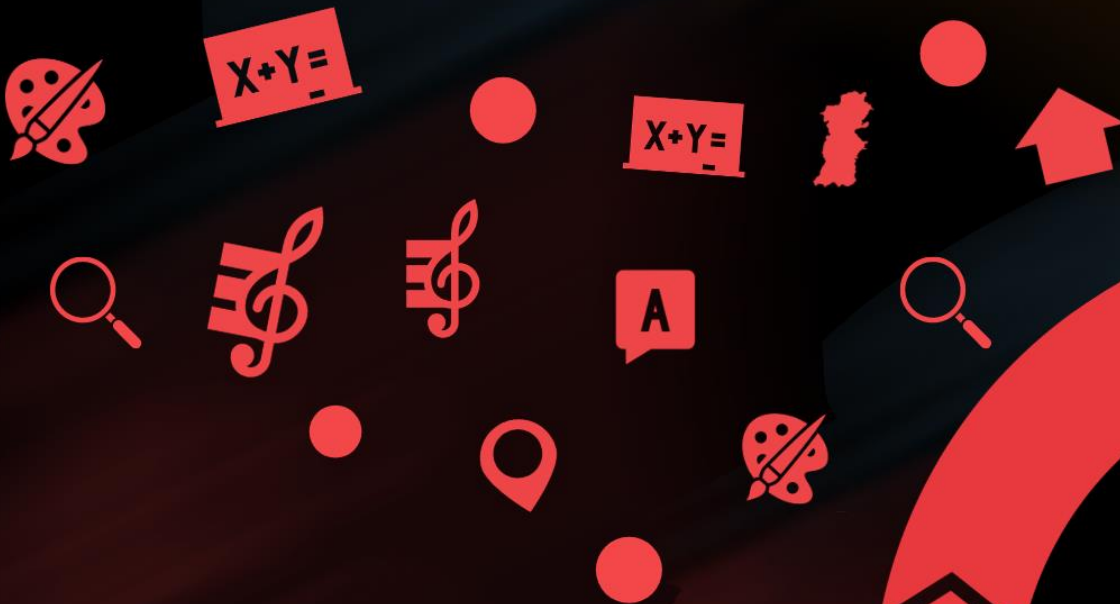




**Proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in
W. School**
Objection Report



Proposal to close Castle Caereinion Church in Wales School

Objection Report

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Consultation on the closure of Castle Caereinion Church in Wales School

Objection Report

1. BACKGROUND

Powys County Council consulted on proposals to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. The consultation took place from the 14th April 2021 to the 2nd June 2021. The Council published a consultation report outlining the findings of the consultation exercise.

On 13th July 2021, the Council's Cabinet agreed to proceed with the proposal, and a Statutory Notice was published from the 9th September 2021 to the 7th October 2021.

The proposal was as follows:

- i) *To discontinue Castle Caereinion Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled School, Castle Caereinion, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 9AL*

It is proposed to implement the proposal on 31st August 2022.

2. SUMMARY OF OBJECTIONS RECEIVED

21 objections were received during the statutory objection period.

Objections were received from the following:

- Castle Caereinion Community Council
- Diocese of St Asaph
- Castle Caereinion Recreation Association
- Parents and members of the community

The objections received included a petition against the proposal which received 102 signatures.

The objections received are outlined on the following pages, along with the Council's response.

The main issues raised in the objections are as follows:

1. Concern about the impact on the community

- General concern about the impact on the community

- Concern about the impact on the community centre
- Concern about the impact on the local church
- Reference to housing developments in the village

2. Concern about the impact on pupils

- General concern about the impact on pupils
- Concern that pupils would struggle in larger schools

3. Comments about transport

- Concern about the impact of additional travel time
- Comments about the cost of transport
- Concern about the environmental impact of transport
- Concern that reliance on transport would impact on pupils' ability to access after school activities
- Queries about the transport that would be provided

4. Concern about access to Church in Wales provision

5. Positive comments about Castle Caereinion C. in W. School

6. Positive comments about small / rural schools

7. Concern that additional pupils would put pressure on other schools

8. Comments about the process

- Concern about the process taking place during the Covid pandemic
- Suggestion that the correct process has not been followed

9. Suggestion that Federation with Welshpool C. in W. School should be looked at again

The objections received are provided in Section 3 of this report, along with the Council's response to the points raised in each objection.

3. OBJECTIONS RECEIVED

The objections received are outlined below, along with the local authority's response to the issues raised. Any references to personal information have been removed.

Objection 1

Issue	Points raised	Council response
1.1	I wish to object to the closure of the above school. Closure will be a nail in the coffin for Castle as a community.	<p>The Council notes these concerns about the potential impact on the community.</p> <p>The draft Community Impact Assessment included with the consultation documentation has identified the potential impact of the proposed closure of the school on the community. It notes the extensive community use of the Castle Caereinion school building, and extensive links between the school and the local community. This was updated to reflect comments received during the consultation period, and an updated version was considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal.</p>
1.2	The education of the pupils attending the school will be affected in a detrimental way if they are forced to move to another school.	The Council accepts that any school reorganisation proposal creates a period of uncertainty for the pupils involved. Should the school close, the schools that pupils would transfer to would provide support to pupils to aid their transition, ensuring a successful transition to their new school to ensure that all pupils can achieve their potential.

		<p>As stated in the Consultation Document in reference to alternative schools:-</p> <p><i>The Council's view is that all of these schools would provide education for pupils which is of at least equivalent quality as that provided at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on standards and progress overall.</i></p>
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Objection 2

Issue	Points raised	Council response
2.1	<p>I wish to object to the closure of Castle Caereinion School.</p> <p>How to take the heart out of a community: Close the local school</p>	<p>The Council notes these concerns about the potential impact on the community.</p> <p>The draft Community Impact Assessment included with the consultation documentation has identified the potential impact of the proposed closure of the school on the community. It notes the extensive community use of the Castle Caereinion school building, and extensive links between the school and the local community. This was updated to reflect comments received during the consultation period, and an updated version was considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal.</p>

2.2	How to encourage secular education as opposed to education with a Christian focus: Close the church school	Should the Council proceed with the proposal, parents would be able to choose which alternative school they would prefer their child to attend and could choose for their child to attend alternative Church in Wales provision should that be their choice. Alternative Church in Wales provision is available 5.3 miles away from Castle Caereinion C. in W. School at Welshpool C. in W. School. There are sufficient places available to accommodate all pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.
2.3	How to give children an even longer day: close the school and transport them elsewhere	<p>It is acknowledged that implementation of the proposal would lead to additional travel for pupils for whom Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is currently their closest school.</p> <p>There are a number of alternative primary schools within 10 miles of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, and should the school close, it is not considered that the length and nature of journeys for pupils to alternative provision would be excessive.</p>
2.4	How increase the cost of education: provide transport to other schools	Should the school close, free home-to-school transport would be provided to the nearest alternative school, in accordance with the Home to School Transport Policy. The estimated cost of this transport is £32,300 per annum. However, even after taking into account these additional transport costs, it is estimated that the implementation of the proposal would deliver annual revenue savings to the Council of around £58,100.
2.5	How to give into educational fads: listen to the so-called experts, many of whom have never taught in these so-	The Council's Transforming Education Strategy has been formulated following discussions with a number of stakeholders, including teachers and Powys education

	called small schools	challenge advisers, many of which have experience of teaching in small schools.
2.6	Are these schools inadequate? No they provide social skills and pastoral support that is unattainable in larger schools	All schools, regardless of size, would be able to provide social skills and pastoral support. There is no evidence that larger schools cannot provide social and pastoral skills.
2.7	Are specialist teachers required for various subjects: highly doubtful, a good all rounded teacher can introduce numerous subjects into one lesson.	The alternative schools would be larger schools, and in many cases, larger schools are able to offer wider range of activities, as there are larger groups of pupils who would be able to take part in activities such as sports teams, choirs etc, as well as a larger team of staff to offer such activities.
2.8	How to lose the co-operation of parents as friends of the school, as possible members of the governing body and close it down, for their anger at its closure will probably prevent their future co-operation with the other school.	<p>The Council acknowledges that any school reorganisation proposal leads to a period of uncertainty for those affected, including parents.</p> <p>There would be opportunities for parents to become involved with the alternative schools, and in time, the Council would hope that the parents would take these opportunities, which could include expressing interest in positions on the school's governing body.</p>
2.9	And is it true that if parents wish to opt for a church school for their child's education, they must pay the transport costs themselves? If so this is deplorable and discrimination.	<p>As indicated in the Statutory Notice published in respect of this proposal:</p> <p><i>'Transport arrangements will be in accordance with the Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy.</i></p> <p><i>The Council will provide transport for Church in Wales provision for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion Church in Wales School who wish to transfer to Welshpool</i></p>

		<i>Church in Wales Primary School. This will be provided on a case by case basis using the Council's discretionary powers under Section 6 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008.'</i>
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Objection 3

Issue	Points raised	Council response
3.1	I am writing to express my concerns regarding the consequences of the planned closure of Castle Caereinion Church in Wales School, which I can see negatively effecting the community in numerous ways.	<p>The Council notes these concerns about the potential impact on the community.</p> <p>The draft Community Impact Assessment included with the consultation documentation has identified the potential impact of the proposed closure of the school on the community. It notes the extensive community use of the Castle Caereinion school building, and extensive links between the school and the local community. This was updated to reflect comments received during the consultation period, and an updated version was considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal.</p>
3.2	Closing this local school will force parents and students to attend one of the surrounding schools, causing all parties involved to wake up earlier. Doing this to students when it's already proven ^[1] they require significantly more rest than adults and perform better at school and in terms of mental health and grades when afforded such rest seems inconsiderate of their needs. Not to mention parents now	<p>It is acknowledged that implementation of the proposal would lead to additional travel for pupils for whom Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is currently their closest school.</p> <p>There are a number of alternative primary schools within 10 miles of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, and should the school close, it is not considered that the length and nature</p>

	<p>being required to find extra hours in their day to provide transport to these schools outside the community, when many are already struggling with having to work long, exhausting hours.</p>	<p>of journeys for pupils to alternative provision would be excessive.</p> <p>Should the Council proceed with the proposal, transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the home to school transport policy. Therefore, it is not expected that most parents will not need to transport their children to any alternative school themselves.</p>
3.3	<p>While the closure of one school may save some money, the additional strain the extra students will put on the schools they're forced to attend instead – which are already staffed by overworked, underpaid teachers and teaching assistants – will further reduce the quality of education these teachers are able to provide.</p>	<p>The Council does not agree that implementation of the proposal would have a negative impact on the quality of provision at alternative schools. The Council's view is that all of the alternative schools pupils might transfer to would provide education for pupils which is of at least equivalent quality as that provided at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, and as outlined in the Consultation Document published in respect of this proposal: <i>'The total number of pupils at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is currently small, therefore it is not anticipated that this would have a significant impact on pupils attending other nearby primary schools.'</i></p>
3.4	<p>The environmental cost of this is concerning too, especially given Wales's reputation for having excellent green policy, as the increased drive will inevitably increase pollution rates. Additionally, further distance to travel discourages students from walking, cycling or similar low-emission transport in favour of cars. While school buses may slightly counteract this, no statement appears to have been made regarding these services.</p>	<p>The Council recognises the possible environmental impact of the proposal. As indicated in the impact assessment document:</p> <p><i>'Implementation of the proposal would require additional travel for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School for whom this is their closest school. This would have a negative environmental impact as more home to</i></p>

		<p><i>school transport would need to be provided to transport pupils to their nearest alternative school.'</i></p> <p>The assessment also states that:</p> <p><i>'The number of pupils requiring additional transport would be relatively small, and it is possible that they could be accommodated on transport which is already operating.'</i></p> <p>It is accepted that there are some pupils who can currently walk or cycle to Castle Caereinion C.in W. School, who will not be able to do so to their alternative school.</p>
3.5	While small classes are being used as a reason for the closure, smaller classes are significantly more beneficial for the mental health and learning of students. They're able to receive personal tutelage that many students with poor mental health or learning difficulties require.	All schools, regardless of size, would be able to provide for the needs of their pupils, including those with mental health issues or learning difficulties. Smaller class sizes would not necessarily mean that pupils receive a more individual education as there are a number of year groups and a wider age range of pupils in the class.
3.6	Closing Primary Schools to invest in secondary schools seems backwards as many social developmental skills are developed at a Primary School age ^[3] .	The Council's Education Transformation Strategy is not about closing primary schools in order to invest in secondary schools, but rather to improve learner entitlement and experience and to ensure that education provision is distributed equitably throughout Powys. In order to do this, it is necessary to continually review the educational provision in the County.
3.7	The knock-on effects of this will create both higher stress levels in students, teachers and parents, increase pollution and overall, negatively impact the quality of life	The Council accepts that any school reorganisation proposal creates a period of uncertainty for the pupils

