



Builth Wells High School and Llandrindod High School

Objection Report

February 2017

1. Introduction

Powys County Council consulted on the following proposal during the period 6th April 2016 to 1st June 2016:

- **To close Builth Wells High School and Llandrindod High School on the 31st August 2017, and to establish a new dual-stream 11 - 18 secondary school that will operate across the current sites of the two schools from 1st September 2017 (“the New School”)**

On the 27th September 2016, the Council’s cabinet agreed to proceed with the closure of the school with an amendment to the implementation date from 1st September 2017 to 1st September 2018. Statutory Notices were published from the 17th October 2016 to the 9th December 2016.

2. Objections received

A total of 1788 objections were received during the statutory objection period:

- 78 individual written responses
- 1695 responses were a copy of a single objection template signed by individual objectors
- 12 responses were copies of the single objection template signed by individual objectors, but which also included additional comments
- Of the responses received, five were submitted by organisations.

3. Summary of main issues raised

The issues raised in each of the objections received during the statutory objection period are listed in the tables on the following pages, along with the authority’s response to these issues.

- i) Quality of education;
- ii) Financial;

- iii) Curriculum;
- iv) Staffing;
- v) Welsh-medium
- vi) Case for change
- vii) Process
- viii) Economic/community impact
- ix) Single-sited school
- x) General comments

1.	Issues related to quality of education	
1.1	Estyn are not convinced the proposal will at least maintain standards.	
	<p>Estyn are not convinced the proposal will at least maintain standards.</p> <p>One of the issues that have been raised include the fact that Estyn are not convinced “the proposal will at least maintain standards”. I feel this is an understatement and I do not believe that this decision has any benefits in improving the standard of teaching it will just allow you to be able to relabel the schools as ‘new’ and reset the status of them. This is just a quick fix option that will not benefit the students.</p> <p>Estyn have said that they are not convinced “the proposal will at least maintain standards”. This means that you are openly proposing to decrease the quality of education that I and my friends are to receive. How dare you do this to us? I believe that we deserve so much better.</p> <p>We understand that Estyn is not convinced that “the proposal will at least maintain standards”. This statement in itself should ring alarm bells within Powys County Council who state that its intention is to provide the best possible standards of education for its pupils. If Estyn, governing body is not convinced that the standards will be maintained, we feel that improvement is extremely unlikely with the new model.</p> <p>I write with particular reference to the view expressed by</p>	<p><i>The following is the summary of Estyn’s response, received by the authority on the 20th September 2016, following a resubmission of their initial response, which did not relate to the correct proposal:</i></p> <p>‘Summary/ Conclusion The proposer has provided a clear rationale for the proposal. Overall, many aspects of the proposal receive appropriate consideration. However, the proposal does not sufficiently consider standards currently achieved at both schools or demonstrate how the changes will lead to improved standards or provision or the impact on teaching and curricular arrangements or the leadership and management of the new school. In addition it does not consider fully all the risks involved in the proposal and the consideration of both the longer-term vision and interim solution does not aid the proposal’s clarity. As a result, it is Estyn’s opinion that it is not possible to establish whether standards will be at least maintained by the proposal’</p> <p><i>Whilst the authority acknowledges Estyn’s views about the proposal, the authority is of the view that the proposal would deliver a sustainable model of secondary education that could provide high-quality teaching and learning for the pupils of Mid Powys. Some of the opportunities and benefits of the proposal are as follows:</i></p> <p>1) <i>Improved leadership at all levels: When streamlining the</i></p>

<p>Estyn that it is not convinced that ‘the proposals will at least maintain standards’. Raising standards at both schools is clearly a priority for all stake-holders since both Builth and Llandrindod were recently placed in “special measures”.</p> <p>As Estyn has stated they are not even convinced that this planned amalgamation will at least maintain standards, how can this be right for the youngsters of our town? We all owe them an education that will give them the best start to their life and this plan obviously won’t.</p> <p>The Estyn inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales does not concur with the Powys County Council assumption that teaching standards and exam results will improve as a result of the proposals to close and merge Builth and Llandrindod schools as one school on two campuses</p> <p>Estyn are not convinced that "the proposal will at least maintain standards" were the schools to merge. Nor are they convinced that Powys County Council have addressed the possibility that parents may, in the future, choose not to send their children to the new split site school</p> <p>Estyn said that they do not believe this course of action will even maintain standards, let alone improve them.</p> <p>Another issue with the proposal set out by the Council is that Estyn, the authority responsible for inspecting schools in Wales, is not convinced that “the main proposal will at least maintain standards”, further consolidating the argument that the proposal will lower standards at the school</p>	<p><i>leadership structure following the joining of two schools into one split site secondary school, the newly appointed governing body are able to place the strongest leaders in each position within the new leadership structure. This means that the new school can have the strongest governors, senior leaders, subject leaders and pastoral leaders – those who have the best track record of securing high outcomes and delivering the highest level of care - leading school improvement across the two sites. The joining of two schools represents an opportunity for a step change improvement in the quality of leadership. Larger departments with a greater number of staff would also ensure more resilience.</i></p> <p>2) <u><i>Improved leadership leads to improved teaching: Professor David Reynolds has stated: ‘we know that effective leadership of a school from the Headteacher and through to other ‘middle leadership’ positions is important in its own right and important in generating...high quality classroom teaching’ (WG PDG guidance 2013-15). Leadership and teaching quality are linked. The research is clear, by securing a step change improvement in leadership, we are able to secure a step change improvement in teaching quality.</i></u></p> <p>3) <u><i>Improved coaching and mentoring support opportunities for staff: If teachers were required to teach from both campuses during the school week, it would be expected that this would be managed in such a way as to provide staff with appropriate time to move between both campuses. It would be expected that this would be a structured part of the timetable to provide staff, pupils and parents with full knowledge of the teaching arrangements. It is essential that time is allocated to enable the best teaching staff in different subject areas to travel between sites (or communicate regularly via video conferencing arrangements) in order to provide mentoring/coaching/resources for their colleagues on the other campus. This ongoing mentoring support and training can have a considerable impact on teaching quality. There is a world</i></u></p>
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Estyn stated THEY ARE NOT CONVINCED "the proposal will at least maintain standards"!!! You have 25% of schools in Powys in SPECIAL MEASURES!!! Estyn are telling you clearly that this proposal will not even maintain standards to the schools...WHAT are you not understanding about the standards you will force upon our young people??? YOU are setting them up to FAIL!!!

One of the issues that have been raised include the fact that Estyn are not convinced "the proposal will at least maintain standards". I feel this is an understatement and I do not believe that this decision has any benefits in improving the standard of teaching it will just allow you to be able to relabel the schools as 'new' and reset the status of them. This is just a quick fix option that will not benefit the students.

Estyn are not convinced "the proposal will at least maintain standards." This shows that the current proposal will fail to maintain standards, let alone improve them which is the aim of the proposal.

How this will improve our young people's standard of teaching escapes me. Indeed, Estyn themselves recognise the progress being made by each High School but are not convinced the proposal will even maintain the current standards.

Estyn have clearly stated that they are not convinced 'the proposal will at least maintain standards', let alone improve them. As the education and training inspectorate for Wales, their view should be critical to this decision.

- Estyn have expressed doubts about it, and seeing as

of difference between the potential impact of loose school-to-school collaboration between separate schools, and the level of collaboration and support in a single school with split sites. The extent to which leaders are willing to invest finite time into engaging in mentoring, coaching and training of staff on the second campus of a single school is considerably higher if leaders are going to be held to account for standards and provision on both sites.

- 4) *Economies of scale leads to greater investment in teaching and learning: By having a single leader of each curriculum area across the two school sites and a more streamlined senior leadership structure, savings can be generated over time. The new leadership team would be able to invest these savings in whatever way they believe would make the greatest impact on standards.*

The arrangement would also enable more effective and efficient use of staff specialism between sites.

	<p>most schools seem to care more about their opinion than the actual well-being and education of their pupils, we might as well trust them.</p> <p>I don't full understand about Estyn but I do know they are very important in education in Wales in that they give advice and guidance to improve the running of schools and their results. Even Estyn are not convinced the proposal will at least maintain standards. If you are not going to listen to those who give advice and guidance how can you expect kids to? Mr Patterson, please don't merge our schools</p> <p>Estyn have state they are not convinced "the proposal will at least maintain standards" in either school therefore are we not jeopardising the education of our children on this proposal without any indication that it will raise standards which has been given as the primary objective for this move.</p> <p>To create critical mass of learners does not guarantee improvement in standards I cannot see how shutting the 2 schools will raise standards at all.</p>	
1.2	Concern that the cabinet failed to take account of Estyn's views appropriately	
	<p>One other major objection is that the proposal does not clearly show how standards at the two schools would improve.</p> <p>The School Organisation Code says that PCC 'should place the interest of learners above all others' In addition, ' they should give paramount importance to the likely impact of the proposals on the quality of</p>	<p><i>Estyn is a statutory consultee and the authority is required to highlight Estyn's views of the proposal in the consultation report. The consultation report was discussed by the full County Council in September 2016, and further considered by the cabinet on the 27th September 2016, and the views of Estyn were considered.</i></p> <p><i>cabinet is required to consider the views of Estyn, alongside the views of</i></p>

<p>- outcomes (standards and wellbeing); - provision (learning experiences, teaching, care support and guidance, and learning environment); The words in bold above are in bold in the School Organisation Code. Placing the interest of learners above all others should mean that the views of Estyn on the proposals should lead Powys County Council to reject the current proposal. Estyn commented on the financial aspect of the proposal as follows: ' Significantly, the proposer does not consider sufficiently well the impact on provision and outcomes of a reduced budget'. In their comments on the Educational Aspects of the proposal, Estyn state: ' Overall, the proposer has not sufficiently considered the impact of the proposal on the quality of outcomes, provision and leadership and management' ' Overall, the proposer does not demonstrate how the reorganisation would have a positive impact on the standards achieved by pupils at any key stage'. Estyn's unambiguous conclusion in their response to the Consultation is: 'However, the proposal does not sufficiently consider standards currently achieved at both schools or demonstrate how the changes will lead to improved standards or provision or the impact on teaching and curricular arrangements or the leadership and management of the new school.' 'As a result, it is Estyn's opinion that it is not possible to establish whether standards will be <u>at least maintained</u> by the proposal.' The governors of Llandrindod High School wish to see high standards and do not wish to see them jeopardised</p>	<p><i>all consultees, as part of their decision-making process. As stated in the consultation report, 'Consultation should promote accountability and assist decision making: public bodies should give an account of their plans or proposals and they should ensure that all responses are taken into account in order to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Be informed of any issues, viewpoints, implications or options that might have been overlooked;</i> • <i>Re-evaluate matters already known; and</i> • <i>Review priorities and principles.'</i> <p><i>The authority has fully complied with the requirements of Welsh Government's Schools Organisation Code, and the aim of the proposal is to ensure a sustainable secondary education infrastructure in Mid Powys that would be able to provide the highest quality education, thereby placing the interest of learners above all other factors.</i></p>
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by these proposals which in Estyn's words do not show 'standards will be at least maintained'.

Estyn reported that' the consultation document does not offer enough evidence to support PCC's conclusion that the proposal would improve educational quality and standards' and they are also 'of the view that the possibility of the new school failing to improve standards has not been considered appropriately'. This means that PCC has failed in its duty to meet the recommendations of the Welsh Assembly School Organisation Code, which states that relevant bodies should:

- place the interest of learners above all others
- give paramount importance to the likely impact of the proposal on the quality of outcomes
- take into account what impact the proposal will have on educational attainment among children from economically deprived backgrounds
- take into account whether proposals will lead to an improvement in the educational or training achievements of persons who are above compulsory school age but below the age of 19

Given that Estyn states that there is not enough evidence in the consultation to support PCC's conclusions, the proposal should be sent back to officers to collect evidence. And I am very surprised that cabinet allowed the proposal to proceed, if the evidence did not satisfy Estyn.

I believe that any efforts made to change a school should be made purely to improve academic standards - particularly when standards are as poor as they currently are. I fail to see, therefore, when Estyn state they believe PCC is planning to do something they believe ' will not even maintain standards' why on earth the

proposal was considered let alone was passed. If PCC is serious about improving standards, I cannot see why decision makers are being so bullish about pushing through something that even the experts have said will not improve the situation - it clearly makes NO sense. We also need to face reality and realise that Powys does not have a good track record of making its schools good - therefore Estyn's opinion has my confidence a great deal more than PCC's does. I also share many of the concerns which have been well document by others including Estyn in their 4 page response to the proposal.

Furthermore, Estyn's report has clearly said they are not convinced that the proposal will 'at least maintain standards' surely this is a very important point. We should be listening to Estyn's observations, they are far more specialised in education standards etc. than County Councillors and Council Officers.

Estyn have said that they are not convinced this proposal will at least maintain standards. I have great difficulty understanding how the cabinet can disregard such a pertinent statement from an austere national body with such disdain.

Estyn is our inspectorate of Schools. Their vision is to be recognised, through the expertise of their staff, as an AUTHORATIVE voice on education and training in Wales. They have stated that they are not convinced "the proposal will at least maintain standards" in the two schools. This means that Estyn feel this proposal will decrease the standard of education that my child and her peers will receive. This means that the cabinet are openly and deliberately agreeing to reduce the quality of

education that our young people receive. It is shameful. My daughter deserves so much better.

My greatest objection, however, is the cavalier manner in which the cabinet has completely ignored the advice given by ESTYN in response to their proposal. They have stated clearly that there is no evidence that the proposal will even MAINTAIN existing standards. Essentially they are warning that this proposal will jeopardise children's future education, undoing all the hard work that Llandrindod and Builth Wells High Schools have invested to remedy the faults identified in their recent inspections. To simply disregard this warning displays the cabinet's arrogance and irresponsibility in a very unflattering light.

Your proposal goes against the opinion of Estyn, it goes against the opinion of your own councillors and against public opinion, as pointed out in the consultation, and the subsequent council meeting.

Most concerning is the feedback from Estyn that the proposal will not at least maintain standards. Despite the portfolio holder's assertion that this comment only referred to the fact that Powys had not included sufficient evidence of how standards would be improved, a recent comment from an Estyn inspector seems to confirm that their concern was indeed that the proposal would not at least maintain standards, as Llandrindod governors understood, and that they were surprised that Powys was going ahead. If Powys is so concerned about the schools currently being in special measures why are they prepared to jeopardise the excellent progress made so far to improve standards just so that they can be seen to be 'doing something'.

The authority has had no other response from Estyn about the proposal other than that which was provided as part of the consultation response, therefore the authority is not able to corroborate the last statement in this section.

1.3	Lack of evidence that the proposal would improve standards	
	<p>The lack of consideration of standards or evidence for improved standards. Estyn's response cites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Lack of consideration of how the reorganisation would have a positive impact on the standards achieved by pupils at any key stage ii. No evidence to demonstrate how the proposed reorganisation would lead to improved standards of teaching, or how these potential benefits would link to improved outcomes for pupils iii. No consideration of the impact that the reduction in overall funding to a single school will have on the school's ability to deliver its curriculum iiii. No clarity about how the proposal will result in improvements in the quality of leadership and management. <p>There has been no evidence put forward or proposals as to how standards are to be improved. ESTYN has clearly stated that they are not convinced that the proposal will at least maintain current standards.</p> <p>I feel strongly that until the whole plan has been made clear to the pupils and the public there is insufficient evidence upon which to base the hoped for improvements in the standards in education.</p> <p>I hear adults talking about this merger everywhere i go and the adults all say the same things - it's a ridiculous idea. How is it going to improve the kids' education and results? It's just another one of Powys' stupid ideas.</p>	<p><i>Pages 22 – 24 of the consultation document outlines the likely impact of the proposal on the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>outcomes (standards and wellbeing)</i> b) <i>provision (learning experiences, teaching, care support and guidance, and learning environment)</i> c) <i>leadership and management (leadership, improving quality, partnership working and resource management).'</i> <p><i>The consultation document also included potential advantages and disadvantages of the proposal, along with potential risks to the proposal. It is therefore the view of the authority that information relevant to these topics were included in the consultation document, and also in the consultation report.</i></p> <p><i>However, the authority recognises that there is no 'widespread empirical data' that will provide evidence that schools across more than one site would improve standards. However, the authority's experience of establishing dual-sited schools suggests that this is a model that can work in Powys. As evidenced in the merger of Newtown and John Beddoes High Schools, there is clear evidence that standards have improved at both sites. Data is readily available on the Welsh Government My Local School Website</i></p> <p><i>By establishing one school across both sites, there would be more opportunities for teachers to work together in larger departments, thereby ensuring more resilience. Larger departments would improve capacity from within the school ensuring that there is continuity of teaching provision for the pupil.</i></p>

<p>Everyone is against the merger except you.</p> <p>I will be contacting the Children's Commissioner of Wales shortly to express my concerns that PCC have failed to demonstrate the quality impact of this merger and PCC are detrimenting our children by re-organising with no demonstrable quality improvement. My great personal concern is that my child will be commencing her GCSE's in 2018 and will be exposed to the massive change to the restructuring of staff and processes; this will affect my daughter's standard of education and therefore her academic achievements in 2020 will be detrimented.</p> <p>There is no widespread empirical evidence that mergers improve standards.</p> <p>I would like you to provide me with hard factual evidence backed up with three year trend statistical data (such as that used on inspection) to PROVE that a merger will lead to improved outcomes and standards.</p> <p>At no point in the process has anyone explained fully, supported the empirical evidence, that one school over a split site will improve educational standards for a generation of school children in Radnorshire</p> <p>There is a need for change but this proposal risks the improvements already made by the two schools and should be rejected because it is not based on any quantitative evidence that standards will improve.</p>	<p><i>There is evidence that there is a significant reliance on supply teachers in at least one of the current schools.</i></p>
<p>Powys cannot expect the communities to accept a proposal when we have no details of what it will look like,</p>	<p><i>It is not possible for the local authority to provide detailed information/plans about how the school would operate, should it be</i></p>

<p>what it will mean for our children.</p> <p>There is no evidence of a medium/long term plan. We had no assurance that the school would still exist in ten years time.</p> <p>My principal objection is that the proposal does not clearly show how standards at the two schools would improve and indeed puts the present standards at risk.</p> <p>I have studied the Formal consultation document issued on the 6th April 2016, the Addendum issued on the 12th April and the Consultation Report and responses documents published in August 2016 in great detail and I remain deeply concerned at the lack of depth and clarity of what is being proposed.</p>	<p><i>established. As with all schools, the governing body and leadership team would be responsible for the management of the school. It would be their decision how to structure and operate the school in accordance with regulations that govern schools. The school would be expected to meet school improvement targets and provide a curriculum that meets the national requirements.</i></p>
<p>I also have great concern that the Governing body for the one school on two sites will have the power to make significant changes without consultation for example, the power to close buildings or the power to separate pupils according to language with no re-dress.</p> <p>The Town Council concluded that there are still too many unresolved possibilities in relation to future provision of A Levels and Welsh medium education for example, and on which campus, to enable a reasoned opinion based on fact to be decided</p> <p>8. This proposal has not provided me with any evidence that the quality of education will improve. This should be the main focus.</p>	<p><i>The governing body of the new school would need to carry out its duties in accordance with regulations for the governance of schools. However, it would not have the power to close any sites/buildings – this would be the responsibility of the local authority.</i></p> <p><i>Ultimately, the decision on how to structure the school would be made by the school’s governing body and management team. Should the governing body wish to structure the teaching in a different way, which could have an impact on where Welsh-medium provision, for example, or post-16 provision, is delivered from, then the authority would expect the governing body to fully consider the impact of this on the well-being of pupils and staff, the financial cost and any additional transport implications that may be arise.</i></p> <p><i>The authority is responsible for the provision of home-to-school transport in accordance with its Schools Transport Policy and any significant</i></p>

		<i>additional cost to this budget would need to be discussed with the authority.</i>
1.4	Challenge to the use of Newtown/John Beddoes as evidence that standards will improve with a dual-sited model	
	<p>It is true that the merged Newtown/John Beddoes school has improved its examination results. But three observations must be noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the merger at Newtown was executed very differently to the proposed Llandrindod/Builth Wells merger, as the leadership team at Newtown was more or less left intact - it should be described as a takeover rather than a merger. - the improved examination results at the merged Newtown school still are not as good as results at Llandrindod High School - Estyn rated Newtown as excellent before the merger, but only satisfactory after the merger - the same drop under the new framework as that recorded at Llandrindod (good to special measures). <p>The Code on School Organisations report (2013) emphasis is on the quality impact of any school organisation proposal. I have not been able to establish any evidence from PCC to 'demonstrate quality impact positively' with the proposed closure of the two schools and the re-opening of one school. PCC continue to use the recurring example of the mergers of Newtown School with Presteigne High School (HS) as good examples to support the proposals to date. Prior to the merger Newtown HS has been assessed by Estyn as excellent and Presteigne HS was in special measures and an interim team was about to brought into run the school.</p>	<p><i>The authority points to the Newtown High School dual-sited model as it is an example of a model that works in Powys.</i></p> <p><u><i>Newtown High School's performance.</i></u> <i>It is recognised that Newtown High School was inspected in 2009, and was rated as 'a good school with several outstanding, features' and scored 3 'grade 1' and 4 'grade 2' against the seven key questions which formed part of the inspection framework at that time.</i></p> <p><i>In 2015, the school was inspected again, and this time was judged as 'adequate' for current performance, and 'adequate' for prospects for improvement, and was placed in the category of needing Estyn monitoring.</i></p> <p><i>Direct comparison of schools, however, does not give an accurate analysis as there is a need to analyse the schools in the context of their family of schools to ensure that there is like for like comparison.</i></p> <p><i>However, standards have improved on both campuses of Newtown High School, but in particular at the John Beddoes campus. In 2015, 62.4% of pupils at Newtown HS achieved the L2+ indicator which was a 7.6 percentage point improvement on the previous year.</i></p> <p><i>Newtown High School's Estyn report of 2014 states, 'During the last 18 months, leaders, staff and pupils at the school have faced a significant period of change with the closure of John Beddoes School and the transfer of pupils to Newtown High School. Under the strong leadership of the headteacher, leaders and staff share a firm commitment to ensuring that the expansion of Newtown High School across two</i></p>

Newtown HS had an excellent standard and therefore it made perfect sense for them to utilise their proven effective standards to support and mentor Presteigne HS to improve their Estyn assessment. Following the merger further Estyn inspection put Newtown HS into satisfactory category.

