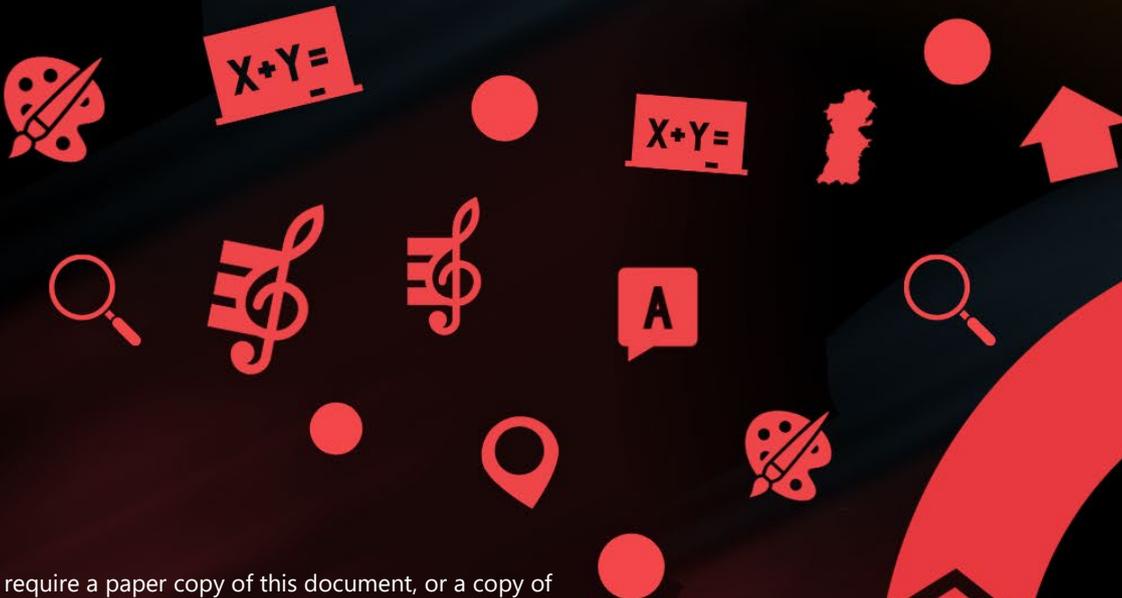




## Proposal to close Churchstoke C.P. School

Consultation Document



If you require a paper copy of this document, or a copy of the document in a different format, please contact the Transforming Education Team on 01597 826618, or e-mail [school.organisation@powys.gov.uk](mailto:school.organisation@powys.gov.uk).

# Consultation on the closure of Churchstoke C.P. School

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# Consultation on the closure of Churchstoke C.P. School

## OVERVIEW

### 1. The Proposal

Powys County Council is consulting on a proposal to close Churchstoke C.P. School. The proposal is as follows:

- To close Churchstoke C.P. School from the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools in Powys

### 2. How to respond to the consultation

You can respond to this consultation by completing the online questionnaire which is available on our website:

<https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/10567/Churchstoke-C.P.-School>

A paper copy of the questionnaire is also available at the back of this document. Alternatively, you can respond in writing using the contact details below.

All responses must be received by the **9<sup>th</sup> June 2021**.

### 3. Contact details

All responses should be sent to the following address:

Transforming Education Team  
Powys County Council  
County Hall  
Llandrindod Wells  
Powys  
LD1 5LG

E-mail: [school.consultation@powys.gov.uk](mailto:school.consultation@powys.gov.uk)

Phone: 01597 826618

### 4. What will happen next

Once the consultation period has ended, a consultation report will be produced which will outline the feedback received. The Council's Cabinet will consider the consultation report and will consider whether or not they wish to proceed with either of the options outlined in the consultation document. This is expected to happen in the autumn of 2021.

If the Cabinet decide to proceed with the proposal, a statutory notice would be published, and there would be a period of 28 days for people to submit objections. The Cabinet would then need to consider another report summarising any objections received and decide whether or not to proceed with implementation.



The following table provides general information about the school:

School name and location	School Category	Language Category	Admission Number	Rural School <sup>1</sup>
<b>Churchstoke C.P. School, Churchstoke, Montgomery, Powys, SY15 6AA</b>	Community Primary  School building owned by Powys County Council	English-medium	10	Yes

Current pupil numbers<sup>2</sup> at the school are as follows:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
<b>Churchstoke C.P. School</b>	8	4	5	3	10	2	4	36

In April 2020, the Council approved a new Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys, which sets out a number of aims and objectives to transform the Powys education system over the next few years, in order to provide the best possible opportunities to Powys learners now and in the future. One of the objectives included in the strategy is to 'improve learner entitlement and experience' and includes an objective to 'rationalise primary provision'.

The Council has carried out an options appraisal exercise to identify a preferred option for Churchstoke C.P. School.

The following steps have been undertaken:

- Options appraisal exercise
- Recommendation considered and agreed by the Transforming Education Programme Board

On the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021, the Council's Cabinet considered a report in respect of Churchstoke C.P. School, and agreed to commence consultation on the following:

*"To close Churchstoke C.P. School from the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools in Powys."*

<sup>1</sup> Annex F of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2018) (<https://gov.wales/sites/default/publications/2018-10/school-organisation-code-second-edition.pdf>)

<sup>2</sup> Finance NOR – 2020 Pupil Count Day (6<sup>th</sup> November 2020)

## **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 school 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 £7,877 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. THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

In the summer of 2019, Powys Education Services were inspected by Estyn. The report published by Estyn following the inspection outlined significant concerns regarding the Council's progress on school reorganisation, and includes a recommendation to 'Ensure that the organisation of provision for non-maintained, post-16, Welsh-medium education and secondary education meets the needs of children and young people of Powys.'

Following the publication of the inspection report, 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 order to achieve the vision and guiding principles, the strategy outlines a number of aims and objectives to transform the Powys education system over the next few years, in order to provide the best possible opportunities to Powys learners now and in the future. One of these aims is to 'improve learner entitlement and experience' and this aim includes an objective to 'rationalise primary provision'.

The current proposal in respect of Churchstoke C.P. School is in line with these priorities.

#### 4. WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN CHURCHSTOKE

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

##### i) **Low pupil numbers**

Current pupil numbers<sup>3</sup> at Churchstoke C.P. School are as follows:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
<b>Churchstoke C.P. School</b>	8	4	5	3	10	2	4	36

The Welsh Government defines a 'small school' as a school with less than 91 pupils. Pupil numbers at the school are significantly lower than this and the latest projected pupil information suggests that they are not expected to increase significantly 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 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 £7,475. This is significantly higher than the Powys average of £4,264. Churchstoke is ranked the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest school in Powys by budget share per pupil.<sup>4</sup>

##### iii) **Building condition and suitability**

The Welsh Government's survey of school buildings carried out in 2009 identified issues with the building condition and suitability of Churchstoke C.P. School. The building condition was assessed to be condition C – Poor, whilst its suitability was assessed to be condition B/C – Good/Poor.

##### iv) **Leadership**

Whilst there is permanent leadership in place in Churchstoke C.P. School, the headteacher has a significant teaching commitment, which limits the time available to focus on leadership of the school.

##### v) **Combined age classes**

<sup>3</sup> Finance NOR – 2020 Pupil Count Day (6<sup>th</sup> November 2020)

<sup>4</sup> Section 52 Budget Statement 2020/2021

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.

## 5. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

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 another school  This is not a viable option as there are no other C.P. schools in the vicinity which Churchstoke C.P. School could federate with, therefore this option is <b>DISCOUNTED</b>
3	Merge with Montgomery C. in W. School to establish a new school on two sites
4	Close Churchstoke C.P. School, but retain the site as part of Montgomery C. in W. School
5	Close Churchstoke C.P. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools in Powys
6	Close Churchstoke C.P. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools

SWOT analyses have been carried out for each of these options. In addition, the options have been assessed against a number of Critical Success Factors, and the likely impact of each option on quality and standards, the community and travelling arrangements was also considered. These can be found in Appendix B and Appendix C of this document.

## 6. PREFERRED OPTION

Based on the SWOT analyses, the assessment against the Critical Success Factors and the consideration of the likely impact of each option on quality and standards, the community and travelling arrangements, the preferred option is as follows:

### **Option 5: Close Churchstoke C.P. School, 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
- Pupil would 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

This is the basis for the current proposal on which the Council is consulting. The proposal is further explored in the following section. The reasons why other options considered have not been taken forward are summarised in Appendix D of this document.

