



Llangedwyn C. in W. School

Options Appraisal

August 2023



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Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	3
PART A – THE CASE FOR CHANGE.....	4
2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT	4
2.1 POLICY CONTEXT	4
2.2 WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN POWYS	4
3. WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN LLANGEDWYN.....	7
3.1 THE CURRENT SITUATION	7
3.2 WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN LLANGEDWYN	14
PART B – OPTIONS FOR LLANGEDWYN C. IN W. PRIMARY SCHOOL	16
4. AVAILABLE OPTIONS	16
5. SWOT ANALYSIS OF EACH OPTION.....	16
6. IMPACT OF EACH OPTION	20
7. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS.....	23
8. EMERGING PREFERRED OPTION	24
PART C – FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF PREFERRED OPTION	26
9. QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN EDUCATION	26
10. NEED FOR PLACES AND IMPACT ON ACCESSIBILITY OF SCHOOLS.....	30
11. RESOURCING OF EDUCATION AND OTHER FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS..	32
12. OTHER GENERAL FACTORS.....	33
13. SPECIFIC FACTORS IN THE CONSIDERATION OF SCHOOL CLOSURES.	34
14. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS.....	36

1. INTRODUCTION

Wave 2 of the Council’s Transforming Education Programme includes a commitment to restart and conclude the review of the Llanfyllin / North Welshpool catchment, which commenced in 2020. This commenced in April 2023. In September 2023, the Council’s Cabinet considered a paper which outlined the findings of the review and presented an indicative preferred way forward. The preferred way forward included the possible closure of Llangedwyn C. in W. School, however this would be subject to the Statutory Process as outlined in the School Organisation Code (2018).

The purpose of this paper is to present the options identified for Llangedwyn C. in W. School and the preferred option, and to give further consideration to the impact of this option.

Current pupil numbers¹ at Llangedwyn C. in W. School are as follows:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	1	0	1	2	1	2	2	9

¹ Teacher Centre, 22nd September 2023

PART A – THE CASE FOR CHANGE

2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

2.1 POLICY CONTEXT

Following the inspection of Powys Education Services carried out by Estyn in the summer of 2019, the Council carried out a strategic review of schools during 2019-20, which led to the development of a new Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys. The strategy, which was developed following engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, was approved in April 2020 and updated following the Council elections held in May 2022.

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

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

In addition, the strategy outlines a number of aims and objectives, which include an objective to 'Reconfigure and rationalise primary provision' in order to improve overall learner entitlement and experience in Powys.

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

2.2 WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN POWYS

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

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

The following is a summary of the main challenges facing the Council, as outlined in the Strategy:

i) High proportion of small schools

Based on PLASC 2021 figures, there were 33 small primary schools in Powys – this is approximately 43% of the primary provision in the county. 15 schools had fewer than 50 pupils, and for those schools the budget share per pupil is generally higher than the Powys average for primary schools.

ii) Decreasing pupil numbers

Pupil numbers have decreased over the past decade, and are expected to decrease further over the next five years. Pupil numbers in the primary sector in Powys are expected to decrease by approximately 5% by 2026.

iii) High number of surplus places

Based on PLASC 2021 figures, there was 14% surplus capacity in Powys primary schools. With pupil numbers across Powys projected to decrease overall over the coming years, the proportion of surplus places across the county will continue to increase.

iv) Building condition

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

v) Financial pressures

The Council is currently facing significant financial pressures in general. This is affecting all service areas, including the schools' sector. There are significant variations in the budget share per pupil across Powys schools, ranging from £3,512 to £11,689 in the primary sector in 2022-23.

vi) Inequality in access to Welsh-medium education

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

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

vii) Limited post-14 and post-16 offer

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

viii) Inequality in access to SEN provision

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

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

ix) Historical lack of political decision making

The Council's failure to implement a number of high-profile proposals in the past left a legacy in Powys.