	<p>for the community. I do hope you reconsider this closure and think over the impact this will have.</p> <p>[1] https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/134/3/e921 https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-40443474 (Video linked by Kirsty Williams regarding alterative measures)</p> <p>[3] https://www.virtuallabschool.org/school-age/cognitive/lesson-2</p>	<p>involved, and that this is exacerbated this year due to the Covid pandemic.</p> <p>However, the Council would expect that pupils are fully supported by their teachers and other staff at the school during any periods of uncertainty to minimise the impact on their wellbeing.</p> <p>Should the school close, the receiving school or any other school pupils would transfer to would provide support to pupils to aid their transition, ensuring a successful transition to their new school to ensure that all pupils can achieve their potential.</p>
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Objection 4

Issue	Points raised	Council response
4.1	<p>How can the Transformation Team, during a pandemic, disadvantage parents, children and the wider community. They have given no regard to anything that has been said during the consultation period. The points made by the Team apart from numbers, are so wrong.</p>	<p>The Council has been developing its Strategy for Transforming Education since Estyn’s inspection of Powys Education Services in 2019. It is acknowledged that it would have been preferable for the consultation process to have taken place at a time when there wasn’t a global pandemic, the consultation has been carried out in line with Welsh Government requirements.</p> <p>It is untrue that no regard has been given to anything said during the consultation period – a consultation report was prepared which outlined the issues raised during the</p>

		<p>consultation period and provided the Council's response to these issues. This was considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal.</p>
4.2	<p>The new Curriculum is already being offered and it doesn't need a class of 30 pupils to achieve this.</p>	<p>As stated in the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-30, the Council faces a challenge due to the high proportion of small schools in the county and the lack of equity amongst schools. Castle Caereinion C. in W. School teaches children in two classes of mixed aged groups. With such low pupil numbers the teacher-pupil ratio is notably different to many other schools in the area, and due to the Council's funding formula, the school the funding per pupil is higher than the Council's average. This does not provide equity across the education system – teachers in larger schools are required to provide the same education as smaller schools for less funding per pupil. Powys' Strategy is intended to improve equity across the education system and to ensure an improvement for every pupil's learning entitlement and experience.</p> <p>The Council's primary specialists have been exploring how the authority can best support schools to deliver the new curriculum for 2022. These education professionals are of the view that this will be significantly more challenging, and will place significantly greater demands on teachers in very small two-class schools. This does not mean that it would be impossible to deliver the new curriculum in these schools but it is clear that the skills required by teachers will need to be very wide ranging to support the full and effective fulfilment of the curriculum's high ambitions.</p>

		<p>The new Curriculum for Wales is locally influenced and often pupil-led. All schools will design the detail of their own curriculum to suit their learners based on the four purposes and the six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE). Learners' views about their experiences and about what, how and where they learn should be taken seriously when a curriculum is being designed. The school's curriculum needs to be co-constructed, encouraging learners, parents, carers and the local community to understand and contribute to its development. It should also draw on a wider range of experts and stakeholders who can contribute to learning.</p> <p>The curriculum needs to be innovative and creative. Teachers, with pupils, will select the content, with no prescription on how areas should be taught, but with guidance provided nationally on a wide range of widely recognised pedagogical principles. Additionally, planning and designing the curriculum in schools is a teacher responsibility, not one for support staff.</p> <p>Teachers in two class schools would need to plan for a mixed age range for all Areas of Learning and Experience. In some cases this could involve preparing for and delivering for up to four different year groups for all six AoLEs. To ensure equity for learners, leaders and teachers across Wales, there needs to be a shared understanding of learner progression, including expectations around what progression may look like and the pace at which learners progress. This shared understanding is being developed</p>
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		<p>through professional learning and dialogue, as an ongoing process both within and across schools. Practitioners can share and learn from each other's understanding of progression and adapt their teaching in the light of what is learned. This will be particularly challenging in a very small school with only two teachers, for example. If a member of staff is linking up with practitioners from other schools for all 6 AoLEs and across a wide age range they would need to be away from their class for a far greater amount of time than a teacher teaching a single year group or two year groups in a class, and who also leads on behalf of the whole school on a single AoLE such as Humanities.</p> <p>High levels of flexibility and organisation are needed in lesson planning to ensure that teaching caters for both age groups and all abilities within the class. This additional workload is a risk that the education profession needs to manage together, given the limited numbers of teachers to carry the additional roles and responsibilities in a very small school. Two-class schools not only have fewer qualified teachers in school to design the curriculum, but generally the limited numbers of staff will in all probability between them have a narrower range of disciplinary-specific expertise for the learners in that school than would probably be the case in a large school. In a larger school, each member of staff can lead on a specified area where they may have an appropriate background and in which they can continue to gain growing levels of expertise. Effective learning and teaching requires disciplinary-specific expertise which will become increasingly relevant in developing a curriculum as learners progress. Although the</p>
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		<p>guidance promotes inter-disciplinary approaches, it also recognises the importance that disciplinary-specific expertise plays in such approaches.</p> <p>A significant responsibility for the Council, and others, over the coming years will be to ensure that every learner in Powys benefits from the step change that is anticipated through the changing curriculum. The Council will work with all the schools in our care, of whatever size, and will provide significant support, whilst also encouraging collaboration. However, it would be inappropriate if officers of the authority did not stress the additional demands on staff in very small schools, whilst doing all we can to facilitate the lightening of the load.</p> <p>Additionally, it is only fair that professional primary experts within the Council comment on the balance of potential risks and benefits to a child when being taught by the same person over 3 or 4 years of their primary education.</p>
4.3	<p>The building may be old but is fit for purpose and is fully equipped for any children with extra physical needs. The computer suite has been in place for many years and all children have access to this also have access to tablets and there are Interactive white boards in both class rooms. There is also a well attended breakfast club. The garden and play areas are large and equipped for outdoor learning, and Forest school is offered every week. Pre Covid the school had good links with other schools.</p>	<p>The Council notes these comments about the facilities available at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. Issues with the building is only one of the reasons for the proposal.</p> <p>Whilst the school building was assessed to be in good condition by the Welsh Government's condition survey carried out in 2009, the Council recently commissioned an updated condition survey of the school building. This was carried out in the autumn term 2020. The survey assessed</p>

		the condition of all three blocks at the school as condition C.
4.4	The school has always had good links with parents the church and wider community, many of those links are continuing virtually.	Comment noted.
4.5	I really don't understand how larger class numbers and increasing carbon footprint are a good idea.	<p>There are a significant number of surplus places at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and the average cost per pupil at the school is higher than the Powys average, which does not provide value for money to the Council.</p> <p>Should the Council proceed with the proposal, pupils would transfer to larger schools, and it is likely that they would attend larger classes. However all schools, regardless of size, would be able to provide for the needs of their pupils. Smaller class sizes would not necessarily mean that pupils receive a more individual education, as there are a number of year groups and a wider age range of pupils in the class.</p> <p>Whilst the Council notes the concerns regarding the environmental impact of the proposal, any increase in carbon footprint is likely to be minimal. It should also be noted that school buildings themselves have a carbon footprint as well as transportation.</p>
4.6	With regard to the wider community closing the school makes the village less viable for young parents choosing to live here so further depleting the area	The Council notes these concerns about the potential impact on the community.

		The draft Community Impact Assessment included with the consultation documentation has identified the potential impact of the proposed closure of the school on the community. It notes the extensive community use of the Castle Caereinion school building, and extensive links between the school and the local community. This was updated to reflect comments received during the consultation period, and an updated version was considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal.
4.7	I would also like to thank the past and present teachers and staff on how well they have handled the pandemic from ensuring that all children had equipment for online learning and on their return to in school teaching, keeping them safe happy and secure, with no covid cases.	Comment noted.

Objection 5

Issue	Points raised	Council response
5.1	<p>I wish to lodge an objection about the intention to close Castle Caereinion Church in Wales Primary School.</p> <p>The education authority has not provided any sound rationale for the closure of this vibrant village school.</p>	<p>The current proposal is being taken forward in order to implement the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys, which was developed following engagement with a range of stakeholders.</p> <p>The proposal is intended to address the challenges identified in respect of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School which are outlined in the Consultation Document:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Low pupils numbers ii) High budget per pupil iii) Issues with the building iv) Combined age classes v) Leadership <p>Following consideration of a number of options, the Council's preferred option is to close Castle Caereinion CiW School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools. The reasons for this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To address the issue of low pupil numbers - To reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools - To realise a financial saving to the Council - To enable pupils to attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum - To enable pupils to attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities - To enable pupils to attend schools with better quality accommodation - The proposal meets all of the Critical Success Factors
5.2	I consider that the closure of the school will be unethical action on the part of the Council.	<p>The Council has carried out a full consultation in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code.</p> <p>A consultation report was prepared which outlines the issues raised in the consultation responses received and</p>

		provides the Council's response to these issues. This was considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal.
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Objection 6

Issue	Points raised	Council response
6.1	From what I've observed over the last few years, you have worked hard to underhandedly boil dry all the honest opposition to the closure of our school using all the county council's powers and hyper educated theories. So here's a last attempt to appeal for sense.	<p>The Council does not agree with this statement. The Council has carried out consultation on the proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code.</p> <p>A consultation report was prepared which outlined the issues raised in the consultation responses received and provided the Council's response to these issues, this was considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed.</p>
6.2	<p>Small schools are good.</p> <p>Behind the uncertainty and stresses of controlling the pandemic the council have announced a plan to close many of our smaller village schools.</p> <p>There are reasons why these village schools are good and better than sending children away to larger schools.</p> <p>The dedication of the staff and small class numbers provides a key each child's needs with individuals</p>	<p>The Council agrees that there are good examples of schools of all sizes. All schools, regardless of size, would be able to provide for the needs of their pupils. Smaller class sizes would not necessarily mean that pupils receive a more individual education as there are a number of year groups and a wider age range of pupils in the class.</p> <p>As stated in the Consultation Document in reference to the alternative schools pupils might transfer to:</p>

	supported one to one. Children are better able to help one another.	<i>'The Council's view is that all of these schools would provide education for pupils which is of at least equivalent quality as that provided at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on standards and progress overall.'</i>
6.3	Lots of safe outdoor learning space. Hands on gardening, nature study and outdoor activities. Two big sports fields, a playground, a garden, fenced pond and wild area. Safe local nature walks.	The Council notes these comments about the facilities available at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.
6.4	<p>Teaching independence and to value your own community, also keeps villages together and growing. Encourages children to return as an adult. Gives young life at the centre of the community. Creates a web of connections with local people.</p> <p>A statement of where we place our values. Local friendships for life give a foundation that honours and respects the village. Less distance for children to travel. Sends a message Yes you can succeed on the local scale. A microcosm of the world. It can work from tiny beginnings.</p> <p>It is a poor plan that proposes throwing away good working schools, hollowing out valuable communities in an already sparsely populated countryside. Since the lockdowns the benefits of rural life have been evident and becoming even more valued. Supporting and encouraging rural life is now being recognised as a key component to lower our carbon</p>	<p>The Council notes these concerns about the potential impact on the community.</p> <p>The draft Community Impact Assessment included with the consultation documentation has identified the potential impact of the proposed closure of the school on the community. It notes the extensive community use of the Castle Caereinion school building, and extensive links between the school and the local community. This was updated to reflect comments received during the consultation period, and an updated version was considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal.</p>

