



# Ysgol Bro Cynllaith

## Options Appraisal

June 2024



### Version Control:

Version	Date	Brief Summary of Change	Author
0.1	April 2024	Document created	SA
0.2	June 2024	Version for consideration by CLT	ME / SA
0.3	July 2024	Version for consideration by Scrutiny	SA
0.4	September 2024	Version for consideration by Cabinet	SA

# CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION .....	3
<b>PART A – THE CASE FOR CHANGE.....</b>	<b>4</b>
2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT .....	4
2.1 POLICY CONTEXT .....	4
2.2 WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN POWYS .....	4
3. WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED AT YSGOL BRO CYNLLAITH .....	7
3.1 THE CURRENT SITUATION .....	7
3.2 WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN YSGOL BRO CYNLLAITH .....	14
<b>PART B – OPTIONS FOR YSGOL BRO CYNLLAITH.....</b>	<b>16</b>
4. AVAILABLE OPTIONS .....	16
5. SWOT ANALYSIS OF EACH OPTION .....	16
6. IMPACT OF EACH OPTION .....	21
7. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS.....	24
8. EMERGING PREFERRED OPTION .....	25
<b>PART C – FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF PREFERRED OPTION .....</b>	<b>27</b>
9. QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN EDUCATION .....	27
10. NEED FOR PLACES AND IMPACT ON ACCESSIBILITY OF SCHOOLS.....	31
11. RESOURCING OF EDUCATION AND OTHER FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS..	34
12. OTHER GENERAL FACTORS.....	36
13. SPECIFIC FACTORS IN THE CONSIDERATION OF SCHOOL CLOSURES.	37
14. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS.....	38

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Wave 2 of the Council’s Transforming Education Programme included a commitment to restart and conclude the review of the Llanfyllin / North Welshpool catchment, which commenced in 2020. This commenced in April 2023.

In September 2023, the Council’s Cabinet considered a paper which outlined the findings of the review and presented an indicative preferred way forward. The preferred way forward included the possible closure of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, however this would be subject to the Statutory Process as outlined in the School Organisation Code (2018).

The purpose of this paper is to present the options identified for Ysgol Bro Cynllaith and to identify a preferred option, and to give further consideration to the impact of this option.

The purpose of this paper is to identify a preferred option for the future of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith. Current pupil numbers<sup>1</sup> at the school are as follows:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
<b>Ysgol Bro Cynllaith</b>	3	2	6	2	6	2	5	26

---

<sup>1</sup> Teacher Centre, 5<sup>th</sup> September 2024

# PART A – THE CASE FOR CHANGE

## 2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

### 2.1 POLICY CONTEXT

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

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

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

In addition, the strategy outlines a number of aims and objectives, which includes an objective to 'Reconfigure and rationalise primary provision' in order to improve overall learner entitlement and experience in Powys. This is being taken forward in the form of catchment reviews, the first of which is a review of the Llanfyllin catchment.

### 2.2 WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN POWYS

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

Whilst there has been some reorganisation activity in Powys over recent years, the county's schools' infrastructure largely remains similar to that which was in place 20 years ago.

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

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

**i) High proportion of small schools**

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

**ii) Decreasing pupil numbers**

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

**iii) High number of surplus places**

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

**iv) Building condition**

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

**v) Financial pressures**

The Council is currently facing significant financial pressures in general. This is affecting all service areas, including the schools' sector. There are significant variations in the budget share per pupil across Powys schools.

**vi) Inequality in access to Welsh-medium education**

In contrast to other areas of Wales, there has been no growth in Welsh-medium pupil numbers in Powys over recent years. Significant changes are needed to the Welsh-medium offer in Powys to reverse the trend of the last few years and ensure that all Powys learners can access comprehensive Welsh-medium provision throughout their educational careers.

