

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET EXECUTIVE

25 March 2025

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REPORT TITLE: Ysgol Calon Cymru Proposal Paper

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Following Cabinet and Welsh Government approval of a new Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) in 2024, the Council has been considering options in terms of how to move forward with the Council's plans for Ysgol Calon Cymru.
- 1.2 This report presents an options appraisal which outlines the options considered and identifies a proposal to be taken forward, and requests Cabinet approval to commence the statutory process on the following proposals:

Phase 1 (September 2027):

- To establish a new Welsh-medium all-age school (4-18) on the current Builth campus of Ysgol Calon Cymru.
 - o Initially the school would share the Builth campus with Ysgol Calon Cymru, using part of its building and sharing some facilities.
 - o This would be a temporary arrangement until there has been capital investment on the Llandrindod site under Phase 2.
- To change the language category of Builth Wells C.P. School to English-medium.
 - o Pupils in the Welsh-medium stream at Builth Wells C.P. School would move to the new Welsh-medium all-age school.
- To change the language category of Ysgol Calon Cymru from dual stream to English-medium.
 - o Pupils in years 7, 8 and 9 in the Welsh-medium stream of Ysgol Calon Cymru in September 2027 would transfer to the new Welsh-medium all-age school. The Welsh-medium

stream of Ysgol Calon Cymru would be phased out by September 2029.

Phase 2 (September 2029 at the earliest):

- Following capital investment on the Llandrindod Wells campus to accommodate all Ysgol Calon Cymru pupils and improve existing facilities, Ysgol Calon Cymru would close its Builth Wells campus and operate solely from the Llandrindod campus.
 - o Pupils from Ysgol Calon Cymru’s Builth Wells campus would move to the Llandrindod Wells site.
 - o The Welsh-medium all-age school would take over the whole of the Builth Wells site.

1.3 The report is supported by the following appendices:

Appendix A – Options Appraisal – Plans for Ysgol Calon Cymru
Appendix B – Impact Assessment

2. Background

Strategic Context

- 2.1 On 7 May 2024, the Council’s Cabinet considered and approved a new Strategic Outline Programme (SOP), which outlined the Council’s ambitious plans for capital investment in schools as part of the Welsh Government’s Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. Following Cabinet approval, the SOP was submitted to the Welsh Government and was formally approved in the summer of 2024.
- 2.2 The new SOP presents a preferred option which includes capital investment in respect of the current Ysgol Calon Cymru campuses in Llandrindod Wells and Builth Wells. It sets out a plan to provide significant investment in the Ysgol Calon Cymru building in Llandrindod Wells, and investment to provide a new all-age Welsh-medium school in Builth Wells. However, it must be noted that the successful delivery of the project is dependent on the outcome of a statutory school reorganisation process, including consultation. The anticipated opening date for pupils outlined in the SOP is 2028/29 for the two campuses. Capital investment plans for Builth Wells and Llandrindod Wells campuses will be subject to an options appraisal developed in accordance with HM Treasury’s Green Book, which will require Cabinet and Welsh Government approval of the relevant business cases to secure funding through the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. Any capital investment plans would also require identification of the Council’s contribution.
- 2.3 The revised SOP includes the following overview of the Council’s plans for Ysgol Calon Cymru:

‘Ysgol Calon Cymru is a school that was established in 2018, following the reorganisation of Llandrindod Wells High School and Builth Wells High School. The school currently operates from the campuses of the two previous schools. Llandrindod Wells campus is a condition C, and Builth campus is a condition B.

Previously, work has focused on remodelling the Design & Technology block on the Llandrindod campus, but the scope is now expanding to include whole school transformation.

A revised Strategic Outline Case has been approved by Cabinet on the 29 September 2020. The preferred way forward is to develop new facilities for a new English-medium secondary school for Ysgol Calon Cymru in Llandrindod and to establish a new all-age Welsh-medium school in Builth Wells on the current campus, which would need some remodelling to bring in early years and primary facilities. This would address the demand for a designated Welsh-medium secondary provider in Mid and South Powys.

A statutory school reorganisation process will need to be completed.’

2.4 The plans for Ysgol Calon Cymru as outlined in the SOP reflect the aspirations outlined in the Council’s Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for 2022-32, which was approved by Cabinet on the 26 July 2022 and subsequently approved by the Welsh Government to improve access to secondary provision which meets the definition of the Welsh Government’s ‘Welsh-medium’ category.

2.5 The WESP states the following:

‘In the first 5 years of this plan, the authority will carry out the following action to improve access to Welsh-medium secondary provision for Powys learners:

- *‘Complete the statutory processes required to provide access to secondary provision which meets the definition of the ‘Welsh-medium’ category in 2 further locations in Powys. This will focus on the newly established Ysgol Bro Caereinion and the Ysgol Calon Cymru area.’*

2.6 The statutory process to change the language category of Ysgol Bro Caereinion was carried out during 2023/24, so there is now a need to move forward with the plans for the Ysgol Calon Cymru area, to meet the commitments made in the WESP.

