

Transforming Education in Powys

Options Appraisal

Mount Street Infants, Mount Street Junior Schools and Cradoc C.P. School

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1. INTRODUCTION

On the 29th September 2020, the Council's Cabinet considered a Programme Business Case (PBC) in respect of primary provision in the Brecon catchment.

The PBC considered by Cabinet identified a preferred way forward for the Brecon catchment, which is as follows:

To invest in the development of:

- A new 360 place English-medium primary school in Brecon, to replace Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street juniors School and Cradoc C.P. School, with a co-located Pupil Referral Unit and a community swimming pool – to be built on the site of the old Brecon High School
- A new 180 place dual-stream primary school in Sennybridge, replacing the current poor accommodation at Sennybridge CP School – to be built on the current site of Sennybridge CP School.

At the Cabinet meeting on the 29th September, Cabinet approved the submission of the PBC for the Brecon catchment to Welsh Government, and also approved that officers bring back a further report to Cabinet outlining the implementation steps, including consultation, required to achieve the new facilities.

There are no consultation requirements in order to achieve the second point above.

The purpose of this paper is to identify a preferred option in respect of Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Juniors School and Cradoc C.P. School, to prepare for a move to one new building in the future.

Pupil numbers¹ at the three schools are as follows:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Mount Street Infants School	39	33	41					113
Mount Street Junior School				47	49	38	39	173
Cradoc C.P. School	13	10	12	19	14	13	14	95

¹ Finance NOR – 2020 Pupil Count Day (6th November 2020)

PART A – THE CASE FOR CHANGE

2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

2.1 POLICY CONTEXT

Following the inspection of Powys Education Services carried out by Estyn in the summer of 2019, the Council carried out a strategic review of schools during 2019-20, which led to the development of a new Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys. The strategy, which was developed following engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, was approved in April 2020.

The strategy sets out a Vision Statement and Guiding Principles which will underpin the Council's work to transform the Powys education system over the coming years. The Vision Statement 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.

In addition, the strategy outlines a number of aims and objectives, which include an objective to 'Develop a network of all-age schools based around the 13 current secondary school locations' in order to improve overall learner entitlement and experience in Powys.

To take forward this objective, the Council is reviewing the smallest schools in Powys, with the aim of identifying solutions for these schools which will meet the objective to 'Reconfigure and rationalise primary provision', in order to ensure that education in Powys is delivered through an affordable, resilient infrastructure which provides the best possible opportunities to learners, now and in the future.

2.2 WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN POWYS

Powys is a large, rural authority. Covering a quarter of the landmass of Wales, it contains only 4.2% of the population, making it the most sparsely populated county in Wales. Delivering services across such a large, sparsely populated area is challenging and expensive.

Whilst there has been some reorganisation activity in Powys over recent years, the county's schools' infrastructure largely remains similar to that which was in place 20 years ago.

The Council's new Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys outlines a number of challenges facing education in Powys, which were identified following engagement with key stakeholders during the autumn term 2019 and spring term 2020.

The following is a summary of the main challenges facing the Council:

i) High proportion of small schools

Based on PLASC 2019 figures, there were 33 small primary schools in Powys – this is approximately 40% of the primary provision in the county. 21 schools had fewer than 50 pupils, and for those schools the budget share per pupil is generally higher than the Powys average for primary schools.

ii) Decreasing pupil numbers

Pupil numbers have decreased over the past decade, and are expected to decrease further over the next five years. Pupil numbers in the primary sector in Powys are expected to decrease by approximately 4% by 2025.

iii) High number of surplus places

Based on PLASC 2019 figures, there was 18% surplus capacity in Powys primary schools. With pupil numbers across Powys projected to decrease overall over the coming years, the proportion of surplus places across the county will continue to increase.

iv) Building condition

Whilst the Council has invested in its school's estate through the 21st Century Schools Programme and the Asset Management Plan, building condition remains an issue across Powys, with associated maintenance costs.

v) Financial pressures

The Council is currently facing significant financial pressures in general. This is affecting all service areas, including the schools' sector. There are significant variations in the budget share per pupil across Powys schools, ranging from £3,276 to £11,912 in the primary sector.

vi) Inequality in access to Welsh-medium education

In contrast to other areas of Wales, there has been no growth in Welsh-medium pupil numbers in Powys over recent years. Significant changes are needed to the Welsh-medium offer in Powys to reverse the trend of the

last few years and ensure that all Powys learners can access comprehensive Welsh-medium provision throughout their educational careers.

vii) Limited post-14 and post-16 offer

In September 2019, the Council's Cabinet considered a report on post-16 provision, which outlined a number of challenges facing the sector, including decreasing learner numbers, financial challenges and sustainability of the curriculum offer, including Welsh-medium provision.

viii) Inequality in access to SEN provision

Within Powys, pupils with special education needs (SEN) attend a range of settings, including special schools, specialist centres, the pupil referral unit (PRU) as well as mainstream schools.

Currently, not all pupils are educated in the setting that meets their needs best, and depending on where pupils live, they have access to a different quality and type of provision.

ix) Historical lack of political decision making

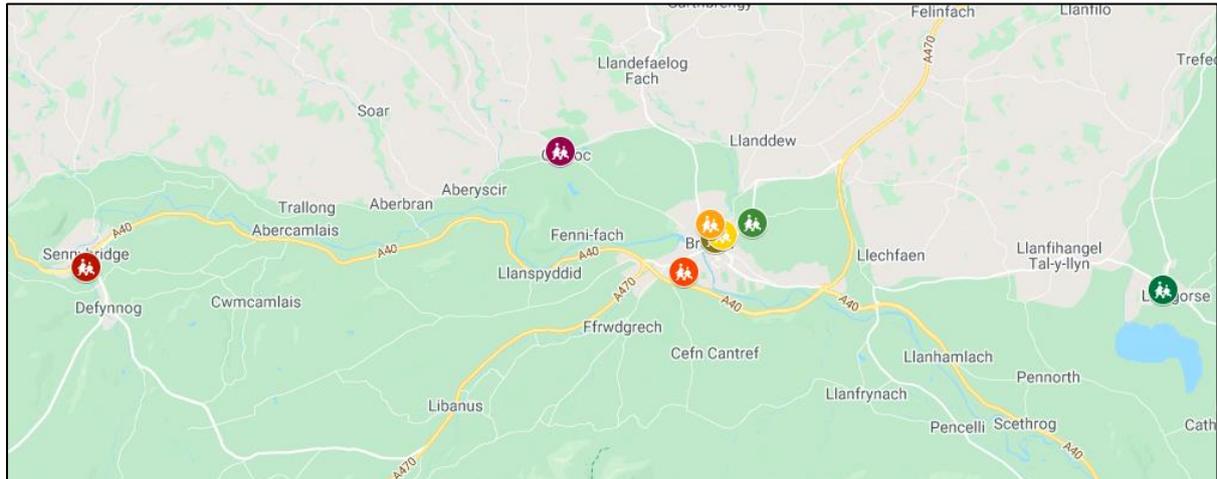
Although there have been some developments in terms of the schools' infrastructure over recent years, the Council's failure to implement a number of high-profile proposals in the last few years has left a legacy in Powys, and there has been a reluctance to embark on large scale reorganisation of education provision since then.

3. WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN BRECON

3.1 THE CURRENT SITUATION

Mount Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School are located in Brecon in South Powys. Cradoc C.P. School is located in the village of Cradoc, approximately 3 miles from Brecon.