	<p>footprint. It's time to value our rural life and build upon it at this time of hopeful regeneration from the pandemic. Please don't destroy these essential parts of our communities.</p>	
6.5	<p>Few would disagree that children have suffered badly as a result of the pandemic. But Powys County Council is saying surprisingly little about how its 'ambitious' educational policy might help to address this.</p>	<p>The Council acknowledges that children have suffered badly as a result of the pandemic.</p> <p>The Council's Transforming Education Strategy was formulated before the Covid pandemic, and is a long term strategy, the aim of which is to improve learner entitlement and experience across Powys.</p> <p>Whilst the Transforming Education Strategy does not directly deal with the effects of the Covid pandemic, having equitable and resilient educational provision in Powys will help mitigate the implications of the pandemic on pupils.</p>
6.6	<p>The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act was passed by the Welsh Government in 2015. Its aim is to encourage politicians and other public bodies from taking a narrow, short-term approach, thinking only of saving money or the next election.</p>	<p>The Council's Transforming Education Strategy, is a long term strategy over a period of 10 years, which aims to improve learner and entitlement experience in Powys. It is not therefore a short term strategy, solely aimed at saving money before the next Council elections in 2022.</p> <p>The proposal's impact on the Welsh Government's well-being goals, as outlined in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, is considered in the impact assessments.</p>
6.7	<p>The first three primary schools targeted for closure are in Castle Caereinion, Churchstoke and Llansilin. They head a long list of rural schools in Powys deemed too small and therefore uneconomic and/or inefficient.</p>	<p>The Council is currently taking forward a number of proposals in order to implement its Strategy for Transforming Education. Whilst some of these impact on</p>

		rural schools, other proposals affect schools located in more urban locations.
6.8	<p>Will young families move into the new houses if there is no local school for their children? Is the village destined to become an isolated retirement community? Will enough younger people live there to support them? Education policy should be strengthening communities for the future, not decimating them.</p> <p>If the council thinks about this when it studies its balance sheet, it might realise how much rural schools deliver in sheer value for money. With support and a stable future, they would be able to offer even more. Would the Future Generations Commissioner agree, I wonder? Might she consider that a review would be in order?</p>	<p>The Council note these comments regarding the role of rural / village schools within their communities.</p> <p>The draft Community Impact Assessment included with the consultation documentation has identified the potential impact of the proposed closure of the school on the community. It notes the extensive community use of the Castle Caereinion school building, and extensive links between the school and the local community. This was updated to reflect comments received during the consultation period, and an updated version was considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal.</p> <p>The impact assessment also considers the proposal's impact on the Welsh Government's well-being goals, as outlined in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.</p>

Objection 7

Issue	Points raised	Council response
7.1	I wish to object to the proposal to close Castle Caereinion School. The school is integral part of our village. In the past the school has invited residents in the village to attend their school fetes and other activities. This allows the children to meet us and for us to meet them. It makes	The Council notes these concerns about the potential impact on the community.

	<p>for a community that takes an interest in each other and works together as a whole. If the children have to attend schools outside the village then this won't happen. They have also attended our Church and are familiar with it through belonging to their church school.</p>	<p>The draft Community Impact Assessment included with the consultation documentation has identified the potential impact of the proposed closure of the school on the community. It notes the extensive community use of the Castle Caereinion school building, and extensive links between the school and the local community. This was updated to reflect comments received during the consultation period, and an updated version was considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal.</p>
7.2	<p>The current numbers of pupils in school are not as high as we would like but with planning for further houses this should increase.</p>	<p>The Council notes these comments about housing developments in the village. Comments about housing developments in Castle Caereinion were received during the consultation period – these were listed in section 6.3 of the Consultation Report produced in respect of this proposal.</p> <p><i>As indicated in the Consultation Report, 'Information received from the Council's housing department suggests there are approximately 40 housing developments already completed, underway or planned in the area. Some of these are affordable housing'</i></p> <p>and</p> <p><i>'The Council uses a pupil-yield ratio of .45 children per new house built. This is an estimate and does not necessarily lead to an increase in pupil numbers.'</i></p>

7.3	<p>If the children attend school outside the village then parents will have to have to travel to collect them if they do after school clubs and activities, whereas currently parents from the village can walk to collect them.</p>	<p>The Council acknowledges that implementation of the proposal could impact on the ability of pupils for whom Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is currently the closest school to access after school activities, due to reliance on home-to-school transport.</p> <p>As indicated in the Impact Assessment carried out in respect of this proposal <i>'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.'</i></p> <p>The majority of schools in Powys rely on some level of home-to-school transport for their pupils, and schools are usually able to work with families to provide an appropriate level of extra-curricular activities for pupils, including clubs within the school day, shared transport with other parents etc.</p>
7.4	<p>Parents who do not choose the C.I.W school in Welshpool will also have to transport their children to school daily. We are teaching our children to preserve the planet and travelling in cars etc is not going to help this.</p>	<p>As indicated in the Statutory Notice published in respect of this proposal:</p> <p><i>'Transport arrangements will be in accordance with the Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy.'</i></p> <p><i>The Council will provide transport for Church in Wales provision for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion Church in Wales School who wish to transfer to Welshpool Church in Wales Primary School. This will be provided on a case by case basis using the Council's discretionary</i></p>

		<p><i>powers under Section 6 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008.'</i></p> <p>Transport would be provided to all pupils to their closest school.</p>
7.5	I trust all objections will be read carefully and are taken into consideration whilst making a decision. Our children are our future and need to feel they belong to a community that cares.	All objections received are included in this Objection Report, along with the Council's response to the points raised. The Objection Report will be considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with implementation of the proposal.
7.6	From a presentation I attended on zoom given by the former head teacher the school are doing well and the children appear very happy.	The Council notes these positive comments regarding the current provision at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.

Objection 8

Issue	Points raised	Council response
8.1	<p>The Diocese of St Asaph wish to register their strong objection to the closure of this school.</p> <p>As you are aware we set out our concerns about the proposals in our response to the consultation. Those concerns remain and in particular, I would like to highlight the following:-</p> <p>Castle Caereinion is located in a rural setting and serves a close knit community. We are aware that there are new</p>	<p>The Council notes these comments about housing developments in the village.</p> <p>Comments about housing developments in Castle Caereinion were received during the consultation period – these were listed in section 6.3 of the Consultation Report produced in respect of this proposal.</p> <p>As indicated in the Consultation Report, <i>'Information received from the Council's housing department suggests</i></p>

	<p>builds planned and it is likely that pupil numbers will increase at Castle Caereinion as a result of these housing developments. This will then improve the budget per pupil position, a concern raised by the Local Authority.</p>	<p><i>there are approximately 40 housing developments already completed, underway or planned in the area. Some of these are affordable housing'</i></p> <p>and</p> <p><i>'The Council uses a pupil-yield ratio of .45 children per new house built. This is an estimate and does not necessarily lead to an increase in pupil numbers.'</i></p>
8.2	<p>As a Church in Wales school, the school is actively involved with the local church for key services such as Harvest, Easter, Christingle etc., where the children take a leading role in delivering the service. The Church is also involved in RE lessons and other related activities. This close relationship and involvement with the local church will be denied to many pupils if the school were to close.</p>	<p>The Council notes these comments regarding the links between Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and the local church, and the potential impact on pupils' involvement with the church should they transfer to alternative provision.</p> <p>Alternative Church in Wales places are available in the area at Welshpool C. in W. School. Should the Council proceed with the proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, pupils could apply for a place at this school, which would ensure continued access to Church in Wales provision.</p>
8.3	<p>The supposed issues with the school building were identified as a weakness in the consultation options. However, whilst the school building is not a modern building, its ability to meet the needs of the new curriculum are not a concern for us.</p>	<p>Comment noted. Issues with the building is only one of the reasons for the proposal.</p> <p>Whilst the school building was assessed to be in good condition by the Welsh Government's condition survey carried out in 2009, the Council recently commissioned an updated condition survey of the school building. This was carried out in the autumn term 2020. The survey assessed</p>

		the condition of all three blocks at the school as condition C.
8.4	In addition, the school has developed specialised provision which is very successful in meeting the needs of ALN pupils who thrive in a small school environment.	<p>The Council notes this positive comment about Castle Caereinion C. in W. School's ability to meet the needs of ALN pupils. However, all schools, regardless of size, would be able to provide for the needs of their pupils.</p> <p>The Powys SEN/ALN strategy, agreed by Cabinet in November 2021, is committed to improving the provision for all pupils with SEN/ALN. This includes pupils who can be educated in mainstream classes as well as pupils who require specialist provision. Pupils with ALN at all schools, regardless of size, would have the appropriate support to meet their needs.</p> <p>Should the school close, the Council would ensure that the requirements for pupils with additional needs were met at whichever school they may choose to attend.</p>
8.5	One of our continuing concerns as a Diocese, is that there is no reference to a designated alternative Church in Wales school. This would be Welshpool Church in Wales Primary, and as such, parents should have the option to choose this school without having to meet the costs of that transport. It has been noted that the Statutory Notice states that transport will be provided on a case-by-case consideration. This means that parents have no certainty when choosing an alternative Church in Wales School.	<p>Should the Council proceed with implementation of the proposal, parents would be able to express a preference for a school of their choice for their children, and this choice will be accommodated where possible.</p> <p>Any pupils wishing to continue to access Church in Wales provision could express a preference for Welshpool C. in W. School. There are sufficient places available at this school for all current pupils at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, therefore there is no reason to believe that any</p>

		<p>pupils wishing to transfer to Welshpool C. in W. School could not be accommodated.</p> <p>As indicated in the Statutory Notice published in respect of this proposal:</p> <p><i>‘Transport arrangements will be in accordance with the Council’s Home-to-School Transport Policy.</i></p> <p><i>The Council will provide transport for Church in Wales provision for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion Church in Wales School who wish to transfer to Welshpool Church in Wales Primary School. This will be provided on a case by case basis using the Council’s discretionary powers under Section 6 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008.’</i></p> <p>This clearly indicates that the Council will provide transport for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School who wish to continue to access Church in Wales provision at Welshpool C. in W. School.</p>
8.6	<p>Parents may be forced to opt for Berriew as their next nearest school on the basis that they will be able to secure free school transport, however, this is a county primary and not a CiW school. This removes parental choice for a Church in Wales school place on economic grounds.</p>	<p>As above – the Council has clearly indicated in the Statutory Notice published in respect of this proposal that transport will be provided for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School who wish to access Church in Wales provision at Welshpool C. in W. School.</p>

8.7	<p>Another ongoing concern relates to the impact on children of having to travel further to school. Children at Castle Caereinion currently enjoy a breadth of activities and can actively participate because the majority live within or very near to Castle Caereinion. Whichever school they choose, they will need to be transported to and from school necessitating a longer school day.</p> <p>Furthermore, if they wish to engage in after school activities, this will be determined on the basis of whether their parents are able to collect them from school given the distances they will live from their nearest school. This assumes that parents' working hours, ownership of a car and financial position, makes that possible. It is likely then, that for some children, they will not be able to enjoy the same opportunities as their peers.</p>	<p>It is acknowledged that implementation of the proposal would lead to additional travel for pupils for whom Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is currently their closest school.</p> <p>There are a number of alternative primary schools within 10 miles of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, and should the school close, it is not considered that the length and nature of journeys for pupils to alternative provision would be excessive.</p> <p>The Council acknowledges that implementation of the proposal could impact on the ability of pupils for whom Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is currently the closest school to access after school activities, due to reliance on home-to-school transport.</p> <p>As indicated in the Impact Assessment carried out in respect of this proposal <i>'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.'</i></p> <p>The majority of schools in Powys rely on some level of home-to-school transport for their pupils, and schools are usually able to work with families to provide an appropriate level of extra-curricular activities for pupils, including clubs within the school day, shared transport with other parents etc.</p>
8.8	<p>It is our view that there is a strong case to retain this school given its location, the community it serves (which</p>	<p>There are a number of alternative schools located within 10 miles of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School which pupils</p>

	<p>is growing), and the greater distances children will need to travel to a new school. The alternatives will have a detrimental impact on children's well-being and ability to participate in extra curricular activities with their peers.</p>	<p>could access should the Council proceed with the proposal to close the school. Should the school close, it is not considered that the length and nature of journeys for pupils to alternative provision would be excessive.</p> <p>Powys is a large, rural county, and many pupils and parents across the county rely on home to school transport to access both primary and secondary provision, with some required to travel distances which are significantly greater than the distance from Castle Caereinion C. in W. School to the nearest alternative schools.</p>
8.9	<p>The closure of the school will decimate the heart of the community and could deter future families from moving to the area.</p>	<p>The Council notes these concerns about the potential impact on the community.</p> <p>The draft Community Impact Assessment included with the consultation documentation has identified the potential impact of the proposed closure of the school on the community. This was updated to reflect comments received during the consultation period, and an updated version was considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal.</p>
8.10	<p>As a minimum, we would expect parents to be offered places at Welshpool Church in Wales school as a designated alternative school with the assurance of free transport. If this was not offered, then the Diocese would be of the opinion that the Council have not met the provisions of the School Organisation Code 2018 which state that where school provision is being reduced or removed, alternative school provision of the same nature</p>	<p>See response to 8.5.</p> <p>The Council is adhering to the requirements of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code which states the following:</p> <p><i>'with reference to the nature of the schools subject to proposals, whether the alternative school-based provision is</i></p>

