

Transforming Education in Powys

Options Appraisal

Ysgol Bro Cynllaith

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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 Llanfyllin / North Welshpool catchment.

The PBC considered by Cabinet identified a preferred way forward for the Llanfyllin / North Welshpool catchment, which is as follows:

- A new community campus for approximately 900 pupils aged 4 – 18 in Llanfyllin, replacing the current poor condition buildings of Ysgol Llanfyllin – to be built on the current Ysgol Llanfyllin site.
- To establish and build a new 360 place area school, to replace Carreghofa School and Llandysilio C. in W. School – this could also potentially include neighbouring schools in the Welshpool catchment as well. Site to be confirmed.
- To establish a new Welsh-medium school on the current Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant site, replacing both Ysgol Pennant and Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant Primary School. This may require capital funding to extend the school.
- To provide an extension to Llansantffraid C. in W. Primary School.
- Possible closure of Llangedwyn C. in W. School, Llanfechain C. in W. School and Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.

At the Cabinet meeting on the 29th September, Cabinet approved the submission of the PBC for the Llanfyllin / North Welshpool 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.

On the 18th March 2021, Cabinet considered a further paper in respect of Llangedwyn C. in W. School, Llanfechain C. in W. School and Llansantffraid C. in W. School, which considered options for the church schools in the area in light of the PBC for the catchment. This paper set out the Council's intention to take forward the Transformation Programme in the Llanfyllin/North Welshpool catchment area on a phased basis as follows:

- Phase 1 – the development and consideration of options for Llangedwyn CIW Primary School and Llanfechain CIW Primary School, along with plans for capital investment in Llansantffraid CIW Primary School.
- Phase 2 – the development and consideration of options for Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, Ysgol Gynradd Pennant and Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant.
- Phase 3 – the development and consideration of options for Llandysilio CiW Primary School, Carreghofa CP School, Arddleen CP School and Brynhafren CP School.

The paper considered by Cabinet on the 19th March addressed Phase 1 above.

A further options appraisal paper was subsequently developed for Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, Ysgol Gynradd Pennant and Ysgol Llanrhaeadr which considered a number of options relating to these three schools, in order to address Phase 2 as outlined above. This was considered by the Council’s Transforming Education Board in April 2021. All of the options identified as possible options in respect of these three schools include the closure of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, therefore the conclusion of this paper was to proceed to develop a separate options appraisal paper in respect of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.

The purpose of this paper is to identify a preferred option for the future of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.

Current pupil numbers¹ at the school are as follows:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	4	1	3	4	5	3	4	24

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 'Reconfigure and rationalise primary provision' 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 £3,127 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

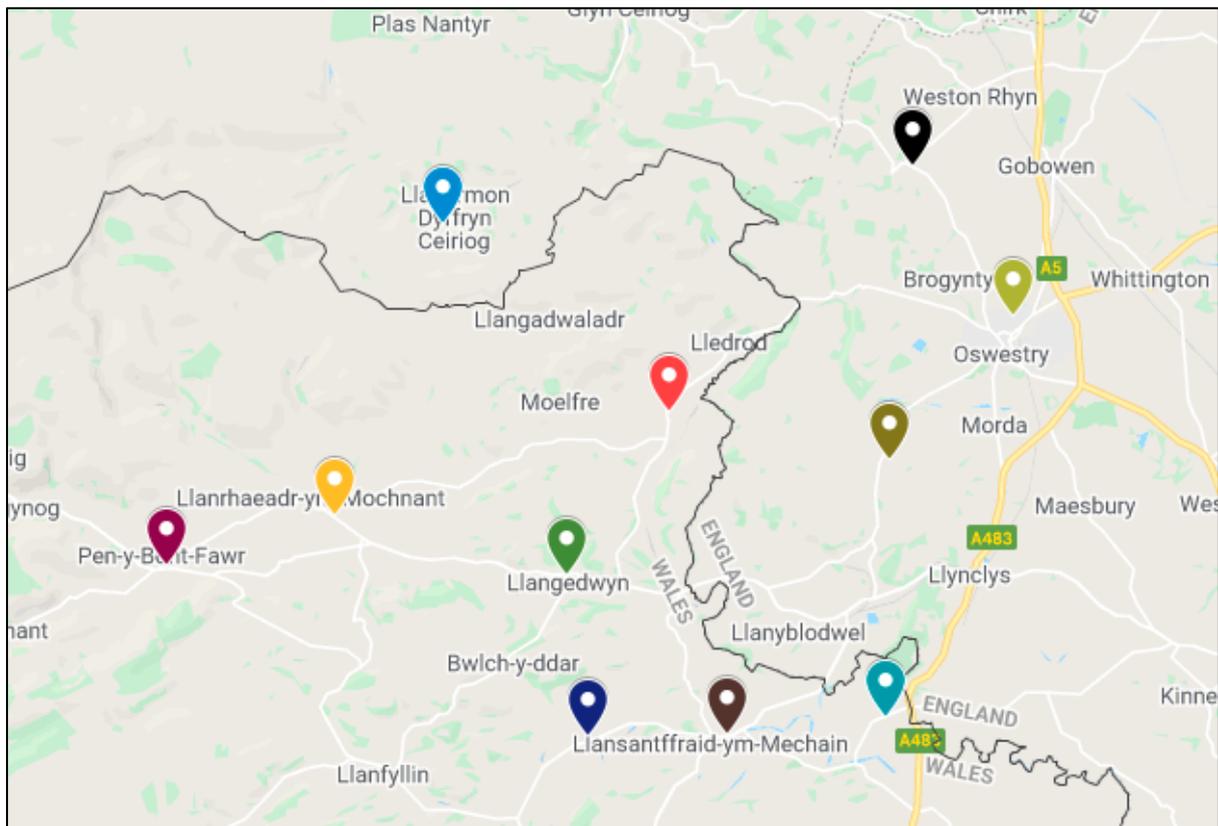
Although there have been some developments in terms of the schools' infrastructure over recent years, the Council's failure to implement a number of high-profile proposals in the last few years has left a legacy in Powys, and there has been a reluctance to embark on large scale reorganisation of education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

3. WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN YSGOL BRO CYNLLAITH

3.1 THE CURRENT SITUATION

Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is a community Primary school located in Llansilin in north Powys.

The following map shows the location of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith and nearby schools:



Key: Red – Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, Orange – Ysgol Llanrhaedr ym Mochant, Dark Red – Ysgol Pennant, Green – Llangedwyn C. in W. School, Dark Blue – Llanfechain C. in W. School, Brown – Llansantffraid C. in W. School, Light Blue – Carreghofa C.P. School, Blue – Ysgol Llanarmon DC, Light Brown – Trefonen C. of E. Primary School

The following primary schools are located within 10 miles of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith²:

School	Distance from Ysgol Bro Cynllaith by road (miles)
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	3.573 miles

² School Distances by Road - Council's Business Intelligence Team

Trefonen CofE Primary School (Shropshire)	4.255 miles
Woodside Primary School (Shropshire)	5.149 miles
Selattyn CofE Primary School (Shropshire)	5.304 miles
Ysgol Llanarmon DC (Wrexham)	6.136 miles
Llanrhaeadr Ym Mochnant C.P. School	6.233 miles
Llansantffraid C. in W. (A) School	6.411 miles
Llanfechain C. in W. School	6.939 miles
Ysgol Llanfyllin	8.341 miles
Ysgol Pennant	8.525 miles
Bryn Offa CofE Primary School (Shropshire)	8.553 miles
Carreghofa C.P. School	9.761 miles

The following is a summary of key data relating to Ysgol Bro Cynllaith:

	School Type	Language Category	Admission Number	Rural School? ³
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	Community Primary School building owned by Powys County Council	English-medium	7	Yes

Pupil Numbers

i) Current pupil numbers⁴

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	4	1	3	4	5	3	4	24

³ 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.

⁴ Finance NOR – 2020 Pupil Count Day (6th November 2020)

ii) Historical pupil numbers⁵

	Jan. 2014	Jan. 2015	Jan. 2016	Jan. 2017	Jan. 2018	Jan. 2019	Jan. 2020
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	42	38	38	32	29	30	26

iii) Projected pupil numbers (Birth rate)⁶

	Jan. 2021	Jan. 2022	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	26	27	28	27	25

iv) Projected pupil numbers (Finance projections)⁷

	Jan. 2022	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025	Jan. 2026
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	24	25	27	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 Capacity ⁸	Currently Filled	Surplus Capacity
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	48	24 (50%)	24 (50%)

ii) Building condition⁹

⁵ PLASC 2020

⁶ Powys Schools Service Projections based on PLASC & Birth Rates

⁷ Powys Finance Projections based on data provided by the school

⁸ Welsh Government School Places Return – August 2020

⁹ Premises Data Return to Welsh Government – 2020

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

	Condition	Suitability	Access to hall on site
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	B Good	B Good	Yes – access to community hall

Standards of Education

i) Estyn

	Ysgol Bro Cynllaith
Date of Inspection	June 2015
Standards	Good
Wellbeing	Good
Learning experiences	Adequate
Teaching	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Learning environment	Good
Leadership	Good
Improving quality	Adequate
Partnership working	Good
Resource management	Good
Follow Up	School to draw up action plan. Estyn to monitor progress.

ii) School Categorisation¹⁰

¹⁰ 2019. Categorisations were not carried out in 2020 due to Covid-19.

	Standards Group	Improvement Capacity	Support Capacity
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	N/A	B	Yellow

Financial information

i) Cost per pupil (Section 52 Budget Statement, 2020/2021)

	Budget share per school	Budget share per pupil	Notional SEN budget	Non ISB funds devolved to the school
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	£197,000	£7,295	£14,000	£3,000
Powys average (Primary)	N/A	£4,264	N/A	N/A

Home to school travel

i) Closest school

An analysis of pupil travel patterns has been carried out, based on the 26 pupils that were attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith in January 2020. The closest provider for all of these pupils is as follows:

	Pupils attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	88.5%
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	3.8%
Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant C.P. School	3.8%
Trefonen Primary School (Shropshire)	3.8%

Based on this information, Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is the closest school for 88.5% of current pupils.