**vii) Limited post-14 and post-16 offer**

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

**viii) Inequality in access to SEN provision**

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

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

**ix) Historical lack of political decision making**

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

### 3. WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED AT YSGOL BRO CYNLLAITH

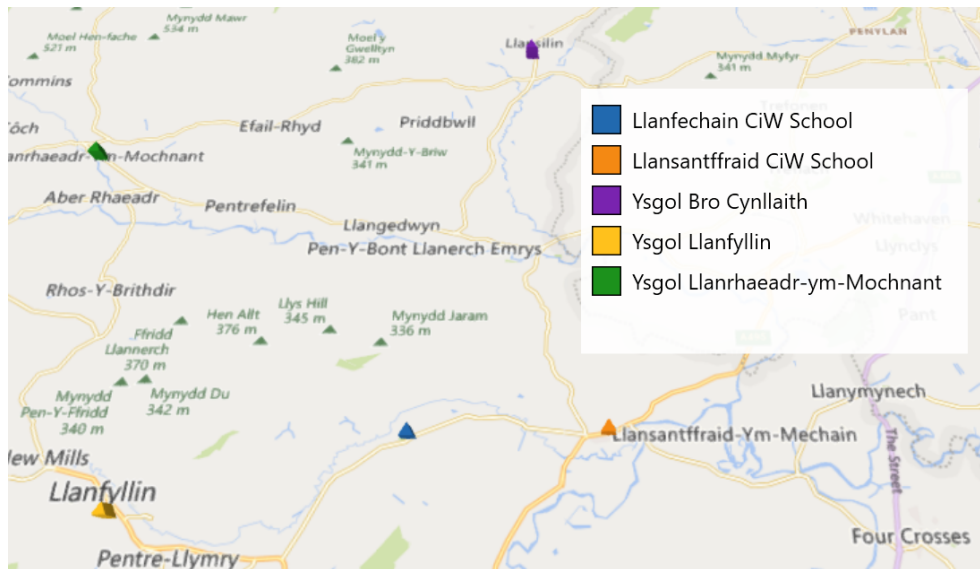
#### 3.1 THE CURRENT SITUATION

Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is a community primary school located in the village of Llansilin in the Llanfyllin catchment area in North Powys.

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

	School Type	Language Category	Admission Number <sup>2</sup>	Rural School? <sup>3</sup>
<b>Ysgol Bro Cynllaith</b>	Community Primary School building owned by the Council	English-medium	7	Yes

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



<sup>2</sup> Powys County Council's Admissions Information and Arrangements 2024-25

<sup>3</sup> Annex F of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2018)

(<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/school-organisation-code-second-edition.pdf>) includes a list of 'rural schools', to which the 'Presumption against the closure of rural schools' applies. Whilst Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is not included in the list of 'rural schools' which is included in the Code, the Council's view is that the school should be included, therefore the Council will treat Ysgol Bro Cynllaith as a school identified as a 'rural school'.

The following primary providers are located within 10 miles of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith<sup>4</sup>:

School	School Type	Language Medium	Distance from Ysgol Bro Cynllaith by road (miles)
Llanfechain C. in W. School	Voluntary Controlled C. in W.	English-medium	8.5
Llansantffraid C. in W. School	Voluntary Aided C. in W.	English-medium	6.7
Ysgol Llanfyllin	Community all-age	Dual stream	8.4
Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant	Community Primary	Dual stream	5.9

There are also a number of schools located in Shropshire which are within a few miles of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith:

School	School Type	Language Medium	Distance from Ysgol Bro Cynllaith by road (miles)
Trefonen C of E Primary School	C of E	English-medium	5.1 miles
Selattyn C of E School	C of E	English-medium	5.9 miles

## **Pupil Numbers**

### **i) Current pupil numbers<sup>5</sup>**

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total

<sup>4</sup> School Distances by Road - Council's Business Intelligence Team

<sup>5</sup> Teacher Centre, 5<sup>th</sup> September 2024



<b>Ysgol Bro Cynllaith</b>	3	2	6	2	6	2	5	26
----------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

ii) **Historical pupil numbers<sup>6</sup>**

	<b>Jan. 2017</b>	<b>Jan. 2018</b>	<b>Jan. 2019</b>	<b>Jan. 2020</b>	<b>Jan. 2021</b>	<b>Jan. 2022</b>	<b>Jan. 2023</b>	<b>Jan. 2024</b>
<b>Ysgol Bro Cynllaith</b>	32	29	30	26	26	23	27	25

iii) **Projected pupil numbers**

**Birth rate<sup>7</sup>**

	<b>Jan 2024</b>	<b>Jan 2025</b>	<b>Jan 2026</b>	<b>Jan 2027</b>	<b>Jan 2028</b>
<b>Ysgol Bro Cynllaith</b>	27	26	24	27	24

**Finance Projections<sup>8</sup>**

	<b>Jan 2024</b>	<b>Jan 2025</b>	<b>Jan 2026</b>	<b>Jan 2027</b>	<b>Jan 2028</b>
<b>Ysgol Bro Cynllaith</b>	25	25	20	n/a	n/a

**Building Capacity and Condition**

i) **Capacity**

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

	<b>Capacity<sup>9</sup></b>	<b>Currently Filled<sup>10</sup></b>	<b>Surplus Capacity<sup>11</sup></b>
--	-----------------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------------------------

<sup>6</sup> PLASC

<sup>7</sup> Powys Schools Service Projections based on PLASC Jan 2023

<sup>8</sup> Powys Finance projections based on data provided by the school – updated by Finance June 2024

<sup>9</sup> MSCW Capacity from the Welsh Government Planning of School Places Return – October 2023