	<p>(language category or, if relevant, religious character), wherever possible, should remain available and accessible to pupils in the local area. If free transport is not provided, then the nearest Church in Wales School cannot be considered as accessible to pupils.</p> <p>We strongly urge the Council to reconsider its position in relation to this school and allow it time to grow and develop.</p>	<p><i>sufficient to meet existing and projected demand for schools of the same:</i></p> <p><i>a. language category as set out in “Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision” Welsh Assembly Government Information document No: 023/2007 or any successor documents; and</i></p> <p><i>b. (if relevant) designated religious character.</i></p> <p><i>Proposals should ensure that the balance of school provision reflects the balance of demand. This means that where school provision is being reduced or removed, alternative school provision of the same nature (language category or, if relevant, religious character), wherever possible, should remain available and accessible to pupils in the local area. However in some areas it may not be compatible with the cost effective provision of education to continue to maintain access to schools of the same nature.’</i></p>
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Objection 9

Issue	Points raised	Council response
9.1	<p>I object to the closure for the following reasons:</p> <p>The school forms a key part of the community which enables children in the village and surrounding area to develop a well rooted connection with the community. It plays a critical role in encouraging positive citizenship, participation and a sense of place – all vital aspects of rural life.</p>	<p>The Council notes these concerns about the potential impact on the community.</p> <p>The draft Community Impact Assessment included with the consultation documentation has identified the potential impact of the proposed closure of the school on the community. It notes the extensive community use of the Castle Caereinion school building, and extensive links</p>

		<p>between the school and the local community. This was updated to reflect comments received during the consultation period, and an updated version was considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal.</p>
9.2	<p>I contest the validity of the consultation on which this notice is drawn. The pre-cursor to this statutory notice was instigated during the pandemic at a time where the stakeholders were unable to meet in order to plan and co-ordinate a cohesive response to the proposal.</p>	<p>The Council has been developing its Strategy for Transforming Education since Estyn's inspection of Powys Education Services in 2019. It is acknowledged that it would have been preferable for the consultation process to have taken place at a time when there wasn't a global pandemic, however the consultation has been carried out in line with Welsh Government requirements.</p>
9.3	<p>The effects of the pandemic on children's education are yet to be fully understood by parents, schools, the education dept. and government – closing the school at this time is highly premature and irreversible. There is no provision any of the preparation documents to cover this unprecedented circumstance.</p>	<p>The Council accepts that any school reorganisation proposal creates a period of uncertainty for the pupils involved, and that this has been exacerbated this year due to Covid pandemic.</p> <p>Should the school close, the schools pupils would transfer to would provide support to pupils to aid their transition, ensuring a successful transition to their new school to ensure that all pupils can achieve their potential.</p> <p>The Council is monitoring the impact of Covid on all pupils, and should the Council proceed with implementation of this proposal, the Council and the school to which the pupils transfer would continue to monitor the impact of Covid on the pupils following their move to an alternative school.</p>

9.4	<p>The details on transport provisions differ in the consultation report and the statutory notice. The transport policy is vague, moveable and lacking in clarity for the parents of the children affected.</p>	<p>The commitment in respect of the provision of home to school transport is as per the Statutory Notice. It is correct that the commitment in the Statutory Notice is different to the commitment in the consultation document, this is because the Council reviewed it's position having considered the responses received during the consultation period.</p> <p>As indicated in the Statutory Notice published in respect of this proposal:</p> <p><i>'Transport arrangements will be in accordance with the Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy.</i></p> <p><i>The Council will provide transport for Church in Wales provision for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion Church in Wales School who wish to transfer to Welshpool Church in Wales Primary School. This will be provided on a case by case basis using the Council's discretionary powers under Section 6 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008.'</i></p>
9.5	<p>The further assessment document required under the School Code and used for the consultation did not 'add up' and based on negative/positive comments in the various categories actually showed that closing the school was one of the least favourable options out of the nine.</p>	<p>The School Organisation Code requires proposers to assess the original options and any reasonable alternative options against the likely impact on quality and standards of education, the community and on travel. As explained in the Code:</p> <p><i>'The purpose of this further assessment is to take account of any further information that has come forward in the consultation or otherwise.'</i></p>

		<p>The Code goes on to state that:</p> <p><i>‘The proposer is required to confirm whether it considers the implementation of the proposal, (wholly or partly) to be the most appropriate response to the reasons it identified for the proposal, and give reasons for its conclusion.’</i></p> <p>This is not based on the ratio between negative and positive comments in the assessment.</p> <p>In this case, the Council’s conclusion was as follows:</p> <p><i>‘It is confirmed that implementation of the proposal is the most appropriate response to the reasons identified for the proposal.’</i></p> <p>The Council goes on to state that:</p> <p><i>‘Having considered the issues raised in the consultation report, having carried out a further assessment of the proposal and alternative options on the likely impact on quality and standards in education, the likely impact on the community and the likely effect of different travelling arrangements, and having considered any further reasonable alternatives suggested during the consultation period, the Council’s view is that the current proposal continues to be the most appropriate response to these reasons, to ensure improved management of the Powys schools estate, and to ensure that the best possible educational opportunities can be provided to pupils living in Castle Caereinion and across Powys in the future.’</i></p>
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9.6	Powys County Council had clearly decided that they were going to close the school before taking any of the consultation comments into consideration. This is evidenced by the council initially issuing their report with their conclusion to close, despite the preceding information being incomplete/incorrect/highlighted for queries and errors.	<p>The Council had not ‘clearly decided that they were going to close the school before taking any of the consultation comments into consideration.’</p> <p>A consultation report was prepared which outlines the issues raised in the consultation responses received and provides the Council’s response to these issues. This included comments about the consultation document which were received during the consultation period. The consultation report was considered by the Council’s Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal.</p>
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Objection 10

Issue	Points raised	Council response
10.1	<p>In response to the statutory notice proposal to close Castle Caereinion CIW primary school, I write on behalf of the Trustees of the Castle Caereinion Recreation Association to object to this notice and contest the validity of the consultation on which this notice is drawn.</p> <p>The pre-cursor to this statutory notice was instigated during the pandemic at a time when the stakeholders were unable to meet in order to plan and co-ordinate a cohesive response to the proposal.</p>	<p>The Council has been developing its Strategy for Transforming Education since Estyn’s inspection of Powys Education Services in 2019. Whilst acknowledging that it would have been preferable for the consultation process to have taken place at a time when there wasn’t a global pandemic, the consultation has been carried out in line with Welsh Government requirements.</p>
10.2	<p>PCC set out in its 2018-2023 vision for Powys to be established as an innovation base for learning, research and skills and it is with great disappointment that mid-</p>	<p>The Council’s Strategy for Transforming Education was developed following engagement with a range of stakeholders. The number of schools in Powys was clearly</p>

	<p>term with the vision PCC defined an objective to rationalize primary provision. The vision clearly sets out a priority to work in partnership with schools, colleges, universities and businesses to improve career opportunities and commitment and greater focus on working in partnership with schools and the communities they serve.</p>	<p>identified as a concern during this engagement exercise, and the Strategy includes an objective to 'rationalise primary provision' in order to address this concern and ensure equity across the Powys schools estate. However, this is only one of a number of objectives within the Strategy.</p> <p>The Strategy aligns with Vision 2025. Learning and skills is one of the four objectives of Vision 2025, with the Council setting out it's intention to 'strengthen learning and skills'. The Strategy for Transforming aims to improve the provision for learners across Powys.</p>
10.3	<p>Castle Caereinion is a rural community and is built on its agricultural foundations with over 50 farms and small holdings currently operational in the ward. Agriculture has a particularly high focus on well-being due to its solitary environment and this is of paramount importance within the community of Castle Caereinion which has the school and Community Centre at its heart.</p>	<p>The Council recognises that Castle Caereinion is located in a rural area with many agricultural holdings, and recognises the school's importance within the community.</p>
10.4	<p>The school is the primary income generator for the Recreation Committee and without the school's support would leave a significant gap in income which will be very difficult to bridge with other income sources in relation to the required outgoings. Additionally, if PCC were to re-assess the relief offered to community centres this could force closure without the school's financial support.</p>	<p>A number of comments were received during the consultation period which expressed concern about the potential impact on the community centre. The Council acknowledges that the school is an important financial contributor to the Community Centre, and notes the comments regarding the relief offered by PCC to community centres.</p>

		Should the Council proceed with this proposal, the management committee of the Centre would need to consider how best to utilise the Centre, so that it remains viable.
10.5	<p>Without the recreation center, well-being in the community would most likely decline and drain the resources available with health across PCC. This is counter to the 2018-2023 vision where PCC sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing effective learning interventions will support schools to improve and produce well-qualified individuals • Committed to modernizing our schools to provide sustainable, low-carbon buildings with high quality educational environment • Support improvement of good quality, targeted education which will allow individuals to make more informed healthy life choices • Committed to ensuring our learners have equitable access to education provision regardless of their background or where they live • Council will work to ensure the co-location of council services and other services on school sites, in particular as part of new build projects so they are central to community life. 	<p>As above.</p> <p>The Council notes the concerns about the potential impact on community well-being.</p> <p>The Council does not agree that the current proposal is counter to these points which are set out in Vision 2025. The proposal's impact on Vision 2025, including health and care, is considered in the Impact Assessment document.</p>
10.6	In response to the consultation document there are a number of points which have been reported incorrectly and lead us to question the validity of the consultation	The updated condition survey did not include the community centre.

	<p>when out of date and/or incorrect information has been presented. Specifically, these relate to:</p> <p>Point 4.iii). The consultation document does not make it clear what the updated survey condition refers to or the three blocks and whether this includes the community centre where the hall is owned by the community to which the school contributes to annual fees.</p>	
10.7	<p>Appendix A – Impact of community hall is not mentioned in appendix A.</p>	<p>Appendix A of the consultation document provides key data in respect of the schools affected by the proposal. It would not be appropriate for the proposal's possible impact on the community hall to be mentioned in this section.</p> <p>Many comments expressing concern about the proposal's impact on the community hall were received during the consultation period. These are listed in the consultation report in section 6.2. This concern is also reflected in the impact assessments.</p>
10.8	<p>Appendix A 12.3 states that no other trusts or charitable interests are affected by the closure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the community hall is under a village hall trust this should be taken into account in Appendix A 12.3 – in the current document it says that no trusts are affected as the community centre is a trust this should be listed in the impact assessment 	<p>The reference here to '12.3' relates to the Options Appraisal document considered by the Council's Cabinet on the 9th February 2021.</p> <p>The question to be responded to in the Options Appraisal document is: <i>'Whether the school / schools involved are subject to any trust or charitable interests which might be affected by the proposals, for example in relation to the use or disposal of land.'</i></p>

		<p>The Council's response here is: <i>'The school is not subject to any trust or charitable interests which might be affected by the proposals.'</i></p> <p>This was also addressed on page 27 of the Consultation Document:</p> <p><i>'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?'</i></p> <p><i>Castle Caereinion C.W. School is not subject to any trust or charitable interest which might be affected in relation to the use or disposal of the land.'</i></p> <p>The objection relates to the community hall being under a village hall trust, however the question in the Options Appraisal document and the Consultation Document relates specifically to the school and not the Community Centre. Castle Caereinion C.W. School is not subject to any trust or charitable interest which might be affected in relation to the use or disposal of the land.</p>
10.9	<p>Appendix B – SWOT analysis does not consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a socio-economic impact to the community not implications to community center with the primary revenue stream being removed 	<p>These comments regarding the SWOT analysis are noted. SWOT analyses were included in the Options Appraisal document considered by Cabinet on the 9th February, and in the Consultation Document published in respect of this proposal. A number of comments about the SWOT</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opportunities to leverage technology and on-line learning capabilities that have been implemented during the covid-19 pandemic • does not stipulate that PCC under the transport for school policy will only provide transport to one elected school in the area. It would appear that transport provision now differs between the consultation report and the statutory notice. The transport policy is vague, moveable and lacking in clarity for the parents of the children affected. • does not consider creating learning specialties in specific schools to provide learning areas of excellence for pupils to participate with. This does not necessarily mean all learning is limited to one location to create a center of excellence. • incorrectly states community hall using refuse provision at school • does not consider the financial viability of the hall should the school close and impact on community • there is acknowledgement of the impact of the community and the potential loss of community facilities - but there is no specific mention here of the community hall • assessment of SWOT analysis is subjective and not supported by qualitative data to make a balanced assessment 	<p>assessments were received during the consultation period, these are listed in section 15.1.3 of the Consultation Report along with the Council's response. The factors listed here are referenced in the Consultation Report.</p>
10.10	<p>Appendix C</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No mention of the community hall 	<p>Whilst there is no reference to the impact on the Community Hall in Appendix C of the Consultation Document, a number of comments were received during the consultation period which expressed concern about the</p>