The following map shows the location of all primary schools in the Brecon area:



	Sennybridge C.P. School		Cradoc C.P. School		Llanfaes C.P. School
	Priory C. in W. School		Mount Street Infants School		Mount Street Junior School
	Ysgol y Bannau		Llangors C. in W. School		

The following primary schools are located within 10 miles of the three schools²:

Mount Street Infant School Mount Street Junior School	Distance from schools by road (miles)
Ysgol Y Bannau	0.589 miles
Priory C. in W. School	0.673 miles
Llanfaes C.P. School	0.762 miles
Cradoc C.P. School	2.412 miles

² GIS mapping

Llangors C. in W. School	6.343 miles
Ysgol Mynydd Du	8.696 miles
Sennybridge C.P. School	9.164 miles
Archdeacon Griffiths C. in W. School	9.392 miles

Cradoc C.P School	Distance from schools by road (miles)
Priory C. in W. School	2.345 miles
Mount Street Infant School	2.412 miles
Mount Street Junior School	2.412 miles
Llanfaes C.P. School	2.59 miles
Ysgol Y Bannau	3.000 miles
Sennybridge C.P. School	7.074 miles
Llangors C. in W. School	8.498 miles

The following is a summary of key data relating to the three schools:

	School Type	Language Category	Admission Number³	Rural School?⁴
Mount Street Infants School	Community Infants School building owned by Powys County Council	English medium	43	No
Mount Street Junior School	Community Junior School building owned by Powys County Council	English medium	43	No
Cradoc C.P. School	Community Primary	English medium	25	Yes

³ Powys Admissions Information and Arrangements 2021-22

⁴ Annex F of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2018)

(<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/school-organisation-code-second-edition.pdf>) includes a list of 'rural schools', to which the 'Presumption against the closure of rural schools' applies.

	School building owned by Powys County Council			
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Pupil Numbers

i) Current pupil numbers⁵

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Mount Street Infants School	39	33	41					113
Mount Street Junior School				47	49	38	39	173
Cradoc C.P. School	13	10	12	19	14	13	14	95
TOTAL	52	43	53	66	63	51	53	381

ii) Historical pupil numbers⁶

	Jan. 2014	Jan. 2015	Jan. 2016	Jan. 2017	Jan. 2018	Jan. 2019	Jan. 2020
Mount Street Infants School	159	176	191	187	179	171	150
Mount Street Junior School	153	124	138	139	145	143	152
Cradoc C.P. School	141	139	136	142	133	123	112
TOTAL	453	439	465	478	457	437	414

iii) Projected pupil numbers (Birth rate)⁷

	Jan. 2021	Jan. 2022	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025
Mount Street Infants School	105	109	110	111	110

⁵ Finance NOR – 2020 Pupil Count Day (6th November 2020)

⁶ PLASC

⁷ Powys Schools Service Projections (R – Yr6) based on PLASC 2020 & Birth Rates

Mount Street Junior School	159	156	151	139	130
Cradoc C.P. School	98	98	99	99	94
TOTAL	362	363	360	349	334

iv) Projected pupil numbers (Finance projections)⁸

	Jan. 2022	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025
Mount Street Infants School	113	112	N/A	N/A
Mount Street Junior School	173	178	N/A	N/A
Cradoc C.P. School	95	94	N/A	N/A
TOTAL	381	384	N/A	N/A

Building Capacity and Condition

i) Capacity

The following table provides information about the current capacities of school and the capacity:

	Current Capacity⁹	Currently Filled	Surplus Capacity
Mount Street Infants School	129	113 (87.6%)	16 (12.4%)
Mount Street Junior School	172	173 (100.6%)	-1 (0.5%)
Cradoc C.P. School	175	95 (54.3%)	80 (45.7%)

ii) Building condition

⁸ Powys Finance Projections based on data provided by the schools – November 2020

⁹ Welsh Government School Places Return – August 2020

In 2009, Welsh Government carried out condition and suitability assessments of the schools.

	Condition	Suitability	Access to hall on site
Mount Street Infants School	C Poor	B/C Good/Poor	Yes
Mount Street Junior School	C Poor	A/B Excellent/Good	Yes
Cradoc C.P. School	C Poor	B/C Good/Poor	Yes

Standards of Education

i) Estyn

	Mount Street Infants School
Date of Inspection	January 2020
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Excellent
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Excellent
Leadership and management	Good
Follow Up	School will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

	Mount Street Junior School
Date of Inspection	March 2016

Standards	Good
Wellbeing	Good
Learning experiences	Good
Teaching	Good
Care, support, and guidance	Good
Learning environment	Good
Leadership	Good
Improving quality	Good
Partnership working	Good
Resource management	Good
Follow Up	The school will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations

	Cradoc C.P. School
Date of Inspection	May 2017
Standards	Adequate
Wellbeing	Adequate
Learning experiences	Adequate
Teaching	Adequate
Care, support, and guidance	Adequate
Learning environment	Adequate
Leadership	Adequate
Improving quality	Adequate
Partnership working	Adequate

Resource management	Adequate
Follow Up	The school will draw up an action plan, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will review the schools progress

ii) School Categorisation¹⁰

	Standards Group	Improvement Capacity	Support Capacity
Mount Street Infants School	N/A	A	Green
Mount Street Junior School	N/A	C	Amber
Cradoc C.P. School	N/A	B	Yellow

Financial information

Cost per pupil¹¹

	Budget share per school	Budget share per pupil	Notional SEN budget	Non ISB funds devolved to the school
Mount Street Infants School	£526,000	£4,618	£44,000	£8,000
Mount Street Junior School	£558,000	£3,821	£67,000	£21,000
Cradoc C.P. School	£423,000	£4,226	£21,000	£5,000
Powys average (Primary)	N/A	£4,264	N/A	N/A

Equalities Information

¹⁰ 2019

¹¹ Section 52 Budget Statement, 2020/21

i) **Free School Meals¹²**

	Number of pupils who had a free school meal on Census day
Mount Street Infants School	9.3%
Mount Street Junior School	15.8%
Cradoc C.P. School	6.3%

ii) **Pupils in care¹³**

	Number of pupils in care
Mount Street Infants School	1.3%
Mount Street Junior School	0.7%
Cradoc C.P. School	1.8%

iii) **English as an Additional Language¹⁴**

	Number of EAL pupils
Mount Street Infants School	11.3%
Mount Street Junior School	13.8%
Cradoc C.P. School	2.7%

iv) **SEN/ALN¹⁵**

	School Action	School Action Plus	Statement
Mount Street Infants School	13.3%	10%	0%
Mount Street Junior School	14.5%	19.7%	2%

¹² PLASC 2020

¹³ PLASC 2020

¹⁴ PLASC 2020

¹⁵ PLASC 2020

Cradoc C.P School	12.5%	3.6%	0%
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Early Years

There are maintained early years providers at Mount Street Infants School and Cradoc C.P. School.

Travel Assessments

Mount Street Infants School

An analysis of pupil travel patterns has been carried out, based on the 115 pupils that were attending Mount Street Infants School in January 2020¹⁶. The closest provider for all of these pupils is as follows:

	Pupils attending Mount Street Infants School
Cradoc C.P. School	2
Llanfaes C.P. School	10
Llangors C. in W. School	1
Mount Street Infants School	52
Priory C. in W. School	46
Ysgol y Mynydd Du	4

Based on this information, Mount Street Infants School is the closest school for 52 (45.2%) of pupils attending in January 2020.