The Case for Change

2.7 Ysgol Calon Cymru is an 11-18 school that operates across two campuses in Llandrindod Wells and Builth Wells. It is a dual stream

school, with Welsh-medium and English-medium provision being delivered on the Builth Wells campus, and English-medium provision only being delivered on the Llandrindod Wells campus.

2.8 Pupil numbers at the school’s two campuses are as follows¹:

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Total
Llandrindod campus	91	102	79	98	95	30	25	520
Builth campus	73	81	95	85	62	22	17	435
Total	164	183	174	183	157	52	42	955

2.9 Welsh-medium pupil numbers in years 7 – 11 at the school are as follows²:

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Total
23	25	21	15	14	98

2.10 Further data relating to Ysgol Calon Cymru is included in the options appraisal document, which is attached as Appendix A.

2.11 Ysgol Calon Cymru was established in 2018 following the merger of Llandrindod High School and Builth Wells High School, as part of the Council’s previous Secondary School Reorganisation Programme. However, whilst the school is on an improvement journey, it has been apparent for a number of years that the school’s two sited model is causing challenges in terms of the school’s ability to continue to improve. The main challenges facing Ysgol Calon Cymru are outlined below.

Quality of provision

2.12 Estyn carried out an inspection of the school in October 2022. Following this inspection, Estyn placed the school in the Estyn Review category.

2.13 A monitoring visit was carried out in September 2024, and the outcome of the visit was as follows:

¹ Information provided by the school, September 2024

² Information provided by the school, December 2024

‘Ysgol Calon Cymru is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection.

As a result, His Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is increasing the level of follow-up activity.

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, His Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement’

- 2.14 It is clear that the current provision at Ysgol Calon Cymru is not currently meeting the Council’s aspirations for education provision, and the school’s current two sited model is causing challenges in terms of the school’s ability to continue to improve. Duplicating provision across two sites means that costs, effort and resources are not deployed effectively.

Budget pressures

- 2.15 Ysgol Calon Cymru had a cumulative deficit of £1.7 million as at the 31 March 2024. Based on the 1 May 2024 budget submittal, this was forecast to increase to £2.1 million over the next 3 years if there was no further preventative action. The school is working closely with officers of the authority and has made significant inroads into mitigating the in-year deficits that had been projected. The latest plan discussed with the school estimates in-year underspends from 2025/26 onwards which will start to reduce the cumulative deficit.
- 2.16 All schools are currently working with the funding levels included in the Council’s Budget for 2025/26 with formal submission required by the 1st May 2025.

Welsh-medium provision

- 2.17 Welsh-medium provision is currently provided on Ysgol Calon Cymru’s Builth Wells campus. During the 2024/25 school year, Welsh-medium pupil numbers at Ysgol Calon Cymru are as follows³:

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Total
23	25	21	15	14	98

- 2.18 Although pupil numbers are higher in years 7, 8 and 9 than in years 10 and 11, overall pupil numbers at the school’s Welsh-medium stream have been decreasing over the last few years, which causes increasing

³ Information provided by the school, September 2024

challenge to the school in providing access to comprehensive provision, and maintaining a Welsh ethos to ensure pupils can continue to develop their Welsh language skills throughout their education.

- 2.19 The Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys outlines a number of challenges facing education in Powys, one of which is 'Inequality in access to Welsh-medium education'. In respect of secondary provision, the strategy states that: 'The size and proportion of the secondary streams varies considerably across the county, and the range of subjects available through the medium of Welsh also varies significantly. The curriculum offer is increasingly limited for Welsh-medium learners, and there is significant concern amongst the profession regarding the commitment of the authority to learners who study in Welsh.'
- 2.20 Decisions have already been made which will ensure that pupils in other areas of Powys will be able to access comprehensive Welsh-medium secondary provision in the future, following the recent statutory processes to change the language category of Ysgol Bro Hyddgen and Ysgol Bro Caereinion from dual stream to Welsh-medium on a phased basis. Pupils living in South Powys are able to access designated Welsh-medium providers located in other local authorities, e.g. Ysgol Ystalyfera Bro Dur, so pupils in Mid Powys are now the only pupils who are unable to access designated Welsh-medium secondary provision.
- 2.21 It is also notable that there is currently no access to designated Welsh-medium primary provision in the Ysgol Calon Cymru catchment area either – Welsh-medium primary provision is currently delivered at a number of Welsh-medium streams.
- 2.22 The current Welsh-medium provision at Ysgol Calon Cymru itself and the wider catchment does not meet the Council's aspirations for Welsh-medium provision, as outlined in the Strategy for Transforming Education and the WESP. Ensuring that learners can access comprehensive Welsh-medium provision throughout their educational careers is a key driver for this project.

