

## **Appendix C - Minutes of meetings with School Councils, Governors and Staff**

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**A Report on the meeting with the School Council of  
Banw C.P. School**

**October 24th 2018**

## **A Meeting with the School Council of Banw C.P. School**

Officers from the School Transformation Team met with Dyffryn Banw School Council on 24 October 2018 to discuss the consultation on the future of Ysgol Dyffryn Banw and Ysgol Llanerfyl.

One session was held with 8 pupils from the school council.

The officers explained the proposals in relation to Dyffryn Banw Primary School and the Llanerfyl Church in Wales (Foundation) School, namely:

- To close Dyffryn Banw Primary School and Llanerfyl Church in Wales (Foundation) School and to establish a Welsh-medium Church in Wales Voluntary Aided School.
- To establish the new school either
  - a. On the current site of Dyffryn Banw Primary School **or**
  - b. On the current site of Llanerfyl Primary School

The pupils were asked a number of questions and their responses are summarised below:

### **1. What do you like about Ysgol Dyffryn Banw? What's good about the school?**

- The park and the large hall
- The yard for playing netball
- A good place to do exercise and sports
- A good place to do athletics with a 200 metr running track
- A good place to do the long jump
- 4 classrooms so we study maths and language in different rooms
- Many computers
- The hall is good for sports if it rains
- The hall is good for concerts, Eisteddfod y Foel. The Powys Eisteddfod is also coming here
- A good hall for gymnastics
- A large canteen and kitchen
- An after school cooking club
- There is a kitchen by the hall as well
- A breakfast club
- School lunch has improved and the food is delicious - the food comes up from Llanerfyl
- Chips on Friday
- There is a lot of space here, so there is enough room for us to have time alone if necessary
- The little ones like the bikes
- It is a healthy school and we make fruit pots

- The school is suitable for disabled children or children who have had an injury e.g. a broken leg, because there are no stairs
- 2. Is there anything you dislike about Ysgol Dyffryn Banw, or anything that could be better?**
- No
  - Have more spaces for nature, a nature corner
- 3. If things changed, and if Ysgol Llanerfyl pupils also came to the school in Dyffryn Banw, what impact would this have?**
- We are friends with Llanerfyl children already, so there wouldn't be much of an impact on us
  - Llanerfyl children come here quite a lot already, for example to see Mr Formula
  - It would be good to have more sports and competitions. There are not enough children here to have a netball team at present, so there would be enough children for this
  - It would be good to have more children in the school and more friends
  - Llanerfyl children would have to come to school by car / on the bus
  - There is room for 120 children here, so there is plenty of room for more children
- 4. Is there anything that worries you about the possibility that Ysgol Llanerfyl children could come to Ysgol Dyffryn Banw?**
- I worry that we wouldn't be friends and that Llanerfyl children would stick together and that Dyffryn Banw children would stick together
  - We would be happy for Llanerfyl children to come here - there's plenty of space here and I would be happy to welcome new children here.
- 5. If things changed, and if Ysgol Dyffryn Banw pupils went to school in the Ysgol Llanerfyl building with Ysgol Llanerfyl children, what impact would this have?**
- I would worry about this - my mother is English and my sister wasn't allowed to go to Llanerfyl because Mum was English
  - This would be good for Llanerfyl children, but there's not enough room for everyone there
  - There are stairs at Ysgol Llanerfyl and I worry that if there were disabled children at the school, they would not be able to get upstairs
  - There wouldn't be room for everyone in the classes
  - There is no canteen or hall
  - It's dangerous to cross the road to go to the hall
  - There is only one female toilet at Llanerfyl, there are more toilets here

**6. Is there anything that worries you about the possibility that you would have to go to Ysgol Llanerfyl?**

- I don't think there's enough room for everyone
- I'm worried that people would move to Ysgol Llanfair or Ysgol Pontrobert
- I worry about crossing the road to go to the hall
- I'm worried that they don't let English children go to Llanerfyl. I would have to go to Llanfair
- It would be good for Llanerfyl children, but I don't think the change would be good for us.

**7. Pupils were asked if they had any further comments or anything else to add. The following comments were made:**

- Having one school is a good idea but the loss of a school in one place will affect that community
- If there were one school, it would be easier for the children to make friends and the school would be able to compete in netball and choir competitions, and be better at Eisteddfodau.
- Ysgol Llanerfyl is good at some things and Ysgol Dyffryn Banw is good at other things, so the new school would be able to be good at lots of things

To conclude the session, the officers explained the next steps in the consultation process. It was explained that the consultation will close on the 5th November, after half term, and the pupils were encouraged to send any further comments to the school transformation team, or to their teachers who will be able to arrange for them to be sent on.



**A Report on the meeting with the School Council of  
Llanerfyl C. in W. (Foundation) School**

**October 24th 2018**

## **A Meeting with the School Council of Llanerfyl C. in W. (Foundation) School**

Officers from the School Transformation Team met with Llanerfyl School Council on 24 October 2018 to discuss the consultation on the future of Ysgol Llanerfyl and Ysgol Dyffryn Banw.

One session was held with 7 pupils from the school council, and a second session with 2 late arrivals.

The officers explained the proposals in relation to Dyffryn Banw Primary School and the Llanerfyl Church in Wales (Foundation) School, namely:

- To close Dyffryn Banw Primary School and Llanerfyl Church in Wales (Foundation) School and to establish a Welsh-medium Church in Wales Voluntary Aided School.
- To establish the new school either
  - a. On the current site of Dyffryn Banw Primary School **or**
  - b. On the current site of Llanerfyl Primary School

The pupils were asked a number of questions and their responses are summarised below:

### **1. What do you like about Ysgol Llanerfyl? What's good about the school?**

- The food is good here
- We are all friends
- The building is big enough
- There is plenty of room here
- It's easier to be here because there aren't many children here
- The site is open after school and at weekends
- The building is old
- The building and the classrooms are colourful, and there are lots of things on the walls
- The playing field, there is plenty of space to have 4 play areas at the same time
- I like to play rounders, cooking, running, football, netball and crafts here
- Eisteddfodau and taking part in the Urdd
- The site is safe and it's safe enough to cycle and walk to school
- The teachers are kind and willing to help you
- The teachers can be strict but they help us and are kind
- Being able to walk to school
- I like the fact that it is a small school, there are friends in different year groups, and everyone knows each other

### **2. Is there anything you dislike about Ysgol Llanerfyl, or anything that could be better?**

- Rugby, we are not allowed to tackle because it's a 'contact sport'
- There are plenty of computers in the school, but the internet is slow
- There is no hall at the school, but we use the village hall. When it rains, we use the classrooms. We use the hall for the Urdd and for concerts, and go to the Church for thanksgiving.
- It's a long way to Welshpool to buy sweets!
- Nothing, I like the school

**3. If things changed, and if Ysgol Dyffryn Banw pupils also came to the school in Llanerfyl, what impact would this have?**

- We don't know them very well, so we would have to get to know them
- I worry that there is less space at this school - no room in the classroom or on the playing field
- We know some of the children already through trips, playing rugby and Mr Formula
- We need to get to know the children first
- We would have to make new friends
- Llanerfyl children would show Dyffryn Banw children where to go
- We would be able to make more friends
- If the Dyffryn Banw children came here, the school would have to be made bigger

