



Welshpool Town Primary Education

Consultation Report

November 2016

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Consultation on the proposal to establish a new English-medium Church-in-Wales (Voluntary Controlled) (CiW) Primary School and a new Welsh-medium Community Primary (CP) School in Welshpool.

1. Overview of the consultation

Powys County Council consulted on a proposal to establish a new English-medium Church-in-Wales (Voluntary Controlled) (CiW) Primary School and a new Welsh-medium Community Primary (CP) School in Welshpool during the period from the 5th September 2016 to the 18th October 2016.

1.1 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 (2013). A separate version for young people was also available and distributed to pupils, and was also available on the council's website throughout the consultation period.

Consultees were invited to respond to the consultation by either completing an online consultation form, filling in a paper copy of the form and returning it to the School Transformation Team at County Hall, or by writing to the School Transformation Team.

Meetings were also held with the following:

- Ardwyn, Gungrog, Oldford and Maesydre Staff – 15th September 2016
- Ardwyn, Gungrog, Oldford and Maesydre Governors – 15th September 2016
- Parents and the Communities of Welshpool– 20th September 2016
- Ardwyn School Council – 14th October 2016
- Gungrog School Council – 14th October 2016
- Oldford School Council – 14th October 2016
- Maesydre School Council – 14th October 2016

1.2 Responses received

A total of 297 written responses were received to the consultation. These included:

- i) 65 written responses
- ii) 232 online responses

This included a response from Estyn, which is provided on page 13.

During the consultation period it became apparent that a campaign had been set up by the Welsh Humanists, who were encouraging their supporters to respond to the consultation to oppose the proposal for the English-medium primary school to be a Church in Wales school. Screenshots of the Wales Humanists Facebook page are provided in Appendix A.

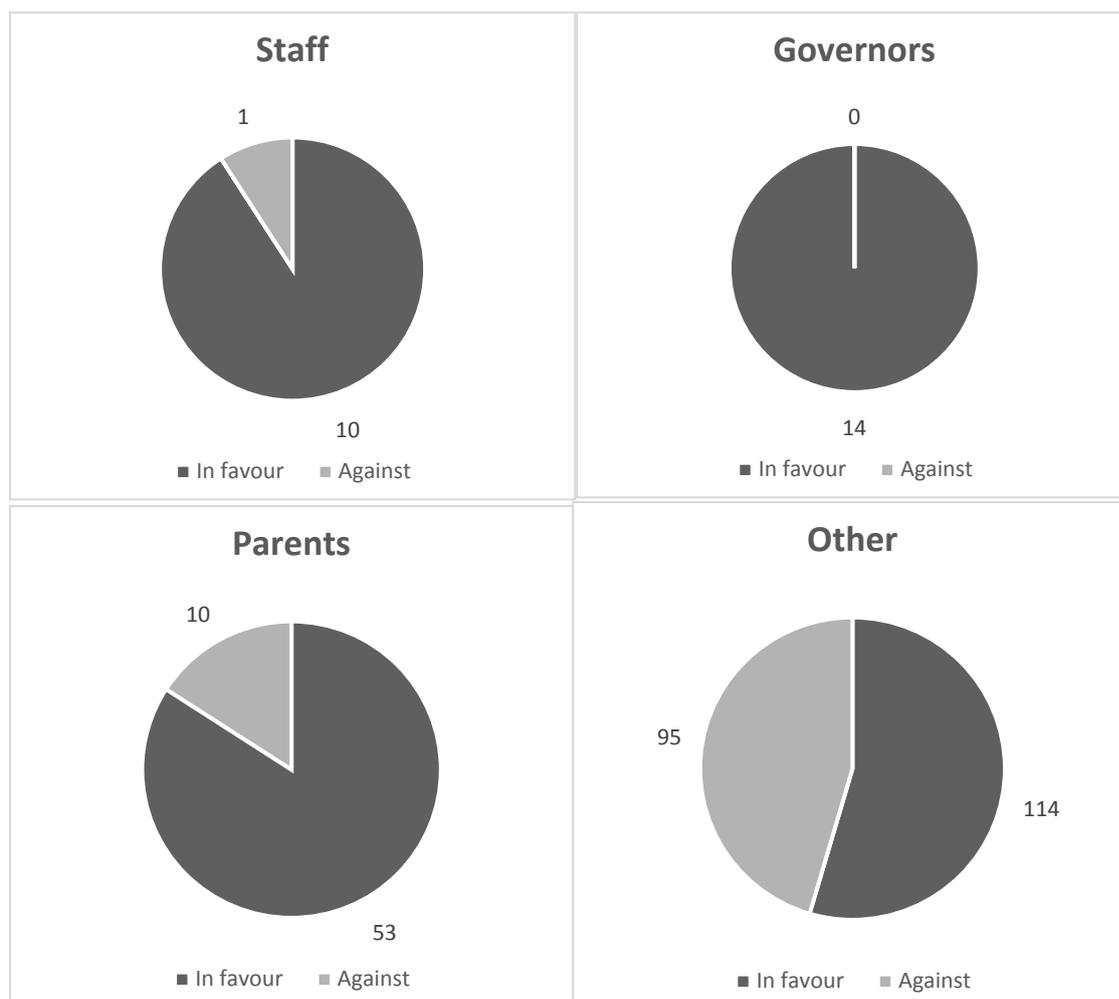
A large number of the responses received oppose the Church in Wales element of the proposal, however it is not clear how many of these responses were due to the Facebook campaign as most responses were anonymous. However, many of the respondents who opposed the proposal who did provide a name and address were from outside Welshpool and outside of Powys.

A large number of responses were also received from members of the local community which supported the proposal outlined in the consultation documentation, including the establishment of an English-medium Church in Wales school to establish an English-medium Church in Wales school in Welshpool.

When responding, respondents were asked to state who they were from a drop down list of options. The 297 responses received can be broken down as follows:

- Staff – 11
- Governors – 14
- Parents – 63
- Other – 209

These responses can be broken down further based on whether or not the responses indicated support of the proposal. This is illustrated in the following graphs:



2 Consultation with pupils

A pupil version of the consultation document was available throughout the consultation period and was distributed to pupils, however no written responses were received from pupils.

Officers from the local authority met with the School Councils of the four schools in Welshpool on the 14th October 2016. The issues raised in the meetings are summarised below:

i) Ardwyn / Oldford

What do you know about the new schools?

- There's going to be an English one and a Welsh one
- There will be a bigger canteen because there will be more children there

How do you feel about the new schools?

- We will go from a little school to a big school
- Happy, as we will be able to make new friends
- There will be a bigger playground
- Excited, as there will be new computers and ipads
- Shocked because it will be massive

What would you like to see in the new schools?

- Stairs
- A big hall to eat dinner and for assembly
- Big stage
- Lots of books

How do you feel about the new English-medium school being by the High School and the Flash leisure centre?

- We will be able to see our brothers and sisters in the high school
- I can see my mum, she works in the high school
- We can go swimming
- We can walk to the pool to keep fit

How do you feel about the Welsh-medium pupils and English-medium pupils having different schools?

- A bit sad, but I can see my friends outside of school
- There will be more classes
- Will have lots of new friends

Do you think it will be better to have a Welsh-medium school rather than a Welsh-medium stream?

- We can learn more Welsh and speak more Welsh
- Scared because there will be more pupils than there are now
- Confused because the school will be new

Is there anything else you would like to see at the new schools?

- Playstations
- Lots of maths
- I-Pads
- A big kitchen
- Library
- More books
- More teachers / kind teachers
- Theatre
- Swimming pool
- More wooden floors because the carpet gets dirty
- Treehouse

Do you have any other questions / comments / concerns?

- It will be hard to choose which school to go to

ii) **Gungrog**

What do you think of the current schools in Welshpool?

- They are old
- They should be knocked down

What will be different in the new schools?

- The school will be bigger

How do you feel about a new school?

- Excited
- Sad that we will have to leave this school
- It's a good idea

What would you like to see in the new school?

- Football pitch
- Science room
- Swimming pool
- Books / Welsh books
- Library
- Hall with a stage
- Sunshine
- Lego
- Bigger slide at the swimming pool
- Swings

- Monkey bars / Climbing area
- Computer room
- School nurse
- Art room
- Basketball
- Happy room (like they currently have)
- Quiet / peace room

How do you feel about leaving this school and going to a different school, not Maesydre?

- Scared because there will be more pupils
- Great because we won't have to move to another school
- We will be with our brothers and sisters
- It's a long way but we can go in the car

Do you have any other questions / comments / concerns?

- Will we have the same staff?
- Will there be a staff room and kitchen?
- Are we allowed school pets?
- Would Rev Steve still come to see us?
- Are we still allowed to go to church?
- Will there be different outdoor play areas?
- Can we still do forest school?
- Will we have a sand area?

iii) **Maesydre**

What do you know about the new schools?

- It will be by Welshpool High School
- It will have a canteen
- Next to the Flash
- There will be lots of technology
- 360 pupils
- Church in Wales school
- Ages 4 – 11
- English-medium school

How do you feel about the new school?

- It will destroy nature and living creatures
- Happy about moving to a new school
- Happy because we will be in the same school as brothers and sisters
- Sad because moving to a new school will crush our memories
- Scared because the school will be bigger
- Happy because we can make more friends
- Sad Maesydre is going
- Sad that the Welsh stream is splitting up from the English stream

- Sad for the Welsh medium school because it is smaller and they are moving away from the English medium school
- Happy times, looking forward to the new school
- Want to save the current school and do repairs to it
- Scared of change
- Worried about the environment
- Don't like that there are more places in the English-medium school than the Welsh-medium one
- Don't want to leave teachers

Do you have any other questions / comments / concerns?

- Why are there going to be 2 schools?
- How many classes will there be?
- There will be an English-medium school and a Welsh-medium school, where will the Polish children go?
- How will the little children find their way around a new school?
- Will teachers have to apply for new jobs?
- Where will we be picked up?
- Will the school be open after school?
- It's a waste of buildings, and a waste of money to build 2 new buildings

3 Consultation meetings

A joint meeting was held between the staff of Ardwyn, Gungrog, Oldford and Maesydre schools, and a joint meeting was held for the governing bodies of the three schools. In addition, a meeting was held for the parents of pupils at all four schools and the community of Welshpool.