		<p>potential impact on the community centre. These comments are listed and responded to in the consultation report, and are reflected in the impact assessment document.</p> <p>In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code, a further assessment of the proposal and alternative options was included in the Consultation Report, when Appendix C of the Consultation Document was reviewed. The revised assessments do refer to the potential impact on the community hall.</p>
10.11	<p>Appendix D</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain inaccuracies which have been rectified by PCC including safeguarding where there was an issue of open access to the school to which the Diocese of St Asaph have clearly stated there is separate access to the community hall and that the school has sole use of it during the day. 	<p>It is accepted that there is separate access to the community hall and that the school has sole use of it during the day.</p>
10.12	<p>It is the assessment of the Recreation Committee that PCC have not completed a thorough analysis leading to the release of the consultation document and without conducting a detailed impact assessment on potential implications to fund the community hall the consultation process should rescind the proposal and continue status quo. Without a formal impact assessment, the school closure could lead to the closure of the community hall which would bring significant bearing on the community and well-being on members of the agriculture community</p>	<p>The Council has carried out a number of impact assessments as part of this process, including an integrated impact assessment, an equalities impact assessment and a community impact assessment, which was carried out with input from the school. These have been updated as the process has moved forward to reflect comments received during the process.</p> <p>A number of comments were received during the consultation period which expressed concern about the potential impact on the community centre. The Council</p>

	<p>which has the highest suicide rates as a profession in the UK.</p>	<p>acknowledges that the school is an important financial contributor to the Community Centre. Should the Council proceed with this proposal, the management committee of the Centre would need to consider how best to utilise the Centre, so that it remains viable.</p>
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Objection 11

Issue	Points raised	Council response
11.1	<p>If this school closes and those little children have to get up early in a morning to get on a school bus then be thrust into a class room with 30-40 other pupils, possibly not being with their friends and others in class, they don't know their teacher and are afraid to put up their hand to ask if they are no sure of the work they are supposed to be doing, they will be shy or embarrassed. Those children will get left behind, and then those report will say "could have tried harder". But whereas if they are in their village school they will have their friends around them and a teacher they know, she will be walking around them and sitting beside them and giving them hands on learning.</p>	<p>Many pupils in Powys travel to their school by bus, without detriment. There are a number of alternative primary schools within 10 miles of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, and should the school close, it is not considered that the length and nature of journeys for pupils to alternative provision would be excessive.</p> <p>Should the Council proceed with the proposal, pupils would transfer to larger schools, and it is likely that they would attend larger classes. However all schools, regardless of size, would be able to provide for the needs of their pupils. Smaller class sizes would not necessarily mean that pupils receive a more individual education, as there are a number of year groups and a wider age range of pupils in the class.</p> <p>The Council acknowledges that any school reorganisation proposal leads to a period of uncertainty for those affected by the proposal. Should the school close, the schools pupils would transfer to would provide support to pupils to aid their</p>

		transition, ensuring a successful transition to their new school to ensure that all pupils can achieve their potential.
11.2	They have the church nearby which they go to learn about Christian life, the church needs them, and those young people need the church, it is so important for our young people today.	The Council notes the links between Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and the nearby church.
11.3	Please I beg of you all to think about what you are doing to these young children. Before you close this school, is it pence at pupils	The current proposal is being taken forward in order to implement the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys, which aims to improve learner entitlement and experience across Powys.

Objection 12

Issue	Points raised	Council response
12.1	<p>I am writing a letter of objection to Powys Country Council to express my disapproval of the plans to close Castle Caereinion Church in Wales School.</p> <p>I am appalled to learn of the reasons on which the closure is based.</p>	<p>The current proposal is being taken forward in order to implement the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys, which was developed following engagement with a range of stakeholders.</p> <p>The proposal is intended to address the challenges identified in respect of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School which are outlined in the Consultation Document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Low pupils numbers ii) High budget per pupil iii) Issues with the building iv) Combined age classes v) Leadership

		<p>Following consideration of a number of options, the Council's preferred option is to close Castle Caereinion CiW School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools. The reasons for this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- To address the issue of low pupil numbers- To reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools- To realise a financial saving to the Council- To enable pupils to attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum- To enable pupils to attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities- To enable pupils to attend schools with better quality accommodation- The proposal meets all of the Critical Success Factors <p>The Council has carried out a full consultation in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code.</p> <p>A consultation report was prepared which outlines the issues raised in the consultation responses received and provides the Council's response to these issues. This was considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal.</p>
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12.2	<p>The primary school is the heart of the both the village and the community, it is fundamental that it is kept open during a time of enormous planned expansion within Castle Caereinion.</p>	<p>The Council notes these concerns about the potential impact on the community.</p> <p>The draft Community Impact Assessment included with the consultation documentation has identified the potential impact of the proposed closure of the school on the community. It notes the extensive community use of the Castle Caereinion school building, and extensive links between the school and the local community. This was updated to reflect comments received during the consultation period, and an updated version was considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal.</p>
12.3	<p>There are plans for over forty new homes to be built which consist of family homes that will undoubtedly cause the number of pupils to increase. The appeal of a thriving and safe primary school will be lost should the decision for its closure go ahead.</p>	<p>Comments about housing developments in Castle Caereinion were received during the consultation period – these were listed in section 6.3 of the Consultation Report produced in respect of this proposal.</p> <p>As indicated in the Consultation Report, <i>'Information received from the Council's housing department suggests there are approximately 40 housing developments already completed, underway or planned in the area. Some of these are affordable housing'</i></p> <p>and</p> <p><i>'The Council uses a pupil-yield ratio of .45 children per new house built. This is an estimate and does not necessarily</i></p>

		<i>lead to an increase in pupil numbers.’</i> The school would continue to be a small school of two classes.
12.4	As we have recently lost our local shop, the importance of keeping our school open has been brought to attention more than ever. To transport children to a different village or town is to take them away from their home and their local community. Myself and my family attended Llanfair Caereinion High School and found that we did not feel fully part of their neighbourhood despite attending school there for five years. The feeling of unfamiliarity is exacerbated among children and does not seem to have been fully considered.	See response to 12.2.
12.5	Powys is the biggest county in the entire country and yet rural schools, not just Castle Caereinion, are planned to close on a large scale at the detriment of the children and families which inhabit the communities which make up the heart of rural Wales.	<p>The Council notes these comments about rural schools and recognises the role of rural schools in their communities. The current proposal in respect of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is being taken forward in order to implement the Council’s Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys, which was developed following engagement with a range of stakeholders.</p> <p>The number of schools in Powys was clearly identified as a concern during this engagement exercise, and the Strategy includes an objective to ‘rationalise primary provision’ in order to address this concern and ensure equity across the Powys schools estate. However, this is only one of a number of objectives within the Strategy.</p> <p>The Council is currently taking forward a number of proposals in order to implement its Strategy for Transforming Education. Whilst some of these impact on</p>

		<p>rural schools, other proposals affect schools located in more urban locations.</p> <p>A significant number of Powys schools are identified as rural schools, including a number of the alternative schools pupils are likely to attend should there no longer be a school at Castle Caereinion, and almost all schools serve at least some pupils who live in rural areas.</p>
12.6	<p>The importance of small rural schools cannot be understated, the personal relationships and understanding between peers and teachers is vital for their development at an early age and beyond. The skills acquired through our time at Castle Caereinion C in W School have shaped our entire lives and allowed us to maintain the sense of community which is currently under threat. The bond which is formed at that school is invaluable and lasts a lifetime, to lose our school after it has been open for over 130 years would be heart-breaking.</p>	<p>The Council is pleased to note the positive comments regarding Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. However, all schools, regardless of size, would be able to provide for the needs of their pupils.</p>
12.7	<p>The environmental impacts of transporting children as young as four appear to have been ignored also. At a time where the subject of the environment is unavoidable, why would such young children be required to take public transport to a school in a different community when there is one within the village?</p>	<p>The Council recognises the possible environmental impact of the proposal. As indicated in the impact assessment document:</p> <p><i>'Implementation of the proposal would require additional travel for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School for whom this is their closest school. This would have a negative environmental impact as more home to school transport would need to be provided to transport pupils to their nearest alternative school.'</i></p>

		<p>The assessment also states that:</p> <p><i>‘The number of pupils requiring additional transport would be relatively small, and it is possible that they could be accommodated on transport which is already operating.’</i></p> <p>It is accepted that there are some pupils who can currently walk or cycle to Castle Caereinion C.in W. School, who will not be able to do so to their alternative school.</p> <p>Whilst the Council notes the concerns regarding the environmental impact of the proposal, any increase in carbon footprint is likely to be minimal. It should also be noted that school buildings themselves have a carbon footprint as well as transportation.</p>
12.8	<p>The cost of buses to villages and towns several miles away from their own seems illogical when there is a fully functioning and very successful school in the heart of the village.</p>	<p>The Council acknowledges that implementation of the proposal would result in additional travel for pupils for whom Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is currently the closest school.</p> <p>Should the school close, free home-to-school transport would be provided to the nearest alternative school, in accordance with the Home to School Transport Policy. The estimated cost of this transport is £32,300 per annum. However, even after taking into account these additional transport costs, it is estimated that the implementation of the proposal would deliver annual revenue savings to the Council of around £58,100.</p>

12.9	During the Covid-19 pandemic the children have been displaced enough without a normal routine and unable to play on the playground which is on their doorstep. What are the perceived best interests of the children if not the factors I have raised.	Comment noted. The Council fully acknowledges the disruption caused to children by the Covid-19 pandemic.
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Objection 13

Issue	Points raised	Council response
13.1	The school is an integral part of the village, community and church. The youngsters who attend are seen and heard during the day and know and are known within our community. It cannot be a good thing to educate pupils as young as our school's pupils so far from their community with the resulting alienation from their community.	<p>The Council notes these concerns about the potential impact on the community.</p> <p>The draft Community Impact Assessment included with the consultation documentation has identified the potential impact of the proposed closure of the school on the community. It notes the extensive community use of the Castle Caereinion school building, and extensive links between the school and the local community. This was updated to reflect comments received during the consultation period, and an updated version was considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal.</p>
13.2	School and church here in Castle have always been inextricably linked with regular Christian input from local Clergy as well as the pupils joining in with the church for specific festivals and events throughout the year, to say nothing of the annual Leavers Service and presentation of books to those going to high school. Should the school	The Council notes these comments regarding the links between Castle Caereinion C. in W. School and the local church.