**4. Is there anything that worries you about the possibility that Ysgol Dyffryn Banw children could come to Llanerfyl?**

- No, nothing worries us about the Dyffryn Banw children coming here
- There would be more competition to get a place in the sports teams
- How would 55 pupils fit in this building?
- The only concern is that Ysgol Llanerfyl would have to be made bigger

**5. If things changed, and if Ysgol Llanerfyl pupils went to school in the Ysgol Dyffryn Banw building with Ysgol Dyffryn Banw children, what impact would this have?**

- We would not be able to cycle to school
- We would have to go to school by car or by bus
- A larger minibus would be needed to take everyone to school
- It would be harder for small children to find their way around the school because the school is bigger
- Different teachers, it would be better if our present teachers went to Ysgol Dyffryn Banw too
- The school is bigger and there would be more space for sports
- Mum works at Ysgol Dyffryn Banw so that would be good
- It would be sad for my parents and grandparents because they went to school at Llanerfyl and the school wouldn't be there any more



**6. Is there anything that worries you about the possibility that you would have to go to Ysgol Dyffryn Banw?**

- I would have to make new friends
- I do not want to go to Dyffryn Banw, I want to stay here

**7. Pupils were asked if they had any further comments or anything else to add. The following comments were made:**

- We are happy in the school
- We like the school as it is

To conclude the session, the officers explained the next steps in the consultation process. It was explained that the consultation will close on the 5th November, after half term, and the pupils were encouraged to send any further comments to the school transformation team, or to their teachers who will be able to arrange for them to be sent on.

**Minutes of the Consultation meeting with governors and staff of Ysgol Gynradd  
Gymunedol Dyffryn Banw held on the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2018 at 7.30pm at Ysgol Dyffryn  
Banw**

Present-

**Governors of Ysgol Dyffryn Banw** – Kate Pinder, Emlyn Thomas, Eleri Mills, Richard Tudor, Marie Shirley Smith, Ruth O'Dwyer

**Staff of Ysgol Dyffryn Banw** – Delyth Thomas, Catrin Tudor, Nia Ellis, Rhian Jones, Penny Davies, Mererid Lewis, Betsan Llwyd

**Powys County Council representatives** – Cllr Aled Davies, Alec Clarke – Head of Learning, Marianne Evans – Senior Manager Schools Transformation, Catherine Cottle – HR Business Partner

**Representative of the St Asaph Diocese** – Sheridan Goodey, Jennie Downes

Clerk – Diane Rees

## **1 Welcome**

Cllr Aled Davies welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. All present introduced themselves.

Cllr Aled Davies explained that Cllr Myfanwy Alexander was the Portfolio Holder for Education but had declared an interest as she is a Governor at Ysgol Llanerfyl, therefore he had been appointed to act as temporary Portfolio Holder for this consultation.

Cllr Aled Davies commented that a drop in session had been held in the Community Hall from 3.00pm until 7.00pm that day and that the purpose of the evening meeting was to give the opportunity for Banw governors and staff to ask questions about the consultation.

## **2 Background to Consultation**

Cllr Aled Davies asked Marianne Evans to outline the background to the consultation process.

Marianne Evans provided an overview of the consultation. She explained that the consultation period had started on 24 September 2018 and was due to finish on 5 November 2018. When the consultation period ends, the next step will be to look at the comments received during the consultation period, and to produce a consultation report, which responds to the comments. The consultation report will go to the Council, who will discuss the proposal, and then Cabinet who will make a decision on how to proceed.

If the Cabinet decides to go ahead with one of the options, statutory notices would be published, and there would be a period of 28 days when people could submit objections. Following this, another report would be produced, outlining the objections received. This report would be considered by Cabinet, who would then make a decision on whether or not to proceed with implementation. It is anticipated that the whole process will be complete by May/June 2019.

## **3 General discussion**

**Comment: Pleased to note the good response to the afternoon consultation session. I believe that when the facts are looked at, for the parents of pupils at Banw to move to**

**Llanerfyl school there would be a need for investment – the facilities are not as good there. No discussions have been held regarding building commitments at the Llanerfyl site if it was chosen, but there would be a wish list of improvements that would be needed, which would be very costly.**

Dr Alec Clark: The figures that were in the report from Heart of Wales Property Services (HOWPS) have to be taken into context, there are fluctuations year on year in schools. In many ways some of the things mentioned were a wish list more than how old a boiler is at that point in time. It is clear in the consultation document that there are two categories that would be looked at – the condition of the building and then the suitability of the building in terms of day to day use. In terms of looking in the round, I would like to visit both schools on a school day when there are children there. In terms of the council's Challenge Advisors and School Improvement colleagues, there are no major concerns about the quality of education in either of the schools. We have historical Estyn reports, however remember that these are snapshots of the school at a point in time. I would want to see both schools in the light of day, running as usual.

Cllr Aled Davies: I would like to visit with Alec. I visited the school on the snow day in April, it was planned that there would be children here but unfortunately both schools were closed. However, both schools are able to accommodate all children in their current state.

Dr Alec Clark: I'm confident that an effective school with all the pupils in it could be run on either site. However, whatever decision is made, it is possible that there won't be full buy in from the other party. If the new school was in Banw, some consultees have already indicated that not all the Llanerfyl children would come here, and vice versa.

Cllr Aled Davies: Although it would take time to settle, I hope for the sake of the education within Dyffryn Banw that the two school communities can move forward with whichever option is chosen. It's so important that a school continues here in the valley and for it to flourish.

**Comment: If you are providing a good education, it attracts people anyway. The most important people in all of this are the children.**

Dr Alec Clark: We have been told that the current uncertainty at the moment is resulting in parents not wanting their children to come to this school at the moment.

**Comment: I understand that, that's why it's so important that a decision is made as soon as possible.**

Dr Alec Clark: Whatever the outcome of this process, it needs to be a stable solution that is fit for the future.

**Comment: I'm sure it said in the report that there are 26 children who travel out of the area to another school, and are provided with free transport.**

Dr Alec Clark: Which ever site is chosen, it is unlikely, from the comments that we have heard, that the new school will manage to receive all the pupils in the area, but if only a percentage choose the new school, it would be an increase to the current numbers on roll.

Cllr Aled Davies: With regard to potential investment in the future, there is no doubt that whichever site is chosen, investment would be needed in the medium term.

Marianne Evans: Based on the capacity of the two buildings, all children can be accommodated on either site. However, there is a duty on the authority to look at the suitability of what's there already and what's actually needed because there would be

different needs in both. For example, if the school was in Llanerfyl, we would need to look at whether there is enough storage, have they got enough cloakrooms, have they got enough toilets, and I think it would probably be the same here. No capital funding is needed immediately to be able to accommodate all pupils at either site, but as an authority we would want whichever site is chosen to be the most suitable to meet the needs of learners, so there would have to be some funding at some point.

**Comment: If all the pupils came from Llanerfyl School to Banw School – it would be a win win situation. The Banw children would have more social interaction and the Llanerfyl children would have more facilities. If the Banw school pupils went to Llanerfyl school, it would be a lose lose situation because Llanerfyl would have less space individually and Banw would be losing the Hall and the facilities.**

Marianne Evans: Cabinet will have to look at things from each perspective, and consider the advantages, disadvantages and the impact for both.