The issues raised in the meetings are summarised below:

Meeting with staff – 13th September 2016

- What age will the nursery provision be?
- Are you expecting the current 3 plus settings to take on the extra pupils?
- Has any thought been given to making the school a more community centred school like Trefonnen, with health and education facilities under one roof?
- Will there be a hall at both schools?
- Concern about the impact on ALN provision
- Why will the two schools be on separate sites?
- Parents who live closer to the Welsh-medium school may send their children there even though they currently receive English-medium education because the school will be closer
- Having the schools on separate sites will cause a divide in the town
- There is no Welsh medium secondary school in Welshpool
- Concern about capacity of Caereinion if Welsh-medium education grows in Welshpool and continues to grow in Newtown
- What do you mean by a Church in Wales school?
- Concern about communication with staff throughout the process
- Query about the process and timescales
- Does the Voluntary Severance Scheme extend to Headteachers and Deputies?
- Would everyone on the shadow governing body at the Welsh-medium school have to be Welsh speaking?
- If you are currently a teacher in an English-medium stream but are a fluent Welsh speaker, could you apply for a position in the Welsh-medium school and have the same chance of getting a job there as those who have already taught in a Welsh-medium stream?
- What would happen to the English-medium teachers?
- Will there be an opportunity for staff to discuss this outside of the formal consultation process?
- Very uncomfortable for staff that they can't get answers now
- Staff are concerned that they may not get a job
- There are set points in the year when teacher jobs are advertised and if the consultation process doesn't match that timescale, teachers will have a problem

Meeting with governors – 13th September 2016

- Why is the meeting with parents / community ticket only?
- Concern that the English-medium school will be a Church in Wales school
- We had believed that the Welsh-medium school would be Church in Wales not the English-medium school – concerned that it has switched from the initial discussions
- Concerned about the Church in Wales aspect as we live in a secular society
- What if you don't want a Christian education?

- Why does it have to be a Christian school?
- Query about the set up at the English-medium school for the interim period when it is operating as a multi sited school
- Normally budgets are set in April, but this does not coincide with the new schools opening in September 2017 – when will the financial situation catch up with the new school situation?
- Concern that some redundancies may need to be made due to the change to the age of admission
- Concern that some parents would want to move their children from the English stream in Ardwyn sooner rather than later so their children can build up their social groups
- Concern about the location of the English-medium school
- Concern that a consultation meeting in Theatr Ciera with a top table could be very daunting
- Any concerns expressed by parents have been dealt with by the local headteachers and governing body, but need to make sure support is in place for parents at all schools.
- Staff are anxious and have responsibilities such as mortgages and rent
- Does the HR department have the capacity to deal with all the process which are currently ongoing?
- Would parents who currently sit on the governing body be able to sit on the shadow governing body if their child has left school?
- Request for an explanation of the shadow governing body process
- Would all governors on the shadow governing body for the Welsh medium school have to speak fluent Welsh?
- When will the governors of Ardwyn and the new Welsh medium school be able to start spending their budget on things like translation?
- Why are the governors on the shadow governing body from the current governing bodies?
- Is there no opportunity for the chair of the shadow governing body to be impartial?
- Will there be an equal split by category for shadow governing body posts, or will there be a balance across the whole governing body?
- What will be the position in terms of the shadow governing body for governors who are on more than 1 governing body?
- Request for provision for Polish speakers at the consultation meeting
- Concern that parents don't want to send their children to a super school and are wanting to send them to the village schools
- Query re inspection arrangement – does the clock get reset when the new school opens and should we expect an early inspection?
- Concern about parking
- Concern that lack of access to Welsh medium secondary education will limit numbers in the Welsh medium primary school
- When / how will the Headteacher be appointed?
- A bigger school will mean a higher pay grade for the headteacher, who will fund that?

Meeting with parents / community – 20th September 2016

- The proposal is very positive for Welshpool
- What is the point of trying to develop Welsh-medium education and grow the numbers if there is no Welsh medium secondary school in Welshpool?
- Concern about the size of the English-medium school and the number of pupils that will be attending it
- Would juniors and infants be separate at lunchtimes?

- Concerned about class sizes as pupils are currently in smaller classes
- What thought has gone into the provision of transport to the English-medium school as it will be difficult for parents to bring their children here then get to work on time
- Suggestion that the Council could work with transport providers to ensure services were running to the school at the right time
- Concern about the impact the proposal is having on pupils and staff
- Some parents are concerned about continuity of staffing
- Staff are worried about having to reapply for their position
- Who is going to fund the shortfall in the school budget when the numbers aren't there currently?
- Concern about additional transition for children currently in the English stream at Ardwyn which will cause upheaval for the children
- Hearing that other schools are at capacity, pupils cannot decide which school they would like to go to
- Concern about the distance from the Oldford area of Welshpool to the new English-medium school
- Concerned that parents in Welshpool will have to send their children to a faith school if they want English-medium education – call on the council to reconsider this
- Polish teaching assistants are very important and sometime the only way to communicate between parents and teachers – we need this sort of provision to continue
- Query about pre-school provision – will this still be available at the new schools?
- When the age of admission changes, children won't start school until they are nearly 5, will this affect pre-school provision?
- Will the parents have an input into choosing the headteachers for the new schools?
- Pleased that the new school will be a Church in Wales school
- Children that have been to Church in Wales schools are well rounded children, they haven't been brainwashed
- A Welsh-medium school in the town is well overdue
- Lack of a Welsh medium secondary school is a real issue
- In the schools now there are mixed age groups in a class, in the new school there will be one age group in a class, this will be better
- The current buildings are in a mess
- What are the alternatives if this proposal doesn't go ahead? It's important we are aware of this
- You have good plans for the Welsh medium primary but not for secondary – pupils start off on a good path which then ends abruptly
- This is a great opportunity for Welshpool and the children
- The current school arrangement in Welshpool isn't something we would set up if we were looking to set something up now
- This is a fantastic opportunity for Welshpool
- Concern about the number of parents that will be driving their children to the new English-medium school – the better the public transport is, the less the additional traffic will be
- Important that staff are not disadvantaged – they need to have information about the staffing levels at the new schools in time for them to be able to apply for the voluntary severance scheme
- What will happen to the old schools?
- We currently have pupils who are being transported out for SEN provision, it would be nice if there was provision for them in the new schools
- The pavement along Salop Road is very narrow – has any consideration been given to making alterations to the footpath, such as widening it?

- Has any consideration been given to what support can be given to English speaking parents who send their children to Welsh schools?
- It is important parents have information about what Welsh-medium education means – children read a lot slower in English and parents worry about this because they don't understand that don't start working in English until later on.
- Will money be set aside to maintain the new buildings?
- Will the uniform be the same as now or will there be a separate uniform for the two schools?
- All schools in Welshpool now have the same badge – we wouldn't want the Welsh school to have a different badge to the English school
- Gungrog is a healthy school, the dentist visits and so does the nurse. Will this continue in the new school?
- Do you have exact figures in relation to the number of pupils that go out of Welshpool for their education? I think many smaller schools are reliant on those pupils, what would the repercussions be for those schools?
- If it is decide that the sites are not suitable is there an alternative?
- Surely having two sites means that the children will be segregated?
- Would Welsh Government fund a dual stream school?
- By having the two schools on separate sites, Welsh-medium pupils won't get to mix with children from other cultures
- Maesydre starts at 8.50 and ends at 3.25, those times are very close to when the high school starts and finishes – will you be changing the times?
- This is a golden opportunity for Welshpool and it should be welcomed that the Council are intending to invest in education in the town – it will mean a lot for current pupils and those in the future
- If the people of Welshpool don't take this opportunity, the money will go to other local authorities where it will be welcomed
- Benefit of a Welsh medium school is that children can live through Welsh in school, and not just speak Welsh in class.

4 ESTYN

Estyn's response to the consultation is provided below:

Estyn's response to the proposal establish a new English-medium (Voluntary Controlled) Church-in-Wales (CiW) Primary School and a new Welsh-medium Community Primary (CP) School in Welshpool.

This report has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer and other additional information such as data from Welsh Government and the views of the Regional Consortia which deliver school improvement services to the schools within the proposal.

Introduction

The proposal is by Powys County Council

The council is proposing to close the current four schools in Welshpool – Ardwyn Nursery & Infant School; Gungrog CiW Nursery & Infant School; Oldford Nursery & Infant School and Ysgol Maesydre and create one English-medium primary Church-in-Wales (CiW) Primary school and one Welsh-medium Community Primary school.

Summary/ Conclusion

The proposal has been developed in line with the council's 21st Century Schools programme, School Transformation Programme and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. The council aims to provide appropriate places and choices for Welsh-medium education and support the growth of Welsh-medium education in Welshpool to become in line with other areas in Powys. The proposal also aligns with the council's policy of having 'all through' age 3 to 11 schools wherever possible.

The proposal does not provide an analysis of the current performance of the schools involved. However, the most recent Estyn inspection reports would appear to indicate that standards would at least be maintained should the proposal go ahead.

Description and benefits

The proposer has given a clear rationale for the proposal. The proposer states that it believes that the proposal is the most cost effective option in order to reduce surplus places and meet the objectives of its 21st Century Schools programme. It also states reasonably that the proposal would benefit pupils by providing improved accommodation and more 'all through' provision in the local area. The proposer clearly defines the expected benefits of the proposal with regard to provision for Welsh-medium education.

The proposer has carried out a community impact assessment for each school which concluded that the impact on the wider community would be minimal given that the new schools are to be located within Welshpool town and will provide new community friendly facilities. The proposer states reasonably that the relocation will have a positive impact on extra-curricular activities as it is anticipated that more opportunities and more varied activities can be offered. The proposer has considered suitably the advantages of planning better access, drop-off and car parking facilities.

The proposer sets out the expected advantages of the proposal reasonably well. These include having larger staff teams at both schools to enable a greater distribution of responsibilities to develop specific curriculum areas. There are a few instances where the proposal uses emotive or inaccurate language and terminology such as its assertion that the new schools will provide 'inspirational settings' for the pupils and their description of the two new schools as 'single' language schools whereas in fact both schools will be teaching Welsh and English to a greater or lesser degree. The proposer also asserts that the proposal would lead to greater parental choice which isn't the case for those parents who do not wish that their child attends a denominational or a Welsh-medium setting.

The proposer has considered suitably a range of risks associated with the proposal and details counter measures for each risk. However, its proposed actions to mitigate against the risk that the development will de-stabilise neighbouring schools outside Welshpool are weak. The proposer has suitably considered the impact of the proposal on learner travel arrangements. It recognises appropriately that the proposal could lead to some pupils having to walk further to school.

The proposer has provided information about school capacities and tables of current and anticipated pupil numbers. It states that the proposal would eventually lead to a reduction in surplus places but with a sufficient capacity for growth.

The proposer has undertaken a Welsh language impact assessment. It asserts reasonably that there would be an expected positive impact on Welsh language provision in Welshpool. The proposer includes detailed information about the quality of the accommodation and makes references to the condition category of the schools as identified by the 21st Century Schools Survey.

Educational aspects of the proposal

The proposer has not considered well enough the impact of the proposal on the quality of the outcomes, provision and leadership and management. It has summarised the support category for each school based on the national school categorisation system which takes into account the view of the local authority. It also makes reference to the most recent Estyn inspection reports for each school involved and other local schools. The proposer states reasonably that the proposal could bring many benefits, including more distributed leadership and improved sharing of expertise. However, the proposal does not provide an analysis of the performance of the schools involved and does not consider well enough the implications of the proposal on outcomes.