Building condition and suitability

- 2.23 There are significant backlog maintenance costs on both sites. Updated condition surveys were carried out on both sites in 2024 which indicated that based on an updated grading methodology, both sites are now assessed as Condition B – Satisfactory but with minor deterioration. However, the surveys also identify significant backlog maintenance costs on both sites – estimated backlog maintenance costs of around £2.4m are identified on the school's Llandrindod Wells campus and estimated backlog maintenance costs of around £1.5m are identified on the school's Builth Wells campus. These figures exclude any fees associated with carrying out works to address the backlog maintenance identified.

- 2.24 Whilst the updated condition surveys have indicated an improvement in the overall condition assessment in respect of the Llandrindod site in particular, this is due to a change to the grading methodology used by Welsh Government.
- 2.25 The updated condition assessments did not consider the suitability of Ysgol Calon Cymru's buildings – these are assessed as Condition C – Poor.
- 2.26 The Council's view is that the current buildings, and the Llandrindod campus in particular, don't meet the Council's aspirations for education, as outlined in the Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys.

Options Appraisal

- 2.27 An options appraisal has been carried out to consider options in order to take forward the Council's plans for Ysgol Calon Cymru. This is included as Appendix A.
- 2.28 The options appraisal document includes the following:
- An overview of the strategic context
 - Data about Ysgol Calon Cymru
 - Consideration of why change is needed at Ysgol Calon Cymru
 - An assessment of possible governance options
 - An assessment of possible language category options for Builth Wells C.P. School
 - An assessment of options that would enable the Welsh-medium school to be established before completion of the planned capital investment on the two sites
 - An assessment of phasing options
 - Identification of a preferred option, which combines the elements listed above
 - Further consideration of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the preferred option against factors listed in the School Organisation Code (2018) as factors to be taken into account when developing school organisation proposals.
- 2.29 Based on the options appraisals carried out, the paper identifies the following preferred option:

Phase 1 (September 2027):

- To establish a new Welsh-medium all-age school (4-18) on the current Builth campus of Ysgol Calon Cymru.

- Initially the school would share the Builth campus with Ysgol Calon Cymru, using part of its building and sharing some facilities.
- This would be a temporary arrangement until there has been capital investment on the Llandrindod site under Phase 2.
- To change the language category of Builth Wells C.P. School to English-medium.
 - Pupils in the Welsh-medium stream at Builth Wells C.P. School would move to the new Welsh-medium all-age school.
- To change the language category of Ysgol Calon Cymru from dual stream to English-medium.
 - Pupils in years 7, 8 and 9 in the Welsh-medium stream of Ysgol Calon Cymru in September 2027 would transfer to the new Welsh-medium all-age school. The Welsh-medium stream of Ysgol Calon Cymru would be phased out by September 2029.

Phase 2 (September 2029 at the earliest):

- Following capital investment on the Llandrindod Wells campus to accommodate all Ysgol Calon Cymru pupils and improve existing facilities, Ysgol Calon Cymru would close its Builth Wells campus and operate solely from the Llandrindod campus.
 - Pupils from Ysgol Calon Cymru’s Builth Wells campus would move to the Llandrindod Wells site.
 - The Welsh-medium all-age school would take over the whole of the Builth Wells site.

