We also understand how difficult it is for your staff, pupils and parents. Part of the process is to make sure your staff are cared for and supported. We had HR in the staff meeting, and offers have been made for them to come up and do one to one sessions, in terms of staff I think that will help.

Eurig Towns: The offer of support from staff is from now, it's not dependent on the outcome of the consultation.

Headteacher: HR agreed they were going to come before Christmas.

Governor: Thank you for that, as that is not the support we had in 2020 and we felt battered. We feel battered this time but in a different way.

Marianne Evans: In terms of yourselves as governors, you're volunteers doing a really difficult job in difficult circumstances, so we do appreciate the level of commitment you provide to the two schools, to the federation. We worked with you to establish the federation, we can see that it has been successful in terms of working together. Pupil numbers are an issue, sadly. You mentioned the funding formula, we recognise that there is an issue.

Governor: We know it quite well, we know what the impact is. We know that the funding formula is a result of the Welsh Government policy. Our view was it feels like it was designed to impact small schools. It has had this effect of impacting small schools and you get into this spiral.

Marianne Evans: In terms of the operational difficulties of managing such a small school and sorting staffing and making it safe, yes small schools can manage if they're up to a level. If they then fall below that level, it becomes a dangerous situation.

Governor: The numbers go down, the budget deficit goes up. If we need to put another teacher in, we can't afford it, so we're in a difficult situation. We can't just spend the money as there's a big deficit, so we are in an impossible situation.

Lynette Lovell: You mentioned well-being, we are really aware of the well-being of staff across the board. What we do have this time is we do employ some totally independent from the local authority, who was a headteacher in Powys years ago. She works alongside us, but independently, particularly with the headteacher.

Headteacher: She has been in touch.

Lynette Lovell: She will be available anytime that you want her to visit, talk, we can put that in place.

Headteacher: I think also it's not just the well-being of the staff, it's also having a huge impact on the pupils and parents as nothing is happening in isolation. That's a real concern for me as I can see people struggling everywhere and I can't stop it. It is a difficulty with the process, but it is having a big impact.

Marianne Evans: It's had an impact on you as the head. You are the Head of Llanfechain as well, so there's a difficult dynamic to manage within that. Let us know if there is anything we can do to help you.

Governor: Obviously we are a federated governing body and potentially one of the schools is going to close, we need to understand the mechanism of what would happen. What would be the make up of the governing body? If the federation ceases when does it cease? Do you have a shadow governing body?

Marianne Evans: I am going to jump to the point you made around ALN and the ALN strategy for pupils moving to larger schools.

Lynette Lovell: In terms of the ALN strategy, in the New Year we'll be looking at our ALN strategy and providing nurture and shaping the way we provide that nurture in schools. Already in some of our larger schools we have nurture groups and classes, family liaison officers. I was school improvement officer here a number of years ago, when I came here the numbers were in the 50s, you had children with needs travelling into the school.

Governor: I think the issue is many of our parents associate small schools with good provision. If there are no small schools left then parents associate that with there isn't any nurturing care. You've got a big challenge on your hands to convince parents that you can achieve that in a bigger school. People drive past other schools to come to smaller schools.

Lynette Lovell: It is a challenge, but I think it can happen because we see it happening in lots of our schools where the larger schools provide care, support and nurture which is really strong. Scrutiny Committee have asked for member development on ALN and the act. I think there is work to do in our messaging about ALN provision and nurture provision which isn't always necessarily in the smaller schools but in the larger schools.

Governor: What we're looking for is a reflection of that in the recommendation to Cabinet, a recognition of the strength of this small school in that respect, and something in the report to cabinet that we recognise that and that there are plans to deal with it.

Lynette Lovell: I think that will be a really good point for us to bring out in Cabinet. Your local member will be able to attend, and can ask that publicly if you want them to ask that question.

Headteacher: I think also within this school and within Llanfechain we have staff that are highly qualified in nurture provision and it's about utilising their skills to support. I'm aware of learners changing schools and the impact that can have, so I think there should be support available for those more vulnerable learners with that transition with staff. To build up a nurturing relationship that is really beneficial takes time, and for some there is a risk that the person they have spent years building that trust with is just going to be taken away alongside moving schools. Those people could go, so that's the continuity of nurture that we want.

Marianne Evans: Your next question was about what happens to Ysgol Bro Cynllaith?

Governor: We were just wondering if that were to close, it's not in the paper but what we discussed as a governing body, say people wanted to take their children to an English medium school, what support would they have.

Marianne Evans: With Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, in the same way as Llangedwyn, the catchment review paper indicated a preferred way forward to close the school. However, we would have to do exactly the same process, bring proposal papers to Cabinet, so no decisions have been made around Ysgol Bro Cynllaith. We need to see what happens to Llangedwyn, as it all interlinks in this catchment. One thing that happens has a knock on effect on others. The border issue does come into play here, and the language issue. Things can't happen at once in a catchment like this, things have to happen in a sequence.

Jumping to admissions in Llanfechain, we are absolutely aware of the capacity. We know there have been difficulties around admissions in terms of some in-year transfers. If this is a Council proposal to close a school and we are naming a receiving school, we believe that the provision in the admission code for exceptional circumstances should apply. The admissions policy itself has a clause, which means that pupils can be admitted.

What we don't want is a situation where we're closing a school and parents have to go through the ordeal of the school closure and then find themselves in a situation where they're refused admission into the main receiving school.

Headteacher: That's what we've been told is the situation at the moment.

Marianne Evans: We will be looking into and managing that. In terms of the space, I hear what you're saying, and about the backlog maintenance in Llanfechain, we will be looking at that. We will bring the property team up to have a look what's needed in Llanfechain.

Governor: We are looking for recognition of that in the report, we need that commitment. We're looking for some acknowledgement that the issues we have raised will actually be in the Cabinet paper, for Cabinet to say 'yes we agree you need more capacity', and then send officers away to bring back proposals of how you are going to do that. If it's not in the Cabinet paper we know it won't happen.

Governor: Another question is the size of the maintenance backlog. I understand in May last year a review of the maintenance backlog across all schools in Powys started and we're not aware there's been any reviewing since.

Marianne Evans: It hasn't started yet, however there are two things going on. The Council are doing their own condition assessment of schools, looking at condition issues, whilst Welsh Government are doing their own survey of schools, looking at energy and carbon zero issues. There is going to be quite a lot of information coming out over the next year from both. The current backlog figure in Llanfechain is based on a formula calculation.

Governor: As a federation we know what the issues are and have been asking for a long time. It seems wrong we're going to accommodate extra pupils. I accept we can't put everything right, but there should be some sort of programme so that parents know that that school is going to start to feel like a nicer place to be, because it feels run down.

Headteacher: Some of the issues that have been raised are safeguarding issues. There's an urgency there.

Marianne Evans: We do hear what you're saying and we are going to take it into consideration.

Sarah Astley: In terms of the earlier queries regarding governance. This isn't a situation we've had previously, however should the decision be made to close, the federation governing body would cease to exist. We would then work with the governor support team to support you with this going forward.

Marianne Evans: Do you want to say anything regarding curriculum challenges?

Governor: The Headteacher keeps us very informed in terms of what's changing etc.

Lynette Lovell: I think your comment on the curriculum is very fair. When numbers are as low as this it does become more challenging.

Governor: Unfortunately 2-3 years ago, it became a sort of catchphrase with some politicians, that you can't do the national curriculum in a small school. We used to say yes you can, but when you get to a school of 7, that's the issue.

Headteacher: For me it's accepting that whilst you teach a lot of the content and cover this, what you can't do is develop four purposes. There just isn't the people to do it with.

Lynette Lovell: Yes, as you say, you don't have the people to do it and then a lot falls on the headteacher to be able to develop those things.

Headteacher: We do work through the federation, we draw expertise from other schools, but there's only so much you can do. This is all day every day and we want it to be the best experience, these children only have one chance.

Governor: If they haven't got the peers it becomes very difficult, it becomes hard to put the next steps in then.

Headteacher: Especially when you build challenge, because challenge comes from the teachers and it also comes from the other children.

Marianne Evans: Is there anything else you want to discuss?

Governor: It's a really sad time for us. I'm grateful for you coming up tonight and you've heard our views about the actions of the authority and how we think that's impacted on the numbers. A series of threats of closure can do nothing but damage to the reputation of the school. That's a product of what's happened. Then there's the funding formula which is the other thing which leads us to where we're just unsustainable.

Lynette Lovell: I think in terms of that you've been very clear tonight. You've given us very clear messages, we've got things to take in from the information you've given us. The consultation is still open until next week for parents to send in and whoever else wants too.