The proposer explains that there may be a reduction in the number of staff required at the two new schools, compared to the number currently employed at the four schools should the proposal go ahead. It states that the council would establish a Management of Change work stream to work closely with the staff and shadow governing body, ensuring that transition arrangements are managed well should the proposal be implemented.

The proposer has undertaken an equality impact assessment which concludes that there would be minimal impact on many protected groups. It states reasonably that any issues

relating to individual pupils or vulnerable groups would be considered during the consultation process.

The proposer has outlined briefly the transitional arrangements for the proposed changes. However, these lack detail therefore it is difficult to judge whether or not these arrangements are suitable and would minimise the disruption to pupils' education.

5 ISSUES RAISED DURING THE CONSULTATION PERIOD

The following tables list the issues raised during the consultation period, including the issues raised by consultees and the issues raised in the consultation meetings held in relation to this proposal.

REF	ISSUE	LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSE
1. ISSUES RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW CHURCH IN WALES (C. IN W.) SCHOOL		
1.1 In favour of a new C. in W. School		
	<p>A new C. in W. School will be good for the children of Welshpool</p> <p>Bringing children up in the knowledge of a faith is beneficial for their future</p> <p>Church Schools support tolerance, patience, kindness and love and have numerous other benefits</p> <p>A C. in W. School will give children a good all round education</p> <p>Vital that our Christian community in Wales be supported by a fully operational Church school</p> <p>Access to a C. in W. School will sustain and uphold the Christian values that already have their roots firmly embedded in this community</p> <p>Church schools educated about and discuss other religions as well as Christianity</p> <p>Church schools do not indoctrinate / brainwash pupils</p>	<p>The authority notes the comments made in favour of establishing a faith school.</p> <p>As a provider of statutory education, Church in Wales schools work alongside local authorities and in partnership with the Welsh Government.</p> <p>The Diocese of St Asaph has long been a provider of schools to the children of North Powys, and has a strong partnership with Powys County Council. As stated on page 18 of the Consultation Document, the Authority is of the view that a Church in Wales school in Welshpool can provide education provision that offers an inclusive, broad and balanced curriculum, but that is also rooted in a firm belief that every person has spiritual needs that should be developed just like other skills and gifts.</p>

Children who have moved up to the juniors are really missing the values that attending a C. in W. School instilled upon them during their time there

A church school provides excellent education to the whole community

The infants is currently a C. in W. School, so it is sensible that children starting their education in a C. in W. environment can continue this in the juniors

People must not be confused about the nature of a C. in W. School – it is a tolerant, inclusive and supportive environment which allows pupils to make their own informed choice about the world

The ethos present in Church in Wales schools supports the development of young people who are aware of their world, their rights and responsibility to others

A C. in W. School gives children a strong background based on respect for all

A C. in W. School welcomes children of all faiths and none

A C. in W. School makes a greater contribution to a child's spiritual and moral development therefore making them stronger and more resilient human beings

Children that have been to Church in Wales schools are well rounded children, they haven't been brainwashed

Church schools provide a loving and warm environment for pupils

<p>Behaviour in church schools is generally really good</p> <p>It's good that children learn about all religions so that they are informed in their view of the wider world</p> <p>A Church in Wales school provides a place where children have the freedom to explore their own beliefs and those of others in a caring non-judgemental environment</p> <p>Fantastic ethos in a church school</p> <p>The ethos of a church school is more inclusive than community schools</p> <p>Pupils that attend a church school have a balanced view of religion and enjoy finding out about other faiths and celebrations</p> <p>Church schools strive to be open, welcoming and inclusive to all, regardless of personal faith commitment, socio-economic or ethnic background</p> <p>Church schools are a valuable way of maintaining a moral education which is vital in today's society</p> <p>Church schools are inspected by various bodies to ensure that they deliver a fair and balanced curriculum without undue pressure on delivering a particular set of beliefs</p> <p>Parents of children attending a C. in W. School can choose for their children to opt out of collective worship and religious education</p> <p>Church schools provide a valuable ethical framework for pupils and encourage pupils to ask questions about belief,</p>	
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<p>faith and ethics while teaching the same syllabus as other schools</p> <p>As a C. in W. School will be closing as part of this proposal, please that a C. in W. School will be replacing it</p> <p>A Church school would support children and families of other religions and none, respecting their beliefs</p>	
<p>1.2 Against a new C. in W. School</p>	
<p>1.2.1 Denies parental choice in the area</p>	
<p>The establishment of a new C. in W. School will deny parents the choice to send their child to a non-faith school</p> <p>There should be an alternative so that non Welsh speaking children can be sent to a non-religious school</p> <p>The proposal will dramatically increase the number and proportion of places at religious schools in the area, which is a cause of great concern</p> <p>Lack of choice for parents who do not wish their children to have a faith education</p> <p>The council should not be reducing the choice of schools</p> <p>Those who do not want their children to attend a faith school will have to choose a Welsh-medium school</p> <p>Those who want a faith school will have to choose the English-medium school</p> <p>The choice will be a Welsh speaking school or a faith based</p>	<p>Powys County Council and the Church in Wales are joint education providers in the catchment area of Welshpool.</p> <p>Reorganising education in Welshpool will provide parents with a choice of both non-faith and faith-based education and is an improvement on the current situation. Currently, parents wishing to have faith-based education for their children throughout their primary school years are not able to do so, as pupils from Gungrog CiW School have to transfer to Ysgol Maesydre, which is a community primary school.</p> <p>Should the proposal be supported, parents would be able to choose to place their children in either the English-medium CiW school, or the Welsh-medium community primary school. There are also a range of other English-medium community primary schools in the vicinity of Welshpool, with Leighton CP School being the closest at a distance of around 2 miles from the centre of Welshpool town. Parents would be able to apply for a place in any of these schools in accordance with the authority's Admissions Policy.</p> <p>There are fourteen schools providing primary-aged education in the Welshpool catchment area. The majority are community primary schools, with four providing Church-in-Wales provision. The current total admission numbers for faith schools in the Welshpool catchment area is 69. If the</p>

<p>school – both are catering for minority groups</p> <p>This proposal will create a limited choice of schools</p> <p>The proposal is depriving parents the option of a non-religious English-medium school</p> <p>As a non-Welsh speaker and a non-religious person, my only choice would be to leave the area</p> <p>There should be no pressure on non or alternatively believing parents to move their children into a school where there will be active promotion of beliefs they do not share</p> <p>The combination of schools proposed means that parents can choose a school based on its ethos</p> <p>One of the objectives of the proposal was to where appropriate, maintain faith-based education – the proposal flies in the face of the notion that faith schools exist to provide parental choice</p> <p>The proposal will result in no adequate provision of English-medium education for families in Welshpool who don't want their children to attend a C. in W. School</p> <p>The proposal offers no options for families who are not either Welsh speaking or of the Christian faith</p> <p>There are other non-church schools locally which are available to those who wish to opt out of a Church in Wales school</p> <p>Any proposals which involve a lessening of choice, especially of religious / non-religious choice, are counter to</p>	<p>proposals are approved, this would increase to 95.</p> <p>Should the proposal be implemented, there would be no requirement for pupils attending the Welsh-medium school to be from Welsh-speaking families, or for pupils attending the Church in Wales school to be from Christian families. Admissions for both school would be administered by the council's Admissions Team, and placed would be allocated in accordance with the council's Admissions Criteria.</p> <p>A Voluntary Controlled Church in Wales school delivers the same RE syllabus as a community school and has the same legal obligation to provide a daily act of collective worship for staff and pupils. The right of withdrawal from both these remains unchanged.</p>
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<p>a modern enlightened society</p> <p>There is no provision for non-Christian families, surely this is not legal</p> <p>Parents will have no option but to move if they wish to access English-medium non-church education</p> <p>Appreciate the need for updated buildings, however the choice has been taken away from parents by only having one school</p>	
<p>1.2.2 Opposition to faith provision in an increasingly secular society</p>	
<p>Faith schools have no place in a modern education system</p> <p>The establishment of a church school does not reflect the needs of an inclusive modern society</p> <p>The proposal to establish a new faith school does not reflect the realities of the population the school is serving, which is becoming increasingly secular</p> <p>Most people in Wales are atheist</p> <p>Keep faith in places of worship and the homes of believers and away from our schools</p> <p>Church schools divide society</p> <p>The school should remain secular so children are educated together and not segregated</p> <p>Would prefer if children from non-religious families were not forced to become part of a church with which they do not</p>	<p>The authority acknowledges the view of respondents who have stated that a faith based provision does not reflect a modern society, which is becoming increasingly secular. In Wales, 25,000 children and young people attend a Church in Wales school, with many others attending other denominational schools.</p> <p>The authority is of the opinion, as stated in the Consultation Document, that <i>‘Church in Wales schools seek to provide the highest possible standard of education within a distinctively Christian context, underpinned by a clear code of values derived from the Gospels. They do not seek to convert but to serve, and to provide a strong Christian ethos and educational vision help to raise standards and achievement and enable every child to fulfil their potential. A church school does not measure its success criteria by pupils adhering to Christianity, but seeks rather to equip its pupils with the knowledge and understanding for them to critically evaluate the moral and ethical challenges of life and to find their own response, be that within Christianity or not. The aim of a church school is to give a gift of a deep and broad education, allowing the children to make a personal, informed decision about matters of faith’.</i></p> <p>There are Church in Wales schools in most unitary authority areas in Wales. The schools are similar to non-denominational school, and are</p>

<p>identify in order to get schooling</p> <p>Faith schools are divisive, selective, prejudiced, irrational and unwanted by the majority in the UK – they have no place in modern society</p> <p>In 2015 48.5% of the population identified as having no religion</p> <p>Evidence shows that state funded religious schools are exclusive, divisive and counter-intuitive to social cohesion.</p>	<p>inclusive by nature, serving children and young people in a range of communities. They also form a natural point of community focus, whether in the inner city or in rural villages.</p> <p>In the same way as non-denominational schools, Church in Wales schools are committed to celebrating the rich heritage of faith, language and culture of Wales, offering the very best education to the children of Wales in a safe and secure Christian context.</p> <p>Church in Wales schools do not require pupils to be of a Christian faith in order to be admitted to the school, and the authority will be the admissions authority for the proposed new CiW school in Welshpool.</p> <p>The authority is not aware of any evidence that shows that state funded religious schools are exclusive, divisive and counter-intuitive to social cohesion.</p> <p>A Voluntary Controlled Church in Wales school delivers the same RE syllabus as a community school and has the same legal obligation to provide a daily act of collective worship for staff and pupils. The right of withdrawal from both these remains unchanged.</p> <p>Church schools, in the spirit of Successful Futures, aim to equip their pupils as ethical and informed citizens, by developing their abilities to connect, critically reflect upon, evaluate and apply their learning to their own nascent and growing understanding of religion and belief, and of themselves, society and the world.</p>
<p>1.2.3 Governance</p>	
<p>No reason why a school should be maintained by any organisation that takes it out of state control</p> <p>State schools should not be religious</p>	<p>The proposed English-medium CiW School will be a voluntary controlled school. In accordance with the Schools Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013, schools are defined under one of the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community