2.30 The reasons for this are as follows:

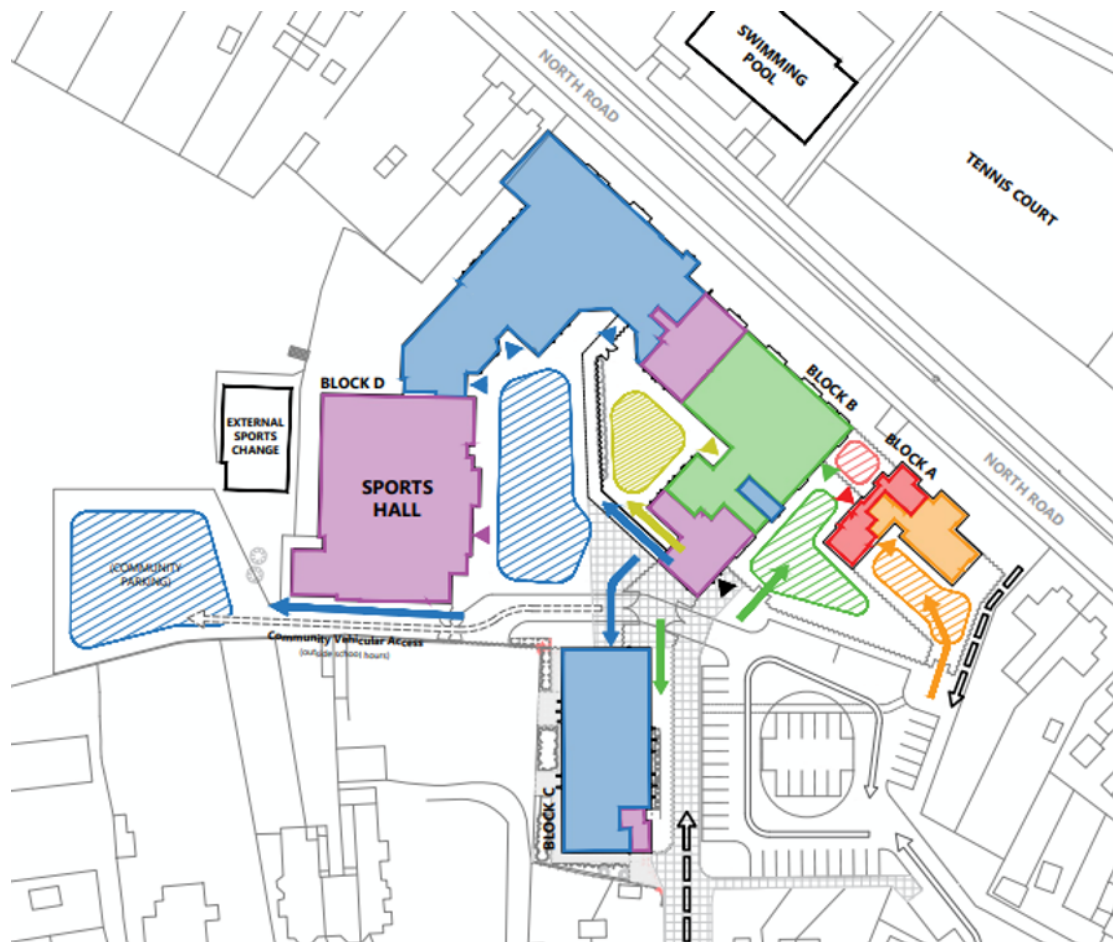
- Would retain secondary provision in Llandrindod Wells and Builth Wells
- Would provide some stability in Llandrindod Wells as Ysgol Calon Cymru would remain as the provider
- Would provide a greater mass of English-medium learners on one campus
- Broader curriculum could be provided to English-medium learners
- Would be no need to duplicate English-medium provision across two sites
- A new Welsh-medium all-age school would be established which would provide an opportunity to ‘rebrand’ Welsh-medium provision in the Mid Powys area
- A Welsh-medium all-age school would provide an improved Welsh-medium experience

- Would provide access to designated Welsh-medium primary provision
 - All-age Welsh-medium model would promote transition into Welsh-medium secondary provision
 - Broader Welsh-medium curriculum could be provided
 - Two separate schools would potentially be more attractive to prospective headteachers, teachers and support staff
 - The two-phased approach enables the Welsh-medium all-age school to be established on the Builth campus from the outset as there is insufficient space at the Llandrindod Wells campus to accommodate all Ysgol Calon Cymru pupils.
- 2.31 The preferred option aligns with the vision and guiding principles as set out in the Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-2030.
- 2.32 Implementation of the preferred option is subject to the statutory process outlined by the Welsh Government in the School Organisation Code (2018), which is available online: [school-organisation-code-second-edition.pdf](#)
- 2.33 It is recognised that there is leisure provision at each of Ysgol Calon Cymru's two campuses currently. The Council's plans for the school will need to align with the Sustainable Powys programme, which identifies Llandrindod Wells as a core town, and in particular the Council's review of leisure provision in the county.
- 2.34 The plans for Ysgol Calon Cymru will also need to align with any future plans relating to post-16 provision in Powys. The Council is currently reviewing post-16 provision, and any recommendations resulting from the review which would impact on provision in the area currently served by Ysgol Calon Cymru would be subject to a further statutory process. Proceeding with the current proposals for Ysgol Calon Cymru does not preclude the school from being part of future proposals.
- 2.35 The proposals for Ysgol Calon Cymru would not result in any changes to other Welsh-medium providers in the area, apart from those located in Builth Wells; Welsh-medium streams will continue to be provided at Ysgol Trefonnen and Rhayader C. in W. School.

Implementation and Phasing

- 2.36 The establishment of the new Welsh-medium all-age school would be phased to support the transition and limit disruption to pupils. The proposal is that when the school opens in September 2027, it provides education for primary aged pupils and Key Stage 3.
- 2.37 Pupils from the Welsh-medium stream of Builth Wells C.P. School would transfer to the primary phase of the new school.