Mount Street Junior School

An analysis of pupil travel patterns has been carried out, based on the 152 pupils that were attending Mount Street Junior School in January 2020¹⁷. The closest provider for all of these pupils is as follows:

	Pupils attending Mount Street Junior School
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¹⁶ PLASC 2020

¹⁷ PLASC 2020

Cradoc C.P. School	3
Llanfaes C.P. School	22
Llangors C. in W. School	2
Llangynidr C.P. School	5
Mount Street Junior School	68
Priory C. in W. School	47
Sennybridge C.P. School	3
Ysgol y Mynydd Du	2

Based on this information, Mount Street Junior School is the closest school for 68 (44.7%) of pupils attending in January 2020.

Cradoc C.P. School

An analysis of pupil travel patterns has been carried out, based on the 99 pupils that were attending Cradoc C.P. School in January 2020¹⁸. The closest provider for all of these pupils is as follows:

	Pupils attending Cradoc C.P. School
Builth C.P. School	3
Cradoc C.P. School	53
Llanfaes C.P. School	7
Mount Street Infants School	3
Mount Street Junior School	7
Priory C. in W. School	17
Sennybridge C.P. School	7
Ysgol Bro Tawe	2

Based on this information, Cradoc C.P. School is the closest school for 53 (53.5%) of pupils attending in January 2020.

¹⁸ PLASC 2020

3.2 WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN MOUNT STREET INFANTS, MOUNT STREET JUNIORS AND CRADOC

The following is a summary of the main challenges facing Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc CP School.

3.2.1 MOUNT STREET INFANTS AND MOUNT STREET JUNIORS

i) Building condition

The current building condition of the two schools is as follows:

	Condition
Mount Street Infants School	C – Poor
Mount Street Junior School	C – Poor

There are issues with building condition in both schools, with the condition of both schools being rated as poor, with approximately £1.7m in backlog maintenance outstanding across the two sites.

ii) Last remaining infant and junior schools in Powys

School reorganisation in Powys has gradually moved to a model of ‘all-through’ provision in primary schools across the county. Mount Street Infant and Junior Schools represent the last remaining separate infant and junior schools within the County.

The advantages offered by single school provision for primary age pupils are well known and evidence based. Due in part to an increased critical mass of learners, ‘all-through’ primary schools are usually able to offer both enhanced continuity of provision and a curriculum which is more broad and balanced in content delivered in a continuous and coherent way from the Foundation Phase through to the end of Key Stage 2.

iii) Transition arrangements

Whilst the two schools work closely together to minimise disruption for pupils on transition from the Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2 in order to ensure that they can effectively move from one school to the other, the current arrangement does mean that there is an additional transition for pupils during their educational careers, which can cause disruption to pupils and their families.

iv) Staff development opportunities

The current arrangement provides the opportunity for staff to specialise in a particular educational phase – either Foundation Phase or Key Stage 2. However,

this does that it is more difficult for them to gain experience across the primary age range.

3.2.2 WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN CRADOC

The following is a summary of the main challenges facing Cradoc C.P School:

i) Decreasing pupil numbers¹⁹

	Jan. 2014	Jan. 2015	Jan. 2016	Jan. 2017	Jan. 2018	Jan. 2019	Jan. 2020
Cradoc C.P. School	141	139	136	142	133	123	112

Pupil numbers have decreased significantly over the last five years. It has a capacity of 161 pupils with 96 on roll, according to latest pupil data, although forecasting information suggests pupil numbers may increase.

ii) Building condition

The current building condition of the two schools is as follows:

	Condition
Cradoc C.P. School	C – Poor

There are issues with building condition at Cradoc C.P. School, with the condition of the school being rated as poor, with approximately £628k in backlog maintenance outstanding. The building is also not fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010.

iii) Building configuration

The configuration of the school is problematic and creates safeguarding concerns. The school also utilises three aging demountable buildings, only one of which has toilet facilities; therefore children have to leave the classroom to enter the main building in order to use the toilets.

¹⁹ PLASC

PART B – OPTIONS FOR MOUNT STREET INFANTS, MOUNT STREET JUNIORS AND CRADOC

4. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

The following options have been identified which could potentially provide a solution.

Option	Description
1	Status Quo – Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc CP School continue to operate as separate schools
2a	Federation – Mount Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School federate to create a federated primary school. Cradoc CP School continues to operate as a separate school
2b	Federation – Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc CP School federate to create a federated primary school
3a	Merge Mount Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School to create a new primary school. Cradoc CP School to continue to operate as a separate school
3b	Merge Mount Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School to create a new primary school. Close Cradoc CP School, with pupils to attend alternative schools.
4	Merge Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc CP School to create a new primary school.
5	Close Mount Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School, pupils to attend alternative schools. Retain Cradoc CP School.
6	Close Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc CP School. Pupils to attend alternative school.

5. SWOT ANALYSIS OF EACH OPTION

SWOT analyses for each of the four options are provided below.

Option 1: Status Quo – Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc CP School continue to operate as separate schools

Strengths	Weaknesses
- Retains provision in all current locations	- Buildings are in poor condition

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retains provision in the village of Cradoc - No additional transport costs - No requirement for a reorganisation process - No change for staff - No change for pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would still need to maintain all three buildings - Would not lead to any financial efficiencies - Would not reduce surplus places - Unlikely to attract capital funding to improve the buildings - Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision - Outdated infant / junior model would remain
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunities for further collaboration between the schools and other neighbouring schools to provide increased opportunities for pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building condition would continue to deteriorate

Option 2a: Federation – Mount Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School federate to create a federated primary school. Cradoc CP School continues to operate as a separate school

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each school would retain its own character, ethos and identity - Improved opportunities for sharing staff expertise and good practice across the Mount Street schools - Improved transition links between the two Mount Street schools - Potential for the two Mount Street schools to run more efficiently through shared staffing and resources - One governing body for the two Mount Street schools which would have strategic overview of the two schools - Would be easier to dissolve a federation if the change was not working - Potential for one headteacher across the two Mount Street schools in the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The two Mount Street schools would remain as two separate schools therefore there could be some tensions between the two schools - Federation is a less robust model than amalgamation - Parents of pupils at the Mount Street schools would still have to apply to admit their children to the junior phase - The buildings are in poor condition - Would still need to maintain all three buildings - Would not lead to any financial efficiencies - Would not reduce surplus places - Unlikely to attract capital funding to improve the buildings - Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision - Outdated infant / junior model would remain

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in the village of Cradoc - No additional transport costs - No requirement for a school reorganisation process - No change for staff at Cradoc - No change for pupils at Cradoc 	
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity for collaboration between the two Mount Street schools - Opportunity to secure shared leadership across the Mount Street schools in the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building condition would continue to deteriorate

Option 2b: Federation – Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc CP School federate to create a federated primary school

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each school would retain its own character, ethos and identity - Improved opportunities for sharing staff expertise and good practice across the three schools - Improved transition links between the two Mount Street schools - Potential for the three schools to run more efficiently through shared staffing and resources - One governing body for the three schools which would have strategic overview of the two schools - Would be easier to dissolve a federation if the change was not working - Potential for one headteacher across the three schools in the future - Would retain provision in the village of Cradoc - No additional transport costs - No requirement for a school reorganisation process - Minimal impact on staff and pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The three schools would remain as separate schools therefore it would be more difficult to create a single school ethos - Federation is a less robust model than amalgamation - Parents of pupils at the Mount Street schools would still have to apply to admit their children to the junior phase - The buildings are in poor condition - Would still need to maintain all three buildings - Would not lead to any financial efficiencies - Would not reduce surplus places - Unlikely to attract capital funding to improve the buildings - Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision - Outdated infant / junior model would remain
Opportunities	Threats