**Comment: The community aspect comes into it as well due to the co-location of the school with the Hall – they are entwined and rely on each other.**

Marianne Evans: I have spoken with the Chair of the Community Hall committee, who explained which bits of the hall were leased to the community but also that every service coming in was via the school – electricity etc. so I accept that there would be a huge impact – you can't just close a door and say, that was the school, that was the Hall – the two are far more integrated.

**Comment: How did the HOWPS survey not pick up that the Hall and the school were so intertwined?**

Marianne Evans: It was known that they were intertwined but we hadn't had the full details or appreciated the reality.

Dr Alec Clark: HOWPS carried out a broad building survey more in the style of an asset management plan, they came in as building surveyors. It was not their duty to unpick in terms of community usage, potential expensive costs of separating the buildings. I had assumed that the switch gear, mains inlets and outlets, drainage etc were shared, so actually it was a more complex picture but it is the quality of potential education for children and that would come at the top of the list.

**Comment: The Hall is a huge asset to the school because we use it so often, we have use of it during the day, we have PE lessons there and use the stage for performances, we can access it all day and with the new curriculum it would be used even more.**

Dr Alec Clark: I agree that it would help deliver the standard for the performing arts and expressive arts element of the curriculum and also the Health and Wellbeing in terms of having dry access to sporting and physical activities during the day.

**Comment: The children that attend Llanerfyl have to walk to the Hall in all weather, at some times of the year when there were practices for performances such as Christmas time, they had to walk back and forward four or five times a day. This could be seen as a Health and Safety issue. If it is raining, PE has to be carried out in the classroom, if you have 32 children in a classroom, this is not acceptable, there is nowhere for the pupils to go for fresh air. Some pupils eat their lunches at their desk as well.**

**Comment: If Llanerfyl pupils came to Banw, it would be because individuals had made a decision for the community, not a school that exists because of politics. The report has given us figures regarding money to be spent on building a new extension at Llanerfyl, however it does not take into account that there would be additional costs to move boilers / services etc if Banw school shut. Shutting the school would not be a simple process. Also how much call would there be for a building of this size in this rural area if the building was closed?**

Cllr Aled Davies: Property prices aren't the same as the middle of Birmingham or London, the potential of capital receipt for the authority was not a large sum compared to other costs. Everyone had seen the list in the consultation. While there could be receipts for potential investment, this did not drive the process, what drove it was the education and the opportunities for pupils in a small school. By opening one school, it could help with things such as budget, as well as other things such as numbers for football teams. The authority could invest in the building – there had been an extension in the past. Possibly the Church could be asked to provide a contribution. If a large amount of expenditure was needed, we could make a bid for a Welsh Government grant. As the proposal is to establish a Church in Wales VA school, whether on the Llanerfyl site or the Banw site, Welsh Government would provide 85%, compared to 50% for other schools.

Sheridan Goodey: The information is correct with regard to the 85% funding, however that would need to be looked at within the limit of the whole 21<sup>st</sup> Century funding for schools and the money available. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools funding is for big capital investment, it would need to be looked at in the context of how much money Powys has asked for.

Cllr Aled Davies: A business case would need to be put forward. There are no guarantees, the case to Welsh Government could be accepted or rejected.

**Comment: Where would an extension go on the Llanerfyl site as there are no grounds around the school suitable to build on.**

Cllr Aled Davies: We cannot get into that level of detail at the moment – there is no commitment to any capital expenditure at this stage.

**Comment: There are rumours going around that the person who owns the ground around the school was willing to give the ground to the authority. However, the opposite rumour had also gone around at the meeting in the day, so this information is unreliable and cannot be taken into consideration.**

**Comment: As a parent of a child in the Banw school, are we being asked to choose the site as it is now in Banw or the site as it is now in Llanerfyl? Is that correct?**

Cllr Aled Davies: Yes that is correct.

**Comment: The Llanerfyl site has no car park, canteen, playing field or facilities, disabled access or a hall, however all this is available two miles up the road.**

Cllr Aled Davies: There are pros and cons to both sites, the consultation is an opportunity to gather all the information and highlight the benefits of both sites. A decision will not be made tonight.

**Comment: During the initial engagement with parents held in the spring, parents were asked to complete a questionnaire. More forms were returned from parents at Llanerfyl school than parents at Banw school but actually the consensus was that**

**more parents believed the new school should be at Banw. That included the parents of children who currently attend Ti a Fi.**

Dr Alec Clark: Many people today have talked about the positives of the Banw site, however this is a formal consultation so will be based on written responses. Stakeholders needed to provide their written comments for the authority to look at and analyse.

**Comment: I haven't been to Llanerfyl school yet but will be visiting the school this week. What should I be looking for?**

Dr Alec Clark: In terms of equity at both sites, both are functioning schools, therefore you have to take into account that both could go forward as the new site.

**Comment: The numbers in the consultation paper need to be corrected.**

**Comment: It's wrong where it states in the document that no pupils walk to the school, when there is an estate directly behind the school that pupils walk from.**

Dr Alec Clark: Any comments submitted will be taken into consideration when determining how to proceed. To address any concerns about a local councillor having a vested interest, the Cabinet have shown their high esteem of Cllr Aled Davies by asking him to take over the process.

**Comment: The Friday night previously, the local member took me around the Llanerfyl school site, how could she do this if she didn't have an interest.**

Cllr Aled Davies: The decision was up to the councillor, she may have been asked to go and support Llanerfyl. It is very difficult for a local member to please everybody but it is important that she represents all residents in the area. Everyone needs to try and take the emotion out of the process and look at the evidence, to ensure that thoughtful comments are made through written submissions, not just expressed in meetings. The evidence would then be put into a report, which was such an important process, so that all the relevant information could be gathered together. The Authority's decision may not please everybody.

**Comment: The process sounds fair, but if the process is going according to fairness, would the local member be allowed to speak on the decision day? She would be encouraging the Cabinet to make their decision in favour of Llanerfyl site.**

Cllr Aled Davies: The decision would be made by the Cabinet members but not including Cllr Myfanwy Alexander. Cllr Alexander would be able to speak at the meeting as local member. Before Cabinet makes a decision, the consultation report will also go to full council. Cllr Myfanwy Alexander would be allowed to comment as local member at the full council meeting.

**Comment: the local member should be neutral as she represents both areas, Llanerfyl and Banw, but we are all aware of the situation and of her influence in Council. Would the consultation potentially back Llanerfyl as they have the support of the church?**

Cllr Aled Davies: We have consulted with them before the initial consultation and after the recommendation was altered, and so would ask for their observations. However, the feedback has been that the Dioceses is happy to support whatever decision comes out of the consultation and is best for the communities. At this stage, it is an open consultation, any taxpayer can comment.

Dr Alec Clark: Who the consultation affects has got to have the greatest opinion. This will be considered. People should consider what a seven year old pupil would consider to be the best setting and what's best for the pupils.

**Comment: What power does the scrutiny committee hold within the council?**

Cllr Aled Davies: Scrutiny does not have a role within the consultation. A decision was made a couple of years back that where a consultation goes through full Council, the scrutiny committee does not have a separate role, it was bypassed by full council. If there was clear evidence for a course of action, the consultation going through full council would give it extra weight and it gives everybody a chance to have their say. A recommendation would be received about the consultation from full council and the Cabinet would consider that whilst making the final decision. The regulators, Estyn and the Welsh Government audit office would deem the full council sufficient.

