



Closure of Langedwyn C. in W. School
Consultation Report



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Consultation on the closure of Llangedwyn C. in W. School

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Consultation on the closure of Llangedwyn C. in W. School

1. OVERVIEW OF THE CONSULTATION

Powys County Council consulted on a proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School. The proposal is as follows:

- To close Llangedwyn C. in W. School from the 31st August 2024, with pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School

The consultation took place between the 12th of October 2023 and the 23rd of November 2023.

i) Consultation methods

The consultation documentation was available on the Council's website throughout the consultation period, and was distributed to stakeholders, as required by the School Organisation Code (2018). Separate versions for children and young people were also available on the Council's website throughout the consultation period.

Consultees were invited to respond to the consultation by either completing an online response form, filling in a paper copy of the form and returning it to the Transforming Education Team at County Hall, or by e-mailing / writing to the Transforming Education Team.

Meetings were held with the following:

- Staff of Llangedwyn C. in W. School – 16th November 2023
- Governors of Llangedwyn C. in W. School – 16th November 2023

In addition, the school's Headteacher discussed the proposal with pupils.

ii) Responses received

24 respondents completed the online response form and 6 respondents completed the Word version of the consultation response form. 3 other written responses were received, which included a response from Estyn and from the Governing Body of Ffederasiwn Dwy Afon.

The response received from Estyn is provided on page 13, in-line with the requirements of the School Organisation Code.

iii) Summary of issues raised

The issues raised in the consultation responses are listed in detail in section 6 on page 16 onwards. This includes the Council's response to each issue.

The following is a summary of the issues raised:

1. Comments about Llangedwyn school
2. Impact on pupils
3. Impact on pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups
4. Impact on staff
5. Impact on the community
6. Impact on families
7. Comments about travel/transport arrangements
8. Comments about Church in Wales provision
9. Comments about small/rural schools
10. Comments about other schools
11. Comments about finance / funding
12. Criticism of the Council's treatment of Llangedwyn School
13. Comments about the process
14. Comments about the presumption against closing rural schools
15. Comments about the documentation
16. Alternative options
17. Comments about impact on the Welsh language
18. Comments in support of the proposal
19. Other comments

2. CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

30 respondents completed the consultation response form. All respondents responded in English.

Information about those that completed the consultation response form is provided below.

Written comments were also provided in the consultation response forms. The issues raised in these comments are included in Section 6 of this report.

Part 1 – About you

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

Response	No.	%
Parent, carer or guardian	8	24.24%
Prospective parent, carer or guardian	1	3.03%
Governor	1	3.03%
Member of staff	1	3.03%
Member of the community	17	51.51%
Organisation	5	15.15%
Pupil	0	0.00%
No association	1	3.03%
Other	0	0.00%
Not Answered	0	0.00%
Total responses	33	

2. Please specify which school you are associated with:

Response	No.	%
Llangedwyn C. in W. School	26	86.67%
Another school	2	6.67%
No association with any school	2	6.67%
Not Answered	0	0.00%
Total responses	30	

3. Please provide your postcode:

Response	No.	%
Llanrhaeadr-Ym-Mochnant	2	6.67%
Dolafon	1	3.33%
Llansilin	2	6.67%
Nantmawr	2	6.67%
Pen-Y-Bont	2	6.67%

Llangedwyn	12	40%
Oswestry	3	10%
St. Martin	1	3.33%
Gobowen	1	3.33%
Llanymynech	2	6.67%
Ilanwddyn	1	3.33%
Penbontfawr	1	3.33%
Total responses	30	

Part 3 – About you

12. How old are you?

Response	No.	%
Under 16	0	0.00%
16-24	2	6.67%
25-34	3	10.00%
35-44	4	13.33%
45-54	7	23.33%
55-64	6	20.00%
65-74	7	23.33%
75-84	0	0.00%
85+	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Not answered	1	3.33%
Total responses	30	

13. What is your gender?

Response	No.	%
Male	11	36.67%
Female	18	60.00%
Gender Fluid	0	0.00%
Non-Binary	0	0.00%
Gender neutral	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Not answered	1	3.33%
Total responses	30	

14. Can you understand, speak or write Welsh?

Response	No.	%
Yes	9	30.00%
No	16	53.33%
Prefer not to say	3	10.00%
Not answered	2	6.67%
Total responses	30	

15. If you have school-aged children, are they entitled to receive free school meals?

Response	No.	%
Yes	6	20.00%
No	11	36.67%
Prefer not to say	2	6.67%
Not answered	11	36.67%
Total responses	30	

16. If you have school-aged children, do they have any additional learning needs?

Response	No.	%
Yes	4	13.33%
No	9	30.00%
Prefer not to say	2	6.67%
Not answered	15	50.00%
Total responses	30	

17. Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

Response	No.	%
Yes	3	10.00%
No	20	66.67%
Prefer not to say	4	13.33%
Not answered	3	10.00%
Total responses	30	

18. What is your ethnic group?

Response	No.	%
White	28	93.33%
Asian	0	0.00%
Black, African or Caribbean	0	0.00%
Mixed	0	0.00%
Gypsy/Traveller	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	1	3.33%
Not Answered	1	3.33%
Total	30	

3. CONSULTATION WITH PUPILS

No written consultation responses were received from pupils.

The Headteacher of Llangedwyn C. in W. School discussed the proposal with pupils at the school. The following is a summary of the discussion:

What do you like about Llangedwyn School?

- happy and colourful
- always get supported by teachers
- maths, inside break
- lots of people to help
- nice teachers
- friends and lots of nature
- really fun and like to play

Is there anything you don't like about Llangedwyn School, or that could be better?

- zip wire is broken
- getting up early
- not allowed to go on survival Minecraft
- barely any people
- that it might be shutting
- not allowed on field when muddy

If the school closed, the Council would like you to go to Llanfechain School, which has the same Headteacher as Llangedwyn. What do you think would be good about this?

- not happy about going to Llanfechain – want to stay at Llangedwyn
- want to see friends at Llanfechain but also would like to make new friends at another school
- wouldn't be scared to go because they know friends there already and scared about going to a completely new school
- nice teachers there

What do you think wouldn't be good about this?

- don't know everyone there
- there would be things they didn't know about
- we know everyone and everything about Llangedwyn

If there was no school in Llangedwyn, you would go to a bigger school. Is there anything you think would be better about being in a bigger school?

- more friends and would be more friends to go to high school with
- at Llangedwyn there aren't many people

Is there anything you think would be worse about going to a bigger school?

- too many people
- not knowing where everything is

What do you think the impact would be on the community in Llangedwyn if there was no school here?

- the village would be destroyed
- people would move out of the village to be nearer other schools
- lots of things would break in the village

Do you have any other questions / comments?

There were no other questions or comments.

4. CONSULTATION MEETINGS WITH STAFF AND GOVERNORS

Consultation meetings were held with the staff and governors of the school.

The issues raised at these meetings are summarised below:

i) Consultation meeting with Staff of Llangedwyn C. in W. School

- Concerns about communication. Commitments were made that communication would be better, however this hasn't been the case.
- In the Llanfyllin Catchment review, it was very difficult seeing information about the school on the screen without any prior warning. Several members of staff reported that they felt like everyone looked at you in a big room of people, and it caused people a lot of anxiety.
- Concern about the way information about the proposal was originally shared. It was leaked out locally on social media, so some members of staff found out via social media, friends, their children's school's apps.
- Concerns about the timing of information being shared. Staff found out about the proposal during the school day, and then had to continue while upset.
- Larger schools, unaffected by the proposals, shared information on their social media, which led to staff at Llangedwyn finding out about it before the governors and leadership had had a chance to discuss the situation with them.
- Concern that staff found out about the Cabinet decision two days before they received a letter from Lynette Lovell.
- A request for information about redeployment and redundancy processes.
- How much notice needs to be given before closing a school?
- What would happen to the school and its contents?
- It has been difficult to shield pupils from comments about the school closing from members of the public.
- The process has been difficult for pupils.
- It can be very difficult for staff when they are asked questions by pupils about the process, and staff don't have all the answers.
- As well as supporting the pupils, staff need to support parents, which is difficult without having all of the information.
- Concern that Llangedwyn feels like an underdog in the federation compared to Llanfechain, and that staff can feel the differences between how the schools are perceived/treated. These differences have made it difficult for staff to work with staff of the other schools.
- Concern that the schools in the federation have been unequal partners.

- The Llangedwyn pupils are currently in a safe and secure environment, moving to a larger community may be challenging for them.
- The transition will be difficult for pupils.
- Parents need support with transition as well as pupils.
- What transition support will be provided?
- Queries about the transport policy.
- Questions about transition for ALN pupils.
- Are pupil numbers likely to continue to drop – four pupils have left since the announcement was made about the consultation.
- When are staff likely to learn about the decision made following consultation.
- Could someone ring the school to let them know what the decision is once it has been made?

ii) Consultation meeting with Governors of Llangedwyn C. in W. School

- In this meeting, governors will summarise the written response which will be submitted by the governing body.
- The governing body are disappointed to find themselves in this situation.
- After initiating the federation themselves, they believe that it has strengthened both schools and the pupils have benefited from that.
- The governing body feels that the transformation programme has impacted significantly on pupil numbers at the school, as it reduces parents' faith that the school will continue to stay open.
- The funding formula is designed to punish small schools, as it makes them unsustainable.
- The governing body believes it has done an excellent job of managing the little money that the school receives, but the combination of the deficit and reduction in pupil numbers are causing difficulties.
- These difficulties can lead to safeguarding issues. The low numbers of staff means that the school is at the point where if a single member of staff is unavailable, they have to consider closing the school.
- The school and governing body understand the needs of the new Welsh Curriculum, and clearly the number of children at Llangedwyn presents all sorts of challenges for the Headteacher.
- Two potential closures, reducing pupil numbers, and unmanageable budgets has had a massive impact on the wellbeing of staff.
- The county council is thanked for its level of engagement this time, as the time before it was outrageous. However, there has still been a significant impact.
- Llangedwyn has a reputation for supporting the most vulnerable children. It is a risk for ALN pupils to attend bigger schools. The governing body seeks assurance that ALN pupils will be supported.

- Concern about English language provision in the valley if both Llangedwyn and Ysgol Bro Cynllaith were to close. The fact that Church in Wales places are being preserved is welcomed.
- Assurance is sought that admissions will be managed properly for pupils moving to Llanfechain as space there is limited.
- A request for additional space to be provided at Llanfechain.
- The proposal is to eventually build a new school in the Llansantffraid/Llanfechain area, but at best that's 5 years away. It is questioned how this will work when Llanfechain has a £500,000 maintenance backlog.
- The governing body would like assurance in the recommendation to Cabinet that the authority will develop a funded maintenance programme to get Llanfechain back to a reasonable standard
- The current situation at Llangedwyn is unsustainable.
- The impact of the proposal on parents, staff, and especially pupils is emphasised.
- Questions about the make up of the new governing body at Llanfechain should Llangedwyn close.
- Many Llangedwyn parents associate small schools with good provision. If there are no small schools left, then parents associate that with there not being any nurturing care available.
- The governing body is looking for a recognition of the strength of Llangedwyn as a nurturing care provider in the recommendation to cabinet, and work to be done on the ability of larger schools to be as caring and nurturing.
- Extra support from receiving schools needs to be offered to vulnerable learners.
- Questions about the future of English medium education in the area.
- Concern about the school's ability to develop the four purposes with so few pupils; challenge comes from peers as well as school staff.