	<p>close then these local children will miss out on an essential and fundamental part of their upbringing, regardless of whether they or their families are regular church attenders. The Christian input is essential to ensuring they grow to be citizens that we can all be proud of, but pupils who are forced to move to non-church schools will be thrust into the maelstrom of learning where Christian beliefs are left to the back burner at best.</p>	
13.3	<p>Pupils moved to another Church school will miss out on the community life and become strangers in their own community. Messy Church, a national movement for involving youngsters in church life, has been a regular part of the offering from members of the church to our local pupils, normally occurring immediately after close of school for the day, something which will cease should the school closure proceed. This timing always ensured that the youngsters were all together and within a minute of the church. Parents have supported these get-togethers as part of a valuable school/church/community liaison exercise. Schooling our pupils in other locations will ensure that there will be no possibility of these young people ever getting together in their church for a light hearted learning event. General church services can be all that will be on offer to them most of the time!</p>	As above.
13.4	<p>I really believe that now is NOT the time to consider closure given the additional housing shortly to be constructed.</p>	<p>Comments about housing developments in Castle Caereinion were received during the consultation period – these were listed in section 6.3 of the Consultation Report produced in respect of this proposal.</p>

		<p>As indicated in the Consultation Report, <i>‘Information received from the Council’s housing department suggests there are approximately 40 housing developments already completed, underway or planned in the area. Some of these are affordable housing’</i></p> <p>and</p> <p><i>‘The Council uses a pupil-yield ratio of .45 children per new house built. This is an estimate and does not necessarily lead to an increase in pupil numbers.’</i> The school would continue to be a small two class school.</p>
13.5	<p>The need to mitigate carbon emissions on road journeys and avoidance of officially provided school transport costs.</p>	<p>The Council recognises the possible environmental impact of the proposal. As indicated in the impact assessment document:</p> <p><i>‘Implementation of the proposal would require additional travel for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School for whom this is their closest school. This would have a negative environmental impact as more home to school transport would need to be provided to transport pupils to their nearest alternative school.’</i></p> <p>The assessment also states that:</p> <p><i>‘The number of pupils requiring additional transport would be relatively small, and it is possible that they could be accommodated on transport which is already operating.’</i></p>

		<p>It is accepted that there are some pupils who can currently walk or cycle to Castle Caereinion C.in W. School, who will not be able to do so to their alternative school.</p> <p>Whilst the Council notes the concerns regarding the environmental impact of the proposal, any increase in carbon footprint is likely to be minimal. It should also be noted that school buildings themselves have a carbon footprint as well as transportation.</p>
13.6	If nothing else can be done please consider linking Castle school with the Welshpool C in W school and keeping our youngsters educated in their own community. It is a good school and nothing good will come out of its closure.	Federating and/or merging Castle Caereinion Church in Wales School have both been considered as part of the consultation process. These options have been discounted as they do not address the challenges identified in respect of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.

Objection 14

Issue	Points raised	Council response
14.1	<p>I write to strongly object to the proposed closure of Castle Caereinion Church in Wales School.</p> <p>I cannot stress how important it is to have a school in our community. This school IS our community and to take away our school is to unjust, unfair and highly detrimental to our children's future. Lifelong friendships are made in this school and pupils are given a real understanding of community life, our community, not someone else's!</p>	<p>The Council notes these concerns about the potential impact on the community.</p> <p>The draft Community Impact Assessment included with the consultation documentation has identified the potential impact of the proposed closure of the school on the community. It notes the extensive community use of the Castle Caereinion school building, and extensive links between the school and the local community. This was updated to reflect comments received during the</p>

		consultation period, and an updated version was considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal.
14.2	Should we really have to travel an absolute minimum of 6 miles a day to take our children to school when we have one on our doorstep? Is that fair on pupils? Is that fair on the parents? Is that fair on the communities we will have to drive through 4 times a day?	<p>It is acknowledged that implementation of the proposal would lead to additional travel for pupils for whom Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is currently their closest school.</p> <p>There are a number of alternative primary schools within 10 miles of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, and should the school close, it is not considered that the length and nature of journeys for pupils to alternative provision would be excessive.</p> <p>Powys is a large, rural county, and many pupils and parents across the county rely on home to school transport to access both primary and secondary provision, with some required to travel distances which are significantly greater than the distance from Castle Caereinion C. in W. School to the nearest alternative schools.</p>
14.3	The village itself currently has planning permission for 28 new houses, with 6 currently under construction. Where will these children go to school?	<p>Comments about housing developments in Castle Caereinion were received during the consultation period – these were listed in section 6.3 of the Consultation Report produced in respect of this proposal.</p> <p>Should the Council proceed with the proposal, pupils living in these houses would be able to apply for a place at one of the alternative schools in the area, and these applications would be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Admissions Policy.</p>

14.4	I would be pushed to find a child who has not excelled in Castle Caereinion School, certainly not in my lifetime, with many going on to higher education and university. My old school friends are now teachers, college lecturers and local business owners. My daughters friends, all Castle Caereinion pupils are now starting on their own career paths, all of which began in our small community school.	Comment noted. The quality of provision at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is not one of the reasons why the Council is proposing to close the school.
14.5	I know you will just quickly read this objection and file it away somewhere as the decision has already been made, but 'hand on heart' how can this be the right thing for our community? The day our school closes will be a very sad day indeed.	All objections received are included in this Objection Report, along with the Council's response to the points raised. The Objection Report will be considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with implementation of the proposal.

Objection 15

Issue	Points raised	Council response
15.1	<p>I am writing to you today to object the proposed notice to close Castle Caereinion CIW primary school.</p> <p>I ask that the federation of Welshpool CIW primary school is looked again. I believe this would be in the best of interest for our community and of the children attending the school and would also remain open for future generations of younger families would move to Castle Caereinion.</p>	<p>The option of federating Castle Caereinion C. in W. School was considered as part of the consultation process, and was reassessed in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code following completion of the Consultation Report.</p> <p>This option was not taken forward as federation would not address the challenges identified in respect of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.</p>

15.2	I remember from the last proposal to close Castle Caereinion CIW primary school, it was given a 5 year notice to turn things around and increase numbers this has only been 3 years!	There has been no proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School within the last 5 years.
15.3	<p>Transport is still a massive uncertainty that the local authorities have not been sincere about from the consultation period which has changed several times since and again changed at issuing statutory notice, but still leaves parents an uncertainty if free transport is available.</p> <p>Providing transport on a case by case basis is completely unacceptable, and should therefore be looked at again and re-written and transport is provided free to all children to whichever school the wish to go to for there education.</p>	<p>The commitment in respect of the provision of home to school transport is as per the Statutory Notice. It is correct that the commitment in the Statutory Notice is different to the commitment in the consultation document, this is because the Council reviewed its position having considered the responses received during the consultation period.</p> <p>As indicated in the Statutory Notice published in respect of this proposal:</p> <p><i>'Transport arrangements will be in accordance with the Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy.</i></p> <p><i>The Council will provide transport for Church in Wales provision for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion Church in Wales School who wish to transfer to Welshpool Church in Wales Primary School. This will be provided on a case by case basis using the Council's discretionary powers under Section 6 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008.'</i></p> <p>It is not correct that transport would be provided on a case by case basis – transport would be provided in accordance with the Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy to a pupil's closest school, however the Council has</p>

		<p>acknowledged the need for additional consideration in order to ensure continued access to Church in Wales provision. As indicated in the Statutory Notice, the reference to providing transport on a case by case basis would only apply to pupils wishing to transfer to Welshpool Church in Wales Primary School.</p>
15.4	<p>You are proposing to close our school, for no reason but to provide financial gain to support building new school(s) in Welshpool, were the monies could of supported all rural schools and Castle Caereinion could and was on the way to meet the new curriculum with ease.</p> <p>I hope you consider my points, and the school remains open.</p>	<p>A revenue saving to the Council is only one of a number of reasons for the proposal.</p> <p>The current proposal is being taken forward in order to implement the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys, which was developed following engagement with a range of stakeholders.</p> <p>The proposal is intended to address the challenges identified in respect of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School which are outlined in the Consultation Document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Low pupils numbers ii) High budget per pupil iii) Issues with the building iv) Combined age classes v) Leadership <p>Following consideration of a number of options, the Council's preferred option is to close Castle Caereinion CiW School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools. The reasons for this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To address the issue of low pupil numbers

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools - To realise a financial saving to the Council - To enable pupils to attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum - To enable pupils to attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities - To enable pupils to attend schools with better quality accommodation - The proposal meets all of the Critical Success Factors
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Objection 16

Issue	Points raised	Council response
16.1	<p>Further to the decision made by Powys County Council's Cabinet in July 2021, and subsequent publication of the Statutory Notice proposing to close Castle Caereinion Church in Wales School, we are writing to inform you Castle Caereinion Community Council wish to formally object to the closure and the reasons for our objection are as follows:</p> <p>Transport</p> <p>Throughout the consultation period PCC have consistently stated that transport would only be provided to the nearest school – Berriew, and gives no option for Welshpool CIW, Llanfair or Guilsfield:</p>	<p>The commitment in respect of the provision of home to school transport is as per the Statutory Notice.</p> <p>It is correct that the commitment in the Statutory Notice is different to the commitment in the consultation document / consultation report, this is because the Council reviewed it's position having considered the responses received during the consultation period.</p> <p>As indicated in the Statutory Notice published in respect of this proposal:</p>

However, the Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy provides transport to a pupil's nearest or catchment school and does not provide transport to denominational schools specifically. If a parent chose a school that is not their nearest school, then they would be responsible for ensuring their child(ren) are transported to that school. It is recognised that if a parent didn't drive, or have access to a car, then they would have to make alternative arrangements which could include private taxi/shared transport with other parents. The Council recognises that this may potentially have an economic impact on the parent and will therefore use its discretionary powers under the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008.

PCC have changed this within the statutory notice: The nearest alternative schools for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled Schools would be as follows: Berriew C.P. School Community Primary English Medium; Welshpool C. in W. School Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled English Medium; Guilsfield C.P. School Community Primary English Medium; Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School1 Community Primary Dual Stream 1 From 31st August 2022 Llanfair Caereinion Community Primary School will be discontinued and a new dual stream community school for pupils aged 4-18 years of age will operate on the current sites of Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School. Details of any other measures proposed to be taken to increase the number of school places at the nearest alternative schools The expectation is that the number of pupils transferring to

'Transport arrangements will be in accordance with the Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy.

The Council will provide transport for Church in Wales provision for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion Church in Wales School who wish to transfer to Welshpool Church in Wales Primary School. This will be provided on a case by case basis using the Council's discretionary powers under Section 6 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008.'

The Council does not agree that this statement causes ambiguity and uncertainty. Transport will be provided in accordance with the Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy, which provides transport to a pupil's 'nearest suitable school or catchment school'. The Statutory Notice also includes a statement stating that the Council will provide transport for Church in Wales provision for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion Church in Wales Primary School who wish to transfer to Welshpool Church in Wales Primary School.

The Council does not agree that this is unfair and discriminatory – to the contrary it provides an additional choice to pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.

	<p><i>each of the nearest alternative schools would be small, and therefore the impact on these schools would not be significant. Therefore, no measures are proposed to be taken to increase the number of school places available on consequence of the proposed discontinuance of Castle Caereinion Church in Wales school. Home-to-School Transport Arrangements Transport arrangements will be in accordance with the Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy. The Council will provide transport for Church in Wales provision for pupils currently attending Castle Caereinion Church in Wales School who wish to transfer to Welshpool Church in Wales Primary School. This will be provided on a case-by-case basis using the Council's discretionary powers under Section 6 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008.</i></p> <p>We have concerns with this statement. There is increased ambiguity and uncertainty when cases are determined on a 'case-by-case' basis. At such a stressful and difficult time, families need clarity. Within our community, we have families who are under increased financial pressure and will be forced to make their decision based on their financial situation instead of what may suit their child's needs. This is unfair and discriminatory.</p>	
16.2	<p>Further consideration to a Federation School is required</p> <p>PCC looked at this in the consultation period (page 203 option 2 7.1) and appear to have reached the conclusion this is not the right solution for Castle CIW school. We do not believe this has been given sufficient consideration.</p>	<p>As required by the School Organisation Code, the Council carried out a further assessment of the proposal and alternatives in the consultation report, and revised assessments of the likely impact of each option on quality and standards, the community and different travelling</p>

	<p>Within the consultation report the following points were stated:</p> <p>Likely impact on quality and standards <i>The impact on quality and standards would be minimal. Castle Caereinion C. in W. School would continue to operate as a standalone school; however, the school would be federated with Welshpool C. in W. school, meaning that one joint governing body would be responsible for both schools. There would also be the potential for shared leadership across the two schools. Establishment of the federation could lead to opportunities to share staff / resources across the federation, which would have a positive impact on quality and standards.</i></p> <p>Likely impact on the community <i>The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Castle Caereinion. However, one joint governing body would be responsible for both schools, therefore there could be a perceived reduction in community involvement in management of the school, depending on the makeup of the federated governing body.</i></p> <p>Likely impact of different travelling arrangements <i>There would be no impact on travel arrangements – pupils would continue to attend Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.</i></p>	<p>arrangements are provided in section 7.1 of the consultation report.</p> <p>Having carried out this further assessment, the Council's view, as explain in section 7.3 is as follows:</p> <p><i>'It is confirmed that implementation of the proposal is the most appropriate response to the reasons identified for the proposal.'</i></p> <p>The Council goes on to state that:</p> <p><i>'Having considered the issues raised in the consultation report, having carried out a further assessment of the proposal and alternative options on the likely impact on quality and standards in education, the likely impact on the community and the likely effect of different travelling arrangements, and having considered any further reasonable alternatives suggested during the consultation period, the Council's view is that the current proposal continues to be the most appropriate response to these reasons, to ensure improved management of the Powys schools estate, and to ensure that the best possible educational opportunities can be provided to pupils living in Castle Caereinion and across Powys in the future.'</i></p>
16.3	Community Impact Assessment	An initial community impact assessment was prepared for consideration by Cabinet on the 9 th February 2021. This

