

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

CABINET EXECUTIVE

29th September 2020

**REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Phyl Davies
Portfolio Holder for Education and Property**

**REPORT TITLE: Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High
School**

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Purpose

1.1 This report requests Cabinet approval to commence the statutory process to amalgamate Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School, to create a new all-age school in Llanfair Caereinion on the current sites of the two schools.

1.2 The report is supported by the following appendices:

Appendix A – Options Appraisal

Appendix B – Impact Assessment

2. Background

Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys

2.1 On the 14th April 2020, a new Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys was approved by the Leader via a delegated decision.

2.2 The Strategy was developed following extensive engagement with a range of stakeholders during two separate periods between October 2019 and March 2020.

2.3 The Strategy sets out a new vision for education in Powys, which is as follows:

‘All children and young people in Powys will experience a high quality, inspiring education to help develop the knowledge, skills and attributes that will enable them to become healthy, personally fulfilled, economically productive, socially responsible and globally engaged citizens of 21st century Wales.’

2.3 The Strategy also sets out a number of guiding principles which will underpin the transformation of education in Powys. These are as follows:

- *A world class rural education system that has learner entitlement at its core*
- *Schools that are fully inclusive, with a culture of deep collaboration in order to improve learner outcomes and experience*
- *A broad choice and high quality of provision for 14 – 19 year old learners, that includes both academic and vocational provision, meeting the needs of all learners, communities and the Powys economy*
- *Welsh-medium provision that is accessible and provides a full curriculum in Welsh from Meithrin to age 19 and beyond*
- *Provision for learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN)/Additional Learning Needs (ALN) that is accessible as near to home as is practicably possible, with the appropriate specialist teaching, support and facilities that enables every learner to meet their potential*
- *A digitally-rich schools sector that enables all learners and staff to enhance their teaching and learning experience*
- *Community-focused schools that are the central point for multi-agency services to support children, young people, families and the community*
- *Early years provision that is designed to meet the needs of all children, mindful of their particular circumstances, language requirements or any special or additional learning needs*
- *Financially and environmentally sustainable schools*
- *The highest priority is given to staff wellbeing and professional development*

2.4 The new Strategy sets out a number of Strategic Aims and Objectives, to shape the Council's work to transform the Powys education system over the coming years. One of the Strategic Aims is to '*improve learner entitlement and experience*'. Within this aim, the Strategy sets out a Strategic Objective to '*Develop a network of all-age schools based around the 13 current secondary school locations.*'

2.5 Since approval of the Strategy, representatives of the local authority have met with representatives of the governing bodies of Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School, to discuss the all-age school model in particular. Both governing bodies have indicated their support in principle to move towards establishing an all-age school in Llanfair Caereinion.

2.6 An options appraisal paper has subsequently been prepared, which considers the options for moving towards an all-age governance structure in Llanfair Caereinion. This is attached as Appendix A.

2.7 The Strategy for Transforming Education also includes a Strategic Aim to '*improve access to Welsh-medium provision across all key stages*',

and a strategic objective to ‘move schools along the language continuum’. Whilst the current paper is focussed on creating an all-age governance structure in Llanfair Caereinion and does not propose any change to the current language categories of Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School, the Council will continue to engage with representatives of Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School, to continue to explore ways to develop and enhance the Welsh-medium provision in Llanfair Caereinion.

Information about Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School

2.8 Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School are both dual stream schools, located on the same campus in Llanfair Caereinion in north Powys. Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School primarily serves Llanfair Caereinion, whilst the high school serves a larger catchment area. In particular, the high school’s Welsh-medium stream serves a very large catchment, which includes the towns of Newtown and Welshpool.

2.9 Data about the two schools is provided below:

i) General information

	School Type	Language Category	Admission Number
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	Community Primary School building owned by Powys County Council	Dual Stream	27
Caereinion High School	Community Secondary School building owned by Powys County Council	Dual Stream - Bilingual (Type B)	114

ii) Pupil Numbers

Current pupil numbers¹

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	13	21	17	27	24	31	29	162

	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total
Caereinion High School	84	74	72	91	75	34	35	465

Historical pupil numbers²

	Jan. 2014	Jan. 2015	Jan. 2016	Jan. 2017	Jan. 2018	Jan. 2019	Jan. 2020
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	202	209	195	185	174	173	166
Caereinion High School	549	530	494	495	487	456	447
Total	751	739	689	680	661	629	613