Marianne Evans: In terms of the pupil consultation, we've agreed that the Headteacher will speak with pupils on our behalf so that we can hear the learner voice, because of the concerns parents have raised about pupils meeting with us.

Lynette Lovell: Thank you all, it's been a really helpful meeting this evening. We will keep you informed as the process goes forward.



Proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School

Updated Impact Assessments

December 2023



Contents

	Page
1 Introduction	2
2 Integrated Impact Assessment	3
3 Equality Impact Assessment	17
4 Community Impact Assessment	24

Proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School

Draft Impact Assessments

1. Introduction

Powys County Council has consulted on a proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School. The proposal is as follows:

- To close Llangedwyn C. in W. School from the 31st August 2024, with pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School

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 now 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 schools.

Following the consultation period, the impact assessments have been updated to incorporate any issues raised during the consultation period. The updated versions will be considered by the council's Cabinet when determining how to proceed in relation to this proposal.

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.

Proposal	Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School Proposal
Outline Summary / Description of Proposal	
The Council has carried out consultation on the following proposal:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To close Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School from the 31st August 2024, with pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School. 	

1. Consultation requirements

Consultation Requirement	Consultation deadline/or justification for no consultation
Public consultation required	Consultation in accordance with the School Organisation Code took place from the 12 th of October to the 23 rd of November 2023.

2. 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"/>	Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Legal and Democratic Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Children's Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Property, Planning and Public Protection	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Commissioning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Highways, Transportation and Recycling	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Transformation and Communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Digital Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Housing and Community Development	<input 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

Personal details will be processed in accordance with the Transforming Education Privacy Notice.

3. Geographical Locations

Llanfyllin

✓

4. 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: 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 generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.</p>	<p>As part of the Council’s Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys, this proposal represents an effort to ‘reconfigure and rationalise primary provision’ for the pupils of Llangedwyn. Implementation of this proposal would positively contribute to a Powys that uses resources efficiently, and which produces a skilled and well-educated population.</p> <p>Comments received from school staff and governors during the consultation period indicate that implementation of the new Welsh curriculum has been difficult with such a small number of pupils attending Llangedwyn. The development of pupils into skilled and well-educated members of Powys’ population will be more easily achieved at a larger school.</p>	Good		
<p>A resilient Wales: 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 Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School for whom this is their closest school. This would have a negative environmental impact as more home to school transport would need to be provided to transport pupils to their nearest alternative school. However, Llangedwyn is not currently the closest school for the majority of pupils attending the school, so the number of pupils impacted by this would be minimal – it is possible that there would be a reduction in travel for some pupils.</p>	Neutral		

	In addition, running a single school site is more environmentally friendly than running two, due to a reduction in the use of heating and electricity amongst other factors.			
<p>A healthier Wales: 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: 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 Llangedwyn C. in W. School, with pupils transferring to Llanfechain C. in W. School. 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>It is recognised that some parents may choose other schools rather than Llanfechain C.in. W School, and there could potentially be an impact on the wellbeing of pupils who are transferring to other schools without their classmates.</p>	Poor	<p>The intention is that pupils would transfer to Llanfechain, which is currently federated with Llangedwyn, and are already familiar with this school, its staff, and its pupils through taking part in joint activities. This would help with transition arrangements.</p> <p>Whichever school a parent may choose for their child, the local authority would work with the headteacher of that school to ensure that support is provided during the transition period to enable them to transfer effectively to their new schools.</p> <p>The process is to be concluded as quickly as possible to minimise the period of uncertainty for pupils, staff, and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Comments received during the consultation indicate an emphasis on the importance of wraparound care for parents, including breakfast and after-school clubs. Activities such as these should be more easily provided at larger schools, where the greater number of pupils generally means that there is a greater level of demand. Easier access to sports clubs, and extra time to socialise with peers, should have a positive impact upon the mental and physical health of pupils.</p>	Neutral
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities: Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected Communities.</p>	There would be an impact on the community of Llangedwyn, as there would no longer be provision in the village, and therefore there could be a potential loss of community facilities associated with the school.	Poor	The Llangedwyn School building is not owned by the Council. Should the school close, the building would be transferred to its owners, who would need to determine its future use, and therefore whether facilities would remain available in Llangedwyn.	Poor

	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School for whom Llangedwyn is the closest school. However, Llangedwyn is not currently the closest school for the majority of pupils attending the school, so the number of pupils impacted by this would be minimal.</p> <p>A separate draft community impact assessment has been carried out with input from the school, which concludes that the impact on the village would be minimal, particularly as most pupils that attend the school don't live in Llangedwyn.</p> <p>Responses to the consultation from members of the public indicate that the school plays an important part in the community of Llangedwyn. Especially emphasised is the school's connection with the church.</p>		<p>There is a Village Hall in Llangedwyn which is already used more widely by the local community, so any events/meetings which are currently held at the school could be located there.</p>	
<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</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>Consultation has been carried out on the proposal, which gave an opportunity for those affected by the plans to give their views. As part of the consultation, the school's Headteacher discussed the proposal with pupils. The feedback received from them is included in the Consultation Report.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>		

right to life, survival and development; and the right to be heard.				
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. <i>Incorporating requirements under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards</i>				
<i>Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and treating the Welsh language no less favourable than the English language</i>	<p>Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School and Llanfechain C. in W. School are both English-medium schools, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the proposal would impact on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, or on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.</p> <p>Comments made during the consultation period indicate that some pupils may move to schools in England should Llangedwyn close, thus reducing the number of pupils accessing Welsh-language lessons. However, the number of pupils at Llangedwyn is very small, so this is unlikely to have a significant impact upon opportunities for Powys pupils to access the Welsh language.</p>	Neutral		
<i>Opportunities to promote the Welsh language</i>	<p>Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School and Llanfechain C. in W. School are both English-medium schools, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the proposal would impact on opportunities to promote the Welsh language.</p>	Neutral		
<i>People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation.</i>	<p>Implementation of the proposal would lead to the closure of Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School, with pupils transferring to Llanfechain C. in W. School.</p>	Good		

	<p>This would result in increasing pupil numbers at Llanfechain C. in W. School, which should enable the school to provide additional opportunities for pupils to take part in sport, art, and other extra-curricular activities.</p> <p>Comments made during the consultation indicate that wraparound care such as breakfast and after-school clubs are very important for parents. Larger schools are generally able to offer a greater number of sports clubs than smaller schools. Should Llangedwyn close, pupils should be able to access sports clubs more easily.</p>			
<p>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). <i>Incorporating requirements under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 and the Social Economic duty (2020).</i></p>				
Age	<p>The proposal would impact on primary aged pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School. The proposal aims to provide improved educational opportunities for all affected pupils.</p>	Neutral		
Disability	<p>The proposal would impact on any pupils with disabilities currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School. The proposal aims to provide improved educational opportunities for all affected pupils, including any pupils with disabilities.</p> <p>Comments received during the consultation expressed concern about the proposal's impact on pupils with additional learning needs in particular.</p>	Neutral	Support to be provided to pupils with additional learning needs to support their transition to alternative schools.	
Gender reassignment	No impact.	Neutral		
Marriage or civil partnership	No impact.	Neutral		

Race	The proposal would impact on all primary aged pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary 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 Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School, regardless of their religion or belief. Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School is a church school, however the proposal is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, which is also a C. in W. W. School, which would ensure continued access to Church in Wales provision.	Neutral		
Sex	The proposal aims to provide improved educational opportunities for all pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School.	Neutral		
Sexual Orientation	The proposal aims to provide improved educational opportunities for all pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School, regardless of their sexual orientation.	Neutral		
Pregnancy and Maternity	No impact.	Neutral		
Socio-economic duty	The aim of the proposal is to provide improved educational opportunities for all pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School, including any eligible for Free School Meals. PLASC data from January 2023 shows that 23.1% of pupils at Llangedwyn C. in W. School were eligible for Free School Meals, so the proposal	Neutral		

	<p>would impact on some pupils from lower income homes.</p> <p>Should the proposal be implemented, there would be no school in Llangedwyn. This would mean that pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School would need to travel to Llanfechain C. in W. School. 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. However, Llangedwyn is not currently the closest school for the majority of pupils attending the school, so the number of pupils impacted by this would be minimal.</p>			
--	--	--	--	--