	<p>Our school and community centre are at the heart of our village and is important for the health and wellbeing of everyone. The community council have not been involved in the preparation of a community impact assessment, nor have we had sight of the community impact assessment that you state was prepared... <i>A Community Impact Assessment has been prepared as part of the proposal which considers the impact of the possible closure of the school on the community.</i></p>	<p>draft community impact assessment was prepared with input received from the school and was published with the Cabinet papers therefore was available to anyone who wished to view it.</p> <p>Further to this, a draft impact assessment document was published with the consultation documentation. This included the draft community impact assessment, as well as an integrated impact assessment which also considers impact on the community. This document was available to all stakeholders as part of the consultation documentation, and was referenced within the consultation document itself.</p> <p>A number of comments relating to the proposal's potential impact on the community were received during the consultation period. These are listed in the consultation report prepared in respect of this proposal, as well as the Council's response to the issues raised. The impact assessment document was subsequently updated to reflect comments received during the consultation period, and the updated impact assessment document, as well as the full consultation report which outlined the comments about the impact on the community which were received during the consultation period, were considered by Cabinet in July 2021. This has ensured that the school community have had the opportunity to input into the community impact assessment, including the community council..</p>
16.4	<p>Announcing a proposed closure during a lockdown The timing of the consultation of the proposed closure is poorly judged. To undertake the consultation part way through a lockdown is an inappropriate way of engaging a</p>	<p>The Council has been developing its Strategy for Transforming Education since Estyn's inspection of Powys Education Services in 2019. It is acknowledged that it would have been preferable for the consultation process to have</p>

	<p>community. Our local discussions have taken place virtually as we have not been permitted to have community gatherings or meetings. Not all residents have access to online facilities or are not confident in using them, therefore a number of residents have been excluded from participating in the consultation process due to lack of technology. Powys County Council's decision to choose to launch the consultation during a lockdown has led to an unfair bias towards closure.</p>	<p>taken place at a time when there wasn't a global pandemic, the consultation has been carried out in line with Welsh Government requirements.</p> <p>The Council does not agree that there has been an 'unfair bias towards closure'. A consultation report was prepared which outlined the issues raised during the consultation period and provided the Council's response to these issues. This was considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal.</p>
16.5	<p>The school's reputation for supporting pupils Castle Caereinion School is a wonderful village school in a beautiful rural setting which supports local families and children in the community. The school enjoys a peaceful setting with stimulating outdoor learning areas including a pond and forest area to develop interests in nature and the environment. As a small school it provides a nurturing environment particularly for children with SEN, for which the school is particularly strong in supporting. The school provides an essential local educational service within a rural setting, supporting local families.</p>	<p>The Council notes these positive comments regarding Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.</p>
16.6	<p>Impact on the health and wellbeing of school children Like all children across Wales, our pupils have had an extraordinary year in terms of the impact of the pandemic on their education, routine, mental health, wellbeing and social interaction. Powys County Council should be doing everything it can to provide stability and reassurance to learners and should not be providing further uncertainty and increased anxiety with a proposed closure at this</p>	<p>The Council accepts that any school reorganisation proposal creates a period of uncertainty for the pupils involved, and that this is exacerbated this year due to the Covid pandemic.</p> <p>However, the Council would expect that pupils are fully supported by their teachers and other staff at the school</p>

	<p>time. The subsequent upheaval of having to move schools for children will cause stress and anxiety and affect our children's health and wellbeing and provide 12 months of worry and uncertainty.</p>	<p>during any periods of uncertainty to minimise the impact on their wellbeing.</p> <p>Should the school close, the receiving school or any other school pupils would transfer to would provide support to pupils to aid their transition, ensuring a successful transition to their new school to ensure that all pupils can achieve their potential.</p>
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Objection 17

Issue	Points raised	Council response
17.1	<p>I write to submit my formal objection to the closure of the above school. The local authority has failed meaningfully to address the concerns of the village expressed in the course of the consultation as to:</p> <p>The impact of closure on plans for supporting schoolchildren from the village and surrounding area who have suffered as a result of the Covid pandemic, and indeed publicise any such plans. Closure should not take place until any such plans have been comprehensively developed and the resources of the school taken into account in that context;</p>	<p>The Council accepts that any school reorganisation proposal creates a period of uncertainty for the pupils involved, and that this is exacerbated this year due to the Covid pandemic.</p> <p>However, the Council would expect that pupils are fully supported by their teachers and other staff at the school during any periods of uncertainty to minimise the impact on their wellbeing.</p> <p>Should the school close, the receiving school or any other school pupils would transfer to would provide support to pupils to aid their transition, ensuring a successful transition to their new school to ensure that all pupils can achieve their potential.</p>

17.2	The impact of closure on the local community, with a view to development of the community and maintenance of a balanced and diverse population, in particular, but not exclusively, in terms of age;	The Council notes these comments about the possibility of a change in the demographics of people living in Castle Caereinion, were the school to be closed.
17.3	The impact of closure on the local church and community centre;	<p>The Council acknowledges that closure of the school could impact on the church and community centre.</p> <p>These concerns were raised in the consultation period, and were reflected in the consultation report which was considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal.</p>
17.4	The impact of closure on the built environment, given that the school buildings are the property of the Powys Estate and only available for educational purposes.	<p>The Council notes this concern about the impact of closure of the school on the built environment.</p> <p>The Castle Caereinion C. in W. School building is owned by the Diocese of St Asaph. Should the Council proceed with the proposal to close the school, the Diocese would need to determine the building's future use.</p>
17.5	<p>The local authority has further failed to take account of the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 in its deliberations as to closure.</p> <p>I therefore respectfully submit that closure should be deferred to enable the local authority properly to address these matters, and make public its specific deliberations and conclusions, and that the Future Generations Commissioner should be given the opportunity to comment and offer support as appropriate.</p>	<p>The Council disagrees that it has failed to take account of the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 whilst consulting on this proposal.</p> <p>The proposal's impact on the Welsh Government's well-being goals, as outlined in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, is considered in the impact assessments.</p>

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Objection 18

Issue	Points raised	Council response
18.1	<p>I attended Castle Caereinion myself when I was younger, and can firmly say for a fact I would never have coped in a bigger school.</p> <p>It is a smaller school and therefore was able to give me the one-to-one and the chance to grow as an individual that I needed, something the bigger schools struggle with.</p> <p>The one-to-one children are able to receive is exactly what they need. The staff at the school understand them, and through the connection they have with them, they are improving all the time.</p> <p>I feel that Castle was to shut and pupils had to go to a bigger school, they would struggle, and they wouldn't be able to meet their needs. They wouldn't have the freedom to grow as an individual that they do at the moment.</p>	<p>The Council notes these comments about the small size of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, and the concerns about pupils attending a larger school.</p> <p>All schools, regardless of size, would be able to provide for the needs of their pupils. Smaller class sizes do not necessarily mean that pupils receive a more individual education as there are a number of year groups and a wider age range of pupils in the class.</p> <p>The most important influence on a pupils' education is the quality of teaching. In a small school, a teacher may have to teach pupils over four year groups. It will be a significant challenge to plan and deliver the new curriculum for all four year groups.</p>
18.2	<p>Another reason I don't think the school should close is because there are lots of houses being built, with potential families moving into the area.</p>	<p>Comments about housing developments in Castle Caereinion were received during the consultation period – these were listed in section 6.3 of the Consultation Report produced in respect of this proposal.</p> <p>As indicated in the Consultation Report, <i>'Information received from the Council's housing department suggests</i></p>

		<p><i>there are approximately 40 housing developments already completed, underway or planned in the area. Some of these are affordable housing'</i></p> <p>and</p> <p><i>'The Council uses a pupil-yield ratio of .45 children per new house built. This is an estimate and does not necessarily lead to an increase in pupil numbers.'</i> The school would continue to be a small</p>
18.3	<p>If the school closes, so will the community centre, so they'd be nothing for them to do and no school within walking distance. The community centre is where all the groups and activities are held. We have already lost the shop if they go too, then we will only have the pub which isn't open all the time, and the park left. Not really very inviting for people who want to move here.</p>	<p>The Council notes these concerns about the potential impact on the community.</p> <p>The draft Community Impact Assessment included with the consultation documentation has identified the potential impact of the proposed closure of the school on the community. It notes the extensive community use of the Castle Caereinion school building, and extensive links between the school and the local community. This was updated to reflect comments received during the consultation period, and an updated version was considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal.</p> <p>A number of comments were received during the consultation period which expressed concern about the potential impact on the community centre. The Council acknowledges that the school is an important financial contributor to the Community Centre. Should the Council</p>

		<p>proceed with this proposal, the management committee of the Centre would need to consider how best to utilise the Centre, so that it remains viable.</p>
18.4	<p>There is also the fact that everyone currently who goes to Castle is able to get there using their own transport because it's not too far. Closure of our school would mean there's going to be a lot of parents who won't be able to take their child or children to school anymore and are going to need transport provided.</p>	<p>Transport will be provided to all pupils in accordance to the Council's Home-to-School, which means that transport will be offered to all pupils to their nearest school, if that school is more than 2 miles away from their home.</p>
18.5	<p>We were lied to and told at one of our first meetings that it's not about money. Then we were told it's not sustainable, which means it is about the money. We did suggest the community doing some fundraising and other things. But we were told that wouldn't help.</p>	<p>A revenue saving to the Council is only one of a number of reasons for the proposal.</p> <p>The current proposal is being taken forward in order to implement the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys, which was developed following engagement with a range of stakeholders.</p> <p>The proposal is intended to address the challenges identified in respect of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School which are outlined in the Consultation Document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Low pupils numbers ii) High budget per pupil iii) Issues with the building iv) Combined age classes v) Leadership <p>Following consideration of a number of options, the Council's preferred option is to close Castle Caereinion CiW</p>

		<p>School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools. The reasons for this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To address the issue of low pupil numbers - To reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools - To realise a financial saving to the Council - To enable pupils to attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum - To enable pupils to attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities - To enable pupils to attend schools with better quality accommodation - The proposal meets all of the Critical Success Factors
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Objection 19

Issue	Points raised	Council response
19.1	<p>I moved here from a town with bigger schools. The smaller classroom meant the teachers had more time with the children, and they thrived. Children with A.S.D. have been able to attend mainstream school at Castle instead of attending a special school, going on to Llanfair and leaving with qualifications. This would not have been possible if it hadn't been for the support and dedication of Castle school.</p>	<p>The Council is pleased to note the positive comments about Castle Caereinion C. in W. School. However, all schools, regardless of size, would be able to provide for the needs of their pupils.</p> <p>The Powys SEN/ALN strategy, agreed by Cabinet in November 2021, is committed to improving the provision for all pupils with SEN/ALN. This includes pupils who can be educated in mainstream classes as well as pupils who</p>

		<p>require specialist provision. Pupils with ALN at all schools, regardless of size, would have the appropriate support to meet their needs.</p> <p>Should the school close, the Council would ensure that the requirements for pupils with additional needs were met at whichever school they may choose to attend.</p>
19.2	<p>My understanding is that the school was assessed when there was no permanent headmaster/headmistress.</p>	<p>Whilst the Council's review of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School commenced before there was a permanent headteacher at the school, a permanent headteacher was in place by the time the consultation was carried out, and this was reflected in the Consultation Document published in respect of this proposal:</p> <p><i>'Following a long period of instability during which leadership arrangements for the school were by other schools in the local area, the school now has its own standalone headteacher...'</i></p> <p>The permanent headteacher has now moved to a different position, therefore the leadership arrangements at the school are now temporary again.</p>
19.3	<p>During the period when the last headmistress was at the school, there were massive improvements all around.</p> <p>Pupils' learning difficulties were overlooked in a bigger school because the teachers have more children in the</p>	<p>The Council is pleased to note the positive comments regarding Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, and improvements made by the last headteacher.</p> <p>See response to 20.1.</p>