**Comment: Why did the report indicate that the Banw site would need so much money to bring it up to scratch? The school is in Property Plus, the standards are pretty average and the building has a condition rating of B, so if the decision was made for the school to be at the Banw site, would money be spent to upgrade the school or not, as you commented earlier that it was a functioning school, would we just stay as it was.**

Cllr Aled Davies: It's about prioritisation of works through the major improvement programme.

Marianne Evans: There is a priority list which has an agreed scoring criteria, a prioritisation matrix, which looks at condition, suitability, sufficiency, Health and Safety, and whether a school is part of a school reorganisation process.

**Comment: Does it matter who owns the building? Would the council invest in a building they don't own?**

Cllr Aled Davies: It's about providing an appropriate environment for pupils, it doesn't matter who owns it. Llanerfyl school is not owned by the Authority but could have improvements made to it with Authority funding.

Sheridan Goodey: The Llanerfyl school building is held in Trust and the trust would say that it can only be used for educational facilities.

**Comment: What would happen to the Llanerfyl school building if the Authority did decide to close it.**

Sheridan Goodey: Powys County Council would be required to transfer the school into an educational trust and the trust would be held for the children in the community. The asset of the building is held in a trust, this is because the trust has a charity status.

**Comment: If the decision was to site the school at Banw, as there wouldn't be any obvious need for the building at Llanerfyl for education purposes, in those circumstances, would the trust sell the building, invest the proceeds into education in the area.**

Sheridan Goodey: It's more complicated than that, the church would need to wait for a final decision to be made and at that point the Diocese could go to the Charity Commission, to explain the situation and to request to move forward with whatever proposal and wait for them to respond. It's not possible to confirm what the Diocese would do with the building, it would be the Charity Commission's decision to agree to the dissolution of the Trust.

**A query was raised that the diocese was not dissolving a trust simply an asset of the trust.**

Sheridan Goodey confirmed that it would be dissolving a trust.

Cllr Aled Davies: The consultation remains open until the 5<sup>th</sup> November if governors wish to make any further comments.

**4 Staff Feedback / Queries**

Cllr Aled Davies: This is an opportunity for staff to have their say. Catherine Cottle is here to answer any questions staff have regarding the process.

Marianne Evans: If the Cabinet were to recommend closure of the two schools and the establishment of a new school, one of the first things to happen would be to set up a temporary governing body formed from members of the existing two governing bodies.

Cllr Aled Davies: Is it possible to give a timeline or some potential dates, to give an idea of how long the process would take?

Marianne Evans: If Cabinet were to make a final decision in April/May 2019, the Temporary Governing Body could potentially be established at the end of the Summer Term. Their first role would be to recruit a Headteacher. From September to December, the temporary governing body together with the Headteacher would form the staffing structure for the school. It was usual for the new Headteacher to be involved with the staffing process. After that the HR process starts for the staffing structure which Catherine Cottle can explain.

Catherine Cottle: This meeting tonight is part of the public consultation to decide whether or not to proceed with the proposal to establish one new school. The staff are involved in the public consultation as they are being asked, as people who know, who are doing the job, whether this is a good idea or not. This is separate from the consultation process that would happen further down the road if the proposal went ahead, when there would need to be consultation with staff over the staffing structure. As previously mentioned, most new schools start with the appointment of a Headteacher, then the temporary governing body work with the Headteacher to look at the new staffing structure and to match staff to that structure. One point to understand is that staff are employed in a post in Banw School. If the proposal were to go ahead, the posts would be redundant, but there would be new posts within the new school. We would hope very few people would be made redundant. There are very specific sets of guidance around the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher posts, which state that the temporary governing body could choose whether or not to ring fence those posts, so that would be a very early decision. The same regulations are actually silent on what happens to the rest of the staff but the Local Authority takes a very strong view that the remainder of the posts would be ring-fenced to the existing staff, because it makes moral sense and good business sense. If the authority were to make all the people redundant from the two schools, they would find it very hard to get skilled, experienced people to work at the school, and the current staff are the people who have relationships with the pupils. So there would be an expectation from the Local Authority that the rest of the posts would be ring fenced, and if they weren't the trade unions would be very unhappy.

Dr Alec Clark: The only caveat there would be if enough staff wanted to make themselves redundant or take the opportunity of being made redundant, which is the only time it would not carry through.

Catherine Cottle: The authority would always look at ways of avoiding compulsory redundancies, so one of things that would inevitably be looked at if there was going to be a



reduction in the number of staff would be to ask if anyone was interested in the Voluntary Severance Scheme (VSS). That's not to say that everybody who expressed an interest in VSS would be able to get it. In relation to the transformation in Welshpool Primary schools, where four primary schools merged into two schools, voluntary redundancy was something that was offered under that process but in the end, only one person was able to take it up. There were no compulsory redundancies because inevitably with change, some people moved on and they were left with vacancies in one school and a full staff in the other school. So in Welshpool Primaries and in the establishment of Ysgol Calon Cymru, there were no compulsory redundancies. Although the opportunity for redundancy could be there, the authority would only be able to release people if they were not needed for the structure of the new school.

The way it would work would be that the Headteacher would be involved in creating the staff structure and the appointments to that staff structure, but the temporary governing body are also involved in the appointments, so that helps with any possible allegations there may be of bias. Going by the timeline that Marianne had outlined, the temporary governing body with assistance from Human Resources would develop the staffing structure during Spring 2020, implementing the new structure wherever possible by matching/slotting staff to jobs so they were not put through any unnecessary processes. The selection could be through a skills audit which would allow time for everyone to be in post before the break for the Summer holidays in 2020 and would enable all pupils to know what classes they would be going to in September 2020 and who their class teacher would be.

**Comment: Who would choose the temporary governing body?**

Catherine Cottle: The temporary governing body is made up of members of the existing governing bodies from the current schools, all of whom would be invited to express an interest in being on the temporary governing body, at the same time as still being on the existing governing bodies. Usually it is the Portfolio Holder that makes the final decision about the membership of the governing body but it wouldn't be in this case.

Dr Alec Clark: There is an option for the Cabinet to delegate that decision, but in my experience, it is important that there is a good mix of both schools and a large amount of common sense required.

Catherine Cottle: In Welshpool it sorted itself out, the chair of the governing body was from one school and the vice chair from another school, the governing body would be roughly the same size as the existing one, the temporary governing body could be smaller but there are rules around how you constitute the governing body. There are interim arrangements before the new school starts, the temporary governing body would set a new budget which would need to be agreed with the local authority and then hand over to the new permanent governing body.

Dr Alec Clark: Everyone would need to work together to make sure that the process happened correctly and smoothly for the children.

**Comment: What about the make up of the governing body – would a Church in Wales school's governing body have more members on it?**

Sheridan Goodey: In a Church of Wales school, the governing body would have exactly the same amount of community governors, parent governors etc as they usually would, but they would also need to have at least as many Foundation governors, so that they would have a bigger amount of governors on the governing body.

**Comment: How much influence would the Church have on who sat on the governing body?**

Sheridan Goodey: The Foundation Governors would need to be agreed and recommended by the Diocese. They don't have to be members of a Church in Wales, it could be people from a non-conformist background, but it's important that they are able to ensure that the Christian ethos is promoted through the school, that was the additional job of a Foundation Governor.