5. ESTYN

Estyn's response to the consultation is provided below:

This report has been prepared by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However, Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals. Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer.

The proposal is to close Llangedwyn Church in Wales Primary School from the 31 August 2024, with pupils to transfer to Llanfechain Church in Wales Primary School.

Summary/Conclusion

Estyn considers that the proposal is likely to, at least, maintain the standard of education provision in the area.

Description and benefits

The local authority has demonstrated a suitable rationale for its proposal. It outlines the challenges currently facing the school, including very small pupil numbers and an unsustainable deficit budget.

The local authority has provided a detailed description of the proposal and the projected timetable for statutory procedures and for implementation of the proposal.

The local authority has considered four suitable alternatives and given sound reasons as to why these have been discounted. Whilst the local authority sets out clearly and fairly the expected benefits and disadvantages when compared with the status quo, there is no recognition of the fact that, under the proposal, pupils will be moving from a building deemed to be in "poor" condition to one that is identified as being likewise. The proposer does not identify how the facilities at Llanfechain will be improved, and the proposal states that no capital funding will be required to facilitate the proposal.

The local authority notes rightly that the transfer of provision from Llangedwyn to Llanfechain will result in additional travel time for pupils and their families, and that transport will be provided for those who are entitled to it. It also suggests that Llangedwyn is not the closest school for most pupils who currently attend. However, as it is not clear how far these pupils are already travelling to Llangedwyn, it is unclear as to whether travelling to Llanfechain would be realistic in these cases. As a result, it is not possible to suggest that all pupils will automatically move to Llanfechain. Whilst the numbers may be very low, the proposal does not recognise the potential impact on the wellbeing of pupils who may not ultimately attend the same school as their current classmates sufficiently.

The local authority shows successfully how the proposal will reduce the number of surplus places in the locality. This is in-line with the council's 'Strategy for Transforming Education'. However, should the proposal be successful the potential number of pupils in Llanfechain could be above the school's capacity and the proposal is not clear enough in how this will be addressed should it be the case. The proposal also includes reference to a potential future merger of Llanfechain with Llansantfraid Church in Wales Primary School. Whilst no time frame is mentioned, this does suggest the possibility of further upheaval for pupils currently attending Llangedwyn.

The proposal is to close an English-medium primary school. The proposal is not linked to the targets in the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and would not expand or reduce the availability of Welsh language provision.

The local authority has identified a potential annual saving of £91,000 and additional annual cost of £34,600 for transport. The local authority has provided a Community Impact Assessment as part of this proposal.

Educational aspects of the proposal

In general, the local authority considers well the impact of the proposals on the quality and standards in education should pupils move to Llanfechain. It recognises the working relationship that already exists between the two schools through the formal federation and how pupils will already be familiar with staff at Llanfechain. There is appropriate recognition of the potential impact on the quality and standards in education, including pupils' learning, wellbeing, teaching and learning experiences, care support and guidance and leadership and management. For example, it identifies that pupils will have access to more staff and resources and a better range of extra-curricular activities following the potential move. However, the general assumption that pupils will automatically move to Llanfechain means that the implications of pupils moving to different schools is not considered or explored well enough in the proposal.

The local authority states that it has no concerns about the quality of provision at Llanfechain, and that as a result there should be no negative impact on pupils' learning should they transfer.

The local authority highlights the fact the headteacher of Llanfechain is the headteacher of the current federation arrangement. This would mean no changes to current leadership and management systems within Llanfechain would be required.

The very small number of pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) means that, whilst their transition would need to be managed carefully, provision for their needs at Llanfechain should be manageable. The local authority notes that it will need to work closely with both schools to ensure that the needs of all ALN pupils are met.

The local authority has recorded the outcome of both schools' most recent inspections in its proposal. Neither school is currently subject to any follow-up activity by Estyn. However, Llangedwyn was removed from Estyn Review in 2021 and Llanfechain has not been inspected since December 2016. Whilst the local authority emphasises its confidence in leadership, teaching and learning at Llanfechain, they provide no up-to-date information to support this.

The local authority recognises the potential disruption and uncertainty caused by a school closure. It records the need for effective transition arrangements to be put in place should the proposal be approved. The preferred option in this case should ease transition concerns given the relationship that already exists between the two schools and communities.

Llangedwyn Church in Wales Primary School is designated by Welsh Government as a 'rural school'. Therefore, there is an automatic 'presumption against' its closure. However, it appears that the local authority has demonstrated that it has explored alternatives to closure.

The community impact assessment shows that the school building is not used as or seen as a community hub and that most of the school's pupils do not live in the village.

6. ISSUES RAISED DURING THE CONSULTATION PERIOD

The following tables list the issues raised during the consultation period and provide the local authority's response to these issues:

1. Comments about Llangedwyn C. in W. School

1.1 Positive comments about the school

Ref	Comment	Council Response
1.1.1	Llangedwyn School is a fantastic setting.	The council notes these positive comments about Llangedwyn C. in W. School.
1.1.2	Pupils have been welcomed to the school and helped to feel comfortable.	As above.
1.1.3	Llangedwyn School has provided us a sense of community and made us feel welcomed and involved within the school.	As above.
1.1.4	The school provides an excellent standard of learning.	As above.
1.1.5	Llangedwyn ensures that my child doesn't feel held back or disadvantaged after the trauma they experienced elsewhere.	As above.
1.1.6	The school should stay open as it's an amazing school. They have great teachers there that treat everyone equally and prevent bullying.	As above.
1.1.7	The nurturing aspect of our pupils within the school has been frequently commented upon by villagers, visitors, and professional educators.	As above.
1.1.8	Our attractive Victorian-era school stands safe and smart and compares favourably against the mid-twentieth-century buildings.	As above.
1.1.9	The school has recently been lauded in the Senedd for an innovative history project about Owain Glyndwr. This only went ahead because of Llangedwyn School's location at the centre of the	As above.

	heritage area and would not have got off the ground without the school.	
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1.2 Comments relating to the school’s provision for pupils with ALN or any other protected characteristics

1.2.1	Llangedwyn School has provided extra support for pupils with additional learning needs ensuring they meet their full potential.	<p>Whilst recognising the support Llangedwyn C. in W. School has provided to pupils with ALN over the years, Llangedwyn is a mainstream school and does not have any specialist facilities to support children with additional learning needs compared with other mainstream schools.</p> <p>All schools are expected to cater to the needs and requirements of learners with Additional Learning Needs, while also ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and ensuring that learners are not discriminated against as per the directions in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Smaller schools with limited resources and personnel may be presented with challenges implementing responsibilities in line with the Equality Act – including providing diverse support systems, accommodations and bespoke services necessary to meet the diverse needs of learners. In addition, social interaction is key to development. In small classes, there are fewer opportunities for learners with ALN to interact with a diverse peer group, and experience role modelling from their peers. In essence, the effectiveness of an educational environment for learners with ALN depends on a holistic approach that includes both class size and</p>
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		<p>the availability of appropriate resources and support.</p> <p>The Council recognises that, due to the geographic nature of the county, the current provision of specialist support for pupils with ALN may not be fully accessible to all pupils. To address this, the Council has started providing satellite provision of the main Special Schools in key strategic locations within the county where there is a lack of local provision. The Council's ALN Strategy will be reviewed in early 2024 in order to ensure that it is appropriate to meet the needs of pupils with ALN wherever they are located within the county.</p>
1.2.2	Various children have moved to Llangedwyn School as their needs weren't being met at other schools.	As above.
1.2.3	The provision for special needs has been provided by Llangedwyn for many years and should be recognised for the excellence it has provided.	As above.
1.2.4	I understand that the pupils who attend Llangedwyn school have particular needs which are readily met in their current situation.	As above.
1.2.5	The school has been recognised for providing outstanding provision for those with protected characteristics.	As above.
1.2.6	The school has had a good reputation over a long period. It has a status to provide an enriching and stable environment for those pupils with protected characteristics, alongside main-stream pupils.	As above.
1.2.7	Llangedwyn is inclusive of all disabilities and characteristics that are protected under the Equality Act 2010, including pupils that have to use a wheelchair and pupils with other additional needs.	As above.

	The school makes sure pupils have the support they need without feeling not included.	
1.2.8	I believe that the school can help those with additional learning needs, as with low pupil numbers, the individual tuition needed can be given to ensure that these children reach their full potential.	As above.
1.2.8	Llangedwyn has a proven track record of catering to children of primary school age with a wide range of ALNs including disability, only recently has this been an issue and seems to be linked to the proposal to close the school.	As above.
1.2.9	Llangedwyn being a smaller school has the ability and opportunity (and has previously) been a promoter of equality and diversity, catering to all needs.	As above.
1.2.10	The school over the past two decades has accepted many children who have had a more difficult start in life, many of whom have gone on to enjoy a fulfilling life ahead.	As above.
1.2.11	It has a long track record of supporting the most vulnerable of children, indeed many parents bring their children to the school because of this reputation.	As above.

1.3 Comments about the school's connection with the community and the church

1.3.1	The school is a central hub for the community.	The council recognises the school's role within the local community and its links with the church. A Community Impact Assessment has been prepared which considers the proposal's impact on the community, this will be updated to reflect information received during the consultation and will be considered by Cabinet when deciding whether or not to proceed.
1.3.2	The school is a strong focal point within the local community.	As above.

1.3.3	The school has a particularly close relationship with the church and holds services there throughout the year to which we are all invited. Artwork of various kinds which the children make in school is displayed in the church and they perform musical items on occasion. The vicar visits the school on a regular basis. The school children have entertained us at the Jubilee club – a luncheon club for the elderly, and during lockdown the children made cards for us. The school puts on coffee mornings and sales of work to raise money for charity and school funds. The school concerts are much enjoyed by the community, all going to show what a big part the school plays in village life and what a loss it would be. The school provides a warm, nurturing environment in which children can thrive, encouraging a good work ethic and an ethos of kindness, thoughtfulness, and service to the community.	As above.
1.3.4	The school has been at the heart of the Llangedwyn Community for nearly two hundred years, and throughout has provided a loving and nurturing education emphasising Christian values.	As above.
1.3.5	The close link between school and church has been to the betterment of both, plus the community at large. Our congregations regularly witness the high standards of care, education, and social ability during their frequent visits to our church. To lose this fruitful and delightful link will be to the detriment of the village.	As above.

1.4 Comments on the impact of the current low pupil numbers at the school

1.4.1	The national curriculum in Wales has dramatically changed in recent years and preparation for this change has been an important part of Llangedwyn's school development priorities. Whilst the school is able to deliver the content of the curriculum effectively, although requiring a huge amount of work from the teacher, it is becoming increasingly difficult to do so with the	The council recognises these concerns about the impact of the current low pupil numbers at Llangedwyn C. in W. School on the provision offered at the school.
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	appropriate pedagogy due to low numbers. With only one child in most year groups, peer collaboration, development of independent learning and delivering effective challenge is becoming increasingly difficult.	
1.4.2	The low number of pupils at the school means that discussion, sharing ideas and considering differing viewpoints is limited, and this impacts pupil progress. This is true of all year groups but has a particularly negative impact on the youngest children, learning about working with others is critical to future learning and social confidence.	As above.
1.4.3	The adult:learner ratio at Llangedwyn is very high (over 1:3) and this makes independent working more challenging, as learners tend to rely on staff for support, discussion and idea bouncing, rather than their peers or resources in the classroom.	As above.
1.4.4	With such small numbers at the school, it is very difficult to take part in learning activities that require more participants, for example games in PE and performances. Whilst this is mitigated as far as possible by working as a federation, it does not cover everything.	As above.
1.4.5	An important element of the curriculum is the development of social skills and confidence of all learners which is expressed through the Four Purposes. Whilst staff at the schoolwork very hard to do this, the limited number of people to interact with, does not give the children a sufficient range of relationships to build their skills with.	As above.