## **PART B - THE PROPOSAL**

### **7. OVERVIEW**

Powys County Council is consulting on a proposal to close Churchstoke C.P. School. The proposal is as follows:

- To close Churchstoke C.P. School from the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools in Powys

### **8. REASONS FOR THE PROPOSAL**

The Council is proposing to close Churchstoke C.P. School for the following reasons:

- To address the issue of low pupil numbers
- To reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools
- To provide a revenue saving to the Council
- To enable pupils to attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities
- To enable pupils to be taught in classes with peers of similar ages
- To enable pupils to attend schools with better quality accommodation
- To enable pupils to continue to access provision in Powys

### **9. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES**

The advantages and disadvantages of the current proposal in respect of Churchstoke C.P. are summarised below:

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers</li><li>- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools</li><li>- Revenue saving to the Council</li><li>- Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities</li><li>- Pupil would be taught in classes with peers of similar ages</li><li>- Pupils would attend schools with better quality accommodation</li><li>- Minimal impact on any other schools</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Additional travel for those pupils for whom Churchstoke C.P. School is currently the closest school</li><li>- Pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School would have to transfer to alternative provision</li><li>- Loss of provision from Churchstoke</li><li>- Impact on the current staff of Churchstoke C.P. School</li><li>- Impact on the Churchstoke community</li><li>- Some pupils may transfer to alternative provision in England</li><li>- Possible loss of early years provision on the Churchstoke school site</li></ul>

- Opportunity for the Council to realise a capital receipt from sale of the school site	
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## 10. RISKS

As with all school reorganisation proposals, there are risks associated with the proposal to close Churchstoke C.P. School.

These are outlined below, along with suggested mitigating actions:

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Actions
Insufficient capacity at nearest Powys school to accommodate all pupils at Churchstoke C.P. School.	Medium	Medium	There is sufficient capacity at other Powys schools in the local area to accommodate all pupils, and capacity at schools in Shropshire which pupils may choose to transfer to should Churchstoke C.P. School close.
Parents of pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School choose for their children to attend provision in Shropshire instead of transferring to alternative schools in Powys.	Medium	Medium	Engagement with parents to take place throughout the process.
Period of uncertainty for Churchstoke C.P. School if a statutory process is carried out and implemented which might have a negative effect on standards at the school	Medium	Medium	The Council to provide advice and support to the school and governing body to ensure that standards and performance do not deteriorate during the transition period.
Uncertainty for staff whilst the process is ongoing	Medium	Medium	Engagement with staff to take place throughout the process and staff to be kept informed of developments.

## 11. POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION TIMESCALE

Should Cabinet decide to proceed with the proposals, potential implementation timescales are as follows:

Formal Consultation	21 <sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 9 <sup>th</sup> June 2021
Consultation Report to be published, and considered by Cabinet	September 2021

**If Cabinet decide to proceed:**

Publish Statutory Notice (28 days objection period)	October 2021
Objection Report to be published and considered by Cabinet	December 2021

**If Cabinet approves implementation:**

School closes	31 <sup>st</sup> August 2022
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## **PART C – LIKELY IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL**

### **12. IMPACT ON PUPILS**

#### **i) Pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School**

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the proposal, Churchstoke C.P. School would close and pupils would transfer to their nearest alternative school in Powys. It is acknowledged that this would have an impact on pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School, as they would need to transfer to an alternative school. Should the proposal be implemented, the Council would work closely with the current school and the alternative schools to ensure a smooth transition for pupils.

Whilst the Council's preferred option is for pupils to transfer to alternative provision in Powys, it is acknowledged that a number of pupils live closer to alternative provision in Shropshire, and therefore it is possible that they would transfer to this provision. This would mean that they would no longer access the Welsh curriculum, which could have an impact on their Welsh identity in the longer term.

As Churchstoke C.P. School would close and pupils would transfer to their nearest alternative provision in Powys, additional transport would be required for pupils for whom Churchstoke C.P. School is currently the closest school. Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's home to school transport policy, it is acknowledged that there could be an impact on pupils' ability to access after-school activities, and that there could be increased travelling times to school for some pupils.

#### **ii) Pupils attending other nearby primary schools in Powys**

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the proposal, Churchstoke C.P. School would close and pupils currently attending the school would transfer to their nearest alternative schools in Powys. For the majority of pupils, this would be Montgomery C. in W. School. Therefore, implementation of the proposal could impact on pupils at any alternative schools in Powys which pupils may choose to transfer to, as those schools would receive additional pupils.

However, the total number of pupils attending Churchstoke C.P. School is currently relatively small, therefore it is not anticipated that this would have a significant impact on pupils attending other nearby primary schools in Powys. Whilst the Council's preferred option is for pupils to transfer to alternative schools in Powys, it is also possible that some pupils would choose to transfer to schools in Shropshire, which would reduce the number of pupils transferring to Powys schools, and therefore the impact on pupils currently

attending these schools. The numbers admitted to each alternative school would be in line with the admissions number for each school.

**iii) Pupils attending other nearby primary schools in Shropshire**

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the proposal, Churchstoke C.P. School would close and pupils currently attending the school would transfer to alternative schools. Whilst the Council's preferred option is for pupils to transfer to alternative schools in Powys, it is also possible that some pupils would choose to transfer to schools in Shropshire.

Therefore, it is possible that implementation of the proposal could impact on pupils attending other nearby primary schools in Shropshire, as those schools could receive additional pupils. However, the total number of pupils attending Churchstoke C.P. School is currently relatively small, therefore it is not anticipated that this would have a significant impact on pupils attending other nearby primary schools in Shropshire. Pupils would need to apply for a place at schools in Shropshire using Shropshire County Council's Admissions Procedure, and the numbers admitted to each alternative school would be in line with the admissions number for each school.

**13. IMPACT ON STAFF**

Should the proposal be implemented, Churchstoke C.P. school would close. A staff redundancy process would be necessary for staff currently employed at Churchstoke C.P. School. This would be conducted in line with the relevant HR policies for teaching and support staff. All cleaning and catering staff that are currently employed centrally by the Council would be supported by the relevant HR policies for Council employees

**14. IMPACT ON NURSERY / EARLY YEARS PROVISION**

In September 2017, the Council changed the age of admission to primary schools in Powys from "at the start of the term in which they attain their fourth birthday" to "at the start of the school year following his/her fourth birthday". Following this change, there are no nursery aged pupils attending Churchstoke C.P. School.

However, ten hours of funded early years education provision is available on the school site at Churchstoke Little Explorers. Information about this provision is provided below<sup>5</sup>:

**Churchstoke Little Explorers**

Churchstoke Little Explorers is a non-maintained community run setting which operates from the site of Churchstoke C.P. School. They also provide the Childcare Offer for Wales. Standards of nursery education and

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<sup>5</sup> All information correct as of Summer Term 2021/22

sufficiency of accommodation at this provider are good. The setting is bright, inviting and practitioners are friendly and approachable.

There are 16 ten hours early years education places available at this provider which are currently sufficient to meet the need for early years education in the area.

Whilst implementation of the proposal to close the school would not directly affect the early years provision which is available on site, it is possible that this could impact on the provision's viability in the longer term.

Should there be no early years provision in Churchstoke, there are a number of other registered early years providers in the area, including providers in Powys and providers in Shropshire. Information about these providers is provided below:

### **Montgomery Pre-School**

Montgomery Pre-School is a non-maintained school run setting which operates from the community hall in Montgomery. They also provide the Childcare Offer for Wales. Standards of nursery education and sufficiency of accommodation at this provider are good. The setting is welcoming and has an inclusive family ethos.

There are 16 ten hours early years education places available at this provider which are currently sufficient to meet the need for early years education in the area.

### **Busy Bees Nursery (Chirbury CofE Primary School)**

Busy Bees Nursery is a maintained school run setting which operates from the site of Chirbury CofE Primary School in Shropshire. Standards of nursery education and sufficiency of accommodation at this provider are good. Outdoor learning opportunities make the most of the school's rural location.

The admission number for this setting is 12.

### **Long Mountain CofE Primary School**

Long Mountain CofE Primary School is a maintained school run setting which operates from the site of Long Mountain CofE Primary School in Shropshire. Standards of nursery education and sufficiency of accommodation at this provider are good. The setting provides a nurturing and safe environment for children.

The admission number for this setting is 11.

It is acknowledged that should there be no early years provision in Churchstoke in the future, parents currently accessing provision in Churchstoke may need to travel

further to access alternative provision. Should this be the case, nursery / early years provision would be available at the alternative providers listed above.

## **15. IMPACT ON GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

Implementation of the proposal would result in the closure of Churchstoke C.P. School and the Governing Body of Churchstoke C.P. School would be dissolved.

## **16. IMPACT ON QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN EDUCATION**

### **i) Standards, wellbeing and attitudes to learning**

#### **Standards and progress overall, of specific groups and in skills**

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Churchstoke C.P. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools in Powys. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school in Powys would be Montgomery C. in W. School. Some pupils may also choose to attend schools in Shropshire, in particular Chirbury CofE School.