<sup>10</sup> Based on current pupil numbers – September 2024

<sup>11</sup> Based on current pupil numbers – September 2024

<b>Ysgol Bro Cynllaith</b>	54	26	28 (52%)
----------------------------	----	----	----------

ii) **Building condition<sup>12</sup>**

	<b>Condition</b>	<b>Suitability</b>
<b>Ysgol Bro Cynllaith</b>	C Poor	B Satisfactory

**Quality of Education**

i) **Estyn**

	<b>Ysgol Bro Cynllaith</b>
<b>Date of Inspection</b>	December 2023
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>R1 – Address the safeguarding issue that was raised during the inspection</p> <p>R2 – Strengthen procedures to monitor and track pupil progress to evaluate more effectively the standards they achieve</p> <p>R3 – Improve the standards of pupils’ writing across the school</p> <p>R4 – Provide appropriate challenge and regular opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills</p>
<b>Follow up activity</b>	<p>Estyn Review.</p> <p>The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the</p>

<sup>12</sup> Welsh Government Return June 2023

	recommendations. Estyn will review the school's progress.
--	---

## **Financial information**

### **i) Cost per pupil<sup>13</sup>**

	<b>Budget share per school</b>	<b>Budget share per pupil</b>	<b>Notional SEN budget</b>	<b>Non ISB funds devolved to the school</b>
<b>Ysgol Bro Cynllaith</b>	£200k	£8,000	£7,000	£18,000
<b>Powys average (Primary)</b>	N/A	£4,799.78	N/A	N/A

## **Home to school travel<sup>14</sup>**

### **i) Closest school**

An analysis of pupil travel patterns has been carried out, based on the 27 pupils that were attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith according to the PLASC 2023 information. The closest provider for these pupils is as follows:

<b>Closest School</b>	<b>Pupils attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith</b>
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	96.3%
Trefonen Primary School (Shropshire)	3.7%

Based on this information, Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is the closest school for 96.3% of the school's pupils on roll in January 2023.

<sup>13</sup> Section 52 Budget Statement, 2023/2024.

<sup>14</sup> As Llangedwyn C. in W. School is due to close on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024, this school hasn't been included in the calculations in this section.

If there were no school in Llansilin, the closest school for all of the pupils that were on roll in January 2023 would be as follows:

	<b>Pupils' closest school should there be no school in Llansilin</b>
Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant	7.4%
Selattyn CofE Primary School (Shropshire)	37.0%
Trefonen Primary School (Shropshire)	51.9%
Llansantffraid C. in W. School	3.7%

If there were no school in Llansilin, the closest Powys school for all of the pupils that were on roll in January 2023 would be as follows:

	<b>Pupils' closest school should there be no school in Llansilin</b>
Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant	85.2%
Llansantffraid C. in W. School	14.8%

## ii) **Average travel distance**

The average travel distance for all pupils on roll in January 2023 at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith to the school was 1.40 miles.

If there were no school in Llansilin, the average travel distance for all pupils attending the school in January 2023 to their closest alternative school would be 4.77 miles.

If there were no school in Llansilin, the average travel distance for all pupils attending the school in January 2023 to their closest alternative school in Powys would be 6.64 miles.

### iii) Furthest travel distance

Of the pupils that attended Ysgol Bro Cynllaith in January 2023, the furthest travel distance to the school for those pupils for whom Ysgol Bro Cynllaith was the closest provider was 3.62 miles.

If there were no school in Llansilin, the furthest distance to the closest alternative school would be 5.66 miles.

If there were no school in Llansilin, the furthest distance to the closest alternative school in Powys would be 9.01 miles.

### Equalities Information

#### i) Free School Meals<sup>15</sup>

	TP% Eligible	eFSM% Eligible	Total FSM % Eligible
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	0.0%	12.0%	12.0%

#### ii) Children looked after<sup>16</sup>

	% of children looked after
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	0

#### iii) SEN/ALN<sup>17</sup>

	No ALN	School Action	School Action Plus	Statement	IDP School	IDP LA	Total ALN
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	88%	8%	0	0	0	4%	12%

---

<sup>15</sup> PLASC 2024

<sup>16</sup> Teacher Centre, 5<sup>th</sup> January 2024

<sup>17</sup> PLASC 2024

iv) **EAL<sup>18</sup>**

	<b>% of EAL pupils</b>
<b>Ysgol Bro Cynllaith</b>	0

v) **NI & Ethnicity<sup>19</sup>**

**National Identity**

	<b>British</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Irish</b>	<b>Scottish</b>	<b>Welsh</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Not provided</b>
<b>Ysgol Bro Cynllaith</b>	44.0%	0%	0%	0%	48.0%	0%	8.0%

**Ethnic Group**

	<b>% White British</b>	<b>% Other Known Ethnicity</b>	<b>% Not provided</b>
<b>Ysgol Bro Cynllaith</b>	96.0%	0.0%	4.0%

**Early Years Provision**

There is no Early Years provision on the school site.