Projected pupil numbers (live birth info)³

	Jan. 2021	Jan. 2022	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	159	153	144	139	133
Caereinion High School	443	416	390	367	344
Total	602	569	534	506	477

Projected pupil numbers (projections received by the Council's Finance team)⁴

¹ Teacher Centre, 7th September 2020 & SIMS, 10th September 2020

² PLASC

³ Powys Schools Service Projections based on PLASC & Birth Rates

	Jan. 2021	Jan. 2022	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	162	145	143	N/A	N/A
Caereinion High School	459	465	460	N/A	N/A
Total	621	610	603	N/A	N/A

iii) Building Capacity and Condition

	Capacity	Condition	Suitability
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	167	C Poor	B Good
Caereinion High School	603	C Poor	B/C Good/Poor

iv) Quality and standards of education

Estyn

	Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School
Date of Inspection	January 2018
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

⁴ Powys Finance Projections based on data provided by the school

Follow Up	School to produce action plan to address recommendations
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	Caereinion High School
Date of Inspection	November 2013
Standards	Adequate
Wellbeing	Adequate
Learning experiences	Good
Teaching	Adequate
Care, support, and guidance	Good
Learning environment	Good
Leadership	Adequate
Improving quality	Adequate
Partnership working	Good
Resource management	Adequate
Follow Up	<p>School to produce action plan to address recommendations. Estyn to monitor progress.</p> <p>December 2016 – Placed into schools requiring significant improvement</p> <p>May 2018 – Removed from schools requiring significant improvement</p>

School Categorisation

	Standards Group	Improvement Capacity	Support Capacity
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	N/A	C	Amber
Caereinion	N/A	C	Amber

High School			
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v) Financial information

Cost per pupil

	Budget share per school	Budget share per pupil	Notional SEN budget	Non ISB funds devolved to the school
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	£169,000	£3,730	£45,000	£22,000
Caereinion High School	£2,381,000	£5,335	£33,000	£40,000
Powys average (Primary)	N/A	£3,978	N/A	N/A
Powys average (Secondary)	N/A	£4,562	N/A	N/A

Budgetary position (as of 22nd May 2020 submittal by full governing body)

	2019/20 Actual Cumulative Outturn	2020/21 Budget	2021/22 Budget	2022/23 Budget
Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	£103,281	£59,901	£43,963	£19,442
Caereinion High School	(£6,123)	(£27,421)	£31,511	£119,764

Statutory Process for School Organisation Proposals

2.6 The process for school organisation proposals is set out by the Welsh Government in the School Organisation Code (2018). The process is summarised below:

i) Consultation

Consultation would be carried out with stakeholders as required by the Code. This includes consultation with the pupils at both schools, to ensure that their views are taken into account, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Feedback from the consultation would be collated and summarised, and a report would be presented to the Cabinet. Cabinet will consider the report and the feedback received during the consultation period, and will decide whether to proceed with the proposal, to make changes to the proposal or to not proceed with the proposal.

If Cabinet decides not to proceed, that will be the end of this proposal.

ii) Statutory Notice

If Cabinet decides to proceed, a Statutory Notice would be published, which would give a period of 28 days for people to submit written objections.

If there were objections, the authority would publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and the authority's response to them. A further report would be presented to the Cabinet, which they would consider alongside the objection report, in order to decide whether or not to approve the proposal.

iii) Implementation

If Cabinet approves the proposal, it would be implemented in accordance with the date given in the Statutory Notice or any subsequently modified date.

3. Advice

3.1 Officers have carried out an options appraisal in respect of Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School. This is attached to this report as Appendix A.

3.2 The options appraisal includes the following:

- Consideration of key data relating to the two schools
- Identification of options
- SWOT analysis of each option
- Initial financial appraisal of each option

- Assessment of each option against a number of critical success factors
- Identification of an emerging preferred option
- Further consideration of the emerging preferred option against factors listed in the School Organisation Code (2018) as factors to be taken into account when developing school organisation proposals.

3.3 The options appraisal identifies the following preferred option:

Option 3: All-age school – Merge Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School to create a new all-age school in Llanfair Caereinion

3.4 It is therefore recommended that the Council carries out formal consultation in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code on the following:

‘To amalgamate Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School to create a new all-age school in Llanfair Caereinion. This will be achieved by closing Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School and opening a new all-age school providing education for pupils aged 4-18 on the current site of the two schools.’