The Council's view is that Montgomery C. in W. School would provide education for pupils which is of at least equivalent quality as that provided at Churchstoke C.P. School, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on standards and progress overall.

Whilst the Council does not have direct experience of the provision at Chirbury CofE School, the school's last Ofsted inspection which was carried out in December 2019 judged the school's overall effectiveness and quality of education to be Good, therefore it is likely that the provision is of at least equivalent quality as that provided at Churchstoke C.P. School.

This also applies 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, approximately 10% of pupils at Churchstoke C.P. School are eligible for Free School Meals, and there are a small number of pupils with Additional Learning Needs. However, 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.

## **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 Churchstoke C.P. School 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 Churchstoke C.P. School, 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.

## **ii) Teaching and learning experiences**

### **Quality of teaching**

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Churchstoke C.P. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school in Powys would be Montgomery C. in W. School. Some pupils may also choose to attend schools in Shropshire, in particular Chirbury CofE School.

The Council has no concerns about the quality of teaching at Montgomery C. in W. School, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on the quality of teaching experienced by pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School.

Whilst the Council does not have direct experience of the provision at Chirbury CofE School, the school's last Ofsted inspection which was carried out in December 2019 judged the school's overall effectiveness and quality of education to be Good, therefore it is likely that the quality of teaching is of at least equivalent quality as that provided at Churchstoke C.P. School.

### **The breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum**

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Churchstoke C.P. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools in Powys. For the majority of pupils, the closest

alternative school in Powys would be Montgomery C. in W. School. Some pupils may also choose to attend schools in Shropshire, in particular Chirbury CofE School.

The Council's view is that Montgomery C. in W. School would provide a curriculum which is at least equivalent to that currently provided at Churchstoke C.P. School. Pupils would transfer to a larger school, therefore the expectation would be that there would be an improvement in the breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum provided to pupils, and that the alternative school would be better placed to develop provision which meets the requirements of the new curriculum.

Montgomery C. in W. School is a Church in Wales school, whilst Churchstoke C.P. School is a community primary school. This would impact on some aspects of the curriculum should pupils transfer to Montgomery C. in W. School. However, alternative C.P. provision is available within 10 miles of Churchstoke, ensuring that non-Church in Wales provision would continue to be available to those pupils who wished to access it.

Should pupils transfer to Chirbury CofE School, they would access education in England, therefore would receive a different curriculum to that provided in Wales. One significant difference is that Welsh would no longer be a part of their curriculum. Whilst the Council is committed to providing continued access to education in Wales to pupils living in Churchstoke, it is acknowledged that some pupils may choose to transfer to alternative schools, which would impact on the curriculum they receive.

### **The provision of skills**

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Churchstoke C.P. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools in Powys. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school in Powys would be Montgomery C. in W. School. Some pupils may also choose to attend schools in Shropshire, in particular Chirbury CofE School.

The Council has no concerns about the provision of skills at Montgomery C. in W. School, 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 Churchstoke C.P. School.

Whilst the Council does not have direct experience of the provision at Chirbury CofE School, the school's last Ofsted inspection which was carried out in December 2019 judged the school's overall effectiveness and quality of education to be Good, therefore it is likely that the provision of skills would be of at least equivalent quality as that provided at Churchstoke C.P. School

### **iii) Care support and guidance**

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

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Churchstoke C.P. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school in Powys would be Montgomery C. in W. School. Some pupils may also choose to attend schools in Shropshire, in particular Chirbury CofE School.

In general, it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on tracking, monitoring and the provision of learning support, personal development and safeguarding for pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School. In respect of pupils transferring to Montgomery C. in W. School, it is anticipated that the arrangements would be at least equivalent to the current arrangements at Churchstoke.

For pupils choosing to transfer to schools in Shropshire, it is acknowledged that there could be a greater impact in the short term as it is likely that there would be different systems in place for tracking and monitoring pupils, and the provision of learning support, personal development and safeguarding. However, once the pupils have transferred, there is no reason that the arrangements would not be at least equivalent to the arrangements at Churchstoke. Whilst the Council does not have direct experience of the provision at Chirbury CofE School, the school's last Ofsted inspection which was carried out in December 2019 judged the schools overall effectiveness and personal development to be Good, therefore it is likely that the arrangements would be at least equivalent to the current arrangements at Churchstoke C.P. School.

#### **iv) Leadership and management**

##### **Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers, self-evaluation processes and improvement planning**

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Churchstoke C.P. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools in Powys. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school in Powys would be Montgomery C. in W. School. Some pupils may also choose to attend schools in Shropshire, in particular Chirbury CofE School.

Both Churchstoke C.P. School and Montgomery C. in W. School have permanent leadership arrangements, and both were categorised in the Yellow support category with an improvement capacity of B in the latest school categorisations carried out in 2019, therefore the Council's view is that leadership and management at the alternative school would be at least as good as the current arrangements at Churchstoke. Montgomery C. in W. School is larger than Churchstoke C.P. School, therefore it is expected that the headteacher would have more time available to focus on leadership and management.

Whilst the Council does not have direct experience of the provision at Chirbury CofE School, the school's last Ofsted inspection which was carried out in December 2019 judged the school's overall effectiveness and leadership and management to be Good, therefore it is likely that these aspects would be at least equivalent to the current arrangements at Churchstoke C.P. School.

### **Professional learning**

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

### **Use of resources**

Churchstoke C.P. School is not currently forecasting a cumulative deficit budget.

Whilst there are no significant concerns about the use of resources within the school, there are concerns about use of resources overall within the Powys schools infrastructure. As indicated earlier in this document, one of the main challenges facing the Powys schools infrastructure is the high proportion of small schools in the county. Churchstoke C.P. School is among 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 has 50% surplus capacity, which is 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, pupils would transfer to larger schools, ensuring more effective use of the Council's resources. In addition, larger schools 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.

It is also the case that pupil numbers feed into the distribution formula used by Welsh Government to distribute funding to the Council via the Revenue Support Grant (RSG). Should Churchstoke C.P. School close, there is potential for pupils to opt to go to schools outside of Powys, which may in turn result in a reduction in the RSG to the Council from Welsh Government.

#### **v) Impact on vulnerable groups, including children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

Implementation of the emerging preferred option would result in the closure

of Churchstoke C.P. School. It is acknowledged that there would be an impact on any pupils belonging to vulnerable groups currently attending the school, including any pupils with SEN, and that in the short term, these pupils would need to transfer to alternative schools.

Based on January 2020 PLASC information, 16% of pupils at Churchstoke C.P. School were on School Action, and 4% of pupils were on School Action Plus. There were no statemented pupils.

Whilst the 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 Churchstoke C.P. School and the receiving school(s) 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 for any pupils choosing to transfer to schools located in Shropshire.

**vi) Impact on the schools' ability to deliver the full curriculum in the foundation stage and each key stage**

Should the proposal be implemented, Churchstoke C.P. School would close and pupils would transfer to alternative schools, therefore Churchstoke C.P. School would no longer need to deliver the curriculum at any key stage.

Should Churchstoke C.P. School close, pupils would transfer to alternative schools. This would lead to an increase in pupil numbers at the schools to which the pupils transfer. However, current pupil numbers at Churchstoke C.P. School are small, and therefore the number of pupils likely to transfer to each year group at an alternative school would be 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's likely that some schools would need to make adjustments to their class structure in the short term to accommodate any additional pupils.

**vii) Impact on other schools**

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Churchstoke C.P. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools in Powys. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school in Powys would be Montgomery C. in W. School. Some

pupils may also choose to attend schools in Shropshire, in particular Chirbury CofE School.

Whilst it is possible that this could have some impact on the schools pupils may wish to transfer to, particularly in the short term when they receive additional pupils, the total number of pupils at Churchstoke C.P. School is relatively small, therefore it is not anticipated that this would have a negative impact on the quality and standards in education (to include standards; wellbeing and attitudes to learning; teaching and learning experiences; care support and guidance and leadership and management) at each of the schools pupils may transfer to. In some cases, it is possible that implementation of the proposal would have a positive impact on quality and standards in education at the alternative schools, as it would lead to an increase in pupil numbers and the opportunity to provide enhanced opportunities to pupils.