**3.2 WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN YSGOL BRO CYNLLAITH**

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

i) **Low pupil numbers**

Current pupil numbers<sup>20</sup> at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith are as follows:

---

<sup>18</sup> PLASC 2024

<sup>19</sup> PLASC 2024

<sup>20</sup> Teachers Centre 5<sup>th</sup> September 2024

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
<b>Ysgol Bro Cynllaith</b>	3	2	6	2	6	2	5	26

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

**ii) High primary budget share per pupil**

Based on the Council’s Section 52 Budget Statement for 2024-25, the school’s budget share per pupil was £8,000. This is significantly higher than the Powys primary school average of £4,799.78. Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is ranked the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest primary school in Powys by budget share per pupil.

**iii) Combined age classes**

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

## PART B – OPTIONS FOR YSGOL BRO CYNLLAITH

### 4. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

The following options have been identified for Ysgol Bro Cynllaith:

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

### 5. SWOT ANALYSIS OF EACH OPTION

SWOT analyses for each of the 6 options are provided below.

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

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



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would not address the high budget per pupil</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunities for further collaboration with other neighbouring schools to provide increased opportunities for pupils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The school would continue to be a small school</li> </ul>

**Option 2: Federation with Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant**

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

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

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

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

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would retain provision in Llansilin</li> <li>- More opportunities could be provided to the pupils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Small numbers would remain at the Llansilin</li> <li>- Llansilin pupils would still be taught separately</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There would be no additional transport costs</li> <li>- Could provide a financial saving to the Council</li> <li>- Minimal impact on staff at Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant</li> <li>- Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant would retain its identity</li> <li>- Pupils would continue to attend school at the same location</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would still need to maintain the Llansilin building</li> <li>- Would not address issues with the Ysgol Bro Cynllaith building</li> <li>- Would not reduce surplus places</li> <li>- Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would lose its identity</li> <li>- May not be attractive to Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant</li> <li>- The schools have different language categories</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunities for further collaboration across the sites</li> <li>- More opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff</li> <li>- Opportunity for increased leadership time for headteacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensuring equal opportunities to all pupils due to age range of pupils in mixed age classes</li> </ul>

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

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers</li> <li>- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools</li> <li>- Revenue saving to the Council</li> <li>- The Council would no longer need to maintain the Ysgol Bro Cynllaith building</li> <li>- Pupils would attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum</li> <li>- Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited availability of places at the closest alternative schools</li> <li>- Additional travel for those pupils for whom Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is currently the closest school</li> <li>- Pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would have to transfer to alternative provision</li> <li>- Loss of provision from Llansilin</li> <li>- Impact on the current staff of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith</li> <li>- Impact on the Llansilin community</li> <li>- Pupils would be closer to schools in Shropshire</li> <li>- If pupils chose to attend schools in England, they would not benefit from the Curriculum for Wales</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupils would attend schools with more suitable accommodation</li> <li>- Pupils would be taught in classes with peers of similar ages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loss of children out of county would mean they wouldn't have the opportunity to use the Welsh Language</li> <li>- PCC would still be responsible for funding home to school transport for Powys pupils even if their closest school was in England</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunity for the Council to realise a capital receipt from sale of the school site</li> </ul>	

**Option 6: Close Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, Powys based pupils to attend nearest alternative schools in Powys – this would be Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant for the majority of pupils**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers</li> <li>- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools</li> <li>- Revenue saving to the Council</li> <li>- The Council would no longer need to maintain the Ysgol Bro Cynllaith building</li> <li>- Pupils would attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum</li> <li>- Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities</li> <li>- Pupils would attend schools with more suitable accommodation</li> <li>- Pupils would be taught in classes with peers of similar ages</li> <li>- Pupils would be able to continue to access provision in Powys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Additional travel for those pupils for whom Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is currently the closest school</li> <li>- Loss of provision from Llansilin</li> <li>- Impact on the current staff of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith</li> <li>- Impact on the Llansilin community</li> <li>- Impact on Welsh language ethos of Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant</li> </ul>

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunity for the Council to realise a capital receipt from sale of the school site</li> <li>- Opportunity to offer Trochi provision to enable pupils to transfer to Welsh-medium provision at Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of capacity at nearest alternative schools in Powys</li> </ul>

## 6. IMPACT OF EACH OPTION

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

Option	Likely impact on quality and standards	Likely impact on the community	Likely impact of different travelling arrangements
<b>Option 1: Status quo – continue as a standalone school</b>	There would be no impact on quality and standards – pupils would continue to access the current provision in Llansilin.	There would be no impact on the community – provision would continue to be available in Llansilin.	There would be no impact on travel arrangements – pupils would continue to attend Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.
<b>Option 2: Federation with Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant</b>	There would be very little impact on quality and standards – pupils would continue to access the current provision at Llansilin. Pupil numbers at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would continue to be low, however, more opportunities may be provided for collaboration between the schools.	There would be no impact on the community – provision would continue to be available in Llansilin.	There would be no impact on travel arrangements – pupils would continue to attend Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.
<b>Option 3: Merge with Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-</b>	This option would retain provision in Llansilin, as both sites would be retained as part of the merger.	The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Llansilin.	Pupils would continue to attend school on the current site of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, so no