<p>Church and state are separated in this country, our schooling should not be any different</p> <p>Great concern that the proposal will give full control to the Church in Wales over the primary education of all English medium primary age children in Welshpool</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary Controlled (VC) with religious designation • Voluntary Aided (VA) with religious designation <p>The main differences between a VC school and a community school is that the Church would have representation on the governing body, but this representation would be in the minority. The size of the governing body, and the membership, is shown on page 20 of the Consultation Document. There would also be a technical legal practice of conditional transfer of the land that the school is built upon to the Church. The land would return to local authority ownership should the Church educational provision come to an end on the site.</p> <p>Otherwise – the following is true of both categories (Community and Voluntary Controlled (VC):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local authority would control admissions • The local authority and the governors would be responsible for appointing staff • In terms of joint worship, legal requirements for daily worship would have to be met. Individuals have the right to opt out of joint worship or religious education lessons <p>The headteacher and the senior leadership team would be responsible for the day to day running of the school.</p> <p>The headteacher and staff would also have access to the support and services of the Diocesan Education team (in addition to ERW and Powys County Council), who can provide advice and support on a range of topics including curriculum and ethos matters, and who provide regular training for staff and governors. In addition, they would have access to a network of advisers and consultants commissioned by the Diocese, and would also have access to training, resources and activities. Church schools also have a named ‘Bishop’s Visitor’, who would support and challenge the school; offering advice and support to staff and pupils, and embodying the pastoral concern that the Bishop of St Asaph has for the schools in his diocese.</p>
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1.2.4 Indoctrination	
<p>Indoctrination at an early age is unacceptable and is in direct conflict with the decline of Christianity and religion in Wales and the UK</p> <p>Schools should not be recruiting grounds for any religion and should encourage freedom of religious thought through high quality, non-denominational education</p> <p>It is wrong to force religion into the lives of young people and their families</p> <p>Forcing a religion on children is inappropriate in modern society</p> <p>Church schools force religious propaganda onto the minds of children who are not yet of an age where they can give their consent to this</p> <p>School is a place for education not indoctrination It's child abuse to ram religion down the throats of innocent children</p> <p>Segregating children into faith based schools will only widen sectarian issues in our society</p> <p>Faith based education segregates children based on their faith rather than demonstrating and instilling in our children the values of acceptance and inclusion of people of all faiths and no faith</p> <p>Church schools are divisive and can be exclusive – all primary schools should be open to all children</p>	<p>Any parent who chooses to send their child to a church school has the right to opt out of collective worship and Religious Education.</p> <p>The authority is of the opinion, as stated in the Consultation Document, that <i>‘Church in Wales schools seek to provide the highest possible standard of education within a distinctively Christian context, underpinned by a clear code of values derived from the Gospels. They do not seek to convert but to serve, and to provide a strong Christian ethos and educational vision help to raise standards and achievement and enable every child to fulfil their potential. A church school does not measure its success criteria by pupils adhering to Christianity, but seeks rather to equip its pupils with the knowledge and understanding for them to critically evaluate the moral and ethical challenges of life and to find their own response, be that within Christianity or not. The aim of a church school is to give a gift of a deep and broad education, allowing the children to make a personal, informed decision about matters of faith’.</i></p>

1.2.5 Discrimination	
<p>Powys County Council is continuing to discriminate in favour of those with Christian beliefs within our community</p> <p>The proposal discriminates against those in the area with an alternative faith or none</p> <p>The proposal is granting privilege to one belief over all others</p> <p>Children should not be subjected to a religious education because they do not speak Welsh</p>	<p>The proposal does not discriminate against any pupil. An equality impact assessment has been undertaken, and was published as a draft document at the start of the consultation. This will now be finalised to take account of views gathered during the consultation.</p>
1.2.6 Impact on children's education	
<p>Being a Church school will take time away from subjects like science and languages</p> <p>Children would be better served by a more thorough grounding in mathematics and science studies to prepare them for life in the 21st century</p> <p>It is a backwards step to force non-religious children to attend religious schooling and worship within the school day</p> <p>Education should be inclusive, not exclusive</p> <p>Is the national curriculum for RE not sufficient to meet needs?</p> <p>A 'belief-neutral' council run school is what is in the best interests of all pupils</p>	<p>The curriculum in a Church in Wales school is identical to that of a community school and both types of schools are required to deliver the Welsh Curriculum. With both types of schools, religious instruction is included in the school curriculum and the syllabus agreed upon at local level through SACRE.</p> <p>Any parent who chooses to send their child to a church in wales school has the right to opt out of collective worship and Religious Education.</p> <p>See also 1.1</p>

<p>No evidence that “faith” schools provide better education or produce better people</p> <p>Children should be taught about a wide range of issues and religions and should be able to make an informed choice themselves, not be brainwashed</p> <p>The model denies children the right to fully explore other cultures and religions</p> <p>Concern about conflict between children and their parents if the children are educated in a religious environment and that environment is not present in the home</p> <p>Please make sure the rights of all children are protected, regardless of their parents religious views, and provide schools which are not linked to a particular religion</p>		
<p>1.3 Other</p>		
<p>1.3.1</p>	<p>Parents who have Welsh as a first language may prefer for their children to go to a faith led school</p>	<p>The authority notes this comment. There is currently no faith based Welsh-medium provision in Welshpool. The authority is satisfied that the current proposal provides an appropriate choice for Welsh-medium parents. Should parents wish for their children to attend a faith led school, they could attend the English-medium school.</p>
<p>1.3.2</p>	<p>Had believed that the Welsh-medium school would be the Church in Wales school not the English-medium school – concerned that it has switched from the initial discussions</p>	<p>The proposal has not changed, it was always planned that the English-medium school would be the Church in Wales school not the Welsh-medium. This was shared and agreed with local stakeholders and local members during the School Organisation Review Panel (SORP) meeting held on 12th January 2016.</p>
<p>1.3.3</p>	<p>Church schools have the same RE curriculum as non-church schools and parents have the option of opting out of collective worship</p>	<p>It is true that the RE curriculum in church schools is the same as non-church schools. It is also true that parents of pupils attending church schools have the option of opting out of collective worship.</p>

2. ISSUES RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW WELSH-MEDIUM SCHOOL	
2.1 In favour of a new Welsh-medium school	
<p>Hopefully a new Welsh-medium school will promote demand and will increase the number of Welsh speakers</p> <p>Pupils are entitled to receive good quality Welsh-medium education</p> <p>The establishment of a new Welsh-medium school and a new build will increase interest in Welsh-medium education</p> <p>A Welsh-medium school will further develop the Welsh language in our area</p> <p>Powys should be applauded for recognising the need to develop a Welsh-medium school</p> <p>A Welsh-medium school in the town is well overdue</p> <p>The benefit of a Welsh-medium school is that children can live through Welsh in school, and not just speak Welsh in class</p> <p>Welsh-medium schools are the best model in order to help pupils develop skills in two languages</p> <p>The proposal will ensure that Welsh-medium education is available locally and within reasonable distance for Welshpool families</p> <p>Having Welsh-medium provision in the community will give a fair and reasonable choice to parents</p>	<p>The authority notes the comments made in favour of a new Welsh-medium school.</p>

<p>Pleased that the Council is considering growth of Welsh-medium education</p> <p>Welcome the establishment of a category 1 school which offers education completely through the medium of Welsh rather than a category 2 dual stream school</p> <p>Will contribute to the Welsh Government's aim to have a million Welsh speakers by 2050</p>	
<p>2.2 Size of the Welsh-medium school</p>	
<p>150 places is too low, it should be nearer 200</p> <p>Important to be able to increase the size of the school in the future</p> <p>Do not think the pupil numbers quoted for the Welsh-medium school will be achieved</p> <p>Where is the evidence for a 150 pupil school? Dafydd Llwyd grew before a new building was provided</p>	<p>The authority is currently writing a business case to make the case for the need to establish a new bilingual category 2a secondary school in the North of Powys. Analysis of a range of factors has been carried out as part of this work, to identify possible locations for any new school. This has included analysis of population trends and Welsh language skills, and has also included an analysis of potential latent demand for Welsh-medium education in north Powys. This work has identified potential latent demand of nearly 800 Welsh-medium places across north Powys, which includes approximately 80 places in the 4 Welshpool wards.</p> <p>This work has also identified significant potential latent demand in the areas surrounding Welshpool. Whilst it is unlikely that the demand from the surrounding areas will be as significant as the demand from within the town of Welshpool, it is reasonable to expect that there will be an increase in demand for Welsh-medium education from these areas following the establishment of the new school.</p> <p>In addition to this, the Welsh-medium school will be the only provider of Welsh-medium education in the wider Welshpool catchment area, therefore the school will need to be large enough to accommodate growth from the area surrounding Welshpool</p>

The establishment of a new Welsh-medium primary school in Welshpool is a key objective of the authority's WESP and is key in terms of the authority's response to the Welsh Government strategy to achieve one million Welsh speakers by the year 2050. Therefore, it is essential that the new Welsh-medium primary school has sufficient capacity to meet this anticipated increase in demand.

Currently, there is a total of 64 pupils who access Welsh-stream education at Ardwyn and Maesydre schools, as indicated in the below table:

	2016 Actual		2017		2018		2019		2020
	Welsh Stream	English Stream	Welsh Stream						
Ardwyn	39	17	41	18	43	19	45	19	50
Maesydre	25	157	27	166	29	177	31	189	30

Evidence indicates that pupil numbers in Welsh-medium education in Welshpool have not increased substantially over the last ten years. This is not a pattern that has been replicated in other areas of Powys, where Welsh-medium numbers have grown significantly, for example, Ysgol Dafydd Llwyd in Newtown was established in 2001 and has seen 57% growth since its establishment.

The absence of a stand-alone Welsh-medium primary school within Welshpool town has led to some parents choosing to travel to other Welsh-medium or dual-stream primary schools outside the town for Welsh-medium education. This is supported by analysis of pupil movement, which shows that there are currently 29 pupils living closer to the Welshpool schools but who choose to travel to other Welsh-medium or dual-stream schools for their education. This suggests that the demand for Welsh-medium education in Welshpool is not currently being met.

The new Welsh-medium primary school will be built with flexibility to extend, if that is necessary in the future.