- 2.38 At secondary level, Welsh-medium provision would initially be available for Years 7, 8 and 9, with pupils transferring from Ysgol Calon Cymru. Pupils in years 10 and 11 of the Welsh-medium stream of Ysgol Calon Cymru would remain on roll at Ysgol Calon Cymru to ensure continuity and limit disruption during these important examination years.
- 2.39 The expectation is that Ysgol Calon Cymru and the new Welsh-medium school would work collaboratively during this transition period to maximise opportunities to enhance the Welsh-medium offer available to these learners. This would include sharing of staff and resources.
- 2.40 This phased implementation approach would support sustainable growth of the Welsh-medium offer available at the new Welsh-medium school. Key Stage 4 Welsh-medium provision would be provided by the new Welsh-medium school from September 2028 and Key Stage 5 Welsh-medium provision would be provided from September 2030 as the pupils move through the school.
- 2.41 In September 2029, all Ysgol Calon Cymru pupils would transfer to the Llandrindod Wells campus, subject to completion of the required capital works. Ysgol Calon Cymru would become an English-medium secondary school with all Welsh-medium provision provided by the new Welsh-medium school in Builth Wells.
- 2.42 Capital works would be undertaken at the Builth Wells campus ahead of September 2027 to create the new primary provision. The primary accommodation will be segregated from the secondary phase with its own external play space. This would be achieved through a reconfiguration and refurbishment of existing facilities, which represents an investment of approximately £5 million. There would also be accommodation for early years provision.
- 2.43 A high-level site plan has been developed to highlight where the primary and early years provision would be accommodated. Early years would be accommodated within the orange area, primary would be accommodated within the green area on the ground floor, and secondary would be accommodated in the blue area. Purple and red areas indicate shared or multi-purpose spaces.



Proposed Capacity and Catchment Area

Primary

- 2.44 It is proposed that the new Welsh-medium school would provide 210 Welsh-medium primary places, with a Published Admission Number of 30. There are currently 119 pupils attending the Welsh-medium stream in Builth Wells C.P. School. The proposed capacity would provide additional Welsh-medium places in Builth Wells, supporting the Council's aspiration to increase Welsh-medium pupil numbers in line with the commitments in the Council's WESP.
- 2.45 The proposed catchment area for the primary phase of the new Welsh-medium school would be the same as the existing catchment area for the Welsh-medium stream of Builth Wells C.P. School.

Secondary

- 2.46 It is proposed that the new Welsh-medium school would provide 300 secondary places for pupils in years 7-11, with a Published Admission Number of 60. This would provide sufficient capacity to meet demand from within the catchment area, and would also enable future growth in Welsh-medium education.

- 2.47 The new-Welsh-medium school would also provide 100 post-16 places from September 2030.
- 2.48 There is sufficient space on the Builth site to increase the capacity in the future should the demand for places support that.
- 2.49 The proposed catchment area for the secondary phase would be the same as the existing catchment area for Ysgol Calon Cymru's Welsh-medium stream, which includes the catchments of the Welsh-medium streams at Rhayader C. in W. School and Ysgol Trefonnen as well as Builth Wells C.P. School.

Projected Numbers

- 2.50 The projected numbers for the secondary phase of the new Welsh-medium school includes pupils currently attending the 3 primary Welsh-medium streams in the catchment. Pupil numbers at these three Welsh-medium streams are as follows⁴:

	R	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Total
Builth Wells C.P. School	23	15	19	14	19	13	16	119
Rhayader C. in W. School	5	23	10	14	7	11	11	81
Ysgol Trefonnen	13	14	5	10	12	11	14	79
Total	41	52	34	38	38	35	41	279

- 2.51 Should all of these pupils transfer to Welsh-medium secondary provision in Builth Wells, numbers in the secondary phase in the new Welsh-medium school from September 2027 onwards would be as follows:

	Yr 7	Yr 8	Yr 9	Yr 10	Yr 11	Total
September 2027	38	35	41	N/A	N/A	114
September 2028	38	38	35	41	N/A	152
September 2029	34	38	38	35	41	186
September 2030	52	34	38	38	35	197
September 2031	41	52	34	38	38	233

⁴ Teacher Centre, 8th November 2024 (Finance Count Date)

- 2.52 Whilst it is acknowledged that not all pupils accessing Welsh-medium primary provision in the catchment currently transfer to Ysgol Calon Cymru's Welsh-medium stream, it is anticipated that the establishment of designated Welsh-medium provision with a strengthened Welsh-medium offer would result in an increase in the proportion of pupils transferring to Welsh-medium secondary provision.
- 2.53 The new Welsh-medium school could also attract applications from outside Ysgol Calon Cymru's current catchment area from parents/carers looking for designated Welsh-medium provision.
- 2.54 Trochi (Welsh language immersion) provision would also be made available in the area to support the establishment of the new Welsh-medium all-age school, which would provide opportunities for pupils not currently accessing Welsh-medium primary education to improve their Welsh language skills to enable them to move into Welsh-medium provision.

3. Advice

- 3.1 Based on the findings of the options appraisal exercise, the advice of officers is that Cabinet approves commencing the statutory process on the following proposals:

Phase 1 (September 2027):

- To establish a new Welsh-medium all-age school (4-18) on the current Builth campus of Ysgol Calon Cymru.
 - o Initially the school would share the Builth campus with Ysgol Calon Cymru, using part of its building and sharing some facilities.
 - o This would be a temporary arrangement until there has been capital investment on the Llandrindod site under Phase 2.
- To change the language category of Builth Wells C.P. School to English-medium.
 - o Pupils in the Welsh-medium stream at Builth Wells C.P. School would move to the new Welsh-medium all-age school.
- To change the language category of Ysgol Calon Cymru from dual stream to English-medium.
 - o Pupils in years 7, 8 and 9 in the Welsh-medium stream of Ysgol Calon Cymru in September 2027 would transfer to the new Welsh-medium all-age school. The Welsh-medium

stream of Ysgol Calon Cymru would be phased out by September 2029.