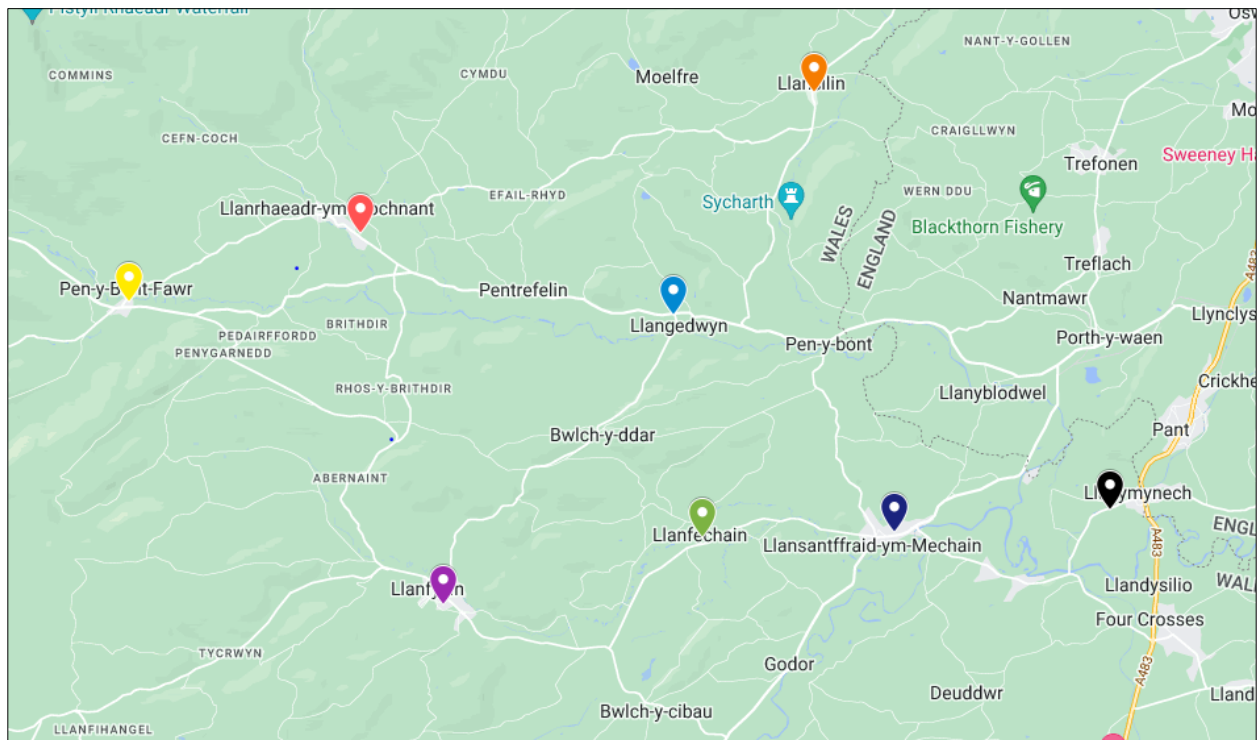
3. WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN LLANGEDWYN

3.1 THE CURRENT SITUATION

Llangedwyn Church in Wales (C. in .W) School is a small English-medium primary school located in the village of Llangedwyn in the Llanfyllin catchment area of North Powys.

It currently operates as part of a formal federation with Llanfechain C. in W. School. Ffederasiwn Dwy Afon was established in 2018. The Federation has a single governing body and headteacher that are responsible for both schools, and is supported by both Powys County Council and the Diocese of St. Asaph.

The following map shows the location of Llangedwyn C. in W. School and nearby schools:



Blue – Llangedwyn C. in W. School, Green – Llanfechain C. in W. School, Dark Blue – Llansantffraid Primary School, Black – Carreghofa Primary School, Orange – Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, Red – Llanrhaeadr Ym Mochnant Primary School, Yellow – Ysgol Pennant, Purple - Ysgol Llanfyllin

The following primary schools are located within 10 miles of Llangedwyn C. in W. School²:

School	Distance from Llangedwyn C. in W. School by road (miles)
Arddleen C.P. School	9.7
Carreghofa C.P. School	9.9
Llanfechain C. in W. School	4.4
Llansantffraid C. in W. School	4.6
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	3.8
Ysgol Llanfyllin (Primary)	4.7
Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant	4.2
Ysgol Pennant	6.4

The following is a summary of key data relating to Llangedwyn C. in W. School:

	School Type	Language Category	Admission Number ³	Rural School? ⁴
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	Voluntary Controlled Church in Wales School building owned by the Wynnstay Estate	English-medium	6	Yes