Source of Outline Evidence to support judgements

PLASC, consultation responses, consultation report

5. How does your proposal impact on the council's other key guiding principles?

Principle	How does the proposal impact on this principle?	IMPACT 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?	IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION Please select from drop down box below
Sustainable Development Principle (5 ways of working)				
<p>Long Term: Looking to the long term so that we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.</p>	<p>Pupil numbers at Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School are very low and are not expected to increase 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, and to ensure better strategic management of the Powys schools estate.</p>	<p>Good</p>		
<p>Collaboration: Working with others in a collaborative way to find shared sustainable solutions.</p>	<p>Consultation has been carried out on the proposal, which has enabled all interested parties to give their views. This included an opportunity to suggest any alternative options for the school.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>		
<p>Involvement (including Communication and Engagement): Involving a diversity of the population in the decisions that affect them including: Unpaid Carers: Ensuring that unpaid carers views are sought and taken into account</p>	<p>Full consultation has been carried out in accordance with the School Organisation Code. This ensures that all interested parties have had the opportunity to give their views. The findings of this exercise will be reported to Cabinet and will be taken into consideration when determining how to proceed.</p> <p>All stakeholders have had the opportunity to give their views as part of this process, this includes any unpaid carers in the area.</p>	<p>Good</p>		

Page 180

Principle	How does the proposal impact on this principle?	IMPACT 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?	IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION Please select from drop down box below
<p>Prevention: Understanding the root causes of issues to prevent them from occurring including:</p> <p>Safeguarding: Preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children, young people and adults with health and social care needs who can't protect themselves.</p>	<p>The aim of the proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School is to ensure the best possible opportunities for learners in the area now and in the future, and to ensure better strategic management of the Powys schools estate.</p> <p>Ensuring appropriate safeguarding arrangements is a key aspect of any school organisation proposal. The intention is that the proposal would maintain or improve the safeguarding arrangements for all pupils.</p> <p>Comments made by governors and school staff indicate that safeguarding measures have been difficult to uphold in a school as small as Llangedwyn. On occasion, the school has been forced to close where it has had too few staff available to meet safeguarding requirements.</p>	Good		
<p>Integration: Taking an integrated approach so that public bodies look at all the well-being goals in deciding on their well-being objectives.</p>	No impact.	Neutral		

Principle	How does the proposal impact on this principle?	IMPACT 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?	IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION Please select from drop down box below
Powys County Council Workforce: What Impact will this change have on the Workforce?	<p>Implementation of the proposal would impact on all current staff at Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School as there would no longer be a school in Llangedwyn, 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 has been supported by relevant LA teams (e.g. HR). This has included consultation with staff, ensuring that they had an opportunity to give their views.</p>	Poor		Poor
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>Implementation of the preferred way forward could impact on salary arrangements for current staff at Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School.</p>	Neutral		
Welsh Language impact on staff	<p>Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School is an English-medium school, therefore it is not anticipated that there would be a Welsh-language impact on staff.</p>	Neutral		
Apprenticeships: Has consideration been given to whether this change impacts negatively, or positively on Apprenticeships within the service?	<p>No impact</p>	Neutral		
Source of Outline Evidence to support judgements				

6. 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
Llangedwyn	<p>There would be an impact on the community of Llangedwyn, as there would no longer be provision in the village, and therefore there could be a potential loss of community facilities associated with the school.</p> <p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School for whom Llangedwyn is the closest school. However, Llangedwyn is not currently the closest school for the majority of pupils attending the school, so the number of pupils impacted by this would be minimal.</p> <p>A separate draft community impact assessment has been carried out with input from the school, which concludes that the impact on the village would be minimal, particularly as most pupils that attend the school don't live in Llangedwyn.</p> <p>Comments made during the consultation indicate that the school plays an important part in the Llangedwyn community for those that live in it, especially regarding its links with the church.</p>	Major	<p>The Llangedwyn School building is not owned by the Council. Should the school close, the building would be transferred to its owners, who would need to determine its future use, and therefore whether facilities would remain available in Llangedwyn.</p> <p>There is a Village Hall in Llangedwyn which is already used more widely by the local community, so any events / meetings which are currently held at the school could be located there.</p>	Major	

7. What are the risks to service delivery or the council following implementation of this proposal?

Description of risks			
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)
N/A			

8. Overall Summary and Judgement of this Impact Assessment?

Outline Assessment (to be inserted in cabinet report)	Cabinet Report Reference:
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 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 Llangedwyn due to loss of educational provision from the village.	

9. 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 undertaken in order to assess this proposal, and this has enabled the impact assessment to be further developed.

10. 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.
The impact assessment will be reviewed at all stages of the development.

3. Equality Impact Assessment

Powys County Council

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)



Proposal	To close Llangedwyn C. in W. School from the 31st August 2024, with pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School.
Service Area	Schools Service
Date of Assessment	October 2023 Updated December 2023

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 October 2023, the Council's Cabinet approved carrying out consultation on the following proposal:

- To close Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School from the 31st August 2024, with pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School

2. OBJECTIVES

Please state the current business objectives of the change proposal.

The Council is proposing to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School for the following reasons:

- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School
- Would increase pupil numbers at Llanfechain C. in W. School
- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools
- Revenue saving to the Council
- The Council would no longer need to maintain the Llangedwyn building
- Pupils would attend a larger school where they would be part of a larger cohort of pupils
- Pupils would transfer to a school they are already familiar with
- Pupils would continue to access Church in Wales provision

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 Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School
- Would increase pupil numbers at Llanfechain C. in W. School
- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools
- Revenue saving to the Council
- The Council would no longer need to maintain the Llangedwyn building
- Pupils would attend a larger school where they would be part of a larger cohort of pupils
- Pupils would transfer to a school they are already familiar with
- Pupils would continue to access Church in Wales provision

4. CORPORATE RELEVANCE

How does this change proposal relate to Corporate Improvement Plan?

The proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School is aligned to the Transforming Education Programme and forms part of the Transformation Portfolio, setup to support the priorities and objectives outlined in the Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan.

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 No

Please state the gaps:

- None

How will the gaps be addressed going forward? N/A

6. DATA ANALYSIS

<p><u>6.1 Quantitative</u> 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 2023</u></p> <p>Based on the information provided in the school’s PLASC return in January 2023, the following pupils at Llangedwyn C. in W. School belong to the protected characteristic groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Free school meals: 23.1% of pupils are eligible for Free School Meals. - ALN: 38.5% of pupils have additional educational needs. Of these, 15.4% of pupils are on School Action, 15.4% of pupils are on School Action Plus, 0.0% of pupils have statements, 0.0% of pupils have IDPs issued by the School and 7.7% of pupils have IDPs issued by the local authority. - Disabilities: 38.5% of pupils have additional learning needs. - English as an Additional Language: 0.0% of pupils with EAL. - Ethnicity: The ethnic group of 100% of pupils in the school is White British - Looked after Children: 15.4% of pupils are looked after. <p>This information shows that a small number of pupils that belong to a protected characteristic group will be affected by this proposal. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 23.1% of pupils at Llangedwyn C. in W. School are eligible for Free School Meals. This is higher than the Powys average for primary schools (18.8%), however, there are very small numbers of pupils at Llangedwyn, so this percentage translates to very few pupils - 38.5% of pupils at Llangedwyn C. in W. School have additional learning needs. This is higher than the Powys average for primary schools (20.9%) <p>The proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School would impact on all pupils currently attending the school, including those pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups.</p>
<p><u>6.2 Qualitative</u></p>	<p>Full consultation has been carried out on the proposal relating to Llangedwyn C. in W. School, including consultation with pupils at the affected schools. This has provided qualitative data in</p>

<p>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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Do certain groups have a different service user experience? How will a change affect this? ii) Have any areas for improvement been communicated by particular groups? Will a change have an impact upon these views? iii) What are the reasons behind some groups not using the service? How will a change affect this position? iv) What has consultation on your proposals revealed about impact on the protected characteristics? 	<p>respect of the proposal, and information regarding any additional impact on pupils that belong to protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>Comments received during the course of the consultation indicated concern about the impact on pupils with additional learning needs that currently attend the school, and concern about Looked After Children that currently attend the school.</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.