## 17. NEED FOR PLACES AND IMPACT ON AVAILABILITY OF PLACES AND ACCESSIBILITY OF SCHOOLS

- i) **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 Churchstoke C.P. School:

School	Capacity <sup>6</sup>	Current pupil numbers <sup>7</sup>	Available spaces	Available capacity	Building Condition	Building Suitability
Montgomery C. in W. School	119	90	29	24.4%	C	B/C
Forden C. in W. School	102	68	34	33.3%	B/C	B
Abermule C.P. School	92	64	28	30.4%	B	C
Leighton C.P. School	91	71	20	22.0%	B/C	B
Berriew C.P. School	106	85	21	19.8%	B	B

<sup>6</sup> Welsh Government School Places Return – August 2020

<sup>7</sup> Finance NOR – 2020 Pupil Count Day (6<sup>th</sup> November 2020)

St. Michael's C. in W. VA School	140	91	49	35.0%	B	B/C
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This suggests that there is sufficient space in Powys schools located within 10 miles of Churchstoke C.P. School to accommodate all pupils currently attending the school. The building condition of all the schools in the above table has been assessed as either condition B or condition C. The condition of Churchstoke C.P. School has been assessed as condition C, therefore it is likely that the quality of accommodation at the alternative schools would be at least equivalent to the quality of accommodation at Churchstoke C.P. School.

In addition to the Powys schools listed above, Chirbury C of E Primary School and Bishops Castle Primary School are located within 10 miles of Churchstoke C.P. School. Whilst the Council is committed to continuing to provide access to Churchstoke pupils in Powys schools, it is possible that some pupils would choose to attend provision in Shropshire. The following table shows the number of spaces available of Shropshire schools providing English-medium education located within 10 miles of Churchstoke C.P. School:

School	Capacity <sup>8</sup>	Current pupil numbers <sup>9</sup>	Available spaces	Available capacity	Building Condition	Building Suitability
Chirbury C of E Primary School	84	66	18	21.4%	N/A	N/A
Bishops Castle Primary School	175	135	40	22.9%	N/A	N/A
Long Mountain C of E Primary School	100	98	2	2%	N/A	N/A

This suggests that there are some spaces available at Chirbury C of E Primary School and Bishops Castle Primary School.

**ii) Is the alternative provision sufficient to meet existing and projected demand for schools of the same language category and designated religious character?**

<sup>8</sup> Get information about schools via GOV.UK - <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/>

<sup>9</sup> Information received from Shropshire County Council – April 2021

As indicated in the table in section (i) above, there is sufficient English-medium capacity within 10 miles of Churchstoke C.P. School to accommodate the school's current and projected pupil numbers.

Churchstoke C.P. School is a community primary school. Whilst the school's neighbouring schools are mainly Church in Wales schools, alternative community primary provision is available within 10 miles of Churchstoke C.P. School at Abermule C.P. School, Forden C.P. School and Berriew C.P. School, as well as at Bishops Castle Primary School in Shropshire, therefore community primary provision is available in the local area for any pupils not wanting to attend a Church in Wales school.

**iii) 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 (i) above, there are alternative primary places available at several other schools located within 10 miles of Churchstoke C.P. school. Should Churchstoke C.P. School 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.

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

Pupil numbers in Churchstoke C.P. School are low, however it is acknowledged that some increase has been seen in pupil numbers recently, as a result of new housing developments in the village. The Council's latest projected pupil figures for the school suggest that pupil numbers at the school are not expected to increase significantly over the coming years, however it is possible that further housing developments planned for the village will lead to an increase in the demand for places in the area.

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

Implementation of the proposal would mean that pupil would attend their nearest alternative school in Powys. The latest Welsh Government School Premises Return 2020, indicates that these schools are either compliant, or partially compliant with the Equality Act 2010 with all of the schools having statutory Accessibility Plans in place.

## **18. RESOURCING OF EDUCATION AND OTHER FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**i) What effect will the proposals have on surplus places in the area?**

Churchstoke C.P. School currently has 50% surplus places. Implementation of the preferred option would result in closure of Churchstoke C.P. School,

and would therefore lead a reduction in surplus places in the area, and in the Council's overall surplus places in primary schools.

**ii) Do the proposals form part of the local authority's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Investment Programme and contribute to the delivery of sustainable schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and to the better strategic management of the school estate?**

The review of Churchstoke C.P. School does not form part of the local authority's 21<sup>st</sup> 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 Churchstoke C.P. School is being carried out in order to meet this objective.

**iii) 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 £19,000 per annum as detailed in (iv) below. 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.

**iv) Will additional transport costs be incurred as a result of the proposal?**

It is estimated there will be additional transport costs of £19,000 per annum, this is based on pupil's current location and assuming the pupils will go to the next nearest school in Powys.

**v) 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 17(i) above, there are sufficient places at schools located within 10 miles of Churchstoke C.P. School to accommodate all current and projected pupils.

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

It is estimated that this would result in annual revenue savings to the Council of around £50,000. This overall figure comprises a potential saving on

Schools' delegated funding of over £61,000, estimated additional transport costs of £19,000 and savings on catering costs of around £7,500.

**vii) Without the proposals, would the schools affected face budget deficits?**

Churchstoke C.P. School is not currently forecasting a cumulative deficit budget.

**viii) 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.

**ix) 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 Churchstoke C.P. School site would be reinvested into the Schools Transformation programme in order to improve the educational provision across Powys.

## **19. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

**i) Impact 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 Churchstoke C.P. School. 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, approximately 10% of pupils attending Churchstoke C.P. School 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, would be able to provide more opportunities to the pupils, therefore having an overall positive impact.

**ii) Land and Buildings**

**Comparison of the quality of accommodation at the school from which pupils would be transferred**

Information about the quality of accommodation at Churchstoke C.P. School and other schools to which pupils may transfer is provided in Appendix A.

**Information on any building works necessary to ensure that transferred children can be accommodated**

No building works are necessary as there is sufficient capacity at alternative provision in Powys for existing Churchstoke C.P. School pupils.

**Details of any potential transfer or disposal of land or buildings that may need to occur as a result of the proposals**

Any sites which are surplus following any school closure would be disposed of in accordance with the Council's asset management policy.

**Is the school / schools involved 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?**

Churchstoke C.P. School is not subject to any trust or charitable interest which might be affected by the proposal.

**iii) Walking routes to school**

Should the proposal be implemented, walking routes which are currently established for Churchstoke C.P. School would no longer be required, as pupils would attend alternative schools.

For those pupils for whom Churchstoke C.P. School is currently the closest school, additional travel would be required to access alternative provision. For these pupils, it is unlikely that walking or cycling to the alternative school would be possible.

**iv) School Admissions**

Should the proposal be implemented, admissions to any alternative school in Powys would continue to be administered by the Council in accordance with the Council's Admissions Policy, which is available on-line at:  
<https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/1158/Applying-for-a-School-Place>

For pupils wishing to transfer to schools in Shropshire, this would be administered by Shropshire County Council in accordance with their

Admissions Policy which is available at: [www.shropshire.gov.uk/school-admissions/](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/school-admissions/).

**v) Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)**

The proposal is to close an English-medium primary school. The proposal is not linked to the targets in the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

The proposal would not expand or reduce the availability of Welsh language provision.

**19. SPECIFIC FACTORS IN THE CONSIDERATION OF SCHOOL CLOSURES**

**i) 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 Churchstoke C.P. School, these are outlined in Appendix C 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 Churchstoke C.P. School are low, and whilst some increase in pupil numbers has been seen recently following housing developments in the village, the school is projected to remain a small school. Establishing a multi-site school would not address this issue.

**ii) 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 Churchstoke C.P. School is not a viable option as there are no other C.P. schools in the vicinity which Churchstoke C.P. School could federate with, therefore this is not a possible option.

**iii) 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 building as a community or educational resource would not address the issues identified in respect of Churchstoke C.P. School.

Pupil numbers at Churchstoke C.P. School are low, and whilst some increase in pupil numbers has been seen recently following housing developments in the village, the school is projected to remain a small school. Establishing a multi-site school would not address this issue.

**iv) 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 in Churchstoke. It is acknowledged that this would have a negative impact on the Churchstoke community, including the loss of any community facilities associated with the school from the village. However, there is a Community Hall in Churchstoke, which would continue to be available should there be no school in the village.

An initial community impact assessment has been carried out, with input from the school to identify the potential impact on the community. This will be updated throughout the process to reflect any feedback received, and will be considered by the Council's Cabinet as part of the decision making process.

**v) How parents' and pupils' engagement with any alternative schools and any facilities they 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 new headteacher and receiving schools to ease transition into their new school.

## **21. EQUALITY AND COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Draft impact assessments have been carried out in respect of the proposal. These will be updated following the consultation period to reflect any additional issues raised. The assessments are available on the Council's website:

<https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/10567/Churchstoke-C.P.-School>

A summary of the assessments are provided below:

**i) Equalities impact assessment**

Should the proposal be implemented, Churchstoke C.P. School would close, and pupils transfer to their nearest alternative school in Powys.

