

## APPENDIX B - LOG OF RESPONSES TO FORMAL CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL TO CLOSE CWMDU C IN W SCHOOL

REF.	COMMENT
<b>C1</b>	<p>Cwmdu School provides cultural, spiritual and social input to its surrounding area. It promotes Welsh culture by holding annual Eisteddfod, the afternoon session of which is reliant on excellent competition provided by pupils of Cwmdu School. Would challenge the statement in the Community Impact Assessment that there would be no loss of Welsh medium provision in area, if the school closed. The closure of the school would result in loss of the only remaining Eisteddfod in that area of South Powys. Cwmdu Agricultural Show is also dependent on many entries from pupils of the school. The relationship between St Michaels Church and Cwmdu school is very strong. Parents have been attracted to the school because of its strong Christian values and ethos. The 2 nearest Church schools are Llangattock which is at maximum capacity and Llanbedr whose access roads are difficult.</p> <p>The school provides the village with many social events, which is particularly important in an area of scattered population.</p> <p>The school has received endorsements from SEN specialists, with many children benefiting from smaller environment.</p> <p>The school is the main source of local employment in the village.</p> <p>The school has received a favourable ESTYN report. Latest ESTYN report states that "Cwmdu is a good school where pupils achieve well; the school is very much at the heart of the local village community ....."</p>
<b>C2</b>	<p>Cwmdu Church in Wales School has an extremely important role to play in the life of the community and is at the heart of community activities. The school, Village Hall, Eisteddfod and Cwmdu Show are all linked and the loss of any one would adversely affect the others. The Hall relies on the school for many bookings and the Eisteddfod is reliant on participation of Cwmdu School pupils. Many of the entries are performed in Welsh by non-Welsh speaking children. The village is proud of its ability to maintain this Welsh tradition. A valuable part of Welsh culture would be lost if the school closes. The proposed closure would have a disastrous effect on the local area as many of the local activities are based around the school, which are organised for the benefit of the community. Cwmdu School is a denominational school and plays a key part in the local Church. Cwmdu School has an extremely good reputation for catering for pupils with special needs in preparing them to go forward to the next stage of their education. Loss of Cwmdu School would have an adverse effect on Cwmdu and on the Community Council, which would not have a school in its area. Closure of the school would "leave a gap at the heart of the village". Cwmdu School is the largest employer in the village. Loss of employment would be keenly felt.</p>
<b>C3</b>	<p>Cwmdu School provides a loving, secure environment where the children are nurtured. School provides caring, consideration and respect in a fun atmosphere. Older children help the younger children. Pupils are taught life skills and develop into "happy, rounded individuals".</p> <p>Cwmdu School is at the heart of the local community, supporting local show, Eisteddfod etc. The Eisteddfod would finish if the school closed. The pupils play an important part in Church services and events. The School organises events which are open to the local community. Without the school, there would be no heart to the local rural community.</p> <p>The school has time for each child and any problems or learning difficulties are identified and dealt with, the child and parents being given support and guidance. The school has taken many children who have found mainstream, large schools difficult. These children have "blossomed into confident, happy, achieving children through care, kindness and hard work of the staff.</p> <p>No money will be made by selling the land and school building for development as they do not belong to PCC. There will be a cost to Authority</p>

## APPENDIX B - LOG OF RESPONSES TO FORMAL CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL TO CLOSE CWMDU C IN W SCHOOL