2.3 Issues relating to secondary provision	
<p>Concern that there is no Welsh-medium secondary school in Welshpool</p> <p>Lack of access to Welsh-medium secondary education will limit numbers in the Welsh-medium primary school</p> <p>What is the point of trying to develop Welsh-medium education and grow the numbers if there is no Welsh-medium secondary school in Welshpool?</p> <p>Welsh-medium pupils will start off on a good path when the new school opens but this will end abruptly when they transfer to secondary</p> <p>There need to be further discussions about the pupils' needs in order to ensure continuity</p> <p>Would like information about where pupils who leave the Welsh-medium primary school are to progress for secondary provision</p> <p>Would like confirmation that there will be suitable provision at Welshpool High School to enable Welsh-medium learners to continue their education through the medium of Welsh in the town</p>	<p>It has become apparent over recent years that the current dual-stream model of delivering secondary education does not provide robust linguistic continuity for pupils throughout their educational lives in school, and does not provide equality for those wishing to have a Welsh-medium education.</p> <p>The authority is currently writing a business case to make the case for the need to establish a new bilingual category 2a secondary school in the North of Powys. This business case will be considered by Cabinet next year.</p> <p>Currently, Welsh-medium pupils from Ysgol Maesydre are provided with free home-to-school transport to Ysgol Uwchradd Caereinion, Llanfair Caereinion, which provides Welsh-medium education in a dual-stream setting.</p> <p>Welshpool High School do not provide any subjects through the medium of Welsh apart from Welsh 2nd Language.</p>
2.4 Concerns relating to the establishment of separate Welsh-medium and English-medium schools	

<p>Having the schools on separate sites will cause a divide in the town</p> <p>Having two sites will mean that the children will be segregated</p> <p>By having the schools on separate sites, Welsh-medium pupils won't get to mix with children from other cultures</p> <p>Why are you splitting the Welsh-medium and English-medium pupils, it is apartheid</p> <p>Positioning of the 2 schools at different end of town may be a bone of contention – all education on one site would be a preferred option</p> <p>Rivalry between the Welsh-medium and English-medium school will cause friction in Welshpool</p> <p>Making friends should not be forced by what language you are educated in</p>	<p>The Welsh Government has recently launched an ambitious new strategy to create a million Welsh speakers by the year 2050. The authority welcomes this ambitious strategy, and acknowledges the key role Welsh-medium education will play in the achievement of this aim.</p> <p>The authority aspires to develop an infrastructure that enables all pupils to access full provision in either Welsh or English throughout their educational careers, ensuring that Welsh-medium learners have the opportunity to be fully immersed in the Welsh language, to ensure that they are fully bilingual and are confident communicating in both Welsh and English when they leave school.</p> <p>It is clear that the current method of delivering Welsh-medium education within Powys does not provide equality for Welsh-medium learners compared with English-medium learners.</p> <p>The current method of delivery has led to a situation where access to Welsh-medium education is a 'postcode lottery', where the type and level of provision available to pupils at each phase of their education varies significantly depending on where they live. The authority fully agrees with the view of Welsh Government that pupils are more likely to become fully bilingual after attending Welsh-medium schools, particularly when they come from non-Welsh speaking homes, and realises that a fundamental change is required in Powys to ensure all learners can access high quality, robust provision from the early years onwards.¹</p> <p>Being part of a fully Welsh-medium experience will enable them to be even more confident Welsh speakers who can still contribute to the development of the Welsh language in Welshpool.</p> <p>The authority does not believe that separate Welsh and English medium schools will cause friction in Welshpool. Experience in other areas of Powys and outside shows that schools can exist alongside each other with no</p>
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¹ Welsh-medium Education Strategy – <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/welshmededstrat/?lang=en>

		<p>problems – pupils will continue to be part of the same community.</p> <p>The authority did investigate whether it was possible to have both schools on a single site. However, no suitable land was identified.</p>
2.5 Other		
2.5.1	Support the rights of people to be educated in Welsh, however this should be a choice	The proposal provides an improved choice for parents and pupils than the current provision in Welshpool.
2.5.2	Children with complex educational needs may not have the capacity to learn Welsh	Throughout Powys, children with complex educational needs are educated in all types of schools, regardless of the medium of education, and the authority seeks to provide support for them in the language of their choice.
2.5.3	Parents who live closer to the Welsh-medium school may send their children there even though they currently receive English-medium education because the school will be closer	Parents will have a choice of schools for their children, and they will be able to make their decisions based on their own preferences, which may include distance to school.
2.5.4	Has any consideration been given to what support can be given to non-Welsh speaking parents who will send their children to the Welsh-medium school? It's important that parents have information about Welsh-medium education so that they understand that children don't start working in English until later on	The authority acknowledges the importance of providing appropriate support to non-Welsh speaking parents who will send their children to the Welsh-medium school, and will work with other organisations such as Menter Maldwyn and the Welsh for Adults Centre, as well as the headteacher of the new school to identify what support is needed.
2.5.5	It is wrong to impose the Welsh language on anybody	The authority has a duty to provide access to Welsh-medium education to pupils that choose it. There will also be an English-medium in Welshpool, and the schools in the villages surrounding Welshpool are all English-medium, therefore the authority is not imposing the Welsh language on anybody.
2.5.6	In terms of the Welsh-medium school, you need to establish something that doesn't only meet the	The authority strongly believes, from past experience in other areas, that Welsh-medium schools often act as catalysts for growth. It is expected that

	current need but also inspires future parents	this will be the same in Welshpool.
3. ISSUES RELATING TO THE PROPOSED LOCATIONS OF THE NEW SCHOOLS		
3.1 Issues relating to the proposed location of the English-medium school		
<p>It is 1.5 miles from the far end of the Oldford Estate to the proposed new school</p> <p>The distance to the site is an incentive for parents to use the car, which will lead to an increase in car use</p> <p>It will be difficult for parents to bring their children to the new school and then get to work on time</p> <p>Concern about the number of parents that will be driving their children to the new English-medium school</p> <p>It's a very long walk to the site from Oldford, especially for very young children</p> <p>The proposed location would involve the loss of a well-used playing field and amenity areas</p> <p>The proposed location will add to the congestion caused by the high school and the Flash and is close to the bypass</p> <p>The Oldford school site would be a better, more central location</p> <p>The proposed location would triple the time it took to do a school run one way</p> <p>Wherever the school is sited, learners would have the opportunity to walk to school as at any point there is less</p>	<p>The authority recognises that the location of the new English-medium school is further for some parents than others, particularly those living in Oldford. However, the school is still within 2 miles from the edge of Welshpool town, and therefore pupils will not be eligible for free home-to-school transport. The authority will ensure that there will be safe walking routes to school.</p> <p>It is recognised that some parents may want to use their cars because of the change of location of the school. The authority will, however, investigate whether alternative transport arrangements could be put in place e.g use of public transport/community transport, which would help parents who live furthest away from the school.</p> <p>The proposed location at Welshpool High School is on a piece of land that is not used frequently by the high school, and the school would continue to have sufficient sports and recreation areas, in accordance with the legal requirements.</p> <p>Access to the school and impact on highways/travel will be a key factor when the school is designed. If the plans are submitted for planning approval, the Authority's Highways Dept is a statutory consultee, and its views will be considered at this stage.</p> <p>Consideration was given to all potential sites in Welshpool, including Oldford, and it was agreed that the current locations provided the best opportunities to build two new schools.</p>	

<p>than 2km distance – this will be good for the health of the town</p>	
<p>3.2 Queries in relation to travel to the new English-medium school</p>	
<p>Would appreciate the Council looking into ways to help parents get their children to school</p> <p>Suggestion that the council works with transport providers to ensure services are running to the school at the right time</p> <p>If extra public transport is available, need to make sure that the service is used by those who really need it – would it be possible to have a bus pass to ensure transport is provided fairly?</p> <p>Could walking buses be used in conjunction with buses or taxis?</p> <p>Opportunity to improve the infrastructure of cycle routes etc</p> <p>Transport would have to be provided, even if a small fee was payable</p> <p>Would need to consider 2 sets of transport, one to allow children to attend breakfast club and one for children heading to school for the start of school</p> <p>If some form of transport was provided, would a parent/guardian have to accompany the children?</p>	<p>The authority notes these suggestions and comments, and will investigate options to provide travel support to those living furthest from the school.</p> <p>It would be the authority’s expectation that children of early years age (up to 7) would be accompanied on public transport by a responsible adult.</p>
<p>3.3 Issues relating to road safety with regard to the route to the English-medium school</p>	
<p>The route to the new English-medium school passes through the busiest part of town at the busiest time of the</p>	<p>The authority has a duty to provide safe walking routes to schools, and these will be identified and planned as part of the design process for the new</p>

<p>day</p> <p>It is inevitable that children of 5 or 6 years old will end up walking the route to the school on their own if they miss buses – this will be dangerous</p> <p>There is a lot of traffic on Severn Road and there is no form of traffic management in place</p> <p>Drivers ignore people waiting at the zebra crossing on Severn Road</p> <p>Measures should be put in place to improve the pedestrian route along Salop Road and Gungrog Road</p> <p>Widening pavements and reducing the speed of traffic would help with road safety</p> <p>A safe walking route needs to be considered</p> <p>Need to look at improving the canal walk as this can cut down quite a long walk beside busy roads with a lot of exhaust fumes, which would be a potential hazard to young children with asthma and other chest complaints</p>	<p>schools. Safeguarding of pupils is the utmost priority for the authority.</p>
<p>3.4 Issues relating to the proposed location of the new Welsh-medium school</p>	
<p>Maesydre is a fair distance for some children</p> <p>Walking to the Welsh-medium school will pose a problem for many</p>	<p>The junior school currently located at Maesydre serves the whole town of Welshpool. The authority is confident that the Maesydre site is a suitable location to serve the whole of Welshpool.</p>
<p>4. ISSUES RELATING TO STAFFING</p>	
<p>4.1 Impact on Staff</p>	