1.5 Comments on Ffederasiwn Dwy Afon

1.5.1	Federating the school in my opinion has had an adverse effect on Llangedwyn CiW. The school's status has been diminished with emphasis being given to Llanfechain CiW, thus creating an	Ffederasiwn Dwy Afon was established in 2018 in accordance with the requirements of the 'Federation process of maintained schools in
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	<p>imbalance and lack of positivity which has had far reaching implications for Llangedwyn CiW school.</p>	<p>Wales¹. The proposal was taken forward by the governing bodies of the two schools, not the local authority. The governing bodies of both Llangedwyn C. in W. School and Llanfechain C. in W. School agreed to proceed with establishing the Federation.</p> <p>The aim of the process included ensuring stability in leadership across the two schools, enabling the sharing of good practice across the schools and improving opportunities for pupils and staff.</p> <p>The Council does not agree that establishing the Federation has directly led to the current proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School.</p>
1.5.2	<p>Although federations can work in many cases it seems to have failed in the case of Llangedwyn School where the federation has been put in the position of choosing one school over the other.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
1.5.3	<p>The federation's focus is only on Llanfechain School with no care or effort to ensuring that Llangedwyn is given equal attention. This has been the reason for the decline.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
1.5.4	<p>Llangedwyn feel like an underdog in the federation compared with Llanfechain.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
1.5.5	<p>The school became part of a federation linking it to Llanfechain, which had very low pupil numbers. The joint governing body has succeeded in reversing the pupil numbers with Llanfechain near capacity and Llangedwyn low. This was despite Llangedwyn having an excellent educational standard and good facilities. The</p>	<p>As above.</p> <p>Historical PLASC information relating to the pupil numbers at both Llanfechain C. in W. School and Llangedwyn C. in W. School are included in the Consultation Document published as part of the</p>

¹ [The Federation of Maintained Schools \(gov.wales\)](http://gov.wales)

	disparity of representatives connected to the two schools is obvious, with Llangedwyn being mutilated by this governing body.	proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School. This information shows that in January 2018, there were 28 pupils at Llangedwyn C. in W. School, whilst there were 39 pupils at Llanfechain C. in W. School. This does not support the statement that 'The joint governing body has succeeded in reversing the pupil numbers'.
1.5.6	After initiating the federation themselves, the governing body believe that it has strengthened both schools and the pupils have benefited from that.	Comment noted.

1.6 Comments on leadership at the school

1.6.1	The governing body and Headteacher have been working to reduce pupil numbers for a long period of time at Llangedwyn school. The Church in Wales places that should be being maintained are being reduced by bad management of Llangedwyn school and children are being lost to English schools. The Welsh government pledged to increase Welsh language use in Wales however due to the policies of Powys County Council this are being lost.	The Council does not agree with the statement that 'the governing body and Headteacher have been working to reduce pupil numbers for a long period of time at Llangedwyn school', nor that the current proposal has been caused by 'bad management' of the school.
1.6.2	The school has had bad management under the headteacher and governing body for years and this has resulted in a reduction in pupil numbers and admissions.	The Council does not agree that 'the school has had bad management under the headteacher and governing body for years'.
1.6.3	Having absent heads through long term leave has had a negative affect on the whole school.	Comment noted.
	Llangedwyn school has for many years been considered an outstanding school with high standard of teaching and has only been let down by the headteachers and governors.	The Council does not agree that the current proposal has been caused by the school's headteachers and governors.
1.6.4	The Headteacher and the governing body have only been interested in Llanfechain school since they were federated in Oct	The Council does not agree with this statement. Admissions for both Llangedwyn C. in W. School

	<p>2018 during this time they have stopped children going to Llangedwyn or told parents you can only send kids to Llanfechain school. This is wrong and should be stopped.</p>	<p>and Llanfechain C. in W. School are administered by the Council in accordance with the Council's Admissions Policy. Pupils have been free to apply for places at either school.</p>
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1.7 Concerns about the school's financial position

1.7.1	<p>The school's budgetary deficit at the end of year 23/24 is estimated to be £32,803 and by 25/26 £189,860. This is an irretrievable situation for the school and the lack of funding impacts on the future of the school</p>	<p>The Council notes this comment about the school's current financial position.</p>
1.7.2	<p>As a result of the large funding deficit at the school, the staffing budget is highly restricted allowing only for the employment of one full time qualified teacher and two support staff. One qualified teacher on contract provides cover when required. In order to provide adequate safeguarding for the pupils, three members of staff, one of who must be a contracted, qualified teacher, must be on site at all times. If this is not possible, the school must close. During the first half of the autumn term this happened on one occasion, there is no guarantee that it will not happen again. Clearly this is disruptive to both pupils and parents and impacts on the educational experience offered at the school.</p>	<p>The Council notes this comment about the school's current financial position, and the impact of this on staffing arrangements at the school.</p>
1.7.3	<p>Working in these conditions puts pressure on the staff who have the challenge of maintaining adequate levels of safeguarding at all times and providing an appropriate educational experience for pupils with a wide range of ages and abilities with such a small team. Particularly, in the need to ensure that there is cover for planned and unplanned absences as there must be a minimum of three members of staff on site at all times. Normally, any such absences would be filled by a supply teacher, but safeguarding rules do not allow this to happen, as one person must be a contracted qualified teacher, so considerable amounts of time can</p>	<p>As above.</p>

	be spent making arrangements at very short notice to ensure that the school can remain open. On occasion this is not possible, and the school is forced to close which puts extra stress on staff members.	
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1.8 Other comments

1.8.1	The UK population is increasing fast due to immigration. Some of that migration is being absorbed locally, and this will only increase. The long-term fact for almost all areas of the UK, including Wales, is population increase, so Llangedwyn School will be needed to accommodate this increase.	Current projections are that pupil numbers in Powys schools will continue to decrease over the coming years. There is no current evidence of any significant increased demand for places in Llangedwyn over the coming years.
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2. Impact on pupils

2.1	It is unfair to the pupils and impacts severely on their mental health and wellbeing.	<p>The Council recognises that any school reorganisation process creates a period of uncertainty for all involved, including children. The Council is committed to supporting schools and learners, including through periods of change. An experienced member of staff from the Council is supporting school leaders effectively to help them manage possible changes for their learners.</p> <p>It is also expected that school governors, staff, and parents support the children to ensure that there isn't a detrimental impact on their wellbeing,</p> <p>Schools receiving pupils as a result of a school closure are expected to work with the closing school, the pupils, and their families to provide full support to pupils to ensure a smooth transition. In</p>
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		<p>this case, the proposal is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, which is federated with Llangedwyn. Pupils are familiar with the staff and pupils at Llanfechain, and are familiar with the school building. This should minimise the impact on pupil well-being for those pupils transferring to Llanfechain.</p>
2.2	<p>Concern that pupils would have to move to different schools which will cause anxiety and will mean they have to adjust to a different school environment</p>	<p>As above.</p>
2.3	<p>Concern about pupils being uprooted and taken away from the teachers they trust, who understand their needs. This will have a negative impact on their ability to learn.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
2.4	<p>It is an educationally recognised fact that pupils who change schools will regress and or their progress will be inhibited by two terms.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
2.5	<p>Pupils have already undergone the impact of COVID and a threat of closure at the same time. They now face almost certain closure of the school. We seek assurance that a commitment to suitable transition arrangements, particularly in relation to wellbeing, will be made for those pupils transferring from Llangedwyn to Llanfechain and that these commitments will be made in recommendations to the Cabinet.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
2.6	<p>Pupils would have to move to different schools where they don't know people and don't know where everything is.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
2.7	<p>The process has been difficult for pupils.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
2.8	<p>The Council aren't considering the effect of closing Llangedwyn School on the children's social skills</p>	<p>Should the Council proceed with the current proposal, pupils would transfer to larger schools, where they would be part of larger groups of pupils, which should have a positive impact on their social skills.</p>

2.9	They would be singled out as they couldn't attend after school club which would be denying them social skills and depriving them of out of school activities which would be detrimental to the mental health	Llangedwyn C. in W. School is currently not the closest school for the majority of the 7 pupils that attend. Whilst acknowledging that access to after school club may be more difficult for the few pupils for whom the school is the closest school, the numbers affected are very small.
2.10	The proposal would mean moving children from the stable caring secure place they currently attend to a larger school with bigger classes and teachers that will have less time to spend with them, which will impact on their progress	<p>If Llangedwyn C.in W. School closes, then pupils would transfer to Llanfechain C.in.W School (or other schools if that was the parental preference). As the smallest school in the county, it is recognised that pupils would move to larger schools and be taught in larger classes – there would be more opportunity for interaction with a wider group of peers, and this would be beneficial in both an educational and social sense.</p> <p>However, it must be noted that the named receiving school – Llanfechain C.in W. School –is significantly below the Welsh Government's definition of a small school even though it is larger than Llangedwyn C.in W. School.</p>
2.11	Without Llangedwyn School, a lot of children's education will suffer.	As above.
2.12	What transition support will be provided by the receiving school?	Transition support will be provided by the receiving school(s) through a variety of means: children would be able to attend for familiarisation days and activities, parents would be able to meet the headteachers and teachers and also familiarise themselves with the school.

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3. Impact on pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups

3.1	<p>Llangedwyn has met the needs of ALN pupils over many decades. There is little ALN provision in North Powys, hence the importance of the ALN support given by the school. The withdrawal of that should the school close will cause concern in the community. Assurance is needed that the Authority have plans to address this shortfall and that it will feature in any recommendation made to the Cabinet.</p>	<p>Whilst recognising the support Llangedwyn C. in W. School has provided to pupils with ALN over the years, Llangedwyn is a mainstream school and does not have any specialist facilities to support children with additional learning needs compared with other mainstream schools.</p> <p>All schools are expected to cater to the needs and requirements of learners with Additional Learning Needs, while also ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and ensuring that learners are not discriminated against as per the directions in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Smaller schools with limited resources and personnel may be presented with challenges implementing responsibilities in line with the Equality Act – including providing diverse support systems, accommodations and bespoke services necessary to meet the diverse needs of learners. In addition, social interaction is key to development. In small classes, there are fewer opportunities for learners with ALN to interact with a diverse peer group, and experience role modelling from their peers. In essence, the effectiveness of an educational environment for learners with ALN depends on a holistic approach that includes both class size and the availability of appropriate resources and support.</p>
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		<p>The Council recognises that, due to the geographic nature of the county, the current provision of specialist support for pupils with ALN may not be fully accessible to all pupils. To address this, the Council has started providing satellite provision of the main Special Schools in key strategic locations within the county where there is a lack of local provision. The Council's ALN Strategy will be reviewed in early 2024 in order to ensure that it is appropriate to meet the needs of pupils with ALN wherever they are located within the county.</p>
3.2	Local smaller schools are still needed and could be used for special education for pupils with learning difficulties	As above.
3.3	Children with special needs require an environment in which education can be individually tailored to support them. Small, friendly classrooms are more conducive to this obligation.	As above.
3.4	The closure of a small rural school will always have an impact on local children, however in this case it will deny places to children that need a smaller school (either through physical disabilities or social anxiety from having developmental delay caused by early life trauma) to allow them to integrate more fully in mainstream education	As above.
3.5	The proposal would increase the number ALN children in other schools, which would reduce the availability of existing staff to spend the time required for each child as they 'cope' with a larger pool of children needing their attention.	As above.
3.6	Concern about the impact on LAC children	As above.