**Comment: Would the Christian ethos be a lot more than it currently is at the school as monitored by the authority? Would they have to teach a lot more religious education?**

Jennie Downes: Alongside the Estyn inspection, it would be statutory for the school to undertake a Section 50 Church inspection. The inspection would ensure that the Christian ethos was embedded in the school and core to all the values, Compassion is an example of a Christian value, the pupils showed compassion and the ethos was very visible to people visiting the school. When the new school was created, the School would create a new mission statement, aligned to the Christian values. For example 'working together in harmony'. This might be underpinned with a Bible verse.

The Foundation governors would be people that would support the Christian ethos in your school, ensure the collective worship was of a certain standard, some of this may already be in place in the school

Headteacher: how often are the section 50 inspections carried out?

Sheridan Goodey: The inspection would be either at the same time or within a short period of an Estyn inspection, that would be a decision for the school.

Dr Alec Clark: A lot of schools have the two inspections together, the Estyn team are used to having a member of the diocese with them and it doesn't cause any problems.

Jenny Downes: The Diocese would provide support prior to a Section 50 inspection and would give a few pointers. Good practice might include Governors listening to views of pupils through the School Council the school council and show the school how to work with the community, to help bring the two communities together and make sure that it was successful. The Diocese may ask how the school brought the communities together, how did you manage change, did children have a part in it, were the voices of the communities heard? A church school was still expected to study other religions and other faiths.

Cllr Aled Davies: I have a Church in Wales school in my area and when you walk through the door you don't really see a difference, it's really an extra resource to support the school.

Sheridan Goodey: The Diocese could provide extra support for example during a bereavement, and there are other services that can be accessed through the church which could be helpful.

**Comment: Can we have clarification on the numbers on the governing body? For instance if Banw governing body is made up of 10 members at present, would there be an additional ten foundation governors on the temporary governing body?**

Sheridan Goodey: There is a Statutory Instrument for numbers on a governing body and that would set out the legal requirement for the numbers of governors on a governing body.

**Comment: I had understood from earlier in the meeting that there would be five governors from Llanerfyl and five governors from Banw but if they have to have an**

**equal number of Foundation governors to the governing body, would that then be ten additional Foundation governors?**

It was agreed to provide information about the make-up of the temporary governing body and the new permanent governing body.

**Comment: The timetable mentioned in the consultation paper states that the new school would open in 2020. Could this be shortened, as whichever site is chosen, there is a school running already.**

Marianne Evans: It's fair to raise the point. Concerns about the timescales were also raised in the meeting in Llanerfyl. I accept that it does sound like a long time from here to the opening, so it may be possible to move quicker and to open after Christmas 2019.

Catherine Cottle: Looking at the timescale now and bearing in mind that the temporary governing body wouldn't be established until September, to have the new school open by January 2020 may be too tight. Where the authority has tried to do the process too quickly, it has put the Headteacher and staff under significant stress. After Easter 2020 could be possible, but you would almost be through the school year, so 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 would be the most sensible option. Unions prefer schools to open in the September, also if there should be the need for any redundancies, which we hope there won't be, it would just be a more natural time for staff to move schools.

**Comment: If a decision is made, what would happen to the staff if not all pupils from the other site transferred to the new school? As staffing is based on expected pupil numbers, if the actual number was lower, would we then have to go through another process to reduce staff?**

Catherine Cottle: Members of the temporary governing body would have to make decisions on staff numbers based on the number of pupils expected to be at the school. If down the line the numbers are lower, then a decision to reduce might have to be taken. There is a risk of lower numbers, it is always a risk in school transformation, and managing change from a staff perspective, staff sometimes say that they are not going to move.

Catherine Cottle: I will be available to answer questions at a later stage, should the proposal be supported by Cabinet, and a generic e-mail address would be given to staff and governors which would be monitored and responded to, as soon as the final decision is made.

**Comment: Why did the original recommendation change?**

Cllr Aled Davies: I asked for the recommendation to be changed. The officers had drawn the Cabinet report, but when I read it all, I thought that it was too close to call. It's important that the process is open to everyone, is open and that no options are closed off.

Cllr Aled Davies thanked everyone for attending, including the representatives from the church and the translator for her services.

**Minutes of the Consultation meeting with governors and staff of Ysgol Llanerfyl Church in Wales School held on the 4 October 2018 at 7.30pm at Llanerfyl School**

Present-

**Governors of Ysgol Llanerfyl** – Trefor Jones, John Gittins, Lowri Rees, Dyfrig Jones, Cllr Myfanwy Alexander, Rhian Owen, Gaynor Roberts, Ffion Simmons (Clerk)

**Staff of Ysgol Llanerfyl** – Meinir Jones, Llinos Williams, Penny Davies, Haf Lewis, Nesta Jones, Meinir Russell

**Powys County Council representatives** – Cllr Aled Davies, Alec Clark – Head of Learning, Marianne Evans – Senior Manager Schools Transformation, Nancy Owen – Finance Business Partner, Catherine Cottle – HR Business Partner

**Representative of the St Asaph Diocese** – Sheridan Goodey

Clerk – Diane Rees

### **1. Welcome**

Cllr Aled Davies thanked everyone for coming to the meeting to meet with the officers of the Authority. All attendees introduced themselves.

Cllr Aled Davies noted that a drop in session had been held in Llanerfyl Hall from 3.00 until 7.00pm that day, and that the purpose of the evening meeting was to give the opportunity for Llanerfyl Governing Body and staff members to ask questions about the consultation.

### **2 Background to the Consultation**

Marianne Evans provided an overview of the consultation. She explained that the consultation period had started on 24 September 2018 and was due to finish on 5 November 2018.

When the consultation period ends, the next step will be to look at the comments received during the consultation period, and to produce a consultation report, which responds to the comments. The consultation report will go to the Council, who will discuss the proposal, and then Cabinet who will make a decision on how to proceed.

If the Cabinet decides to go ahead with one of the options, statutory notices would be published, and there would be a period of 28 days when people could submit objections. Following this, another report would be produced, outlining the objections received. This report would be considered by Cabinet, who would then make a decision on whether or not to proceed with implementation. It is anticipated that the whole process will be complete by May/June 2019.

### **3 General Discussion**

**Comment: The council had produced a report which reached the conclusion that the proposed new school should be in Llanerfyl. Would that report still be part of the process?**

Marianne Evans: The work done up to now has been considered by Cabinet and, at the next decision point, Cabinet will be considering responses received to the consultation. Most of the information that was included in the original Options Appraisal report is also contained within the current consultation document.

**Comment: Would the report would be considered again?**

Marianne Evans: The pros and cons of the Options Appraisal report are already included in the consultation document.

**Comment: After all the work that had been carried out for the original report, I don't understand how one councillor was able to change the recommendation, it made a mockery of the system.**

Cllr Aled Davies explained that he was the County Councillor who asked for the amendment to the original recommendation, so that consultation took place on the two possible sites. He suggested that it was fairer to both schools to include both sites in the consultation. Members of the Cabinet had supported him with the amendment.