<p>Staff are concerned that they may not get a job</p> <p>It's very uncomfortable for staff that they can't get answers now</p> <p>Staff are anxious – they have responsibilities such as mortgages and rent</p> <p>Concern that some redundancies may need to be made due to the change to the age of admission</p> <p>Concern that an increase in Welsh-medium pupil numbers would cost jobs in the English-medium school</p>	<p>The authority acknowledges that any school reorganisation proposal will lead to a period of uncertainty for those affected by the proposal and is keen to conclude this process as swiftly as possible to minimise this period of uncertainty. However, the authority is unable to proceed with the process of appointing staff to the new schools until the statutory element of establishing the new schools has been concluded.</p> <p>Schools receive funding via the Fair Funding Formula, which allocates how much funding a school receives based on a combination of factors, including pupil numbers and premises costs. If pupil numbers in either schools increase or decrease, funding will be allocated in accordance with the Formula, and the governing bodies and headteachers will need to ensure appropriate staffing levels within their funding allocation.</p> <p>Through the consultation on changing the age of admission, the authority has identified that there will be £2.8 million reduction in primary schools budgets across Powys, and the main area of savings that schools will be required to make is around staffing. This will have an impact on the two new schools in Welshpool. The authority is currently running a voluntary severance scheme to support this change management process.</p> <p>As schools are funded largely based on pupil numbers, the balance of pupils between the Welsh-medium and English-medium school will have an impact on the schools' ability to employ staff. An increase in numbers in the Welsh stream will impact on pupil numbers at the English-medium school. However it is expected that learners who currently travel out of Welshpool will remain within the town resulting in an overall increase in pupils numbers. In addition, the Welsh-medium primary school will serve the wider Welshpool catchment area therefore the impact would be shared with other English-medium schools in the catchment area.</p>
<p>4.2 The process for appointing staff to the new schools</p>	
<p>Concern about communication with staff throughout the</p>	<p>The authority acknowledges that communication with staff is important. An</p>

<p>process</p> <p>There are set points in the year when teacher jobs are advertised – if the consultation process doesn't match that timescale, teachers who do not get jobs in the new school will have a problem</p> <p>Will there be an opportunity for staff to discuss this outside of the formal consultation process</p> <p>Important that staff aren't disadvantaged – they need to have information about the staffing levels at the new schools in time for them to be able to apply for the voluntary severance scheme</p> <p>Concern for staff during the transition period – needs maximum consultation, good support and access to enough information about future staffing asap</p>	<p>informal meeting with teachers was held earlier this year, and staff from the School Transformation Team are in regular contact with the Headteachers. Communication with staff will continue via the Headteachers as the process goes forward.</p> <p>If the proposal is supported by Cabinet, following both the consultation period and objection period, then a new shadow governing body will be immediately established, and headteacher recruitment will begin. Following this, the new headteachers and governors will begin the staffing process for the new school, in accordance with the recognised timescales for teacher recruitment.</p> <p>There is then a separate consultation process regarding staff employment which would only happen if Cabinet decide to proceed with the proposal.</p>
<p>4.3 The appointment of Headteachers / Deputies</p>	
<p>Does the Voluntary Severance Scheme extend to Headteachers and Deputies?</p> <p>When and how will the Headteachers be appointed? A bigger school will mean a higher pay grade for the Headteacher, who will fund that?</p> <p>Will parents have an input into choosing the headteachers for the new schools?</p> <p>I hope that the head's position will be advertised nationally and not just offered to the three existing heads</p>	<p>The scheme doesn't specifically say that it doesn't extend to Headteachers and Deputies. However, every school has business critical roles which the school cannot operate without and the Headteacher post is one of them, therefore it is likely that it will not be relevant to Headteachers and Deputies.</p> <p>Once the shadow governing bodies have been established, one of their first priorities will be to appoint Headteachers. They can decide to advertise the position or they can ringfence the position to the current headteachers. Funding for the posts will be included in the funding allocated to each school.</p> <p>The appointment process is the responsibility of the shadow governing bodies, which include parent –governors' representatives.</p>
<p>4.4 Positive impact on staff</p>	

<p>The proposal could provide new opportunities to have more specialised teaching in certain subject areas</p> <p>Staff will benefit from this proposal</p> <p>Teachers will benefit from a well-planned environment</p> <p>It's a good plan which will provide greater capacity for delivery of the curriculum in a bigger school</p>	<p>The authority notes these comments.</p>	
<p>4.5 Other</p>		
<p>4.5.1</p>	<p>Concern about consistency for pupils in terms of teachers and staff</p>	<p>It is recognised that pupils may not have the same teachers as they have currently, if the proposal is approved. However, the main aim of the shadow governing body will be to appoint the most appropriate teachers and staff to the right posts that match their skills and aspirations, in order to ensure that standards of teaching and learning remain as good as possible.</p>
<p>4.5.2</p>	<p>If you are currently a teacher in an English-medium stream but are a fluent Welsh speaker, could you apply for a position in the Welsh-medium school and have the same chance of getting a job there as those who have already taught in a Welsh-medium stream?</p>	<p>Yes, this would be possible.</p>
<p>4.5.3</p>	<p>Does the HR department have the capacity to deal with all the processes which are currently ongoing?</p>	<p>The voluntary severance scheme will improve the capacity and support that HR will be able to provide. The authority will ensure that appropriate capacity is available to deal with the relevant processes.</p>
<p>4.5.4</p>	<p>The Polish teaching assistants are a very important method of communicating between parents and teachers – we need this sort of provision to continue</p>	<p>The staffing structure at the new schools will be determined by the headteacher and governing body, however there is no reason to believe that they would not want this provision to continue.</p>

4.5.5	Hope that the present teaching and support staff will receive fair treatment when structures are being put in place and are given every opportunity to secure their own futures, whether in the new school or elsewhere	The authority has a duty to ensure that the process of establishing the new staffing structure is fully compliant with HR policies and all teaching and support staff will receive fair treatment when structures are put in place.
5. ISSUES RELATING TO THE IMPACT ON PUPILS		
5.1 Positive impact on pupils		
<p>The new schools will greatly benefit the children of Welshpool</p> <p>Pleased that Welshpool children can look forward to a future in schools with better buildings and improved resources</p> <p>The proposal offers the children of Welshpool a much better educational experience than they currently receive</p> <p>The two new schools will provide an opportunity to give pupils a modern cohesive educational experience</p> <p>The proposal offers the best opportunity for pupils to have the educational opportunities they deserve</p> <p>The young people of Welshpool deserve an educational provision that will help them grow and thrive</p> <p>The children will benefit from up to date technology</p> <p>The schools modernisation process is essential to ensure quality educational environments for current and future generations of children in Welshpool</p> <p>The new school will provide more facilities for the children</p>	<p>The authority is pleased to note these comments.</p>	

<p>Pupils will be able to make new friends</p>	
<p>5.2 English-medium pupils currently attending Ardwyn School</p>	
<p>Concern about the impact on English-medium pupils currently attending Ardwyn School who will have to move to another school – either Gungrog or Oldford. This additional transition will cause upheaval for these pupils</p> <p>Hope that pupils who have to move because their current school will be changing languages are going to be given the support they and their parents need during what will be a traumatic time</p> <p>Some parents may want to move their children from the English-medium stream at Ardwyn sooner rather than later so that the children can build up their social groups</p> <p>Going ahead with the proposals next September is premature and disruptive to some children’s education</p> <p>Splitting the schools will mean that children will lose their friends which may cause them to be upset and lose interest in school</p>	<p>The authority acknowledges that any school reorganisation proposal leads to a period of uncertainty for those affected by the proposal, and recognises that English-medium pupils in Ardwyn School will possibly be the group most affected, due to having to move twice over the next few years. The issue of being separated from their friends will only apply to current small number of Welsh-medium pupils attending Ysgol Maesydre and the small number of English-medium pupils attending Ysgol Ardwyn.</p> <p>The well-being of pupils is paramount, and full support will be provided to these pupils throughout the transition process.</p> <p>The decision to implement the proposal from September 2017 rather than upon the opening of the new buildings was made to provide staff with certainty about jobs, and to provide the two new governing bodies and headteachers with a better opportunity to plan for the transition to the new buildings.</p>
<p>5.3 General concerns about the impact on pupils</p>	
<p>General concern about the impact of the proposals on pupils</p> <p>Pupils are concerned about moving to a new / bigger school</p>	<p>The authority acknowledges that any school reorganisation proposal leads to a period of uncertainty for those affected by the proposal. However the authority’s view is that the long term benefits of this project to pupils in Welshpool will be significant. The well-being of pupils is paramount, and full support will be provided to them throughout the transition process.</p>
<p>5.4 Impact on vulnerable pupils</p>	

<p>Concern about the impact on ALN provision</p> <p>Some pupils are currently being transported out for SEN provision, it would be nice if there was provision for them in the new schools</p>	<p>Discussions in relation to the ALN provision that will be available in the new schools have taken place with the senior manager for ALN and Inclusion, and it has been agreed that the current provision will be replicated at both schools.</p> <p>The aim across Powys is to ensure that as many pupils as possible are able to access provision in their local schools. We will be working with staff to ensure that the new schools are as inclusive as they can be.</p>
<p>6. ISSUES RELATING TO THE SIZE / STRUCTURE OF THE NEW SCHOOLS</p>	
<p>6.1 School size</p>	
<p>Study at the Cambridge Institute of Education shows no evidence that small schools are less educationally viable than large schools.</p> <p>Estyn said in 2006 that small schools are as good as other schools and are particularly good at working with parents</p> <p>Concern about the size of the English-medium school and the number of pupils that will be attending it</p> <p>Primary schools should be kept to a size which does not become overly impersonal</p> <p>Concern that bigger is not always best, although understand that from a financial viewpoint this will save money</p>	<p>Powys County Council is committed to ensuring that all children and young people have an equal opportunity to receive the best possible education. The Council aspires to have an educational infrastructure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides all learners with opportunities to achieve high standards of achievement and attainment; • Provides for first class teaching and learning provision reflecting national, regional and local priorities; • Has high quality resilient leadership and management; • Provides robust linguistic continuity and progression; • Improves cost-effectiveness and efficiency; • Has the right number of schools in the right place for the current and future pupil population of Powys; • Has school buildings and blocks that are assessed as condition A or B; • Minimises dependency on temporary accommodation; and • Reduces overall surplus places in schools. <p>The aspiration for primary education in Powys is to have schools with single year group classes, and schools that have headteachers with no classroom responsibilities.</p>