3.5 The reasons for this are:

- Retention of primary and secondary provision in Llanfair Caereinion
- There would be no additional transport costs
- Would enable staff expertise and good practice to be shared across all key stages
- Would improve transition between each key stage
- Minimal disruption for pupils and parents
- Would improve the ability to provide an appropriate curriculum to all pupils
- Would enable the school to run more efficiently through shared staffing, shared resources etc.
- One governing body which would have strategic overview over the provision for pupils/learners in all key stages
- One leadership team which would have strategic overview over the provision for pupils/learners in all key stages
- Meets all of the Critical Success Factors

3.6 Should the recommendation to commence formal consultation be approved, it is anticipated that consultation would commence in October 2020.

3.7 The target date for closure of the two schools would be the 31st August 2022, with the new school to open on the 1st September 2022.

- 3.8 This paper is focussed on creating an all-age governance structure in Llanfair Caereinion and does not propose any change to the current language categories of Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School. Alongside any proposal to establish an all-age governance structure in Llanfair Caereinion, the Council will continue to engage in dialogue with representatives of Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School, to continue to explore ways to develop and enhance the Welsh-medium provision in Llanfair Caereinion. If the outcome of the dialogue is a need to change the school's language category, a separate statutory consultation process would need to be undertaken.
- 3.9 It must be noted that the Council is currently working on developing a new model of post-16 provision across the county. This may have implications for the age range of the proposed all-age school. If there are changes to post-16 provision, a separate statutory consultation process will need to be undertaken. The Council is also developing a new model for ALN/SEN across the county, which may have implications for the type of provision delivered at the proposed all-age school.
- 3.10 It must be noted that the establishment of a new school does not preclude that school from being a part of future reorganisation proposals.

4. Resource Implications

- 4.1 The amount of funding provided to schools is driven by the funding formula. Any change to the formula funding provided will impact on the Council's revenue budget. Based on the current formula, the formula funding requirement will reduce as a result of these proposals and savings falling to the Council's revenue budget are estimated to be £11,994 per annum, as indicated in the Options Appraisal (Appendix A). This figure does not include any redundancy costs that could arise should the proposal be implemented.
- 4.2 In line with the Council's Scheme for Financing Schools, should a school be in a deficit budget position when closed the deficit is written off. Neither Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School or Caereinion High School are currently projecting to be in a deficit budget position on the 31st August 2022 when it is anticipated that the schools would close should the recommendation be implemented. However, the Council will continue to work with the schools to ensure that the school budgets comply with the scheme for financing schools and are within the funding envelope available.
- 4.3 The Scheme for Financing Schools also states the following in section 3.7.2:
- 'In order to ensure effective stewardship of the resources available to schools, the Authority may impose additional restrictions on a school scheduled to close, including but not limited to:

- Restriction of expenditure to agreed plans
- Removal of powers of virement'

The Council will consider the use of these powers of intervention where appropriate.

- 4.4 Development and implementation of the proposal would require involvement from a number of service areas, including staff from the Schools Service, Finance, HR and ICT. These service areas will be kept informed of the development of the proposal throughout the statutory process.
- 4.5 The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) notes the content of the report. The revenue implications estimated in section 4.1 are indicative and will be recalculated based on the funding allocations to each school at the point of closure, if approved.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Legal: The recommendation can be supported from a legal point of view
- 5.2 The Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: "I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report".

6. Comment from local member(s)

6.1

7. Integrated Impact Assessment

- 7.1 An initial impact assessment in respect of the recommendation is attached. The impact assessment considers the proposal's impact on the Welsh Government's well-being goals, as outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

The summary of the impact assessment is as follows:

'Overall, it is anticipated that the proposal to establish an all-age school in Llanfair Caereinion would provide improved educational opportunities for all school aged pupils in the town. Implementation of the proposal would provide a more sustainable model of delivering education in Llanfair Caereinion, ensuring that education could be delivered more efficiently, therefore safeguarding the provision of primary and secondary education in Llanfair Caereinion.'

Should Cabinet approve the commencement of the statutory process in respect of the recommendation, the impact assessment would be updated throughout the process, to take account of feedback received.

8. Recommendation

8.1 To commence consultation in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code on the following proposal:

‘To amalgamate Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School to create a new all-age school in Llanfair Caereinion. This will be achieved by closing Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School and opening a new all-age school providing education for pupils aged 4-18 on the current site of the two schools.’

8.2 The target date is to close the two schools on the 31st August 2022 and to open the new school on the 1st September 2022.

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