<p>The proposal does not present any adverse impact on equality. [Proceed to question 10]</p>	
<p>The proposal presents some adverse impact on equality. [Proceed to question 8]</p>	✓

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) Pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) attending the school would be affected by the proposal. The proportion of pupils with ALN at the school is higher than the Powys average. Comments received during the consultation expressed concern about the impact on pupils with ALN if they had to move to different schools.</p> <p>In addition, there are a number of Looked After Children currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School who would be affected by the proposal. Comments received during the consultation expressed concern about the impact on these pupils.</p> <p>ii) As indicated above, 23.1% of Llangedwyn pupils are eligible for Free School Meals, which is higher than the Powys average, so it is likely that a number of pupils / families on low incomes would be affected by the proposal.</p> <p>iii) Llangedwyn C. in W. School is an English medium school – therefore the proposal will not directly affect Welsh speakers.</p>
---	---

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, Llangedwyn C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School.</p> <p>This would have a significant impact on pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School, including any pupils belonging to the protected characteristic groups that attend that school.</p> <p>In particular, some additional travel may be required for them to attend their nearest alternative school. However, it is to be noted that Llangedwyn is currently not the nearest school for the</p>
---	--

<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>majority of pupils that attend provision there. Therefore, the impact of additional travel is likely to be minimal. Some pupils may choose to transfer to schools that are closer to their homes, which would minimise the</p> <p>In addition to the impact of additional travel, concern has been raised about the impact on pupils belonging to the protected characteristic groups of having to transfer to alternative schools. This includes pupils with additional learning needs. Whilst the Council acknowledges these concerns, all schools are expected to cater to the needs and requirements of learners with Additional Learning Needs, so there is no reason to believe that Llanfechain C. in W. School or any other schools pupils may choose to transfer to would be unable to meet the needs of pupils. Smaller schools with limited resources and personnel may be presented with challenges implementing responsibilities in line with the Equality Act – including providing diverse support systems, accommodations and bespoke services necessary to meet the diverse needs of learners. In addition, social interaction is key to development. In small classes, there are fewer opportunities for learners with ALN to interact with a diverse peer group, and experience role modelling from their peers. In essence, the effectiveness of an educational environment for learners with ALN depends on a holistic approach that includes both class size and the availability of appropriate resources and support.</p> <p>Concern has also been expressed during the consultation about the impact on LAC pupils who currently attend the school, who would also need to transfer to alternative schools. Whilst the Council acknowledges these concerns, there is no reason to believe that Llanfechain C. in W. School or any other school pupils may choose to transfer to would be unable to meet the needs of pupils belonging to the protected characteristic groups that would be affected.</p> <p>Having considered the impact on protected characteristic groups, the Council does not consider that the proposals requires modification to reduce or remove the impact on protected characteristic groups.</p>
--	--

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: Need was not identified at time of writing Service Strategy</p>
---	---

4. Draft Community Impact Assessment – Llangedwyn C. in W. School.

i) Information on the proportion of pupils from the catchment area that attend the school

The closest provider for the 17 pupils that were attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School in January 2022 was as follows:

School	% of Pupils
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	17.6%
Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant C.P. School	35.3%
Ysgol Llanfyllin	11.8%
Ysgol Meifod	11.8%
Llanfechain C. in W. School	5.8%
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	5.8%
Bryn Offa Primary School (Shropshire)	5.8%
Weston Rhyn Primary School (Shropshire)	5.8%

This suggests that Llangedwyn was the closest school for only 17.6% of pupils attending the school. 82.4% of pupils attending the school lived closer to other primary schools.

ii) After-school clubs and extra-curricular activities provided by the school

- After School Club

iii) Any other facilities or services the school accommodates or services the school provides

- Little Hedgehogs Stay and Play
- Venue for Church Council Meetings

iv) Other use by the community of the school building

- None

v) Other links between the school and the community

- Links with St Cedwyn's Church. E.g. services in the church, visits from church members, activities in the church.
- Children meet with Jubilee Club (over 60's group)
- Campaigning for purchase of Sycharth Castle
- Community coffee mornings
- School field used by Football Club and for Car Boot sales
- Recycling site for Crisp packets

vi) If accommodation, facilities or services are provided by a school, where would they be provided in the event of closure?

The school has indicated that while some services are provided at and by the school, there is a Village Hall in Llangedwyn which is used more widely by the local community than the school building.

vii) Distance and travelling time involved in attending an alternative school of the same language category

- The majority of pupils in attendance at Llangedwyn C. in W. School live closer to other schools, with only 17.6% of Llangedwyn pupils being able to call Llangedwyn their nearest school.
- Information from the schools suggests that most pupils travel to Llangedwyn from out of catchment.

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 eventual implementation of the preferred option, support would be provided to pupils and their parents as part of the transition process.

The proposal is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, which is federated with Llangedwyn C. in W. School, which would help with the transition arrangements and would help to ensure parents' and pupils' engagement.

ix) Any wider implications e.g. impact on public transport provision, wider community safety issues

As mentioned above, Llangedwyn is currently not the closest school for the majority of its pupils. Closure of Llangedwyn school may result in greater numbers of pupils walking or cycling to school should they choose to attend their closest school, as there would be a reduction in the distance from their home to school.

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 Llangedwyn C. in W. 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**

The school has indicated that several families of pre-school aged children may choose to move elsewhere should Llangedwyn be closed.

The school has also indicated that fewer families may choose to move to the village should the school be closed.

- **What impact closure might have on other services provided locally, for instance if the school is the only remaining public building in a community**

Llangedwyn has a Village Hall which the school has indicated is more widely used by the community than the school. Therefore, some of the services offered by the school in the local community may be moved to the Village Hall.

- **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 while a small number of services are run from the school building, there is also a Village Hall in Llangedwyn which is used more widely by the local community.

- **Whether or not the loss of the school, and potential families, will have a detrimental effect on the wider economy of the community**

The school has indicated that due to the size and nature of the village, there is virtually no local economy based in Llangedwyn, and

what there is, is not dependant on the school or the families that attend.

- **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**

Should the Council proceed with the statutory process and eventual implementation of the preferred option, support would be provided to pupils and their parents as part of the transition process.

The proposal is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, which is federated with Llangedwyn C. in W. School, which would help with the transition arrangements and would help to ensure parents' and pupils' engagement.

It is acknowledged that there could be an impact on pupils' ability to participate in after school activities, however Llangedwyn is not currently the closest school for the majority of pupils that attend.

- **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 while the school offers some local services, in particular linking with the Church, what services are on offer could be relocated to the Village Hall in Llangedwyn, which is already used more widely by the local community.

Based on information provided by the school, the fact that the majority of pupils that Llangedwyn is not the closest school for the majority of pupils that currently attend, combined with the low pupil numbers, means that the closure of the school would not have a significant impact economically, culturally, or socially on the village of Llangedwyn.

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**
 - Additional travel time/distance
 - Queries about the Council's Home to School Transport Policy

- **Comments about Church in Wales provision**
 - Positive comments about Church in Wales schools / Christian ethos
 - Access to Church in Wales provision will be insufficient if Llangedwyn closes

- **Impact on the community**
 - General concern about the impact on the community
 - The school is an important part of the community
 - Reference to the importance of the school working with the church to the community

xii) Conclusion

Should Llangedwyn C. in W. School close, there would be an impact on the village of Llangedwyn as there would no longer be a school in the village. However, the impact of school closure on the village would likely be minimal, particularly as most pupils that currently attend the school don't live in Llangedwyn.

In addition, information received from the school indicates that whilst there are links between the school and the community, community use of the school building is minimal. There is a Village Hall in Llangedwyn which is already used more widely by the local community, so any events/meetings etc which are currently held at the school could be located to the Village Hall.

This page is intentionally left blank

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

AUDIT COMMITTEE
24th November 2023

CABINET EXECUTIVE
19th December 2023

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor David Thomas
Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate
Transformation

REPORT TITLE: Treasury Management Quarter 2 Report

REPORT FOR: Information

1 Purpose

- 1.1 CIPFA's 2009 Treasury Management Bulletin suggested:
'In order to enshrine best practice, it is suggested that authorities report formally on treasury management activities at least twice a year and preferably quarterly.'

The CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management emphasises a number of key areas including the following:

- xi. Treasury management performance and policy setting should be subject to scrutiny prior to implementation.

- 1.2 In line with the above, this report is providing information on the activities for the quarter ending 30th September 2023.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Capital and Treasury Management Strategy (CTMS) approved by Full Council on 23rd February 2023 can be found here - powys.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s77379/Appendix_H_Capital_and_Treasury_Management_Strategy_2023-28.pdf

3 Advice

3.1 Investments

- 3.2 The Authority's investment priorities within the Strategy are.

- (a) the security of capital, then,
(b) the liquidity of its investments then
(c) the yield

- 3.3 The Authority aims to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity. The risk appetite has been low in order to give priority to security of investments. With interest rates for investments remaining

lower than borrowing rates, the use of cash reserves as opposed to borrowing is prudent and cost-effective.

3.4 Short-term money market investment rates have continued to increase following the two increases to the Bank Rate in the last quarter. Due to the uncertainty around the short term cash requirements, we have continued to hold any surplus funds in the council's deposit accounts. These funds have earned interest totalling £0.55 million for the first quarter of this financial year.