	<p>The authority recognises that performance levels vary between all types and sizes of schools, both within Powys and across Wales. The benefit of larger schools is their ability to attract high quality resilient leadership and management, with headteachers, senior leaders and staff who can focus on raising standards.</p> <p>If the proposal is supported by Cabinet, the new English-medium school will be one of the largest primary schools in Powys, and the authority recognises that this could be a cause for concern for parents who have been used to the smaller schools currently operating in Welshpool. However, the new schools will be designed to ensure that pupils can thrive in an environment that is safe and inspiring.</p>
<p>6.2 Class sizes</p>	
<p>6.2.1</p>	<p>Concerned about larger class sizes as pupils are currently in smaller classes</p>
	<p>The authority acknowledges that some pupils might be happier in a small class situation, however the authority's view is that the classroom arrangement in the new schools will have benefits for pupils.</p> <p>In the new English-medium school, pupils will be taught with pupils of the same age and of similar ability. This is likely to improve a teacher's ability to better meet the needs of all learners and the authority is confident that pupils achieve well in larger class as well as in smaller classes.</p> <p>The Welsh-medium school will be built for 150 pupils, which would mean 5 classes. This would include some mixed-age classes.</p> <p>Schools are bound by regulations relating to class sizes, which mean that there cannot be more than 30 pupils in classes in the foundation phases. The governing bodies of the new schools would also be expected that junior class sizes were maintained at an appropriate size.</p>
<p>6.2.2</p>	<p>In the schools now there are mixed age groups in a class, in the new school there will be one age</p>
	<p>Comments noted</p>

	group in a class – this will be better Young children will socialise and learn better in small groups with children of the same age	
6.3 All-through primary structure		
6.3.1	The proposal to build new primary schools that incorporate infants and juniors is the right one.	Comments noted
6.3.2	The current system of 3 infant schools and 1 junior is not a beneficially educational system – it is outdated and unhelpful and can be counter-productive to good education	Comments noted
6.3.3	Concern about combining children of a very young age into a school with older pupils	Most primary provision in Powys and the rest of Wales is delivered in all through primary schools where infants and juniors attend the same school. Apart from Welshpool, there are only 2 other examples in Powys where there are separate infants and junior schools.
6.3.4	Will infants and juniors be separate at lunchtimes?	Lunchtime organisation will be a matter for the governing bodies of the two school to decide. However, many newly built schools have separate areas to be used by infants and juniors during break times, therefore it is likely that this would be the same in the new schools in Welshpool.
7. ISSUES RELATING TO BUILDINGS / GROUNDS		
7.1 Current Buildings		
	Powys should be applauded for recognising the need to replace the current aged buildings The current buildings are in poor condition and are not fit for purpose.	The authority agrees with these comments. The poor condition of some of the current school buildings in Welshpool is one of the main reasons for this proposal. The authority has an asset disposal process which is followed when buildings are no longer required. Part of Gungrog School would go back to the church

What will happen to the old school buildings?		as they own part of it. If the authority had no use for the sites, we would be looking to dispose of them in order to realise capital receipts.
7.2 New buildings		
<p>The new development will provide buildings that are fit for purpose with all the latest technological advances.</p> <p>It will be a bonus to have a 21st century education in a 21st century building</p> <p>We need condition A buildings for our children</p>		The authority agrees with these comments.
7.3 Other		
7.3.1	Will money be set aside to maintain the new buildings?	Schools are funded in accordance with the Fair Funding Formula, which includes an allocation for repairs and maintenance.
7.3.2	Why will the two schools be on separate sites?	The authority has investigated the possibility of having both schools on a single site, but has not identified any suitable location in Welshpool.
8. QUERIES ABOUT THE FACILITIES AT THE NEW SCHOOLS		
8.1	<p>Have you given any thought to making the school a more community centred school like Trefonnen, with health and education facilities under one roof?</p> <p>Will other services be accommodated at the school – for example the school nurse could have a room or access to a room for drop in sessions</p>	Both schools will have community facilities which could be used to provide space for support services, as required.
8.2	Will there be a hall at both schools?	Yes, there will be a hall at each of the new schools.
8.3	Concern about parking at the schools	There are regulations in place which require a certain number of parking

		places depending on the capacity of the school. The authority is working with the relevant departments in order to ensure that this requirement is met.
8.4	Gungrog is a healthy school, the dentist visits and so does the nurse. Will this continue in the new school?	The arrangements in relation to the dentist and the school nurse will continue. It will be up to the governing body and headteacher of each school to decide if they wish to take part in the healthy schools scheme.
8.5	Will the schools have the same uniform as now or will there be separate uniforms for the two schools?	The issues of school uniform will be determined by the governing bodies and headteachers of the new schools.
9. IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY OF WELSHPOOL		
9.1	Having two schools instead of four may make it easier to have links to community groups and businesses	Comments noted.
9.2	The town will lose its community spirit due to the plans Moving Oldford school across town will lose the community spirit	A draft community impact assessment was published as part of this consultation, which came to the conclusion that there would be no adverse impact on the community of Welshpool. There will be two 21 st C Schools in the town rather than four ageing schools, and community cohesion will be strengthened. The community impact assessment will be updated and finalised to take account of issues raised during the consultation.
9.4	The proposal will benefit the local community The proposal is very positive for Welshpool A golden opportunity for Welshpool, it should be welcomed that the council are intending to invest in education in the town There is a real sense of excitement in Welshpool about the proposals	The authority agrees that the proposed investment in new schools in Welshpool will be beneficial to the local community.

	The current 4 school primary provision undermines community cohesion	
10. IMPACT ON STANDARDS		
10.1	The standards would at least be maintained should the proposal go ahead	The authority agrees with this comment.
10.2	What would happen with regard to inspection arrangements – does the clock get reset when the new school opens and should the schools expect an early inspection?	When a new school opens, Estyn normally wait until there is 2 years of data available before inspecting a school. The authority is writing to the Chief Inspector to inform Estyn that we are currently carrying out consultation on closure of the schools in Welshpool.
10.3	Proposed new schools will have a massive impact on the quality of learning the children will receive	The authority's expectation is that the proposal will have a positive impact on the quality of learning the children will receive. This was the case in the Ystradgynlais area, where the authority recently carried out a similar school reorganisation programme.
10.4	This process is essential to secure the future of quality primary education for current and future generations of children in Welshpool	The authority agrees with this comment.
10.5	Hope the council will guarantee that educational standards will remain high	The authority's expectation is that the proposal will have a positive impact on educational standards in Welshpool. This was the case in the Ystradgynlais area, where the authority recently carried out a similar school reorganisation programme. The authority's team of Challenge Advisors will support and challenge the new schools to ensure that educational standards are as high as possible.
11. QUERIES ABOUT PRE-SCHOOL / NURSERY EDUCATION		
11.1	Will the nurseries at both schools be run and staffed by Powys County Council or will they be run by independent outside organisations / businesses?	The Authority is currently planning a tender exercise for all early years settings throughout the county. Until this exercise has been completed, it is not possible to say who will be the successful provider of early years education at either school.

11.2	With the rise in the age of admission, will there be any flexibility with regard to nursery places provision?	The change of age of admission will apply to both schools. The authority is planning to develop new schools with classroom space for pre-school provision, or current providers will be invited to take part in the tender process that is currently being developed. The authority is also considering interim arrangements around the Welshpool area.
11.3	The nursery provision at the new schools will only offer 2 extra places	The pre-school provision is expected to be delivered both from the two new schools and from other existing funded settings. The authority believes it has enough spaces to meet the requirements of the 3+ and 4 year old provision.
11.4	What age will the nursery provision be?	Pre-school education provision will be provided from the start of the term after a child's third birthday. The authority also funds Flying Start provision in Welshpool, and this provision will continue, together with other pre-school provision that is funded through parental contributions.
11.5	Are you expecting the current 3 plus settings to take on the extra pupils?	As the number of children entitled to 3+ provision will increase by up to 1400 children per year across Powys, the number in each setting is expected to increase. This provision will be subject to a tendered process over the next few months.
11.6	When the age of admission changes, children won't start school until they are nearly 5 – will this affect pre-school provision?	Yes, the authority will provide additional funded pre-school provision.
12. QUERIES ABOUT THE TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS		
12.1	What will be the set up at the English-medium school during the interim period when it is operating as a multi-sited school?	Oldford and Gungrog schools will remain the same. Ardwyn will become a Welsh-medium school so English-medium pupils would have to either move to Oldford or Gungorg. English-medium pupils at Ysgol Maesydre would remain at the school. Welsh-medium pupils at Ysgol Maesydre would move to Ardwyn.
12.2	School budgets are normally set in April, but this does not coincide with the new schools opening in	The budget for the year would be broken up and the school would get part of the budget. So if the school opens in September 2017 then the budget the

	September 2017 – when will the financial situation catch up with the new school situation?	school gets would be from September 2017 to the following April, and then the following year the school would get the full budget for the year.
12.3	Any concerns that have been expressed by parents and staff have been dealt with locally by the headteachers and governing body, however the council needs to make sure support is in place for parents at all schools during the interim period.	The authority acknowledges that any school reorganisation proposal leads to a period of uncertainty for those affected, and is grateful to the headteachers and governing body for their support for this process up until now. Once a decision has been made by Cabinet on the way forward, the authority will arrange to meet with the governors to plan a way forward, ensuring that appropriate information and support is provided to parents.
12.4	Who will fund the shortfall in the school budget when the numbers aren't there?	Schools receive funding via the Fair Funding Formula, which allocates how much funding a school receives based on a combination of factors, including pupil numbers and premises costs. If pupil numbers in either schools increase or decrease, funding will be allocated in accordance with the Formula, and the governing bodies and headteachers will need to ensure appropriate staffing levels within their funding allocation.
13. QUERIES RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW GOVERNING BODIES		
13.1	Would everyone on the shadow governing body at the Welsh-medium school have to be Welsh speaking?	No, all members of the shadow governing body or permanent governing body of the Welsh-medium school would not have to be Welsh speaking.
13.2	Request for an explanation of the shadow governing body process	<p>If the Proposal is approved, then the immediate establishment of two shadow governing bodies would be required to oversee the strategic and operational transition to the two new schools. The shadow governing bodies would be responsible for recruitment of the headteacher and other staff of the new schools</p> <p>The shadow governing bodies would be established from amongst the membership of the four existing governing bodies. Expressions of interest to serve on the shadow governing bodies would be sought – the specific make-up of the shadow governing bodies is set out in <i>The Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005</i>.</p>

13.3	Would parents who currently sit on the governing body be able to sit on the shadow governing body if their child has left school?	They would be able to sit on the shadow governing body, however they wouldn't be eligible to sit as a parent governor on the permanent governing body.
13.4	Why are the governors of the shadow governing body from the current governing bodies?	The shadow governing body will be formed from the current governing bodies. If the authority does not receive sufficient expressions of interest to fill all positions on the governing body, the authority will appoint governors to the vacant positions. In a Church in Wales School, the foundation governors are appointed by the church.
13.5	Concern that there is no opportunity for an impartial chair of the shadow governing body	The Chair is voted in by the shadow governing body.
13.6	Will there be an equal split by category for the shadow governing body posts, or will there be a balance across the whole governing body?	This would depend on how many current governors express an interest in the shadow governing body posts. Ideally, the authority would prefer there to be equal representation from all schools.
13.7	What will be the position in terms of the shadow governing body for governors who are on more than 1 governing body?	Governors who are members of more than 1 governing body will receive two invitations to provide an expression of interest, and they will have to decide if they wish to put their name forward.
13.8	When will the governors of the new Welsh-medium school be able to start spending their budget on things like translation?	The new school budget wouldn't be in place until September 2017.
13.9	It's important that the governing body of the new Welsh-medium school understand the challenges and needs of the sector	The authority notes this comment. The shadow governing body for the Welsh-medium school will be formed from the members of the current governing bodies of Ysgol Ardwyn and Ysgol Maesydre.
14. THE IMPACT ON OTHER SCHOOLS		
14.1	Concern about the capacity of Caereinion if Welsh-medium education grows in Welshpool and continues to grow in Newtown	The authority is currently reviewing Welsh-medium secondary provision in North Powys, which is considering options relating to the establishment of a category 2A secondary school in the area. The current primary provision in Newtown and Welshpool will be a key consideration in this work.