It is not correct to compare us to John Beddoes and Newtown as those schools were not closed. This decision has been made “to improve teaching standards” but with absolutely no evidence to back up its claim. It states the example of John Beddoes School being taken over by Newtown High School as its role model but this is an entirely different situation due to the differing sizes of schools, combined with the changing provision at Presteigne.

Powys County Council claim that a model for improved educational standards can be found in the recent merger of Newtown High School and John Beddoes School in Presteigne but this assertion is flawed as the circumstances are not similar to the merger proposal involving Llandrindod and Builth High Schools. Both these schools are in Special Measures whereas only John Beddoes school was in Special measures not Newtown High School and therefore an increase in educational standards is unlikely.

It will be difficult to make comparisons with the John Beddoes/Newtown merger as all schools are different. It is not obvious that the experience of that merger is relevant to the Builth/Llandrindod proposed merger

The Newtown/John Beddoes merger is cited as justification and evidence that standards are improved by

campuses is a success. During the first year, senior leaders in particular, have responded effectively to the challenges of working across two campuses that are nearly thirty miles apart.’

Implementation of the model

The authority agrees that the process of establishing the Newtown dual-sited school was different to the proposal for Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools. The reorganisation proposal took the form of extending the capacity of Newtown High School to include the John Beddoes campus in Presteigne and John Beddoes School closed – the campus remained as a second-site of Newtown high School. Staff restructuring only affected the John Beddoes campus, and not Newtown High School staff.

The Newtown/John Beddoes proposal was also different due to the fact that only one school - John Beddoes School - was in special measures, compared to both schools in Mid Powys. John Beddoes school was closed but education was retained on the Presteigne site as part of Newtown High School. There was also a difference in the pupil population size at both schools.

merger but their results are still not as good as Llandrindod's and in their recent inspection they dropped from Excellent to Satisfactory/Adequate which is the same drop of 3 categories as Builth/Llandrindod dropping from Good to Special Measures. Hardly convincing evidence.

Estyn itself has said that it is not convinced that this proposal will even maintain standards, let alone improve them. You keep holding up Newtown and Presteigne and telling us how well this school on two sites is working, and it is true that more pupils have left that school with 5 GCSEs, but Newtown school went from "excellent" before the merger, to "satisfactory" following the merger. So pupils at Newtown have not benefited from the merger.

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	<p>Welshpool High school had a similar merge with Llanfair Caereinion, that did not work, if this happens here that will waste further money.</p>	<p><i>This is incorrect.</i></p>
<p>1.5</p>	<p>Comments about current standards of both schools</p>	
<p>1.5.1</p>	<p>Llandrindod High School</p>	
	<p>Having read all the evidence provided for the consultation we understand and accept and fully agree with the fact that we must not be resistant to change and should always strive to improve standards and offer our young people the best possible education to enable them to achieve their potential. With this in mind it is difficult to understand why Llandrindod Wells High School should face closure when evidence shows that standards are improving and results this year were among the best in Powys. Estyn have stated that they are not convinced the changes will improve standards or even maintain them so why fix something that is not broken. Llandrindod High School has had problems but it is now moving forward and should be supported in this rather than pushed aside.</p> <p>You are proposing to merge the best high school in Powys with the worst.</p> <p>If you look at the statistics, Llandrindod High School has come top in the County, so why are you insisting on CUTTING THEIR FUNDING??? Or should I say, in your words; making savings! Then there's Built Wells High School, coming 12th out of 12!!! WHAT are you doing to the Educational future of our young people?</p>	<p><i>Whereas standards have improved over the past two years, the school is making satisfactory progress against the Estyn recommendations. However, there are some areas where progress has been limited, despite having been in special measures for some time. There is no evidence to support the statement that Llandrindod has come top in the County. This is factually incorrect.</i></p> <p><i>Since the core inspection [Oct 2014], the school's targeted actions, for example involving refining pupil groupings and examination policies, have had a marked impact on performance at key stage 4 in mathematics and science and those indicators that include English and mathematics. However, performance in wider indicators has been more modest.</i></p> <p><i>In 2016, performance at key stage 4 in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics has improved for the second consecutive year. This now places the school in the upper half of similar schools based on free school meal eligibility, after being in the top quarter in 2015. This performance is in line with modelled outcomes for the second consecutive year, after having been below in each of the previous three years. Similarly, the proportion of pupils achieving 5 A* to A grades at GCSE has also improved and is markedly above that of similar schools.</i></p> <p><i>In 2016, performance in the capped points score, the level 2 and level 1 thresholds has declined since 2015. Although performance in the level 2</i></p>

	<p>I understand that Llandrindod school has improved its standards since their Estyn Inspection, and has actually come out on top in Powys according to another survey measuring other aspects and qualities of the school. Surely the upheaval for staff and pupils will not help them to continue to raise standards. Estyn are not convinced that the proposal will even maintain the present standards!</p> <p>Llandrindod High School is an extremely good school and although it is currently in Special Measures, it is evident from recent reports that significant works have been carried out and the standard has improved greatly over the last few months. This is despite the fact that the teachers, staff and pupils are working under the threat of closure.</p> <p>Llandrindod High School was graded by "Wales online" as top of the league tables this year. The school is going from strength to strength as it comes out of special measures and I wish for this to continue.</p>	<p><i>threshold is slightly higher than at the time of the core inspection, this places the school in the bottom quarter of similar schools for the fifth year running. Performance in the capped point score and the level 1 indicator places the school in the bottom quarter of similar schools and is lower than at the time of the core inspection.</i></p> <p><i>At key stage 3, performance in the core subject indicator and in a majority of subjects has improved noticeably since 2015. Performance in the core subject indicator is in line with modelled outcomes and places the school in the lower half of similar schools.</i></p> <p><i>Despite sound improvements on the previous year, attendance remains in the bottom quarter of similar schools and remains well below modelled outcomes for a second year. It is noticeably below the average for similar schools and nationally and below that at the time of the core inspection.</i></p>
1.5.2	Builth Wells High School	
	<p>1. Builth Wells high school is not failing its youngsters. In 2016 65.5% of our pupils in Year 11 achieved grade C or better in English/Cymraeg, maths and science. We are also the 8th best school in Wales when you look at A* to A grades at GCSE for 2016.</p> <p>2. These results are not ok. They are to be celebrated!</p> <p>3. We are not failing the whole cohort. This statement is wrong and has misled the cabinet. We recognise there are improvements to be made with a small and sometimes challenging part of the cohort and the school's Estyn report has made 7 recommendations which have guided the school in putting in place a</p>	<p><i>Builth Wells High School, with 65.5% of pupils' attaining their level 2 threshold including English / Welsh and mathematics at key stage 4, is performing above the national average, but below that of similar schools. Nearly all pupils achieve the level threshold of 5 GCSE qualifications (or equivalent) at grade A* - C, which is above the national average and that of similar schools.</i></p> <p><i>In 2016, performance at key stage 4 is higher than at the time of the core inspection in the majority of indicators. Overall, performance at this key stage, compares slightly more favourably to that of similar schools according to eligibility for free school meals, than at the time of the core inspection. However, performance in the indicators that include English</i></p>

	<p>rigorous and robust school improvement plan which has seen the English Grade C pass rate improve by 4.7 percentage points and maths grade C pass rate improve by 10.7 percentage points since 2014.</p> <p>Estyn are not convinced that” the proposal will at least maintain standards”. Surely even Powys should not consider closing Builth High School when it is the 8th best school in Wales with regards to GCSE and A level Results;</p> <p>In the case of Builth Wells High School, the most recent performance date for the school and the progress the school is making against the Estyn recommendations following the 2015 inspection are clearly demonstrating that the school is capable of improving standards without merger.</p>	<p><i>or Welsh and mathematics, continues to be lower or much lower than the average performance in similar schools. Over the period 2013 to 2015, pupils made less progress than expected from previous key stages in many indicators, and significantly less in close to a half.</i></p> <p><i>Performance in the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh and mathematics, improved in 2016. However, it remains well below modelled outcomes and places the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools for the fourth year running. Similarly, performance in the core subject indicator, and in English, also improved but continue to place the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools. In contrast, improved performance in the wider indicators of the level 2 threshold and capped points score places the school in the top 25% of similar schools in 2016 after being in the lower 50% at the time of the core inspection, as does performance in the level 1 threshold. Performance in science, improved in 2016 and moves the school up into the upper 50% of similar schools while performance in mathematics remained unchanged but drops the school into the lower 50% of similar schools.</i></p> <p><i>At key stage 3, the proportion of pupils achieving the core subject indicator increased in 2016 and is higher than at the time of the core inspection. However, this performance remains below modelled outcomes and places the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools for the fourth year running.</i></p> <p><i>In 2016, the performance of pupils in the sixth form is strong in the level 3 threshold. The proportion of pupils achieving three A levels at grades A* or A dipped but remains close to the average for similar schools and schools nationally. The proportion of those achieving three A level grades A* to C improved in 2016 and is above the average for similar schools and schools nationally.</i></p>
1.5.3	Impact on both schools as they are trying to come out of Special Measures	
	Both schools are currently in Estyn Special Measures	<i>The authority acknowledges the work that the staff and governors of</i>

<p>and therefore both have individual Action Plans that have been set out by Estyn and the Local authority and it is the duty of the County Council's Education Department to see that both schools complete their action plans in order to increase the educational standards of both schools. Each school needs their SLT to be working on these plans in order to increase the standards for the children currently within the system. This cannot be done whilst merging the school and removing a number of senior management from each school.</p> <p>If you merge the 2 school's you will be removing both school's from special measurer therefore removing any additional support and funding that they are currently receiving in order to help improve standards. This therefore would be a cut in funding that Estyn have clearly stated that both schools currently need to improve their overall standards.</p> <p>Both schools are currently in special measures after Estyn inspections and are having regular termly monitoring visits. This is obviously an increased stress.</p> <p>Until the schools show they are capable of leaving special measures I do not see how we can move forward.</p> <p>There will be additional pressures placed on the teaching staff and it will be time consuming trying to raise standards and come out of special measures.</p> <p>Builth and Llandrindod High Schools are in an unknown situation; both schools are in special measures. The two schools require support to improve their standards and the merger will not improve standards, in fact standards</p>	<p><i>both schools are carrying out to implement their post inspection action plans.</i></p> <p><i>The role of the authority and the regional school improvement consortia, ERW, is to challenge and support schools in implementing their post inspection action plans. This would continue to be the case if the proposal is implemented.</i></p> <p><i>Schools also receive support through the regional consortia, ERW, and the level of support each school receives is based on their national categorisation, which is published annually. In January 2017, the National Categorisation of Schools was published which shows that Llandrindod High School will be receiving the highest level of support as it is a 'red' category school, with Builth Wells High School receiving the next level of support, being in the 'amber' category.</i></p> <p><i>The schools do not receive any additional funding due to being placed in need of special measures by Estyn.</i></p>
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and quality will not improve as Estyn have stated; PCC are unable to evidence improvement in quality.

In the volatile situation of the two current schools and their 'Unsatisfactory' status as labelled by Estyn, I believe that stability would be more beneficial to the improvement of the schools' performance as opposed to the potentially risky decision to merge.

Both Builth and Llandrindod schools are in special measures, this is recognised, but both are working hard and making progress. It is my view that both schools are capable of improving standards without a formal merger. Both schools can endeavour to work more closely together and share best practice but a merger which would result in one headteacher and one leadership team over two sites is a backwards step and will ultimately impact upon the pupils of a merged school.

I do not think that merging two schools, which are both in special measures, will raise the standard of educational provision in Builth. It will increase stress levels in the teaching team in Builth and Llandrindod, reduce already depleted morale and create more uncertainty; not provide the opportunity for developing skills, capacity, leadership and expertise as is required. Instead, very precious energy and resources will be taken up with planning and dealing with the merger.

Therefore, in coming back to the proposals for the merger of our schools, I can imagine Members thinking 'why aren't parents behind the efforts to improve their schools?' (remembering that Estyn doesn't think that they will even maintain standards). In my opinion, it is for this reason: my daughter is at school NOW. She goes to a

	<p>school that is in Special Measures. The plan is to merge that poor school with another poor school. My presumption is that if PCC and teaching staff are struggling to pull the existing schools out of the doldrums, how on EARTH are they going to organise the improvement of a merged school whilst making the practical circumstances even harder?</p> <p>This is not an excellent school taking a poor school under its wings. It's a poor school merging with a poor school. I appreciate that the Heads of both schools are working very hard to improve standards and I have faith that - in time - they will do so. Each school has had a difficult past few years and I understand that turning things around is tough.</p>	
<p>1.4</p>	<p>Impact on pupils</p>	
	<p>I feel that the whole process has been extremely disruptive to the children of both schools, focusing their attention and worries on bureaucratic changes, rather than challenging their focus on their education. My two children are at a crucial stage of their education, Matt has just gone into Year 10 and Abi has just gone into Year 7 of Llandrindod Wells High School.</p> <p>The proposed date for implementation of September 2018 will be such a time at which Matt will have just completed his GCSEs. However, I fear that the focus of this year group will be dominated by the implementations to be put in place. I desperately want for him to focus his attention on his work and his potential achievements, but am worried that this is a huge distraction at this point in his life. The implementation process will ultimately have an impact on this Year group's overall results.</p> <p>My daughter, Abi will be entering Year 9 in September 2018, she will be thinking about her 'options' and what</p>	<p><i>Any school reorganisation process creates a period of uncertainty for all involved, including pupils. However, the authority endeavours to minimise any disruption to pupils – pupils are key stakeholders in the whole process and their views are extremely important.</i></p> <p><i>If the proposal is approved by cabinet, the next steps would be to establish a temporary governing body. Its first task would be to recruit a headteacher. Once a headteacher is appointed, the headteacher would work with the governors to establish a staffing structure. Staff would be supported throughout this process by the authority's HR department and appropriate policies and procedures.</i></p> <p><i>At key stage 3 and key stage 4, it is not expected that pupils would travel between sites. However, the new governing body would be responsible for how it structures the curriculum and timetable, and it may be possible that some subjects would be taught on one site only at key stage 4. This would increase the options available to those pupils.</i></p>

<p>direction she will choose to go. I fear that her choices will be dominated by 'which school will house which subjects'? Locations shouldn't influence a child's ability to make decision which will affect their future. I fear that children will be spending the majority of their time travelling between campuses. This will be mentally and physically exhausting for them. How are they to achieve their best goals in this state of mind?</p> <p>I am 9 years old and don't want a lower standards of education than my brother who is in high school</p> <p>From a personal perspective, my daughter should be starting her secondary school education in Builth Wells High School in September 2017. I am extremely worried about the implications that this merger will have on the quality of the education that she will receive.</p>	
<p>6. Children will evidently 'slip through the net' with large amount of pupils across a larger campus. Children that need more attention and extra care are less likely to be on the Teachers radar.</p> <p>5. Children with learning disabilities will be lost in the system, more so than they are now</p>	<p><i>As stated in the consultation document:</i></p> <p><i>'All schools in Powys are responsible for meeting a child's special educational needs, in accordance with the Council's ALN Strategy and Operational Guidance, referencing the 1996 Education Act. The New School would be required to adhere to the same Guidance. Funding from the Council is delegated to individual schools to support pupils with significant needs and this would be allocated to the New School , ensuring that needs continue to be met. The Council will work in partnership with pupils with additional learning needs, parents and the schools to support an effective transition to the new learning environment. Llandrindod High School currently has a specialist centre for those with high levels of need associated with a diagnosis of ASD. The same support will continue to be provided by the New School . Any change of school and any disruption not of the learner's or their family's choosing is going to have some impact on feelings of wellbeing. However, as pupils will remain at their current school sites, it is unlikely that the impact on feelings of wellbeing will be significant. Mitigation of</i></p>

		<p><i>possible negative effects of change, especially for those with additional needs, will need to be well planned and allow for individual plans of support to be in place.</i></p> <p><i>Person centred reviews and planning will be very helpful in providing the circles of support and hearing the voice of the young people during this period.'</i></p>
	<p>Potentially increase indiscipline within the pupil body</p> <p>I am worried that the standards of behaviour will fall and the school will be unruly which will decrease the quality of my education.</p>	<p><i>The proposed new school would be responsible for managing behaviour in accordance with its own behaviour and discipline policies.</i></p>
	<p>The needs of the children will not be the schools priority but funding and targets will be.</p>	<p><i>The proposed new school would be expected, as all schools are expected, to put the educational needs and wellbeing of pupils first. However, every school also has a responsibility to operate within the funding they receive from the authority via the fair funding formula and additional grants.</i></p>
	<p>I think the standards were poor - Huge bullying issues which were never addressed at Builth High School and left my child with severe anxieties. Poor school. Poor teachers. In experienced teachers. Good it is closing.</p>	<p><i>Noted</i></p>

2. Financial Issues																					
2.1	Proposal is a cut in funding and does not reflect additional costs of operating across two sites.																				
<p>I would like you to provide me with a monetary break down of how a merger can possibly make substantial and sustainable savings.</p> <p>The proposed budget for the new merged school is in fact a cut in the funding of education in both Llandrindod Wells and Builth Wells. It does not accurately reflect the actual costs of running the two sites. Given the general funding cuts filtering down from Westminster to Cardiff, and from Cardiff to Powys, there is general sympathy towards PCC finding ways to save money. However, this merger is not the way to do it, for the following reasons: - It actually saves the council very little money in the medium term. The annual projected savings have already fallen from £166,000 to £123,000 and these savings still do not take into account additional travel costs that may be incurred by post-16 students, by key stage 4 students, but staff and by governors. And there are interim costs associated with the merger, such as employing a new head teacher, supply costs for leadership, resources taken out of school during the new school set up, clerking and training costs for the shadow governing body, etc. There are better ways of saving this relatively small amount of money than merging two schools.</p> <p>Fourthly, the proposal has not been costed fully or accurately and so the supposed financial savings will not occur, if anything cost will rise not fall, when all cost are factored in.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Component of Cost</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Builth High School</td> <td>£2,441,966</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Llandrindod High School</td> <td>£2,276,187</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Single site Secondary Merger saving</td> <td>£0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2 x Single Language School additional costs</td> <td>£0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Existing travel costs</td> <td>£552,207</td> </tr> <tr> <td>New travel costs</td> <td>£0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Net Cost to Council</td> <td>£5,147,453</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Net Reduction from Current</td> <td>£122,907</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>The 123k is the saving to the authority through reduced funding allowances by creating one school funded through the fair funding formula. The funding supports the revised group size for the school and the corresponding management structure of a larger school.</i></p> <p><i>The reduction in funding is not in respect of direct support to pupils, such as class teachers, learning support assistants etc. Further efficiencies could also be achieved through economies of scale.</i></p>	Component of Cost		Builth High School	£2,441,966	Llandrindod High School	£2,276,187	Single site Secondary Merger saving	£0	2 x Single Language School additional costs	£0	Existing travel costs	£552,207	New travel costs	£0	Net Cost to Council	£5,147,453	Net Reduction from Current	£122,907		
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Throughout the consultation there are no figures to evidence the day to day running costs of the two merged schools. The figure of £122k only represents the closure of both schools. PCC are unable to demonstrate the day to day cost savings of the running costs of the schools.

It has been stated that this project would save £130,000 but the consultation documents sent out did not give the details of how this was going to be done and gave a false impression of the financial situation for each school currently therefore it is impossible for the cabinet, the council and the community to come to an informed decision on the proposals.

The proposal brings about a reduction in funding, not a saving, of over £100,000 which is the equivalent of one Senior Leadership team. So the reduction in the number of Senior leaders required would not free up money in the budget for the governors to employ additional specialist teaching staff, improve resources or increase support staff to help improve standards. The appointed Senior leaders would also be on a higher salary range because of the larger school.

This effective reduction in funding would also make it impossible for the governing body to increase the range of subjects on offer without making further redundancies from the existing staff at both schools. Redundancy has a catastrophic effect on staff morale and is not cost negative. There is also a cost in restructuring the middle management team, to morale and protected salaries for those losing TLR's - not to mention the potential for increased costs as TLR holders would have responsibility for more staff and pupils so may be on a higher point. Has the authority considered the actual staffing required

The financial information included within the consultation document and cabinet report of 27th September 2016 includes a split-site allowance in respect of a school operating over a split-site. This information could now change following cabinet's decision to review the formula for a split-site allowance, following consultation on the authority's funding formula that took place in late 2016. If there are any changes to funding resulting from any review to the split-site allowance, these would be deferred to 1st April 2018 or the opening date of any new split site school.

The authority recognises that there may be additional costs incurred in a school merger. Any costs incurred during the staffing transition to the new school would be a cost to the authority, not the school. The authority would also provide clerking services to the temporary and permanent governing body for a period of up to 12 months after the merger at a cost to the authority, not the school.

However, as it is the responsibility of the new temporary and permanent governing bodies to structure and manage the school, it is not possible at this stage to quantify these additional costs. The school would have to be structured within the budget available, including costs of TLRs and senior positions. The school would be responsible for structuring the timetable, and any costs incurred by staff travelling between sites would be a cost to the school.

<p>in order to be able to deliver to pupils split across 2 sites?</p> <p>Powys County Council claim that the school merger must occur in order to make financial savings. However, the initial proposed saving of £123,000 does not take into consideration the salary of the new head teacher which is directly proportional to the size of the new school. A dual site school would also necessitate a large increase in inter-site transport costs. Provision for this increase does not seem to have been taken into account.</p> <p>The proposal for Llandrindod and Builth Schools is no less than a cut in funding, such funding will have a dramatic effect on the attendance of both schools affecting the performance of both schools.</p>	<p><i>The authority does not expect attendance to fall at either school – the proposal is intended to provide a sustainable secondary school infrastructure that would be able to provide high quality education that would meet the needs of children and young people in the mid Powys area.</i></p>
<p>Sharing staff across two sites will lead to additional expense in their travelling expenses and the cost of busing children around the county plus add to the burden of carbon emissions.</p> <p>I fail to see how the huge spend to provide this additional transport can be seen as cost effective. Injecting this money into current resources would be more beneficial surely?</p> <p>* If the new school is just to have one 6th form in Builth, have the extra costs of transporting the Llandrindod students there daily been calculated amongst the savings, as well as time lost in travelling? I think not.</p> <p>It is not clear if any consideration has been given to the effect of increased workload and the time and cost of travel between sites for middle and senior leaders.</p>	<p><i>From September 2018, the school would be run as a dual-sited school. At key stage 3 and key stage 4, it is not expected that pupils would travel between sites. However, the new governing body would be responsible for how it structures the curriculum and timetable, and it may be possible that some subjects would be taught on one site only at key stage 4. This would increase the options available to those pupils.</i></p> <p><i>The proposal is to establish a new 11 – 18 school across two sites. It would be the decision of the governing body whether it wished to centralise post-16 education on one site, but the authority would strongly encourage this to happen. The benefits would be increased critical mass, enabling a wider range of subjects to be offered from one location. It is the authority's view that this would be attractive to learners and would stem the flow of learners leaving the county for post-16 provision, as currently happens.</i></p> <p><i>Any transport costs incurred for the delivery of post-16 provision should the governing body decide to centralise all/some provision a specific</i></p>

	<p>Neither is it clear if the implications for staff time and travel costs have been considered if teaching or support staff have to move between sites.</p> <p>If, on the other hand, workload is not reduced by keeping the same number of leaders, the merged school would not be able to operate within its new budget. Again, PCC has made no proposals how the new governing body and SLT would be able to run the new school within the predicted new budget. It has just stated that this is their job and not the job of PCC.</p> <p>It is not clear if any consideration has been given to the effect of increased workload and the time and cost of travel between sites for middle and senior leaders. Neither is it clear if the implications for staff time and travel costs have been considered if teaching or support staff have to move between sites.</p> <p>The time and money spent on transporting staff between campuses will increase the costs to the school budget without additional income to cover this.</p>	<p><i>campus will be paid for by the authority. The authority already funds transport for post-16 learners to travel between schools/college to study subjects not available to them at their 'home' school.</i></p>
2.2	The proposal is a cut in funding which will have a detrimental impact on standards and provision	
	<p>The proposal is a cut in funding, NOT making savings!!! The so-called 'Saving money should NEVER be brought into this decision. This proposal is all about A CUT IN FUNDING, to schools already struggling with the budgets they currently have, so you want to give them LESS!!!</p> <p>The proposal is a cut in funding. Our children and families here in Powys already have less access to services than more populated areas. At the very least the Council should provide children with an education in their own community in order to successfully access</p>	<p><i>The consultation document outlined the pressures facing the secondary sector in Powys, which includes ensuring that educational provision is of the highest standard possible within an economic/financial climate that is very challenging. Powys County Council has seen its funding from Welsh Government reduced for a number of years. Since 2012/13 we have seen a net reduction of £17,700,000 in our funding from Welsh Government. This, coupled with increasing responsibilities and services pressure has created a significant budgetary shortfalls across all three years. In order to balance the budget the Council has been required to deliver savings of £53,493,000 over the same period. In order to create sustainable services</i></p>

<p>extra-curricular activities to bridge this gap.</p> <p>The proposal is a cut in funding of apparently £128,000 initially at Llandrindod alone.</p> <p>This will be an actual cut in funding for the schools, when we should be spending more on educating our young people.</p> <p>. The proposal is a cut in funding. This will be detrimental to the pupils and schools.</p> <p>- I'm afraid we really do not need additional funding cuts!</p> <p>It is obvious to me that this proposal will mean a cut in funding as despite what council officers say there will not be enough courses offered across the two schools, (especially if the Welsh Medium stream is kept at Brecon High School) to attract additional funding.</p> <p>The merger will cut funding to one of the schools and therefore further detriment standards.</p> <p>There is a reducing school population at present, although it is predicted to increase again within 10 years, and with this comes a reduction in capitation funding to schools. This proposal is a further cut to education spending in Mid Powys and I believe will lead to a fall in standards.</p> <p>"Savings" in Education will only decrease standards, meaning that the cost in the future will increase, due to the children not achieving during school years. It is simple to see, for all but YOU and the MEMBERS who have allowed this to happen.</p>	<p><i>with reduced funding it is essential that the Council transform its service provision.</i></p> <p><i>The reduction in funding available to the proposed school is not in respect of direct support to pupils, such as class teachers, learning support assistants etc. The reduction in funding is based on the cost of the overall management structure required.</i></p> <p><i>The proposal provides opportunities to create economies of scale that may lead to greater investment in teaching and learning: By having a single leader of each curriculum area across the two school sites and a more streamlined senior leadership structure, savings can be generated over time. The new leadership team would be able to invest these savings in whatever way they believe would make the greatest impact on standards.</i></p> <p>.</p>
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	<p>In the scheme of things the minimal savings this will make will therefore decrease the standards of education;</p> <p>e expectation that both schools will be expected to manage with less budget and less senior managers leaves great uncertainty on the way ahead.</p> <p>The proposer does not consider the impact that the reduction in overall funding to a single school will have on the school's ability to deliver its curriculum."</p> <p>- The cost of introducing a new uniform may not be much, but it's honestly a lot of bother for what is very little reason.</p> <p>I, the education inspectorate and many others are well aware that such cuts will not maintain standards and will have the reverse effect. It is safe to say that if this proposal goes ahead the standard of education and the quality of jobs that pupils gain as a result will be affected. I ask you to question what positive outcome can this proposal have for the next generation? If it were your children attending either schools would you be happy with the above proposal? I think your answer would be the same as mine – No.</p> <p>It is quite simple that such a proposal where funding is reduced will not improve output, results, or the quality of education, the result of such cuts will be by far the opposite.</p>	
	<p>I am asking you this because I understand it is to save the council money by reducing the funding to the school. Now Mr Patterson I like school but I don't really find my class work easy, I really struggle. I currently get extra</p>	<p><i>The reduction in funding available to the proposed school is not in respect of direct support to pupils, such as class teachers, learning support assistants etc. The reduction in funding is based on the cost of the overall management structure required.</i></p>

	<p>lessons and help with numeracy and literacy. This as you know is very important for me. I am very worried that if funding it cut there won't be money left to fund this extra help that I really need - and then where will I be?</p>	
2.3	<p>Savings too small to justify the proposal</p>	
	<p>To merge the two schools you believe there will be a saving of £128,000 which first started off at £166,000. £128,000 is not a substantial amount of savings to justify closing both High Schools and reopening of one High School.</p> <p>Bearing the above in mind, I can therefore only conclude that there is a different reason for pushing through the proposal when the experts have clearly stated that it's a bad idea: it must be financial. We understand that PCC are seeking to remove £123,000 from the merged budget. £123,000 is a piffling sum in the great PCC scheme of things and seeing as it's already dropped from approximately £160k, confidence is very low to think that it might be accurate and achievable.</p> <p>The savings of £123,000 are minimal in my view, equivalent to at the most, two Senior Manager posts within Powys and it is not justifiable to ruin our children's education for this sum.</p> <p>The proposed savings are minimal.</p> <p>The estimated saving of £123,000 (as mentioned at the Llandrindod public meeting) is not a good enough reason, as this would be less than one Chief Executive's salary.</p> <p>Also with Machynlleth to have £20 million spent on a new</p>	<p><i>Making a financial saving is not the basis for this proposal. The proposal is intended to deliver a sustainable model of secondary education, which can deliver high-quality provision.</i></p> <p><i>The consultation document outlined the pressures facing the secondary sector in Powys, which includes ensuring that educational provision is of the highest standard possible within an economic/financial climate that is very challenging.</i></p> <p><i>The proposal provides opportunities to create economies of scale that may lead to greater investment in teaching and learning: By having a single leader of each curriculum area across the two school sites and a more streamlined senior leadership structure, savings can be generated over time. The new leadership team would be able to invest these savings in whatever way they believe would make the greatest impact on standards.</i></p>

	<p>through school, this is a drop in the ocean.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The financial benefits hypothesized are negligible, and have been reducing, which is a sure sign that you the council have pretty much no idea what you're doing. 	
2.4	PCC wasting money	
	<p>It will (and has) cost the council in the short term. For example, the consultation process has already cost a large amount of money (in terms of paying OSS, of staff resources producing documentation and doing reaserch, etc).</p> <p>I work for Powys County Council and frequently see the waste of money by the Council in many areas which angers me when the proposed small amount of savings to be made at both Llandrindod and Builth is mentioned. This is about our children and grandchildren's future in education and their future paths in life, NOT money.</p> <p>Savings could be made of this amount elsewhere within Powys County Council. Here are some suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Charge employees of Powys Count Hall to park their carpark. PCC is one of the only carparks within the town that do not charge. Gwalia workers have to pay for a permit if they wish to parkin the High street car park. Yet you have the audacity to say that PCC is a private car park and for permit holders only even though it is funded by us tax payers. If your employees have a permit to use that carpark then they should for it yearly. - Reduce the workforce in each department. No other company has several stages of management from line managers to Head of Departments. Depending on the size of the department one line manager and one Head of Dept should be sacrificed, making a saving of 	<p><i>Any school reorganisation process incurs a cost to the authority to ensure that all stakeholders are provided with the appropriate information to make their views known.</i></p> <p><i>The authority notes these comments.</i></p>

thousands!

- Stop using these consultancy firms to make decisions for Powys County Council. You employ people within your departments who should be able to make a decision without having to bring outside agencies in. Again this would save hundreds of thousands.

In conclusion, THAT is why I am asking that you overturn your previous decision. Provide staff and pupils with some stability, get standards up and resilient, resource them properly. Resource them by ditching all non-essential staff at PCC: ditch any staff that you would feel uncomfortable explaining to the public whose taxes you spend. Ditch the Media Officers, the statisticians, the monitoring officers, the people who oversee the work of others and yet who aren't those peoples' line managers. The public do NOT want these staff and place no value upon them.

I am acutely aware that local government has had cuts and is facing more. That is a problem that we must all deal with and accept that there may be cuts in our standards of service. However - the public are heartedly sick of the choices that PCC make with the money they have.

For example, on the day our village's primary school was informed that further cuts would result in further loss of invaluable teaching assistants, I looked at the jobs page on the PCC website and saw an advert for a Media Officer, salary £32,000. How on earth PCC can value a Media Officer above teaching assistants (or social workers or any of the other statutory responsibilities) it is beyond the comprehension of most of the public. We don't want our money to be spent on PR and media: we

want it to be spent on our statutory responsibilities. The public are also sick of PCC employing consultants when they are unable to make a decision themselves. PCC have many fantastic (and well paid) officers and yet we seem to be afraid of allowing them to make and consider decisions, preferring instead to employ consultants to make those decisions our behalf - madness when our officers supply them with the very information they use to base their decision on. PLEASE can PCC use the money they pay consultants with to actually fund our schools? Maybe then we would have money to fund our services rather than paying to take the responsibilities that come with difficult decision-making away from our Members. I appreciate it's politically far easier to simply adopt the recommendations of a consultant who has been paid, but it NOT what we pay our Members a very good salary for.

If you were the CEO of a private company and were overseeing such ludicrous measures your job would be terminated. Yet in local government we are seeing less and less decision making and more use of consultants. As the chief executive your role is to understand how the different parts of the council (the business) work together in order to satisfy the common goal of fulfilling their ambitions.

3. Curriculum Issues	
3.1	Concern that the proposal does not help improve curriculum offer
3.1.1	<p>"The proposer does not consider the impact that the reduction in overall funding to a single school will have on the school's ability to deliver its curriculum." (Estyn)</p> <p>There seems to be a lack of understanding of basic logic on behalf of the cabinet that having a school with two sites will make it possible to increase the number of subjects taught without a major movement of pupils from site to site and consequent associated transport costs.</p> <p>The decision is supposedly meant to increase the number of subjects taught in the school but this will not be the case as there will be the same number of students to be taught.</p> <p>There is also a serious concern that the new model will not improve the ability to increase the number of subjects taught in either school. The children of our town and the surrounding area deserve the right to have choices and to have a better selection of courses available to them to give them the best possible opportunities in life.</p> <p>It will not improve the ability to increase subjects taught</p> <p>Also, despite having two sites, a lack of teachers due to significantly decreased funding will lead to less subjects being offered at AS and A2 Level, as well as at GCSE, at</p> <p><i>The authority recognises that establishing the school over the two sites would not provide all the efficiencies and economies of scale that would be available if the school was established on a single site. There would also be more curricular benefits if the schools on a single site, with a larger critical mass of pupils. This was recognised in the business case that supported this proposal, and was outlined in the consultation document.</i></p> <p><i>However, the authority is of the view that, even though the school would be a dual-sited school, there are still opportunities for curricular benefits, as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The proposed new school would be of a size that meets the authority's aspiration for size of school, both in key stage 3 and key stage 4, and at post-16. The authority believes that a school with a minimum of 600 pupils in key stage 3 and key stage 4 would have average year group of 120 pupils, which would help maximise the curriculum benefits and lead to improved outcomes. However, it is not expected that pupils would travel between sites, although the new governing body and leadership team would be responsible for the structure of the curriculum and timetable, and it may be possible that some subjects would be taught on one site only at key stage 4. This would increase the options available to those pupil.</i> • <i>The authority wants sixth forms to be able to provide at least 25 AS/A level subjects from one location, which means that the authority aspires to having sixth forms that have over a 150 pupils; The authority is concerned that the continued year-on-year reduction in funding for post-16 provision means that the number of subjects offered is also reducing. Pupils currently have to travel between existing school sites to access a broad</i>

<p>both schools – in contrast to the Council’s opinion that the new school would be able to offer more subjects.</p> <p>3: It will not improve our ability to increase the number of subjects taught, so what gain is there here???</p> <p>The decision is supposedly meant to increase the number of subjects taught in the school but this will not be the case as there will be the same number of students to be taught</p> <p>3) The proposal will not allow either high school to increase the number of subjects on offer which is also a goal of the proposal. I agree that the schools are unable to offer enough subjects but this is not the right way in which more subjects can be offered.</p> <p>One of the reasons given for merging the two schools was to improve the choice of subjects available in the schools but this in fact will not be the case</p> <p>It will not improve the ability to increase the number of subjects being taught.</p> <p>It will not improve our ability to increase the number of subjects taught, with special concern with the already poor provision of science subjects at GSCE and A-level currently at Llandrindod Wells High School.</p> <p>Whilst you do not move pre 16 children between the 2 campuses the class sizes will remain the same therefore you are not changing the critical mass of learners. As the critical mass of learners in pre 16 education will not change this will not improve the ability to increase the number of subjects taught.</p>	<p><i>range of academic and vocational courses during the school day, with associated costs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It would be the decision of the governing body and leadership team how they wished to deliver post-16 provision, but the authority would strongly encourage the school to have a single sixth form centre. The benefits of this would be that learners would have access to at least 25 AS/A levels in one location, with no requirements for additional travel during the school day, although there may be some travel required to access vocational subjects;</i> • <i>Welsh-medium provision would be available for pupils on the Builth Wells site.</i>
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	<p>How will closing the school and reopening it improve options at GCSE.</p> <p>I don't agree with the merger, too many miles travelled by too many children.</p> <p>I feel the Council is playing down the amount of disruption to school days with the inevitable movement of pupils between sites and more so the movement of staff which I feel may cause too much disturbance to a pupil's education as a whole.</p>	
3.1.2	<p>If the movement of Welsh medium education from Brecon to Builth Wells fails to materialise then there will not be enough additional funding to fall back on to enable more choice of subject to be offered as promised through both English and Welsh streams as detailed in the consultation. A lot seems to be resting on 'if's' and not concrete evidence.</p> <p>With the current proposal there will have to be three learning streams in each academic year; an English stream on both sites and a welsh stream in Builth Wells. This will involve three class groups and so using efficient class sizes of up to thirty pupils won't be possible. Whereas the proposal says more subjects will be able to be taught I would suggest it would reduce the number of subjects, which can be provided.</p>	<p><i>The number of pupils attending the Welsh stream at Builth Wells High School has increased in recent years, and the school is currently able to provide:</i></p> <p><i>However, the authority acknowledges that there would be an impact on a school if pupil numbers in the Welsh stream decreases as this would have an impact on the funding that would be provided to the school.</i></p> <p><i>The establishment of the school over two sites would not provide all the efficiencies and economies of scale that would be available if the school was established on a single site. The school, however, would be provided funding protection through the key stage 3 and 4 funding allowance and the school would receive an allowance for Welsh-medium provision in accordance with its fair funding formula.</i></p>
3.1.3	<p>There is no evidence to prove that a merger will attract specialist teachers to the area.</p>	<p><i>There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal would be unattractive to specialist teachers. A successful school, operating with a distributed leadership model, would be as attractive to</i></p>

	<p>A merger will not offer the pupils of the new school a greater choice of subjects. To achieve this, an increase in funding must be implemented, not a cut. The new school would have to attract specialist teachers who would expect a greater job security, promotion prospects and more competitive salaries. As the closure and merger of the existing high schools only represents the first phase of Powys County Councils long terms plans for education, the uncertainty surrounding the future of the dual site school is unlikely to attract specialist candidates.</p> <p>3. It will not improve the schools ability to increase the number of subjects taught. Specialist teachers that excel in their field will not be attracted to Powys whilst the council facilitate a shutdown of services in the area. Lack of services, job insecurity and an inability to commute elsewhere are not attractive to career professionals.</p> <p>A merger will not offer the pupils of the new school a greater choice of subjects. To achieve this, an increase in funding must be implemented, not a cut. The new school would have to attract specialist teachers who would expect a greater job security, promotion prospects and more competitive salaries. As the closure and merger of the existing high schools only represents the first phase of Powys County Councils long terms plans for education, the uncertainty surrounding the future of the dual site school is unlikely to attract specialist candidates.</p>	<p><i>specialist teachers as the current situation, and it could also be argued that the current situation, with both schools in special measures, is not attractive to specialist teachers.</i></p>
3.2	Post-16 curriculum	
	<p>5. Avril stated 'we have got to improve options at GCSE and A level. How will closing the school and reopening it improve options at A level? Also the proposal is that there is</p>	<p><i>Schools in South Powys deliver post-16 provision through the South Powys Post-16 Partnership. Learners are able to choose subjects from a single timetable with option blocks – learners can then travel</i></p>

<p>no change to sixth form provision. So how will the closure of the school provide more options at A level?</p> <p>6. Avril stated 'Have to stop leakage to other schools and to Hereford sixth form college' but again, the proposal is that there is no change to sixth form provision. So how will the closure of the school stop leakage to other schools and Hereford sixth form?</p> <p>The proposed merger will not improve the ability of either site to increase the number of subjects taught at key stage 4, unless pupils are moved between sites. But it is also PCC's view that the current movement of KS5 pupils between sites is a reason to merge the two schools. This does not make sense. Either the aim of the merger is to reduce pupil movement, or it is to increase pupil movement - it cannot be both at the same time.</p> <p>Children are already leaving the area to attend sixth form college in Hereford due to the proposed merger.</p> <p>The forward planning for the 6th Form provision is a crucial element for our current and future pupils. Until this is open and clear many pupils are unable to choose their options and feel engaged in planning their future education within Powys. Given the length of time this matter has been under discussion it is understandable that many youngsters feel disadvantaged and let down by the education offered to them by Powys County Council.</p> <p>Is there a plan to develop a reliance upon other establishments such as Hereford 6th form College to provide subjects which are not available within Powys, or is there a plan to develop resources to meet the needs of all our pupils?</p>	<p><i>to other schools to study subjects not available to them at their home school. This model enables the authority to meet the statutory requirements of the Learning and Skills Measure – i.e. all learners in South Powys have access to 30 options, 5 of which are vocational. However, the reality is that, depending on school location or other subject choices, a learner's choice is limited.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There are small sixth forms at both schools with a narrow choice of subjects, which are both below the Council's aspiration for size of sixth form. The Council wants sixth forms to be able to provide at least 25 AS/A level subjects from one location, which means that the Council aspires to having sixth forms that have over a 150 pupils;</i> • <i>Learners currently have to travel between school/college sites during the school day to have a wider choice of subjects – this is an additional cost to the Council;</i> • <i>The Welsh Government gives Powys County Council an annual grant for post-16 provision. This grant has been reducing every year since 2013, and is forecast to reduce even further. This means that the number of subjects that the schools can offer has also reduced, and may reduce further;</i> • <i>Some pupils travel to sixth forms or colleges in other counties or in England to study – this means that there is even less money coming in to Powys to spend on post-16 subjects.</i> <p><i>The proposal is to establish a new 11 – 18 school across two sites. It would be the decision of the governing body whether it wished to centralise post-16 education on one site, but the authority would strongly encourage this to happen. The benefits would be increased</i></p>
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The logistics of transporting pupils and teachers between the sites have not been adequately addressed. The current transport provision which exists for the sixth form consortium, in which both schools participate, is unsatisfactory. Pupils are frequently late for lessons on both sites and there have been many instances when the transport has simply not materialised and parents have had to step in to rescue stranded children. This does not bode well for a school based on two remote sites.

3. I could agree with merging the sixth forms if this resulted in more "A" level subjects being available but there seems to be no guarantee that this would be the case.

The cabinet have suggested in the past that there needs to be a wider range of subjects available to pupils, both at GCSE and at 'A' Level. In the past the high schools have done their best to work together to provide as wide a range as possible for pupils, particularly with 'A' level provision. I cannot see how the cabinet's proposal will do anything to increase the number of subjects available; indeed, it may well have exactly the opposite effect.

Children are already leaving the area to attend sixth form college in Hereford due to the proposed merger.

The whole process is creating a great deal of uncertainty for staff and students. We have already lost one fantastic teacher and more will follow. Significant numbers of year 11 are looking at out of county or private options for their sixth form. Please stop this process now and support our schools rather than undermine them. Your actions are harming the education of thousands of young people.

The forward planning for the 6th Form provision is a crucial

critical mass, enabling a wider range of subjects to be offered from one location. It is the authority's view that this would be attractive to learners and would stem the flow of learners leaving the county for post-16 provision, as currently happens.

Whilst some learners experience some logistical or transport difficulties at the start of an academic year, the authority is committed to addressing any issues as soon as they are known, and the majority of learners are able to access this provision without problems.

	<p>element for our current and future pupils. Until this is open and clear many pupils are unable to choose their options and feel engaged in planning their future education within Powys. Given the length of time this matter has been under discussion it is understandable that many youngsters feel disadvantaged and let down by the education offered to them by Powys County Council.</p>	
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4. Staffing Issues	
4.1	Concern about increased workload and additional travel affecting staff wellbeing and standards
<p>At both meetings it seemed that the school governors, management team and staff are already stretched and stressed so I believe that if the new governors/management team and headteacher have to cover two schools this will bring added problems and impossible workloads, resulting in loss of drive to improve the schools.</p> <p>1. I believe that the pupils' education will suffer due to the fact that the teachers workloads will include, especially the management and Heads of Department. The workload at present is immense without reducing the timescale in half and increasing the workload with managing it over the two schools.</p> <p>I cannot see how shutting the 2 schools will raise standards at all. It will only create more work for a very stressed and over worked staff. No new teachers will want to apply for jobs at either school with this hanging over them and current staff are already looking for new jobs because they are uncertain how this will affect them!! I think the whole process has been a waste of valuable money and time and it will not improve standards.</p> <p>I cannot see how shutting the 2 schools will raise standards at all. It will only create more work and stress for pupils and staff.</p> <p>I am worried about the extra pressure and stress these</p>	<p><i>The day-to-day management of the school would be the responsibility of the headteacher and senior leadership team, and it would be their responsibility, in partnership with the governors, to decide how the timetable of the school is structured.</i></p> <p><u>Teaching on more than one site/travel implications</u></p> <p><i>Although this would be an operational decision for the school, it would be expected that teachers would, in the main, teach from one location – there would be need to provide subject teachers for the same year groups on both campuses, and it would be more practical and beneficial for teachers and pupils if they were mainly teaching at one campus.</i></p> <p><i>However, if teachers were required to teach from both campuses during the school week, it would be expected that this would be managed in such a way as to provide staff with appropriate time to move between both campuses. It would be expected that this would be a structured part of the timetable to provide staff, pupils and parents with full knowledge of the teaching arrangements.</i></p> <p><i>It would not be good practice for staff to travel between sites more than once during the school day, without this being a structured part of the curriculum. It is essential that time is allocated to enable the best teaching staff in different subject areas to travel between sites (or communicate regularly via video conferencing arrangements) in order to provide mentoring/coaching/resources for their colleagues on the other campus.</i></p> <p><i>However, the arrangement would enable more effective and efficient use of staff specialism between sites. At key stage 4, there may be more</i></p>

proposals will put on my teachers. They do such a good job and make our lessons interesting. These proposals will mean that we as pupils will face more teacher absences, meaning cover teachers who do not understand the subject properly and do not follow the curriculum properly. This will decrease the standard of our education. How can Heads of Year and Subjects be expected to give 100% to their pupils if they are split over two sites; stressed and tired? I am worried that the standards of behaviour will fall and the school will be unruly which will decrease the quality of my education.

. The Town Council is also concerned about the well being of the teaching staff with the new model; they will have increased workloads, additional travel time and more pressure placed upon their already busy schedules. The introduction of one management time will, we feel, be a disaster and the pressure of increased workloads will lead to staff absences, sickness and is likely to leave to long term sickness, this will then have an additional cost to the County Council.

From a personal perspective, my daughter should be starting her secondary school education in Builth Wells High School in September 2017. I am extremely worried about the implications that this merger will have on the quality of the education that she will receive. I do not think that merging two schools, which are both in special measures, will raise the standard of educational provision in Builth. It will increase stress levels in the teaching team in Builth and Llandrindod, reduce already depleted morale and create more uncertainty; not provide the opportunity for developing skills, capacity, leadership and expertise as is required. Instead, very

opportunities to teach larger groups of learners for certain specialist subjects – this may happen through teachers teaching from one site, some pupils travelling to create larger groups for subjects and/or the use of technology between sites.

In terms of staff/departmental meetings, the management of the school/departments could decide that these should take place at one or either campuses – the use of technology would also be available to reduce travelling and aid communication.

It would also be expected that there would be whole-staff/departments Continuous Professional Development events taking place where the whole staff/departments would come together on one site.

Additional workload

It is unlikely that there would be an additional workload for class/subject teachers as they would be employed to teach a set number of classes per week.

However, it is acknowledged that there would be a new workload for middle and senior leaders because they would be managing a larger school with more pupils and a larger workforce. Examples of a change in workload include the following:

- *performance management, where subject leaders would be responsible for appraising additional team members;*
- *additional quality assurance activities including work scrutiny and lesson observations for subject leaders;*
- *timetabling – more challenging to structure a timetable across two sites; and*
- *the need for senior leadership to be timetabled across both sites to carry out management responsibilities.*

Any potential issues created by a new workload could be addressed through more effective distributed leadership, and additional remuneration

<p>precious energy and resources will be taken up with planning and dealing with the merger.</p> <p>Teachers will have an increased workloads</p> <p>The management team of the school and all the teachers will have an increased work load, meaning it will be difficult to recruit new teachers when required. . That is not going to improve standards, in fact when the best teachers, who form the leadership team, have additional travel, and an additional work load. At best, they will not be able to provide the best education for our children. At worst, they will leave, or go off on sick leave with stress.</p> <p>4: Teachers will have an increased workload, especially the Leadership Team and Heads of Subjects. This will most definitively lead to permanent staff members being off on the sick due to illness/stress, which in turn will increase the costs to the school to bring in supply teachers. I know a child who had THREE supply teachers in ONE DAY last week. How are the children supposed to gain trust in the teachers, IF they are constantly being given supply teachers???</p> <p>Following the Powys Council decision to close Llandrindod and Builth High Schools and reopen them under one umbrella of one school with one management team, one team of governors may seem like a good plan but when we scratch beneath the surface they are still planning on reducing the schools budget initially by £128,000 at Llandrindod alone, increasing workloads for existing teachers, the threat of redundancy for others, reduction in resources and we feel standards WILL NOT be improved by the Council's</p>	<p>would be provided for senior/middle leaders, taking into account the larger staff and pupil numbers of the new school.</p> <p><u>Impact on standards</u></p> <p><i>The proposal provides an opportunity to improve standards as follows:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i><u>Improved leadership at all levels:</u> When streamlining the leadership structure following the joining of two schools into one split site secondary school, the newly appointed governing body are able to place the strongest leaders in each position within the new leadership structure. This means we can have the strongest governors, senior leaders, subject leaders and pastoral leaders – those who have the best track record of securing high outcomes and delivering the highest level of care - leading school improvement across the two sites. The joining of two schools represents an opportunity for a step change improvement in the quality of leadership. Larger departments with a greater number of staff will ensure more resilience.</i> 2) <i><u>Improved leadership leads to improved teaching:</u> Professor David Reynolds has stated: ‘we know that effective leadership of a school from the Headteacher and through to other ‘middle leadership’ positions is important in its own right and important in generating...high quality classroom teaching’ (WG PDG guidance 2013-15). Leadership and teaching quality are linked. The research is clear, by securing a step change improvement in leadership, we are able to secure a step change improvement in teaching quality.</i> 3) <i><u>Improved coaching and mentoring support opportunities for staff:</u> It is essential that time is allocated to enable the best teaching staff in different subject areas to travel between sites (or communicate regularly via video conferencing arrangements) in order to provide mentoring/coaching/resources for their colleagues on the other</i>
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<p>proposals. This will affect BOTH schools and ALL pupils of Llandrindod and Builth schools.</p> <p>Teachers and the leadership team will be pushed to the brink due to dramatically increased workloads.</p> <p>The teachers will also have an increased workload following this decision having to initially travel in between the two sites. Teachers' workloads have already increased over recent years and they are becoming burnt out which means that another increase in workload will only have a negative affect on their teaching ability and so will reduce the standard of teaching.</p> <p>The teachers, particularly the leadership team, heads of year and subjects etc. will have a hugely increased workload if they are to cover both schools equally. How can they manage their work and commitments as they would on one site, with the travelling between sites, parent events etc. and provide a fair provision to every child and parent? E.g. - Newtown and John Beddoes School - their school production means that Pupils in John Beddoes will not have a chance to perform on stage as it will be in Newtown. They will only be able to take part in playing the music. There aren't enough hours in the day to cope with the pressure, but as dedicated professionals, they will soldier on until they are unable to manage and will break under the strain. Where will the savings be then when supply teachers will need to be paid for?</p> <p>"The proposer identifies appropriately that the transition</p>	<p><i>campus. This ongoing mentoring support and training can have a considerable impact on teaching quality. One there is a world of difference between the potential impact of loose school-to-school collaboration between separate schools, and the level of collaboration and support in a single school with split sites. The extent to which leaders are willing to invest finite time into engaging in mentoring, coaching and training of staff on the second campus of a single school is considerably higher if leaders are going to be held to account for standards and provision on both sites.</i></p> <p>4) <u><i>Economies of scale leads to greater investment in teaching and learning</i></u>: <i>By having a single leader of each curriculum area across the two school sites and a more streamlined senior leadership structure, savings can be generated over time. The new leadership team would be able to invest these savings in whatever way they believe would make the greatest impact on standards.</i></p> <p><u>Operational Issues</u></p> <p><i>Parents and pupils will be made aware of the structure of each department, and clear protocols will be put in place, as expected at every school, about how parents can contact teachers to discuss pupil-related issues.</i></p>
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to the new school will provide substantial additional workload for the shadowing governing body and appointed leadership team, and how the council aims to support this process. However, the proposer is less clear about how the proposal will result in improvements in the quality of leadership and management once the new school is established." Additional travel time between the two sites means that the workload of some of the leaders will more than double. For example, the new head of maths would be looking after twice as many teachers and will also have to share his/her time between the two sites. No allowance has been made in the proposal for supporting this additional workload. No research has been done to predict the effect of reducing teaching time of senior leaders in order for them to increase their management time

The expectation you are putting on these members of the leadership team and teaching staff to not only lead and teach on two sites, but to also travel between campuses in order to provide mentoring opportunities for colleagues, is incredibly high

Another consideration that doesn't seem to have been made thoroughly is the practicality of staff members travelling between sites. You assert that it is essential for time to be made for teachers to do this but the reality of not having consistency of personnel on one campus at all times is incredibly risky. The various needs of pupils create issues that a leadership team is responsible for dealing with, and in a school these happen on a daily basis. These can include bad behaviour incidents, SEN issues or pastoral difficulties based on students' home lives. The best leadership

teams are not just those that use good policies but those that enforce these policies accurately and consistently. I am concerned that the location of personnel over two campuses will make the application of such systems very challenging. Day to day issues cannot be timed according to travel schedules and if the strongest leaders of the dual-sited school are not on hand to immediately deal with an incident, it could escalate into a much larger issue,, which could then become quite a considerable barrier to learning.

The teachers will also have an increased workload following this decision having to initially travel in between the two sites. Teachers' workloads have already increased over recent years and they are becoming burnt out which means that another increase in workload will only have a negative effect on their teaching ability and so will reduce the standard of teaching.

Teachers will have an increased workload, especially the leadership team and less time due to travelling.

Going back to the original plan of reopening the two schools on their current sites under a shared leadership team, I am very concerned at the extra pressure this would put the teaching staff under as they battle to manage teaching pupils on two different sites. The extra time required in doing this would take teachers out of the classroom, particularly the leadership team so our children will lose out on benefitting from their longer experience of teaching. I sadly already see increased numbers of teachers needing support, counselling, medication and time off work in my role as a GP and this will undoubtedly increase if your plans proceed.

How this will improve our young people's standard of teaching escapes me. Indeed, Estyn themselves recognise the progress being made by each High School but are not convinced the proposal will even maintain the current standards.

How does the area expect to attract more teachers of a better standard if they will be forced to travel back and forth between two sites?

- Do we really want department heads running around between two schools constantly? Do we? Truly? Will that be anything short of a nightmare?

In September 2018, one school on two sites will lead to a loss of further teaching staff with the appointment of one headteacher and one leadership team (with redundancies of existing staff an almost certainty). On a day to day basis, will staff members be expected to travel the 14 mile round trip between the 2 campuses to attend appointments, teach pupils and undertake extra-curricular activities? A teacher's already stretched workload will almost certainly be unmanageable with travel time being scheduled in. The main losers will be the children that attend the school. They will not have easy access to teaching staff due to their absence to another campus and will feel quite strongly that a raising of standards against this backdrop will be extremely difficult if almost impossible

1. I believe that the pupils' education will suffer due to the fact that the teachers workloads will include, especially the management and Heads of Department. The workload at present is immense without reducing the timescale in half and increasing the workload with

managing it over the two schools.

2. The proposals are a gamble and not based on hard facts, with the result that the education of a number of cohorts of pupils in both schools is being put at risk during the inevitable prolonged reorganisation process and settling in period. Teacher morale will also be affected, resulting in further adverse disruption to educational standards and student outcomes.

Whilst I appreciate that there are financial restrictions in the current economic climate, I believe there are other alternatives for reducing budgets. Estyn themselves do not consider that the proposal will maintain standards and in my experience, staff going through organisational change do not perform to the highest standards, but they do go off sick and become stressed and de-moralised.

After watching the consultation meetings at the schools I cannot see how the proposals will help either school to raise educational standards, quite the contrary. Morale amongst teachers is at an all time low as it is and I believe that having only one headteacher, one management team and one board of governors between two schools will put added stress on everyone involved and be detrimental to pupil's education. Our position and this proposal is not the same as Newtown High and John Beddoes!!

How can over worked staff and less money be better for our children's education? I thought that the key focus here is for improving our children's education not diminishing it! Estyn have themselves have reported that they are not convinced that standards will improve stating 'the proposal will at least

	maintain standards'	
4.2	Concern about impact on leaders	
	<p>Having read your published Secondary School Reorganisation Programme from 27 September 2016, I am particularly dubious about the practical reality of 'improved leadership at all levels'. It is on this point (which seems to constitute the primary advantage of your proposal) that I wish to discuss in this letter. As your programme reads: 'When streamlining the leadership structure following the joining of two schools into one split site secondary school, the newly appointed governing body are able to place the strongest leaders (...) - those who have the best track record of securing high outcomes and delivering the highest levels of care - leading school improvement across the two sites'.</p> <p>The underlying assumption behind this statement is that the strongest leaders will undeniably be available to handle the management of a dual-sited school and that this is a guaranteed way of improving performance, and subsequently learning of pupils, in the local catchment area.</p> <p>The suggestion that a merged school will be able to select the strongest leaders at all levels, and therefore standards will improve has two problems: it assumed that the new school will be able to select the strongest leaders, and it assumes that the strongest leader when operating within their current leadership team at a single site school will also be the strongest leader when operating within their current leadership team at a dual site school. There is no guarantee that either is true.</p>	<p><i>The authority acknowledges the point made in this objection i.e. there is an assumption that the strongest leaders would apply for leadership posts. However, where this has taken place in other schools where staff populations have merged, middle leaders, have, in the main, regarded this as an opportunity to develop their career, and influence quality of provision for more pupils.</i></p> <p>See response 4.1</p>

Leaders may choose to move to another school, once the merger becomes a certainty (we have already seen a drop in staff morale and an increase in staff turnover at Llandrindod High School due to the merger process). And strong leadership has a high dependency on teamwork - in many cases it is better to build up an existing team that is working well than to create a new one by bringing in stronger people.

The successful Head - bearing in mind that she is currently struggling to improve a failing school - will then be given another several hundred pupils and their parents, dozens of extra staff - some of whom will no doubt be very dispirited - another office several miles away, and then be told (against Estyn's warning) that she has to improved standards. Talk about a poisoned chalice....

The whole concept that running one school on two sites with head teachers and heads of department being stretched between the two makes no sense!

The proposed merger of the two school includes a merger of the two sets of leaders. One headteacher, one senior leadership team, one set of subject leaders, and one governing body. However, because the number of pupils will remain the same, the number of staff will only slightly reduce, and the same buildings will be used, the total amount of work that the new leadership will be required to do will be only slightly smaller than it is now. This will nearly double the workload of most of the leadership team (with the possible exception of the governing body).

<p>PCC provided the following evidence to support its view that the merger would improve standards: the correlation between improved leadership and raised standards;</p> <p>I am also concerned that each school will lose their heads of subject teaching time due to the heads managing people in both schools.</p> <p>The expectation that both schools will be expected to manage with less budget and less senior managers leaves great uncertainty on the way ahead.</p> <p>A merger would place an additional burden on any new leadership team which is likely to result in an immediate decrease in standards and logistical chaos</p> <p>I am also worried about having one Head teacher between both campuses. I believe that over time, one campus will inevitably secure more favourable attention over the other. This will be at the detriment of the pupils.</p> <p>4. Teachers will have an increased workload, especially the leadership team</p> <p>Teachers will have an improved workload, especially the leadership team.</p> <p>4The leadership team will have to stretch across both sites which would hugely increase their workload.</p> <p>The proposal will increase the workload of teachers, especially those in the leadership team, at a time when across the country it is acknowledged that the workload</p>	
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	<p>needs to be reduced, in order for teachers to perform at their best.</p> <p>My second objection is that teachers, particularly those in middle and senior management positions, will face a vastly increased workload, to say nothing of the difficulties of trying to administrate two campuses. Those who have invested much in time and energy to their work as Heads of Departments and Tear Team Leaders will have to reapply for their own jobs, and some will not be successful. Rather than increasing efficiency, this proposal is guaranteed to make life much more difficult for teachers, with its inevitable knock-on effect on the education that Powys children receive, which must be our gravest concern.</p> <p>Both schools are likely to suffer if the leadership team is stretched between the two school sites. This raises issues with communication, extra travel and losing touch with one site or the other. Also the extra work that any management team will have trying to be in two places at once.</p> <p>6. The senior leadership team of the new school will have an increased workload, without having the in-depth knowledge of the school or their teams in order to raise standards.</p> <p>Leadership teams are comprised of some of the best teachers in both schools. Reducing the size of this leadership team will only encourage some of the best teachers in the area to leave and their experience and knowledge will therefore be lost.</p>	
4.4	Impact of low staff morale currently	

	<p>The likelihood of a successful dual-sited school emerging from September 2018 is very dependent on leadership personnel, as you have acknowledged in the report. However, I am unsure that the governing body of the new school will be guaranteed to have every current staff member at their disposal for the formation of a new leadership team. I can only imagine that the morale amongst staff members is currently very low and after your announcement to create the dual-sited school, a large proportion will be looking elsewhere for work. Therefore it could be assumed that you are going to indirectly cause the relocation of a number of teaching professionals from Powys, and this could possibly include your 'strongest leaders'. On top of the economic consequences of forcing out working professionals, you are also likely to discourage others from moving to the area, and this could well contribute to the on-going demise of the local economy.</p> <p>Surely the last thing those members of staff need is the additional challenge of merging schools on separate sites? What they surely need are resources, support, stability and more support.</p> <p>I can imagine what the disruption would look like: staff spending their time worrying about the proposal rather than focusing on improving their teaching. Good staff looking to for new jobs rather than risk losing their existing ones. I'm particularly concerned about losing the staff who are currently Heads of Dept - 50% of them are going to lose their position - they'd be mad to sit and wait for it to happen. Those with any get up and go - exactly the staff we want - will probably get up and go. Heads who are currently fighting to pull things together and improve standards will spend their time considering</p>	<p><i>Any school reorganisation process creates uncertainty for staff. The authority is fully aware that both schools are currently in special measures and are working very hard to improve the situation. However, the authority's view is that the proposal would provide a long-term solution for secondary education in the area which would enable the new school to flourish and provide the highest quality education for pupils in Mid Powys.</i></p> <p><i>If the proposal is approved by cabinet, the next steps would be to establish a temporary governing body. Its first task would be to begin the process of recruiting a headteacher for the new school. Once a headteacher is in place, the process of developing the staffing structure would then commence.</i></p> <p><i>It is recognised that some current staff may choose not to apply for posts within the new school and this would be their individual choice. However, all staff would be supported through the process by the authority's HR department in accordance with HR policies and procedures.</i></p>
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which one of them is going to lose their position - the Head of Llandrindod has already disappeared, leaving us with an (albeit very good) acting Head with all the problems and instability that the situation provides both for her and the school.

The practicalities of having one school on two sites has not been well thought through as a first stage proposal. Should the cabinet decide to go ahead with a merger in 2018, this will result in approximately 18 months of limbo for both schools whereby existing teaching staff will look for new jobs and the recruitment of new staff will be increasingly difficult. This is also set against the backdrop of both schools having to work particularly hard to raise standards in order to get out of their 'special measures' category.

The teaching staff, and especially the senior leadership team, at Llandrindod are under great pressure at present. This is brought about by increased workload created from termly monitoring visits but also the pressure to provide the current curriculum. The low morale of this excellent staff is further undermined by this proposal, which creates uncertainty of future employment as well as immense difficulty in acquiring much-needed new staff to Mid Wales. Consequently this plan will massively increase the workload especially in the leadership team.

Whilst I appreciate that there are financial restrictions in the current economic climate, I believe there are other alternatives for reducing budgets. Estyn themselves do not consider that the proposal will maintain standards and in my experience, staff going

through organisational change do not perform to the highest standards, but they do go off sick and become stressed and de-moralised.

The proposals are a gamble and not based on hard facts, with the result that the education of a number of cohorts of pupils in both schools is being put at risk during the inevitable prolonged reorganisation process and settling in period. Teacher morale will also be affected, resulting in further adverse disruption to educational standards and student outcomes.

Teachers already have a large workload in comparison to their pay and in recent years have the added stress of dealing with Estyn inspections which seem to give no positive feedback and just make the already stressful life of a teacher even worse.

increase pressure and stress on an already struggling staff body (where is your duty of care to them?);
decrease staff motivation;

4. Teachers will have an increased workload, especially the leadership team. Staff morale is already at an all-time low due to this instability. Powys County Council and Schools Service need to open up constructive dialogue with the Schools that support good learning environments. Powys County Council needs to consider that stability could potentially offer more than transformation. The council needs to hone its people management skills to inspire positive change instead of forcing our teachers to undergo the humiliation of reapplying for their jobs.

	<p>The best teachers will leave for fear of losing their jobs and the poor teachers will be hanging on for redundancy, any new posts which are advertised will not have quality applicants with this uncertainty hanging over them. The proposal made by Llandrindod Governors was by far the best suggestion.</p> <p>4: There is an obvious lack of morale amongst the staff at Builth High School. I believe it is time that Powys acknowledged its role in contributing to this due to the uncertainty over the last few years.</p> <p>The whole process is creating a great deal of uncertainty for staff and students. We have already lost one fantastic teacher and more will follow. Significant numbers of year 11 are looking at out of county or private options for their sixth form. Please stop this process now and support our schools rather than undermine them. Your actions are harming the education of thousands of young people.</p> <p>All the time this whole merger and threat of school closure is being discussed, the morale of the students and teachers is in decline and replacement of any that retire or leave is increasingly unsuccessful.</p>	
4.5	Operational issues	
	<p>Builth have five one hour lessons per day, Llandrindod have six fifty minute lessons – how is this to be resolved? Each school starts and ends at a different time and has different lunchtimes, etc. It is all well and good for Ian Roberts to state that the governing body will decide “the details” but these are non-paid volunteers and most do not understand the intricacies of the school day.</p>	<p><i>The temporary governing body and new permanent governing body would work with the head and senior leadership team to structure the timetable and it would be expected that there would be a single timetable across both sites.</i></p>

	<p>10. By ring-fencing jobs this will give the new school the inability to get the best people for the jobs. You only have 1 standing head therefore there is no ability to get the best person for the job.</p>	<p><i>The decision to ring-fence specific jobs or not would be the decision of the temporary governing body. The temporary governing body could decide to advertise externally for a headteacher rather than ring-fence the post – alternatively, they could also decide to ring-fence the post.</i></p>

5.	Welsh-Medium Issues	
5.1	Need for a Category 2A Welsh-medium Secondary School	
	<p>Despite our objections to the planned merger, we would also like to state our willingness to work together with you on future development of Welsh medium education in Mid Powys. In particular we are pleased to see that in the draft WESP (Welsh Education Strategic plan) there is a proposed review of primary provision in Mid Powys and exploration of late immersion provision as important steps on the journey towards a Category 2A Welsh Medium secondary school.</p> <p>In light of this, we would like to state our preferred model in Mid Powys as the development of a Category 2A Welsh Medium High School for the many positive reasons you laid out on page 76 and 77 of the consultation document.</p> <p>We would argue that the many positives of this model warrant formal exploration, particularly in relation to the assumptions made around costings.</p> <p>It has been shown that in other areas that if Category 2A Welsh Medium secondary provision is made available, then the demand for that provision will grow significantly. This will have an impact on assumptions around transport costs and provide a real incentive for young people from the Brecon and Sennybridge areas to attend the Mid Powys school.</p> <p>A Category 2A school would address the concerns regarding the 'dilution' of the Welsh stream and the impact on teaching that would be present in the planned merger and it would attract more high-calibre teachers to the area.</p> <p>We also wish to state our desire for equality of choice and parity of provision in Mid Powys in relation to any</p>	<p><i>As stated in Powys' draft WESP for 2017-20: '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'. The authority has recently consulted on a related proposal to close the Welsh stream at Brecon High School, although no decisions have yet been made. The authority's view is that centralising the current provision in mid and south Powys in one location is the most suitable way forward at the current time in order to ensure that more robust linguistic continuity can be provided to Welsh-medium learners. As stated in the consultation document in respect of the recent proposal to close the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School, 'this would provide a solid base which could be further developed in the future, through the possible establishment of designated Welsh-medium secondary provision to serve the area.'</i></p> <p><i>Any future proposals to establish a category 2A school would be subject to formal consultation procedures in accordance with the Schools Standards and Organisation Act and the Schools Organisation Code 2013.</i></p> <p><i>Any school reorganisation consultation document must include information about alternative options that have been considered. Appendix B of the consultation document included the business case that was considered by cabinet on the 23rd February 2016, which included a range of possible options for Mid and South Powys.</i></p> <p><i>The conclusion to this option appraisal states the following:</i> 'In conclusion, there is strong case that Option 5A (a category 2A bilingual school) should be the preferred option, based on a stronger strategic fit with associated educational and linguistic benefits. However, given the current and future financial challenges faced by the authority,</p>

proposals being developed in North Powys. If in the future there is a Category 2A Welsh Medium school established in the North, then we would argue that it would be a fundamental issue of equality that equivalent linguistic provision be offered to learners in both Mid and South Powys.

The initiative would like to see the Council establishing a category 2A school in Mid Powys, as we believe this is the best way of developing our pupils linguistic skills, developing confidence and fluency and therefore ensuring everyday use of the language in this area. We believe that establishing a dedicated Welsh medium high school would clarify and strengthen Welsh medium pupils education path, and therefore encourage more families to choose Welsh education for their children.

I live in Llanwrtyd and our children attend Ysgol Dolafon. I made the choice to put my children through an English medium education because of the lack of Welsh Medium Education in Powys and the quality of how it is provided. (I am talking from experience as I was educated through the Welsh medium attending the Welsh stream at Ysgol Dolafon and then at Builth Wells High School) Ysgol Dolafon is a very bilingual School delivering both Welsh & English education. But after you forced the closure of Ysgol Dolafon Welsh stream and you now send the children to Ysgol Gymraeg Llanfair y Muallt. I can only presume that your intention is to turn Builth High School into a Welsh Medium School in the long term if you get enough numbers? But it says in your Notice that Builth is going to be a bilingual school? Which is where I get a little confused? As is it not a bilingual school already? Surely it is not viable? This was one of your main reasons for closing

Option 3A is the preferred option based on economic reasons. Further work is required to ascertain the capital costs linked to this option. It must be noted that Option 3A would still be able to provide the appropriate conditions for the growth of Welsh-medium education in the area, where the possibility of a viable Bilingual Category 2A (Welsh-medium) school could be considered in future. ‘

	<p>the Welsh stream as Ysgol Dolafon? Surely the best thing for Welsh Medium Education is a Welsh Medium School? May I suggest that you take a leaf out of Ysgol Is Coed in Newport. They have opened with 86 pupils on an existing school site in porta cabins as an independent school sharing the school site? Until their numbers increase and they find and build a new school. Surely this would be a better option than proposing to close both schools and re open as a dual site? May I also point out that other high schools share resources across schools but are not dual sited? (Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw in Torfaen & Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni in Caerphilly). I look forward to receiving more detailed information on this Notice.</p> <p>I also believe that consideration should be given to delivering Welsh Medium on one site and English Medium on the other, ideally as two separate schools, one being a category 2A Welsh Medium Secondary School. Such a school would enhance provision and encourage take up of Welsh Medium education. It would also provide parity with the proposed category 2A school in North Powys.</p>	
5.2	Lack of clarity and inconsistency	
5.2.1	Impact assessments	
	<p>The consultation documents Draft Welsh Language Impact Assessment and Draft Equality Impact Assessment available on your website do not address the impact on Welsh Medium education as a result of the planned merger, instead only focusing on the</p>	<p><i>In accordance with the Welsh Government's Schools Organisation Code 2013, the authority published draft impact assessments (equality, community and Welsh language) as part of the formal consultation process that was held between April 6th and June 1st 2016. These were updated to include issues that were raised during the consultation process</i></p>

impact from the potential closure of the Welsh Medium stream in Brecon High School, which is still undergoing consultation.

As an example of this, in the Draft Equality Impact Assessment Section 8 (Areas for Improvement), question iii) 'Will Welsh speakers be affected?' the only conclusion is that 'there will be a positive impact for Welsh speakers as the school will have a larger Welsh-medium stream with an enhanced range of provision'. We would argue that there is no evidence that the planned merger would result in a larger Welsh stream with an enhanced range of provision.

These documents were referred to in the consultation document relating the planned merger, including the line 'the proposal provides positives for the Welsh Language and Welsh-medium education through improved linguistic progression and opportunities for pupils through all key stages of education' on page 31, again seemingly referring to the separate proposal to close Brecon High School's Welsh-medium stream.

We would argue that the pre-assumption that Brecon High School's Welsh stream will close apparent in these documents should mean that the planned merger should not take place and that potentially a new consultation would have to be undertaken with the correct impact assessment in place so that a fair picture of the impact on Welsh Medium education can be addressed.

As a Welsh Language initiative, we aim to create and strengthen Welsh speaking communities in South Powys. We empower and support local communities to plan and develop opportunities for Welsh speakers and learners of all ages. Because of this aim, the initiative opposes the Statutory Notice to unite the two high

and were considered, alongside the Consultation Report, by cabinet on 27th September 2016.

At the same time, the authority was also consulting on an associated proposal for Brecon and Gwernyfed High Schools, of which one element was as follows:

c) 'From the 1st September 2017, Welsh-medium secondary education to be delivered at the Builth Wells site of the proposed new school in Mid Powys (provided that the Proposal is approved by cabinet following consultation).'

The authority published a Welsh Language Impact Assessment (draft and final) that related to Welsh-medium provision across South and Mid Powys. However, the majority of issues raised during both consultations related to proposal c) above, and the impact of this proposal. This can be evidenced in the Consultation Reports for both proposals.

There was no pre-assumption that Brecon High School's Welsh stream would close in the impact assessments – the impact assessments were undertaken on the proposals that were put forward at that time.

	<p>schools on the basis of two specific points:</p> <p>1. Assessments to measure the effect on the Welsh Language</p> <p>We do not consider that the assessments to measure the effect within the consultation document is a fair reflection of the effect that merging the two schools would have on the Welsh stream. We feel that the document takes for granted that the Welsh stream in Brecon High School will close, as it mentions a higher number of pupils in the school on two sites. Of course, the Welsh stream hasn't closed, and its future is uncertain as yet, therefore a higher number of pupils should not be taken for granted.</p>	
5.2.2	Response to questions around the impact of a 'more English' school	
	<p>During the consultation period, the question was asked ' what will the effect of injecting more English medium pupils into the school by a merger?' (Consultation Report, page 27 4.3.1) The only response given to this and other concerns regarding the impact on the 'vision of a fully bilingual school in Mid Wales' was that 'the proposal is for the Welsh stream to remain on the Builth Wells site of the new dual-sited school' and that 'the new governing body and senior leadership team would be required to develop a strong Welsh ethos across both sites'.</p> <p>We feel that this does not address the questions for two reasons:</p> <p>i) As yet, there is no clarity about the future of the Welsh Medium stream in Builth Wells.</p> <p>While the statutory notice states that pupils who wish to</p>	<p><i>The proposal intends to establish a new bilingual dual-sited school that will operate from the current sites of Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools, with Welsh-medium education proposed to be delivered from the Builth site of the new school. Therefore, the statutory notice clearly states the location of these Welsh-medium places from September 1st 2018.</i></p> <p><i>This does not contradict any responses given previously about the power of the temporary or permanent governing body of the proposed new dual-sited school. Ultimately, the decision on how to structure the school will be made by the school's governing body and management team. Should the governing body wish to structure the teaching in a different way, which could have an impact on where Welsh-medium provision is provided, the authority would expect the governing body to consider the impact on the well-being of pupils and staff, the financial impact and any issues relating to the provision of home-to-school transport.</i></p> <p><i>The authority is responsible for the provision of home-to-school transport in accordance with its Schools Transport Policy and any significant</i></p>

<p>access Welsh-medium provision will be allocated places at the Builth Wells campus of the New School', this seems to contradict responses given during the consultation process. It was suggested that it would be the governing body of the New School who would eventually have the power to decide which classes were delivered in which locations.</p> <p>If the governing body did decide to move some delivery e.g. if key stage 4 English Medium classes were only delivered in Llandrindod, there is little clarity over where the burden of transport costs would fall.</p> <p>We are also concerned that where the governing body of a 'more English Medium' school could be under increasing financial pressure to make savings, this would potentially impact on the availability of Welsh provision in the 'more expensive' Welsh stream.</p>	<p><i>additional cost to this budget will need to be discussed with the authority.</i></p> <p><i>As with any school, the proposed new dual-sited school would be expected to operate within the funding it receives via the fair funding formula, which includes an additional allowance for Welsh-medium classes.</i></p>
<p>ii) As the need to have a “strong Welsh ethos” is present for every bilingual school, no matter the ratio between English Medium and Welsh Medium learners, we feel this does not address the real concerns about extra pressures put on a proportionally smaller Welsh stream in this environment.</p> <p>I'm writing on behalf of Menter Brycheiniog a Maesyfed (Brecknockshire and Radnorshire Welsh Language initiative) to formally oppose the Statutory notice to close Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools and re-open them in September 2018 as one school over two sites.</p>	<p><i>The authority acknowledges that the Welsh stream would be proportionately smaller as part of a dual-sited school. However, the proportion on the Builth Wells site, (if the proposal is implemented) should remain the same. The authority would expect the school to develop a strong Welsh ethos and that the Welsh language is fully visible and utilised across both sites.</i></p>

	<p>We strongly believe it would be very difficult to sustain, never mind expanding the Welsh ethos in a school where the Welsh stream is marginally smaller than it currently is in Builth Wells High School. The Welsh Ethos can be vulnerable in bilingual schools, but the school currently has a strong attitude and Welsh ethos which nurtures pupils pride in the language and culture. We believe that merging the two schools would endanger this situation due to the change in percentage of pupils studying through the medium of Welsh. We foresee that merging that two schools would dilute the Welsh ethos of the school and possible make it difficult to recruit and retain teachers. We are concerned on the long term effect of merging the two schools, not only on the current pupils, but also on the ability of schools with Welsh medium streams to attract new families to Welsh education</p>	
5.3	Impact on Welsh Medium Teaching	
	<p>We are concerned that the potential impact of the merger on the distribution of Welsh Medium teachers has not been fully explored. While there is uncertainty over the leadership's structure of the new school, we assume that various leadership roles will be split over the two sites. If a Welsh medium teacher from Builth Wells wishes to seek on of these leadership roles, this will take them away from their Welsh Medium delivery, as there will be a greater proportion of English Medium involved in split roles. As it is already difficult to cover lessons for some Welsh Medium classes due to the availability of appropriate teachers, and there is no guarantee of extra Welsh learners in the school we believe this situation will exacerbate the problem. This may also dissuade ambitious Welsh Medium teachers from applying for leadership positions in the new school</p>	<p><i>The authority acknowledges that, if the proposal is implemented and leadership roles are required to operate across both sites, there would be a risk that Welsh-medium teachers may not always be on the Builth Wells site. As a bilingual school, the authority would expect the school to provide a curriculum that meets the needs of Welsh-medium pupils as well as English-medium pupils. However, the decision on how to structure the school would be made by the school's governing body and management team, with advice from the authority's challenge advisors.</i></p>

	<p>and encourage them to seek opportunities elsewhere.</p> <p>We feel that this last point is a key example of how throughout this process there has been little to no consideration as to how the Welsh Medium provision can be maintained, enhanced or developed following the planned merger. Instead, we would argue, there has been a reliance on assuming that there will be more Welsh Medium learners due to the closure of Brecon High School's Welsh Medium stream.</p> <p>As a parent of a child who has undertaken her primary education through the medium of Welsh, I see no way in which this proposal will increase the number of subject teachers who will be able to teach through the medium of Welsh.</p>	<p><i>The number of pupils in years 7 – 11 in the Welsh stream at Builth Wells High School has increased from a 107 in September 2014 to 138 in September 2016. A related proposal is currently being taken forward by the authority, regarding the Welsh stream at Brecon High School. However, no final decision has been made.</i></p>
5.4	Support for Welsh-medium Education	
	<p>Despite our (Rhag) objections to the planned merger, we would also like to state our willingness to work together with you on future development of Welsh medium education in Mid Powys.</p> <p>The initiative (Menter Brycheiniog a Maesyfed) is happy to work with the local authority in developing the Welsh language in Powys, and we look forward to continue working to promote and strengthen the Welsh language in the county</p>	<p><i>The authority welcomes this support and will work closely with both organisations to develop Welsh-medium provision in the area in future.</i></p>
5.5	Concern that proposal could lead to the establishment of a Welsh-medium secondary school	
	<p>I fear that if this proposal comes to fruition Builth will be forced to become a solely Welsh Medium school against the wishes of the majority of the schools</p>	<p><i>As stated in Powys' draft WESP for 2017-20: '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</i></p>

	<p>catchment area;</p>	<p><i>they come from non-Welsh speaking homes'. The authority has recently consulted on a related proposal to close the Welsh stream at Brecon High School, although no decisions have been made yet. The authority's view is that centralising the current provision in mid and south Powys in one location is the most suitable way forward at the current time in order to ensure that more robust linguistic continuity can be provided to Welsh-medium learners. As stated in the consultation document in respect of the recent proposal to close the Welsh-medium stream at Brecon High School, 'this would provide a solid base which could be further developed in the future, through the possible establishment of designated Welsh-medium secondary provision to serve the area.'</i></p> <p><i>Any future proposals to establish a category 2A school would be subject to formal consultation procedures in accordance with the Schools Standards and Organisation Act and the Schools Organisation Code 2013.</i></p>
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6.	The Case for Change	
	<p>Reasons for change As the proposal leaves the same children occupying the same school buildings, the proposed merger can have no impact on the following 'reasons for change' specified by PCC:</p>	<p><i>The reasons for the proposal are based on a number of factors, as outlined below:</i></p>
	<p>- falling pupil numbers</p>	<p><i>Pupil numbers have fallen across the county, and this has a direct impact on the funding available to schools.</i></p> <p><i>The county council commissioned a study by Price Waterhouse Cooper to report on the potential financial viability of each of the secondary and of the overall provision of secondary education across the county. The report concluded that ‘all the schools appear to be reaching a point where their options are extremely limited and there is a tangible risk that schools will become finance, rather than curriculum led’, and that ‘in light of the forecasted, deteriorating financial position of the whole county provision, even a concerted, joint effort of cost management may not be enough to avoid the requirement to examine structural changes to the education provision across the county’.</i></p> <p><i>The authority’s view is that the proposal will create a sustainable secondary school infrastructure that would be more resilient to the challenges created by fluctuations in pupil numbers. However, it is acknowledged that a dual-sited school does not provide the same economies of scale and other benefits as a single-sited school with a larger critical mass would be able to provide.</i></p>
	<p>- low numbers in some year groups making it difficult to provide the full curriculum</p>	<p><i>At key stage 3 and key stage 4, it is not expected that pupils would travel between sites. However, the new governing body would be responsible for how it structures the curriculum and timetable, and it may be possible that some subjects would be taught on one site only at key stage 4. This</i></p>

		<i>would increase the options available to those pupil.'</i>
	- difficult to provide an equitable range of subjects through the medium of Welsh	<i>Welsh-medium provision would be available to pupils at the Bulth Wells site of the proposed new school.</i>
	- too many surplus places	<i>The consultation document states that there are too many surplus places in both schools, it does not state that this proposal will reduce the level of surplus places at either site of the proposed new school.</i>
	<p>The other reasons for change were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited post 16 education (mentioned twice, so it must be important). Currently, the two school collaborate on post-16 education, together with other schools in South Powys. The proposed merger will have little impact on both the total range of subjects taught and on the quality of the teaching, and most of the benefits of a merger could be implemented with closer collaboration and sharing of best practices rather than a school merger 	<p><i>Schools in South Powys deliver post-16 provision through the South Powys Post-16 Partnership. Learners are able to choose subjects from a single timetable with option blocks – learners can then travel to other schools to study subjects not available to them at their home school. This model enables the authority to meet the statutory requirements of the Learning and Skills Measure – i.e. all learners in South Powys have access to 30 options, 5 of which are vocational. However, the reality is that, depending on school location or other subject choices, a learner's choice is limited.</i></p> <p><i>The authority is concerned that the continued year-on-year reduction in funding for Post-16 provision means that the number of subjects offered is also reducing. Pupils currently have to travel between existing school sites to access a broad range of academic and vocational courses during the school day, with associated costs.</i></p> <p><i>The authority's optimum model for post-16 education is for centres to be able to provide 25 subjects, with a minimum class size of 12 and above. The proposal is to establish a new 11 – 18 school across two sites. It would be the decision of the governing body whether it wished to centralise post-16 education on one site, but the authority would strongly encourage this to happen. The benefits would be increased critical mass, enabling a wider range of subjects to be offered from one location. It is the authority's view that this would be attractive to learners and would stem the flow of learners leaving the county for post-16 provision, as</i></p>

		<i>currently happens</i>
	- The significant forecast deficit budget at Llandrindod High School, unless action is taken. Action has been taken, and there is now no significant budget deficit forecast.	<i>Both Llandrindod and Builth Wells High Schools are currently forecasting deficit budgets, based on the latest financial plans received from both schools.</i>
	- The Estyn ' special measures' status of both schools. Again, the proposed merger will have little impact on the Estyn status - the new school will continue to be monitored. And if it is Estyn's view that there is not enough evidence to support the view that standards will at least be maintained by the merger, their current position must be that the new school would also be considered, at least in the minds of the inspectors, as still in special measures.	<i>The benefits of the proposal are outlined in (1.1). If the proposal is implemented, WG and Estyn would still require the new school to be regularly monitored by ERW and by Estyn. Estyn inspect all new school within two years of opening, usually when there are two sets of pupil attainment data available.</i>
	4. Sharing of good practice, resources and staff can contribute to a continued improvement in standards at both schools without the distraction and added pressure to governors and staff of effecting the merger. At two or more cabinet members justified their support for the proposal against the amendment passed by full council by stating that the schools had already been working collectively and had not improved standards, so did not deserve 'another chance'. This was either a deliberate distortion of the truth or those members were seriously mislead or misinformed. The collaboration was not just between Builth and Llandrindod. I believe the collaboration to which they were referring was the 14 - 16 and post-16 collaboration between the college and schools across Powys, which was intended to increase the number of subjects on offer to pupils and to give access to vocational subjects too.	<i>In 2011, cabinet agreed, following a period of informal consultation on secondary school reorganisation, to establish 'learning partnerships' of schools. The learning partnerships took forward school-to-school collaboration on a more formal basis. A South Powys learning partnership was formed, and schools held joint CPD events. However, the learning partnership in South Powys evolved to focus mainly on post-16 collaboration.</i>

	<p>6. Keeping the merged school on 2 sites negates many of the potential economics of scale. The merged school still has the same area of buildings and grounds to maintain, which are still in the same condition as before the merger. Pupil numbers on each site remain the same, except possibly for 6th form, so there are no potential savings from creating a 'critical mass' of learners, either to staffing or provision of resources.</p> <p>If the educational outcomes are doubtful then surely the aim is economic</p>	<p><i>The authority's view is that the proposal would create a sustainable secondary school infrastructure that would be more resilient to the challenges created by fluctuations in pupil numbers. However, it is acknowledged that a dual-sited school does not provide the same economies of scale and other benefits as a single-sited school with a larger critical mass would be able to provide.</i></p>
	<p>I dispute the following points that were stated as reasons for closure at your cabinet meeting on the 27th September where you passed the motion to close Bulth Wells high school.</p> <p>The portfolio holder Arwel Jones stated from the report that the closure would:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve leadership at all levels 2. This would lead to improved teaching 3. This would lead to improved coaching and mentoring 4, There would be less duplication of subjects 5. There would be greater choice of subjects for pupils 6, There would be no proposed change to the sixth form 7. There would be investment in the Llandrindod site <p>I dispute these points that you used to justify your vote to close the schools because:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There were no reasons given why points 1 - 5 would happen? 2. Why do the schools need to close to improve leadership? 3. Why would this lead to improved teaching? 4. I cannot see how there would be less duplication of 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. See Section 4 2. See Section 1 3. See Section 1 4. See Section 3 5. <i>The reason for the proposal is not to improve the building condition of Llandrindod High School. As part of the authority's continued ambition to improve its schools infrastructure, condition assessments are carried out on a regular basis. This informs the authority's priorities for capital investment. Llandrindod High School is a condition C school building, and therefore this would be a high priority for capital investment.</i>

	<p>subjects or more choice if there are two sites? 5. Why do the schools need to close in order to invest in the Llandrindod site?</p>	
	<p>I also dispute these points the following statements which the Builth Wells County Councillor and Builth High School Governor Avril York made at this meeting before she seconded the motion to close Builth Wells high school She stated:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We are failing youngsters 2. The results are ok but they are not good enough 3. We are failing the whole cohort going through Builth schools at the moment 4. John Bedodes and Newtown schools had merged and results at both school had improved 5. We have got to improve the options at GCSE and A level 6. Have to stop leakage to other schools and to Hereford sixth form college 7. We need one head with one governing body and one vision <p>There were no reasons given for these statements and I dispute the decision to close Builth Wells high school that has been made by the cabinet after hearing these statements because:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Builth Wells high school is not failing it's youngsters. In 2016 65.5% of our pupils in Year 11 achieved grade C or better in English/Cymraeg, maths and science. We are also the 8th best school in Wales when you look at A* to A grades at GCSE for 2016. 2. These results are not ok. They are to be celebrated! 3. We are not failing the whole cohort. this statement is 	<p><i>Any comments made by a county councillor reflect their own opinion. Responses to these issues can be found in sections 1 and 3 of this report.</i></p>

	<p>wrong and has misled the cabinet. We recognise there are improvements to be made with a small and sometimes challenging part of the cohort and the school's Estyn report has made 7 recommendations which have guided the school in putting in place a rigorous and robust school improvement plan which has seen the English Grade C pass rate improve by 4.7 percentage points and maths grade C pass rate improve by 10.7 percentage points since 2014.</p> <p>4. It is not correct to compare us to John Beddoes and Newtown as those schools were not closed.</p> <p>5. Avril stated 'we have got to improve options at GCSE and A level. How will closing the school and reopening it improve options at GCSE and A level? How will closing the school and reopening it improve options at GCSE? Also the proposal is that there is no change to sixth form provision. So how will the closure of the school provide more options at A level?</p> <p>6. Avril stated 'Have to stop leakage to other schools and to Hereford sixth form college' but again, the proposal is that there is no change to sixth form provision. So how will the closure of the school stop leakage to other schools and Hereford sixth form?</p> <p>7. As for Avril's last statement ' We need one head with one governing body and one vision' , I completely agree, but why does Builth Wells High School have to close for this to happen?</p>	
	<p>The plans should be visionary and transformational. They are neither. What a wasted opportunity.</p>	<p>The authority disagrees with this comment.</p>
	<p>In the whole consultation process, financial and quite possibly political reasons seem to outweigh the educational reasons for such a decision.</p>	<p>The authority disagrees with this comment. The reasons for the proposal were outlined clearly in the consultation document and in the cabinet report of 27th September.</p>
	<p>Neither of us opposes progress and it is laudable that the county council wants to raise standards. With the</p>	<p>The pressures facing the secondary school education system in Powys were outlined in the consultation document. The proposal provides an</p>

<p>scrapping, however, of the proposed Brecon-Gwernyfed merger and the reversal of proposals to shut several primary schools, we are left with the feeling that the merger between Builth and Llandrindod has to go ahead in order for the council to appear to "be doing something".</p> <p>Quite simply, there has to be valid and proven educational argument for such a change; we along with many others that we have spoken to, have not been provided with such an argument. Therefore we are left with the conclusion that the driving force is to save money; that quite simply is not good enough when the future of thousands of children is at stake.</p>	<p>opportunity to develop a sustainable model of secondary education in Mid Powys, by merging two schools that are 7 miles apart. Benefits of the proposal are outlined in sections 1,3 and 4 of this report.</p>
<p>Powys County Council has also expressed the view that Builth and Llandrindod High Schools are no longer viable in order to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum. As I indicated, some of the schools I inspected were below 400 on roll. Many of these are in Gwynedd and have received commendable reports from Estyn. Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen with just over 400 on roll (11-18) was judged as "excellent" in its most recent report. If schools in Gwynedd are able to achieve good and excellent standards, it should be achievable in Powys.</p> <p>Between 1996 and 2007, I worked as a Registered Inspector for Estyn. During that period I inspected over one hundred schools in all parts of Wales. The secondary schools I inspected ranged from under 400 to over a 1000 on roll. As evidenced in my reports and other Estyn reports that I have read, there is no correlation between the size of the school and standards achieved. This has been confirmed by Estyn when asked to comment on the proposed merger of Gwernyfed and Brecon High Schools as well as Builth</p>	<p><i>The proposed new school would be of a size that meets the authority's aspiration for size of school, both in key stage 3 and key stage 4, and at post-16. The authority believes that a school with a minimum of 600 pupils in key stage 3 and key stage 4 would have average year group of 120 pupils, which would help maximise the curriculum benefits and lead to improved outcomes. However, it is not expected that pupils would travel between sites, although the new governing body and leadership team would be responsible for the structure of the curriculum and timetable, and it may be possible that some subjects would be taught on one site only at key stage 4. This would increase the options available to those pupil.</i></p>

	and Llandrindod High Schools.	
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7.	Process	
7.1	Concern about the composition of cabinet	
	<p>We have a Powys County Council as opposed to the historical shires (Radnorshire, Breconshire and Montgomeryshire) so, why is it that the current education review has only looked at schools in Radnorshire and Breconshire?</p> <p>A great deal has been said about the heavily weighted cabinet which favours Montgomery area, is it co-incidental then that Montgomery schools are not under review currently. Furthermore, the full council voted against the school proposals yet the cabinet continue to support the decision and this does not sit well with any of us. If a review of education is needed in Powys, then it should be reviewing the whole county at the same time in order to see the whole picture and they make a balanced and fully informed decision reflecting the needs and recommendations involving everyone in the whole of Powys. The sceptical amongst us may be thinking that the Montgomery based cabinet members are thinking ahead to the elections in May next year!</p> <p>What we can't understand is that Powys have spent a fortune on consultants and have asked the people of Powys for their opinions and have obviously been in contact with Estyn who have also made their views known but at the end of the day have ignored everything they have been told and have gone ahead with their initial proposal. This is not democracy in any way. It is very easy for the cabinet who are mainly made up of Montgomeryshire Councillors to hit the Brecon & Radnor schools with no effect on</p>	<p><i>The current cabinet includes the following membership:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5 North Powys members; - 4 Mid/South Powys members. <p><i>On the 24th March 2015, cabinet agreed to commence a Powys-wide Secondary Schools Reorganisation Programme.</i></p> <p><i>A feasibility report on the establishment of a Welsh-medium Secondary School(s) in North Powys was considered by cabinet on the 29th September 2015, and cabinet requested a further business case to be prepared. Officers have been preparing this business case, which will be considered by cabinet later this year.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, following a review of Welshpool primary provision, the cabinet recently approved the closure of four schools in Welshpool, in order to establish two new schools.</i></p>

	<p>their career whatsoever but surely when even the majority of Councillors voted against this proposal when asked for their opinion and that is not taken into account either, something is very wrong with you present system.</p> <p>We urge you to re think this proposal and to ask the County Councillors to think about what their constituents want before making their final decision on what could be the final stroke for our town.</p> <p>12. The way that the process is handled by the council is undemocratic. The board is made up of 80% members from the north of the county therefore nothing proposed in mid or south Powys is voted on by councillors affected in these areas. This is inherently undemocratic. It is impossible to change as people in Llandrindod only vote for Llandrindod county councillors therefore it is not possible to change the cabinet democratically.</p> <p>*One last point - for decisions affecting Radnorshire and Breconshire, I feel that the councillors and officials representing those areas make the decisions, not Montgomeryshire, as it appears that the schools in the North have been mainly unaffected by the Powys cuts.</p>	
7.2	Concern about the decision-making process	
	<p>It is also our understanding that the cabinet made this decision not the full council who were over-ruled. This gives us great concern not just for the future of our schools but for the fairness of our democratic</p>	<p><i>In May 2016, the full County Council debated the decision-making process for school reorganisation proposals. A vote was held with the result that</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>cabinet should continue to be the decision-maker on school reorganisation proposals; and</i>

<p>system within PCC.</p> <p>My great concern is that the community of Builth Wells and the surrounding community have been misrepresented by both County Councillors and this can be evidenced by previous filmed council meetings. The majority of the Builth Wells community DO NOT support the proposals, which is contrary to what the County Councillors for our area have stated in Council chambers. There has been a failure to engage with the community and presumptions have been made by the County Councillors due to their lack of engagement despite community members attempting to communicate with them. Following a PCC announcement 7/12/16, I understand Cllr York has now resigned from her cabinet post and I wonder if her vote for and second vote to support the merger now still stands in council chambers?</p> <p>3. The information provided by Powys County Council with reference to the future of both schools has been drip-fed to the communities over a period of time, much of it appearing to be anecdotal and rumour.</p> <p>The cabinet against the wishes of the council made this decision and I hope it can be reversed for the sake of the local population.</p> <p>Your proposal goes against the opinion of Estyn, it goes against the opinion of your own councillors and against public opinion, as pointed out in the consultation, and the subsequent council meeting.</p>	<p>- <i>Full Council should have an opportunity to consider consultation reports and provide its views to cabinet prior to cabinet making its decision;</i></p> <p><i>The authority has carried out formal consultation on this proposal in full compliance with the requirements of the Welsh Government's Schools Organisation Code 2013. The wide ranging responses to the consultation, which can be found in the ORS Consultation Report, were considered by full Council and the cabinet in September 2016.</i></p> <p><i>Every county councillor was able to register to speak at a full Council meeting that was held on 17th September 2016.</i></p> <p><i>Cllr Avril York has resigned from the Council and cabinet. However, her vote remains as recorded in the minutes of both meetings.</i></p> <p><i>The cabinet is required to take the views of all stakeholders, including those of children and young people, into account when it considers any school reorganisation proposal. The cabinet is also required to consider the views of the full County Council.</i></p> <p><i>Opinion Research Services (ORS) were commissioned by the authority to provide independent facilitation and support the consultation. The consultation report drafted by ORS is a collection of the feedback to the consultation, and is not in any way a reflection of the views of ORS.</i></p>
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I was recently informed of the statutory notice to close Llandrindod High School and Builth Wells High School, and to open a new school operating across the two existing sites. This idea is supposedly the result of the consultation that the council held, although I would argue that there was overwhelming support to leave the schools as they are. The plan that the council has proposed may seem like a sensible decision at first, however, when analysed closer, it has many flaws, which is why I find it appalling that Powys County Council would go ahead with this plan

We are writing to lodge our objection to the closure of Llandrindod High School and to establish a new dual-sited bilingual school. As grandparents of 2 grandchildren attending LI/High one of whom is taking his mock GCSE next year we feel that the feelings of the students and community have been ignored, majority of CC voted against this proposal and the democratic vote was ignored by these 10 independent cabinet members who made this decision, PCC is known as a democratic council, this was ignored by the cabinet (as CC made a democratic vote) why were the other 2 High Schools up for the closure were saved at the last minute, this was very unfair by these independent cabinet members.

What concerns me the most is that the views of the citizens of both towns; the company that conducted the consultation process; the majority of the County Councillors and, most crucially, of Estyn have been utterly ignored and swept aside by the minority that makes up the cabinet.

	<p>5. The council need to put the children's needs first and this involves listening and representing all the families that have objected to this merger.</p> <p>I would like to seek clarification from you that, as Director for Education, you are confident and content that each and every member of the cabinet has given this decision the time and attention it deserves. I look forward to receiving your response.</p> <p>The overwhelming support from the county councillors who voted (32 votes to 9 with 3 absentions) to abandon the proposal for a period of up to 2 years at the full Council meeting on the 8th September 2016, and the representations made by many of those at the Cabinet meeting on the 27th September are also noteworthy</p>	
	<p>The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets a goal of having 'A wales of cohesive communities' and PCC must work towards that. In rural communities, schools are central to making communities attractive, viable, safe and well connected. Anything that threatens the existence of schools in such communities will increasingly come under scrutiny from the Auditor General and Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.</p>	<p><i>At its meeting on the 27th September 2016, cabinet considered the outcome of consultation on this proposal. As part of this process, it also considered a number of impact assessments including the authority's Single Integrated Impact Assessment – this considered the proposal against the objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.</i></p>
7.3	Failure to consider related proposals	
	<p>I am also concerned that this decision by cabinet was taken at a time when several other consultation were about to start that each have a direct impact on what is detailed in the statutory notice dated 17th October 2016 and the business case linked to it. The Brecon High School Welsh-medium stream consultation, the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for 2017 -</p>	<p><i>Section 1.14 of the Schools Organisation Code 2013 states that 'when approving or determining proposals, relevant bodies....must consider whether there are any other related proposals.'</i></p> <p><i>On September 27th 2016, cabinet considered related proposals for Brecon and Gwernyfed High Schools, which had also been subject to formal consultation at the same time as this proposal. cabinet agreed not to</i></p>

	<p>20 consultation and Scheme for Financing Schools are all factors that will affect secondary education provision in Builth Wells and Llandrindod.</p> <p>There is also a formal consultation on the closure of Welsh-medium provision at Brecon High School with the pupils there transferring to Builth Wells High school. Again, this is a related proposal and must be considered at the same time as the proposals for Builth Wells High School and Llandrindod High School.</p> <p>The continuing debate about Welsh Medium education in Brecon and the review of Llanidloes High School also have potential to impact on the merger of Builth and Llandrindod. In the case of the Brecon decision, this would be a negative impact. I do not believe this has been properly risk assessed. Given the proximity of Rhayader children to Llanidloes High School, what is the plan going ahead for this High School, will it offer the same provision or offer different opportunities.</p>	<p><i>proceed with aspects of the proposal for Brecon and Gwernyfed High schools, but to reconsult on a proposal to close the Welsh stream at Brecon High School.</i></p> <p><i>When determining the proposal for Llandrindod and Builth High Schools, cabinet will be aware that there is a related proposal for Brecon High School,</i></p> <p><i>There are no other related proposals. The authority is currently developing a business case for the establishment of a Category 2A school or schools in North Powys. However, no proposals have been made.</i></p> <p><i>The draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) was approved by cabinet in December for consultation.</i></p> <p><i>The Scheme for Financing Schools and fair funding formula proposals were approved with amendments on the 7th February 2017, following consultation in December and January.</i></p>
7.4	Criticism of the process	
	<p>The whole process has been a huge waste of money and time as well as jeopardising our children's education, how exactly has this exercise improved standards. It has created stress and unrest in both schools which has had a negative impact on students.</p> <p>I find it heart breaking to think I left the school 25 years ago when children were offered at least 5 additional subjects at GCSE level- What are you doing?</p>	<p><i>The authority recognises that any school reorganisation proposal creates a period of uncertainty. However, the authority is required by law to carry out school reorganisation in accordance with the Welsh Government's Schools Organisation Code 2013, which has a clear process that must be followed. The process for this proposal has complied fully with the Code.</i></p>

	<p>Is this the legacy you want to leave from your time employed by Powys County Council? I hope you feel ashamed, while you are fiddling about with figures and delaying the decision children's futures are being damaged and this blame is placed firmly in your hands.</p> <p>The whole process as usual with PCC has been a shambles and makes me question whether I want my children to stay in education in Powys. My eldest daughter is in year 11 currently doing her GCSEs. She attended Shrewsbury Sixth Form College last week, what an eye opener? I suggest you take a few hours out of your day to see how things should be done properly. Whatever your decision it should be done by September 2017.</p> <p>Pull your finger out ...STOP PLAYING WITH OUR CHILDRENS FUTURES.</p> <p>It has created stress and unrest in both schools which has had a negative impact on students. The whole process has been a shambles and makes me question whether I want my children to stay in education in Powys.</p>	
7.5	Concerns that the proposal for Brecon and Gwernyfed were not approved	
	<p>In fact, why are PCC isolating Builth and Llandrindod High School as appropriate for the changes and have dropped the proposals for Brecon community?</p> <p>Finally I am in no way clear why the cabinet seems determined to pursue this proposal when it has already reversed a similar proposal to merge Brecon and Gwernyfed High Schools, presumably for similar</p>	<p><i>In 2016, the local authority consulted on a proposal to close Brecon and Gwernyfed High Schools and establish a new English-medium 11- 16 school in Brecon, with post-16 delivered by NPTC. cabinet considered the consultation report for this proposal and decided that there were a number of reasons that specific elements of the proposal could not go forward as it was proposed – detail can be found in the cabinet report of 27th September mber 2016, available at http://powys.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=3029&</i></p>

	<p>reasons to the ones that I have enumerated above. This seems to me to be unfair to the present and future pupils of Llandrindod and Builth Wells High schools, and to their parents. I would implore the cabinet to reconsider its decision for the good of the two communities, the teachers at both schools, the parents, but above all the pupils.</p>	<p>Ver=4</p>
7.6	<p>Concerns about lack of alternative options/issues related to alternative options.</p>	
7.6.1	<p>The lack of possible other options do not seem to have been considered; for example the possible educational benefits for pupils by developing through schools in both towns linking their high school with the main feeder primary schools.</p> <p>It may be that some of these options have been considered but not shared this is unfortunate.</p> <p>7. It is not obvious that other options are being explored - such as closer co-operation between both schools AND staff to present a wider curriculum and to save money enhancing the educational opportunities</p> <p>11. The consultation document states on Page 79 "Conclusion" states that Option 5A "should be the preferred option" this is to create an English medium school in Llandrindod and a Welsh medium school in Builth. As the consultation document recommends this, this should be the recommendation of the council.</p> <p>7. It is not obvious that other options are being explored - such as closer co-operation between both</p>	<p><i>A range of options were considered as part of the development of this proposal. These were outlined in the consultation document. All Through Schools were not considered in the option appraisal for Mid Powys because, as stated on page 52 of the consultation document, 'Within this business case, 'All Through Schools' will only be considered if there are specific local conditions related to primary schools in a particular area e.g. poor building condition, capacity issues, leadership issues or stakeholder support.' At the time of writing, there were no specific local conditions of this kind in the catchment area that weren't being addressed through other primary school reorganisation proposals, and it was agreed therefore that the options for Builth and Llandrindod High Schools would focus on solutions for the secondary sector only.</i></p> <p><i>In 2011, cabinet agreed, following a period of informal consultation on secondary school reorganisation, to establish 'learning partnerships' of schools. The learning partnerships took forward school-to-school collaboration on a more formal basis. A South Powys learning partnership was formed, and schools held joint CPD events. However, the learning partnership in South Powys evolved to focus mainly on post-16 collaboration.</i></p> <p><i>Any school reorganisation consultation document must include information about alternative options that have been considered. Appendix B of the consultation document included the business case that was considered by cabinet on the 23rd February 2016, which included a range of possible</i></p>

	<p>schools AND staff to present a wider curriculum and to save money enhancing the educational opportunities</p>	<p><i>options for Mid and South Powys.</i></p> <p><i>The conclusion to this option appraisal states the following:</i> <i>'In conclusion, there is strong case that Option 5A should be the preferred option, based on a stronger strategic fit with associated educational and linguistic benefits. However, given the current and future financial challenges faced by the authority, Option 3A is the preferred option based on economic reasons. Further work is required to ascertain the capital costs linked to this option.</i> <i>It must be noted that Option 3A would still be able to provide the appropriate conditions for the growth of Welsh-medium education in the area, where the possibility of a viable Bilingual Category 2A (Welsh-medium) school could be considered in future. '</i></p>
7.7	Criticism of the consultation process	
7.7.1	<p>I am writing to object to the proposed merger of Llandrindod and Builth High Schools. I am somewhat disappointed that you have allowed things to progress this far, but given the poor quality of the biased and mistake-riddled questionnaire that was used as part of the “consultation” process, unfortunately I am not surprised.</p> <p>To me, it is quite clear that the ineptitude of Powys officials has allowed yourself, and the cabinet, to be hoodwinked into thinking the proposed merger will be a success. Have you any evidence for this? During the consultation process, I asked Ian Roberts directly what differences my 9-year-old would be able to see in two years’ time – Ian Roberts was not able to answer the question. I asked him how the funding of transport was to be organised – he was not able to answer the question. I asked him on what site individual subjects would be taught - he told me that</p>	<p><i>The School organisation Code sets out the requirement to present supporting information on the case for change in a clear and coherent way. The questions on the questionnaire were designed to seek responses (either positive or negative) to specific questions. Furthermore, open text boxes allow respondents to explain why they agree or disagree with the proposals and to suggest alternative proposals including no change. These were compiled by Opinion Research Services, a company that undertakes successful independent research across many sectors nationally.</i></p> <p><i>The authority has been clear throughout the process that the organisation and structure of the proposed new school would be the responsibility of the new governing body and management of the school.</i></p> <p><i>The authority acknowledges that there were some errors in the data presented in the consultation document – these were amended and an Addendum was circulated with the correct information.</i></p>

<p>this would be decided by the governing body, i.e. he didn't know and was hoping that someone else could decide for him!</p> <p>The consultation document had a number of flaws in it, some of them quite significant.</p> <p>It raises an issue of confidence for us parents in the whole process, if something as important as a consultation document is not totally accurate.</p> <p>It was clear from the start of this process that the information considered in the making of this decision was flawed and inaccurate. Your team visited Llandrindod High School to answer questions. The staff spent the whole session highlighting the many inaccuracies in the facts contained in the questionnaire. The staff were told these inaccuracies would not be corrected. Straight away this sent out the message that you are not prepared to listen to anyone. If teachers persisted in teaching inaccurate information and refused to correct it, I am sure you would view this as a problem and seek to correct it and yet you don't when it comes from your own council.</p> <p>Secondly, the questionnaire was a perfect example of a biased questionnaire. Pupils are taught at key stage 3 and in GCSE mathematics, how to write an unbiased questionnaire. Your questionnaire will be the perfect resource for them to use in future, when highlighting problems with questionnaires. Perhaps the person who wrote the questionnaire needs to attend Maths lessons and take a GCSE in Maths, to ensure they know how to write an unbiased</p>	<p><i>The authority met with representatives of all feeder primary schools at two meetings – one held in Builth Wells CP School and the other at Cefnlllys CP School, Llandrindod. Opinion Research Services facilitated these meetings. The authority disputes the assertion that pupils were told what to think – pupils were specifically asked their views about the proposal. These were recorded and were included in the consultation report prepared by ORS.</i></p> <p><i>All responses to the consultation were collated and presented in a consultation report that was drafted by an independent research company, Opinion Research Services. The consultation was carried out in full compliance with the Welsh Government's Schools Organisation Code 2013.</i></p> <p><i>cabinet considered the consultation report prior to agreeing to publish the statutory notice. cabinet will again be considering objections received to the notice before making a final decision.</i></p>
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	<p>questionnaire.</p> <p>Thirdly, a group of children from primary school, one whom was my son, were taken to a meeting to canvas their views. They were asked not to think of anything negative about the proposed changes, before their views were taken. I was appalled at this, once again Powys forcing their biased views on our children by telling the young people what to think.</p> <p>8. The consultation process is inherently flawed and therefore does not give the ability for an open discussion/dialogue to find the best possible outcome to the problems that the local authority is facing regarding budget cuts in education.</p>	
7.7.2	<p>The confusing consultation process and changes to the proposal</p>	<p><i>The consultation document which was published on the 6th April 2016 included all relevant information about the proposal and the consultation process. The information was available via hard copies of the document and was also published on the Council website. The process was carried out in full compliance with the requirements of the Welsh Government's Schools Organisation Code 2013.</i></p> <p><i>There were no changes to the proposal. On the 23rd February 2016, cabinet considered recommendations in relation to secondary schools. cabinet approved the following recommendation for Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• To receive the SORP's recommendation in respect of Builth Wells High School and Llandrindod High Schools</i> <i>• To approve the commencement of formal consultation with stakeholders in accordance with Welsh Government's School Organisation Code on • the closure of Builth Wells High School and Llandrindod High School on the 31st August 2017, and to establish a new dual stream secondary school that will operate across the</i>

		<i>current sites of the two schools from 1st September 2017.</i>
7.8	Other	
	Please may I request more information on this proposal? The 3 pieces of paper you sent back with my child from school does not explain to parents what exactly will happen to our children's education? And where exactly they will be receiving this education?	<i>The statutory notice was published in accordance with the legal requirements of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 201? This followed a period of formal consultation which was held between 6th April and 1st June 2016 – a consultation document and impact assessment documents were published and distributed to all parents during this stage.</i>
	The timing of this proposal coincides with proposals to close many of our rural primary schools. I think it has been very unfair to parents of children whose primary schools have been compromised to propose compromising their High School at the same time. We parents can only realistically fight on one front at a time. After all, it is our children who will be most affected by the upheaval of this proposal (if it goes ahead). My son is due to start High school September 2017.	Noted.

8.	Economic/community impact	
8.1	Impact of the proposal on the local economy and community	
	<p>Closure of Llandrindod Wells High School would inevitably result in fewer people with families' moving to the area as schools are often a strong decision maker. This could then have an adverse effect on the two Primary schools. In addition to this Llandrindod Wells will no doubt suffer a negative impact on businesses and trade and the positive new initiatives and businesses that have emerged and are planned may not survive. Llandrindod Wells is beginning to reenergise and closure of its High School will slow down and could even kill the town completely.</p> <p>It is essential to keep high schools in both towns as the centre of education of learning of our young people and also to maintain a healthy mixed age population. These need to be managed locally to ensure good timely management in all areas and to improve the teaching provided our children.</p> <p>If you close Llandrindod and Builth high school and merge it as one it will be the death of both towns and eventually PCC. Nobody will move to the towns and businesses will fold due to the lack of people moving into the area. Llandrindod is already an aging town and we need to keep our high school to encourage our youngster who are starting families to stay and to entice new people to our town.</p> <p>Can you not see the impact of taking away a school from both the Llandrindod and Builth communities,</p>	<p><i>The proposal aims to establish a secondary school across two sites in order to create a high-quality, sustainable secondary education provision in Mid Powys. As the school's campuses will remain in both Llandrindod Wells and Builth Wells, the distance between both schools, according to the AA Route Planner, is 8.4 miles, with a travel time by car of 18 minutes, meaning that management of the school would remain in the Mid Powys area.</i></p> <p><i>As the school's campuses will remain in both Llandrindod Wells and Builth Wells, it is not expected that the proposal would have a detrimental economic impact on either town.</i></p> <p><i>The new dual-sited school would continue to function as a community school, in the same way as the existing two school operate fully within the community. Community governors would also be appointed to the temporary and new governing bodies to represent the community.</i></p> <p><i>The authority recognises that both towns and schools have their own individual identity – however, the proposal is intended to provide a sustainable secondary school infrastructure that would meet the needs of pupils in the catchment areas of Llandrindod and Builth Wells High Schools.</i></p>

jobs, hopes, community functions? I hope you did the right thing and make both schools viable for long term success, rather than the short-sighted vision of a new school without a heart and at great long term cost to both communities.

When business's like ours are looking to recruit staff it is already a struggle, if there is no school or a poor school within our town the younger people we require to fill our positions, those with children, will move to other areas and this will make employment much more difficult and therefore put off prospective business's from locating here.

As someone who lives in our town you must surely be able to see that this proposal is not to the benefit of the town, its residents and most importantly its children.

As a business based in Llandrindod Wells we would like to strongly object to the amalgamation of Llandrindod High School with Builth High School. We have been based here in the town for 90 years and during that time we have employed 100's of local people. The business has expanded over the last few years and the staff we require are now not only lorry drivers, but administrative staff and mechanics. This means it is essential to keep a successful school within the town

Llandrindod Wells has always been community driven and a safe place to bring up our children. I fear that these plans are going to take all of that away in one swoop. The town, the children and the wider community will suffer.

<p>5 This proposal will have a devastating effect on the town and also the pupils attending Llandrindod High School</p> <p>2. Each town has its unique identity and the High Schools being part of that. If you merge the schools what is the point of having separate named towns.</p> <p>The secondary impacts that the lack of high-quality education in Llandrindod and Builth can have is far-reaching, including reduction in house prices, employment demographics, small and large business investments in the area and health care.</p> <p>If parents cannot be given confidence in Powys CC decision making and Education Policy they may well decide not to move into Llandrindod Wells Town at all and those Parents like myself living in Llandrindod Wells already may well decide that their children's educational future is disadvantaged here in Llandrindod Wells due to the actions of Powys CC and decide to relocate and move into England instead. The bigger picture is that only the unemployed and elderly will remain living in Llandrindod Wells as soon as the next 10 years and that creates its own social and economic problems that already exist here in Llandrindod Wells due to its remote location.</p> <p>This will effect house prices, and the inability to sell as we ourselves have already found, employment, demographics, health care services, small businesses, large businesses, personal disposable income - the list is endless.....</p>	
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	<p>As a local business owner and Chair and Press and Promotions Officer of the Chamber of Trade and Tourism we understand the importance of a local school to a local economy. We have seen the strength of opposition at the public meetings and know how important it is the stability and long term prospects for the area and most parents are understandably very concerned at what they see as knee jerk reactions and short term solution</p> <p>Schools are important to Parents and the Community/County as a whole, without independent Town High Schools being run as they have done successfully for years the future is more uncertain than they would be as a merger.</p>	
<p>8.2</p>	<p>Impact of the proposal on the local economy due to the new dual-sited school not being attractive to new families and teaching, or other, professionals.</p>	
	<p>The likelihood of a successful dual-sited school emerging from September 2018 is very dependent on leadership personnel, as you have acknowledged in the report. However, I am unsure that the governing body of the new school will be guaranteed to have every current staff member at their disposal for the formation of a new leadership team. I can only imagine that the morale amongst staff members is currently very low and after your announcement to create the dual-sited school, a large proportion will be looking elsewhere for work. Therefore it could be assumed that you are going to indirectly cause the relocation of a number of teaching professionals from Powys, and this could possibly include your 'strongest leaders'. On top of the economic consequences of forcing out working professionals,</p>	<p><i>Any school reorganisation proposals creates a period of uncertainty for schools and their communities. The proposed new school would continue to be a key employer in the area, attractive to teaching and other professionals, and it is not expected that the proposal would have a detrimental economic impact on the wider area.</i></p> <p><i>The provision and availability of high-quality education locally is an important issue for all stakeholders, as was highlighted in the Consultation Report. These stakeholders include current and future parents of pupils in the Mid Powys – currently, the two schools are in Special Measures and it could be argued that this situation is not attractive to parents or new families to the area.</i></p>

you are also likely to discourage others from moving to the area, and this could well contribute to the on-going demise of the local economy.

There is already a struggle in these isolated rural towns to employ professionals in many different sectors. People such as Doctors, Nurses, Rectors, Teachers, etc. are already hard to employ and removing a school from either town will only reduce the appeal of moving and living in the area. This decision will have a negative effect on the both towns and the area and therefore I hope you will reconsider this decision.

Ultimately, as a result of this proposed implementation, we are not going to attract new Teachers to the area which means that families will not want to move here, resulting in a detrimental impact on both towns.

This area is already suffering from economic deprivation. This proposal will not do anything to attract young families to the area leading to further decline.

I already know of a GP who has decided not to relocate to this area because of the proposed school merger

There is already a struggle in these isolated rural towns to employ professionals in many different sectors. People such as Doctors, Nurses, Rectors, Teachers, etc. are already hard to employ and removing a school from either town will only reduce the appeal of moving and living in the area. This decision will have a negative effect on the both

	<p>towns and the area and therefore I hope you will reconsider this decision.</p> <p>The impact that these changes are already having on the community of Builth Wells is huge. The lack of clarity on the future of secondary education in the town makes it a less attractive place to live or move to for people who have children.</p> <p>I really don't think you are listening to any opinions from the actual people of the town or of ESTYN and I personally feel it is absolutely disgusting how you have still decided to go ahead with the plans. You need to understand that decisions like this don't just impact short term and the local area, they will affect peoples' decisions on continuing to live and bring up families in mid Wales.</p>	
	<p>The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets a goal of having ' A wales of cohesive communities' and PCC must work towards that. In rural communities, schools are central to making communities attractive, viable, safe and well connected. Anything that threatens the existence of schools in such communities will increasingly come under scrutiny from the Auditor General and Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.</p>	<p>The authority completed an impact assessment (Single Integrated Impact assessment) that considered the impact of the proposal against the seven objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. This was presented to cabinet for consideration on the 27th September 2016.</p>

9.	Single-sited school	
9.1	Impact on the town of Llandrindod Wells	
	<p>It is well documented that in rural communities, schools are central to making communities viable, safe and prosperous. In towns such as Builth Wells and Llandrindod Wells, the high schools are an important draw to new businesses and families moving into the area. Would innovative companies such as 'river simple' look to expand their businesses in a town that does not have an educational establishment for the children of their growing number of staff?</p> <p>The view to 'establish a new school on a single' site during the second stage will have a wide impact on the local economies of both Builth Wells and Llandrindod Wells ultimately affecting community facilities and economic growth. Towns such as Builth and Llandrindod have their schools at the hearts of their communities and their loss would have far reaching impacts.</p> <p>1) The proposal will effectively kill the life in Llandrindod Wells as I understand that the long term plan is to build a new school on a premises just outside Builth. The town relies on its sense of community that the school provides and incoming families will be put off by the lack of school leading to a smaller population and the closure of more shops and services which already struggle to remain open. The town takes great pride in the school and its students.</p> <p>I believe this proposal is the first step to closing both</p>	<p><i>As stated in the consultation document and subsequent consultation report, the proposal is the first stage of potential wider plans for secondary education in the area. The second stage, which aims to establish the New School on a single site in the locality of Builth Wells, requires further work to understand the overall capital cost and feasibility, and would be subject to another consultation if cabinet decided to proceed with the second stage.</i></p>

schools and opening one new school somewhere in the vicinity of Builth Wells. Leaving both towns without a High School. Llandrindod Wells will become a ghost town. What business would come to a County town with no High School? Who would move here with children or to start a family when there is no High School? This has such a wide impact on the future of the towns and of Powys that I urge you to reconsider your decision and listen to what you are being advised.

1. Llandrindod has the only high school in Radnorshire, it is the county town of Powys with a population of over 5300 people.
2. Builth has less than half that population at 2,500. If one school does have to close, how can it possibly make sense for that to be the larger catchment area?
3. By closing the larger school, there will be increased transport costs and traffic on roads. It will lengthen the school day for the pupils and reduce attendance at after school activities, a critical part of their development and the community.
4. Families are very likely to be put off staying or moving to the area with no High School here and this will adversely impact current and future businesses, including the council itself.
5. Llandrindod serves as the seat of Powys County Council and is thus the administrative centre of Powys, how will having no high school enable you as the council to recruit people to work?

Our towns are suffering enough and a closure of a school in Llandrindod would have a fundamental effect on the whole town and its businesses and employment.

Also taking the school out of the town in Builth would impact on the town in the same way and cause traffic problems in the town and on the bridge.

Llandrindod Wells would go downhill, it not too good at this time. The park is like a wood. Do help put Llandrindod back on the map. Do not close Llandrindod Wells School "It is a good school" The best. We all would school in Llandrindod or Builth

Although we are told that closure is not simply a budget issue surely there are many adverse budgetary implication if Llandrindod Wells High school were to close. Transport costs of the pupils would be quite substantial and the school day would be greatly increased for many pupils. The distance from the High school for many pupils could have a great impact on attendance at extra-curricular activities which are an important part of pupil development in many areas. In fact after school clubs and groups have proved to be beneficial not just for the subject area they are linked to but also for the self-esteem of pupils increased motivation and achievement in other areas.

Children and the community will be deprived of services should this proposal lead to one school on one site in the future.

When I was a pupil of Llandrindod High School as well as benefiting from some truly excellent teaching I was lucky enough to take part in many extra-curricular activities such as the school hockey team, choir and orchestra. As well as being concerned about the effect on education I am also concerned

about the effect on extra-curricular activities that can make a big difference to a pupil's life and even improve future career prospects etc. I am concerned that teaching staff with an increased work load and increased stress will not be able to commit to extra-curricular activities. I am also concerned that if pupils have to travel a much greater distance to get to school then many will struggle to take part in such activities out of school hours. It would be a great shame if an aspiring sportsperson or musician for example does not reach their full potential because they cannot get home after their extra-curricular activities.

The formal consultation document that is central to this consultation states that there will be a second stage that will 'aim to establish the New School on a single site...' This suggests to me that secondary education in mid Powys will be in a state of flux for many years to come, which will be a major distraction that the schools, the wider community and most importantly a generation of pupils can do without, particularly as they work to raise standards as required by Estyn.

I would like to have your word that this is not the first phase of a plan to eventually built only one school on one site (leading to the death of the town which does not get the new build).

6. There is an underlying feeling that this decision is cut and dried and the greater plan is to carry forward this model and then build a new school within the Builth Wells area, and rumours of "done deals" and an element of corruption are rife within the

community. Openness and transparency is crucial within the County Council and particularly for its members and officers. Llandrindod Wells Town Council urges Powys County Council to dismiss the idea of creating one school on two sites and continue with the existing model with a High School in both towns, particularly in Llandrindod Wells which is the County town of Powys and hosts the County Council headquarters.

I do not believe that Powys CC has secured a viable new site for a new super school in Builth Wells, I do not believe it is healthy for children as young as 11 to be travelling to school long distances by bus at the early peak commute times for workers in Powys as it is dangerous, kids are vulnerable waiting for school bus and it adds traffic to the roads, I do not believe that you will find any cost savings and in fact the investment to build a new school is huge that could be better spent improving what we already have and securing employment of dedicated teaching staff that want to live and work in Llandrindod Wells rather than drive out an entire profession from the town.

. I am very disappointed and dismayed with the plans you have made to close the High Schools in Llandrindod and Builth Wells and reopen them under one leadership team. The next step would be relocating them in a newly built school, allegedly close to Builth. This would be catastrophic for Llandrindod and would result in even more difficulty attracting people to the area to work. We have experienced tremendous problems attracting medics and nurses to move here, partly because there are limited career opportunities for spouses, and a town

without a High School will make things far, far worse. On top of closing shops in Middleton Street, removing the High School would make us even more like a ghost town which is surely not what you would choose for the town where the County Council is based.

Also any alleged saving of money will be swallowed up and overtaken very quickly by paying for a new school to be built (and the interest on any loans you will need to take out) and also on the colossal transport issues for moving pupils to a school which is no longer based in the community where many live, and is even further away for those who already have to commute in from villages and farms out of town. Truancy will inevitably increase and the deprived families in Llandrindod who already struggle to nurture children to fulfil their potential, will suffer even more.

I believe this proposal is the first step to closing both schools and opening one new school somewhere in the vicinity of Builth Wells. Leaving both towns without a High School. Llandrindod Wells will become a ghost town. What business would come to a County town with no High School? Who would move here with children or to start a family when there is no High School? This has such a wide impact on the future of the towns and of Powys that I urge you to reconsider your decision and listen to what you are being advised.

We are writing to object to the proposal to close Llandrindod and Builth High Schools and open as one with a further intention to build a new school near and

outside Builth.

All our three children attended Llandrindod High School and travelled on the Bus from our village. This proposal seems to involve lots of cars and possibly buses moving around to get children to school. Children in the north of the county particularly will have unnecessary travelling time.

I do not believe this is a sound plan for the future. I do not want my son to be bussed to another town for school in the future. (I have enough fears having him travel to Llandod from our rural home!!!).

1 Although the school will operate on two sites this is obviously a precursor to closing one or both sites and merging the school physically into one school.

2 The idea that one super school will be better than the two we have at the moment is unproven and the same investment in the current school sites will be beneficial to the education of our children.

3 The schools have suffered due to a lack of investment, which has been a political decision taken some time ago to work towards a merger of schools

4 The idea of choice when it comes to choosing schools is important, when the schools merge our children will have no realistic choice but to go to the only school in the area, which will be in Builth

5 School are a positive for the local towns, people looking at moving to the area access the school provision and if there is none it could cause Llandrindod to stagnate. The town is currently going through a revival and something like this could put it back indefinitely

6 Time spent by children traveling to school should be minimized

	<p>7 Once the schools merge it will only be a matter of time until they close them and merge them physically into one school</p> <p>8 Once the school in Llandrindod is closed it will never come back</p> <p>Rumours continue to abound that a potential site in Buith has been investigated - are you able to confirm definitely whether any preliminary investigations or discussions with landowners have taken place between representatives of Powys County Council and owners of potential sites?</p> <p>With the temporary removal of the Radnorshire Children's Services Team, the clear establishment of a North and South Powys Hub for Neath Port Talbot College, and now a proposal to have just one secondary school in the area, it does appear that mid Powys is fast becoming the forgotten region of the county</p> <p>It it wrong to close an almost new building and build yet another new one. New doesn't mean better!! Think of the children and the distance they have to travel</p> <p>Finally, Llandrindod Wells is the county town, has Powys Count Hall within it, it would be nonsense to take away Llandrindod Wells High School and then undoubtedly the leisure centre, we are already losing the Youth Services, this is the County Town!!</p>	
9.2	Capital funding issues	
	I would also like to know what you whether you will still be setting aside the £17million to use for your 50% share in the costs to build a new 'super school'	<i>As stated in the consultation document, the proposal is the first stage of potential wider plans for secondary education in the area. The second stage, which aims to establish the New School on a single site in the locality</i>

<p>when the budget is set, bearing in mind you vehemently deny that there are any underlying plans to create this new 'super school' in the future?</p> <p>Can I ask what rate of interest would be payable on this loan of £17m? From my very basic understanding of finance I would assume a rate of around 5% for arguments sake. This would therefore require a monthly interest payment of around £120k per month. That's a figure of £120k per month when you are looking to save £123k a year, I cannot see the logic? Can you explain this to me?</p> <p>Also any alleged saving of money will be swallowed up and overtaken very quickly by paying for a new school to be built (and the interest on any loans you will need to take out) and also on the colossal transport issues for moving pupils to a school which is no longer based in the community where many live, and is even further away for those who already have to commute in from villages and farms out of town. Truancy will inevitably increase and the deprived families in Llandrindod who already struggle to nurture children to fulfil their potential, will suffer even more.</p> <p>The estimated saving of £123,000 (as mentioned at the Llandrindod public meeting) is not a good enough reason, as this would be less than one Chief Executive's salary. Also with Machynlleth to have £20 million spent on a new through school, this is a drop in the ocean.</p>	<p><i>of Builth Wells, requires further work to understand the overall capital cost and feasibility, and would be subject to another consultation if cabinet decided to proceed with the second stage.</i></p> <p><i>In its 2016/17 Capital Strategy, the authority had identified £17.62m in for the development of a new school in Mid Powys. However, as stated in the consultation document and consultation report, further work is needed to be carried out to understand its feasibility and overall costs. However, the provision of the new school in Mid Powys has been removed from the 2017/18 Capital Strategy.</i></p> <p><i>Capital expenditure is funded in five main ways, from capital receipts from the sale of assets, specific grants, reserves, supported borrowing. This is a loan where the cost of the interest and repayment of the principal is funded by WG through the revenue funding provided to the authority annually. The final one is prudential borrowing or unsupported borrowing. This is a loan where the annual interest and repayment of principal has be to funded by the authority.</i></p> <p><i>Capital funding cannot be used for revenue costs. The estimated saving in the funding for the new school is a revenue cost.</i></p> <p><i>The proposal to build a new 4 – 18 school building in Machynlleth is part of the authority and Welsh Government's 21st C Schools Programme, which is a capital funding programme, which cannot be used for revenue costs.</i></p>
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However, I am very concerned that the merger is at best a sticking plaster and at worst a plot to make the schools fail even further so that the ultimate plan of a super school can be built. (Parents have bene reliably informed that a bid for £17m had gone to the Welsh Assembly to build the super school at Builth Road, and a little honesty would be appreciated.)

Although at both meetings it was denied that it is a foregone conclusion that the Council have plan for just one new school on a new site in Builth Wells in the near future, I believe this to be true. I was in a conversation with a staff member whose aunt is a portfolio holder within Powys CC and she assured me taht the new school will be going head and knew where it will be sited. Also on the focussed changes to the LDP the school site at Llandrindod is shown as being a jousting development! I was totally flabbergasted at this especially after the denial by officers. This proposal is just a cover up for a real plan to close Llandrindod Wells High School and site one totally new school in Builth Wells. It came as no surprise then to find that Councillor York didn't consult her constituents and chose to vote for the proposal.

This all seems to be leading to the creation of one large school in the future, which makes no financial sense! The cost of the interest on a loan to build such a school will far exceed the money saved by keeping the current two schools separate, let alone then paying the actual loan back! On top of that there would be the additional cost of transporting all the children back and forth, the additional stress on the already busy lives of the parents who will have to deal

	<p>with transporting their children further to after school activities and so on, and the detrimental effect on the town by not having a school. We will lose wages and money to the local economy and the town will also be far less appealing to people considering moving to the area. It would be a backwards step, when Llandrindod and its residents are trying and succeeding to improve the town.</p>	
	<p>I am glad that the proposal to build one brand new school on a new site has been shelved as I would have considered that an awful waste of money.</p>	<p><i>Noted.</i></p>

10.	General Comments
10.1	Support for status quo
	<p>We urge PCC to allow both schools to demonstrate their ability to deliver better standards for a period of time before any action is taken against them. We do say 'against them' as we feel there has been little attempt at cooperation, just a directive. There is no guarantee that your proposal will raise standards but will put added pressure on teachers to transition to a new format when that time should be better spent on the educational standards. We urge the schools to focus on core academic subjects and encourage the pupils to take as many GCSEs as possible in order to give them the best chance of excelling in further education. We believe that the expectations for pupils and the outcome for the schools will be more favourable. We know Ms Asplin focused the pupils minds on excellence and having met many of our sons teachers recently, believe that there are very good teachers already working hard, and with more time, both schools can perform well.</p> <p>When those schools are performing as well as they should do, THEN you might be forgiven to try and improve them further with Estyn's blessing. The parents whose children are at these schools NOW will not thank you for spending their taxes on fiddling around with the structures: we all know that good teachers provide good education , so let's just concentrate on that. I am therefore asking that you reverse your decision to merge Builth and Llandrindod High Schools, and start trying to improve them in a way that Estyn think will work. Put the effort and resources that you were going to put into the merger - and the money that you are allegedly happy to spend to service a £17m debt - into education for the children who are there NOW. They are our future, they deserve better than this.</p> <p>In summary Mr Patterson, I believe the cabinet voted on misleading and incorrect information on the 27th September and unless you can answer me very relevant and urgent points I have stated above than I dispute the closure of Builth Wells High School and ask the cabinet to instead:</p> <p>Support Builth Wells high school as we continue to make excellent improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitate the continued co-operation between Builth Wells and Llandrindod Well high school - Conduct a full review of sixth form provision in the two schools with all stakeholders so we can address Avril's and her constituents very real concerns about improving options for our pupils post-16 provision. <p>Surely we should be postponing these closure now and allowing both schools time to carry on working hard as they are at present to raise standards, to give them time to improve.</p> <p>I feel it is not unreasonable for you to support the proposal of Cllr Maureen Mackenzie who proposed an all council amendment and an overwhelming democratic expression was made by Council to delay the closure proposals by a realistic and prescribed time for both schools:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">' For</p>

proposals to be made by the both schools to improve standards and to support senior leadership teams'. This would give the schools an opportunity to use their expertise to improve standards collaboratively and work with Estyn inspectors. A model of collaboration which takes place for post-16 education can be adopted for both schools to address their challenges and for them to drive up standards without having to be distracted by the closure agenda proposed by PCC Education cabinet.

Please do not close Builth Wells High School.

The Council should be looking to put all of its resources into supporting both Builth and Llandrindod schools to raise standards now and not to push forward with a scheme that ultimately does not even have the support of Estyn (as noted by Estyn in their 4 page response to Powys Council's proposal

Getting out of Special Measures:

I note that today (7th December 2016) Brecon High School has been officially removed from Special Measure by Estyn as a result of their most recent inspection between the 8th and 10th of November 2016. The schools website states that 'the school has demonstrated the progress required for the school to be removed from this category and is the culmination of 2 years work'. Builth and Llandrindod High Schools are both striving for an upward trend of improvement in standards and this is likely to take a period of time, similar to that of Brecon High Schools journey (approximately 2 years). I would request that Powys Councils cabinet members allow the schools to carry out the work that is required to get the schools out of 'special measures' and allow the governors, leadership teams, staff, pupils and parents from both schools to succeed without adding the pressure of a schools merger into the mix.

As a sixth-form student at Llandrindod High School, I feel that this is an unacceptable move by Powys County Council. I therefore urge the Council to drop the proposal, increase funding for both Schools and to leave them operating as two separate schools.

Two schools in special measures will be better served by two management teams that can adequately meet each community's distinct education requirements.

I believe the two schools could work together to deliver sixth form provision. This would mean a wider choice of subjects, moving nearer the Learning and Skills Measure, and less travelling between many schools. It would help to stop the loss of so many post 16 pupils to Hereford College.

I am writing as a parent of a child in Y7 of Llandrindod High School with two younger siblings tight behind her. I am very sorry to hear the Members' decision to merge Builth and Llandrindod High Schools and I understand that this is our time to ask that you reverse the decision. I am VERY aware that neither Builth or Llandrindod (and sadly many other schools in Powys) are much good in terms of academic achievements, and as a tax payer I am expecting that major efforts should be made to improve

	standards in all schools in Powys - and particularly Llandrindod High School with is position firmly in Special Measures.
10.3	Other
	Given that the limited benefits of a school merger (small saving cost, and post-16 education on one site) could be achieved in other ways, and given the large risk of the merger to the quality of the education in mid Powys, I urge you to overrule the decision by PCC cabinet (which was made against the wishes of the full council) and instruct the council officers to look at alternative arrangements with lower risk and greater benefits.
	<p>There are many more minor points that could be added to this letter. We, like many others feel very strongly about this and I am sure that Builth residents will be reacting in a similar fashion to support their High School. We accept that change may be needed but without evidence to provide that closing Llandrindod Wells High School will be the best option we fail to understand how this has got as far as it has. Surely this is a very short sighted plan that may be financially a good idea at present but the long term implications are far more wide reaching. The pupils of Llandrindod Wells High School deserve the best and in our opinion that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep Llandrindod Wells High School open - Listen to the pupils and think of their future and their community - do not think of things in isolation. - Support the staff to ensure that Teaching and Learning standards are good to excellent. - Work with the Governors and Leadership Team to keep moving the school forward. - Invest in the future of Llandrindod Wells High School based in Llandrindod and invest in Llandrindod the town.
	In conclusion, we ask you to really listen to everyone who responds. Please do not push all this aside and have the mind-set that the decision has been made and this is what is going to happen. If Brexit can be re-looked at, then surely the future of Llandrindod Wells High School can be given the same respect the priority.
	As I have asserted, the educational situation in Powys is currently volatile, and making such a drastic change as you have suggested is likely to bring about a number of practical issues. I thank you for reading this letter and hope that you consider some of the points that I have brought forward.
	<p>Why is it that Council's don't stand firm and tell the Welsh Assembly and Parliament that we cannot cut services anymore and we need more money to fund these services, not less.</p> <p>Powys County Council need to lobby the Welsh Government to request the further funding that we need in Powys, we should have parity.</p> <p>Pass the problem back to the governments.</p>

	<p>Please leave our High Schools alone in Builth Wells and Llandrindod Wells.</p> <p>History will record this period of education within Powys as the darkest of times. You who support such changes are leaving behind a legacy of cuts, closures and failures. That's how you will be remembered, that is what your great grandchildren will read about you in the history books.</p> <p>Why not fight?! Fight the Welsh Assembly for a better deal, Kirsty Williams WILL listen. Don't go down in history as the ones with no backbone, no vision, and no care for the children of Powys. Make a difference! Make a stand, please! Listen to the people you represent, it is not complicated.</p>
	<p>This proposed merger should not go ahead. Both schools are important to both communities. Whilst I no longer live in Builth Wells I had three children who went to this truly wonderful school. A merger is unacceptable.</p>
	<p>Views of the local communities</p> <p>I have attended consultation meetings and Action Group meetings in Builth Wells and have listened to the views of many local business people and parents. The overwhelming feeling is that the local community do not wish for the schools to merge believing that each school can raise standards without a merger. I urge the cabinet to take on board the views of the local community and not to press ahead with the proposal.</p>
	<p>New Director of Education</p> <p>It is my understanding that a New Director of Education is to be appointed in due course. I would urge the cabinet to allow this appointment to be made and for the new Director to oversee the decision making process. Surely the new Director of Education would want to have a say in such an important decision?</p>
	<p>I urge the Council's cabinet to take on board the views of the local communities of both Builth Wells and Llandrindod Wells and listen to the views of parents, teachers and local business people who understand the likely impacts that this will have on their towns.</p>
	<p>We fail to see an economic rationale of your proposal that will deliver for the schools and would be extremely disappointed if you pressed forward through to your ultimate aim of one school. We urge you to stop, reconsider, allow the schools breathing space to focus on their achievement targets and ensure that education spend is protected for the benefit of all.</p>
	<p>I would like you to confirm receipt of this email and provide responses to my requests</p> <p>I am prepared to use my vote in any future council elections to express my concern for this proposed merger - only voting for those who see sense in this matter</p>
	<p>From my experience of discussions with parents at pre and post inspection meetings during the inspection cycle, uppermost in</p>

	parents' minds are the standards achieved by pupils. It follows that the prime duty of every education authority is to ensure that all schools under its jurisdiction achieve the highest possible standards. I trust that the Education authority in Powys will give due consideration to the overwhelming objection to these proposals as expressed in a recent public meeting held at the school and overturn its decision to close both schools and merge them as one school on two sites
	We, the undersigned, strongly object to the closure of Builth Wells High School and the creation thereof of a Welsh-medium school and would prefer that BWHS maintains its current position. Though my child is in the Welsh stream, he takes his science and numeracy lessons in English. If the Council persists with the closures, then we would be asking the Council for a list of suitable alternative schools.
	It would seem to me that Powys council are trying to ensure the demise of both schools but insisting on this course of action, this will ultimately destroy the towns. Meaning we won't need councillors! Please change your mind on this decision, it is the wrong decision for the young people of both Llandod and Builth.
	I find it absurd to think that YOU could even allow this preposterous decision to have got this far. There should be a vote of NO CONFIDENCE in YOU all!!!
	I hope you consider my arguments and will take the opinion of the public into account before making a cemented decisions on the proposal because it would be disastrous for both the high schools of Llandrindod and Builth but also the communities.
	As a tax payer I'd rather pay more Tax to guarantee a high standard of Healthcare and Education, no hard working man or woman would want to see their community affected by cuts.
	I fear for the future for both of my children's high school education and hope that this retrograde step will not be taken.
	As I have asserted, the educational situation in Powys is currently volatile, and making such a drastic change as you have suggested is likely to bring about a number of practical issues. I thank you for reading this letter and hope that you consider some of the points that I have brought forward.
	I ask Powys to think again before they commit to upsetting the balance of this very successful school. I am not a person who fears change, but it must be a change for the better... and I do not think this is!
	I urge you to reconsider your decision and take the common sense approach as if this goes ahead, it may well have a detrimental effect on the town and community of Llandrindod. Would you like to have that on your conscience?
	In addition, as a retired teacher living near the school I should like to comment that I am very impressed with the behaviour and manners of the Llandrindod school pupils. They are a credit to the town and to the school and are essential to the future of Llandrindod
	Our children deserve to be schooled in their home towns in schools of the highest standard. This decision will not deliver that
	This proposed merger should not go ahead. Both schools are important to both communities. Whilst I no longer live in Builth Wells I had three children who went to this truly wonderful school. A merger is unacceptable.

	<p>or a saving of a few thousand pounds, that will be swallowed up by the Headteacher's pay that has not been budgeted for and the expenses of the actual merger, (new identity, new paperwork, new signage, etc.), never mind the damage done to the communities themselves and the heartache and stress that it has caused and is still causing, Powys County Council is proposing this disaster. The staff themselves at the schools are already having to deal with the difficulties the uncertainty is causing and the pupils are suffering as neither school can plan ahead. It is indeed laughable that Powys are asking for budget proposals for the next three years - does the accounting dept not realise there is a proposal to merge the schools?! Yet again, it shows the lack of joined up thinking that exists at PCC and you, as chief executive, must take responsibility for that.</p>
	<p>On a personal note, I wish to add that Llandrindod Wells is a good place to bring up children and my three children who went to Llandrindod Wells High School – in their words – “had a fantastic childhood”. I wonder how many children would say that if this planned merger was to take place. In the words of my 23 year old son “they want to take Llandrindod off the map” – how sad.</p>
	<p>Finally and perhaps most importantly, it is very clear to me that Powys does not care about the standards of education in these schools; especially as it ignores Estyn's advice stating that it was not convinced that the proposal would even maintain standards. So, you are putting inaccurate financial considerations ahead of our children's education. Overall this proposal will damage education standards and young people's life chances in Powys and as a parent, a Powys resident and tax payer, i am mortified by this. I hope that you are able to see the damage you are causing to education by doing this and throw out this proposal</p>