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity for collaboration between the three schools - Opportunity to secure shared leadership across the three schools in the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building condition would continue to deteriorate
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Option 3a: Merge Mount Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School to create a new primary school. Cradoc CP School to continue to operate as a separate school

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More flexibility and opportunities for personal development for staff at the Mount Street Schools - Would enable staff expertise and good practice to be shared across the entire primary age range - Parents would not have to re-apply for admission to junior phase - One governing body and one leadership team across the Mount Street schools - More efficient model of governance and leadership at the Mount Street schools - Improved transition arrangements between Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 at the Mount Street schools - Potential to attract capital funding to replace the current Mount Streets building - Would retain provision in the village of Cradoc - No additional transport costs - No change for staff at Cradoc - No change for pupils at Cradoc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impact on staff at the Mount Street schools as management of change process would need to take place leading to potential job losses - Would still need to maintain three buildings in the short term, and at least two buildings in the long term - Unlikely to attract capital funding to improve the buildings at Cradoc - Would not address issues with building condition at Cradoc - Would not address surplus places at Cradoc
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to access 21st Century Schools funding for a replacement building for the Mount Street schools in the future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building condition would continue to deteriorate

Option 3b: Merge Mount Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School to create a new primary school. Close Cradoc CP School, with pupils to attend alternative schools.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More flexibility and opportunities for personal development for staff at the Mount Street Schools - Would enable staff expertise and good practice to be shared across the entire primary age range - Parents would not have to re-apply for admission to junior phase - One governing body and one leadership team across the Mount Street schools - More efficient model of governance and leadership at the Mount Street schools - Improved transition arrangements between Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 at the Mount Street schools - Potential to attract capital funding to replace the current Mount Streets building - Would reduce the Council’s surplus places in primary schools - Would lead to rationalisation of the primary school estate - Financial saving to the Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional travel for those pupils for whom Cradoc C.P. School is currently the closest school - Pupils currently attending Cradoc C.P. School would have to transfer to alternative provision - Loss of provision from Cradoc - Impact on the current staff of Cradoc C.P. School – would be in a redundancy situation, therefore would not be included in ringfencing arrangements as part of establishing the new Mount Street school. - Impact on the Cradoc community - May not be sufficient capacity at other schools to accommodate all current Cradoc pupils - Impact on staff at the Mount Street schools as management of change process would need to take place leading to potential job losses
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to realise a capital receipt from sale of the surplus site(s) - Opportunity to access 21st Century Schools funding for a replacement building for the Mount Street schools in the future. - A new staffing structure would be developed for the new Mount Streets school, which would could provide new opportunities for current staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Likely to be unpopular in Cradoc

Option 4: Merge Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc CP School to create a new primary school

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One new, larger school would be established which would offer enhanced opportunities for pupils - Would enable staff expertise and good practice to be shared across the entire primary age range - Fairer for staff – all staff at the three schools would have the opportunity to secure positions in the new school - More flexibility and personal development opportunities for staff - Parents of pupils currently attending Mount Street Infants would not have to re-apply for admission to junior phase - Improved transition arrangements between Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 for pupils attending Mount Street Infants - Potential to attract capital funding to provide a new building - Would reduce the Council’s surplus places in primary schools - Would lead to rationalisation of the primary school estate - Financial saving to the Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional travel for those pupils for whom Cradoc C.P. School is currently the closest school should the new school move to one site in Brecon - Potential loss of provision from Cradoc should the new school move to one site in Brecon - Impact on the Cradoc community should there eventually be no school in Cradoc
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to realise a capital receipt from sale of surplus sites - Opportunity to access 21st Century Schools funding for a replacement building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Likely to be unpopular in Cradoc

Option 5: Close Mount Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School, pupils to attend alternative schools. Retain Cradoc CP School.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would reduce the Council’s surplus places in primary schools - Would lead to rationalisation of the primary school estate - Financial saving to the Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - May not be sufficient capacity at other schools to accommodate all current Mount Street pupils - Capital investment may be needed in other schools

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupils would attend primary schools rather than split infant/junior school - Would retain provision in the village of Cradoc - No additional transport costs - No change for staff at Cradoc - No change for pupils at Cradoc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupils currently attending Mount Street Infants and Mount Street Juniors would need to transfer to alternative schools - Loss of provision from the area of Brecon currently served by the Mount Street schools - Possible additional travel for Mount Street pupils should there be no spaces in Brecon - Additional transport costs for the Council should there be a need to transport pupils from Brecon to primary schools in other locations - Impact on the staff of the two Mount Street schools – they would be in a redundancy situation - Would not address issues with the condition of the Cradoc building
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to realise a capital receipt from the sale of surplus sites - Potential opportunity to access 21st Century Schools funding for a replacement building for Cradoc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Likely to be unpopular with the Mount Streets school communities

Option 6: Close Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc CP School. Pupils to attend alternative schools.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would reduce surplus capacity in primary schools - Revenue saving to the Council - Pupils would attend schools with better quality accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unlikely to be sufficient available capacity in other local schools to accommodate all pupils - Capital investment would be needed in other schools - All pupils would need to transfer to alternative schools - Loss of provision from Cradoc and the area of Brecon currently served by the Mount Street schools - Impact on the Cradoc community from loss of provision in Cradoc - Additional travel for pupils for whom Cradoc is currently the closest school

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional transport costs for the Council - Impact on the staff of all three schools – all staff would be in a redundancy situation
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to realise a capital receipt from sale of surplus sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Likely to be the least popular option locally - Job losses

6. IMPACT OF EACH OPTION

The likely impact of each option on quality and standards, the community and travelling arrangements is considered below:

Option	Likely impact on quality and standards	Likely impact on the community	Likely impact of different travelling arrangements
Option 1: Status Quo – Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc CP School continue to operate as separate schools	There would be no impact on quality and standards – pupils would continue to attend either Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School or Cradoc CP School.	There would be no impact on the community – provision would continue to be available in the current Mount Street locations and Cradoc.	There would be no impact on travel arrangements – pupils would continue to attend either Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School or Cradoc CP School.
Option 2a: Federation – Mount Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School federate to create a federated primary school. Cradoc CP School continues to operate as a separate school	The impact on quality and standards would be minimal – pupils would continue to attend their existing schools, however a federated governing body would be established to oversee the Mount Street Schools. This could provide additional opportunities for collaboration across the two schools, and an opportunity to appoint one headteacher for the federation in the longer term. There would also be additional	The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in the current Mount Street locations and Cradoc. One joint governing body would be responsible for Mount Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School, however a separate governing body would continue to operate for Cradoc CP School.	There would be no impact on travel arrangements – pupils would continue to attend either Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School or Cradoc CP School.

	opportunities to share staff expertise across the federation.		
Option 2b: Federation – Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc CP School federate to create a federated primary school	The impact on quality and standards would be minimal – pupils would continue to attend their existing schools, however a federated governing body would be established to oversee the three schools. This could provide additional opportunities for collaboration across the two schools, and an opportunity to appoint one headteacher for the federation in the longer term. There would also be additional opportunities to share staff expertise across the federation.	The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in the current Mount Street locations and Cradoc. However, one joint governing body would be responsible for the three schools, therefore there could be a perceived reduction in community involvement in management of the school, depending on the make up of the federated governing body.	There would be no impact on travel arrangements – pupils would continue to attend either Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School or Cradoc CP School.
Option 3a: Merge Mount Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School to create a new primary school. Cradoc CP School to continue to operate as a separate school	It is anticipated that this option would have a positive impact on quality and standards at the Mount Street schools through the establishment of one new primary school. This would mean that pupil progression would be monitored throughout pupils’ time in primary school, from age 4 to 11, ensuring continuity in delivery and approach.	The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available to the communities currently served by Mount Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School at a new primary school located in Brecon. Cradoc CP School would continue to operate as a separate school in Cradoc, therefore there would be no impact on the Cradoc community.	One new school would be established in Brecon to replace the current Mount Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School. This may result in an additional distance to school for some pupils, however provision would continue to be available within Brecon, therefore it is not anticipated that the impact on travel would be significant.