This would have a significant impact on pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School, including any pupils belonging to the protected characteristic groups that attend that school, as some additional travel would be required in order to attend their nearest alternative school.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposals would impact on pupils belonging to the protected characteristic groups that attend the school, there is no reason to believe that the nearest alternative schools would be unable

to meet the needs of pupils belonging to the protected characteristic groups that would be affected, including pupils with Additional Learning Needs and pupils eligible for Free School Meals.

**ii) Impact on the community**

It is clear that a wide range of extra curricular activities are available to pupils at Churchstoke. Should there be no school in Churchstoke, pupils would transfer to alternative schools. These would be larger schools, and the expectation is that at least a similar range of activities would be available for pupils. However, it is acknowledged that pupils would need to travel to the alternative schools, which could impact on their ability to access activities, particularly where these take place after school.

Should the proposal be implemented, this would mean that there would be no school provision in the village of Churchstoke. The information provided above indicates that there is currently extensive community use of the Churchstoke school building, and extensive links between the school and the local community. There is a village hall located in Churchstoke, therefore should the school no longer be available, community events and activities could take place at the hall.

It is also acknowledged that implementation of the proposal would result in additional travel to school for pupils for whom Churchstoke is currently their closest school. Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the home to school transport policy which is in operation at that time, it is acknowledged that there could be an impact on some pupils' ability to access after school activities, and could impact on the ability of parents to take part in school events, meetings etc.

## **PART D – CONSULTATION DETAILS**

### **Who will we consult with?**

The Council will consult with a range of stakeholders as required by the School Organisation Code, which include the following:

- Parents, carers and guardians at Churchstoke C.P. School and other schools which may be affected by the proposals
- Governors at Churchstoke C.P. School and other schools which may be affected by the proposals
- Pupils at Churchstoke C.P. School and other schools which may be affected by the proposals
- Staff at Churchstoke C.P. School and other schools which may be affected by the proposals
- The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authorities
- The Welsh Minister for Education
- Shropshire County Council
- Local Powys Councillors
- Town and Community Councils in the local area
- The prospective candidates for Member of the Senedd for Montgomeryshire and prospective candidates for Members of the Senedd for the Mid and West Wales region
- The MP for Montgomeryshire
- Estyn
- Teaching and staff trade unions
- ERW
- The Police & Crime Commissioner for Dyfed Powys
- Nursery providers in the local area
- Mudiad Meithrin
- The Powys Children and Young People's Partnership

Consultation with pupils will take place in accordance with the Welsh children and young people's national participation standards<sup>10</sup>.

### **The consultation period**

The consultation period will commence on the 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and end on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

### **The statutory process**

Consultation on this proposal will follow the guidelines set out by the Welsh Government in the revised School Organisation Code which became operational on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018. The process is summarised below:

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<sup>10</sup> <https://gov.wales/children-and-young-peoples-national-participation-standards>

## **i) Consultation**

Consultation will start on the 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and will end on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021. Feedback from the consultation will be collated and summarised, and a consultation report will be produced and shared with stakeholders.

It is important to note that responses made to the consultation will not be counted as objections to the proposal, and that only objections can be registered following publication of a statutory notice.

The Council's Cabinet will consider the consultation report and the feedback received during the consultation period, and will decide whether to proceed with the proposal, to make changes to the proposal, or to not proceed with the proposal. If the Cabinet decides not to proceed, that will be the end of this proposal.

It is anticipated that the Consultation Report will be considered by the Cabinet in September 2021.

## **ii) Statutory notice**

If the Cabinet decides to proceed with the proposal, statutory notices would be published after the Cabinet meeting. There would then be a period of 28 days for people to submit written objections.

If there were objections, the Council would publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and the Council's response to them before the end of 7 days beginning with the day of the local authority's determination. Only written objections submitted during the statutory notice period will be considered as objections and included in this report. Comments submitted as part of the consultation period would not be counted as objections. Should stakeholders wish their consultation responses to be considered as objections, they would need to be re-submitted in writing during the statutory notice period.

A further report would be presented to the Council's Cabinet, which they would consider alongside the objection report, in order to decide whether or not to approve the proposal.

It is anticipated that a final decision would be made by December 2021.

## **iii) Implementation**

If the Council's Cabinet were to approve the proposal, it would be implemented in accordance with the date given in the statutory notice or any subsequently modified date.

## How to respond to the consultation

A consultation response form is attached to this document. An online version is also available on the Council's website:

<https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/10567/Churchstoke-C.P.-School>

Alternatively, you can respond in writing.

Completed forms and other written responses should be sent to the following address:

*Transforming Education Team, Powys County Council, County Hall, Llandrindod Wells, LD1 5LG*

*E-mail: [school.consultation@powys.gov.uk](mailto:school.consultation@powys.gov.uk)*

All correspondence should be received by the **9<sup>th</sup> June 2021**.

If you have any further questions about this proposal, you can contact the Transforming Education Team using the above contact details, or by phoning (01597) 826618.

## APPENDIX A - KEY DATA

Key data about the affected schools is provided below:

### 1. Churchstoke C.P. School

#### General information

	School Type	Language Category	Admission Number	Rural School? <sup>11</sup>
<b>Churchstoke C.P. School</b>	Community Primary  School building owned by Powys County Council	English-medium	10	Yes

#### Pupil Numbers

##### i) Current pupil numbers<sup>12</sup>

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
<b>Churchstoke C.P. School</b>	8	4	5	3	10	2	4	36

##### ii) Historical pupil numbers<sup>13</sup>

	Jan. 2014	Jan. 2015	Jan. 2016	Jan. 2017	Jan. 2018	Jan. 2019	Jan. 2020
<b>Churchstoke C.P. School</b>	64	54	53	41	39	28	25

##### iii) Projected pupil numbers (Birth rate)<sup>14</sup>

	Jan. 2021 <sup>15</sup>	Jan. 2022	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025
<b>Churchstoke C.P. School</b>	22	21	21	17	16

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> Finance NOR – 2020 Pupil Count Day (6<sup>th</sup> November 2020)

<sup>13</sup> PLASC

<sup>14</sup> Powys Schools Service Projections (R – Yr6) based on PLASC 2020 & Birth Rates

<sup>15</sup> These are the projected figures based on PLASC 2020 information, therefore include a projection for January 2021. PLASC 2021 information and projected pupil numbers based on PLASC 2021 are not yet available.

iv) **Projected pupil numbers (Finance projections)<sup>16</sup>**

	Jan. 2021	Jan. 2022	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025
<b>Churchstoke C.P. School</b>	36	39	44	N/A	N/A

**Building Capacity and Condition**

i) **Capacity**

The following table provides information about the school's current capacity:

	Current Capacity <sup>17</sup>	Currently Filled	Surplus Capacity
<b>Churchstoke C.P. School</b>	72	36 (50.0%)	36 (50.0%)

ii) **Building condition<sup>18</sup>**

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

	Condition	Suitability	Access to hall on site
<b>Churchstoke C.P. School</b>	C Poor	B/C Good to bad	Yes

**Quality and Standards of Education**

i) **Estyn**

	Churchstoke C.P. School
<b>Date of Inspection</b>	April 2015
<b>Standards</b>	Good
<b>Wellbeing</b>	Adequate
<b>Learning experiences</b>	Good

<sup>16</sup> Powys Finance Projections – February 2021

<sup>17</sup> Welsh Government School Places Return – August 2020

<sup>18</sup> Premises Data Return to Welsh Government – 2020

<b>Teaching</b>	Good
<b>Care, support and guidance</b>	Good
<b>Learning environment</b>	Good
<b>Leadership</b>	Adequate
<b>Improving quality</b>	Adequate
<b>Partnership working</b>	Good
<b>Resource management</b>	Adequate
<b>Follow Up</b>	School to draw up action plan. Estyn to monitor progress.  The school was removed from Estyn monitoring in November 2016.

ii) **School Categorisation<sup>19</sup>**

	<b>Standards Group</b>	<b>Improvement Capacity</b>	<b>Support Capacity</b>
<b>Churchstoke C.P. School</b>	N/A	B	Yellow

**Financial information**

i) **Cost per pupil<sup>20</sup>**

	<b>Budget share per school</b>	<b>Budget share per pupil</b>	<b>Notional SEN budget</b>	<b>Non ISB funds devolved to the school</b>
<b>Churchstoke C.P. School</b>	£202,000	£7,475	£16,000	£7,000
<b>Powys average (Primary)</b>	N/A	£4,264	N/A	N/A

**Equalities Information**

i) **National identity**

<sup>19</sup> 2019. Categorisations were not carried out in 2020 due to Covid-19.