	<p>of having to transport pupils to alternative schools. Crickhowell CP School has surplus places but parents have expressed the view they would not send their children to Crickhowell CP School as an alternative school. Little money would be saved by closing Cwmdu School but closure would do damage to the rural community and children's lives and education.</p>
<b>C4</b>	<p>Impressed by ethos and atmosphere of Cwmdu school, the way and what they are taught, politeness of children and the way the pupils treat each other.</p> <p>The whole village has been involved with the school for many generations. The school is a very important heart of the village. The school has strong links with the Church, the Hall, the Eisteddfod and the Cwmdu Show. The Eisteddfod would be likely to discontinue if the school closed. No thought has been given to the quality of education offered at Cwmdu School; only the money saved by its closure. Parents would not be happy to send their children to the local school with the most surplus places and would be left with little choice as to alternative schools. Several pupils come to the school from outside the catchment as parents of these children prefer the school's methods and the size of the school.</p> <p>School is the largest employer in the village and is very important to those working there.</p> <p>Leak of information to the press was disastrous to the school. Expresses view that prospective parents were being "signposted" away from the school.</p> <p>School has nurtured several pupils with special needs who have all done "exceptionally well". Children find the small, welcoming school "less threatening" and relax and settle into school life.</p> <p>Cwmdu School is a small, happy, successful school.</p> <p>Closing Cwmdu School would not save much money as the building is not owned by PCC but closing the school would cause "much distress to the community"</p>
<b>C5</b>	<p>Cwmdu C in W School provides a high quality education with a strong Christian ethos. Parents are attracted to the school because it instils their beliefs and instils in the children a strong sense of belonging to a community. Alternative Faith education in area is limited; Llangattock C in W School is oversubscribed and Llanbedr C in W School which has limited availability but is not easily accessible. Disputes 6 miles distance between Cwmdu School and Llanbedr School quoted in the consultation paper. Church has strong links with the school and takes a weekly Assembly and provides a weekly After School Club. Children are involved in services in the Church, which are well supported by the local community. If the school was to close, Cwmdu Church would lose its connection with the children of the parish. The children would lose their sense of ownership and belonging to the community. Cwmdu is a small, rural community with the school as its main centre of community life and support for the Church.</p>
<b>C6</b>	<p>Children and staff from the school have played an important role in the early development of an orchard of rare and local apple trees. It had been expected that the current generation and future generations of school children would enjoy and appreciate it. Importance of Cwmdu</p>

## APPENDIX B - LOG OF RESPONSES TO FORMAL CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL TO CLOSE CWMDU C IN W SCHOOL

	<p>school for continuity in the rural community; closure would adversely impact on the community as a whole.</p>
<b>C7</b>	<p>School is a vital part of the village community and is held in high regard. The school's closure would remove one of the key facets of life in a small village. It is one of the few institutions which brings the community together. The school and the community have been closely linked for generations. The schoolchildren play a major part in the annual village Eisteddfod and use the village hall for rehearsals and PE lessons. The closure of the school would make the village poorer in many respects.</p> <p>A decision to close a school with good educational standards will force children to relocate to other schools which may not be of a similar standard.</p>
<b>C8</b>	<p>Importance of role of the school in the culture and history of the community. The staff parents and pupils play a big part in community events: Eisteddfod, Village Show, social evenings, Church festivals, school's charitable coffee morning, sports day and school fetes etc. How can communities in Cwmdu area be sustained without a school?</p> <p>What establishment will come to the area to encourage, support, entertain, educate and interest communities in Cwmdu area? Villages should be encouraged to survive rather than to decline and stagnate.</p> <p>The Eisteddfod would not continue without Cwmdu school.</p> <p>Cwmdu School is a unique asset for the Crickhowell catchment and Powys. Cwmdu school enriches lives. School provides a secure happy environment and PCC should be proud of the school.</p> <p>Options offered in way of alternative schools are insufficient. Next local school to Cwmdu (Llangynidr) is full to capacity and school with most surplus places (Crickhowell CP) would not be considered by most parents because of its size.</p> <p>The way in which the community came to hear of the possible closure of Cwmdu school via the media was appalling and not proper conduct.</p> <p>"Cwmdu school delivers, has delivered and can continue to deliver."</p>
<b>C9</b>	<p>The prospect of sustainable communities will be greatly diminished if local schools are closed.</p>
<b>C10</b>	<p>Any proposed change would mean pupils would be transported on roads many miles with longer travel times. No gain to the child having to travel further and school transport would incur the county in more cost. Personal experience of school transport is that County uses lowest cost carriers with unreliable vehicles.</p> <p>Expresses the view that the leak to the press regarding consideration of closure of the school was deliberate and the decision on the school's closure is a foregone conclusion. Implies that insufficient has been done to track down who was responsible for the leak.</p> <p>Why offer Llangattock C in W as an alternative school when this school is already at capacity? A suggestion that an additional classroom is</p>