If there were no school in Llansilin, the closest school for all of the current pupils would be as follows:

	Pupils' closest school should there be no school in Llansilin
Llangedwyn C. in W. School ¹¹	73.1%
Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant C.P. School	3.8%
Selattyn CofE Primary School (Shropshire)	19.2%
Trefonen Primary School (Shropshire)	3.8%

In March 2021, the Council's Cabinet agreed to carry out consultation on a proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, which could mean that there would be no school in Llangedwyn in the future. Should there be no school in Llansilin or Llangedwyn, the closest alternative school for pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would be as follows:

	Pupils' closest school should there be no school in Llansilin or Llangedwyn
Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant C.P. School	23.1%
Llansantffraid C. in W. School	3.8%
Selattyn C. of E. Primary School (Shropshire)	19.2%
Trefonen Primary School (Shropshire)	53.8%

ii) **Average travel distance**

The current average travel distance for all pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is 1.3 miles.

If there was no school in Llansilin, the average travel distance for all current pupils attending the school to attend their nearest alternative provision would be 4.6 miles.

If there was no school in Llansilin or Llangedwyn, the average travel distance for all current pupils attending the school to attend their nearest alternative provision would be 5.1 miles.

¹¹ In March 2021, the Council's Cabinet agreed to carry out consultation on a proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School from August 2023. Consultation is expected to commence in the autumn term 2021.

iii) Furthest travel distance

Of the pupils that currently attend Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, the furthest travel distance to the school for those pupils for whom Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is the closest provider is 3.4 miles.

If there was no school in Llansilin, the furthest distance to the nearest alternative provision for those pupils for whom Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is the closest provider would be 5.8 miles.

If there was no school in Llansilin or Llangedwyn, the furthest distance to the nearest alternative provision for those pupils for whom Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is the closest provider would be 5.8 miles.

Equalities Information

i) Free School Meals¹²

	Number of pupils who had a free school meal on Census day
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	7.7%

ii) Pupils in care¹³

	Number of pupils in care
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	3.8%

iii) SEN/ALN¹⁴

	School Action	School Action Plus	Statement
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	7.7%	0	3.8%

Early Years

No early years / pre-school provision on the school site.

3.2 WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN YSGOL BRO CYNLLAITH

The following is a summary of the main challenges facing Ysgol Bro Cynllaith:

¹² PLASC 2020

¹³ PLASC 2020

¹⁴ PLASC 2020

i) Low pupil numbers

Current pupil numbers¹⁵ at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith are as follows:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	4	1	3	4	5	3	4	24

The Welsh Government defines a ‘small school’ as a school with fewer than 91 pupils, and are expected to remain below 30 for the foreseeable future.

The school’s low pupil numbers have also resulted in a high number of surplus places at the school. Based on current pupil numbers, there is currently 50% surplus capacity at the school.

ii) High budget share per pupil

Based on the Council’s Section 52 Budget Statement for 2020-21, the school’s budget share per pupil during 2020-21 was £7,295. This is significantly higher than the Powys average of £4,264. Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is ranked the 3rd highest school in Powys by budget share per pupil.

iii) Issues with the building

A Welsh Government condition survey carried out in 2009 judged that the condition of the building was ‘B – Good’ and it’s suitability was ‘B – Good’. In 2020, the Council commissioned a new condition survey which concluded that the condition grading of the school was C+. The school is run from within a building thought to have been constructed circa 1960’s. The original building is constructed from cavity walls and laid in a stretcher bond formation, with one timber framed building used as an additional teaching area. The cabin known as ‘Block B’ is approaching the end of its life expectancy and is showing signs of deterioration.

iv) Leadership

Whilst there is permanent leadership in place in Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, the headteacher has a significant teaching commitment, which limits the time available to focus on leadership of the school.

v) Combined age classes

¹⁵ Finance NOR – 2020 Pupil Count Day (6th November 2020)

The small pupil numbers at the school mean that pupils are taught in whole key stage classes, with Key Stage 2 in one class and Foundation Phase in another class. Because pupil numbers in each year group are small, it is more difficult to ensure all pupils are appropriately challenged.

PART B – OPTIONS FOR YSGOL BRO CYNLLAITH

4. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

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

Option	Description
1	Status quo – continue as a standalone school
2	Federation with Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant School
3	Merge with Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant School to establish a new school on two sites
4	Close Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, but retain the site as part of Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant School
5	Close Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools
6	Close Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools in Powys

5. SWOT ANALYSIS OF EACH OPTION

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

Option 1: Status quo – continue as a standalone school

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Llansilin - There would be no additional transport costs - No requirement for a reorganisation process - No change for staff - No impact on pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would continue to be low - Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision - Would still need to maintain the Ysgol Bro Cynllaith building - Would not reduce surplus places - Would not lead to a financial saving - Would not address issues with the Ysgol Bro Cynllaith building

	- Would not address the high budget per pupil
Opportunities	Threats
- Opportunities for further collaboration with other neighbouring schools to provide increased opportunities for pupils	- Introduction of the new curriculum – would be difficult to provide educational opportunities which meet the requirements of the new curriculum

Option 2: Federation with Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant School

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Llansilin - There would be no additional transport costs - More opportunities could be provided to pupils and staff - Ysgol Bro Cynllaith pupils would continue to attend school in the same location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would continue to be low - Ysgol Bro Cynllaith pupils would still be taught separately - Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision - Would still be required to maintain the Ysgol Bro Cynllaith building - Would not reduce surplus places - Would not lead to a financial saving - Would not address issues with the Ysgol Bro Cynllaith school building - Would not address the high budget per pupil - May not be attractive to Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant School - The schools are different language categories
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunities for further collaboration between the two schools to provide increased opportunities for pupils - More opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of the new curriculum – would be difficult to provide educational opportunities which meet the requirements of the new curriculum on the Ysgol Bro Cynllaith site