<sup>20</sup> Section 52 Budget Statement 2020/2021

(Pupils aged 5 or over on the 31st August 2019)

	British	English	Irish	Scottish	Welsh	Other	Not supplied	Refused
<b>Churchstoke C.P. School</b>	32.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.0%

ii) **Ethnic Group**

(Pupils aged 5 or over on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019)

	White British	Other known ethnicity	Information not yet obtained / not recorded
<b>Churchstoke C.P. School</b>	92.0%	0.0%	8.0%

iii) **English as an Additional Language**

	% EAL	% EAL A/B/C
<b>Churchstoke C.P. School</b>	0.0%	0.0%

iv) **Free School Meals<sup>21</sup>**

	Pupils who had a free school meal on Census day
<b>Churchstoke C.P. School</b>	8.0%

v) **Pupils in care<sup>22</sup>**

	Pupils in care
<b>Churchstoke C.P. School</b>	0%

vi) **SEN/ALN<sup>23</sup>**

	School Action	School Action Plus	Statement

<sup>21</sup> PLASC 2020

<sup>22</sup> PLASC 2020

<sup>23</sup> PLASC 2020

<b>Churchstoke C.P. School</b>	16.0%	4.0%	0.0%
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## 2. Other schools that could be affected

Should the proposal to close Churchstoke C.P. School be implemented, pupils would transfer to their nearest alternative school. Whilst the Council's preferred option is that pupils transfer to their nearest alternative school in Powys, it is possible that some pupils would transfer to provision in Shropshire, which may be closer to their homes.

The expectation is that the number of pupils transferring to each school would be small, and therefore the impact on these schools would not be significant. However, information about schools in Powys and Shropshire to which pupils may transfer is provided below:

	<b>School Type</b>	<b>Language Category</b>	<b>Admission Number <sup>24</sup></b>
<b>Chirbury CofE Primary School (Shropshire)</b>	Voluntary Controlled Primary	English medium	12
<b>Montgomery C. in W. School</b>	Voluntary Controlled Primary	English medium	21
<b>Bishop's Castle Primary School (Shropshire)</b>	Academy Primary	English medium	25
<b>Long Mountain CofE Primary School (Shropshire)</b>	Voluntary Controlled Primary	English medium	11

### Pupil Numbers

#### i) Current pupil numbers<sup>25</sup>

	<b>R</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Chirbury CofE Primary School</b>	12	7	6	7	6	19	9	66
<b>Montgomery C. in W.</b>	11	13	12	17	10	15	12	90

<sup>24</sup> Powys Schools – Powys County Council Admission Arrangements and Information 2021/22 / Shropshire Schools – Get Information about Schools Service – GOV.UK & own school websites & Shropshire Parents Guide to Education 2021/22

<sup>25</sup> Powys Schools - Finance NOR – 2020 Pupil Count Day (6<sup>th</sup> November 2020) / Shropshire Schools – Shropshire Council

School								
<b>Bishop's Castle Primary School</b>	20	11	23	19	21	24	17	135
<b>Long Mountain CofE Primary School</b>	19	12	17	17	12	12	9	98

ii) **Historical pupil numbers<sup>26</sup>**

	Jan. 2014	Jan. 2015	Jan. 2016	Jan. 2017	Jan. 2018	Jan. 2019	Jan. 2020
<b>Chirbury CofE Primary School</b>	58	55	59	55	52	48	48
<b>Montgomery C.W Primary School</b>	124	127	125	116	107	103	97
<b>Bishops Castle Primary School</b>	145	135	127	133	136	143	144
<b>Long Mountain CofE Primary School</b>	153	133	114	87	92	102	96

iii) **Projected pupil numbers (Birth rate)<sup>27</sup>**

	Jan. 2021	Jan. 2022	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025
<b>Chirbury CofE Primary School</b>	65	66	60	66	73

<sup>26</sup> PLASC 2020 / Shropshire Schools – Spring Census

<sup>27</sup> Powys Schools Service Projections (R – Yr6) based on PLASC 2020 & Birth Rates / Shropshire Schools – Forecast with Housing

<b>Montgomery C. in W. Primary School</b>	95	95	91	95	92
<b>Bishops Castle Primary School</b>	133	136	146	143	151
<b>Long Mountain CofE Primary School</b>	100	102	110	107	98

iv) **Projected pupil numbers (Finance projections)<sup>28</sup>**

	<b>Jan. 2021</b>	<b>Jan. 2022</b>	<b>Jan. 2023</b>	<b>Jan. 2024</b>	<b>Jan. 2025</b>
<b>Chirbury CofE Primary School</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Montgomery C. In W. Primary School</b>	90	88	83	N/A	N/A
<b>Bishops Castle Primary School</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Long Mountain CofE Primary School</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

**Building Capacity and Condition**

i) **Capacity**

The following table provides information about the school's current capacity:

	<b>Current Capacity<sup>29</sup></b>	<b>Currently Filled</b>	<b>Surplus Capacity</b>
<b>Chirbury CofE Primary School</b>	84	66 (78.6%)	18 (21.4%)
<b>Montgomery C. in W. Primary School</b>	119	90 (75.6%)	29 (24.4%)
<b>Bishops Castle Primary School</b>	175	135 (77.1%)	40 (22.9%)
<b>Long Mountain CofE Primary School</b>	100	98 (98.0%)	2 (2.0%)

<sup>28</sup> Powys Finance Projections based on data provided by the school – November 2020

<sup>29</sup> Welsh Government School Places Return – August 2020 / Get Information about Schools – GOV.UK

## ii) Building condition

### **Powys Schools**

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

	<b>Condition</b>	<b>Suitability</b>
<b>Montgomery C. in W. Primary School</b>	C	B/C

### **Shropshire Schools**<sup>30</sup>

The following is a summary of the condition of Chirbury CE Primary School and Long Mountain CE Primary School:

#### **Chirbury CE Primary School, Chirbury**

The property consists of a pre-1919 traditional school building, supplemented by significant demountable building provision (RG Stones).

The demountable classrooms were provided around 1993 and, whilst sectional build and considered temporary, have a life expectancy of 25 years plus and are considered to be in reasonable condition. Based on the average of the condition rating scores (A-D) for building fabric and electrical and mechanical installations, the property could be considered to have a B rating – satisfactory.

In addition to this, regular maintenance actions are carried where legislation dictates.

#### **Long Mountain CE Primary School, Worthen**

The original building dates from around the early 1980s and was extended and improved in 2018 with a new classroom, nursery accommodation and new front entrance. Based on the average of the condition rating scores (A-D) for building fabric and electrical and mechanical installations, the property could be considered to have a B rating – satisfactory.

In addition to this, regular maintenance actions are carried where legislation dictates.

#### **Bishops Castle Primary School**

Bishops Castle Primary School is an academy, therefore the local authority does not have up-to-date information on the condition of the school's buildings.

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<sup>30</sup> Information from Shropshire County Council, April 2021

## Standards of Education

### i) Estyn

	<b>Montgomery C. in W. School</b>
<b>Date of Inspection</b>	February 2019
<b>Standards</b>	Good
<b>Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</b>	Good
<b>Teaching and learning experiences</b>	Good
<b>Care, Support and Guidance</b>	Good
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Good
<b>Follow up</b>	The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

### ii) Ofsted

	<b>Chirbury CofE Primary School</b>
<b>Date of Inspection</b>	December 2019
<b>The quality of education</b>	Good
<b>Behaviour and attitudes</b>	Good
<b>Personal development</b>	Good
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Good
<b>Early years provision</b>	Good

	<b>Bishops Castle Primary School</b>
<b>Date of Inspection</b>	December 2013
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	Good
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	Good
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	Good
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Good

	<b>Long Mountain CofE Primary School</b>
<b>Date of Inspection</b>	November 2016
<b>Effectiveness of leadership and management</b>	Good
<b>Quality of teaching, learning and assessment</b>	Good
<b>Personal development, behaviour and welfare</b>	Good
<b>Outcomes for pupils</b>	Good
<b>Early years provision</b>	Good

iii) **School Categorisation (Wales)<sup>31</sup>**

	<b>Standards Group</b>	<b>Support Capacity</b>
<b>Montgomery C. in W. Primary School</b>	N/A	Yellow

iv) **Overall Performance (England)<sup>32</sup>**

	<b>% of pupils meeting expected standard<sup>33</sup></b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Maths</b>
<b>Chirbury CofE Primary School</b>	100%	3.8 Average	2.3 Average	2 Average
<b>Bishops Castle Primary School</b>	65%	-3.8 Well below average	-2.8 Average	-1.4 Average
<b>Long Mountain CofE Primary School</b>	21%	-5 Well below average	-4.1 Well below average	-8.7 Well below average

<sup>31</sup> 2019

<sup>32</sup> Compare School Performance Service – GOV.UK for performance standards at end of Key Stage 2 in 2019

<sup>33</sup> Pupils are meeting the expected standard if they achieve a scaled score of 100 or more in their reading and maths tests, and their teacher assesses them as 'working at the expected standard' or better in writing.