**Comment: If the change to the consultation was fair, did this show that the original report was unfair? The school is an unfair position due to the change in the recommendation.**

Cllr Aled Davies: It was a matter of opinion. I gave my opinion at the Cabinet meeting – I don't believe it was unfair. Point 5.51 in the report refers to the condition / suitability of the two schools. It isn't clear from this information which is the most suitable site, which is why both sites needed to be considered as part of the consultation.

Dr Alec Clark: In terms of the relevance of the report, it was a report that had gone to Cabinet and is available with the papers of that meeting. The original report was a matter of record.

Cllr Aled Davies: You can go on any council website in Wales and download the reports and minutes of council meetings. Elected members may need to look at what is recorded so far.

Dr Alec Clark: Both the Councillors are right. It's a consultation period, which would have to happen anyway for the public record. I know that it may feel like it has had a false start but it hasn't.

**Comment: The original report was compiled by experts, professional people doing it day in day out. There was a lot of hard evidence in there, it was not just someone's opinion, and it was factual.**

Dr Alec Clark: Those facts did not change.

Cllr Aled Davies: The paper was taken to the Cabinet based on the officer recommendation that the new school would be established on the Llanerfyl site. The reasons for this, whilst justifiable, could be challenged. When it came to Cabinet, there was concern that there was little to choose between the two sites, therefore it would be fairer to include both of the school sites. It was not unusual for recommendations to be amended.

Cllr Aled Davies's comment that recommendations were always changing was challenged, and he was asked why there wasn't a discussion beforehand. He was also asked to name three occasions where recommendations had been changed, because she was not aware of any.

Cllr Aled Davies referred to a Finance report regarding the use of reserves where the recommendation had changed. He explained that changes happened regularly and that the

purpose of Cabinet was to consider the report and accept the recommendations, tweak them or throw them out altogether. Once the consultation had finished, a further report will go to Cabinet with a recommendation. Again the recommendation can be amended as part of the democratic process. The amendment to the original recommendation had just brought another element in, not changed it substantially. It is important now that people respond to the consultation document, so that these responses as well as other evidence can be considered when deciding how to proceed. He acknowledged that it was extremely difficult to take emotion out of the situation and look at all evidence before coming to a decision and he would make sure that Cabinet know all the nuances.

Dr Alec Clark: Even if the recommendation had not been amended, the process would still be running to the same timeline, we would still have been here tonight. It is a very difficult decision, and his view was the more consultation carried out the better. Clearly, whatever the outcome, one school will feel like the loser, so it's important that everyone should have the opportunity to give their full opinion. The process was close to the heart of both communities and both had strong opinions – anything that affects your family brings strong emotions. It is where it is in terms of the democratic process, and the democratically elected members chose to go forward on the amended recommendation.

**Comment: At the drop in session I asked Cllr Aled Davies to put himself in my situation - if he was on a governing body for a school where the figures have been consistent and the projections for the next five years are consistent, then there is an issue up the road at another school where the numbers have dipped, would he have been happy to be dragged into the situation, into the consultation? The governing body at Banw approached the Authority and Llanerfyl School is suffering because of it.**

Cllr Aled Davies confirmed that the governing body at Banw had made the initial approach to the authority about a year ago, as they were concerned about pupil numbers and the impact on the education of children in the Dyffryn Banw Valley. He asked Marianne Evans to take the governors through the process since then.

Marianne Evans: It is true that the governing body of Banw School originally approached the Authority with concerns about numbers and the future education of children in the Dyffryn Banw valley. She explained that separate and joint meetings were held, and both governing bodies had agreed that the right way forward was to look at having one school, to protect education in the area. There was a recognition that whilst it was not quite as bad at Llanerfyl, pupil numbers at both schools are forecast to dip, therefore the authority needed to look at the whole picture, to consider the two schools.

**Comment: One thing the community in general in Llanerfyl can't understand is that if numbers dropped in Llangedwyn School, for example, the council would look at closing Llangedwyn School – the council wouldn't look at closing Llanrhaeadr Ym Mochnant School, because that isn't the school where the numbers are dropping. I have looked through the records and can't find a single occasion when consideration was given to closing a school next door to a school where pupil numbers have dropped. I'm more than happy to look at a solution that tries to bring the best for all the pupils and families in the valley but it is important for people who live here to understand why. Llanerfyl school wasn't facing closure until quite rightly the Headteacher at Banw brought up her concerns about the education that could be provided in Banw. Educational experiences for the pupils at Llanerfyl are fine. It's like**

saying that his house is on fire but we will pour water through your window next door, the crisis was not generated in this school and so it's important to remember, and in an open way, if our numbers were down in the teens, and there were 40 pupils in Banw, the people in Banw would not be happy to close Banw School and send the children down here to Llanerfyl. I know that the difference in numbers is not huge, but there is a feeling that we do not want to be sacrificed to solve their problem. That's not what has happened anywhere else. This was discussed here in the past here, and it has left a bad taste in the mouths of local people. We all want to move onto the future and forget the past, and I think that everyone in this room agrees that there are not enough pupils to sustain two schools in the area, but people feel agitated because they feel that this was an unjustifiable process.

Cllr Aled Davies: I'm very aware of the feeling in the room, this was reinforced this afternoon at the drop in session. As a council, we need a strategic overview of this and also to focus on the education of the children as well as many other factors. Whichever solution is agreed, it will not be perfect and it will not suit everybody, so we must ensure that there is a strong school in the valley. It is quite a distance to the end of the valley, it's a big catchment area, and I appreciate that the schools are at the heart of the community.

**Comment: I know more about the strategic view of education than a lot of people, but in every other place, if numbers fall in school A, we do not think that we must close school B. We may look at an area solution and in a way that's what we are doing here but on basic fairness, that has to be a major factor. Ultimately the school needs to be where the children are. There has never been a proposal to close a school and move a whole school population to a school where there are a very few children, it hasn't been done because it is not practical and that cannot be stressed enough.**

Marianne Evans: It is not about closing one or two schools, it is about establishing a new school in the valley. For fairness, the council thinks that the best way of doing it is to close both schools and to establish a new school with new governance, new staffing. That would then create a new approach, and also treats both schools equally. Whether you think that's right or wrong is your view, but that is why the authority is proposing to close both schools and start a new school on one of the existing sites.

Dr Alec Clark: There are positives whichever of the sites were chosen. The authority is currently putting bids together to equip schools with up to date IT equipment, which will be more essential than ever in the future. I want IT provision to be really good right across the County but in financial terms, two schools equals two servers, two contracts – the costs kept adding up.

**A question was asked about whether the costs are part of the decision for the consultation.**

Dr Alec Clark: It's the quality of education going forward, making sure you have the appropriate resources – this is more than cost. Also if there was the possibility of putting optic fibre in the valley, that your IT resources are up to date. IT is just an example, but a good example.

**Comment: I asked Cllr Aled Davies in the drop in session this afternoon if the process was about cost, and he had confirmed that it was not about cost. However, as a taxpayer I know that you have to manage your costs. Our school has been so careful**

**with the school delegated budget – parents even cut the grass to keep costs down. This should be noted.**

**Comment: Surely you have to go for sustainable education so that the school can keep on going in the future.**

**Comment: I'm confused about the numbers in the consultation document – on page 32 it gives pupil numbers as one amount whilst on another page, it seems to indicate something different.**

Marianne Evans: Page 32 of the document relates to the option to establish a new school on the current site of Llanerfyl, then it gives the details of the new school if it was established on the Llanerfyl site. The maximum capacity would be 59, this includes the art room as a class base, this is why the figures differ. Page 51 of the consultation document shows the current capacity at Llanerfyl school – it was not possible to propose a school of 44 when the combined pupil numbers would be more than that, so we would seek to get the maximum capacity possible for Llanerfyl school.