Option 3: Merge with Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant School to establish a new school on two sites

Strengths	Weaknesses
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Would retain provision in Llansilin – More opportunities could be provided to the pupils – There would be no additional transport costs – Could provide a financial saving to the Council – Opportunity for all staff to secure positions in the new school – Pupils would continue to attend school in the same location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Small numbers would remain on the Llansilin site – Llansilin pupils would still be taught separately – Would not reduce surplus places – Would still need to maintain the Ysgol Bro Cynllaith building – Both schools would lose their identity – Would also impact on the staff of Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant School – May not be attractive to Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant School – The schools have different language categories
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Opportunities for further collaboration across the sites – More opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff – Opportunity for increased leadership time for the headteacher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensuring equal opportunities to all pupils due to age range of pupils in mixed age classes

Option 4: Close Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, but retain the site as part of Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant School

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Would retain provision in Llansilin – More opportunities could be provided to the pupils – There would be no additional transport costs – Could provide a financial saving to the Council – Minimal impact on staff at Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant School – Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant School would retain its identity – Pupils would continue to attend school at the same location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Small numbers would remain at the Llansilin – Llansilin pupils would still be taught separately – Would still need to maintain the Llansilin building – Would not address issues with the Ysgol Bro Cynllaith building – Would not reduce surplus places – Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would lose its identity – May not be attractive to Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant School – The schools have different language categories

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Opportunities for further collaboration across the sites – More opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff – Opportunity for increased leadership time for headteacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensuring equal opportunities to all pupils due to age range of pupils in mixed age classes

Option 5: Close Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Would address the issue of low pupil numbers – Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools – Revenue saving to the Council – Pupils would attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum – Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities – Pupils would attend schools with more suitable accommodation – Pupils would be taught in classes with peers of similar ages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Additional travel for those pupils for whom Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is currently the closest school – Pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would have to transfer to alternative provision – Loss of provision from Llansilin – Impact on the current staff of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith – Impact on the Llansilin community – Some pupils may be closer to schools in Shropshire should the Council also proceed with closure of Llangedwyn C. in W. School
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Opportunity for the Council to realise a capital receipt from sale of the school site 	

Option 6: Close Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools in Powys

Strengths	Weaknesses

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would address the issue of low pupil numbers - Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools - Revenue saving to the Council - Pupils would attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum - Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities - Pupils would attend schools with more suitable accommodation - Pupils would be taught in classes with peers of similar ages - Pupils would be able to continue to access provision in Powys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional travel for those pupils for whom Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is currently the closest school - Pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would have to transfer to alternative provision - Loss of provision from Llansilin - Impact on the current staff of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith - Impact on the Llansilin community
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity for the Council to realise a capital receipt from sale of the school site 	

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 – continue as a standalone school	There would be no impact on quality and standards – pupils would continue to attend the current provision at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.	There would be no impact on the community – provision would continue to be available in Llansilin.	There would be no impact on travel arrangements – pupils would continue to attend Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.
Option 2: Federation with Llanrhaeadr–ym–Mochnant school	The impact on quality and standards would be minimal. Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would continue to operate as a stand alone school, however the school would be federated with Llanrhaeadr–ym–Mochnant school, meaning that one joint governing body would be responsible for both schools. There would also be the potential for shared leadership across the two schools. Establishment of the federation could lead to opportunities to share staff / resources across the federation, which would have a positive impact on quality and standards.	The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Llansilin. However, one joint governing body would be responsible for both 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.	Pupils would continue to attend school on the current site of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.

<p>Option 3: Merge with Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant School to establish a new school on two sites</p>	<p>It is anticipated that this option would have a positive impact on quality and standards through the establishment of one larger school, with a larger number of pupils and a larger team of staff.</p> <p>Both schools currently offer a similar standard of education to their pupils.</p> <p>Whilst pupils would continue to attend separate sites, therefore they would not benefit from all being taught together, this option would provide additional opportunities for staff expertise and resources to be shared across both sites.</p> <p>Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is an English-medium school, whilst Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant is a dual-stream school. Both sites would therefore have a different language category, which whilst not having a negative impact on the quality and standards of education at either school, might complicate the use of resources and teaching staff between the two sites.</p>	<p>The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Llansilin.</p> <p>However, one new governing body would be responsible for both sites, 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.</p> <p>In addition, it is possible that most school activities would take place on the Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant site as more pupils attend this site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Llansilin site.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current site of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>
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<p>Option 4: Close Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, but retain the site as part of Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant School</p>	<p>Implementation of this option would result in closure of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, however provision would continue on the current site.</p> <p>Both schools currently offer a similar standard of education for their pupils. This proposal would create a larger school, with a larger number of pupils and a larger team of staff, which could have a positive impact on the opportunities available for pupils and staff.</p> <p>Whilst pupils would continue to attend separate sites, therefore would not benefit from all being taught together, this option would provide additional opportunities for staff expertise and resources to be shared across both sites.</p> <p>Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is an English-medium school, whilst Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant is a dual-stream school. Both sites would therefore have a different language category, which whilst not having a negative impact on the quality and standards of</p>	<p>Provision would continue to be available in Llansilin. However, the site would be managed by the current governing body of Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant, therefore there could be a perceived reduction in community involvement in management of the school. It is also possible that the school would lose its identity as a school focused in the Llansilin community.</p> <p>In addition, it is possible that most school activities would take place on the Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant site as more pupils attend this site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Llansilin site.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current site of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>
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	education at either school, might complicate the use of resources and teaching staff between the two sites.		
Option 5: Close Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools	<p>Implementation of this option would mean that pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would transfer to their nearest alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative Powys school would be Llangedwyn C. in W. school.</p> <p>Based on the latest categorisations carried out in 2019, both Ysgol Bro Cynllaith and Llangedwyn C. in W. school are categorised as Yellow schools. The Council's view is that quality and standards at Llangedwyn C. in W. school would be at least as good as the provision at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.</p> <p>The Council intends to carry out consultation on a proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, which could mean that there would be no school in Llangedwyn in the future. Should there be no school in Llansilin or Llangedwyn, the closest alternative school in Powys</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Llansilin as there would be no provision in Llansilin.</p> <p>Should the school close, the Council would need to determine the future use of the building. Should the Council declare the building to be surplus to requirements and seek to sell the building, this would mean that the school's facilities would no longer be available to the community in Llansilin.</p> <p>Early years provision is currently provided on the school site, closure of the school could also mean that early years provision would no longer be available to the community.</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.</p> <p>Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to 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>