## APPENDIX B - LOG OF RESPONSES TO FORMAL CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL TO CLOSE CWMDU C IN W SCHOOL

	<p>created for an estimated £300K does not make sense in relation to achieving savings.</p> <p>Llanbedr school is another small village school and is likely to be the subject of future closure based on information re criteria for closure. Crickhowell CP has most surplus capacity; rather than assume closing school will fill space, it would be better to address the reason why parents do not want to send their children to Crickhowell CP. The road between Llangynidr and Crickhowell does not offer easy access particularly in bad weather.</p> <p>Why has Llangorse not been offered as an alternative school? The proposal reflects the minds of isolated planners rather than careful thought, consideration and the voice of parents and the community.</p> <p>The Community Impact Assessment does not reflect the importance of the village school and the significant contribution the school and its families make to life of Cwmdu. The document undersells the importance of the school and reflects poor research.</p> <p>The consultation document makes an assumption that everyone wants big schools, that big equals cost saving and better staff to children ratios, who are able to focus on pupils, rather than administration. Agrees that running the school should not detract from teachers' ability to teach but equally introducing "top heavy administrative functions to create this space is not proven to reduce cost, but rather increase unless commercial operational methods are applied. The county should consider moving away from Local Government approach to control and look at how major companies achieve efficiency savings through effective managements and administrative delivery.</p> <p>Powys CC has been instrumental in reducing the numbers at Cwmdu School through poor communication and staff have misrepresented the views of the County when enquiries have been made about Cwmdu School, meaning that for two years potential parents have not been given Cwmdu as a choice. Although pupil numbers at the school are low, no discussion or thought has been given that the school is worthy of keeping and developing. Decisions on the viability of the school should be based on real, hard proven facts and not based on the assumption that one size fits all.</p>
<p><b>C11</b></p>	<p>If Cwmdu School closes pupils will face a commute of at least 20 minutes each way to any of the alternative schools, more in the Winter if the weather is bad. It would not be satisfactory for a 3-year old to spend 40 minutes on a bus every day. Expresses concerns re health and safety of children on buses. Are special children's seats available on the bus? Will someone be there to ensure the children are properly strapped in? Will the bus pick up from the door or will the children need to wait for the bus in an isolated location? Concerns expressed that the detailed costing of transport to alternative schools has not been sufficiently thought through. Children have a right to stay in their community and this is vital if they are to learn community values. Children should not be shunted across vast distances to reach their place of learning. It makes it more difficult for parents to be involved with the school if they have to face a long drive each time they wish to attend parents' evening to volunteer to help at school events. What is important to us is not having lots of teachers for different subjects at primary school level or an array of play equipment, classrooms and resources – it is important for us for our children to be taught in a small group of children of all ages by a small number of teachers with whom they have a personal relationship. The quality of education is superior at Cwmdu School; we believe the</p>

## APPENDIX B - LOG OF RESPONSES TO FORMAL CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL TO CLOSE CWMDU C IN W SCHOOL