<p><b>ym-Mochnant to establish a new school on two sites</b></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 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 the quality and standards are at least as good as the current provision.</p>	<p>However, one new governing body would be responsible for both sites, therefore there may be a perceived reduction in community involvement in management of the school, depending on the make-up of the new governing body.</p>	<p>additional transport would be required.</p> <p>Some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>
<p><b>Option 4: Close Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, but retain the site as part of Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant</b></p>	<p>This option would retain provision in Llansilin, as the site would remain in use as part of the new operating model.</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>Provision would continue to be available in Llansilin. However, the site would be managed by the current governing body of Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant, therefore there could be a perceived reduction in community involvement in management of the school.</p> <p>In addition, it is possible that joint school activities would take place on the larger Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Llansilin site.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current site of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.</p> <p>Some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>
<p><b>Option 5: Close Ysgol Bro Cynllaith,</b></p>	<p>Following the closure of Llangedwyn C. in W. School in August 2024,</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Llansilin as</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently</p>

<p><b>pupils to attend nearest alternative schools</b></p>	<p>the nearest Powys school to Ysgol Bro Cynllaith will be Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant.</p> <p>If pupils moved to Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant, they would be attending provision where the quality and standards are at least as good as the current provision at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.</p> <p>Some pupils would be closer to schools in Shropshire. Should they transfer to these schools, they would no longer access the Welsh curriculum.</p>	<p>there would no longer be any provision in Llansilin.</p>	<p>attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.</p> <p>Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, there would also be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities/events.</p> <p>Some pupils may be closer to schools in Shropshire should the council proceed with the closure of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.</p>
<p><b>Option 6: Close Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, Powys based pupils to attend nearest alternative schools in Powys</b></p>	<p>Following the closure of Llangedwyn C. in W. School in August 2024, the nearest Powys school to Ysgol Bro Cynllaith will be Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant.</p> <p>If pupils moved to Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant, they would be attending provision where the quality and standards are at least as good as the current provision at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.</p> <p>Some pupils would be closer to schools in Shropshire. Should they transfer to these schools,</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Llansilin as there would no longer be any provision in Llansilin.</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.</p> <p>Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, there would also be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities / events.</p> <p>Some pupils may be closer to schools in</p>

	they would no longer access the Welsh curriculum.		Shropshire should the council proceed with the closure of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.
--	---	--	--

## 7. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

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

Critical Success Factor	Description
1 – Strategic fit and business needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The option must align with the Council’s Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-2032, to include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Address the challenges facing education in Powys, as outlined in the Council’s Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-2032</li> <li>- Align with the Vision and Guiding Principles outlined in the Council’s Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-2032</li> <li>- Align with the Strategic Aims and Objectives outlined in the Council’s Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-2032</li> </ul> </li> <li>● The option must optimise the benefits of the Council’s Transforming Education Programme</li> </ul>
2 – Value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The option must optimise the resources available for the delivery of learning</li> <li>● The option must provide value for money in the delivery of learning</li> </ul>
3 – Potential achievability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The option must be achievable within current legislation</li> <li>● The option must be operationally achievable</li> <li>● The option must be physically achievable</li> </ul>
4 – Potential affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The extent to which the option is affordable within the Council’s forecasted revenue</li> <li>● The extent to which the option is affordable within the forecasted capital funding available to the Council</li> </ul>

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



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

The assessment for each option is as follows:

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6
1 – Strategic fit and business needs	x	x	x	x	?	✓
2 – Value for money	x	x	x	x	✓	✓
3 – Potential achievability	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	✓
4 – Potential affordability	x	x	x	x	✓	✓
<b>Total ✓</b>	1	1	1	1	2	4
<b>Total x</b>	3	3	3	3	0	0
<b>Outcome</b>	Discount	Discount	Discount	Discount	<b>Possible</b>	<b>Preferred</b>

## 8. EMERGING PREFERRED OPTION

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

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

The reasons for this are:

- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers
- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools
- Revenue saving to the Council
- The Council would no longer need to maintain the Ysgol Bro Cynllaith building
- Pupils would attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum

- Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities
- Pupils would attend schools with better quality accommodation
- Pupils would be taught in classes with peers of similar ages
- Pupils would be able to continue to access provision in Powys
- Potential opportunity to realise a capital receipt from sale of the site

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

## **PART C – FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF PREFERRED OPTION**

The Welsh Government's School Organisation Code outlines factors to be considered when developing school organisation proposals. Consideration is given below to the impact of the preferred option, closure of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, with Powys-based pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools in Powys, on the factors outlined in the Code.