	<p>would be Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant. Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant is in an amber support capacity based on the 2019 categorisations, whilst Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is in a yellow support capacity. It is therefore possible that there could be a negative impact on the quality and standards of education of pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.</p> <p>Should there be no school in Llansilin or Llangedwyn, it is possible that the closest school for a number of pupils that currently attend Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would be located outside Powys, in particular Selattyn C of E School, Trefonen and Gobowen, which are located in Shropshire. It is the Council's view that pupils maintain an education in Wales.</p>		
<p>Option 6: Close Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools in Powys</p>	<p>Implementation of this option would mean that pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would transfer to their nearest alternative schools in Powys. For the majority of pupils, the closest</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Llansilin as there would be no provision in Llansilin.</p> <p>Should the school close, the Council would need to determine</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.</p> <p>Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with</p>

	<p>alternative Powys school would be Llangedwyn C. in W. school.</p> <p>Based on the latest categorisations carried out in 2019, both Ysgol Bro Cynllaith and Llangedwyn C. in W. school are categorised as Yellow schools. The Council's view is that quality and standards at Llangedwyn C. in W. school would be at least as good as the provision at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.</p> <p>The Council intends to carry out consultation on a proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, which could mean that there would be no school in Llangedwyn in the future. Should there be no school in Llansilin or Llangedwyn, the closest alternative school in Powys would be Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant. Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant is in an amber support capacity based on the 2019 categorisations, whilst Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is in a yellow support capacity. It is therefore possible that there could be a negative impact on the quality and standards of education of pupils</p>	<p>the future use of the building. Should the Council declare the building to be surplus to requirements and seek to sell the building, this would mean that the school's facilities would no longer be available to the community in Llansilin.</p> <p>Early years provision is currently provided on the school site, closure of the school could also mean that early years provision would no longer be available to the community.</p>	<p>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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	<p>currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.</p> <p>Should there be no school in Llansilin or Llangedwyn, it is possible that the closest school for a number of pupils that currently attend Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would be located outside Powys, in particular Selattyn C of E School, Trefonen and Gobowen, which are located in Shropshire. It is the Council's view that pupils maintain an education in Wales.</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 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6

1 – Strategic fit and business needs	x	x	x	x	?	✓
2 – Value for money	x	x	x	x	✓	✓
3 – Potential achievability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5 – Potential affordability	x	x	x	x	✓	✓
Total ✓	1	1	1	1	4	4
Total x	3	3	3	3	0	0
Outcome	Discount	Discount	Discount	Discount	Possible	Preferred option

8. EMERGING PREFERRED OPTION

Based on the work carried out, the emerging preferred option for Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is:

Option 6: Close Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools in Powys

The reasons for this are:

- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers
- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools
- Revenue saving to the Council
- Pupils would attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum
- Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities
- Pupils would attend schools with more suitable accommodation
- Pupils would be taught in classes with peers of similar ages
- Pupils would be able to continue to access provision in Powys
- Meets all of the Critical Success Factors

Further consideration of this option will now be carried out, to include consideration of the factors outlined in the School Organisation Code.

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 close Ysgol Bro Cynllaith with pupils to attend nearest alternative schools in Powys, on the factors outlined in the Code.

In April 2021, the Council's Cabinet agreed to carry out consultation on a proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, which could mean that there would be no school in Llangedwyn in the future. Llangedwyn C. in W. School is located 3.5 miles from Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, therefore section 9 also considers the impact on pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith should there be no school in Llangedwyn or Llansilin.

9. QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN EDUCATION

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

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Llangedwyn C. in W. School.

The Council's view is that Llangedwyn C. in W. School would provide education for pupils which is of at least equivalent quality as that provided at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on standards and progress overall. Both Ysgol Bro Cynllaith and Llangedwyn C. in W. School were categorised as Yellow schools in the latest school categorisations carried out in 2019/20.

The Council's Cabinet has recently agreed to carry out consultation on a proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School. If this proposal was implemented it could mean that there would be no school in Llangedwyn in the future. Should there be no school in Llangedwyn or Llansilin, Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant would be the closest alternative Powys school for the majority of pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith. Since the last categorisation of schools in 2019, Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant has appointed a permanent headteacher and standards are now at least equivalent to that available at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.