3.5 Investment returns on inter-authority lending have increased in line with the increased interest rates. When looking at temporary investing, the Treasury team consider the bank fee to set up the arrangement, because of this cost some investments are not cost effective for very short periods of time. With the higher interest rates, £10.00 million of inter-authority lending was arranged in September with the loans maturing in October.

3.6 The Authority had no other investments on 30th September 2023.

3.7 Credit Rating Changes

3.8 There have been no credit rating changes relevant to this Authority's position during the last quarter.

3.9 The Authority's Capital Position

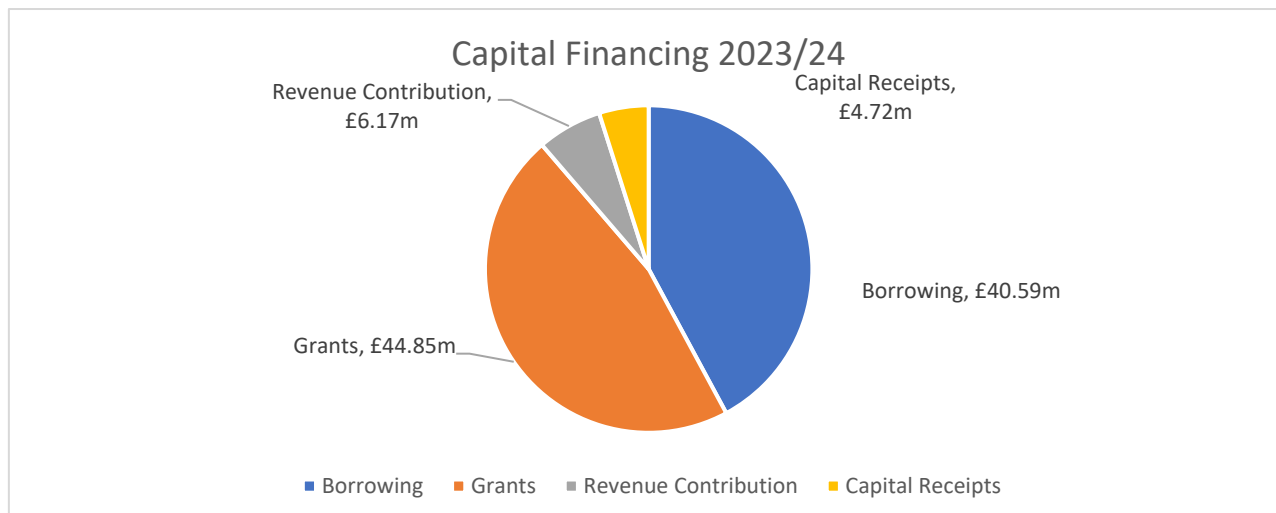
3.10 The 2023/24 Capital Programme was approved by Council on the 23rd February 2023. It included capital schemes totalling £93.29 million, of which £23.48 million related to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The programme has been updated following the reprofiling of projects and additional grants received from Welsh Government. The revised programme at the 30th September 2023 is budgeted at £96.32 million following the successful award of additional grants and the reprofiling of budgets between financial years. Actual spend amounts to £22.85 million, representing 24% of the total budget.

3.11 Table 1 - Breakdown by service

Service	Original Budget	Virements Approved	Revised Budget	Actuals	Remaining Budget		Commitments
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	%	£,000
Adult Services	200	922	1,122	65	1,057	94	405
Childrens Services	0	379	379	102	277	73	121
Education	33,005	(5,238)	27,767	7,670	20,097	72	10,231
Highways Transport & Recycling	12,681	7,078	19,759	7,210	12,549	64	4,442
Property, Planning & Public Protection	100	998	1,098	305	793	72	126
Community Development	922	1,337	2,259	21	2,238	99	595
Housing General Fund	1,748	1,279	3,027	1,043	1,984	66	469
Economy & Digital Services	16,196	(1,679)	14,519	1,234	13,283	91	6,821
Unallocated	4,953	(454)	4,499	0	4,499	100	75
Total Capital	69,805	4,622	74,427	17,650	56,777	76	23,285
Housing Revenue Account	23,482	(1,587)	21,895	5,195	16,700	76	4,483
TOTAL	93,287	3,035	96,322	22,845	73,477	76	27,768

3.12 Currently 42%, £40.59 million, of the capital expenditure is budgeted to be financed by borrowing, the interest cost for this is charged to the revenue account. Finance will be working with the services to ensure the profiling of budgets is accurate to effectively manage the borrowing.

3.13 Chart 1 – Capital Programme funding



3.14 Inflation continues to have a severe impact on the cost of schemes due to rising material and construction costs. It is unclear at this stage how this will impact the programme over the coming years. Services are aware of the impact and are mitigating these increases as far as possible but it is likely that schemes will be reduced or paused. Any additional funding required is likely to be raised with further borrowing, this will increase costs on the revenue budget so must be minimised.

3.15 The Council’s underlying need to borrow for capital expenditure is termed the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). This figure is a gauge of the Council’s indebtedness. It represents the current year’s unfinanced capital expenditure and prior years’ net or unfinanced capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for by revenue or other resources.

3.16 Part of the Council’s treasury activities is to address the funding requirements for this borrowing need. Depending on the capital expenditure, the Council’s cash position is managed to ensure that sufficient cash is available to meet the capital plans and cash flow requirements. This may be sourced through external borrowing or utilising temporary cash resources within the Council.

3.17 Net external borrowing (borrowings less investments) should not, except in the short term, exceed the total of CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for the current year and next two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years.

3.18 **Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)**

The table below shows the impact of the reprofiling of schemes included in the capital programme into future years, with the CFR reducing in this financial year, delaying the increase until future years.

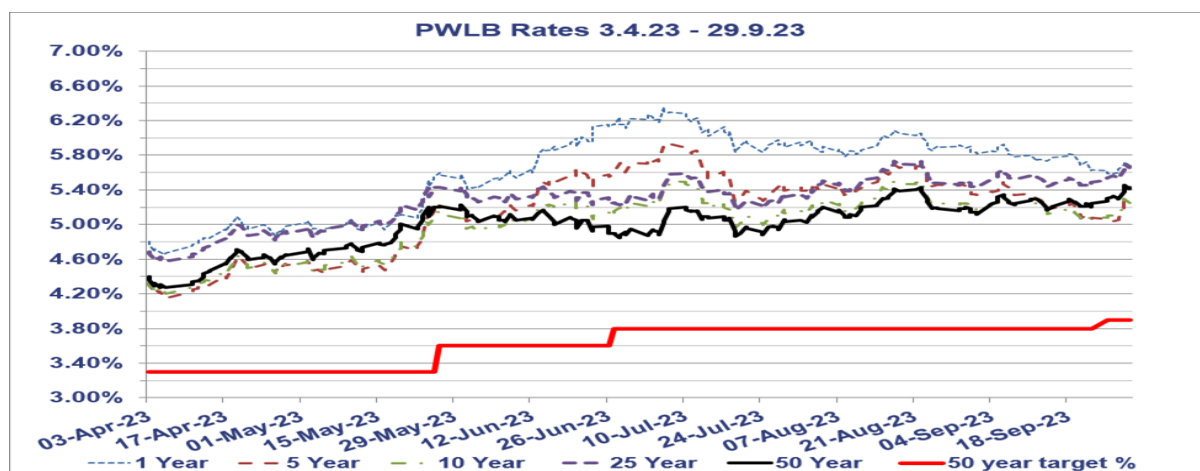
£'m	Total	HRA	Council Fund
Opening Balance – 1st April 2023			
Original Estimates ¹	439.71	108.50	331.21
Actual Balance	422.21	104.31	317.90
Closing Balance – 31st March 2024			
Original Estimates ¹	466.79	119.45	347.34
Quarter 1 Estimate	465.53	120.76	344.77
Quarter 2 Estimate	457.93	114.41	343.52
Closing Balance – 31st March 2025			
Original Estimates ¹	498.71	135.79	362.92
Quarter 1 Estimate	497.81	136.75	361.06
Quarter 2 Estimate	499.69	138.09	361.60
Closing Balance – 31st March 2026			
Original Estimates ¹	536.72	157.13	379.59
Quarter 1 Estimate	529.73	157.74	369.99
Quarter 2 Estimate	536.27	165.44	370.83

¹ Original estimate included in the CTMS approved by Full Council on 23rd February 2023.