	<p>Cradoc CP School would continue to operate as a standalone school, therefore there would be no impact on quality and standards at Cradoc.</p>		<p>Cradoc CP School would continue to operate as a standalone school in Cradoc, therefore no additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Cradoc CP School.</p>
<p>Option 3b: Merge Mount Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School to create a new primary school. Close Cradoc CP School, with pupils to attend alternative schools.</p>	<p>It is anticipated that this option would have a positive impact on quality and standards at the Mount Street schools through the establishment of one new primary school. This would mean that pupil progression would be monitored throughout pupils' time in primary school, from age 4 to 11, ensuring continuity in delivery and approach.</p> <p>This option would result in the closure of Cradoc CP School. The impact on quality and standards would depend on which school(s) pupils transferred to, however in general there are no concerns about the quality of provision at any of the schools in the Brecon catchment therefore it is not anticipated that the impact on quality and standards would be negative.</p>	<p>Provision would continue to be available in Brecon, therefore the impact on the Brecon community would be minimal. Ultimately, there would be a positive impact on the community in Brecon through the provision of one new primary school with enhanced community facilities.</p> <p>Implementation of this option would mean that there would no longer be provision in Cradoc. This would have a negative impact on the Cradoc community, and would result in the loss of primary provision in Cradoc, and a possible loss of any community facilities associated with the school from the village of Cradoc.</p>	<p>One new school would be established in Brecon to replace the current Mount Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School. This may result in an additional distance to school for some pupils, however provision would continue to be available within Brecon, therefore it is not anticipated that the impact on travel would be significant.</p> <p>Implementation of this option would mean that there would be no longer be provision in Cradoc. This would result in additional travel for pupils for whom Cradoc CP School is currently the closest school. Whilst home to school travel would be provided for eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, there would also be an additional travel requirement for parents in</p>

			order to access school activities / events.
Option 4: Merge Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc CP School to create a new primary school	It is anticipated that this option would have a positive impact on quality and standards through the establishment of one new larger primary school. In respect of pupils currently attending the Mount Street Schools, this would mean that pupil progression would be monitored throughout pupils' time in primary school, from age 4 to 11, ensuring continuity in delivery and approach. As a larger school, the headteacher would be able to spend more time on leadership, enabling a greater focus on improving the quality of provision. In addition, there would be a larger team of staff, enabling expertise to be shared across the school and enabling more distributed leadership and professional development opportunities.	<p>Provision would continue to be available in Brecon, therefore the impact on the Brecon community would be minimal. Ultimately, there would be a positive impact on the community in Brecon through the provision of one new primary school with enhanced community facilities.</p> <p>Implementation of this option would eventually mean that there would no longer be provision in Cradoc. This would have a negative impact on the Cradoc community, and would result in the loss of primary provision in Cradoc, and a possible loss of any community facilities associated with the school from the village of Cradoc.</p>	<p>One new school would be established in Brecon to replace the current Mount Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School. This may result in an additional distance to school for some pupils, however provision would continue to be available within Brecon, therefore it is not anticipated that the impact on travel would be significant.</p> <p>Implementation of this option would mean that there would be no longer be provision in Cradoc. This would result in additional travel for pupils for whom Cradoc CP School is currently the closest school. Whilst home to school travel would be provided for eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, there would also be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities / events.</p>
Option 5:	This option would result in the closure of Mount Street Infants	Whilst implementation of this option would mean that Mount	Implementation of this option would mean that Mount Street

<p>Close Mount Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School, pupils to attend alternative schools. Retain Cradoc CP School.</p>	<p>School and Mount Street Junior School. The impact on quality and standards would depend on which school(s) pupils transferred to, however in general there are no concerns about the quality of provision at any of the schools in the Brecon catchment therefore it is not anticipated that the impact on quality and standards would be negative.</p> <p>Cradoc CP School would continue to operate as a standalone school, therefore there would be no impact on quality and standards at Cradoc.</p>	<p>Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School would no longer exist, it is likely that pupils would transfer to alternative provision in Brecon, although additional capacity may be required in Brecon in order to facilitate this.</p> <p>Whilst provision would continue to be available in the town of Brecon, there would be a loss of facilities in the locations where the two Mount Street Schools are currently located, which could impact on the community in this area of Brecon.</p> <p>Cradoc CP School would continue to operate as a separate school in Cradoc, therefore there would be no impact on the Cradoc community.</p>	<p>Infants School and Mount Street Junior School would no longer exist. It is likely that pupils would transfer to alternative provision in Brecon, however additional capacity may be required in Brecon in order to facilitate this. It is therefore anticipated that there would be no significant impact on travel arrangements.</p> <p>Cradoc CP School would continue to operate as a standalone school in Cradoc, therefore no additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Cradoc CP School.</p>
<p>Option 6: Close Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc CP School. Pupils to attend alternative schools.</p>	<p>This option would result in the closure of Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc CP School. The impact on quality and standards would depend on which school(s) pupils transferred to, however in general there are no concerns about the quality of</p>	<p>Whilst implementation of this option would mean that Mount Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School would no longer exist, it is likely that pupils would transfer to alternative provision in Brecon, although additional capacity may be</p>	<p>Implementation of this option would mean that Mount Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School would no longer exist. It is likely that pupils would transfer to alternative provision in Brecon, however additional capacity may be required in Brecon in order to facilitate this. It</p>

	<p>provision at any of the schools in the Brecon catchment therefore it is not anticipated that the impact on quality and standards would be negative.</p>	<p>required in Brecon in order to facilitate this.</p> <p>Whilst provision would continue to be available in the town of Brecon, there would be a loss of facilities in the locations where the two Mount Street Schools are currently located, which could impact on the community in this area of Brecon.</p> <p>Implementation of this option would mean that there would no longer be provision in Cradoc. This would have a negative impact on the Cradoc community, and would result in the loss of primary provision in Cradoc, and a possible loss of any community facilities associated with the school from the village of Cradoc.</p>	<p>is therefore anticipated that there would be no significant impact on travel arrangements.</p> <p>Implementation of this option would mean that there would be no longer be provision in Cradoc. This would result in additional travel for pupils for whom Cradoc CP School is currently the closest school. Whilst home to school travel would be provided for eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, there would also be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities / events.</p>
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7. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

The options have also been assessed against the following Critical Success Factors:

Critical Success Factor	Description
1 – Strategic fit and business needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The option must align with the Council’s Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-2030, to include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address the challenges facing education in Powys, as outlined in the Council’s Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-2030 - Align with the Vision and Guiding Principles outlined in the Council’s Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-2030 - Align with the Strategic Aims and Objectives outlined in the Council’s Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-2030 • The option must optimise the benefits of the Council’s Transforming Education Programme
2 – Value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The option must optimise the resources available for the delivery of learning • The option must provide value for money in the delivery of learning
3 – Potential achievability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The option must be achievable within current legislation • The option must be operationally achievable • The option must be physically achievable
4 – Potential affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the option is affordable within the Council’s forecasted revenue • The extent to which the option is affordable within the forecasted capital funding available to the Council

Each option has been assessed against the Critical Success Factors based on the following criteria:

✓ – Meets ? – Could meet x – Does not meet

The assessment for each option is as follows:

	Option 1	Option 2a	Option 2b	Option 3a	Option 3b	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6
1 – Strategic fit and business needs	x	x	x	?	✓	✓	?	✓
2 – Value for money	x	x	x	?	✓	✓	?	✓
3 – Potential achievability	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	✓	?	x
5 – Potential affordability	x	x	x	?	✓	✓	?	?
Total ✓	1	1	1	1	3	4	0	2
Total x	3	3	3	0	0	0	4	1
Outcome	Discount	Discount	Discount	Discount	Possible	Pref-erred	Discount	Discount

8. EMERGING PREFERRED OPTION

Based on the SWOT analyses carried out and the financial estimates received so far, the emerging preferred option for Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc CP School is:

Option 4: Merge Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc CP School to create a new primary school

The reasons for this are:

- One new, larger school would be established which would offer enhanced opportunities for pupils
- Would enable staff expertise and good practice to be shared across the entire primary age range
- Fairer for staff – all staff at the three schools would have the opportunity to secure positions in the new school
- More flexibility and personal development opportunities for staff
- Parents of pupils currently attending Mount Street Infants would not have to re-apply for admission to junior phase
- Improved transition arrangements between Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 for pupils attending Mount Street Infants
- Potential to attract capital funding to provide a new building
- Would reduce the Council's surplus places in primary schools
- Would lead to rationalisation of the primary school estate
- Financial saving to the Council

- Meets all the Critical Success Factors

Further consideration of the emerging preferred option will now be carried out, to include consideration of the factors outlined in the School Organisation Code. This will be based on implementation of the emerging preferred option on a phased basis:

- **Phase 1:** Establishment of a new school operating from the current three sites
- **Phase 2:** Moving to a new building located on the site of the former Brecon High School

PART C – FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF PREFERRED OPTION

The Welsh Government's School Organisation Code outlines factors to be considered when developing school organisation proposals. Consideration is given below to the impact of the preferred option, to merge Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc CP School to create a new primary school on the factors outlined in the Code.

As indicated in the previous section, this will be based on implementation of the emerging preferred option on a phased basis:

- **Phase 1:** Establishment of a new school operating from the current three sites
- **Phase 2:** Moving to a new building located on the site of the former Brecon High School

9. QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN EDUCATION

9.1 Likely impact on standards and progress overall, of specific groups and in skills

Standards of education and progress at all three schools are currently good. The Council would expect amalgamating to further strengthen the current standards.

For pupils currently attending Mount Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School, amalgamation of the schools would enable pupil progression to be monitored throughout pupils' time in primary school, from age 4 to age 11, ensuring continuity in delivery and approach. It is anticipated that this would have an overall positive impact on standards and progress overall.

This would also apply in respect of pupils belonging to specific groups, such as pupils eligible for Free School Meals, pupils for whom English is an Additional Language, Looked after Children and pupils with Additional Learning Needs. Amalgamating the three schools would ensure that their progress could be monitored, supported and tracked over a longer period of time, and throughout their time in primary school.

It is also anticipated that amalgamating the two schools would have a positive impact on the skills of all pupils, including literacy, numeracy and ICT, through improved opportunities to share staff expertise and resources across, and through improved ability to monitor pupil progress in these aspects.

Whilst some benefits would be realised immediately following establishment of the new school, these would be further enhanced following a move to one new building in the future.

9.2 Likely impact on wellbeing and attitudes to learning

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning are currently strong in all three schools. Amalgamating the schools would provide an opportunity to strengthen these further. For pupils currently attending Mount Street Infants and Mount Street Juniors, amalgamation would mean that pupils would attend one school throughout the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2, therefore providing continuity in progression and approach throughout the primary phase. It is anticipated that this would have a positive impact, particularly with regard to pupils' emotional health.

In the short term, it is possible that there would be an impact on pupil wellbeing during transition to the new operating model, however the Council would work with the temporary governing body and the headteacher of the new school to minimise any negative impact.

In the longer term, the intention is that the new school would move to a new building located on the site of the old Brecon High School. It is possible that there would also be an impact on pupil wellbeing during the transition to the new building, in particular for pupils currently attending Cradoc CP School, who would need to travel further to school. However, all pupils would be attending a brand new building, which would provide significantly improved accommodation compared with the current accommodation of Mount Street Infants, Mount Street Juniors and Cradoc CP School, which should have a positive impact on pupil wellbeing and attitudes to learning.

9.3 Likely impact on teaching and learning experiences

9.3.1 Quality of teaching

Quality of teaching is currently good in both schools. It is anticipated that amalgamating the three schools would provide an opportunity to enhance this, by providing flexibility to share good practice and teaching experiences, resulting in positive benefits for staff and pupils.

For pupils currently attending Mount Street Infants and Mount Street Juniors, there would be enhanced opportunities to share Foundation Phase pedagogy with Key Stage 2 classes, which would enhance teaching approaches across the school, and vice versa. Being part of a larger primary school with a larger pool of teaching staff would also lead to enhanced opportunities for pupils currently attending Cradoc CP School.

Whilst some benefits would be realised immediately following establishment of the new school, these would be further enhanced following a move to one new building in the future.

9.3.2 The breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum

Amalgamating the three schools would provide the opportunity to further strengthen the curriculum offered to pupils. The new school would be better placed to develop provision which meets the requirements of the new curriculum.

Whilst some benefits would be realised immediately following establishment of the new school, these would be further enhanced following a move to one new building in the future.

9.3.3 The provision of skills

The provision of skills is strong in all three schools now, however, amalgamating the schools would provide an opportunity to strengthen this.

Whilst some benefits would be realised immediately following establishment of the new school, these would be further enhanced following a move to one new building in the future.

9.4 Likely impact on care, support and guidance

9.4.1 Tracking, monitoring and the provision of learning support, personal development and safeguarding

Amalgamating the three schools to establish one new school would provide an opportunity to further develop these aspects. In particular, there would be a positive impact for pupils currently attending Mount Street Infants and Mount Street Juniors, as pupils would attend a primary school rather than separate infants / junior schools, therefore the school would know the child for longer, and would monitor their development from 5 years old to 11 years old. For those children that need additional support, this continuity of approach would be beneficial. This is also the case in respect of personal development and safeguarding.

In the longer term, the Council intends to invest in a new building to replace the current buildings. Whilst some benefits would be realised immediately following establishment of the new school, these would be further enhanced following a move to one new building in the future. Safeguarding arrangements would be a key consideration when planning the site, and when designing the new building, therefore it is likely that this would significantly improve safeguarding arrangements.

9.5 Likely impact on Leadership and Management

9.5.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers, self evaluation processes and improvement planning

Leadership is good at all three schools, however, amalgamating the three schools would provide an opportunity to further enhance this, and would increase the capacity for leadership, and sharing of good practice across the foundation phase and key stage 2.