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. Based on PLASC 2020 information, there are two pupils

eligible for Free School Meals, 1 Looked after Children and there are no pupils for whom English is an Additional Language at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith. There are 3 pupils with Additional Learning Needs, and therefore the number of pupils belonging to this group is relatively small and it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on the standards and progress of these pupils.

This is also the case in respect of the impact on the skills of all pupils, including literacy, numeracy and ICT. Pupils would transfer to larger schools, which would provide improved opportunities to share staff expertise and resources, and which have an improved ability to monitor pupil progress in these aspects.

9.2 Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

In the short term it is possible that there would be an impact on pupils' wellbeing, as they would need to transfer from Ysgol Bro Cynllaith to alternative schools. It is possible that pupils could choose to transfer to different schools, which could have a further impact on their wellbeing. However, the receiving school(s) would provide full support to the pupils during the transition period, to minimise any negative impact on them.

For some pupils, implementation of the preferred option could result in additional travel, which could have an impact on pupil well-being. However, alternative primary provision would be available at a number of other schools located within 10 miles of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith including schools located in Powys and schools located in Shropshire. It is not considered that the additional travel time required to alternative provision would be excessive.

In the longer term, the intention is that implementation of the preferred option would have a positive impact on pupil wellbeing and attitudes to learning as they would transfer to larger schools with larger cohorts of pupils, providing improved social and extra-curricular opportunities.

9.3 Teaching and learning experiences

9.3.1 Quality of teaching

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Llangedwyn C. in W. School. The Council has no concern about the quality of teaching at Llangedwyn C. in W. School, and is satisfied that the quality of teaching available to pupils at the school would be at least equivalent to that provided at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.

The Council's Cabinet has recently agreed to carry out consultation on a proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School. If this proposal was implemented it could mean that there would be no school in Llangedwyn in the future. Should there be no school in Llangedwyn or Llansilin, Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant would be the closest alternative Powys school for the majority of pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith. Since the last categorisation of schools in 2019, Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant has appointed a permanent headteacher and standards of teaching are now at least equivalent to that available at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.

9.3.2 The breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Llangedwyn C. in W. School.

However, the Council's Cabinet has recently agreed to carry out consultation on a proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School. If this proposal was implemented it could mean that there would be no school in Llangedwyn in the future. Should there be no school in Llangedwyn or Llansilin, Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant would be the closest alternative Powys school for the majority of pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.

The Council's view is that both of these schools would provide a curriculum which is at least equivalent to that currently provided at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith. Llangedwyn C. in W. School currently operates as part of a federation with Llanfechain C. in W. School, whilst Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant is a larger schools, therefore the expectation is that there would be an improvement in the breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum provided to pupils, and that the alternative schools would be better placed to develop provision which meets the requirements of the new curriculum.

Whilst the preferred option is that pupils would transfer to their closest alternative schools in Powys, some pupils would live closer to schools in Shropshire, therefore it is possible that they would choose to transfer to these schools. Should this be the case, they would not have access to the Welsh curriculum, and in particular would not be taught Welsh.

9.3.3 The provision of skills

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Llangedwyn C. in W. School.

However, the Council's Cabinet has recently agreed to carry out consultation on a proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School. If this proposal was implemented it could mean that there would be no school in Llangedwyn in the future. Should there be no school in Llangedwyn or Llansilin, Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant would be the closest alternative Powys school for the majority of pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.

The Council has no concerns about the provision of skills at either of these two schools, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on the provision of skills for pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.

9.4 Care, support and guidance

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

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Llangedwyn C. in W. School.

However, the Council's Cabinet has recently agreed to carry out consultation on a proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School. If this proposal was implemented it could mean that there would be no school in Llangedwyn in the future. Should there be no school in Llangedwyn or Llansilin, Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant would be the closest alternative Powys school for the majority of pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.

It is anticipated that the arrangements for tracking, monitoring and the provision of learning support, personal development and safeguarding at both of these schools would be equivalent to the arrangements currently in place at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.

9.5 Leadership and Management

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

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Llangedwyn C. in W. School.

However, the Council's Cabinet has recently agreed to carry out consultation on a proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School. If this proposal was implemented it could mean that there would be no school in Llangedwyn in

the future. Should there be no school in Llangedwyn or Llansilin, Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant would be the closest alternative Powys school for the majority of pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.

Ysgol Bro Cynllaith has a permanent headteacher. Leadership arrangements at Llangedwyn C. in W. School are via a shared temporary headteacher for Ffederasiwn Dwy Afon, which includes Llangedwyn C. in W. School and Llanfechain C. in W. School. Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant have recently appointed a permanent headteacher.

The Council's view is that the quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers, self evaluation processes and improvement planning would be at least as good at the alternative schools which pupils may transfer to. Whilst leadership arrangements at Llangedwyn C. in W. School are temporary whilst there are permanent leadership arrangements at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, the headteachers of these two schools are responsible for a larger number of pupils, which should mean that they have less classroom responsibility compared with Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, meaning that the headteachers would have more time available to focus on leadership and management.

9.5.2 Professional learning

It is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would impact on professional learning opportunities. Staff currently employed at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would be subject to a management of change process.