Phase 2 (September 2029 at the earliest):

- Following capital investment on the Llandrindod Wells campus to accommodate all Ysgol Calon Cymru pupils and improve existing facilities, Ysgol Calon Cymru would close its Builth Wells campus and operate solely from the Llandrindod campus.
 - o Pupils from Ysgol Calon Cymru's Builth Wells campus would move to the Llandrindod Wells site.
 - o The Welsh-medium all-age school would take over the whole of the Builth Wells site.

3.2 The reasons for this are set out in 2.30 above.

3.3 Should the recommendation to commence the statutory process be approved, it is anticipated that consultation would commence in April 2025.

3.4 It must also be noted that implementation of this proposal does not preclude schools from being part of future reorganisation proposals.

3.5 It is recognised that a further review of the remaining primary provision in the Ysgol Calon Cymru catchment will also need to be carried out, to identify a preferred way forward for the whole catchment. However, the main issue in this catchment currently relates to Ysgol Calon Cymru. It is therefore advised that the statutory process in respect of the Council's plans for Ysgol Calon Cymru is undertaken first, and that a catchment review of the Ysgol Calon Cymru catchment is undertaken once a final decision has been made on whether or not to move forward with these plans following the completion of the statutory process. This will be Phase 3 of the Council's plans for the Ysgol Calon Cymru catchment. It is expected that this would commence during 2026 at the latest.

3.6 Other individual proposals may also be taken forward prior to the commencement of the catchment review should that be required to respond to local circumstances.

4. Resource Implications

Revenue: full implementation

4.1 Based on full implementation of phase 2 of the proposal, the ongoing annual revenue savings from the schools funding formula is approximately £146k, once the English medium pupils are all accommodated on the Llandrindod site.

- 4.2 Transport costs following full implementation (phase 2) are estimated at an additional £64k and the costs are based on staggered opening times for the 2 sites in order to utilise existing transport. This will also be subject to change dependant on staying on rates to Post 16 at both sites.
- 4.3 It is estimated that there would be no change in catering costs as a result of moving from the status quo to full implementation, as catering provision will remain on both sites. It is also assumed that any additional kitchen equipment would be funded through the capital project.
- 4.4 The total estimated saving following full implementation of phase 2 of the proposal based on 4.1 to 4.3 is £82k (as set out in the table below).

Formula Allowance	2030/31 Saving / (Cost)
Small School Management top up for the new Welsh medium school	(£136k)
Small School Teaching & Learning top up for the new Welsh medium school	(£147k)
Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCo) lump sum for the new Welsh medium school	(£130k)
Multiple site management top up no longer required	£127k
Multiple campus teaching and learning top up no longer required	£249k
Dual Stream Teaching & Learning top up no longer required	£306k
Bilingual allowance reduction from primary school	£2k
Net Premises & Rates costs for both sites	(£125k)
Total estimated formula funding annual saving	£146k
Estimated annual transport costs	(£64k)
Estimated net annual saving	£82k

- 4.5 In terms of the school funding formula, Phase 1 will require additional funding of £164k in 2027-28 and a further £113k in 2028-29, totalling £277k. This is broken down in the table below.

Formula Allowance	2027/28 Saving / (Cost)	2028/29 Saving / (Cost)
ALNCo Lump sum for the new Welsh medium school	(£76k)	(£54k)
Small School top up for the	(£90k)	(£61k)

new Welsh medium school		
Bilingual Allowance no longer needed in the primary school	£1k	£1k
Bilingual Allowance for the new Welsh medium school	(£3k)	(£2k)
Grounds top up	£4k	£3k
Total	(£164k)	(£113k)

- 4.6 Phase 2 – once Ysgol Calon Cymru has fully relocated to the new Llandrindod site, the schools funding formula requirements reduce, meaning that overall, in 2029-30, a saving of £248k can then be realised. A further saving of £175k is estimated for 2030-31 as a result of the full year effect of the reduction in the overall need to provide top ups to the 3 sites and 2 streams, which is reduced by the revised building top ups required. Both phases therefore deliver a full year ongoing revenue saving from the schools’ formula funding of £146k. This is outlined in the table below with the impact across the relevant years, these figures are not currently included in the Council’s 5-year budget model.