## Financial information

### i) Cost per pupil<sup>34</sup> (Section 52 Budget Statement, 2020/2021)

	Budget share per school	Budget share per pupil	Notional SEN budget	Non ISB funds devolved to the school
Montgomery C. in W. Primary School	£407,000	£4,153	£10,000	£10,000
Powys average (Primary)	N/A	£4,264	N/A	N/A

### ii) Total income and cost per pupil<sup>35</sup>

	Total income	Total expenditure per pupil
Chirbury CofE Primary School	£393,723	£6,703
Bishops Castle Primary School	£714,157	£5,389
Long Mountain CofE Primary School	£642,419	£5,611

## Equalities Information

### i) National identity

(Pupils aged 5 or over on the 31st August 2019)

	British	English	Irish	Scottish	Welsh	Other	Not supplied	Refused
Chirbury CofE Primary School	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Montgomery C. in W. Primary School	49.0%	14.4%	0.0%	0.0%	13.4%	6.3%	0.0%	16.5%
Bishops Castle Primary	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

<sup>34</sup> Section 52 Budget Statement 2020/2021

<sup>35</sup> Schools Financial Benchmarking Service for 2019/2020

School								
<b>Long Mountain CofE Primary School</b>	N/A							

ii) **Ethnic Group**  
(Pupils aged 5 or over on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019)

	<b>White British</b>	<b>Other known ethnicity</b>	<b>Information not yet obtained / not recorded</b>
<b>Chirbury CofE Primary School</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Montgomery C. in W. Primary School</b>	77.3%	4.1%	16.5%
<b>Bishops Castle Primary School</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Long Mountain CofE Primary School</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A

iii) **English as an Additional Language<sup>36</sup>**

	<b>% EAL</b>	<b>% EAL A/B/C</b>
<b>Chirbury CofE Primary School</b>	4.2%	N/A
<b>Montgomery C. in W. Primary School</b>	3.1%	0.0%
<b>Bishops Castle Primary School</b>	2.8%	N/A
<b>Long Mountain CofE Primary School</b>	0.8%	N/A

iv) **Free School Meals<sup>37</sup>**

<sup>36</sup> PLASC 2020 / GOV.UK Compare School Performance Service – Pupil Population 2018/2019

<sup>37</sup> PLASC 2020 / GOV.UK – Get Information about Schools

	Number of pupils who had a free school meal on Census day
<b>Chirbury CofE Primary School</b>	6.0%
<b>Montgomery C. in W. Primary School</b>	0.0%
<b>Bishops Castle Primary School</b>	14.6%
<b>Long Mountain CofE Primary School</b>	16.2%

v) **Pupils in care<sup>38</sup>**

	Number of pupils in care
<b>Chirbury CofE Primary School</b>	N/A
<b>Montgomery C. in W. Primary School</b>	0.0%
<b>Bishops Castle Primary School</b>	N/A
<b>Long Mountain CofE Primary School</b>	N/A

vi) **SEN/ALN<sup>39</sup>**

	School Action	School Action Plus	Statement
<b>Montgomery C. in W. Primary School</b>	7.2%	2.1%	0.0%

vii) **Education, Health and Care Plans<sup>40</sup>**

	Number of pupils with SEN Support	Number of pupils with an SEN Education, Health and Care Plan
<b>Chirbury CofE Primary School</b>	14.6%	2.1%

<sup>38</sup> PLASC 2020 / England School Census 2019/2020

<sup>39</sup> PLASC 2020

<sup>40</sup> GOV.UK Compare School Performance Service – Pupil Population 2018/2019

<b>Bishops Castle Primary School</b>	16.8%	1.4%
<b>Long Mountain CofE Primary School</b>	16.1%	1.6%

## APPENDIX B – SWOT AND CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

### 1. SWOT ANALYSES

SWOT analyses for each of these three options identified in section 5 are provided below:

#### Option 1: Status quo – continue as a standalone school

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would retain provision in Churchstoke</li> <li>- There would be no additional transport costs</li> <li>- Would continue to provide access to a community primary school</li> <li>- No requirement for a reorganisation process</li> <li>- No change for staff</li> <li>- No impact on pupils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupil numbers at Churchstoke would continue to be low, based on the projections</li> <li>- Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision</li> <li>- Would still need to maintain the Churchstoke building</li> <li>- Would not reduce surplus places</li> <li>- Would not lead to a financial saving</li> <li>- Would not address issues with the Churchstoke CP School building</li> <li>- Would not address the high budget per pupil</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunities for further collaboration with other neighbouring schools to provide increased opportunities for pupils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not able to secure retention of staff due to small number of pupils</li> </ul>

#### Option 2: Federation with another school

This is not a viable option as there are no other C.P. Schools in the vicinity which Churchstoke C.P. School could federate with, therefore this option is **DISCOUNTED**.

#### Option 3: Merge with Montgomery C. in W. School to establish a new school on two sites

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would retain provision in Churchstoke</li> <li>- Pupils would continue to attend school on their current site</li> <li>- More opportunities could be provided to pupils from being part of a larger school</li> <li>- There would be no additional transport costs</li> <li>- Could provide a financial saving to the Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupil numbers at Churchstoke would continue to be low, based on the projections</li> <li>- Churchstoke pupils would still be taught separately</li> <li>- Would not reduce surplus places</li> <li>- Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunity for all staff to secure positions in the new school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would still need to maintain the Churchstoke building</li> <li>- Would also impact on the staff of Montgomery C. in W. School</li> <li>- Different in the size of the two schools – would have a disproportionate impact on Montgomery C. in W. School</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunities for further collaboration across the sites</li> <li>- More opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Possible tension between Church in Wales status and C.P. status</li> </ul>

**Option 4: Close Churchstoke C.P. School, but retain the site as part of Montgomery C. in W. School**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would retain provision in Churchstoke</li> <li>- Pupils would continue to attend school on their current site</li> <li>- More opportunities could be provided to the pupils</li> <li>- There would be no additional transport costs</li> <li>- Could provide a financial saving to the Council</li> <li>- Montgomery C. in W. School would retain its identity</li> <li>- Minimal impact on staff at Montgomery C. in W. School</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupil numbers at Churchstoke would continue to be low, based on the projections</li> <li>- Churchstoke pupils would still be taught separately</li> <li>- Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision</li> <li>- Would still need to maintain the Churchstoke building</li> <li>- Would not reduce surplus places</li> <li>- Would not address issues with the Churchstoke building</li> <li>- Churchstoke C.P. School would lose its identity</li> <li>- Possible reduction in staffing requirements</li> <li>- There would be no access to C.P. provision locally</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunities for further collaboration across the sites</li> <li>- More opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Possible tension between Church in Wales status and C.P. status</li> </ul>

**Option 5: Close Churchstoke C.P. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools in Powys**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers</li> <li>- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools</li> <li>- Revenue saving to the Council</li> <li>- Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities</li> <li>- Pupil would be taught in classes with peers of similar ages</li> <li>- Pupils would attend schools with better quality accommodation</li> <li>- Minimal impact on any other schools</li> <li>- Would enable pupils to continue to access provision in Powys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Additional travel for those pupils for whom Churchstoke C.P. School is currently the closest school</li> <li>- Pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School would have to transfer to alternative provision</li> <li>- Loss of provision from Churchstoke</li> <li>- Possible impact on early years provision in Churchstoke</li> <li>- Impact on the current staff of Churchstoke C.P. School</li> <li>- Impact on the Churchstoke community</li> <li>- Some pupils may choose to transfer to alternative provision in England</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunity for the Council to realise a capital receipt from sale of the school site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loss of pupils to England</li> </ul>

**Option 6: Close Churchstoke C.P. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers</li> <li>- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools</li> <li>- Revenue saving to the Council</li> <li>- Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities</li> <li>- Pupil would be taught in classes with peers of similar ages</li> <li>- Pupils would attend schools with better quality accommodation</li> <li>- Minimal impact on any other schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Additional travel for those pupils for whom Churchstoke C.P. School is currently the closest school</li> <li>- Pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School would have to transfer to alternative provision</li> <li>- Loss of provision from Churchstoke</li> <li>- Possible impact on early years provision in Churchstoke</li> <li>- Impact on the current staff of Churchstoke C.P. School</li> <li>- Impact on the Churchstoke community</li> <li>- Some pupils may transfer to alternative provision in England</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunity for the Council to realise a capital receipt from sale of the school site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loss of pupils to England</li> </ul>

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

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	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
5 – Potential affordability	x	X	x	x	✓	✓
<b>Total ✓</b>	1	0	1	1	4	3
<b>Total x</b>	3	4	3	3	0	0
<b>Outcome</b>	Discount	Discount	Discount	Discount	<b>Preferred option</b>	<b>Possible option</b>