9.5.3 Use of Resources

Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is currently in a surplus position and is projected to go into a slight cumulative deficit position by the 31st March 2023 which continues into the following financial year.

Whilst there is therefore some concern about the use of resources within the school, there are concerns about the use of resources overall within the Powys school infrastructure. As indicated on page 5 above, one of the main challenges facing the Powys schools infrastructure is the high proportion of small schools in the County. Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is amongst the smallest schools in the County, and the budget share per pupil at the school is higher than the Powys average for primary schools. The school also currently currently has 50% surplus capacity. This is a very inefficient use of the Council's resources.

Closure of the school would reduce the number of schools in Powys, and would enable the Council to use its resources more effectively for the benefit of all Powys learners.

Should the preferred option be implemented, it is likely that pupils would transfer to larger schools, ensuring more effective use of the Council's resources. In addition, larger often have more resources available in terms of number of staff and educational resources, therefore pupils would benefit from the opportunity to access these resources.

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

Implementation of the emerging preferred option would impact on any vulnerable pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, including any pupils with SEN.

Based on January 2020 PLASC information, 2 pupils at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith were on School Action, and 0 pupil were on School Action Plus. There was 1 statemented pupil.

Whilst the emerging preferred option would impact on these pupils, as they would be required to move to alternative schools, there is no reason to believe that the schools to which they might transfer would not be able to meet their needs.

Should the option be implemented, the Council would work with Ysgol Bro Cynllaith and the receiving schools to ensure an effective transition for any vulnerable children, including children with SEN, and their families. This would include working with schools located in Shropshire and/or Wrexham for any pupils choosing to transfer to schools located in Shropshire and/or Wrexham.

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

Should the emerging preferred option be implemented, Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would close and pupils would transfer to alternative schools, therefore Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would no longer need to deliver the curriculum to any key stages. This would also lead to an increase in pupil numbers at the schools to which the pupils wish to transfer. However current pupil numbers at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith are small, and therefore the number of pupils likely to transfer to each year group is low, therefore the impact on alternative schools is not likely to have a significant impact on their ability to deliver the full curriculum at the foundation phase and in each key stage of education.

In some schools, it is possible that an increase in pupil numbers would improve their ability to deliver the curriculum, however depending on the class structure and current breakdown of pupils, it is likely that some schools would

need to make adjustments to their class structure in the short term to accommodate any additional pupils.

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 following table shows the number of spaces available and the building condition of Powys schools providing English-medium education located within 10 miles of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith school:

School	Capacity ¹⁶	Current pupil numbers ¹⁷	Available spaces	Available capacity	Building Condition	Building Suitability
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	47	22	25	53.2%	B	B
Llanrhaeadr Ym Mochnant C.P. School	108	73	35	32.4%	A	A
Llansanffraid C. in W. School	105	103	2	1.9%	B	C
Llanfechain C. in W. School	47	43	4	8.5%	C	B
Ysgol Llanfyllin (Primary)	160	141	19	11.8%	C	B/C
Carreghofa C.P. School	115	93	22	19.1%	B	B

This suggests that there are sufficient places available within 10 miles of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith to accommodate all pupils currently attending the school.

The Council's Cabinet has recently agreed to carry out consultation on a proposal to close both Llangedwyn C. in W. School and Llanfechain C. in W. School, and to provide an extension to Llansanffraid C. in W. School. Should the Council proceed with the implementation of this proposal, there would be

¹⁶ Welsh Government School Places Return – August 2020

¹⁷ Finance NOR – 2020 Pupil Count Day (6th November 2020)

no places available at Llangedwyn C. in W. School or Llanfechain C. in W. School, however there would be an increase in the places available at Llansantffraid C. in W. School. There would continue to be sufficient places available to accommodate all pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.

In addition the Powys schools listed above, Trefonen CofE School, Woodside Primary School, Selattyn CofE School, Brynoffa CofE Primary School are Shropshire schools located within 10 miles of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith. Whilst the Council is committed to continuing to provide access to Ysgol Bro Cynllaith pupils in Powys schools, it is possible that some pupils will choose to attend provision in Shropshire. The following table shows the number of places available at Shropshire schools providing English-medium education located within 10 miles of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith:

School	Capacity ¹⁸	Current pupil numbers ¹⁹	Available spaces	Available capacity	Building Condition	Building Suitability
Trefonen CofE Primary School (Shropshire)	157	147	10	6.3%	N/A	N/A
Woodside Primary School (Shropshire)	504	644	-140	-32.5%	N/A	N/A
Selattyn CofE Primary School (Shropshire)	91	93	-1	4.3%	N/A	N/A
Bryn Offa CofE Primary School (Shropshire)	140	138	2	-0.7%	N/A	N/A

This information suggests that the number of places available at Shropshire schools located within 10 miles of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith are limited.

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?

As indicated in section 10.1 above, there is sufficient English-medium capacity within 10 miles of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith to accommodate the school's current and projected pupil numbers.

¹⁸ Get information about schools via GOV.UK - <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/>. Accessed 7th July 2021

¹⁹ Get information about schools via GOV.UK - <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/>. Accessed 7th July 2021

Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is a community primary school. The school's neighbouring schools are a mix of Church in Wales and community provision, but consisting mostly of community provision, within 10 miles of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, It is considered that there is therefore sufficient community primary provision in the local area for pupils not wanting to attend a Church school.