Year	Amount (saving / (cost))
<u>Phase 1</u>	
2027-28	(£164k)
2028-29	(£113k)
<u>Phase 2</u>	
2029-30	£248k
2030-31	£175k
Total	£146k

- 4.7 The pupil numbers collected on the 8 November 2024 count date have been used throughout the calculations in the above tables. The final funding requirements are subject to final confirmation of actual numbers each year and any demography changes. The modelling does not include any assumptions around Welsh medium growth, however there is likely to be a change in parental preference and there may be fluctuations in those schools affected, which will be modelled with each individual school and budget setting process.
- 4.8 Fundamentally, schools’ funding is driven by the number of pupils and that applies equally for English and Welsh medium schools but you only maximise the cost effectiveness of those models when you have the optimum number of pupils in those schools.
- 4.9 The new funding formula that will be fully implemented in 2025-26 has been used as the basis for the costings along with pupil numbers from the 8 November 2024 pupil count date (which is used to fund all schools for the 2025/26 financial year).

- 4.10 The costings undertaken are subject to an amendment to the Scheme for Financing schools which would seek to adjust these schools' delegated budgets during the year/years where they are going through transformational change and prescribed alterations are being made e.g. language category, but where they are not new schools.
- 4.11 Within the costing above it has been assumed that the Post 16 element remains with the funding envelope of the Post 16 grant provided by Medr.
- 4.12 Phase 3 will need to be modelled if further proposals come forward.

Capital

- 4.13 The Strategic Outline Plan (SOP) that was submitted to Welsh Government as part of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme included significant investment in the Llandrindod Wells and Builth Wells campuses. The SOP was based on investment of up to £107 million across both sites and it is anticipated that Welsh Government will fund 65% of the capital costs and Powys funding the remaining 35%. If the Council's contribution towards this scheme is to be funded from borrowing, as no other funding has been identified at this stage, the cost to the Council's revenue budget because of this borrowing is estimated at £2.06 million per year for 34 years. This amount could be reduced if capital receipts are available to use in place of borrowing. Capital investment plans for Builth Wells and Llandrindod Wells campuses will be subject to an options appraisal developed in accordance with HM Treasury's Green Book and Welsh Government approval of the relevant business cases to secure funding through the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.
- 4.14 This scheme is included in the Council's Capital Programme and the impact of any borrowing requirement to fund the Council's contribution is already included within the Financial Resource Model (FRM). It should be noted that whilst the impact is included in the FRM, there are significant budget gaps in future years which have yet to be resolved. Should Welsh Government grant not be available and the council was to fund the full costs through borrowing, the cost to the Council's revenue budget because of this borrowing is estimated at £5.89 million per year for 34 years. This amount could be reduced if capital receipts are available to use in place of borrowing.
- 4.15 The Director of Corporate Services (Section 151 Officer) comments "I note the content of the report. The Council must have due regard to the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities to ensure that our capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable. We must carefully consider the totality of the impact of our capital expenditure and investment decisions on our capital and revenue resources and how these contribute to the provision of services. This

scheme can be accommodated within the current Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme funding envelope and its impact is already included within the FRM, noting that the budget proposal approved for future years will need to balance prior to any commitments proceeding. On this basis the recommendation can be supported.”

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Legal: the recommendations can be supported from a legal point of view
- 5.2 The Head of Legal Services and the Monitoring Officer has commented as follows : I note the legal comment and support the recommendations

6. Climate Change & Nature Implications

- 6.1 The Council's current plans would result in capital investment to improve the facilities at both current Ysgol Calon Cymru sites, which would be more energy efficient than the current buildings.
- 6.2 However it is acknowledged that the changes being considered could result in an increase in pupil travel, particularly for English-medium pupils currently accessing the Builth Wells campus. This will be further considered as the plans move forward.

7. Data Protection

- 7.1 N/A

8. Comment from local member(s)

- 8.1 **Cllr Gareth Jones, Llanelwedd; Cllr Jeremy Pugh, Builth; Cllr Bryan Davies, Llanafanfawr with Garth; Cllr Peter James, Llanwrtyd Wells; Cllr Deborah Edwards, Llangunllo with Norton:**

As the local members for Builth Wells and the surrounding wards we welcome the proposed capital investment into both the Llandrindod and Builth sites of the current Ysgol Calon Cymru, but we are disappointed with the lack of detail and aspiration within the report in the following areas.

- 1. We are disappointed that the paper only focus' on the current Welsh Medium Catchment area of Ysgol Calon Cymru and we believe that the catchment area of the new proposed Welsh medium School should be extended to include the catchment area of Ysgol Y Bannau in Brecon to provide larger pupil numbers in the School and to also provide those learners with a full Welsh Medium Secondary School education. It is also unclear as to whether the

Catchment of Rhayader C in W School will be included in the catchment area of the proposed new Welsh Medium School in Builth.