### **9. QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN EDUCATION**

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

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would close, and Powys-based pupils would transfer to their nearest alternative school in Powys. For most pupils, this would be Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant.

Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant was inspected by Estyn in June 2022. The inspection outcome was strong across all of the inspection areas.

The Council's view is that Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant would provide education for pupils which is of at least equivalent quality as that provided at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on standards and progress overall.

This would also apply in respect of pupils belonging to specific groups, such as pupils eligible for Free School Meals, pupils for whom English is an Additional Language, Looked after Children and pupils with Additional Learning Needs. Based on PLASC information from January 2023, there are no Looked after Children or pupils for whom English is an Additional Language at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith. There are a number of pupils eligible for Free School Meals and a number of pupils with Additional Learning Needs, however the number of pupils belonging to these groups is small. It is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on the standards and progress of these pupils.

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

#### **9.2 Wellbeing and attitudes to learning**

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

For some pupils, implementation of the preferred option could result in additional travel, which could have an impact on pupil well-being. However, it is not considered that the additional travel time required to alternative schools would be excessive.

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

### **9.3 Teaching and learning experiences**

#### **9.3.1 Quality of teaching**

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For most pupils, the closest alternative school in Powys would be Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant.

The Council has no concerns about the quality of teaching at Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on the quality of teaching experienced by pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.

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

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For most pupils, the closest alternative school in Powys would be Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant.

The Council's view is that Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant would provide a curriculum which is at least equivalent to that currently provided at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith. Pupils would be transferring to a larger school, therefore the expectation would be that there would be an improvement in the breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum provided to pupils. Pupils would also be able to work in groups of similar ability pupils.

#### **9.3.3 The provision of skills**

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For most pupils, the closest alternative school in Powys would be Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant.

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

## **9.4 Care, support and guidance**

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

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For most pupils, the closest alternative school in Powys would be Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant.

It is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on tracking, monitoring and the provision of learning support, personal development and safeguarding for pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith. These areas were seen as strengths in the Estyn inspection of Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant in June 2022.

## **9.5 Leadership and Management**

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

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For most pupils, the closest alternative school in Powys would be Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant.

There is currently an acting headteacher at Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant. This arrangement has been put in place for two academic years and has been put in place to secure leadership at the school, following the unsuccessful recruitment of a permanent headteacher. It is the Council's view that leadership could be secured following transformation in the cluster. Estyn highlighted strengths and had no cause for concern in leadership during the inspection of Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant in June 2022.

Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant is larger than Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, and therefore the headteacher would have more time available to focus on leadership

and management. At Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, the headteacher has to balance a large teaching commitment alongside leadership and management duties. For one day per week, the headteacher is the only teacher at the school.

### **9.5.2 Professional learning**

It is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would impact on positively on professional learning opportunities for staff currently working in Ysgol Bro Cynllaith should they not be able to secure alternative employment. However, should they secure alternative employment in a larger school, it is likely that implementation of the preferred option would have a positive impact on their professional learning, as it is likely the alternative employment would be in a larger school, with a larger group of staff, meaning that the opportunities to share professional learning and lead on professional development would increase.

### **9.5.3 Use of Resources**

Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is currently projecting a carry forward surplus of £20.6k at the end of financial year 2024-25 reducing to £6.7k by the end of 2025-26. The school is finding it increasingly challenging to balance in-year due to the combination of the low pupil numbers and high inflation on running costs they are currently experiencing. When small schools encounter any unexpected pressures such as long-term sickness or building maintenance issues, then the risk of falling into a deficit is higher as they have more limited scope to reduce costs in other areas to compensate.

One of the main challenges facing the Powys schools infrastructure is the high proportion of small schools in the county coupled with significant surplus places, resulting in higher premises related costs per pupil. Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is amongst the smallest schools in the county, and the budget share per pupil is higher than the Powys primary average.

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

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

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

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

Based on PLASC information from January 2024, the proportion of pupils with ALN at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith was as follows:

	No ALN	School Action	School Action Plus	Statement	IDP School	IDP LA	Total ALN
<b>Ysgol Bro Cynllaith</b>	88%	8%	0	0	0	4%	12%

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

Should the option be implemented, the Council would work with Ysgol Bro Cynllaith and the receiving school to ensure an effective transition for any vulnerable children, including children with ALN/SEN, and their families.

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

Should the emerging preferred option be implemented, Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools, therefore Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would no longer need to deliver the curriculum to any key stages.

For most pupils, the closest alternative school in Powys would be Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant. This means that implementation of the proposal would result in an increase in pupil numbers at Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant. It is possible that Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant would need to make some adjustments to its class structure to accommodate additional pupils. The school's dual stream model could cause further challenge.