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

As indicated in the table in section 10.1 above, there are alternative primary places available at several other schools located within 10 miles of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith. Should Ysgol Bro Cynllaith close, it is not considered that the length and nature of journeys for pupils to alternative provision would be excessive. This includes journeys for SEN pupils. One-way journeys to alternative provision would not be in excess of 45 minutes.

11 RESOURCING OF EDUCATION AND OTHER FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

Ysgol Bro Cynllaith currently has 50% surplus places. Implementation of the preferred option would result in closure of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, and would therefore lead a reduction in surplus places in the area, and in the Council's overall surplus places in primary schools.

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?

The review of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith does not form part of the local authority's 21st Century Schools Investment Programme.

However, the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys identifies a number of issues relating to the overall Powys schools' estate, including a high proportion of small schools, a high number of surplus places and issues with building condition. The Strategy includes a strategic objective to 'Reconfigure and rationalise primary provision', which aims to address these issues, to ensure better strategic management of the Powys school estate. The review of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is being carried out in order to meet this objective.

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 transport costs which are currently estimated to be an additional £60,000 per annum as detailed in 11.4. 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?

It is estimated that there will be additional transport costs of £60,000 per annum. This estimate is based on pupils' current location and assuming that pupils will go to their next nearest school.

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

It is not anticipated that capital funding would be required in order to implement the emerging preferred option. As indicated in the table in section 10.1 above, there are sufficient places at schools located within 10 miles of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith to accommodate all current and projected pupils.

Should the Council proceed with the implementation of the proposal to close both Llangedwyn C. in W. School and Llanfechain C. in W. School, an extension would be provided to Llansantffraid C. in W. School, the costs of which were included within that Cabinet paper.

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

Annual revenue savings to the Council are estimated at approximately £81,300. This overall figure comprises a potential saving on Schools' delegated funding of over £140,000, estimated catering savings of £1,300 offset by estimated additional transport costs of £60,000.

These are complex catchment-wide proposals that are particularly sensitive to the final destinations of the learners and the potential for the need for an additional class at one of the receiving schools. If this were the case, then this could reduce the estimated savings by around £60,000.

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

Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is currently in a surplus position and is projected to go into a slight cumulative deficit position by the 31st March 2023 which continues into the following financial year.

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

Any savings would be reinvested in the Council's corporate budget and any reinvestment in the schools' system would be agreed as part of the annual budget planning cycle.

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?

Any capital receipts received from sale of the Ysgol Bro Cynllaith site 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 Ysgol Bro Cynllaith. All pupils currently attending the school, including any from economically deprived backgrounds, would need to transfer to alternative schools. Free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with Council's home to school transport policy, however 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.

Based on PLASC figures from January 2020, 7.7% of pupils attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith were eligible for Free School Meals, therefore it is acknowledged that the proposal would impact on some pupils from economically deprived backgrounds. However, whilst there would be an impact on these pupils in the short term as they would need to transfer to alternative schools, it is likely that they would transfer to larger schools, which would be able to provide more opportunities to the pupils, therefore having a positive impact on their educational attainment.

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

Initial consideration of equalities information recorded through PLASC suggests that there are no significant equality issues in respect of pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith. Should the Council proceed with the statutory process in respect of the preferred option, equality impact assessments will be carried out and regularly reviewed throughout the process to ensure that any issues are identified and fully considered.

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.

Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is 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 Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, including establishing a multi-site school. These are outlined in section 4 of this document, as well as an assessment of each option which includes a summary of the weaknesses / threats associated with each.

Pupil numbers at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith are low, and the school has a high level of surplus places. Whilst pupil numbers are projected to increase slightly over the coming years, pupil numbers are projected to remain low, and the level of surplus places at the school would remain high. Establishing a multi-site school would not address this issue.

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 of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith with Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant is one of the options considered in section 4 of this document. An assessment of this option has been carried out, which includes a summary of the weaknesses / threats associated with this option.

Pupil numbers at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith are low, and the school has a high level of surplus places. Whilst pupil numbers are projected to increase slightly over the coming years, pupil numbers are projected to remain low, and the level of surplus places at the school would remain high. Clustering, collaboration or federation with other schools would not address this issue.

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 school building as a community or educational resource would not address the issues identified in respect of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.

Pupil numbers at the school are low, and are not projected to increase significantly over the coming years.

There is also a village hall in Llansilin, which is used by the community for a variety of activities.

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 there would no longer be provision at Llansilin. It is acknowledged that this would have a negative impact on the Llansilin community including loss of the primary provision from the village of Llansilin, and a possible loss of any community facilities associated with the school from the village.

Should the Council proceed with the preferred option, a draft community impact assessment will be carried out, with input from the school, which will be considered by Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the statutory process. Should the Council proceed with the statutory process, the draft community impact assessment would be published as part of the consultation documentation, 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. The nature of this support will depend on the needs of the parents / pupils, however this could include meetings with headteachers and class teachers to ease transition into the new schools for pupils.

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 6: Close Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools in Powys

The reasons for this are:

- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers
- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools
- Revenue saving to the Council
- Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities
- Pupils will be taught in classes with peers of similar ages
- Pupils would attend schools with better quality accommodation
- Minimal impact on any other schools
- Would enable pupils to continue to access provision in Powys
- Meets all of 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 close Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools in Powys.