Pupil Numbers

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

³ Powys County Council's Admissions Information and Arrangements 2023-24

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

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

i) Current pupil numbers⁵

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	1	0	1	2	1	2	2	9

ii) Historical pupil numbers⁶

	Jan. 2016	Jan. 2017	Jan. 2018	Jan. 2019	Jan. 2020	Jan. 2021	Jan. 2022
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	31	26	28	31	18	23	17

iii) Projected pupil numbers (Birth rate)⁷

	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025	Jan. 2026	Jan. 2027
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	15	16	13	8	8

i) Projected pupil numbers (Finance projections)⁸

	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025	Jan. 2026	Jan. 2027
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	13	13	12	n/a	n/a

Building Capacity and Condition

i) Capacity

⁵ Teacher Centre, 22nd September 2023

⁶ PLASC

⁷ Powys Schools Service Projections based on PLASC and Birth Rates

⁸ Powys Finance Projections based on data provided by the school. Provided by the Finance team in August 2023

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

	Capacity ⁹	Currently Filled ¹⁰	Surplus Capacity ¹¹
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	47	9	38 (80.85%)

ii) **Building condition¹²**

	Condition	Suitability	Sufficient
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	C Poor	B Satisfactory	No

Standards of Education

i) **Estyn**

	Llangedwyn C. in W. School
Date of Inspection	January 2020
Standards	Adequate and needs improvement
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Adequate and needs improvement
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Adequate and needs improvement

⁹ MSCW Capacity Jan. 2022 from the Welsh Government Planning of School Places Return – October 2022

¹⁰ Based on current pupil numbers – September 2033

¹¹ Based on current pupil numbers – September 2023

¹² Condition, Suitability and Sufficiency – The Transforming Education PowerBI Dashboard – 2022

Follow up activity	<p>The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will review the school's progress.</p> <p>Outcome of Estyn review 2021:</p> <p>The school is judged to have made sufficient progress in addressing the recommendations from the Section 28 inspection. The school has been removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn review. There will be no further monitoring activity in relation to this inspection.</p>
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Financial information

i) Cost per pupil¹³

	Budget share per school	Budget share per pupil	Notional SEN budget	Non ISB funds devolved to the school
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	£164,000	£12,625.92	£12,000	£0

Home to school travel

i) Closest school

An analysis of pupil travel patterns has been carried out, based on the 17 pupils that were attending Llangedwyn according to the PLASC 2022 information. The closest provider for these pupils is as follows:

Closest school	Pupils attending Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School
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¹³ Section 52 Budget Statement, 2023/2024

Llangedwyn C. in W. School	17.6%
Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant C.P. School	35.3%
Ysgol Llanfyllin	11.8%
Ysgol Meifod	11.8%
Llanfechain C. in W. School	5.8%
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	5.8%
Bryn Offa Primary School (Shropshire)	5.8%
Weston Rhyn Primary School (Shropshire)	5.8%

Based on this information, Llangedwyn C. in W. School was the closest school for 17.6% of the pupils that were attending the school in January 2022.

If there were no school in Llangedwyn, the closest school for the pupils that were on roll in January 2022 would be as follows:

Closest school	Pupils attending Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School
Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant C.P. School	47.1%
Ysgol Llanfyllin	11.8%
Ysgol Meifod	11.8%
Llanfechain C. in W. School	11.8%
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	5.9%
Bryn Offa Primary School (Shropshire)	5.9%

Weston Rhyn Primary School (Shropshire)	5.9%
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ii) Average travel distance

The average travel distance for all pupils that were on roll in January 2022 was 8.6 miles.

If there were no school in Llangedwyn, the average travel distance for all pupils attending the school in January 2022 to attend alternative provision would be 3.0 miles.

iii) Furthest travel distance

Of the pupils that attended Llangedwyn C. in W. School in January 2022, the furthest travel distance to the school for those pupils for whom Llangedwyn C. in W. School is the closest provider is 1.45 miles.

If there were no school in Llangedwyn, the furthest distance to these pupils' nearest alternative provision would be 6.3 miles.

Equalities Information

i) Free School Meals¹⁴

	Percentage of pupils that are eligible for Free School Meals
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	33.3%

ii) Pupils in care¹⁵

	Percentage of pupils in care
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	11.1%

iii) SEN/ALN¹⁶

¹⁴ PLASC 2022

¹⁵ PLASC 2022

¹⁶ PLASC 2022

	School Action	School Action Plus	Statement	IDP School	IDP LA
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	11.1%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Early Years Provision

There is no Early Years provision on the school site.