**Comment: Is it just the art room that makes a difference to the capacity?**

It was confirmed that this was correct.

**Comment: If the projected pupil numbers show that there is enough capacity at Llanerfyl School for the next five years, with sustainability and the record of careful budget management at the school, surely that was what the Authority should be looking at.**

Marianne Evans: Both sites are big enough to accommodate all pupils, this is why neither site requires capital investment – given the combined pupil numbers, they could all fit in either site. However, dependent on which school site was chosen, the authority would then have to look at the building to see what adaptations, if any, would be required. This could include storage, are there enough toilets etc. Essentially though, all pupils can fit in both buildings.

**Comment: When a previous Headteacher left here, there were 62 children attending the school and Powys inspectors and advisors visited frequently. At no point was it said that there was an issue with capacity or facilities, nobody said that an additional mobile classroom was needed. People who came in and saw how the school was run were quite content with the capacity, so we could be fairly secure on any capacity issue.**

Cllr Aled Davies: Capacity at the school site was not an issue within the consultation. At one time Llansilin school had 90 pupils, but if you went there now you would wonder how it was possible to accommodate all these pupils in that building. The same with Llanrhaeadr – a relatively new school which can accommodate 120 pupils, there are approx. 86 pupils there now and you wonder how it would be possible to accommodate another 30 pupils.

**Comment: There has been an issue with the perceived lack of facilities but I think the parents would tell you if they were not happy with facilities, purely by not stopping here and going up the road to educate their children. The fact that they have stopped**



here and the numbers are consistent should tell you everything you need to know about how content pupils and parents are with the school.

**Comment: Challenge that in the consultation paper, it says that the quality of education in Banw school is better than that at Llanerfyl school and that page 51 of the consultation document mentions significant limitations to the buildings. What were the limitations? I have a daughter in the sixth form at Caereinion High School who is very upset that the document suggests that she is having a substandard education.**

Marianne Evans: When the surveyors came out to carry out the condition assessments at the schools and look at the buildings, this is the information we have to base the analysis on. In terms of suitability of the building for teaching and learning and generally supporting pupils, its things like the lack of a hall, lack of dining space. These are a disadvantage at Llanerfyl compared to Dyffryn Banw, however that doesn't mean to say that the building is not fit for purpose.

**Comment: Does that mean that the children currently attending the school are more disadvantaged?**

Marianne Evans: This is what the surveyors told us about the building, this is the suitability assessment that we received. It doesn't mean that the children aren't being taught well and in a happy environment and using the facilities. We know that you have access to a hall, although you do have to walk up a lane to it. You are using the facilities available to the best you can, however we have to include what the property people tell us in the document.

**Comment: Back when there were 62 pupils at the school and nobody flagged it as an issue, at any point was there an application for a capital bid for these additional facilities in Llanerfyl, which we were struggling so badly without? Actually, when the authority decided not to put a hall or a dining hall or a satellite launch pad on the list, that's because they knew there wasn't a problem, because the capital list was driven by the problems in the physical state of the building. There has never been a bid, therefore the Authority cannot comment on the facilities. If the Authority had put in five bids over the last fifteen years but had not received a grant, it would be different, but at no point did anybody say the facilities at Llanerfyl are poor. Carno School is a good example, Carno is a small school where the facilities were terrible and flags had been raised constantly for years of what to do about Carno, whether to close it or whether to renew the building, at no point did anyone say that the facilities at Llanerfyl are poor.**

Cllr Aled Davies: The surveys were in comparison with new schools which had had been opened which would score an A, nobody would build an exact school like this now, you would all see improvements that you would want to make, there is always ambition to improve your facilities, so it was a graduation from perfect, brand new at the very top all the way down to the poorest grade D.

**Comment: The quality of the accommodation at Llanerfyl School was graded as a B and Dyffryn Banw school was graded as a C.**

Dr Alec Clark: In terms of the admission number, you are a foundation school, which really puts you in the autonomous bracket in terms of making your own decision for admission numbers, it is a legal status.

**Comment: In the next step of the process, when the recommendation is made on which school to close, would the decision be made known to the Headteacher and governing body before it goes to Cabinet, as in the previous consultation? I went to a meeting and everybody knew at the meeting besides the people that should have been told, someone from Cabinet had released the information before speaking to the school first. Can you assure us this will not happen again?**

Marianne Evans: The documents are published a week before the Cabinet meets. The Authority would let the school know before the paper is published.

Cllr Aled Davies: There would be a discussion right up until the whole council have discussed the proposal, then a recommendation to Cabinet before a decision was made. It is important that the Authority treats the both schools fairly in regard to information going out.

**Comment: If one school costs much more to run than the other, surely the cheaper should win. The officers indicated that the costs would not be relevant, it was not the main factor and I said that the County is skint. There was a balanced budget at Llanerfyl, one school was careful with the budget, one school was haemorrhaging money, surely this should be considered.**

Nancy Owen: The financial situation of both schools is constantly changing. The figures in the documents are the figures submitted to the Cabinet by the full governing body of each school which went in the paper presented to Cabinet every year. My understanding is that since the governing body at Llanerfyl submitted their initial budget on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018, they have worked hard and the figures have now changed, and we are now looking at a projected surplus for the 2018/19 financial year.

Marianne Evans confirmed that all the updated information would go into the next report, so it would be an updated version with figures as up to date as are available at the time and explained that only documents signed off officially by the governing body could be included in the consultation document.

**Comment: Queried that on page 11 of the document that the Estyn inspection report went back to 2014 for Llanerfyl school and to 2016 for Dyffryn Banw school.**

Cllr Aled Davies: This was the last official inspection date for each school. Although Llanerfyl had a monitoring visit in 2016, the full report was at the official inspection date in 2014.

Dr Alec Clark: Although Estyn inspectors re-inspect the school on a monitoring visit, they don't give a judgement, and the school doesn't receive a full report. The judgements given in the report cannot be changed. The revisit is a statutory part of the process but it doesn't form a judgement, the purpose of the revisit is to identify whether appropriate progress has been made, and whether the school should be put back into the regular inspection cycle.

**Comment: Llanerfyl School has received a document where the inspector commented that in his 30 years of teaching, he had never seen such standards of written and spoken welsh, to compare with the inspection. However, that could not be put in the document because it was a thematic review so we were not allowed to publish that. This is why we say that we feel that we don't get a fair crack of the whip – we have got a person who has taught in Ceredigion for 35 years who says that they have never seen standards comparable to those in our school but that was a document that had to be put in a locked box. If Dyffryn Banw won a prize for nose blowing, they would somehow be allowed to be put it in the document – it feels that we are being treated unfairly. If you were to ask the High School about the education these children have**

**when they go up from here into Year 7 of the High School, they would tell you what the standards are like in this school. We have all the evidence of what the standards are like, but for some reason, we are not allowed to say. We are a school where the numbers are not critical and where the standards are so high that people have not seen the like in 35 years but we are not allowed to say that, we have a fine and adequate site which is described as inadequate, we are wondering what the hell would we have to do to be left alone.**

Dr Alec Clark: The documents you refer to could be submitted as part of the consultation response. The church inspection if available could also be submitted, then they would be a matter of public record.