		<p>The Council would ensure that any Looked After Children affected by the proposal would be fully supported in transitioning to a new school.</p> <p>If there were any additional support required, the Council would work with the receiving school to ensure that this is provided.</p>
3.7	LAC children require some sort of additional support, be that educational, therapeutic or socially. From experience that is only available in smaller schools. In larger schools there is a tendency that they get lost in the system and get labelled as disruptive or 'naughty'.	<p>As above.</p> <p>Schools of all sizes are able to successfully support pupils, including looked after children. The current proposal in respect of Llangedwyn C. in W. School is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School. This is also a small school.</p>
3.8	If there are village children whose disabilities or additional learning support needs hinder their travelling long distances to get to school, then closing Llangedwyn School will have a severe detrimental effect on their education and lifelong development.	Llangedwyn C. in W. School is not the closest school for the majority of the 7 pupils that currently attend. Whilst acknowledging that implementation of the proposal would result in additional travel for pupils for whom Llangedwyn is currently the closest school, many of the school's pupils already travel long distances to get to the school.
3.9	With the proposed closure it has de-stabilised the whole learning environment of the school, impacting severely on all those involved, thereby having a detrimental effect on those with protected characteristics.	The Council recognises that any school reorganisation process creates a period of uncertainty for all involved, including any pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups. The Council is committed to supporting schools and learners, including through periods of change. An experienced member of staff from the Council is supporting school leaders effectively to help them manage possible changes for their learners.

		<p>It is also expected that school governors, staff, and parents support the children to ensure that there isn't a detrimental impact on their wellbeing.</p> <p>Schools receiving pupils as a result of a school closure are expected to work with the closing school, the pupils, and their families to provide full support to pupils to ensure a smooth transition. This would include schools receiving any pupils that belong to the protected characteristic groups. In this case, the proposal is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, which is federated with Llangedwyn. Pupils are familiar with the staff and pupils at Llanfechain, and are familiar with the school building. This should minimise the impact on pupil well-being for those pupils transferring to Llanfechain.</p>
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4. Impact on staff

4.1	It's unfair to staff and will impact on their mental health and well-being	The Council recognises that any school reorganisation proposal creates a period of uncertainty for staff. The Council's HR team have met with staff to provide support.
4.2	The current proposal and consultation is having an impact on staff well-being	As above.
4.3	Staff have been asked questions about the process by pupils and parents but don't have the answers to give them.	As above.
4.4	The Llanfyllin Catchment review meeting caused anxiety for staff as information about the school was displayed on the screen.	Information about all schools in the catchment was shared at the Llanfyllin Catchment review meeting. This information is already available online on the Council's website.

4.5	Staff found out about the proposal during the school day, and then had to continue working when upset.	There was an agreed communications plan that was communicated with all schools, however unfortunately the information appeared on social media before some parents and staff had received copies of the letter that had been issued. As a result, the press release that had been due to be issued at 3pm was issued earlier in the day.
4.6	Request for information about redeployment and redundancy processes	Information about staffing processes was shared with staff at the consultation meeting held with staff. HR are also available to provide additional information and support to staff as needed. Should the Council proceed with the process, further information would be shared with staff if and when decisions are made.

5. Impact on the community

5.1	The closure of Llangedwyn School would be negative for the community.	The Council recognises that the closure of any school would have an impact on the local community. A draft Community Impact Assessment has been prepared which considers the impact of the proposal on the community. This will be updated to reflect feedback received during the consultation period.
5.2	The closure of Llangedwyn School would be a sad day for our community. It plays a large part in our village life, as it has always done.	As above.
5.3	Closure of the school will detract from the Tanat Valley community as a whole. Once it has closed, it will have gone for good. The school should remain open as a vital part of the community infrastructure for the future.	As above.

5.4	School ethos and links with the community have been the centre of the village and these links will be lost forever. Many of the locals are elderly and cannot drive so having local events and links with younger children are vital to their well being.	As above.
5.5	Concern about the impact on the cohesiveness of the local community	As above.
5.6	Some people would look at moving out of the area if the school was to close	As above.
5.7	A parallel can be drawn between the closure of rural railway lines and stations in the 60's where the only remit was financial, 'if it doesn't pay, take it away' which has been followed by years of regret for local opportunities that were not considered as part of the original remit and the closure plan for small rural schools risks suffering in the same way, leading, as it surely will to the decimation of local communities.	As above.
5.8	Any village school is a focal point in the community. Young children, especially, develop and feel a sense of security being in familiar surroundings. Closure of a village school and the transfer of children to other schools outside of their normal neighbourhood can have a diluting effect on the community as a whole.	As above.
5.9	Llangedwyn school is a short walk away from St. Cedwyn's Church and attendance by the school children, and their teachers, to celebrate Christian religious occasions also draws resident members of the village community. This important connection will be lost if Llangedwyn Primary School is closed.	As above.

6. Impact on families

6.1	The uncertainty caused by the possible closure of the school is causing severe anxiety and is detrimental to the mental health of parents of pupils attending the school as well as the pupils themselves.	The Council recognises that any school reorganisation process creates a period of uncertainty for all involved, including the families of pupils affected by any proposals.
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6.2	There will be an impact on those families wishing to have a Christian-orientated education for their children. The costs both financial and emotional of being taken away from the church and community they belong to will be damaging.	As above.
6.3	Young mothers coming to the area make contacts through the school. This is particularly important for single parents. The loss of the school would further impoverish the lives of the elderly.	The council acknowledges that schools provide an important function in the social lives of parents as well as pupils. However, the majority of the 7 pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School don't live in Llangedwyn. Parents would be equally able to make contacts at schools that their children might transfer to, and a larger school may provide a greater opportunity for this.

7. Comments about travel/transport arrangements

7.1	Attending Llanfechain would add a large amount of travelling time making it virtually impossible to work a full day and collect the children in time.	The Council acknowledges that attending Llanfechain School would require additional travel for pupils for whom Llangedwyn is currently the closest school. However, Llangedwyn is not currently the closest school for the majority of the school's 7 pupils. Whilst the proposal is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, pupils could choose to transfer to alternative schools closer to their homes, which would reduce their travel time to school.
7.2	The council aren't considering the effect that closing Llangedwyn school will have on travel for the parents.	As above.
7.3	Travel to alternative schools would be further.	As above.
7.4	Very little thought has gone into getting children to other schools and how parents will have to sacrifice extra time and expense on getting their children there.	As above.

7.5	Parents would have to drive a lot further to get their children to school, some parents are unable to send them to their closest school because of previous experiences.	As above.
7.6	Transporting children over long distances to attend non-local schools must have a large impact on both the environment and actual transport costs. With the current cost of living situation and the current drive to a cleaner, greener environment, I cannot find any reference to either of these points as having been considered by your proposals. Given that transport whether by private car, taxi, minibus or coach, is going to be costly on an increasing scale I am surprised that this has not been an important part of the consideration.	As above. The environmental impact of the proposal is considered in the impact assessments.
7.7	The nearest school that would continue to teach my child Welsh as a second language is a 30-minute drive which in turn means they would have such a long school day and there would be no transport provided to my child/children as they can't go to their local school.	Comment noted. It is acknowledged that implementation of the proposal could result in additional travel for some pupils, however Llangedwyn is currently not the closest school for the majority of 7 pupils that attend.
7.8	At the cabinet meeting of September 26th, a question was asked about the provision of school transport for children displaced by the proposals, a comment was made that the answer had been 'fudged' in response to a query from Scrutiny, the answer then given was that Powys has a legal responsibility to provide transport for children being displaced to their nearest school or the school for their catchment area (this answer was really in itself a further 'fudge' as it didn't really answer the question that was asked). Transport to alternative schools is a very important question, especially to people like myself who deal primarily with LAC children with their associated additional learning needs.	Should the Council proceed with implementation of the proposal, home to school transport would be provided for eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy. This means that pupils for whom Llangedwyn is currently the closest school or for whom Llanfechain is the closest school and who live more than 2 miles from the school would be entitled to home to school transport. Alternatively, pupils for whom Llangedwyn is not currently their closest school would be eligible for home to school transport to their nearest schools if they live more than 2 miles from the school.

7.9	Other schools in the area have transport for their students but Llangedwyn doesn't, if it did there would be more people willing to send their children there. This would make the school more viable.	Any home to school transport provided to other schools in the area is provided in accordance with the Council's home to school transport policy, which provides transport to primary pupils to their nearest school or their nearest Welsh-medium schools if this is more than 2 miles from their home.
7.10	You are expecting us to take our children to a school further away but not offering to transport them, yet there are busses passing Llangedwyn school.	As above.
7.11	If you look at the local catchment area, you should realise how much time and money is being spent on providing transport to other schools only because Powys have said for many years that it is due to close the school at Llangedwyn.	Parents can apply for a place at whichever school they choose. Any applications are dealt with in accordance with the Council's Admissions Policy. Transport would only be provided to pupils in accordance with the Council's home to school transport policy.
7.12	Another serious implication of the preferred option is that pupils who then have to travel to their 'new' school by arranged transport would be denied the right to interact socially with their peers by joining in things such as breakfast clubs or after school clubs, particularly (as in our instance) where this is not on a regular fixed basis.	The Council acknowledges that attending Llanfechain School would require additional travel for pupils for whom Llangedwyn is currently the closest school, and that this could impact on their ability to access breakfast clubs or after school clubs. However, Llangedwyn is not currently the closest school for the majority of the school's 7 pupils. Whilst the proposal is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, pupils could choose to transfer to alternative schools closer to their homes, which would reduce their travel time to school.
7.13	What will English-medium pupils do if Llangedwyn closes and their nearest school is Welsh-medium? Will they be able to get transport to their nearest English-medium school?	The Council's current Home to School Transport Policy provides transport 'for learners who ordinarily reside in Powys to attend their nearest suitable school or catchment school', and also

		includes the provision of home to school transport policy to enable pupils to access a Welsh-medium school or stream if this is not their closest school. However, the policy doesn't currently provide transport to enable pupils to access English-medium provision if their closest school is Welsh-medium.
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8. Comments about Church in Wales provision

8.1	I would like to see the preservation of a Church in Wales school.	The proposal is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, which would ensure that they could continue to access Church in Wales provision.
8.2	The closure of Llangedwyn C. in W. School will result in the loss of an establishment that continues to demonstrate the high ethical Christian values our community desires.	As above.
8.3	The proposal will impact on families in the area who want their children to be educated in a church school environment with links to the local church.	As above.
8.4	The main failure is that the majority of pupils have not or will elect not to attend the proposed school for them to move to, leading to a loss of a number of Church in Wales places.	The proposal is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, which would ensure that they could continue to access Church in Wales provision. However, it is acknowledged that some pupils may choose to alternative schools which would mean that they would no longer access Church in Wales places.
8.5	The equal right to Church in Wales places for children will and is being removed, the reduction of places from two schools with capacity of 47 pupils in each school is being reduced to only 47 in one school, no extra places are being created and the remaining	As above.

	children are being forced out of Church in Wales schools as Llanfechain school is already full with no places available before the closure of Llangedwyn has taken place. There are also several pre school children in Llangedwyn village within walking distance that will need to be transported to another school. They will not get the chance to be offered a place in a Church in Wales School place.	
8.6	Church in Wales places are being reduced. This is forcing young families out of our area and into England.	As above.
8.7	We welcome the recognition of the need to retain Church in Wales places by keeping Llanfechain School open, and look forward to working with the Authority to develop its long-term plans for Church in Wales provision in the catchment, particularly in terms of capacity, as Llanfechain is at capacity and Llansantffraid is over capacity.	Comment noted.
8.8	There is not another Church in Wales School in the Tanat Valley, I am given to understand that the next nearest CIW school is almost at capacity.	<p>The proposal is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School. Whilst the current figures indicate that the school is close to its current capacity, the Council would work with the school and the governing body to ensure pupils wishing to access Church in Wales provision at the school could be accommodated.</p> <p>The Council's preferred way forward for the catchment, which was considered by Cabinet in September 2023, recognises this, and states that 'Once the way forward for Llangedwyn is clearer, the Council will work with Llansantffraid C. in W. School, Llanfechain C. in W. School and the Diocese of St Asaph to explore the possibility of merging the two schools to establish a dual sited</p>

		school, with the intention of moving them to a new building within the next ten years.'
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9. Comments about small/rural schools

9.1	Small village church schools provide a great learning/family/community environment for the children's education.	The Council notes these comments about the benefits of small and rural schools. However, as stated in the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2022-32, the Council faces a challenge due to the high proportion of small schools in the county and the lack of equity amongst schools. Llangedwyn C. in W. School currently has only 7 pupils, which means that it is increasingly difficult for the school to deliver education.
9.2	Smaller classes, smaller groups, smaller schools all tend to be able to cope with and cater for the wide range of children's needs and abilities.	As above.
9.3	Rural schools play an important part in the education of rural children and children moving to the area.	The Council recognises the role that rural schools have in their local communities. The draft Community Impact Assessment has already recognised the negative impact on the community should the school close. This will be updated to take account of issues raised during consultation. However, it remains the case that the Council is concerned about the challenge facing very small schools in delivering education.
9.4	Concern about the impact of closure of small, local schools on local history and heritage – local schools are one of the main avenues for preserving local history.	As above.

9.5	<p>Closing smaller schools and giving pupils only the option to attend larger schools with larger classes discriminates against them and is against the UNCRC in particular the section dealing with a child's rights concerning education that states: 'the local authority must do everything possible to minimise disruption to their education.'</p>	<p>The Council is not required to provide a choice of schools according to size. The Welsh Government's definition of a small school is a school with 91 pupils or less. Llanfechain C. in W. School, which is the named receiving school in respect of this proposal, also meets this definition.</p> <p>The Council recognises that any school reorganisation process creates a period of uncertainty for all involved, including children. The Council is committed to supporting schools and learners, including through periods of change. An experienced member of staff from the Council is supporting school leaders effectively to help them manage possible changes for their learners.</p> <p>It is also expected that school governors, staff, and parents support the children to ensure that there isn't a detrimental impact on their wellbeing,</p> <p>Schools receiving pupils as a result of a school closure are expected to work with the closing school, the pupils, and their families to provide full support to pupils to ensure a smooth transition. In this case, the proposal is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, which is federated with Llangedwyn. Pupils are familiar with the staff and pupils at Llanfechain, and are familiar with the school building. This should minimise the impact on pupil well-being for those pupils transferring to Llanfechain.</p>
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9.6	Concern about pupils attending larger schools – concern that 'larger' schools who have quite robust safety policies simply ignore them leading to all sorts of problems.	The Welsh Government's definition of a small school is a school with 91 pupils or less. Llanfechain C. in W. School, which is the named receiving school in respect of this proposal, also meets this definition.
9.7	Concern about larger schools – pupils picking up swear words, behaviour problems, inability of staff to cope with the larger numbers.	As above.

10. Comments about other schools

10.1 Llanfechain

10.1.1	The named receiving school (Llanfechain) is full, so the proposal that all Llangedwyn pupils would transfer there is not plausible in the short term and is based on the assumption by PCC that no additional children will move into the area.	<p>The capacity of Llanfechain C. in W. School is 47, and they currently have 44 pupils on roll. However, Llanfechain have the largest numbers in years 5 and 6, and numbers thereafter per year group are lower.</p> <p>On the basis that projected pupil numbers for Llanfechain are also projected to decrease, we don't anticipate that any additional accommodation would be needed. However if needed, the Council would discuss with the school's governing body to understand how the pupils could be accommodated at the school.</p>
10.1.2	Siting a demountable at Llanfechain has been mentioned to provide additional places, however if this was a realistic or planned answer, then it would have been mentioned in the proposal to provide additional capacity.	As above.

10.1.3	There is no capacity at Llanfechain meaning that the preferred option for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain is not viable without further explanation of how additional capacity at Llanfechain would be created.	As above.
10.1.4	At the Cabinet meeting held on October 10th 2023, a discussion took place about the concerns about capacity at Llanfechain. This was addressed with the comment ‘the council would work with the school and the governing body to address this’, hinting that the school and/or governors can somehow magic up some spare places? Hardly realistic or of any comfort to parents.	As above.
10.1.5	If pupils are to be transferred to Llanfechain assurance is needed that a commitment to fund additional classroom capacity at Llanfechain prior to the closure of Llangedwyn will be included in recommendations to the Cabinet.	As above.
10.1.6	Should the proposal be successful the potential number of pupils in Llanfechain could be above the school’s capacity and the proposal is not clear enough in how this will be addressed should it be the case.	As above.
10.1.7	The proposer does not identify how the facilities at Llanfechain will be improved, and the proposal states that no capital funding will be required to facilitate the proposal.	The Authority has a duty to maintain the building condition of all its schools. Llanfechain will be included in the Schools Major Improvements Programme as required. Work to provide additional fencing and lockable access gates is already being prioritised within the Programme.
10.1.8	Various Authority Transformation reports have highlighted the maintenance backlog at Llanfechain. Given that the Authority’s current proposal for a new build would appear to at the best 5 years away, we would like to have assurance from the Authority that officers will commit to a detailed and funded programme to address the building condition at Llanfechain in their recommendations to Cabinet.	As above.

10.1.9	Interesting to note that there is no guarantee given in the proposals that the maintenance required to Llanfechain will be carried out in the near future/in time for the additional pupils?	As above.
10.1.10	Some parents at Llansantffraid want to move their children to Llanfechain.	Any parents of pupils currently at Llansantffraid could apply for a place at Llanfechain C. in W. School. Any such applications would be considered in accordance with the Council's Admissions Policy.
10.1.11	Whilst the local authority emphasises its confidence in leadership, teaching and learning at Llanfechain in the consultation document, they provide no up-to-date information to support this.	The Council holds termly meetings with schools to monitor progress in learning, provision and leadership. During the latest visit in October 2023, there is strong evidence of learner progress, high expectations of pupils by all staff and strong leadership exhibited by the headteacher, teacher in charge and governors.

10.2 Llansantffraid

10.2.1	Why is Llansantffraid over capacity when there are places at Llangedwyn? The building is structurally sound with plenty of room to grow inside and in the grounds.	<p>Llansantffraid is a voluntary aided school and is responsible for its own admissions arrangements. Any applications for places at the school are made to the school and considered by the school in accordance with their policy.</p> <p>Applications for places at Llangedwyn C. in W. School are made to the Council, and have been dealt with in accordance with the Council's Admissions Policy.</p>
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10.3 Llanrhaeadr

10.3.1	The nearest option is Llanrhaeadr however there is no after school club there.	It is correct that there is currently no after school club at Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant to provide childcare, however the school is in the process of assessing demand for this type of provision. There are also opportunities to attend extra-curricular after-school clubs at the school.
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10.4 Other

10.4.1	Other schools in the area are oversubscribed, and therefore unable to take in the children from Llangedwyn when it closes. There are currently insufficient places, and your document does not give adequate answers on how that situation will be addressed.	Information about alternative schools in the area and their capacities is provided in the Consultation Document.
10.4.2	Closure of this school will place unnecessary pressure on neighbouring schools, both in Powys and on the border with North Shropshire.	Comment noted. Whilst the proposal is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School, pupils can apply for places any alternative school they choose. However, there are currently only 7 pupils attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School, so the number of pupils seeking places in alternative schools would be very small.

11. Comments about finance/funding

11.1	I believe that the main reason for the closure is financial. Figures have been drawn up that indicate that educating children at Llangedwyn school is several times more costly than the Powys average. However there are several aspects that may have been omitted from the figures. Taking the full facts into consideration, the disparity in costs between Llangedwyn and elsewhere may be	The reasons for the proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School are outlined in the Consultation Document. The school currently has just 7 pupils, and is currently the highest school in Powys by budget share per pupil, with a cost per pupil of
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	much less significant. I refer to examples like transport costs, and education grants for children with additional needs.	£12,625.92 compared with a Powys average of £4,729.
11.2	The funding framework employed by Powys County Council is based on the legislative provisions in sections 45-53 of the Welsh Assembly Governments' School Standards and Framework Act 1998. In effect this allocates funds per pupil instead of per class. This has a disproportionate effect on small schools, and essentially, given the level of fixed costs and overheads calculated by the local authority, and which each school must bear, effectively put them all into an immediate deficit position.	The Council's funding formula for schools recognises the additional cost pressures on small schools and includes a number of top-ups to offset these pressures. However, in the case of a school with such low pupil numbers, the funding is insufficient to meet the costs of running the school, even with the add-ons and any other grant funding.
11.3	LAC children attract a regular sum of funding to their educational establishments, known as Pupil Premium Plus, this is currently £550 per term per child, so £1650 pa, in addition there are top ups available (which in our case have almost always been claimed) and as well as this their families support the school financially in other ways. This would be lost.	This funding would transfer with the pupils to whichever alternative school they chose to transfer to. However, it is recognised that families would no longer be able to support the school financially in other ways.

12. Criticism of the Council's treatment of Llangedwyn School

12.1	Over a number of years there have been several attempts by the local Authority to close Llangedwyn School. This has had an adverse effect on numbers as parents generally wish their children to have a continuity of education at the same school for their primary years, and it has not been possible to give any assurance of this at Llangedwyn. Consequently, the pupil numbers have decreased steadily. In January 2012, prior to the proposed Transformation programme there were 35. In 2019 when there was yet another proposed Transformation programme flowing from the adverse Estyn report there were 29. At the October 2023 PLASC date (now moved from January 2024) the	<p>Pupil numbers have been decreasing for a number of years across Powys as a whole and the Council has a duty to ensure the cost-effective provision of education.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that there have been discussions about the future of Llangedwyn C. in W. School for a number of years. Whilst acknowledging that this could have had an impact on pupil numbers at the school, the historical pupil numbers included in the consultation document</p>
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	pupil numbers will be 7, and as such Llangedwyn is the smallest primary school in Powys. Much of this decrease can be attributed to the threat of closure undermining parents' confidence in the future of the school.	shows that Llangedwyn pupil numbers have fluctuated from 31 in 2016 to the current number of 7 pupils.
12.2	Over the last few years the council has tried to close the school leading to other parents taking their children out of the school causing the numbers to dwindle.	As above.
12.3	Since the county boundary change of 1996 when we were moved from Clwyd to Powys this is the fifth attempt to close our school. Each time the threat has arisen our pupil numbers have declined, which is the case this time with the closure being threatened since 2020. The last attempt 15 years ago was defeated as our numbers had risen to over 30.	As above.
12.4	It is clear that there have been earlier attempts on the part of Powys Council, to close Llangedwyn school down. For such an attempt to become a reality, due process has to be gone through. One of the parts of due process is a consultation. The purpose of such a consultation is normally so that due process can be shown to have been done, rather than it be a genuine intention to act upon the points raised. I am of the opinion that the council has the intention to close the school, and there are several reasons to back that opinion. One is that the school has been run down over the last few years with little regard for its advertisement, its website. or the upkeep of its premises and grounds. Another is the apparently deliberate running down of pupil numbers by hinting that the school has an endangered future, such that parents have located their children elsewhere.	The current consultation is being carried out in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code. At the end of the consultation period, a consultation report will be prepared which summarises the responses received, which will be considered by the Council's Cabinet when determining whether or not to proceed with implementation of the proposal.

13. Comments about the process

13.1	A letter had arrived in the school which was discussed by the governing body on the 13 th September 2023. This was embargoed until 3.30 the following day to allow staff and parents to be informed, however the news was 'leaked' in the early hours and was all over social media by early the next morning, meaning that parents and some staff found out about the proposals from friends, family and/or social media sites, hardly the correct way for such information to be made public.	There was an agreed communications plan that was communicated with all schools, however unfortunately the information appeared on social media before some parents and staff had received copies of the letter that had been issued. As a result, the press release that had been due to be issued at 3pm was issued earlier in the day.
13.2	The way the news was broken caused distress and panic amongst parents of children at the school and had a very negative impact on the children themselves which resulted recently in the staff having to talk to the remaining children to try and explain why all their friends were leaving. Parents were panicked into chasing the few places available at the named receiving school for fear of finding their children with no available placements should the proposal go ahead. This was compounded by places being taken up by children whose parents requested places at Llangedwyn but who were given places at Llanfechain. This of course resulted in artificially (and deliberately) reducing the numbers of children attending the school at Llangedwyn.	As above.
13.3	Concerns about communication with the school. Commitments were made that communication would be better, however this hasn't been the case.	As above.
13.4	The process of closure has not been handled well, which has had a negative and detrimental impact on all those involved – pupils, parents, staff and the wider community.	As above. The Council recognises that any school reorganisation process creates a period of uncertainty for all involved, including pupils, parents, staff and the community.

13.5	Whilst the present proposed closure is part of the School Transformation process, it should be borne in mind that closure under the School Organisation Code due to the low pupil numbers would be a strong possibility in any event as pupil numbers are below 10.	Comment noted. It is correct that given the current pupil numbers in the school, the shorter process for closure of small schools which is outlined in the School Organisation Code would apply should numbers remain the same in January 2024.
13.6	The parents of children presently in Llangedwyn school were told in July 2023 that Llangedwyn school was closing and to move their children to Llanfechain. In a public meeting the Chairman of the governing body told a whole room of people that the governing body were only informed on the 12th Oct 2023.	The Council did not make a decision to commence the statutory process to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School until October 2023.
13.7	What would happen to the school and its contents if the school closed	The building would be cleared and would be returned to its owners, who would need to decide on its future use. As much as possible of the contents would be redistributed to other schools.
13.8	Request for staff to be informed when decisions are made	The Council will ensure that the school is kept informed of any developments in respect of the process.
13.9	How much notice needs to be given before closing a school?	We aim to provide at least a term's notice of closure after a final decision is made, however this is not a requirement.

14. Comments about the presumption against closing rural schools

14.1	You are going against Welsh Government policies on rural schooling.	<p>The Welsh Government's School Organisation Policy 2018 includes a section entitled:</p> <p><i>1.8 Presumption against the closure of rural schools.</i></p> <p>This outlines the additional considerations that local authorities/proposers need to carry out when</p>
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		<p>formulating and consulting on proposals related to rural schools.</p> <p>The Code states: <i>'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>Llanfechain C. in W. School is also classed as a 'rural' school, as are many other schools in the local area.</p>
14.2	The Welsh Government recently spoke about an initiative to preserve and regenerate small rural communities which of course your proposal goes completely against as it will lead to the complete demise of such areas.	As above.
14.3	The proposal doesn't fit in with the Welsh Government's intention to preserve and rejuvenate rural communities to attract young people who have moved away for work to return 'home' when they start their families, they will never consider coming back if all of the local facilities, of which schools are the primary consideration, have been decimated.	<p>As above.</p> <p>The Council recognises that the closure of any school would have an impact on the local community. A draft Community Impact Assessment has been prepared which considers the impact of the proposal on the community. This will be updated to reflect feedback received during the consultation period.</p>
14.4	The Welsh Government are trying to reverse the trend where young people leave the valleys and rural areas to find better employment, however the loss of local schools (which then has a knock on effect to other local facilities such as shops, village halls, pubs etc) will result in there being no attractive initiatives for those same young people to move back 'home' once they decide to	As above.

	start a family, with no local schools whole areas will become defined by aged populations and eventually whole communities will die out.	
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15. Comments about the documentation

15.1	There are a number of assumptions made throughout the proposal stating that there will not be any additional children coming into the Llangedwyn catchment area, that the parents of all children currently at Llangedwyn will want to transfer their children to Llanfechain, and that there will not be any increase in pupil numbers in both Llangedwyn and/or Llanfechain in the foreseeable future.	The Council does not agree with this statement. The latest projections available to the Council suggest that no significant increase in pupil numbers is expected at Llangedwyn or Llanfechain in the coming years. Whilst the proposal is for pupils to transfer to Llanfechain C. in W. School the consultation document fully acknowledges that some pupils may choose to transfer to other schools.
15.2	There is no reference in your proposal to demonstrate that the closure of primary schools in other rural areas has been a positive move, if there is such evidence then it should be included in the proposals and if there is not, why not and surely this would be a necessary step to look at the effects that closing small rural schools have had on the communities that they stood at the heart of. Parents, community members and business people from these areas should be talked to so that the true effects of closing their schools can be evaluated.	The Council notes this comment. A community impact assessment is carried out as part of this process, however, the Council has a duty to ensure the cost-effective provision of education and has to balance this against a number of different factors.
15.3	There is no evidence in your proposals to demonstrate that any consultation or even discussion has been carried out with communities that have already had their primary schools closed to evaluate the overall impact on that community and the surrounding area. Something that I think would be imperative in allowing you to evaluate your chosen path.	As above.

15.4	I can only emphasise that for there to be a full and fair set of proposals every avenue should be explored, rather than starting with a known end result and trying to make everything fit.	The Council's proposal to close Llangedwyn C. in W. School began with a review of the whole Llanfyllin catchment to identify a preferred way forward for the whole catchment, before carrying out a separate options appraisal relating to Llangedwyn C. in W. School. The process did not 'start with a known end result'.
15.5	The proposals are not a carefully worked up plan starting from a current situation and ending with a well thought out conclusion but rather a plan that had started with a known end result with all the intermediate facts being fitted in.	As above.
15.6	The proposal seems to have relied only on new build information with no credence being given to the large number of rental properties in the area any of which have the potential to attract families to the area, there are also a number of houses for sale which again could attract families to move into the area, closing the school would make all of these properties less attractive to families	<p>Information about new housing developments in the area was included in the Llanfyllin Catchment Review paper to understand any possible future increase in pupil numbers in the area, which could lead to an increase in the area's population. These would have included any developments which would be for rental.</p> <p>The latest projections available to the Council indicate that no significant increase in demand for places at Llangedwyn is expected over the coming years.</p>
15.7	The proposal fails to meet 4 of the main points cited in the Youtube video as reasons for proposing the closure.	<p>The Youtube video summarising the proposal for Llangedwyn C. in W. School lists three challenges relating to Llangedwyn C. in W. School, which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low pupil numbers • High budget share per pupil • Combined age classes

		The Council's view is that the current proposal addresses these three challenges.
15.8	Disagreement with the content of the SWOT assessments	The SWOT assessments have been carried out based on the Council's view of the proposal, and reflect the views of a cross section of professionals from across the Council, e.g. School Improvement, Finance, Transforming Education.
15.9	The general assumption that pupils will automatically move to Llanfechain means that the implications of pupils moving to different schools is not considered or explored well enough in the proposal.	It is the Council's preference that Llanfechain C.in.W. School is the named receiving school for the Llangedwyn C.in W. pupils due to the fact that both schools are part of a federation, and that both schools offer Church in Wales provision, plus pupils are familiar with Llanfechain school staff and pupils. However, it is recognised that parents may choose other schools for their children to attend, rather than Llanfechain but it is not possible to consider this as the specific details are not known.
15.10	The proposal includes reference to a potential future merger of Llanfechain with Llansantffraid Church in Wales Primary School. Whilst no time frame is mentioned, this does suggest the possibility of further upheaval for pupils currently attending Llangedwyn.	The Council notes this comment. Should the Council proceed with the implementation of the current proposal in respect of Llangedwyn C. in W. School, and should the Council then proceed with any further developments in respect of merging Llanfechain C. in W. School and Llansantffraid C. in W. School in the future, the impact on any pupils that had already transferred from Llangedwyn to Llanfechain would be considered at that time.
15.11	Whilst the documentation suggests that Llangedwyn is not the closest school for most pupils who currently attend, it is not clear how far these pupils are already travelling to Llangedwyn, so it is unclear whether travelling to Llanfechain would be realistic for these pupils.	As indicated in previous papers in respect of Llangedwyn C. in W. School, the closest provider for the 17 pupils that were attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School in January 2022 was as follows:

		<p>Llangedwyn C. in W. School – 17.6% of pupils Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant CP School – 35.3% of pupils Ysgol Llanfyllin – 11.8% of pupils Ysgol Meifod – 11.8% of pupils Llanfechain C. in W. School – 5.8% of pupils Ysgol Bro Cynllaith – 5.8% of pupils Bryn Offa Primary School (Shropshire) – 5.8% of pupils Weston Rhyn Primary School (Shropshire) – 5.8% of pupils</p> <p>The closest school for these 17 pupils should there not have been a school in Llangedwyn was as follows:</p> <p>Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant CP 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%</p> <p>There are currently only 7 pupils attending the school. Llangedwyn C. in W. School is not currently the closest school for the majority of these pupils. Whether or not travelling to Llanfechain School would be realistic would depend on the individual circumstances of these pupils, however many of the school's pupils are already making a choice to</p>
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		attend Llangedwyn C. in W. School, which already requires significant additional travel compared with them attending their closest school.
15.12	Some pupils may not choose to transfer to Llanfechain – the proposal does not recognise the potential impact on the wellbeing of pupils who may not ultimately attend the same school as their classmates sufficiently.	Comment noted. It is recognised that some parents may choose other schools rather than Llanfechain C.in. W School and there could potentially be an impact on the wellbeing of pupils who are transferring to other schools without their classmates. If the proposal to close the school is approved, then parents would be able to apply for a place at Llanfechain C.in W. School or any other school of their choice. Once it is known which school pupils would be transferring to, the Council would work with the receiving school to ensure a smooth transition process.