## APPENDIX C – IMPACT OF EACH OPTION ON RURAL SCHOOLS CRITERIA

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
<b>Option 1: Status Quo – continue as a standalone school</b>	There would be no impact on quality and standards – pupils would continue to attend the current provision at Churchstoke.	There would be no impact on the community – provision would continue to be available in Churchstoke.	There would be no impact on travel arrangements – pupils would continue to attend Churchstoke C.P. School.
<b>Option 2: Federation with another school</b>	Discounted – N/A	Discounted – N/A	Discounted – N/A
<b>Option 3: Merge with Montgomery C. in W. School to establish a new school on two sites</b>	<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>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>The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Churchstoke.</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 joint school activities would take place on the Montgomery site as more pupils attend this site, which could</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current site of Churchstoke C.P. School.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>

		lead to a reduction in activity on the Churchstoke site.	
<b>Option 4: Close Churchstoke C.P. School, but retain the site as part of Montgomery C. in W. School</b>	<p>Implementation of this option would result in closure of Churchstoke C.P. School, however provision would continue on the current site. Churchstoke C.P. School are both in the yellow support category based on the 2019 categorisations, therefore it is not anticipated that the impact on quality and standards would be negative.</p> <p>The school would be 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>Provision would continue to be available in Churchstoke. However, the site would be managed by the current governing body of Montgomery C. in W. School, therefore there could be a perceived reduction in community involvement in management of the school.</p> <p>In addition, it is possible that joint school activities would take place on the Montgomery site as more pupils attend this site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Churchstoke site.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current site of Churchstoke C.P. School.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>
<b>Option 5: Close Churchstoke C.P. School, pupils to attend nearest</b>	Implementation of this option would mean that pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School would transfer to their nearest	There would be a significant impact on the community of Churchstoke as there would be no provision in Churchstoke.	Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Churchstoke School.

<p><b>alternative schools in Powys</b></p>	<p>alternative schools in Powys. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative Powys school would be Montgomery C. in W. School.</p> <p>Based on the latest categorisations carried out in 2019, both Churchstoke C.P. School and Montgomery C. in W. School are categorised as Yellow schools. The Council's view is that quality and standards at Montgomery C. in W. School would be at least as good as the provision at Churchstoke.</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 Churchstoke.</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>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><b>Option 6: Close Churchstoke C.P. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools</b></p>	<p>Implementation of this option would mean that pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School would transfer to their nearest alternative schools in Powys. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative schools would be Chirbury C. of E. School which is located in Shropshire.</p> <p>Chirbury C. of E. School was last inspected by Ofsted in December 2019, when the school's overall effectiveness was judged to be Good. It is likely therefore that the</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Churchstoke as there would be no provision in Churchstoke.</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 Churchstoke.</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Churchstoke School.</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>

	quality and standards at the school would be comparable to that available in Churchstoke C.P. School.	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.	
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## APPENDIX D – REASONS WHY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS HAVE NOT BEEN TAKEN FORWARD

Option	Description	Reason for discounting
1	Status quo – continue as a standalone school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupil numbers at Churchstoke would continue to be low, based on the projections</li> <li>- Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision</li> <li>- Would still need to maintain the Churchstoke building</li> <li>- Would not reduce surplus places</li> <li>- Would not lead to a financial saving</li> <li>- Would not address issues with the Churchstoke CP School building</li> <li>- Would not address the high budget per pupil</li> <li>- Does not meet the Critical Success Factors</li> </ul>
2	Federation with another school	<p>This is not a viable option as there are no other C.P. schools in the vicinity which Churchstoke C.P. School could federate with, therefore this option is <b>DISCOUNTED</b></p>
3	Merge with Montgomery C. in W. School to establish a new school on two sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupil numbers at Churchstoke would continue to be low, based on the projections</li> <li>- Churchstoke pupils would still be taught separately</li> <li>- Would not reduce surplus places</li> <li>- Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision</li> <li>- Would still need to maintain the Churchstoke building</li> <li>- Would also impact on the staff of Montgomery C. in W. School</li> <li>- Difference in the size of the two schools – would have a disproportionate impact on Montgomery C. in W. School</li> <li>- Does not meet the Critical Success Factors</li> </ul>
4	Close Churchstoke C.P. School, but retain the site as part of Montgomery C. in W. School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupil numbers at Churchstoke would continue to be low, based on the projections</li> <li>- Churchstoke pupils would still be taught separately</li> <li>- Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision</li> <li>- Would still need to maintain the Churchstoke building</li> <li>- Would not reduce surplus places</li> <li>- Would not address issues with the Churchstoke building</li> <li>- Churchstoke C.P. School would lose its identity</li> <li>- Possible reduction in staffing requirements</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There would be no access to C.P. provision locally</li> <li>- Does not meet the Critical Success Factors</li> </ul>
5	Close Churchstoke C.P. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools in Powys	N / A – This is the option which has been taken forward.
6	Close Churchstoke C.P. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Additional travel for those pupils for whom Churchstoke C.P. School is currently the closest school</li> <li>- Pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School would have to transfer to alternative provision</li> <li>- Loss of provision from Churchstoke</li> <li>- Impact on the current staff of Churchstoke C.P. School</li> <li>- Impact on the Churchstoke community</li> <li>- Some pupils may transfer to alternative provision in England</li> <li>- Does not meet the Critical Success Factors</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX E – RESPONSE FORM

### PROPOSAL TO CLOSE CHURCHSTOKE C.P. SCHOOL

Powys County Council is consulting on a proposal to close Churchstoke C.P. School. The proposal is as follows:

- To close Churchstoke C.P. School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools

A consultation document which provides more information about the proposals is available on the Council's website at <http://www.powys.gov.uk/transformingeducation>. This consultation response form gives you the opportunity to let us know your view on the Council's proposal. The response form can also be completed online – a link to the online form is available by following the link above.

The closing date for this consultation is the **9<sup>th</sup> June 2021**. All responses must be received by this date.

For information on how the Transforming Education Team protects and uses personal information collected during consultation processes, please see the Transforming Education privacy notice, which is available via the following link:  
<https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/9803/Transforming-Education-Privacy-Notice>

#### Part 1 – About You

**1. Please indicate how you are associated with the schools affected by this consultation:**

- |                          |                           |                          |                                       |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Parent, carer or guardian | <input type="checkbox"/> | Prospective parent, carer or guardian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Governor                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Member of staff                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Member of the community   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Organisation e.g. Community Council   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | No association            | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other                                 |

If you said 'Other' or are responding on behalf of an organisation, please specify:

\_\_\_\_\_

**2. Please specify which school you are associated with:**

- |                          |                         |                          |                |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Churchstoke C.P. School | <input type="checkbox"/> | Another school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | No association          |                          |                |

If you are associated another school, please specify which school:

\_\_\_\_\_

**3. Please provide your postcode:** \_\_\_\_\_





**Impact on the Welsh language**

7. In your opinion, what positive or adverse effects would the proposal to close Churchstoke C.P. School have on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

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8. How do you think the proposal to close Churchstoke C.P. School could be formulated or revised so that it would have positive / more positive effects, or so that it would not have adverse effects / less adverse effects on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

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**Copy of Consultation Report**

9. At the end of the Consultation Period, the Council will publish a Consultation Report, summarising the issues raised in the consultation responses received and providing the Council's response to these issues.

Would you like to be informed of the publication of the consultation report?

Yes

No

If you answered 'Yes', please provide an e-mail address or postal address:

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**Part 3 – Equalities Information (Optional)**

We want to ensure that we include all sectors of the community in our consultation, and are requesting that you provide this information to enable us to identify whether the consultation has been inclusive. However, these questions are optional.

**10. How old are you?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Under 16	<input type="checkbox"/> 16-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 25-34
<input type="checkbox"/> 35-44	<input type="checkbox"/> 45-54	<input type="checkbox"/> 55-64
<input type="checkbox"/> 65-74	<input type="checkbox"/> 75-84	<input type="checkbox"/> 85+
<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say		

**11. What is your gender?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender Fluid
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Binary	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender neutral	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say

**12. Can you understand, speak or write Welsh?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
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**13. If you have school-aged children, are they entitled to receive free school meals?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
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**14. If you have school-aged children, do they have any additional learning needs?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
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**15. Do you consider yourself to be disabled?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
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**16. What is your ethnic group?**

<input type="checkbox"/> White	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian	<input type="checkbox"/> Black, African or Caribbean
<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed	<input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy/Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say		

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire.**

Completed questionnaires should be sent to the following address, to arrive **no later than the 9th June 2021.**

*Transforming Education Team, Powys County Council, County Hall, Llandrindod Wells, LD1 5LG*

*E-mail: [school.consultation@powys.gov.uk](mailto:school.consultation@powys.gov.uk)*