Marianne Evans: the consultation document is based on guidance from the Welsh Government which states what needs to be included. This includes two things about quality of education – that the last Estyn inspection must be published – what the outcomes were plus the follow up activities, and that school categorisation data must also be included. This information is publicly available for all schools.

Dr Alec Clark: The process of school categorisation is that the Challenge Advisors team work under a national model from Welsh Government from a consultation with ERW. Every school should be on a journey to improve the school and the education provided, it needs to be a dynamic process, so they look at the figures, have common sense about it all and look at it as part of the journey. The Challenge Advisor would look at the data and agree the categorisation colour with the Chair of Governors. The information would be updated if the categorisation were to change since the consultation document was published. Are you as governors concerned about the fact that you have a temporary Headteacher which would reflect in the assessment?

**Comment: Following a conversation with the Challenge Advisor for the school it was agreed that in order to receive extra support for a new headteacher, we would accept a lower categorisation, however the Challenge Advisor acknowledged that the results at Llanerfyl were way ahead of many schools assessed as green schools. The governing body accepted a lower categorisation to provide additional support for a new Headteacher but all of a sudden, because of a drop in numbers at a school up the road, it has put us as a disadvantage, if we could go back, the governing body would not have accepted the lower category, we would have argued differently if we had known about the proposed closure and that the problems up the road would affect us.**

Dr Alec Clark: The Cabinet members will look at everything in the final report and all of the things in the consultation process. Going forward, the proposal is to close both schools and establish a new school, if you were green, purple or orange, the quality of education was irrelevant, because going forward it would be a new school.

**Comment: It was not irrelevant for a teacher if you are going for an interview in the new school, because governors and parents were going to read the document and this may affect our employment prospects.**

Dr Alec Clark: If there was a change to overall numbers of staff, this would be carried out by formal consultation, with union involvement. This process has nothing to do with categorisation of schools – this would not be included in that context.

Catherine Cottle: The categorisation of a school would absolutely not form part of the process and had no bearing on the selection of staff, it would be the individual skills of the members of staff. I'm involved in the primary school transformation in Welshpool and there,

in terms of the processes, there has been fairly little selection process, some staff had fallen out naturally, the situation depends on people's lives and what they want.

**Comment: Clearly the transportation costs for the two options would not be the same – could we get a more detailed estimate of costs?**

Marianne Evans: The figures in the consultation document are from analysis carried out by the Council's Transport Unit and are based on current costs of home-to-school transport in the area – any updated information will be included in the Consultation Report.

#### **4 – Staff feedback/queries**

Catherine Cottle explained to the staff members present that the current process is a public consultation, where you are asked what would work at each school and what wouldn't work. Once the final decision was taken, then there would be a separate consultation exercise with staff.

When two schools close and a new school is established, all posts become redundant – your job would not exist. In the consultation process, we would consult with you about the redundancy of the posts and the structure of posts within the new school. The temporary governing body would have the right to ring-fence the post of Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher and that would be their decision, but the legislation doesn't say whether the other posts at the school should be ring-fenced. However, the temporary governing body is made up of existing members of the two current governing bodies, so they would consider why would they let current staff go and then have problem with recruitment. The unions would strongly advise to keep existing staff.

So consultation would take place with staff, the temporary governing body would make changes to the staffing structure, the existing governing bodies would then consult with staff about the redundant posts, then the temporary governing body would consult with existing staff about the new structure. We would want it to be a meaningful consultation and want to hear your comments. If we do have to use a selection process, this is usually through a skills audit, which sounds scary to support staff, but basically you would need to put in writing the kind of things you would be asked in interview, if you have worked in a primary environment, this would tick all the boxes.

**Comment: Would I start at the bottom point of the pay grade as it was a new job?**

It was confirmed that the employee would continue on whatever point they are on at the moment if the job is on the grade – e.g. if you are a grade 4 now and the new job is grade 4. If you are a grade 3 now and you get a grade 5 job, you would start at the bottom of the pay grade. The existing years of service would continue, along with any benefits of long service and sickness entitlement. For pensions calculations there would be no break, the process was a procedural operation,

Catherine Cottle clarified that if a staff member had a drop in salary, there might be a one off compensatory award, which they would get as compensation for loss of earnings, and reassured the staff that HR would be there to help the process at all times.

**Comment: How would the new temporary governing body formed?**

It was explained that the temporary governing body would be formed by requesting Expressions of Interest from members of the two existing governing bodies. Existing governing bodies would continue to run at the same time as the temporary governing body

until the two schools shut which involved double the workload for governors who were members on both of the governing bodies.

**Comment: What would happen if they didn't want to try for a new post?**

Catherine Cottle: It would depend on the redundancy position at the time. Officially you would have to engage in the process. In some cases, if there was not a suitable post in the new structure, you can have redundancy. She advised the staff members to ask their unions for support. The unions were aware of the consultation and would be invited to the relevant consultation meetings. The governors were reassured that although it would be a once in a lifetime process for them, the authority had managed many similar processes.

**Comment: At a governing body meeting earlier in the week, the timeline of the process had been queried – did the authority still expect the new school to open in September 2020 and would they now need an extension due to the amendment of the consultation? Parents were asking governors where their children would be going. Would the new school be ready for pupils to move into by September 2020?**

Marianne Evans: The timeline is still the same – new school to be established by September 2020, Following a final decision, the timeline would be re-looked at to see if it was feasible to make the process shorter, for the school to start on 1 January 2020. It was acknowledged that this was the middle of school year, but it may make a big difference by the schools closing Christmas 2019. She noted that although the process was simple in some ways, in other ways it was not simple and the governors needed to understand the complexity, in terms of what we are doing and to consider the timeframes of HR consultation.

**Comment: They would like the process to be as quick as possible, as this was a period of uncertainty for pupils and staff and as a parent, it was just prolonging the agony if the process dragged on to Easter/May 2020.**

Marianne Evans: When a final decision has been made, the temporary governing body could then be established in September 2019, their first role would be to appoint a Headteacher, the staffing structure and consultation with staff could not begin until a Headteacher was appointed, this would further influence the decision for the timetable.

**Comment: The community will tear themselves apart until there is a decision. If there was any way that the process could go through quicker, it would be better. It was noted that one parent had sent their child to another school, because of uncertainty, we will get over this bump but the faster the better, it could be a just a month is knocked off the timetable.**

Dr Alec Clark: It is a fragile situation where pupils are being moved and that it would be wrong to put out alternative dates unless they were certain, given the size of schools and emotion in the community, but that he had learnt from previous consultations that the longer you wait the worse it was but his advice would be you cannot start considering an earlier date until the Headteacher is appointed. If the new school started in September the Authority would use the funding formula in place at the time, so both existing schools would get 5 months and then the new school would receive 7 months of funding.

Cllr Aled Davies ended the meeting by informing the staff and governors that they could contact the Authority with any questions that they had following the meeting and thanked the governors and staff for attending the meeting. He explained that the Authority was trying to be fair to both schools and that there wasn't an easy answer but that the consultation would be a thorough and open process.