16. Alternative options

16.1 Status Quo

16.1.1	Keep the school open	Status quo is one of the options considered in the options appraisal carried out in respect of Llangedwyn C. in W. School, however this option would not address the challenges identified. There are currently only 7 pupils attending the school.
16.1.2	The Council should stop trying to close the school	As above.
16.1.3	The Council should reconsider closing the school	As above.
16.1.4	The school should remain open and promote its excellent standards of education and care.	As above.

16.1.5	The proposal to close the school should be stopped and children should be allowed to remain in the school that they know with teachers that they trust.	As above.
16.1.6	Keeping the school open and looking for savings elsewhere.	As above.
16.1.7	Allow the school to stay open and continue its fantastic work with smaller groups and classes	As above.

16.2 Develop the provision at Llangedwyn

16.2.1	Invest in this type of school which would provide a better learning environment for children in the area	Llangedwyn C. in W. School is not currently the closest school for the majority of the 7 pupils attending. There is no evidence of additional demand for places in Llangedwyn.
16.2.2	Add a bus service to the school to increase pupil numbers	Transport to the school would already be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport. Currently Llangedwyn is not the closest school for the majority of the 7 pupils that attend. Home to school transport would not be provided to pupils for whom Llangedwyn is not the closest school.
16.2.3	The school website should be updated, the school promoted, and it may even be possible to encourage attendance if the clear position is made that the school will be preserved. Parents may even feel moved to transfer their children from oversubscribed schools in the area.	The Council is not responsible for updating the school's website or promoting the school.
16.2.4	The primary school needs more publicity, unless people know this area they don't even know the school exists. The online website did need updating but the governors have now removed the website. It is a beautiful school and people with kids need to see that when they are searching for a primary school.	The Council is not responsible for publicising the school, or updating the school's website.

16.2.5	Form better cross border links, promote the school better across the border.	It is not the local authority's role to promote the school.
16.2.6	The local authority should encourage other children to attend the school rather than seek to close it.	It is not the local authority's role to 'encourage other children to attend the school'. Any applications for places at Llangedwyn made to the Council would have been dealt with in accordance with the Admissions Policy.
16.2.7	Look into improving the school	The Council provides regular school improvement support to the school, as it does to all other schools. Despite this, pupil numbers at the school have continued to decrease.

16.3 Dissolve the Federation and allow Llangedwyn to exist as a standalone school

16.3.1	Remove Llangedwyn from the federation and allow it to promote itself and demonstrate what an unfettered school can accomplish even giving a 2 year period of grace to see what the school could achieve would allow the local community working with the school staff and dedicated Llangedwyn governors to demonstrate the viability of the school	The proposal to federate Llangedwyn C. in W. School and Llanfechain C. in W. School was led by the governing bodies of the two schools, and both governing bodies agreed to establish the federation. 'The Federation Process of Maintained Schools in Wales' does allow for schools to leave federations, however neither school has done this.
16.3.2	De-couple the school from the disastrous federation with Llanfechain giving it its own governing body which would lead the promotion taking it back to capacity.	As above.
16.3.3	Stop the threat of closure of Llangedwyn school, allow it to stand alone and not part of a federation with a fixed budget and allow the local community the chance to help finance the school via	As above.

	private support if this does not work for two years and pupil numbers are still below 10 then close the school.	
16.3.4	In order to be able to make a balanced decision about the future of Llangedwyn PCC should dissolve the federation and free Llangedwyn to demonstrate its viability, this could be done for a specified period of time, for example 2 or 3 years, Llangedwyn could then have its own board of dedicated governors, operate for that time with an acting head teacher and be given the chance to determine its own future	As above.
16.3.5	Dissolve the current federation and set Llangedwyn CinW school 'free' to determine its own future, give it a set period to prove itself, e.g. 2-3 years after which a true balanced decision, unaffected by other outside influences could be made, the school could operate during this period under an acting head teacher and elect its own dedicated board of governors who would be able to concentrate on the one school without any conflict of interests or having to make decision that favour one school over another, although federations can be a good thing in this case it does not seem to have worked and Llangedwyn should be given the opportunity to determine its own future and the ability to prove its viability unfettered from outside influences of choice	As above.
16.3.6	End Federation, this federation is only acting for the interests of Llanfechain school. Allow Llangedwyn more time to get more Welsh speaking pupils into the school without the governors and headteacher stopping them.	As above.
16.3.7	The council need to provide better funding for the school and better advertisement for the school. If more people were aware of what the school had to offer and how it is supporting the educational welfare of children, it would have more pupils.	The school is funded in accordance with the Council's funding formula. Promotion of the school is not the responsibility of the Council, this would be in the hands of the school itself.

16.3.8	Sharing of resources to make savings	The school is already part of a federation, which has provided an opportunity to share resources to make savings.
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16.4 Retain Llangedwyn School as an ALN school

16.4.1	<p>To retain Llangedwyn school as an independent school but focus on providing an educational experience for those children with specific ALN's that would require more than just occasional staff intervention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This would cater for LAC children with multiple ALN's who would be sidelined in other larger schools. • Llangedwyn have a proven ability to care for and look after such children, bringing the best out and allowing them to reach their true potential • It would lower potential disruptions in larger classes/alternative schools • It could be promoted as a school for children with ALN's (not a special school) just a school with the ability to give that little bit extra • It would provide an educational setting that could go that extra mile when it came to transition to secondary placements • There could be the opportunity to allow children to work with their chosen secondary educational placement alongside Llangedwyn during their first year of secondary education (the only other specialist education placements are both in Newtown and both cater for children with quite severe behaviour problems, there is no provision for children who fall between usual behaviour and severe behaviour problems) this would 	<p>Based on the current pupil numbers, the school would be unsustainable even as an ALN school. The Council delivers support for pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream schools and in 2 special schools, and some satellite centres. The special schools are staffed with specially trained teachers, who are proficient in the delivery of education to pupils with additional learning needs. The location of Llangedwyn is not suitable for an ALN school.</p>
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	<p>give an opportunity to be inclusive and give every child the chance to reach their full and true potential)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For minimal cost it would provide an almost unique school and at the same time retain the ability to promote the heritage and history of the local area • Current staff at Llangedwyn would be more than likely to support such an initiative. • It would not affect the future proposals for Llanfechain at all in fact it may well support them when the time is right. • It would provide continuing C in W placements meaning that the Diocese of St Asaph may well support such an initiative • The buildings are already in place ready to go • It would have the support of the local community • It would provide capacity going forward which would allow the school to promote its services across a wider area and attract children from across the border. 	
16.4.2	<p>The Council should retain Llangedwyn C in W school as a separate school but with the focus of providing educational placements for those children with ALN's who require more than occasional additional support, (so not special needs just additional needs) Llangedwyn C in W school have a proven record of managing such children and bringing out the very best in them allowing them to reach their maximum potential, this would provide an educational facility in North Powys that is currently sadly lacking and will not be covered by just transferring all children to a different school with larger pupil numbers, in fact this may have the exact opposite especially in the case of children who may require additional support throughout their day or those with developmental delays caused by early life trauma.</p>	As above

16.4.3	Look at different ways to keep the school open. It would make an ideal ALN setting for children who do not need 'special' education but do need that little bit of extra help on an ongoing basis, this is something that from experience does not happen in larger schools where the teachers are limited in the amount of time they can spend with individual children, this means that those children with ALN get the additional help only when it is available and not necessarily when it is needed, there is no provision of this type in North Powys, hence why if Llangedwyn closes we will look to relocate to schools over the border.	As above
16.4.4	The school could become a centre of excellence catering for those with protected characteristics.	As above

16.5 Close Llanfechain and relocate all children to Llangedwyn

16.5.1	<p>Closing Llanfechain and relocating all children to Llangedwyn hasn't been considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Llanfechain has a back log of maintenance and repairs heading for £500k, closing the school would mean that this money would be saved, part of it could be used to place 2 demountables at Llangedwyn to provide current and future capacity. • Any comment that this may not be acceptable to staff/the school at Llanfechain is negated by the same argument in reverse • Ongoing maintenance costs would be much lower at Llangedwyn with new demountables than at Llanfechain where maintaining the old buildings would be ongoing and costly • Pupils would be transferring to a school that they already know, thanks to the federation. 	<p>This option was not considered as part of the current process as the issue that the Council is trying to address is the very small number of pupils in Llangedwyn. Regarding the specific points in this response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recognised that there is a higher backlog maintenance cost at Llanfechain C.in W. School than at Llangedwyn. However, the current cost of installing double-classroom demountables is ? • Point accepted regarding the acceptability by staff/school at Llanfechain is negated by the same argument in reverse • As first point
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land for future expansion at Llangedwyn may be easier to source than at Llanfechain • The Llanfechain site could be sold giving the council a handsome revenue return whereas the land at Llangedwyn cannot • Numbers at Llangedwyn could then be increased through promotion and when the time came for the new 'super school' to be built covering the Llansantffraid and Llanfechain areas new pupils could start at the new school whilst those still at Llangedwyn would complete their education in a school that they knew • This would provide a number of additional opportunities for the school to undertake to increase its presence and community involvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point accepted – pupils would be transferring to a school that they already know, within the federation • Considering pupil projections at both school, it is unlikely that land would be required for future expansion at either school • The Council does not own the Llanfechain site, therefore this would not result in a capital receipt. • It is unclear how pupil numbers could be increased through promotion as the figures suggest that neither school is expected to increase their pupil numbers and the demographic projections for children generally across the county show a decrease. • It is unclear how this option would provide a number of additional opportunities for the school to increase its presence and community involvement, particularly as the majority of pupils currently attending Llanfechain C.in W. School live closer to Llanfechain than Llangedwyn, and many pupils attending Llanfechain currently live closer to other communities. <p>However, this option will be be further assessed an alternative option in accordance with the</p>
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		requirements of the 'Presumption against closure of Rural Schools' in section 7 of this report.
16.5.2	The second option that appears to have been overlooked is to close Llanfechain school and relocate all the pupils from there to Llangedwyn, the financial savings alone make this an option that should be considered and in addition the current Llanfechain site could be sold to give the council an increase in capital, i give more suggested details how this could be achieved in 4 above and in order to be fair and present a balanced view of options i feel that this option should have been considered.	As above
16.5.3	It would surely be cheaper to place 2 (poss 3) demountables at Llangedwyn and close Llanfechain where the land is owned by the council and could be sold so not only a saving in maintenance, but also a cash input from sale of the land and lower ongoing maintenance costs due to the majority of buildings at Llangedwyn being new.	As above
16.5.4	On Financial grounds it would make more sense to close Llanfechain school and keep Llangedwyn school open and move all staff and pupils to Llangedwyn school however the governing body which are mostly Llanfechain School governors would not agree to this so they have ensured all pupils go the Llanfechain before Llangedwyn.	There would be additional home-to-school transport costs as Llanfechain C.in.W. primary school currently has 44 pupils on roll compared to the 7 pupils on roll at Llangedwyn.

16.6 Other

16.6.1	Retain a bilingual school in the Tanat Valley	Whilst pupils learn Welsh as a second language at Llangedwyn C. in W. School, it is an English-medium school, not a bilingual school.
16.6.2	As our population is aging, it could become a centre for life-long learning. E.G. Computer skills, language tuition, or arts and crafts. Our community is scattered, and it would provide a hub.	The building is not owned by the Council. Should the current proposal be implemented, the building would eventually be returned to its owners, who

		would be responsible for determining its future use.
16.6.3	It could make an excellent nursery school; the basic infrastructure is there, and the school is surrounded by fields and a dedicated playground. It would help young parents who wish to return to work.	As above.