	<p>sort of family atmosphere is second to none in terms of passing on the values we want our children to learn at school. In large classes it is easy for one badly behaved child to go unnoticed to bully someone or to cause disruption. We like our children to learn alongside children of different ages.</p> <p>Once the school closes there will be no way of reopening and the infant population may increase in the future. Closure of the school would be another “nail in the coffin” of the rural way of life.</p> <p>The money saved by the closure of the school (£100,000) would be relatively small when compared to the total education budget. Cwmdu School represents excellent quality of education provided for the money, given the low ratio of teachers to pupils. If you disengage children from their community (by removing the local school) you are doing the community at large, as well as the children themselves a disservice.</p>
<p><b>C12</b></p>	<p>Cwmdu School makes a valuable contribution to the community, including the Church the Eisteddfod and the Show. The school’s performance, operating costs and standards were considered strengths in the last inspection report. The pastoral care provided and the behaviour of the children were also highly commended by the inspectors. Many parents choose Cwmdu School as it offers an ethos that supports their religious belief and reinforces the importance of community life. Faith provision in South East Powys is limited and if a possible local 200 hundred house development is taken into account there will be inadequate faith provision in the area. Llangatock C in W School is now at capacity.</p> <p>Concerns that the need to bus children to alternative schools is not in line with the “green agenda” and inappropriate to bus pupils from the age of the 3 to larger schools in an unfamiliar community extending their school day.</p> <p>20% of the pupil intake in the last ten years have been transfers from other local primary schools. Cwmdu School provides a valuable service within the local area by educating children in a mainstream environment who have not thrived in other local schools.</p> <p>The school has received many endorsements from specialists in the field of special education and has been recommended to parents of pupils who are finding school a difficult place to be. The school has been a refuge for school refusers and has also supported a number of children with significant physical disabilities. All these pupils have developed positive social skills and raised their educational attainment substantially with minimal cost to the ALN budget.</p> <p>There is no capital realisation through the closure of Cwmdu School as the site is owned by the Church in Wales. There are additional costs associated with releasing existing staff and redistribution of resources.</p> <p>Some children require stability and support which cannot adequately be met in a larger school. Far the from saving money, the implications of closing Cwmdu school would have costs which extend far beyond the LEA budget.</p>
<p><b>C13</b></p>	<p>Cwmdu School has been very successful. Respondent expresses the view that the Council should concentrate on improving other schools rather than shutting Cwmdu. The relatively small amount of money saved by closing Cwmdu School is not worth the upset to current pupils, future pupils as well as to the community. The village would hardly be able to survive without the school. The school plays an important part in</p>

## APPENDIX B - LOG OF RESPONSES TO FORMAL CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL TO CLOSE CWMDU C IN W SCHOOL

	<p>community events such as the Eisteddfod and the village show. Without a school, the reasons that people would move to Cwmdu or stay in the village would no longer be there.</p>
<b>C14</b>	<p>The current pupil number has now fallen to 19 but one year ago it was around 28/29 pupils with the potential of being around 32 as there were families in the area who were interested in sending their children to Cwmdu. However this all changed when there was a leak in January 11 to the press that the school may close. Since the leak parents have been taking their children away from Cwmdu School as they are worried about its possible closure. Those who were thinking of sending their children to the school have been told that is unlikely the school will still be open after 2012. The leak has probably “wrecked” the school’s chances of staying open. If the governors had been “warned” that the school was being considered for closure they would have done more to advertise the school locally. If the school closes, many community events inspired by the school will close and the village will die. The school employs a lot of local staff and it may be uneconomic for these staff to be redeployed elsewhere for part-time work due to Powys being such a large County. If the school has to be considered for closure, it should be done as part of an area review process when all surrounding schools would be assessed and the future educational requirements for this part of Powys.</p>
<b>C15</b>	<p>Whilst recognising that consultation on closure of the school is driven by pupil numbers, contends there are exceptional reasons why this small school should remain open.</p> <p>Cwmdu School plays a leading part in ensuring that the Welsh language and traditions are maintained in a much anglicised part of the County. The school provides the focus for the cultural life of the wider community and is the mainstay of the local Eisteddfod and the local Church. Maintaining a vibrant cultural heritage in our communities is the responsibility of the County Council and without the school the village and wider community would be significantly impoverished. The drive to standardise schools, to establish a uniformity of provision flies in the face of everything that our education system seeks to promote. Children are all individuals and parents need genuine choices of schools that cater for their child’s needs.</p> <p>There are examples of children who have failed to integrate in larger schools who have thrived at Cwmdu because it provides a caring, inclusive, mainstream environment with a strong Christian ethos. It is recognised that the cost per child is higher than in larger schools, but ensuring that by the age of eleven each child is equipped to face Secondary School does not equate to spending the same amount of money on each primary school pupil. Money spent on fragile children at this crucial stage in their lives can save costs that would fall later in life on other departments such as Social Services, the NHS and the criminal justice system.</p> <p>Concerns expressed that potential parents were signposted away from Cwmdu School.</p> <p>It would be irrational for the Cabinet to acknowledge the lack of alternative Church in Wales provision in respect of Llanfechain but not Cwmdu. There is no surplus capacity at either Llangattock Church in Wales School or at Llangynidr C P School and parents of existing pupils of Cwmdu</p>