It is possible that some pupils could choose to transfer to alternative schools rather than Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant. However, the number of pupils transferring to any other school is likely to be very small, so it is not anticipated that this would impact on the ability of these schools to deliver the full curriculum to pupils.

**10 NEED FOR PLACES AND IMPACT ON ACCESSIBILITY OF SCHOOLS**

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

The preferred option is for pupils to transfer to their closest alternative schools in Powys. For most pupils, this will be Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant.

The following table provides information on the number of spaces available and building condition of Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant:

School	Capacity <sup>21</sup>	Current pupil numbers <sup>22</sup>	Available spaces	Available capacity	Building Condition	Building Suitability
Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant	120	85	35	29%	A Good	A Good

The school's current class structure is as follows<sup>23</sup>:

School	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
KS1E	3	7	5					15
KS1W	12	2	8					22
KS2E				5	9	4	5	23
KS2W				6	5	4	9	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>84</b>

Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant's current PAN is 15, which is based on the published capacity figure of 108. Following a review of capacity in June 2024, the school's capacity has increased to 120 with a PAN of 17. The PAN is whole school not per stream.

Should all current pupils at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith transfer to Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant, pupil numbers at the school would be as follows, based on current pupil numbers at the two schools<sup>24</sup>:

<sup>21</sup> Capacity agreed with the school in July 2024.

<sup>22</sup> Teacher Centre, September 2024.

<sup>23</sup> Teacher Centre, September 2024.

<sup>24</sup> Teacher Centre, September 2024.



	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
<b>Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant</b>	15	9	13	11	14	8	14	84
<b>Ysgol Bro Cynllaith</b>	3	2	6	2	6	2	5	26
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>110</b>

Whilst this information shows that the year groups would be above the revised PAN of 17 in a number of year groups, the Council would work with the school / governing body to accommodate pupils from Ysgol Bro Cynllaith wishing to transfer to Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant.

As Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant is a dual stream school, the school may need to review its class structure should implementation of the proposal result in an increase in English-medium pupils at the school.

Combined pupil projections for the two schools are as follows<sup>25</sup>:

	Jan 2024	Jan 2025	Jan 2026	Jan 2027	Jan 2028
<b>Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant</b>	86	86	78	78	74
<b>Ysgol Bro Cynllaith</b>	27	26	24	27	24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>98</b>

This suggests that total pupil numbers across the two schools are expected to decrease over the next 5 years.

Alternative provision is also available at a number of other schools which are located within 10 miles of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith. The following table provides information on the number of spaces available and the building condition of these schools:

<sup>25</sup> Powys Schools Service Projections based on PLASC Jan 2023

School	Capacity <sup>26</sup>	Current pupil numbers <sup>27</sup>	Available spaces	Available capacity	Building Condition	Building Suitability
Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant	120	85	35	29%	A Good	A Good
Llanfechain C. in W. School	47	43	4	9%	C Poor	B Satisfactory
Llansantffraid C. in W. School	105	106	-1	-1%	B Satisfactory	C Poor
Ysgol Llanfyllin (All-through)	1102	774	320	30%	C Poor	B/C Satisfactory/ Poor

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

As indicated in section 10.1, there are sufficient places at Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant to accommodate Ysgol Bro Cynllaith's current and projected pupil numbers. Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant is a dual stream school, so it may be that the school would need to review its class structure should implementation of the proposal result in an increase in English-medium pupils at the school.

Additional English-medium C.P. provision is also available at other providers in the area, such as Ysgol Llanfyllin.

Church in Wales provision is currently available in the area at Llanfechain C. in W. School and Llansantffraid C. in W. School, however it is acknowledged that there is currently pressure on places at both these schools. Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is a C.P. school. There are sufficient places available in the area for pupils currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith to attend alternative C.P. provision.

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

<sup>26</sup> Powys – Condition Survey Oct 2023 return to Welsh Government. Ysgol Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant capacity increased following discussion with the school in July 2024.

<sup>27</sup> Teacher Centre, September 2024

There are alternative primary places available at Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant should Ysgol Bro Cynllaith close. It is not considered that the length and nature of journeys for pupils to alternative provision would be excessive. This includes journeys for ALN/SEN pupils. One-way journeys to alternative provision would not be in excess of 45 minutes.

#### **10.4 The extent to which the proposal would support the targets in the approved Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).**

Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is an English-medium school, and all pupils at the school are currently taught in English. Should the Council proceed with the preferred option, pupils would transfer to alternative school. For most pupils, the closest alternative school in Powys would be Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant, which is a dual stream school, so pupils would be able to express a preference for either the Welsh-medium stream or the English-medium stream. It is therefore possible that pupils would choose to transfer to the school's Welsh-medium stream, which would result in an increase in the number of pupils taught through the medium of Welsh. If pupils from Ysgol Bro Cynllaith wanted to attend the Welsh-medium stream, the Council would offer trochi provision to support them with this choice, and information about Welsh-medium education would be shared with parents, to encourage pupils to choose Welsh-medium provision.