3.2 WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN LLANGEDWYN

The following is a summary of the main challenges facing Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School:

i) Low pupil numbers

Current pupil numbers¹⁷ at Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School are as follows:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	1	0	1	2	1	2	2	9

The Welsh Government defines a ‘small school’ as a school with less than 91 pupils. Pupil numbers are significantly lower than this, and have decreased significantly in recent years. The latest projected pupil numbers for the school suggest that pupil numbers are not expected to increase significantly over the coming years.

i) Highest primary budget share per pupil

Based on the Council’s Section 52 Budget Statement for 2023-24, the school’s budget share per pupil during 2023-24 was £12,625.92. This is higher than the Powys primary school average of £4,729. Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School is ranked the highest primary school in Powys by budget share per pupil.¹⁸

ii) Combined age classes

¹⁷ Teacher Centre, 22nd September 2023

¹⁸ Section 52 Budget Statement 2023/2024

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

PART B – OPTIONS FOR LLANGEDWYN C. IN W. PRIMARY SCHOOL

4. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

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

Option	Description
1	Status quo – continue as part of a federation with Llanfechain C. in W. School
2	Merge with Llanfechain C. in W. School to establish a new school on two sites
3	Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, but retain the site as part of Llanfechain C. in W. School
4	Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School
5	Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools

5. SWOT ANALYSIS OF EACH OPTION

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

Option 1: Status quo – continue as part of a federation with Llanfechain C. in W. School

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Llangedwyn - There would be no additional transport costs - No requirement for a reorganisation process - No change for staff - No impact on pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Llangedwyn C. in W. School would continue to be very low - Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision - Would still need to maintain the Llangedwyn building - Would not reduce surplus places

- Would retain Church in Wales places in the area	- Would not lead to a financial saving - Would not address the high budget per pupil
Opportunities	Threats
- Opportunities for further collaboration with other neighbouring schools to provide increased opportunities for pupils	- The school would continue to be a very small school

Option 2: Merge with Llanfechain C. in W. School to establish a new school on two sites

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Llangedwyn - Would build on the federation which is already in place - There would be no additional transport costs - All staff would have the opportunity to secure positions in the new school - Pupils would continue to attend school in the same location - Would retain Church in Wales places in the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small numbers would remain on the Llangedwyn site - Llangedwyn pupils would still be taught separately - Would not reduce surplus places - Would still need to maintain the Llangedwyn building - Additional costs associated with establishing a new school would be incurred by the Council - More officer support would be required to support the establishment of new school - Both schools would lose their individual identities
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to develop a new school identity - More opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring equal opportunities to all pupils due to age range of pupils in mixed age classes

Option 3: Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, but retain the site as part of Llanfechain C. in W. School

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Llangedwyn - Would build on the federation which is already in place - There would be no additional transport costs - Pupils would continue to attend school in the same location - Minimal impact on staff employed at Llanfechain School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small numbers would remain at the Llangedwyn - Llangedwyn pupils would still be taught separately - Would still need to maintain the Llangedwyn building - Would not reduce surplus places - Negative impact on staff employed at Llangedwyn School
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring equal opportunities to all pupils due to age range of pupils in mixed age classes

Option 4: Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Llangedwyn - Would increase pupil numbers at Llanfechain - Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools - Revenue saving to the Council - The Council would no longer need to maintain the Llangedwyn building - Pupils would attend a larger school where they would be part of larger cohorts of pupils - Pupils would transfer to a school they are already familiar with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional travel for those pupils for whom Llangedwyn is currently the closest school - Loss of primary provision from the Llangedwyn area - Impact on the current staff employed at Llangedwyn - Reduction of Church in Wales places in the area - Llanfechain C.i.W School would be at or slightly over-capacity if all pupils from Llangedwyn transferred to the school – capacity is currently 47 with 39 on roll.

- Continued provision of Church in Wales education in the area	
Opportunities	Threats
- Opportunity to explore linkages between Llanfechain C. in W. School and Llansantffraid C. in W. School in the future	- Some families may be choose other schools that offer non-denominational provision, meaning that some pupils may not benefit from a Church in Wales provision

Option 5: Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Llangedwyn - Would increase pupil numbers at Llanfechain - Would reduce the Council’s overall surplus capacity in primary schools - Revenue saving to the Council - The Council would no longer need to maintain the Llangedwyn building - Pupils would attend a larger school where they would be part of larger cohorts of pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional travel for those pupils for whom Llangedwyn is currently the closest school - Loss of primary provision from the Llangedwyn area - Impact on the current staff employed at Llangedwyn - Reduction of Church in Wales places in the area
Opportunities	Threats
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Families may choose for their children to transfer to a number of different schools, which could be more difficult in terms of transition - Some families may be choose other schools that offer non-denominational provision, meaning that some pupils may not benefit from a Church in Wales provision