## APPENDIX B - LOG OF RESPONSES TO FORMAL CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL TO CLOSE CWMDU C IN W SCHOOL

	<p>CP School do not consider Crickhowell CP School as an acceptable option.</p>
<b>C16</b>	<p>Cwmdu School provided his 3 children with a superb formative education and 2 have since gone on to achieve excellent results at University.</p> <p>Powys is a County of small rural communities. The County Council's School Closure Policy discourages the maintenance of vibrant all-age communities.</p> <p>Political decisions should not just be based on per capita costs. The values inculcated by Cwmdu School cannot be priced but they are none the less valuable. Cwmdu School provides enormous societal value which cannot be measured in monetary terms. The Minister will not want to take a decision, which is founded on a process that was flawed. "Powys County Council has behaved in a way which opens questions about abuse of process."</p> <p>What consideration has been given to keeping Cwmdu School open as a Welsh medium primary school? South East Breconshire has no such provision and a Welsh medium school in a village which has a proud history in Welsh medium education, would be a most successful development. The school's present headteacher is due to retire; a Welsh-speaking Head could be recruited and the school could move to being a Welsh medium school by year-group, beginning with new entrants in September, 2012.</p>
<b>C17</b>	<p>Has the proposed housing development at Cwrt y Gollen been factored in to the calculations? If this development is approved, the whole demographic of the schools in the Crickhowell area will change.</p> <p>The valuable work done at Cwmdu School for children with learning difficulties will be lost and will be more costly to provide elsewhere.</p> <p>Cwmdu is the only remain school in Cwmdu Community Council area following closure of Cathedine VP School at Bwlch over thirty years ago. Since the closure of the primary school in Bwlch the facilities in the village have slowly declined and the village population now includes a large percentage of elderly people because parents of young children are no longer attracted to the village. The same thing will happen to Cwmdu village if the school is closed. The impact assessment does not adequately reflect the "slow death" that will be inflicted on Cwmdu if the closure goes ahead.</p> <p>The project saving of £80,000 is very small.</p> <p>Concern expressed that officers of PCC have been discouraging new parents from sending their children to Cwmdu School by prematurely advising them that the school is to be closed and thus artificially reducing the number of pupils to make closure inevitable.</p>
<b>C18</b>	<p>Alleges that the process around the proposal to close Cwmdu School has been "badly handled" – reports leaked to the press and continued inaccuracies in the documentation relating to the process. Leaks to the press and officers allegedly informing prospective parents that the school was closing have ensured that the school numbers have reduced further, thus becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy.</p>

## APPENDIX B - LOG OF RESPONSES TO FORMAL CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL TO CLOSE CWMDU C IN W SCHOOL