3.19 Borrowing / Re-scheduling

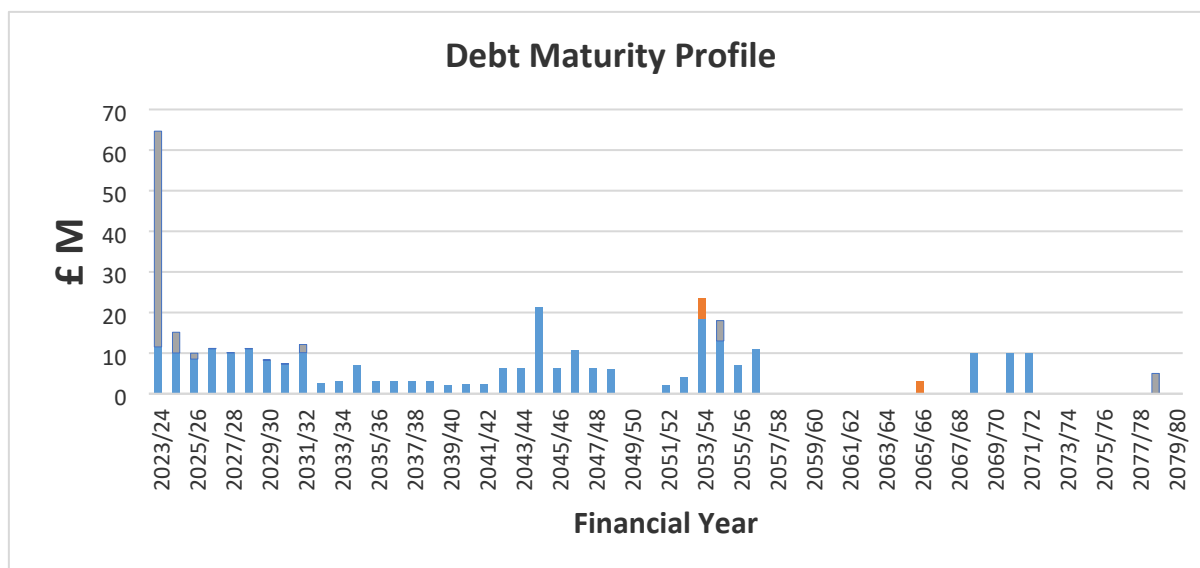
3.20 Effective management of the Authority's debt is essential to ensure that the impact of interest payable is minimised against our revenue accounts whilst maintaining prudent borrowing policies.

3.21 The chart below shows the changes in PWLB interest rates since the start of the April 2023. PWLB borrowing rates are based on the Gilts market. Rates have fluctuated since the last report but remain significantly higher than the 50 year target.



3.22 A prohibition is still in place to deny access to borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) for any local authority which had purchase of assets for yield in its three year capital programme. There are currently no schemes for yield in the Capital Programme. With the significant amounts of borrowing in the future Capital Programme, the inability to access PWLB borrowing will need to be a major consideration for any future purchases of assets for yield. The additional income these assets generate must be sufficient to cover the increased borrowing costs, as borrowing sources other than the PWLB are likely to be more expensive.

3.23 Debt Maturity Profile



Key Blue = PWLB; Grey = Inter Authority Borrowing; Orange = Market Loans

3.24 £3.50 million PWLB and £5.00 million borrowing from another local authority has been repaid during the last quarter. The remaining £17.40 million held for the Global Centre of Rail Excellence (GCRE) has also been repaid. With the uncertain economic position and as outlined by Link later in this report, it is anticipated that borrowing rates will fall over the next few years, so we need to ensure that the council isn't locked into higher rate borrowing for long periods, to allow flexibility to take advantage should rates drop.

3.25 A further £25.00 million borrowing from other local authorities is due to be repaid in the next quarter. To cover this, £20.00 million borrowing from other local authorities has been arranged with £5.00 million received in September and the remaining £15.00 million due to be received during October. Further short term borrowing may be required in Q3 to cover these repayments alongside the commitments in the capital programme.

3.26 With the changes to the MRP policy and the delayed requirement to borrow, the revenue budget set aside to cover these costs is projected to be underutilised in this financial year, however as demonstrated in the tables later in the report, these costs are likely to increase year on year.

3.27 PWLB Loans Rescheduling

3.28 Debt rescheduling opportunities have been very limited in the current economic climate and following the various increases in the margins added to gilt yields which have impacted PWLB new borrowing rates since October 2010. Existing borrowing rates remain lower than current rates, therefore no debt rescheduling has been undertaken to date in the current financial year.

3.29 Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

3.30 This indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital, (borrowing and other long term obligation costs net of investment income), against the Councils net revenue budget (net revenue stream). The estimates of financing costs include current commitments and the proposals in the capital programme.

£'m	2023/24 Estimate	2024/25 Estimate	2025/26 Estimate
From the approved CTMS 2023/24			
Financing Costs	13.66	14.49	14.65
Net Revenue Stream	326.54	338.53	348.39
%	4.2%	4.3%	4.2%
Quarter 1 estimates			
Financing Costs	12.71	14.48	14.30
Net Revenue Stream	326.54	338.53	348.39
%	3.9%	4.3%	4.1%
Quarter 2 estimates			
Financing Costs	12.19	13.88	13.46
Net Revenue Stream	326.54	338.53	348.39
%	3.7%	4.1%	3.9%

3.31 The table above shows the capital financing costs and the change between those disclosed in the 2023/24 Treasury Management and Capital Strategy. Markets suggest that the Bank of England interest rate is at or near its peak. It may rise if inflation remains stubborn. It is then expected that it will reduce over the next few years. There is significant risk that these costs may increase if rates increase faster or do not fall in line with the current forecast. The latest estimates assume that significant further borrowing will be required before the end of the financial year. The amount will depend on the cash position of the council and the interest rates available so this figure may change before the end of the financial year. There is sufficient budget to cover these costs in this financial year.

3.32 The change has been caused by the reduced borrowing requirement to support the capital programme in 2023/24 and future years. This has been the result of reprofiling of budgets into future years. This has allowed the council to defer the date that it expected to take out additional borrowing, reducing the current interest costs, however this borrowing will still be required in the future.

3.33 Prudential Indicators

3.34 All Treasury Management Prudential Indicators were complied with in the quarter ending 30th September 2023.

3.35 Economic Background and Forecasts

3.36 The forecast of interest rates by the Authority's advisor at the 25th September 2023 are shown below. The rates have fluctuated over the last few months but are expected to reduce slightly over the next few years. The current higher rates will increase the cost of borrowing over the next few years. The revised Medium Term Financial Strategy has been updated to take account of these changes.

Link Group Interest Rate View		25.09.23												
		Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26
BANK RATE		5.25	5.25	5.25	5.00	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.00	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75
3 month ave earnings		5.30	5.30	5.30	5.00	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.00	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.80
6 month ave earnings		5.60	5.50	5.40	5.10	4.60	4.10	3.60	3.10	2.90	2.90	2.90	2.90	2.90
12 month ave earnings		5.80	5.70	5.50	5.20	4.70	4.20	3.70	3.20	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
5 yr PWLB		5.10	5.00	4.90	4.70	4.40	4.20	4.00	3.90	3.70	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.50
10 yr PWLB		5.00	4.90	4.80	4.60	4.40	4.20	4.00	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.50	3.50
25 yr PWLB		5.40	5.20	5.10	4.90	4.70	4.40	4.30	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.80	3.80
50 yr PWLB		5.20	5.00	4.90	4.70	4.50	4.20	4.10	3.90	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.60

3.37 The economic background provided by our treasury advisers; Link Group at the 30th September 2023 is attached at Appendix A. It should be noted that this was provided at the end of the quarter and certain factors may have changed since then.

3.38 Sundry Debt

3.39 The prompt collection of debt and encouraging payment as soon as possible helps the Councils cashflow position, reducing the need for short term borrowing.

3.40 The following table outlines the Council's outstanding sundry debt at the 2nd October 2023 of £14.92 million, down from £17.29 million, last quarter. This does not include Council Tax arrears.

Service	Current Debt (30 days or less)	Aged Debt (31 to 60 days)	Aged Debt (61 - 90 days)	Aged Debt (Over 90 days)	Total Aged Debt	Change from previous quarter	Trend Since Q1 2022/23
Adult Services ²	1,403,080	787,181	343,237	8,533,191	9,663,609	(2,119,506)	
Childrens Services	97,728	14,048	375	165,924	180,347	(18,752)	
Corporate, Legal & Democratic Services	7,063	0	0	5,353	5,353	(695)	
Economy & Digital Services	59,179	542	516	72,870	73,929	1,775	
Finance	125,883	130,708	113	918,734	1,049,555	179,880	
Highways, Transport & Recycling	454,767	145,510	171,087	921,012	1,237,609	137,580	
Housing	34,091	785	45,920	1,042,543	1,089,248	38,583	
Community Services	55,586	3,179	2,233	53,113	58,525	6,450	
Other	29,398	6,324	10,312	40,647	57,282	13,828	
Property, Planning & Public Protection	174,070	75,446	70,539	757,153	903,138	(554,256)	
Schools	3,108	22,857	4,969	515,771	543,597	(45,083)	
Workforce & Organisation Development	92,633	17,953	12,995	21,877	52,825	(16,047)	
Total	2,536,586	1,204,532	662,297	13,048,187	14,915,016	(2,376,242)	

² There is a further £0.03 million outstanding debt with the local health board that sits outside this figure.