<p>14.2</p>	<p>Concern that parents don't want to send their children to a super school and want to send them to the village schools</p>	<p>A large number of parents living in Welshpool currently take their children out of Welshpool to access primary education in schools in the neighbouring villages. The authority's view is that when parents see the new building and the facilities available, it is more likely that there will be an increase in the number of pupils attending school within the town. However, parents are entitled to apply for a place for their children in any school they wish, and places will be allocated in accordance with the authority's admissions policy. Parents are welcome to apply for a place for their child in a neighbouring village school instead of the new schools in Welshpool and this choice will be accommodated where possible.</p>
<p>14.3</p>	<p>Do you have exact figures for the number of pupils that go out of Welshpool for their education? Many smaller schools are reliant on those pupils, what would the repercussions be for those schools?</p>	<p>The following document provides information about the number of pupils that go out of Welshpool for their education:</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Analysis of pupils postcodes.xlsx</p> </div> <p>As stated in the consultation document, there may be an impact on some schools in the catchment of Welshpool should the current trend of sending Welshpool town pupils to these schools be reversed over time. If this results in a decrease in pupil numbers at these schools, then funding may decrease. It would be the responsibility of the governing bodies of these schools to manage within their delegated budgets.</p>
<p>14.4</p>	<p>The proposed actions to mitigate against the risk that the development will de-stabilise neighbouring schools outside Welshpool are weak</p>	<p>In the consultation document, the authority states that it 'will continue to monitor pupil numbers at all schools on a yearly basis as part of its Schools Reorganisation Policy.' This risk is, as yet, an unknown quantity, and therefore the only mitigation available to the authority is to continually monitor the situation.</p>
<p>15. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS</p>		

15.1	What are the alternatives if this proposal doesn't go ahead?	If the proposal does not go ahead, the authority will need to consider whether there are any feasible alternatives.
15.2	If it is decided that the sites aren't suitable, is there an alternative?	The authority is confident that the two sites currently being proposed are developable. A number of possible sites were considered by the authority when producing the initial business case submitted to Welsh Government in relation to the Welshpool project. Should the council's Cabinet decide that the proposed sites are not suitable, officers would need to look again at the alternative sites. However, this may cause a delay, and could mean that the authority would not be able to access 21 st Century Schools funding.
15.3	Would Welsh Government fund a dual stream school?	There has been no indication from Welsh Government that they wouldn't fund a dual stream school, however the authority's preferred model was to continue with separate Welsh-medium and English-medium schools, in order to provide maximum immersion opportunity for Welsh-medium pupils.
15.4	The council should replace this plan with a proposal to establish Welsh and English medium CP Schools	Comment noted.
15.5	All primary education on one site would be a preferred option We need 2 schools on 1 site – both proposed sites are big enough to take this	Consideration was given to locating the two schools on one site, however no suitable site was available that would accommodate this.
15.6	Would like to see two schools, one new one and one of the current schools being modernised	All options were evaluated as part of the Strategic Outline Case, which included combinations of new build and remodelling. However, the option appraisal exercise in the Strategic Outline Case concluded that the best value-for-money option, which brought the most benefits, was to build two new schools.
16. ISSUES RELATING TO THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENTATION		
16.1 Consultation Document		

16.1.1	The consultation document lacks detail about the transitional arrangements for the proposed changes	Comment noted.
16.1.2	What exactly do you mean by a Church in Wales school?	Please see section 1 above.
16.1.3	The location of the new English-medium school is not clearly identified anywhere in the report – the expression “on land at Welshpool High School” is misleading as the site is used by the high school but is physically separated from it by the Flash, Gallowstree Bank and the canal	Comment noted.
16.1.4	The table on page 32 would be more helpful if it included the number of pupils living in the Welshpool postcode that currently attend these schools	Comment noted – please see 16.3 above.
16.1.5	The consultation document doesn’t give full consideration to the effect on staff	The consultation document refers to the proposal’s impact on staff on page 21. In addition, a separate consultation meeting was held with staff during the consultation period to give them the opportunity to raise any issues or concerns with council officers.
16.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)		
<p>There are serious issues with the proposal’s EIA</p> <p>The EIA is woefully inadequate</p> <p>The EIA does not fulfil the public sector equality duty</p> <p>The EIA doesn’t consider belief</p>		<p>The draft impact assessment includes an analysis of pupils in the four Welshpool schools based on PLASC 2016 data. Information on pupils who attend the Welshpool town primary schools has been obtained via the Pupil Level Annual School Census 2016 (PLASC), which shows the profile of pupils according to a range of criteria, including age, free school meals, gender, special educational needs, ethnicity, use of Welsh and disabilities. In relation to the protected characteristic groups, the profile of pupils at each affected school is as follows. PLASC does not include information about a pupil’s</p>

<p>Unbelievable that the protected characteristic of secular beliefs is not mentioned in the written assessment</p>	<p>religious beliefs.</p> <p>The draft impact assessment clearly states that there are gaps in the data and that ‘Qualitative data will be gathered during the consultation process and the EqlA will be updated to reflect the qualitative information received.’</p> <p>The conclusion of the draft impact assessment also states that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ‘At the current time, the proposal does not require modification to reduce or remove the impact, however this EqlA will be reviewed and updated following any formal consultation exercise. - At the current time, the proposal should not be considered for removal. However this EqlA will be reviewed and updated following any formal consultation exercise.’ <p>During this consultation exercise, many respondents have expressed their concerns about the proposal to establish a CiW School – this will now form part of the final impact assessment which Cabinet will need to consider before making any further decisions about the proposal.</p>	
<p>17. QUERIES RELATING TO THE PROCESS</p>		
<p>17.1 Consultation meetings</p>		
<p>17.1.1</p>	<p>Why is the parents meeting next week a ticketed event only?</p>	<p>The public consultation meeting is a ticketed event so that the authority has an understanding of how many people will be attending for health and safety reasons. It also gives the authority an opportunity to arrange for any additional rooms, if needed. This does not mean that individuals have to have tickets to attend, but the authority does need to comply with fire regulations. The ticketing system has only started this year and so far everyone who has wanted to attend a consultation meeting have been able to. All tickets are free and if you have difficulty in booking them then you can contact the Schools Transformation team for assistance.</p>
<p>17.1.2</p>	<p>Request for provision for Polish speakers at the</p>	<p>The authority will make arrangements for panellists to meet with anyone who</p>

	meeting for parents	would like to ask a question in Polish at the end of the meeting, with the support of a Polish speaker.
17.1.3	Concern that a consultation meeting in Theatr Clera with a top table could be very daunting for parents	The format of the consultation meeting for parents and the community was in line with the format of similar meetings held for other school reorganisation proposals. If any parents were uncomfortable asking a question at the meeting, there was an opportunity for them to respond to the consultation in writing.
17.1.4	Unclear why there was a need to move the Welsh-medium class from Maesydre to Ardwyn in September 2017 – reason given at the consultation meeting was that this was due to staffing structures	The proposal is to establish a Welsh medium primary school from September 2017 on the site of Ardwyn School, before transferring to the new school. Therefore, the only provision for Welsh-medium pupils from September 2017 will be at the new Welsh-medium school, rather than in two schools as currently delivered.
17.2 Other		
17.2.1	Who actually decides what type of school it will be?	The decision about the category of school will be the responsibility of the Cabinet of the council.
17.2.2	The consultation process has been very thorough	Comment noted.
17.2.3	Concern that outside influences will determine the outcome of this consultation exercise	Cabinet has a duty to consider all responses and issues raised during the consultation. Cabinet will base its decision on all the information provided.
17.2.4	Only those living in Powys and more particularly Welshpool should have their comments considered	Comment noted.

Appendix A – Screenshots

During the consultation period it became apparent that a deliberate campaign was set up by the Wales Humanists, who were encouraging their supporters to oppose the proposal based on the fact that the proposal is for the new English-medium primary school to be a Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled school. Below are screenshots taken from the Facebook page.

The screenshot shows the Facebook page for 'Wales Humanists'. The page header includes the URL 'https://www.facebook.com/WalesHumanists/' and the page name 'Wales Humanists'. The main content is a post from 'Wales Humanists' dated '7 October at 13:04'. The post text reads: 'There is a plan in place in Welshpool to close 4 primary schools and replace them with one 120-place Welsh Medium School and one 420-place English medium Church in Wales school. But does this approach really meet the needs of the community when recent surveys show the percentage of non-religious people in Wales has outgrown the percentage of religious? How would you react if you were told the only choice for English medium education was at a faith school?'. Below the text is a photograph of a large, multi-story building with a prominent tower, identified as a school. Underneath the photo is a link to a BBC News article titled 'Welshpool primary schools closure plan review begins - BBC News'. The article text states: 'Four primary schools in Welshpool, Powys, could close and be replaced by two new ones, under new plans. BBC.CO.UK'. The post has 25 reactions and 96 shares. The right-hand side of the page features a 'Sign Up' button, a 'PEOPLE ALSO LIKE' section with links to 'Wales Stronger in Europe', 'British Humanist Ass...', 'European Movement UK', and 'Charity Organizations in Barry, Vale of Glamorgan', and a 'LIKED BY THIS PAGE' section with links to 'British Humanist As...', 'Northern Ireland Huma...', and 'Bristol Humanists'. The bottom of the page shows a chat window with 12 messages and a system tray with the time 14:44 and date 17/10/2016.

Browser: <https://www.facebook.com/WalesHumanists/> | (1) Wales Humanists



Wales Humanists
@WalesHumanists

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Wales Humanists · 10 October at 17:22 · 🌐

We have 8 days left to stop a Powys Council plan to replace four local primary schools with just two: a Welsh medium school, and an English medium school run by the Church in Wales.

Constantly we are told by officials in the UK and Welsh Governments that 'faith' schools promote parental choice (in spite of research showing that they actually reduce choice).

But surely if there are only going to be two primary schools in the area, catering to Welsh medium and English medium learners, these schools must be fit for the whole community. Making all English-speaking parents send their child to a religious school, regardless of what their beliefs might be, certainly doesn't give them any choice.

Please, take a few minutes today to respond to Powys' consultation on the proposed changes at <http://www.powys.gov.uk/.../welshpool-schools-consultation-r.../>.



WALES HUMANISTS
Dyneiddwyr Cymru
Part of the British Humanist Association

TAKE ACTION! YOUR HELP NEEDED

Welshpool schools consultation response
Act before 18 October to stop English medium primaries in Welshpool from being replaced with a single 'faith' school
POWYS.GOV.UK

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14:44
17/10/2016