	<p>class they don't have the time to dedicate to all the children.</p>	
<p>19.4</p>	<p>We were told at a recent meeting that the closure had nothing to do with money, but it was all about the bigger schools been able to supply the children with what they need. I can vouch that Castle school can provide everything the child needs.</p>	<p>The Council notes the positive comments about Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.</p> <p>The current proposal is being taken forward in order to implement the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys, which was developed following engagement with a range of stakeholders.</p> <p>The proposal is intended to address the challenges identified in respect of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School which are outlined in the Consultation Document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Low pupils numbers ii) High budget per pupil iii) Issues with the building iv) Combined age classes v) Leadership <p>Following consideration of a number of options, the Council's preferred option is to close Castle Caereinion CiW School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools. The reasons for this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To address the issue of low pupil numbers - To reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools - To realise a financial saving to the Council

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To enable pupils to attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum - To enable pupils to attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities - To enable pupils to attend schools with better quality accommodation - The proposal meets all of the Critical Success Factors
19.5	Children do not have to wait as they do in larger schools to work on computers. They have everything at the school for the children, but more <u>importantly</u> , the staff have the time for the children's individually to help bring out the best in that child.	<p>The Council notes these comments about the ICT provision at Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.</p> <p>There has been significant investment in digital equipment in all schools over the last two years as part of the Welsh Government Education Technology Programme. Most Powys primary schools now have a better ratio of devices than one device per pair of children.</p>
19.6	Should you close Castle school, then children will need transport provided to go to another school and will miss out on the opportunity of after school clubs. These activities are of great importance to the children.	<p>The Council acknowledges that implementation of the proposal could impact on the ability of pupils for whom Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is currently the closest school to access after school activities, due to reliance on home-to-school transport.</p> <p>As indicated in the Impact Assessment carried out in respect of this proposal <i>'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.'</i></p>

		<p>The majority of schools in Powys rely on some level of home-to-school transport for their pupils, and schools are usually able to work with families to provide an appropriate level of extra-curricular activities for pupils, including clubs within the school day, shared transport with other parents etc.</p>
19.7	<p>We in the village will lose the community centre which has housed a variety of functions over the years. New houses are being built, and the village will have no amenities except a pub to offer them.</p>	<p>The Council notes these concerns about the potential impact on the community.</p> <p>The draft Community Impact Assessment included with the consultation documentation has identified the potential impact of the proposed closure of the school on the community. It notes the extensive community use of the Castle Caereinion school building, and extensive links between the school and the local community. This was updated to reflect comments received during the consultation period, and an updated version was considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal.</p> <p>A number of comments were received during the consultation period which expressed concern about the potential impact on the community centre. The Council acknowledges that the school is an important financial contributor to the Community Centre. Should the Council proceed with this proposal, the management committee of the Centre would need to consider how best to utilise the Centre, so that it remains viable.</p>

19.8	I and others feel we have been lied to over the closure, and I would like to appeal the decision. This decision was made during a period when the country was going through a crisis.	<p>The Council has not lied to the public as part of this proposal.</p> <p>The Council has been developing its Strategy for Transforming Education since Estyn's inspection of Powys Education Services in 2019. Whilst acknowledging that it would have been preferable for the consultation process to have taken place at a time when there wasn't a global pandemic, the consultation has been carried out in line with Welsh Government requirements.</p> <p>A consultation report was prepared which outlines the issues raised in the consultation responses received and provides the Council's response to these issues. This was considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal.</p> <p>All objections received are included in this Objection Report, along with the Council's response to the points raised. The Objection Report will be considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with implementation of the proposal.</p>
19.9	There wasn't a headmaster/headmistress in place solely for the school in charge. I feel personally that this was an unfair assumption of the school's potential.	See response to 19.2.
19.10	I am aware someone has made this decision and would ask that they rethink it. I would ask that they think of the pupils whose lives will be significantly affected, and the	No final decision has yet been made to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School.

	<p>village. These youngsters are our country's future. We owe it to them to provide the best for them. Smaller groups of children being taught allows for a connection between child and teacher you won't find in bigger schools, allowing them to reach full potential. I look forward to your honest reply.</p>	<p>All objections received following the publication of the Statutory Notice are included in this Objection Report, along with the Council's response to the points raised. The Objection Report will be considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with implementation of the proposal.</p>
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Objection 20

Issue	Points raised	Council response
20.1	<p>I am writing to object to the closure of Castle Caereinion School.</p> <p>This school is listed in Appendix F of the Schools Organisation Code (School Ref 6663022) as a rural school. I object to the closure as the Schools Organisation Code (S1.8) specifically states that there is a procedural presumption against the closure of rural schools. I do not believe that Powys County Council have made this presumption or tried to uphold it. I do not believe that at the start of this process, there was a strong case for closure and that it has been shown that all viable alternatives, including federation, have been explored fully.</p>	<p>It is correct that Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is identified as a rural school in Appendix F of the School Organisation Code.</p> <p>As stated in the School Organisation Code 2018:</p> <p><i>'The second edition of the Code makes special arrangements in regard to rural schools establishing a procedural presumption against their closure. This requires proposers to follow a more detailed set of procedures and requirements in formulating a rural school closure proposal and in consulting on and reaching a decision as to whether to implement a rural school closure proposal. This does not mean that a rural school will never close but the case for closure must be strong and all viable alternatives to closure must have been conscientiously considered by the proposer, including federation.'</i></p>

		<p>The Council has followed these requirements in formulating this proposal. A number of options have been considered and are outlined within the consultation document, this included federation with Welshpool C. in W. School.</p>
20.2	<p>I object to the Closure on the grounds that a full consultation has not been held with local people. I object because the additional direction for County Councils from Welsh Government on how consultation should be conducted under Covid has not been followed.</p>	<p>The Council has been developing its Strategy for Transforming Education since Estyn’s inspection of Powys Education Services in 2019. Whilst acknowledging that it would have been preferable for the consultation process to have taken place at a time when there wasn’t a global pandemic, the consultation has been carried out in line with Welsh Government requirements, including further guidance given by the Welsh Government as to consulting during the Covid pandemic.</p> <p>Consultation has taken place in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code. As explained in the Consultation Report, 93 written responses were received to the consultation exercise, and a petition was received which was signed by 676 people.</p> <p>The Welsh Government has not provided ‘additional direction for County Councils...on how consultation should be conducted under Covid.’ The Welsh Government published ‘non-statutory guidance’ to assist proposers to undertake consultations whilst restrictions are in place. The Council took account of this guidance in respect of consultations carried out during the Covid pandemic.</p>

20.3	I object because the specific further steps which are required to be followed for the closure of a rural school have not been followed.	Please see response 21.1.
20.4	I object because Powys County Council have not taken into account the planning permissions outstanding in Castle Caereinion for the development of further properties and thus additional pupils have been taken in to account.	<p>Comments about housing developments in Castle Caereinion were received during the consultation period – these were listed in section 6.3 of the Consultation Report produced in respect of this proposal.</p> <p>As indicated in the Consultation Report, <i>‘Information received from the Council’s housing department suggests there are approximately 40 housing developments already completed, underway or planned in the area. Some of these are affordable housing’</i></p> <p>and</p> <p><i>‘The Council uses a pupil-yield ratio of .45 children per new house built. This is an estimate and does not necessarily lead to an increase in pupil numbers.’</i></p>
20.5	I object because Powys County Council can be shown to have not completed consultation in line with the Schools Organisation Code and associated documents and that all avenues to avoid the closure of the listed rural school have not been followed.	<p>The consultation has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code.</p> <p>Please see response 21.1 and 21.2.</p>

Objection 21 – Petition

A copy of a petition objecting to the proposal to close Castle Caereinion C. in W. School was received. The petition had 102 signatures, and also included 12 written comments. The written comments received are provided below, along with the Council's response.

Issue	Points raised	Council response
21.1	A school closure in this area will be catastrophic for the community and the building trade. Powys has committed to 600+ homes being built in Mid/North Powys and facilities must be provided to get young families to buy into this area and boost our economy. PCC are not looking at the bigger picture. Parents move to areas where they can walk their children to school and save the environment.	The Council does not agree that the closure of Castle Caereinion Church in Wales School will have an effect on housing demand or the building trade in Mid and North Powys.
21.2	It's a terrible shame to close our wonderful village school	Comment noted.
21.3	I want to see this lovely school stay open. My children all went to this school and am hoping that my grandchildren can go to this lovely small village school.	Comment noted.
21.4	Yet we have more and more children without a place in school madness to close yet another kids have already missed out on so much education yet it is there human right to get one so they may have a brand new school ready to replace it?	All children in Powys are entitled to a school place. Castle Caereinion C. in W. School has a number of surplus places and pupil numbers are not expected to rise substantially in the foreseeable future.
21.5	The school is a long established and central part of our community. We need to encourage young families to live in the village and not allow PCC to irrevocably change the landscape of village and rural community life	Comment noted.

21.6	<p>Village life is so important. Young children find school a daunting prospect. So to have to go on a strange bus on your first days will be even worse. Village school education is by far the best.</p>	<p>The Council acknowledges that any school reorganisation proposal leads to a period of uncertainty for those affected by the proposal. Should the school close, the schools pupils would transfer to would provide support to pupils to aid their transition, ensuring a successful transition to their new school to ensure that all pupils can achieve their potential. All schools would be able to provide for the needs of their pupils, whether they are located in a village location or in a more urban location.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that implementation of the proposal would lead to additional travel for pupils for whom Castle Caereinion C. in W. School is currently their closest school. There are a number of alternative primary schools within 10 miles of Castle Caereinion C. in W. School, and should the school close, it is not considered that the length and nature of journeys for pupils to alternative provision would be excessive.</p> <p>Powys is a large, rural county, and many pupils and parents across the county rely on home to school transport to access both primary and secondary provision, with some required to travel distances which are significantly greater than the distance from Castle Caereinion C. in W. School to the nearest alternative schools.</p>
21.7	<p>Along with hall, heart of village and village is growing. Local schools full now, so difficult for parents with transport to other schools further.</p>	<p>The Council notes these concerns about the possible impact on the community.</p> <p>It is not true that the local schools are full now – there are sufficient places to accommodate all pupils currently</p>

		<p>attending Castle Caereinion C. in W. School at other schools in the local area.</p> <p>Transport will be provided to pupils in accordance with the Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy.</p>
21.8	All children should be able to attend a school in their village.	Comment noted.
21.9	Village schools are the heart of a community. The village should stay open! Have the governors considered entering into a federation with Llanfair or Berriew?	<p>The Council notes these concerns about the potential impact on the community.</p> <p>The draft Community Impact Assessment included with the consultation documentation has identified the potential impact of the proposed closure of the school on the community. It notes the extensive community use of the Castle Caereinion school building, and extensive links between the school and the local community. This was updated to reflect comments received during the consultation period, and an updated version was considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal.</p> <p>It is not possible to federate a Church in Wales school with a Community Primary, therefore the Council has not considered federating Castle Caereinion C. in W. School with Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School or Berriew C.P. School. However, the Council has considered federation with Welshpool C. in W. School, and merging with Berriew C.P. School.</p>

21.10	Closing village schools kills Welsh villages and encourages young families to leave creating the conditions for second homes, holiday let's and high house prices	<p>The Council notes these concerns about the potential impact on the community.</p> <p>Comments suggesting that implementation of the proposal would mean that people would no longer want to live in Castle Caereinion were received during the consultation period, and were included in the Consultation Report considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with the proposal.</p>
21.11	I went to this primary school and it would be a shame to see it go.	Comment noted.
21.12	There are unjustifiable reasons for this school closure! The sums do not add up at all. Three generations of my family, including our two children, have attended this lovely little school. My husband and his siblings have also attended. To see it gone forever would be such a shame for our village. We have already lost our shop last year, this would be yet another blow. Such awful timing too during a Pandemic! Re-think your decision PCC - consider the devastating consequences for the village of Castle Caereinion.	<p>The Council notes these comments.</p> <p>The reasons for proposing the closure of Castle Caereinion Church in Wales School were outlined in the Consultation Document published in respect of this proposal.</p> <p>The Council has been developing its Strategy for Transforming Education since Estyn's inspection of Powys Education Services in 2019. Whilst acknowledging that it would have been preferable for the consultation process to have taken place at a time when there wasn't a global pandemic, the consultation has been carried out in line with Welsh Government requirements.</p>