6. IMPACT OF EACH OPTION

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

Option	Likely impact on quality and standards	Likely impact on the community	Likely impact of different travelling arrangements
<p>Option 1: Status quo – continue as part of a federation with Llanfechain C. in W. School</p>	<p>There would be no impact on quality and standards – pupils would continue to access the current provision at Llangedwyn.</p>	<p>There would be no impact on the community – provision would continue to be available in Llangedwyn.</p>	<p>There would be no impact on travel arrangements – pupils would continue to attend Llangedwyn C. in W. School.</p>
<p>Option 2: Merge with Llanfechain C. in W. School to establish a new school on two sites</p>	<p>This option would retain provision in Llangedwyn, building upon the federation which is already in place.</p> <p>There would be enhanced opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff, however, ensuring equal opportunities to all pupils in mixed age range age classes would continue to be difficult.</p> <p>Merging the two schools to establish a new school is likely to result in a school where quality and standards are at least as good as the current provision.</p>	<p>The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Llangedwyn.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school in the same location, thus there would be no additional transport costs.</p> <p>Some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>

<p>Option 3: Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, but retain the site as part of Llanfechain C. in W. School</p>	<p>This option would retain provision in Llangedwyn, building upon the federation which is already in place with Llanfechain C. in W. School.</p> <p>There would be enhanced opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff, however, ensuring equal opportunities to all pupils in mixed age range age classes would continue to be difficult.</p> <p>It is anticipated that implementation of this option would mean that pupils attend provision where the quality and standards are at least as good as the current provision.</p>	<p>The impact on the community would be minimal. Provision would continue to be available in Llangedwyn. However, the site would be managed by Llanfechain C. in W. School, so there could be a perceived reduction in community involvement in the management of the school.</p> <p>In addition, it is possible that joint school activities would take place on the larger Llanfechain site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Llangedwyn site.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current site of Llangedwyn C. in W. School.</p> <p>Some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>
<p>Option 4: Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School</p>	<p>Pupils would transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, which is a larger school where they would be part of larger cohorts of pupils. This would also have a positive impact on the pupils currently attending Llanfechain C. in W. School as it would result in an increase in pupil numbers at that school.</p> <p>It is anticipated that implementation of this</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Llangedwyn as there would be no provision in Llangedwyn.</p> <p>The Llangedwyn school building is not owned by the Council. Should the school close, the building would be transferred back to its owners, who would need to determine it's future use, and therefore whether or not</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School, particularly those for whom Llangedwyn is currently the closest school.</p> <p>However, Llangedwyn is not currently the closest school for the majority of pupils attending</p>

	option would mean that pupils would attend provision where the quality and standards are at least as good as the current provision.	facilities would remain available to the community in Llangedwyn.	<p>Llangedwyn C. in W. School, so many of the school's pupils are already choosing to travel further to school.</p> <p>Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, there would also be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities / events.</p>
Option 5: Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools	All other schools provide a high quality education for their pupils. Therefore, it is anticipated that implementation of this option would mean that pupils would attend provision where the quality and standards are at least as good as the current provision.	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Llangedwyn as there would be no provision in Llangedwyn.</p> <p>The Llangedwyn school building is not owned by the Council. Should the school close, the building would be transferred back to its owners, who would need to determine it's future use, and therefore whether or not facilities would remain available to the community in Llangedwyn.</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School.</p> <p>Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, there would also be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities/events.</p>

7. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

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

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

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

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

The assessment for each option is as follows:

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

8. EMERGING PREFERRED OPTION

Based on the assessments carried out, the emerging preferred option for Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School is:

Option 4: Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School

The reasons for this are:

- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School
- Would increase pupil numbers at Llanfechain C. in W. School
- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools
- Revenue saving to the Council
- The Council would no longer need to maintain the Llangedwyn building
- Pupils would attend a larger school where they would be part of a larger cohort of pupils
- Pupils would transfer to a school they are already familiar with
- Pupils would continue to access Church in Wales provision

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

PART C – FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF PREFERRED OPTION

The Welsh Government's School Organisation Code outlines factors to be considered when developing school organisation proposals. Consideration is given below to the impact of the preferred option, closure of Llangedwyn C. in W. School, with pupils to attend Llanfechain C. in W. School, on the factors outlined in the Code.

9. QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN EDUCATION

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

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Llangedwyn C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. The preferred option in this case is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School. As Llangedwyn and Llanfechain are already part of the Federation Dwy Afon, pupils already have strong connections across the two schools and take part in collaborative activities. The Council's view is that Llanfechain C. in W. School would provide education for pupils which is of at least equivalent quality as that provided at Llangedwyn C. in W. School, so it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on standards and progress overall.

This would also apply in respect of pupils belonging to specific groups, such as pupils eligible for Free School Meals, pupils for whom English is an Additional Language, Looked after Children and pupils with Additional Learning Needs. There are a number of pupils eligible for Free School Meals, a number of pupils with Additional Learning Needs, and a number of Looked after Children at Llangedwyn C. in W. School, however the number of pupils belonging to these groups is very small. It is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on the standards and progress of these pupils. There are currently pupils for whom English is an Additional Language at Llangedwyn C. in W. School.

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

9.2 Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

In the short term, it is possible that there would be an impact on pupils' wellbeing, as they would need to transfer from Llangedwyn C. in W. School to Llanfechain C. in W. School. However, Llangedwyn and Llanfechain schools are currently

federated, so Llangedwyn pupils are familiar with staff and pupils at Llanfechain C. in W. School, and are familiar with attending the school building to take part in joint activities. This should minimise the impact on pupil well-being.

It is possible that pupils could choose to transfer to other schools instead of transferring to Llanfechain C. in W. School, which could have a further impact on their wellbeing. However, the receiving school(s) would provide full support to the pupils during the transition period, to minimise any negative impact on them.

Closure of Llangedwyn C. in W. School could result in additional travel for some pupils, particularly those for whom Llangedwyn is currently the closest school. However, Llangedwyn is not currently the closest school for the majority of pupils attending the school, so many of the school's pupils are already choosing to travel further to school. It is evidenced above that the additional travel time to alternative provision would likely not be excessive.

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

9.3 Teaching and learning experiences

9.3.1 Quality of teaching

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Llangedwyn C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School.

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

9.3.2 The breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Llangedwyn C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School..

The Council's view is that Llanfechain C. in W. School would provide a curriculum which is at least equivalent to that currently provided at Llangedwyn C. in W. School. Pupils would be transferring to a larger school, therefore the expectation would be that there would be an improvement in the breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum provided to pupils. Pupils would also be able to work in groups of similar ability pupils.

Llangedwyn C. in W. School is a Church in Wales school, which impacts on some aspects of the curriculum. Llanfechain is also a C. in W. School, ensuring that denominational provision would continue to be available to those pupils who wished to access it.

9.3.3 The provision of skills

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Llangedwyn C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School.

The Council has no concerns about the provision of skills at Llanfechain C. in W. School, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on the provision of skills for pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School.

9.4 Care, support and guidance

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

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Llangedwyn C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School.

It is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on tracking, monitoring, the provision of learning support, personal development, or safeguarding for pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School. This is due to the two schools being federated, with a shared headteacher across both sites. As a result, similar systems are employed across the federation.

9.5 Leadership and Management

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

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Llangedwyn C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School.

The headteacher of Llangedwyn C. in W. School is also headteacher of Llanfechain C. in W. Primary, therefore there would be no change in leadership and permanent leadership arrangements are already in place at Llanfechain C. in W. School. The Council's view is that leadership and management at Llanfechain

C. in W. School would be at least as good as the current arrangements at Llangedwyn.

9.5.2 Professional learning

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

9.5.3 Use of Resources

The school is currently projecting a carry forward deficit of £31k at the end of financial year 2023-24 rising to a cumulative deficit of £177k by 31 March 2026. Finance and school improvement officers are working with the school to identify ways to reduce the deficit, but this is increasingly challenging due to the combination of low pupil numbers and high inflation on running costs the school is experiencing. When small schools encounter any unexpected pressures such as long-term sickness or building maintenance issues, then the risk of falling into a deficit is higher as they have more limited scope to reduce costs in other areas to compensate.

One of the main challenges facing the Powys schools infrastructure is the proportion of small schools in the county coupled with significant surplus places, resulting in higher premises related costs per pupil. Llangedwyn C. in W. School is the smallest school in the county in terms of numbers on roll, and the budget share per pupil at the school is therefore higher than any other Powys primary school.