	<p>The proposal around Cwmdu C in W School should be considered as part of an area review process. A school should not be considered for closure without fully considering the impact on neighbouring schools.</p> <p>The fact that so many parents from outside the catchment area choose to send their children to Cwmdu School “speaks volumes”. By closing small schools, you are removing the rights of parents and pupils to choose the type of school. The correspondents do not agree that larger schools provide improved educational experiences for children as not all children are suited to large schools.</p> <p>The original alternative schools proposed were incorrect: Llangorse C in W, Llangattock C in W and Crickhowell CP. Langorse C in W School is in a different catchment. Llangattock C in W School does not have sufficient capacity. Crickhowell CP School has a large number of vacancies which correspondents suggest may be indicative of a “few issues”. Llangynidr CP School does not have vacancies in all classes. Llanbedr C in W School could be considered for closure as part of an area review process in future. Correspondents consider that the number of vacancies quoted in the documents relates to Crickhowell CP School and therefore parents do not have a choice of alternative schools.</p> <p>Disagrees with distances quoted for alternative schools from Cwmdu C in W School and claims that many of the routes would be via single track county lanes, many of which would not be accessible in inclement weather. The possibility of shared school transport with the high School was not mentioned until the consultation meeting with governors.</p> <p>Impact on working families in relation to disruption to childcare arrangements in the event of closure of Cwmdu C in W School needs to be acknowledged.</p> <p>Concerns expressed re delegated powers. Considers it is not democratic if one person has the final decision over whether the school should close.</p> <p>The closure of the schools would “decimate” the village as the school is a focal point for many community events.</p>
<p><b>C19</b></p>	<p>Concerns expressed that should Cwmdu School close, there needs to be continued provision of Church in Wales education which is easily accessible for its pupils. There are concerns regarding available capacity at Llangattock C in W School and there are concerns in relation to provision of transport to any alternative schools.</p> <p>The small size of Cwmdu C in W School enables supportive teaching of pupils who would be seen as having special learning needs. Whilst the special learning needs of these pupils might be dealt with effectively by a school such as Llangattock C in W School, transition is never easy particularly for pupils with particular or specialised needs.</p> <p>Concerns expressed in relation to the process – uncertainty around the possibility of school closure is causing problems and division in the community. Requests that communication process is kept as open, as broad and as clear as possible.</p> <p>Requests that the concerns of local people in Cwmdu, the parents and staff are taken into consideration very carefully.</p>



## APPENDIX B - LOG OF RESPONSES TO FORMAL CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL TO CLOSE CWMDU C IN W SCHOOL

<b>C20</b>	<p>Mr Boggust expresses concern that PCC has not taken into account special needs consideration when calculating the cost per pupil at the schools. He believes that money has been saved by pupils with special needs being placed at Cwmdu C in W School who would have otherwise had to receive Complementary Education. Mr Boggust believes that the “vertical grouping” system at Cwmdu, which it is able to implement because of its size, is the main factor for the school’s success.</p>
<b>C21</b>	<p>Information presented in the most recent Community Impact Assessment contains errors. Most of the surplus places are in Crickhowell CP School, which is not the alternative school most parents of pupils at Cwmdu C in W School would wish to send their children. Alleges there has been misinformation on the part of PCC in relation to the closure process around Cwmdu School and that the Authority has treated pupils, staff in a “dismissive, arbitrary fashion”. Considers that it would have been fairer to consider Cwmdu School as part of an area review process.</p>
<b>C22</b>	<p>Letter 1 – comments in relation to consultation proposal.</p> <p>Alleges that the Authority did not consult with alternative schools.</p> <p>Claims there is a lack of available places at Llangynidr and Llangattock Primary schools and a lack of choice in relation to alternative schools, if Cwmdu C in W School closes. Expresses concern that pupils have not been consulted. Expresses concerns regarding “negative impact on the children’s education” should Cwmdu School close and lack of choice over future schools and failure to include the children’s views in the process.</p> <p>Letter 2 – comments in relation to the community impact assessment</p> <p>Questions the research and statistics drawn upon to inform the Community Impact Assessment. Believes the Community Impact Assessment minimises the impact on the community if Cwmdu School closes. Points out an inaccuracy in relation to some information supplied in the Community Impact Assessment; the Eisteddfod already takes place in the village hall.</p>