The new school would be a larger school, which would provide the opportunity for a non-teaching headteacher and would enable increased focus on leadership. Amalgamating the three schools would also provide enhanced opportunities to develop leadership across the school, and would provide enhanced leadership opportunities for staff.

Amalgamating the three schools would provide enhanced opportunities to develop self-evaluation processes across the primary phase, enabling the development of consistency in processes for the benefit of a larger number of pupils. As a primary school, the new school to see each pupil's full development across the primary age range.

In addition, there would be enhanced opportunities for improvement planning across the primary phase. Pupils currently attending Mount Street Infants and Mount Street Juniors would attend the new school for longer, therefore the school would be better informed about the pupils, which would enable more effective target setting and improvement planning.

The intention is to initially establish a new school in the buildings currently occupied by Mount Street Infants, Mount Street Juniors and Cradoc CP School. It is acknowledged that operating across three sites could cause challenges for the school's leaders during this phase.

Whilst some benefits would be realised immediately following establishment of the new school, these would be further enhanced following a move to one new building in the future.

In the longer term, the intention is for the new school to move to a new building. This would enable the new school to maximise the benefits in terms of leadership and management.

9.5.2 Professional learning

Amalgamating the three schools would provide improved professional learning opportunities for staff through greater opportunities for cross phase

working, opportunities to develop leaders more effectively and more opportunities to develop middle leaders. In addition, there would be improved opportunities to see the progression of learning across the primary age range and improve opportunities to apply the principles of the new curriculum.

Whilst it is expected that some improvements in professional learning opportunities would be realised immediately following the amalgamation of the three schools, this would be further enhanced following a move to one new building in the future.

9.5.3 Use of Resources

Should the three schools amalgamate to create one new school, the school would be funded as one school, with one budget, and would be run by one headteacher, one leadership team, and one governing body. This would eventually enable the school to operate more efficiently compared with the current arrangements, and should result in some efficiencies through shared staffing and the ability to share of other resources.

Initially, the new school would be established on the existing sites of the three schools. This would mean that there would be a need to maintain all three buildings in the short term, which would result in duplication of resources and could lead to inefficient use of resources in the short term.

9.6 Impact on vulnerable groups, including children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Amalgamating the two schools would provide enhanced opportunities to support pupils belonging to vulnerable groups, including children with SEN.

In respect of vulnerable pupils attending Mount Street Infants and Mount Street Juniors, the preferred option would result in establishing one new primary school, ensuring continuity in the support provided to pupils across the primary phase.

This would be further enhanced following the planned move to a brand new building on the site of the old Brecon High School.

There are currently specialist units at both Mount Street Infants and Mount Street Junior Schools.

9.7 Ability of the school/schools which are the subject of the proposals to deliver the full curriculum at the foundation phase and each key stage of education, including the quality of curriculum delivery and the extent to which the structure or size of the school is impacting on this

Amalgamating the three schools would enable the provision of a full curriculum to pupils across the primary age range.

Initially, the new school would be established on the existing sites of the three schools. Whilst one headteacher and governing body would be responsible for all through sites during this period, the full curriculum would continue to be provided to pupils in the foundation phase and key stage 2. The provision available for pupils would be at least equivalent to the current provision, and there would be additional opportunities to provide enhanced opportunities to pupils across all three sites through shared staffing and the opportunity to hold all-school activities.

Eventually, the intention is that the new school moves to a new building located on the site of the old Brecon High School. This would provide enhanced opportunities to offer a full curriculum to all pupils across the primary age range in brand new facilities.

10 NEED FOR PLACES AND IMPACT ON ACCESSIBILITY OF SCHOOLS

10.1 Will the alternative provision have sufficient capacity and provide accommodation of at least equivalent quality for existing and projected pupil numbers?

The intention is to initially establish the new school in the buildings currently occupied by Mount Street Infants, Mount Street Juniors and Cradoc CP School. This would provide the same capacity as is currently available, and would provide accommodation of equivalent quality.

Eventually, the intention is that the new school moves to a new building located on the site of the old Brecon High School. This would improve the quality of accommodation for pupils in the longer term. Existing and projected pupil numbers at Mount Street Infants, Mount Street Juniors, Cradoc CP School and the wider Brecon catchment will be taken into consideration when determining the capacity of the new building.

10.2 Is the alternative provision sufficient to meet existing and projected demand for schools of the same language category and (if relevant) designated religious character?

The three affected schools are English-medium community schools. The intention is to establish a new English-medium community primary school, ensuring continued access to community primary provision of the same language category.

10.3 What will be the nature of journeys to alternative provision and resulting journey times for pupils including SEN pupils?

There would be no change in terms of the nature of journeys and journey times for pupils following the establishment of one new school on the existing sites of Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc CP School.

Eventually, the intention is that the new school moves to a new building located on the site of the old Brecon High School. This would result in additional travel for pupils for whom Cradoc CP School is currently the closest school. The site of the old Brecon High School is approximately 3 miles from Cradoc CP School, therefore whilst there would be additional travel time for all pupils for whom Cradoc CP School is currently the closest school, including SEN pupils, the nature of journeys and journey times would not be unreasonable, and would not exceed 45 minutes.

10.4 Is there evidence of current or future need/demand in the area for additional places?

The latest pupil projection figures for Mount Street Infants, Mount Street Juniors and Cradoc CP School suggest that pupil numbers at the three schools are not expected to increase over the coming years.

10.5 Will the proposals improve access for disabled pupils in accordance with requirements under the Equality Act 2010?

The intention is to amalgamate the three schools in their existing accommodation initially, therefore there would be no change in terms of access for disabled pupils.

Eventually, the intention is that the new school moves to a new building located on the site of the old Brecon High School. This would provide improved access for disabled pupils.

11 RESOURCING OF EDUCATION AND OTHER FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 What effect will the proposals have on surplus places in the area?

The proposal is to establish the new school in the buildings currently occupied by the three existing schools, therefore there would be no impact on surplus places in the area.

Eventually, the intention is that the new school moves to a new building located on the site of the old Brecon High School. The size of the new building

would be planned based on the current and projected pupil numbers at the three affected schools, however it is anticipated that this would lead to a reduction in surplus places in the area.

11.2 Do the proposals form part of the local authority's 21st Century Schools Investment Programme and contribute to the delivery of sustainable schools for the 21st Century and to the better strategic management of the school estate?

Plans to provide a new primary school in Brecon are included in the Council's SOP for Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme.

The Council intends to implement this change on a phased basis, and to initially establish a new school in the buildings currently occupied by Mount Street Infants, Mount Street Juniors and Cradoc CP School. This is not dependent on 21st Century Schools funding.

11.3 What are the recurrent costs of proposals over a period of at least 3 years and is the necessary recurrent funding available?

The recurrent costs of this proposal would be the increased rates charges for a new build which are currently estimated to be an additional £14,000. This has been included in the delegated revenue costing and is funded through savings in other areas of the formula in relation to this proposal.

11.4 Will additional transport costs be incurred as a result of the proposal?

No additional transport costs would be incurred as a result of establishing a new school on the existing sites of Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc CP School.

Eventually, the intention is that the new school moves to a new building located on the site of the old Brecon High School. It is currently projected that there would be no additional transports costs as current bus routes can accommodate this model.

11.5 What are the capital costs of the proposal and is the necessary capital funding is available?

There are no capital costs associated with the initial phase, which would see Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc CP School amalgamating to establish a new primary school operating on the three current sites.

Eventually, the intention is that the new school moves to a new building located on the site of the old Brecon High School. It is estimated that the capital cost of this (including optimism bias) would be £9,187,993.