17. Comments about impact on the Welsh language

17.1	The children have excellent opportunities to learn and use Welsh in their day to day work	The Council is confident that pupils would continue to be able to access equivalent opportunities to learn and use Welsh in any of the alternative Powys schools they may choose to transfer. It is however acknowledged that some pupils may choose to transfer to schools in England, which would mean that they would no longer learn Welsh.
17.2	Parents would have to choose different schools and they might choose English schools where no Welsh is taught, which would be detrimental to the Welsh language.	As above.
17.3	In our family there has been an increase in children learning and using Welsh in all aspects of their lives which would not have happened without the existence of Llangedwyn School, so the proposal would lead to a decrease in the opportunities for children to learn Welsh at its most basic level.	As above.
17.4	Incidental Welsh is taught at the school as with other schools in the area	As above.
17.5	I don't see how closing the school can benefit the use of the Welsh language as the children are introduced to Welsh in the school.	As above.
17.6	No Welsh will be spoken as there will be no school to teach it	As above.

17.7	There will be an adverse effect as Welsh is currently taught in small groups	As above.
17.8	The progress of Llangedwyn pupils in their Welsh language has been noted, and it is unlikely that this level of achievement will be sustained.	As above.
17.9	Llangedwyn school has made great progress to promote the Welsh language within the school and with the local Church community, this loss would be so bad for the area and would promote the return of the English language over the Welsh language. With the hard work for many years to promote the Welsh language within the Llangedwyn area why should it be lost, this is very negative and goes against what every government body Wales and Powys stands for.	As above.
17.10	Closing the school would have a negative effect on the Welsh language, the school provides a good balance of Welsh and English, with children from English speaking families. The school offers a great learning platform, more so than some of the other schools in the area.	As above.
17.11	Many parents would due to the travel issue have to send their children to English speaking schools, meaning less children would have Welsh as a second language as their family don't speak Welsh fluently and would be unable to teach their child the Welsh language at home.	It is acknowledged that some pupils may choose to transfer to schools in England, which would mean that they would no longer learn Welsh.
17.12	Pupils would still access Welsh language teaching if they stayed in the cluster	Comment noted.
17.13	The children will have better opportunities to learn Welsh in other schools	Comment noted.

18. Comments in support of the proposal

18.1	Although it is sad to see a school close, I feel that it is inevitable due to the very low pupil numbers.	Comment noted.
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18.2	The school should have closed years ago it's wasted Powys money for too long.	Comment noted.
18.3	It should be closed sooner, this would support children in gaining a better education.	Comment noted.
18.4	Due to the uncertainty caused by the constant threat of closure and the impact of the Powys County Council funding formula, we reluctantly accept Option Four in the best interests of the pupils and staff.	Comment noted.

19. Other comments

19.1	The Authority's future plans indicate that they would wish to consider closing Ysgol Bro Cynllaith at some time in the future and that Ysgol Llanrhaeadr will move along the Welsh language continuum. Should this take place there will be no English primary provision in the Tanat valley. This will mean that parents may choose to take their children to England and in the long term may deter families from moving to the valley. The Governing Body wish to understand how officers will deal with this issue in their recommendations to Cabinet.	Whilst the Council's preferred way forward for the Llanfyllin catchment includes the closure of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith and supporting Ysgol Llanrhaeadr to move along the language continuum, there are statutory processes which would need to be undertaken to implement both of these changes. The impact on access to English-medium education would be considered at that time, if appropriate.
19.2	It is wrong that the council are proposing to bring Welsh only education to the Tanat Valley, this will lead to a reduction of families moving in to our valley and will eventually see a decline in pupils.	As above.
19.3	Birth rate has gone up during covid, will there be enough school places available in this area to cope with this in the near future?	Current projections are that pupil numbers in Powys schools will continue to decrease over the coming years. There is no current evidence of any significant increased demand for places in Llangedwyn over the coming years.
19.4	What will the make-up of the new governing body at Llanfechain be should Llangedwyn close?	A new governing body would need to be established at Llanfechain C.in W. School and this would be based on The Government of

		Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005 for Voluntary Controlled Schools. This would include: 3 parent governors, 2 LEA governors, 1 teacher governor, 1 or 0 staff governor, 2 foundation governors, 1 community governor as well as the headteacher of the school.
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7. FURTHER ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSION

The School Organisation Code includes some additional steps to be undertaken in respect of the consultation report for proposals relating to the closure of rural schools. This section addresses these requirements.

7.1 Further assessment of the proposal and alternatives

Following consultation, the Council has carried out a further assessment of the proposal and the alternatives identified in the proposal paper on the likely impact on quality and standards in education, the likely impact on the community and the likely effect of different travelling arrangements.

The assessments have been reviewed to take account of any further information that came forward through the consultation, however it is not considered that any information emerged which requires the assessments to be amended. The assessments are provided in the table below:

Option	Likely impact on quality and standards	Likely impact on the community	Likely impact of different travelling arrangements
Option 1: Status quo – continue as part of a federation with Llanfechain C. in W. School	There would be no impact on quality and standards – pupils would continue to access the current provision at Llangedwyn.	There would be no impact on the community – provision would continue to be available in Llangedwyn.	There would be no impact on travel arrangements – pupils would continue to attend Llangedwyn C. in W. School.
Option 2: Merge with Llanfechain C. in W. School to establish a new school on two sites	This option would retain provision in Llangedwyn, building upon the federation which is already in place. There would be enhanced opportunities for networking and	The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Llangedwyn.	Pupils would continue to attend school in the same location, thus there would be no additional transport costs. Some additional travel may be required between schools in

	<p>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>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 option would mean that pupils would attend provision where the quality and standards are at least as good as the current provision.</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 its 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, 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 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>
<p>Option 5: Close Llangedwyn C. in W. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools</p>	<p>It is anticipated that implementation of this option would mean that pupils would attend provision where the quality and standards are at least as</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Llangedwyn as there would be no provision in Llangedwyn.</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llangedwyn C. in W. School.</p>

	good as the current provision at Llangedwyn.	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 its future use, and therefore whether or not facilities would remain available to the community in Llangedwyn.	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.
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7.2 Further reasonable alternatives

The other alternatives which were suggested in the consultation responses received are outlined in section 16 of the 'issues raised in the consultation period' section of this report, including the Council's response to these alternatives. These are as follows:

- i) Retain the status quo
- ii) Develop the provision at Llangedwyn
- iii) Dissolve the federation and allow Llangedwyn to exist as a standalone school
- iv) Retain Llangedwyn as an ALN school
- v) Close Llanfechain and relocate all children to Llangedwyn
- vi) Retain a bilingual school in the Tanat Valley
- vii) Retain the school building as a centre for lifelong learning
- viii) Retain the school building as a nursery school

i) and ii) are included within Option 1 – Status Quo in the above table, and are therefore not subject to a separate assessment.

iii) Dissolve the federation and allow Llangedwyn to exist as a standalone school – this will be subject to a further assessment.

iv) Retain Llangedwyn as an ALN school – this is not subject to further assessment due to the reasons outlined in 16.4.1 above.

- v) Close Llanfechain and relocate all children to Llangedwyn – this will be subject to a further assessment
- vi) Retain a bilingual school in the Tanat Valley – Llangedwyn is an English-medium school, not a bilingual. Welsh-medium education continues to be available to pupils living in Llangedwyn at Ysgol Llanrhaeadr for pupils wishing to become bilingual. This will not be subject to a further assessment.
- vii) Retain the school building as a centre for lifelong learning – should the school close, the building would be returned to its owners, who would then need to decide its future use. For this reason, this option will not be subject to a further assessment.
- viii) Retain the school as a nursery school – this would move away from the Council’s plans to reduce the number of transition points in a child’s education by developing all-through primary provision. For this reason, this option will not be subject to a further assessment.

The reasonable alternatives that will be subject to further consideration against the factors outlined in the School Organisation Code for rural schools are:

- iii) **Dissolve the federation and allow Llangedwyn to exist as a standalone school**
- v) **Close Llanfechain and relocate all children to Llangedwyn**

These reasonable alternatives are considered in the following table:

Option	Likely impact on quality and standards	Likely impact on the community	Likely impact of different travelling arrangements
iii) Dissolve the federation and allow Llangedwyn to exist as a standalone school	This option would result in instability across the two schools that are currently part of Ffederasiwn Dwy Afon in the short term. Dissolving the federation would mean that there would be a need	There would be no impact on the community – provision would continue to be available in Llangedwyn.	There would be no impact on travelling arrangements. Pupils would continue to attend Llangedwyn C. in W. School.

	<p>to re-establish separate governing bodies at Llangedwyn C. in W. School and Llanfechain C. in W. School. In addition, the schools currently have a shared Headteacher. This arrangement would also need to be reviewed.</p> <p>Whilst the staff currently employed at Llangedwyn C. in W. School would continue, the school would remain a very small school, at least in the short term. The Council would have significant concerns about the ability of such a small school to offer appropriate, high quality provision to pupils.</p> <p>Due to Llangedwyn's very small size, being part of a federation enables additional opportunities to be provided to its pupils, through joint activities with Llanfechain. Dissolving the federation would make it more difficult for these types of additional opportunities to be provided, which would have a negative impact on Llangedwyn pupils.</p>		
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<p>v) Close Llanfechain and relocate all children to Llangedwyn</p>	<p>Pupils attending Llanfechain C. in W. School would transfer to Llangedwyn, which would provide an opportunity to increase pupil numbers at Llangedwyn. However, it is possible that pupils would choose to attend other schools, which may be closer for them.</p> <p>for many of the pupils currently alplementation of this option would mean that pupils currently attending Llanfechain C. in W. School would transfer to their nearest alternative schools. For the majority of pupils currently attending Llanfechain C. in W. School, the closest alternative schools would be Llansantffraid C. in W. School, Llangedwyn C. in W. School and Ysgol Llanfyllin. 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 Llanfechain.</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Llanfechain as there would be no provision in Llanfechain.</p> <p>The Llanfechain 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 its future use, and therefore whether or not facilities would remain available to the community in Llanfechain.</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llanfechain C. in W. School. Llanfechain C. in W. School currently has significantly more pupils than Llangedwyn C. in W. School. This option would have a significant impact on travel for the majority of pupils. This would impact on their ability to access any after-school activities, and would also have an impact on parents in terms of their ability to access to school activities.</p> <p>There would also be a significant additional cost to the Council in order to transport pupils from Llanfechain to Llangedwyn.</p>
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7.3 Conclusion

The Council has considered the issues raised in the consultation exercise and has also carried out a further assessment of the proposal, the original options and alternative options identified during the consultation with consideration of the likely impact on quality and standards in education, the likely impact on the community and the likely effect of different travelling arrangements. The Council's view is that none of the other original options or the alternative options address the challenges facing Llangedwyn C. in W. School which are

- Low pupil numbers
- High budget per pupil
- Combined age classes

As outlined in the Consultation Document, the reasons for the proposal are as follows:

- 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

The reasons for this conclusion is that implementation of the proposal will ensure improved management of the Powys schools estate, ensuring that the best possible educational opportunities can be provided to pupils living in the Llangedwyn and wider area and across Powys in the future.

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. Llangedwyn C. in W. School currently has only 7 pupils, with all children taught in one mixed-age class for much of the time. 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's funding per pupil is significantly 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.

The Council's Strategy is intended to improve equity across the education system and to ensure an improvement for every pupil's learning entitlement and experience.