3.41 The £2.54 million shown in the current debt column relates to invoices that are less than 30 days old, overdue debt is classed as overdue when it is above 30 days after the invoice date.

3.42 The total debt represents 23% of the annual generated income (excluding Council Tax and NNDR), if you exclude the current debt (less than 30 days old) this falls to 19% down from 23% last quarter.

3.43 There is a significant level of aged debt (over 30 days old) which has reduced by £2.38 million since the last quarter.

3.44 The table in 3.40 shows that around two thirds of the over three month debt is adult social care debt. This is more difficult to collect as Welsh Government will not allow bailiff action on residential care fees and court action only as a last resort. This debt relates to a high proportion of elderly and vulnerable customers, and often deferred charges are placed on their properties, which requires waiting for houses to be sold and estates to be realised which is often a lengthy process.

3.45 The table below shows the key performance indicators since the start of the financial year.

£'m	PtHB Debt	Non PtHB Debt	Total Debt	Deferred Charge Secured	Payments Received	Debt Written-off ³	Collection Rate
April	3.130	13.280	16.410	0.470	7.491	0.000	37%
May	7.350	12.490	19.840	0.404	3.383	0.000	45%
June	6.910	11.990	18.900	0.404	4.288	0.001	48%
July	4.380	13.680	18.060	0.463	5.225	0.018	59%
August	3.650	12.780	16.430	0.433	4.540	0.113	59%
September	5.000	13.940	18.940	0.560	4.892	0.100	70%

³ Debt is written off in line with the council's debt policy.

3.46 Council Tax and NNDR Collection

3.47 The in-year collection rates at the end of September 2023 (Quarter 2) for Council tax and NNDR are shown below.

Council Tax	53.90% (0.22% down compared to same point during 2022/23)
NNDR	64.36% (3.84% up compared to same point during 2022/23)

3.48 £4.31 million of Council Tax and £1.02 million NNDR remains uncollected from previous financial years. Collection of monies during the ongoing cost of living crisis

is challenging, however robust procedures are in place to pursue all monies owed to the Council, both for the current year and previous final years.

3.49 VAT

3.50 The Technical Section of Finance act as the authority's VAT section. VAT can pose a risk to the authority hence this report includes VAT information.

3.51 The monthly VAT returns were submitted within the required deadlines during this quarter.

3.52 Key Performance Indicators - The VAT KPI's for 2023/24 are attached at Appendix B.

4. Resource Implications

4.1 Not applicable.

5. Legal implications

5.1 Not applicable.

6. Climate Change & Nature Implications

6.1 Not applicable.

7. Data Protection

7.1 Not applicable.

8. Comment from local member(s)

8.1 Not applicable.

9. Impact Assessment

9.1 Not applicable.

10. Recommendation

10.1 This report has been provided for information and there are no decisions required.

Contact Officer:	James Chappelle
Tel:	01597 826492
Email:	james.chappelle@powys.gov.uk
Head of Service:	Jane Thomas

Appendix A – Update provided by Link Group on the 30th September 2023

Economics Update

- The first half of 2023/24 saw:
 - Interest rates rise by a further 100bps, taking Bank Rate from 4.25% to 5.25% and, possibly, the peak in the tightening cycle.
 - Short, medium and long-dated gilts remain elevated as inflation continually surprised to the upside.
 - A 0.5% m/m decline in real GDP in July, mainly due to more strikes.
 - CPI inflation falling from 8.7% in April to 6.7% in August, its lowest rate since February 2022, but still the highest in the G7.
 - Core CPI inflation declining to 6.2% in August from 7.1% in April and May, a then 31 years high.
 - A cooling in labour market conditions, but no evidence yet that it has led to an easing in wage growth (as the 3myy growth of average earnings rose to 7.8% in August, excluding bonuses).
- The 0.5% m/m fall in GDP in July suggests that underlying growth has lost momentum since earlier in the year. Some of the weakness in July was due to there being almost twice as many working days lost to strikes in July (281,000) than in June (160,000). But with output falling in 10 out of the 17 sectors, there is an air of underlying weakness.
- The fall in the composite Purchasing Managers Index from 48.6 in August to 46.8 in September left it at its lowest level since COVID-19 lockdowns reduced activity in January 2021. At face value, it is consistent with the 0.2% q/q rise in real GDP in the period April to June, being followed by a contraction of up to 1% in the second half of 2023.
- The 0.4% m/m rebound in retail sales volumes in August is not as good as it looks as it partly reflected a pickup in sales after the unusually wet weather in July. Sales volumes in August were 0.2% below their level in May, suggesting much of the resilience in retail activity in the first half of the year has faded.
- As the growing drag from higher interest rates intensifies over the next six months, we think the economy will continue to lose momentum and soon fall into a mild recession. Strong labour demand, fast wage growth and government handouts have all supported household incomes over the past year. And with CPI inflation past its peak and expected to decline further, the economy has got through the cost-of-living crisis without recession. But even though the worst of the falls in real household disposable incomes are behind us, the phasing out of financial support packages provided by the government during the energy crisis means real incomes are unlikely to grow strongly. Higher interest rates will soon bite harder too. We expect the Bank of England to keep interest rates at the probable peak of 5.25% until the second half of 2024. Mortgage rates are likely to stay above 5.0% for around a year.
- The tightness of the labour market continued to ease, with employment in the three months to July falling by 207,000. The further decline in the number of job vacancies from 1.017m in July to 0.989m in August suggests that the labour market has loosened a bit further since July. That is the first time it has fallen below 1m since July 2021. At 3.0% in July, and likely to have fallen to 2.9% in August, the job vacancy rate is getting

closer to 2.5%, which would be consistent with slower wage growth. Meanwhile, the 48,000 decline in the supply of workers in the three months to July offset some of the loosening in the tightness of the labour market. That was due to a 63,000 increase in inactivity in the three months to July as more people left the labour market due to long term sickness or to enter education. The supply of labour is still 0.3% below its pre-pandemic February 2020 level.

- But the cooling in labour market conditions still has not fed through to an easing in wage growth. While the monthly rate of earnings growth eased sharply from an upwardly revised +2.2% in June to -0.9% in July, a lot of that was due to the one-off bonus payments for NHS staff in June not being repeated in July. The headline 3myy rate rose from 8.4% (revised up from 8.2%) to 8.5%, which meant UK wage growth remains much faster than in the US and in the Euro-zone. Moreover, while the Bank of England's closely watched measure of regular private sector wage growth eased a touch in July, from 8.2% 3myy in June to 8.1% 3myy, it is still well above the Bank of England's prediction for it to fall to 6.9% in September.
- CPI inflation declined from 6.8% in July to 6.7% in August, the lowest rate since February 2022. The biggest positive surprise was the drop in core CPI inflation, which declined from 6.9% to 6.2%. That reverses all the rise since March and means the gap between the UK and elsewhere has shrunk (US core inflation is 4.4% and in the Euro-zone it is 5.3%). Core goods inflation fell from 5.9% to 5.2% and the further easing in core goods producer price inflation, from 2.2% in July to a 29-month low of 1.5% in August, suggests it will eventually fall close to zero. But the really positive development was the fall in services inflation from 7.4% to 6.8%. That also reverses most of the rise since March and takes it below the forecast of 7.2% the Bank of England published in early August.
- In its latest monetary policy meeting on 20 September, the Bank of England left interest rates unchanged at 5.25%. The weak August CPI inflation release, the recent loosening in the labour market and the downbeat activity surveys appear to have convinced the Bank of England that it has already raised rates far enough. The minutes show the decision was "finely balanced". Five MPC members (Bailey, Broadbent, Dhingra, Pill and Ramsden) voted for no change and the other four (Cunliffe, Greene, Haskel and Mann) voted for a 25bps hike.
- Like the US Fed, the Bank of England wants the markets to believe in the higher for longer narrative. The statement did not say that rates have peaked and once again said if there was evidence of more persistent inflation pressures "further tightening in policy would be required". Governor Bailey stated, "we'll be watching closely to see if further increases are needed". The Bank also retained the hawkish guidance that rates will stay "sufficiently restrictive for sufficiently long".
- This narrative makes sense as the Bank of England does not want the markets to decide that a peak in rates will be soon followed by rate cuts, which would loosen financial conditions and undermine its attempts to quash inflation. The language also gives the Bank of England the flexibility to respond to new developments. A rebound in services inflation, another surge in wage growth and/or a further leap in oil prices could conceivably force it to raise rates at the next meeting on 2nd November, or even pause in November and raise rates in December.
- The yield on 10-year Gilts fell from a peak of 4.74% on 17th August to 4.44% on 29th September, mainly on the back of investors revising down their interest rate expectations. But even after their recent pullback, the rise in Gilt yields has exceeded the rise in most other Developed Market government yields since the start of the year.