The Council's aim is to support all schools to move along the language continuum, including Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant

#### **10.5 How the proposal would expand or reduce Welsh language provision and in the case of the latter, set out why provision will be reduced.**

The proposal would not expand or reduce Welsh language provision as Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is an English-medium school. Should the Council proceed with the preferred option, pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For most pupils, the closest alternative school in Powys would be Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant, which is a dual stream school, so pupils would be able to express a preference for either the Welsh-medium stream or the English-medium stream.

If pupils from Ysgol Bro Cynllaith wanted to attend the Welsh-medium stream, the Council would offer trochi provision to support them with this choice.

## **11 RESOURCING OF EDUCATION AND OTHER FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

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

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

The review of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith does not form part of the local authority's Sustainable Communities for Learning (formerly 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools) Investment Programme.

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

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

The recurrent costs of this proposal would be the potential increased transport costs which are currently estimated to be an additional £70.8k per annum. This has been included in the revenue costing and is funded through savings in other areas of the formula in relation to this proposal.

There will be a further £10.6k annual revenue saving in respect of the rent to the village hall once the lease has been surrendered.

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

It is estimated there would be additional transport costs of £70.8k per annum, this is based on pupil's current location and assuming the pupils will go to Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant.

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

It is not anticipated that capital funding would be required in order to implement the emerging preferred option. However it is possible that there would be capital costs should there be insufficient places at Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant to accommodate all pupils wishing to transfer to the school.

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

It is estimated that this would result in annual revenue savings to the Council of around £77k. This overall figure comprises a potential saving on Schools' delegated funding of over £145.8k and estimated additional transport costs of £70.8k, with a minimal £2k estimated saving in respect of catering.

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

The school is currently projecting a carry forward surplus of £20.6k at the end of financial year 2024-25 reducing to £6.7k by the end of 2025-26. Thereafter the school is projecting a deficit position based on current funding levels.

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

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

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

Any capital receipts received from sale of the Ysgol Bro Cynllaith site would be reinvested into the Transforming Education programme in order to improve the educational provision across Powys.

## **12. OTHER GENERAL FACTORS**

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

Implementation of the preferred option would impact on any pupils from economically deprived backgrounds currently attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith. All pupils currently attending the school, including any from economically deprived backgrounds, would need to transfer to alternative schools. Free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's home to school transport policy, however it is acknowledged that there would be an impact on families due to the requirement to travel to school events, which could have a greater impact on children from economically deprived backgrounds.

Based on PLASC information from January 2024, 11.1% of pupils attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith were eligible for Free School Meals.

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

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

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

Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is not subject to any trust which may be affected in relation to the use or disposal of land.

There is currently a lease arrangement in place in respect of the Llansilin village hall which commits the Council to part funding the upkeep of the building. Should the Council proceed with the statutory process and eventual closure of the school, there would be a need to negotiate a termination of the lease. It is acknowledged that this would impact on the village hall.

## **13. SPECIFIC FACTORS IN THE CONSIDERATION OF SCHOOL CLOSURES**

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

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

Pupil numbers at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith are low and have decreased in recent years. The latest projected pupil numbers suggest that pupil numbers are not expected to increase significantly over the coming years. Establishing a multi-site school would not address this issue.

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

Federation of Ysgol Bro Cynllaith with Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant is one of the options considered in section 4 of this document. An assessment of

this option has been carried out, which includes a summary of the weaknesses / threats associated with this option.

Pupil numbers at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith are low and have decreased in recent years. The latest projected pupil numbers suggest that pupil numbers are not expected to increase significantly over the coming years. Becoming part of a federation with another school would not address this issue.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Should the Council proceed with the statutory process and eventual implementation of the preferred option, support would be provided to pupils and their parents as part of the transition process, thereby ensuring full engagement with their new schools. The nature of this support will depend on the needs of the parents/pupils; however, this could include effective transition arrangements with the receiving school to ensure pupils transition is positive.

## **14. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS**

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

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

The reasons for this are:

- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers
- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools
- Revenue saving to the Council
- The Council would no longer need to maintain the Ysgol Bro Cynllaith building
- Pupils would attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum
- Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities
- Pupils would attend schools with better quality accommodation
- Pupils would be taught in classes with peers of similar ages
- Pupils would be able to continue to access provision in Powys
- Potential opportunity to realise a capital receipt from sale of the site

It is recommended that a paper is considered by the Council's Cabinet, requesting approval to commence consultation on a proposal to close Ysgol Bro Cynllaith, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools in Powys. For most pupils, this would be Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant.