

# CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

## CABINET REPORT FOR PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION 14th November 2011

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Gareth Jones  
Senior Manager, Central Services

**SUBJECT:** Closure of Trefnanney Community Primary School

---

**REPORT FOR:** Decision

---

### Summary

Following a review of small schools in Powys by the Council's Learning in the Community Programme Board earlier in the year, on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2011 the Council's Cabinet approved the commencement of a consultation process to close Trefnanney CP School.

At the time of writing there are 12 pupils at the school and only one of these is of infant age.

The financial costings and potential savings from closure of the school are shown at Appendix A and are approximately £100,000 per annum.

A consultation meeting with staff, governors and the community was held on 29<sup>th</sup> September where the proposals were explained; this included a timetable explaining that the school could be formally closed by summer 2012. The Council must give one term's notice to a school proposed for closure as well as undertaking the formal statutory notice procedure.

The consultation period for comments to be received on the proposals ran from 19<sup>th</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> October. No comments were received during this period. Copies of the agreed minutes of the consultation meetings are available from the Schools Service. Following the closure of the consultation period and a request from the Schools Service, the comments of the pupils at the school were received and these are included at Appendix B.

### Statutory notices

Statutory notices need to be published for one month and are subject to Welsh Government regulations. They must be displayed at all school entrances and published in at least one local newspaper as well as other prominent public places. They must be published not fewer than 15 school days before the end of the school term; the last possible publication date before the end of the current term would be 30<sup>th</sup> November. If one objection to a statutory notice is received, the decision falls to the Minister at the Welsh Government to determine. The Council must make its comments on the objections received and send them to the Welsh Government within two weeks of the end of the objection period.

### Proposal

To publish statutory notices for the closure of Trefnanney CP School on or around 24<sup>th</sup> November with the closing date for objections being on or around 24<sup>th</sup> December with the receiving school being named as Meifod CP School. This timetable would allow, subject to

Ministerial approval, the school to be closed by 31st August 2012. Free transport to Meifod CP School will only be available for qualifying pupils.

### **Corporate Improvement Plan**

A priority of the Corporate Improvement Plan is to provide high quality educational opportunities for all and this priority has been encompassed within the Learning in the Community improvement priority of the Powys Change Programme. The proposals within this paper will also help to meet the efficiency priority targets within the Plan. Any recommendations to consult on the closure of schools will, if implemented, support the priorities for the Schools Service contained in the Plan.

### **Options Considered/Available**

The school could remain open but this would be a very inefficient use of resources and the number of pupils is at a level where it will become increasingly difficult for a reasonable standard of education to be provided.

### **Preferred Choice and Reasons**

It is in the best interests of the pupils in the school that statutory notices for closure are published as soon as possible.

### **Sustainability and Environmental Issues/Equalities/Crime and Disorder,/Welsh Language/Other Policies etc**

Where small schools are proposed for closure there will be some increase in travel and therefore carbon emissions.

The proposals are not anticipated to impact on any vulnerable or minority groups; an equality impact assessment has been undertaken.

School closure proposals will have an impact on the services available in rural communities but the savings generated will help to maintain and improve services for the whole of the community of Powys.

### **Children and Young People's Impact Statement - Safeguarding and Wellbeing**

The best interests of young people in these small schools will be safeguarded at all times particularly during this uncertain period of review. In the case of small schools that will be closing, every effort will be made to ensure a smooth transition to new schools and safe and efficient transport to their new locations.

### **Local Member(s)**

The local member Councillor Eldredd Jones has commented as follows:

Following your invitation to local members to comment on the proposals to close small schools in the area, I confirm that I am supporting my community in this respect. Trefnanney CP School is an important focus of the community in the area. I am aware of the proposal to close the school and I am disappointed especially following the excellent Estyn report the school received recently. I wish to secure the best future for local children and I am opposing the closure of Trefnanney C.P. School and supporting those parents, governors and staff who are also opposing this proposal to close.

### **Other Front Line Services**

No implications identified.

### **Support Services (Legal, Finance, HR, ICT, BPU)**

The Principal Accountant has been fully involved with the costings of the proposed closure of this school and confirms the savings identified are accurate based on the assumptions made in the report.

Legal - There are no legal implications flowing from the recommendations of this report.

**Local Service Board/Partnerships/Stakeholders etc**

No implications identified.

**Statutory Officers**

The Strategic Director, Law & Governance (Monitoring Officer) has commented:-  
The proposals need to follow the normal procedures for school closure and advice from Legal Services obtained as necessary.

The Strategic Director, Finance & Infrastructure (Section 151 Officer) has commented:-  
I note that the Principal Accountant has agreed the financial data used in the report and would support the recommendation of the report.

**Members' Interests**

The Monitoring Officer is not aware of any specific interests that may arise in relation to this report.

**Future Status of the Report**

The portfolio holder is invited to consider the future status of this report and whether it can be made available to the press and public either immediately following the meeting or at some specified point in the future.

<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>Reason for Recommendation:</b>
<b>To publish statutory notices for the closure of Trefnanney CP School before the end of November 2011 with the closing date for objections being before the end of December.</b>	<b>To ensure efficient use of resources within the schools service and to provide the best possible standard of education for local children.</b>

<b>Relevant Policy (ies):</b>			
<b>Within Policy:</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Within Budget:</b>	<b>Y</b>

<b>Relevant Local Member(s):</b>	<b>Councillor Eldredd Jones</b>
----------------------------------	---------------------------------

<b>Person(s) To Implement Decision:</b>	<b>Head of Schools</b>
<b>Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:</b>	<b>31<sup>st</sup> August 2012</b>

<b>Contact Officer Name:</b>	<b>Tel:</b>	<b>Fax:</b>	<b>Email:</b>
Owen James	01597 826709		Owen.james@powys.gov.uk

**Background Papers used to prepare Report:**

Trefnanney Consultation Paper September/October 2011

Trefnanney Community Impact Assessment September/October 2011