Looking forward, once inflation falls back, Gilt yields are set to reduce further. A (mild) recession over the next couple of quarters will support this outlook if it helps to loosen the labour market (higher unemployment/lower wage increases).

- The pound weakened from its cycle high of \$1.30 in the middle of July to \$1.21 in late September. In the first half of the year, the pound bounced back strongly from the Truss debacle last autumn. That rebound was in large part driven by the substantial shift up in UK interest rate expectations. However, over the past couple of months, interest rate expectations have dropped sharply as inflation started to come down, growth faltered, and the Bank of England called an end to its hiking cycle.
- The FTSE 100 has gained more than 2% since the end of August, from around 7,440 on 31st August to 7,608 on 29th September. The rebound has been primarily driven by higher energy prices which boosted the valuations of energy companies. The FTSE 100's relatively high concentration of energy companies helps to explain why UK equities outperformed both US and Euro-zone equities in September. Nonetheless, as recently as 21st April the FTSE 100 stood at 7,914.

Appendix B - VAT - Key Performance Indicators

Creditor Invoices

VAT return for	N° of high value Creditor invoices checked	N° of Creditor invoices highlighted as requiring "proper" document for VAT recovery	% of creditor invoices checked requiring "proper" document for VAT recovery
Apr-23	237	4	1.7%
May-23	247	1	0.4%
Jun-23	316	0	0.0%
Jul-23	262	5	1.9%
Aug-23	341	3	0.9%
Sep-23	305	6	2.0%

There has been a small increase due to housing maintenance service putting through payment vouchers instead of invoices. Whilst this practice is legitimate, accounting for VAT on these should not take place until the correct invoice is received.

Income Management Entries

VAT return for	N° of entries checked by formula per the ledger account code used	N° of entries needing follow up check (but not necessarily incorrect).	% of entries needing follow up check
Apr-23	789	0	0.0%
May-23	1,775	3	0.2%
Jun-23	1,116	3	0.3%
Jul-23	1,058	4	0.4%
Aug-23	1,063	0	0.0%
Sep-23	996	2	0.2%

Note. The sampling threshold amount for Income Management Entries will be increased in Q3 and beyond based on current performance.

Debtor Invoices

VAT return for	N° of Debtor invoices checked	N° of checked debtor invoices with incorrect VAT code used	% of debtor invoices with incorrect VAT code
Apr-23	117	0	0.0%
May-23	90	0	0.0%
Jun-23	95	0	0.0%
Jul-23	130	0	0.0%
Aug-23	102	0	0.0%
Sep-23	131	1	0.8%

Note: Debtors VAT checking is carried out by Finance via a work process prior to the invoice being raised hence the improvement in errors compared to previous years

Purchase Cards

VAT return for	N° of transactions for which paperwork requested for checking	Resolvable errors discovered	Value of VAT potentially claimable but recharged to budget due to non-response	N° of transactions where VAT claimed incorrectly	% of transactions available to be checked where VAT was claimed incorrectly	Value of VAT incorrectly claimed hence recharged to budget
Apr-23	106	1	£304.15	13	12.3%	£109.29
May-23	98	2	£522.91	6	6.1%	£323.64
Jun-23	76	3	£253.95	9	11.8%	£714.08
Jul-23	123	6	£1,382.45	9	7.3%	£912.88
Aug-23	40	4	£1,036.15	0	0.0%	£0.00
Sep-23	119	11	£1,092.63	10	8.4%	£1,686.04

Chargebacks to service areas

The upload of appropriate documents to the BSM (Barclaycard Spend Management purchase card system) to enable VAT recovery was made mandatory in September 2017 as a result of the lack of response from service areas/establishments to provide documents when requested. Where no document has been uploaded, any VAT amount input against the transaction is charged to the service area as there is no evidence to support the VAT recovery.

Any other VAT errors that come to light as a result of the various checks are also charged to the relevant service areas.

Budget holders are able to see this clearly as chargebacks are coded to account code EX400600 and the activity code used alongside this gives the reason why this chargeback has occurred.

The amount charged back to service areas is £69,126 to date. The breakdown of this is as follows:

Potentially correctable errors

Reason	£
Not a tax invoice	44,822
VAT registration not shown on invoice	1,062
No invoice uploaded to purchase card system	17,052
Invoice(s) do not match payment	482
Total	63,418

Other errors

Reason	£
Non-domestic VAT	632
No tax on invoice	1,101
Supply not to Powys County Council	3,423
Over-accounting for VAT	508
Internal payments	44
Total	5,708

A breakdown by service is shown below.

Service	Not A Tax Invoice	VAT Reg Not Shown On Invoice	No Invoice Uploaded To BSM	Invoices Do Not Match Payment	Foreign VAT	No Tax On Invoice	Supply Not To PCC	Over accounting For VAT	PCC Internal Payment	Discovered Recoverable VAT
Revenue										
Schools Delegated Budgets	2,666		7,402	291	71	1,039	19	645	44	
Schools Service	2,234		532		40	17		37		
Adults	2,004		8							
Childrens	7,300		3,626							
Commissioning			3							
Highways, Transport & Recycling	13,946		210	191						
Community Development	784		84							
Property, Planning & Public Protection	4,000		(44)			39				
Housing General Fund		1,062	1,995				3,404			
Housing Revenue Account	4,448		913							
Finance			11							
Corporate Activities	20		238					(174)		(1,044)
Workforce & Organisational Development			165							
Economy & Digital Services	450		1,116		504					
Transformation & Communications			217		17					
Legal And Democratic			18							
Capital										
Childrens	256		445							
Highways, Transport & Recycling	6,424		5							
Housing Revenue Account	290		109							
Total	44,822	1,062	17,052	482	632	1,101	3,423	508	44	(1,044)

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Members

5 December	Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys	Approved the appointment of school governors.
12 December	Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys	Approved the appointment of school governors.
12 December	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for a Fairer Powys	Approved the purchase of a property in Llandrindod Wells to add to the social housing stock.
12 December	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for a Fairer Powys	Approved the purchase of a property in Ystradgynlais to add to the social housing stock.

This page is intentionally left blank

Meeting	Report Title	Report Author(s)	Presenting Member(s)
Cabinet – 2024-01-16	Budget and MTFS	Jane Thomas	Councillor David Thomas
	Winter Maintenance	Matt Perry	Councillor Jackie Charlton
	Quarter 2 Strategic Risk Register	Jane Thomas	Councillor David Thomas
	Rent Setting for 2024-2025	Andy Thompson	Councillor Matthew Dorrance
	Supporting the development of Council Housing	Andy Thompson	Councillor Matthew Dorrance
	Welsh language promotion strategy	Sion Rowley	Councillor Sandra Davies
Cabinet – 2024-02-06	Sennybridge School Outline Business Case	Emma Palmer	Councillor Pete Roberts
	Irfon Valley Consultation Report	Emma Palmer	Councillor Pete Roberts
Cabinet – 2024-02-27	Sustainable Communities for Learning – Strategic Outline Programme	Emma Palmer	Councillor Pete Roberts
	Llangedwyn Objection Report	Emma Palmer	Councillor Pete Roberts
	HRA Thirty Year Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2024-2025.	Andy Thompson	Councillor Matthew Dorrance
	Corporate Safeguarding Board Activity Report	Nina Davies	
Cabinet – 2024-03-19	Quarter 3 Performance Report	Catherine James	Councillor James Gibson-Watt
	Quarter 3 Strategic Risk Register	Jane Thomas	Councillor David Thomas
Cabinet – 2024-07-09	Quarter 4 Strategic Risk Register	Jane Thomas	Councillor David Thomas
Cabinet – 2024-09-17	Corporate Safeguarding Board Activity Report	Nina Davies	
	Quarter 1 Performance Report	Catherine James	Councillor James Gibson-Watt

This page is intentionally left blank