Should the preferred option be implemented, pupils would transfer to a larger school, ensuring a more effective use of both schools' and the Council's resources.

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

Implementation of the emerging preferred option would impact on any vulnerable pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School, including any pupils with ALN/SEN.

Based on September 2023 Teacher Centre information, 11.1% of pupils at Llangedwyn C. in W. School were on School Action, 11.1% of pupils were on School Action Plus, and no pupils were statemented.

Whilst the emerging preferred option would impact on these pupils, as they would be required to move to an alternative school, there is no reason to believe that Llanfechain C. in W. School would not be able to meet their needs.

Should the option be implemented, the Council would work with Llangedwyn C. in W. School and Llanfechain C. in W. School to ensure an effective transition for any vulnerable children, including children with ALN/sen and their families.

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

Should the emerging preferred option be implemented, Llangedwyn C. in W. School would close, and pupils would transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, therefore Llangedwyn C. in W. School would no longer need to deliver the curriculum to any key stages.

This would also result in an increase in pupil numbers at Llanfechain C. in W. School, which would improve this school’s ability to deliver the curriculum in all key stages. However, depending on the school’s class structure and current breakdown of pupils, it is possible that some adjustments would be needed to the school’s class structure to accommodate additional pupils.

It is possible that some pupils could choose to transfer to alternative schools rather than Llanfechain C. in W. School. However, the number of pupils transferring to any school is likely to be very small, so it is not anticipated that this would impact on the ability of these schools to deliver the full curriculum to pupils.

10. NEED FOR PLACES AND IMPACT ON ACCESSIBILITY OF SCHOOLS

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

The preferred option is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School.

The following table provides information on the number of spaces available and building condition of Llanfechain C. in W. School:

School	Capacity	Current pupil numbers ¹⁹	Available spaces	Available capacity	Building Condition	Building Suitability
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¹⁹ Teacher Centre, 22nd September 2023

Llanfechain C. in W. School	47	42	5	11%	C Poor	B Satisfactory
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The estimated pupil forecast (live birth data)²⁰ for Llanfechain is as follows:

	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025	Jan. 2026	Jan. 2027
Llanfechain C. in W. School	38	39	40	28	30

This information shows that Llanfechain C.in W. School would be slightly over-capacity if all Llangedwyn pupils transferred to the school. Should this be the case, the Council would discuss with the school’s governing body to understand how the pupils could be accommodated at the school. However, pupil numbers at Llanfechain are forecasted to decrease over the next few years.

Llanfechain C.in W. School’s condition is categorised as ‘B’, meaning ‘good’ which is better than Llangedwyn’s categorisation of ‘C’, ‘poor’. However, Llanfechain’s category for ‘suitability’ is ‘C’ compared to Llangedwyn’s category of ‘B’. This means that the standard of accommodation at Llanfechain is of at least equivalent standard to that at Llangedwyn.

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

As indicated in section 10.1, Llanfechain C. in W. School would be slightly over-capacity if all Llangedwyn pupils transferred to the school. Should this be the case, the Council would discuss with the school’s governing body to understand how the pupils could be accommodated at the school, to ensure that pupils wishing to access Church in Wales provision can do so.

Both Llangedwyn C. in W. School and Llanfechain C. in W. School are English-medium schools.

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

It is not considered that the length and nature of journeys for pupils to alternative provision at Llanfechain C. in W. School would be excessive. This includes journeys for ALN/SEN pupils. One-way journeys to alternative provision would not be in excess of 45 minutes.

²⁰ Powys Schools Service Projections based on PLASC and Birth Rates

11. RESOURCING OF EDUCATION AND OTHER FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

Implementation of the preferred option would lead to an overall reduction in surplus places in the area.

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

The review of Llangedwyn C. in W. School does not form part of the local authority's Sustainable Communities for Learning (formerly 21st Century Schools) Investment Programme.

However, the review of the Llanfyllin/North Welshpool catchment area carried out recently identified that there are capacity issues in terms of Church in Wales places at Llansantffraid C. in W. School, and that a replacement school building would need to be provided in the area in the future to accommodate projected pupil numbers.

To achieve this, should there be no school in Llangedwyn in the future, the Council would then work with Llansantffraid C. in W. School, Llanfechain C. in W. School and the Diocese of St Asaph to explore the possibility of initially merging the two schools at their existing locations, alongside investigating possible sites for a new school building. However, these developments would be subject to further statutory proposals and Cabinet decisions, and capital investment processes.