The intention is that this would be funded by the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme. Plans to provide a new primary school in Brecon are included in the Council's SOP for Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme, however the Council would need to go through an extensive business case process in order to draw down funding. Should 21st Century Schools funding not be available, the Council could consider utilising alternative funding sources.

11.6 What is the scale of any projected net savings (taking into account school revenue, transport and capital costs)

The intention is to initially establish a new school on the current sites of Mount Street Infants, Mount Street Juniors and Cradoc CP School. It is estimated that this would result in annual revenue savings to the Council of £16,181 per annum. There would be no additional transport costs associated with this phase, although there would be some additional set-up costs. Based on previous primary school mergers, this is estimated to be in the region of £50k.

Eventually, the intention is that the new school moves to a new building located on the site of the old Brecon High. It is estimated that the capital cost of this (including optimism bias) would be £9,187,993.

A move to one new building would also result in additional estimated revenue savings in delegated funding amounting to £184,306 per annum and £35,760 for catering functions. It is currently projected that there would be no additional transport costs as current bus routes can accommodate this model.

11.7 Without the proposals, would the schools affected face budget deficits?

Based on the latest information held by the Council's Finance Team²⁰, Mount Street Infants is projecting to be in a deficit budget position during 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23. Mount Street Juniors is projecting to be in a deficit budget position during 2020/21, however it is projected that this would be recovered by 2021/22 and 2022/23. Cradoc C.P. School are projecting to be in a surplus budget position during 2020/21, but to be in a deficit budget position during 2021/22 and 2022/23.

11.8 Will any savings in recurrent costs be retained in the local authority's local schools budget?

²⁰ December 2020

Any savings would be reinvested into the schools' system.

11.9 Will the proceeds of sales (capital receipts) of redundant sites be made available to meet the costs of the proposal or contribute to the costs of future proposals which will promote effective management of school places?

Initially there would be no redundant sites as the new school would be established on the current sites of the three schools.

Eventually, the intention is that the new school moves to a new building located on the site of the old Brecon High School. This would result in three redundant sites, for which the Council would hope to realise a capital receipt. Any capital receipts received would be reinvested into the Schools Transformation programme in order to improve the educational provision across Powys.

12 OTHER GENERAL FACTORS

12.1 What impact will the proposals have on educational attainment among children from economically deprived backgrounds?

Implementation of the preferred option would impact on any pupils from economically deprived backgrounds currently attending Mount Street Infants, Mount Street Juniors and Cradoc CP School as they would transfer to the new, amalgamated school. Based on PLASC figures from January 2020, approximately 9% of pupils attending Mount Street Infants School, approximately 16% of pupils attending Mount Street Junior School and approximately 6% of pupils attending Cradoc CP School were eligible for Free School Meals, therefore it is acknowledged that the proposal would impact on some pupils from economically deprived backgrounds.

It is anticipated that amalgamation of the three schools would have a positive impact on educational attainment among children from economically deprived backgrounds. As a larger school, the new school would have a larger pupil deprivation grant, which could be used to support pupils consistently throughout their time in primary school.

Eventually, the intention is that the new school moves to a new building located on the site of the old Brecon High. This would mean that pupils attending the school would need to transfer to the new site. For pupils currently attending Cradoc CP School, this would require additional travel. Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with Council's home to school transport policy, it is acknowledged that there would be an impact on families due to the requirement to travel to

school events, which could have a greater impact on children from economically deprived backgrounds.

12.2 Any equality issues, including those identified through equality impact assessments

Amalgamating the schools would impact on pupils belonging to the protected characteristic groups that attend the schools. However, it is anticipated that amalgamating the schools would have a positive impact on all pupils, including pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups.

12.3 Whether the school / schools involved are subject to any trust or charitable interests which might be affected by the proposals, for example in relation to the use or disposal of land.

The schools involved are not subject to any trust or charitable interests which might be affected by the proposals.

13. SPECIFIC FACTORS IN THE CONSIDERATION OF SCHOOL CLOSURES

13.1 Whether the establishment of multi-site schools might be considered as a means of retaining buildings, or the reasons for not pursuing this option

A range of options have been considered in respect of the three schools , these include options considered in the Programme Business Case in respect of the Brecon catchment, and the options outlined in section 4 of this document. Assessments of each option have been carried out, which includes an assessment of the weaknesses / threats associated with each.

13.2 Whether alternatives to closure, such as clustering, collaboration or federation with other schools, might be considered or the reasons for not pursuing these as an alternative

Federation options were considered in respect of the three schools, as outlined in section 4 of this document. Assessments of each option have been carried out, which includes an assessment of the weaknesses / threats associated with each.

13.3 Whether the possibility of making fuller use of the existing buildings as a community or educational resource could be explored

The Council's view is that making more use of the existing buildings as a community or educational resource would not address the issues identified in respect of Mount Street Infants, Mount Street Juniors and Cradoc School. The

building condition of the current buildings is poor, making fuller use of the buildings would not address this.

13.4 The overall effect of closure on the local community (including the loss of school based facilities which are used by the local community)

Implementation of the preferred option would mean that provision would continue to be available in Brecon, therefore the impact on the Brecon community would be minimal. Ultimately, there would be a positive impact on the community in Brecon through the provision of one new primary school with enhanced community facilities.

Implementation of this option would eventually mean that there would no longer be provision in Cradoc. This would have a negative impact on the Cradoc community, and would result in the loss of primary provision in Cradoc, and a possible loss of any community facilities associated with the school from the village of Cradoc.

Should the Council proceed with the statutory process in respect of the preferred option, a community impact assessment would be carried out, which would include input from the affected schools to identify the potential impact on the community. This would be updated throughout the process to reflect any feedback received, and would be considered by the Council's Cabinet as part of the decision making process.

13.5 How parents' and pupils' engagement with the alternative school and any facilities it may offer could be supported

Should the Council proceed with the statutory process and eventually implementation of the preferred option, support would be provided to pupils and their parents as part of the transition process, to ensure full engagement with their new schools. As the preferred option would result in the establishment of one new school, initially operating over three sites, there would be opportunities for all parents and pupils involved with the three existing schools to be fully involved with the establishment of the new school, which would ensure full engagement by the time the school were to move to the planned new building.

14. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Based on the options appraisal carried out and further consideration of the preferred option against the factors outlined in the School Organisation Code, the preferred option is as follows:

Option 4: Merge Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc CP School to create a new primary school

The reasons for this are:

- One new, larger school would be established which would offer enhanced opportunities for pupils
- Would enable staff expertise and good practice to be shared across the entire primary age range
- Fairer for staff – all staff at the three schools would have the opportunity to secure positions in the new school
- More flexibility and personal development opportunities for staff
- Parents of pupils currently attending Mount Street Infants would not have to re-apply for admission to junior phase
- Improved transition arrangements between Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 for pupils attending Mount Street Infants
- Potential to attract capital funding to provide a new building
- Would reduce the Council's surplus places in primary schools
- Would lead to rationalisation of the primary school estate
- Financial saving to the Council
- Meets all the Critical Success Factors

It is recommended that a paper is considered by the Council's Cabinet, requesting approval to commence consultation on a proposal to merge Mount Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School, to create a new primary school in Brecon.

It is recommended that the consultation is based on implementation of the emerging preferred option on the following phased basis:

- **Phase 1:** Establishment of a new school operating from the current three sites
- **Phase 2:** Moving to a new building located on the site of the former Brecon High School