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

The recurrent costs of this proposal would be the potential increased transport costs which are currently estimated to be an additional £34.6k per annum based on current prices. This has been included in the revenue costing and is funded through savings in other areas of the formula in relation to this proposal.

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

It is estimated there would be additional transport costs of £34.6k per annum, based on current prices and pupils' current location, assuming the pupils will all go to Llanfechain C. in W. School.

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

It is not anticipated that capital funding would be required in order to implement the emerging preferred option.

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

It is estimated that this would result in annual revenue savings to the Council of around £56.4k. This overall figure comprises a potential saving on Schools' delegated funding of £91.0k and estimated additional transport costs of £34.6k.

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

The school is currently projecting a carry forward deficit of £31k at the end of financial year 2023-24 rising to a cumulative deficit of £177k by 31 March 2026.

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

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

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

Llangedwyn C. in W. School building is not owned by the Council, therefore the Council would not receive any capital receipts following any sale of the site.

12. OTHER GENERAL FACTORS

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

Implementation of the preferred option would impact on any pupils from economically deprived backgrounds currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School. All pupils currently attending the school, including any from economically deprived backgrounds, would need to transfer to alternative schools. The proposal is that all pupils currently attending the school would transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, which would mitigate the impact on pupils, including those from economically deprived backgrounds, as they are already familiar with

Llanfechain C. in W. School, however it is possible that some pupils could choose to transfer to other schools.

Free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's home to school transport policy, however it is acknowledged that there would be an impact on families due to the requirement to travel to school events, which could have a greater impact on children from economically deprived backgrounds.

Based on Teacher Centre figures from September 2023, 33.3% of pupils attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School were eligible for FSM, therefore it is likely that the proportion of children from economically deprived backgrounds that may be affected is small.

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

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

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

Llangedwyn C. in W. School is / is not subject to any trust which may be affected in relation to the use or disposal of land.

13. SPECIFIC FACTORS IN THE CONSIDERATION OF SCHOOL CLOSURES

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

A range of options have been considered in respect of Llangedwyn C. in W. School, these are outlined in section 4 of this document, as well as an assessment of each option which includes a summary of the weaknesses / threats associated with each.

Pupil numbers at Llangedwyn C. in W. School are very low, and are projected to continue to decrease over the coming years. Establishing a multi-site school would not address this issue.

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

Llangedwyn C. in W. School is already part of a federation with Llanfechain C. in W. School, known as the Federasiwn Dwy Afon. Continuing to operate as part of this federation is one of the options considered earlier in this document. An assessment of this option has been carried out, which includes a summary of the weaknesses / threats associated with this option.

Pupil numbers at Llangedwyn C. in W. School are very low, and are projected to continue to decrease over the coming years. Clustering, collaboration or federation would not address this.

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

The Council's view is that making more use of the existing building as a community or educational resource would not address the issues identified in respect of Llangedwyn C. in W. School.

Pupil numbers at the school are very low, and are projected to decrease further over the coming years.

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

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

A draft community impact assessment, with input from the school, has been carried out. Should the Council proceed with the statutory process in respect of the preferred option, this draft community impact assessment would be published as part of the consultation documentation. This would be updated throughout the process to reflect any feedback received, and would be considered by the Council's Cabinet as part of the decision making process.

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

Should the Council proceed with the statutory process and eventual implementation of the preferred option, support would be provided to pupils and their parents as part of the transition process, thereby ensuring full engagement

with their new schools. The nature of this support will depend on the needs of the parents/pupils; however, this could include effective transition arrangements with the receiving school to ensure pupils transition is positive.

The preferred option is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School which would provide continuity for pupils and their families and would ease transition arrangements, and would support parents' engagement with the school.

14. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

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

Option 4: Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School

The reasons for this are:

- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Llangedwyn C. in W. Primary School
- Would increase pupil numbers at Llanfechain C. in W. School
- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools
- Revenue saving to the Council
- The Council would no longer need to maintain the Llangedwyn building
- Pupils would attend a larger school where they would be part of a larger cohort of pupils
- Pupils would transfer to a school they are already familiar with
- Pupils would continue to access Church in Wales provision

It is recommended that a paper is considered by the Council's Cabinet, requesting approval to commence consultation on a proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, with pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School.