2. Although reference is made in the report, to an upcoming report in respect to the future of Pot 16 Education in the Authority but it is unclear as to how that report will impact on the proposals being considered in this report, especially in respect to the development of Welsh medium post 16 learning opportunities in mid Powys.
3. Although entitlement is implied, we are concerned that the report does not provide a clear statement in respect to the transport entitlement that the pupils living in the current Builth Wells who wish to attend Ysgol Calon Cymru post 2029, for home to school transport to that or other English Medium Secondary Education that is the closest to their home address.
4. Having reviewed the subjects currently being taught through the Welsh Medium in KS3&4 in Ysgol Calon Cymru we are concerned that some of the core curriculum subjects including Maths and Science are currently not taught through the Welsh medium and we have concerns that the new school will not be able to attract the right quality of staff to deliver the required curriculum.
5. We are disappointed that the proposal makes no specific reference to how the cabinet intends to utilise the space released in Builth CP when the Welsh Medium Classes moves to the High School site in September 2027.
6. We are very concerned, based on experience in other areas Such as Machynlleth, that the Council has set a target date for the opening of the new school buildings in Llandrindod that are unachievable, and we would request that the Cabinet provides a detailed project plan at the consultation meetings that are proposed to commence in April 2025.
7. We note the estimated additional home to school transport costs within the report and we will be asking for the full details to back up these estimates during the initial consultation period.

In addition we are disappointed that there does not appear to have been any consideration of locating the Welsh medium School in Llandrindod and the English medium School in Builth as in our view this option would allow both proposed schools to operate from a single site from the 1st September 2027.

This model would keep Builth CP as a Dual Stream School and Trefonnen C in W School becoming a English Medium School and the pupils in the Welsh Stream in Trefonnen joining the new Welsh Medium 4 -18 School on the current Llandrindod site.

As the local members representing the Builth areas we will continue to represent the residents of our area through the consultation process to ensure that the short, medium and long term educational model that evolves provides the best learning opportunities to all the learners in the area through the language of their choice.

Cllr Josie Ewing, Llandrindod South

As a member for Llandrindod – I only have positive comments to make regarding the YCC rebuild on the Llandrindod site. I welcome this news of change for the future of Llandrindod campus.

Cllr Angela Davies, Rhayader:

I am in full support of Welsh medium (or rather Welsh bilingual education) and welcome the introduction of a Welsh bilingual high school in the mid Powys catchment area. This provision will support the ongoing Welsh bilingual education of pupil's from Rhayader primary school and I believe this provision could increase the number of parents choosing Welsh bilingual education for their primary aged children.

However, I am not yet clear what impact this might have on pupil numbers in Rhayader primary school as the transport element is not clearly defined and some parents may choose the all-through school option. Also, I am unclear what impact this will have on the already difficult job of recruiting Welsh language teachers. And I am not clear what the financial implications are for the council by these changes. It might have been useful to see the long-term overall plan for education across the county. These questions may be answered in the learning and skills scrutiny session tomorrow, so it is unfortunate that this response had to be provided prior to that meeting.

But as stated I fully support the ambition to increase Welsh language bilingual education provision.

Cllr Beverley Baynham, Presteigne:

As the elected member for the Presteigne Ward it is difficult for me to comment on the proposals for Ysgol Calon Cymru, however I do recognise the need to provide Welsh medium education in Powys. In principle I support the provision for all young people in Powys to be educated through the medium of Welsh if they wish.

Transport arrangements need to be taken into consideration for those pupils in the Presteigne/Knighton area who wish to be educated in the Welsh Language, and if this decision is approved, I would like assurance that this will be available.

9. Impact Assessment

9.1 An initial impact assessment in respect of the recommendation is attached as Appendix B. The impact assessment considers the proposal's impact on the Welsh Government's well-being goals, as outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

9.2 The summary of the impact assessment is as follows:

This impact assessment suggests that the impact of Phase 1 of the proposal is generally positive:

- *Improving the Welsh-medium secondary provision in Mid Powys is a key consideration as part of this development. There are currently significant concerns about the level of provision available to Welsh-medium learners in the area. Implementation of the preferred way forward would lead to the establishment of a Welsh-medium all-age school in Builth Wells, enabling learners to access full Welsh-medium provision throughout their educational careers, and enabling them to become confidently bilingual, with Welsh language skills that will enable them to use these Welsh language skills throughout their lives.*
- *Phase 1 of the proposals does not fully address the challenges of the current delivery model at Ysgol Calon Cymru as the school would still need to operate across two sites until Phase 2 is implemented. However, changing to an English-medium school would enable the school to focus on improving educational standards in a single language stream school.*
- *Ysgol Calon Cymru, the new Welsh-medium all-age school and Builth CP School would operate as single language schools and therefore there would be no need to duplicate provision in two languages, which would also ensure effective use of resources in the long term.*

This impact assessment suggests that the impact of Phase 2 of the proposal is generally positive:

- *Providing capital investment to improve the facilities at both current Ysgol Calon Cymru sites would address many issues related to the poor condition of the buildings.*
- *Co-locating all the English-medium pupils and Welsh-medium pupils on different sites would enable the school to provide a greater level of educational opportunities for all pupils.*

The proposal addresses the challenges experienced by Ysgol Calon Cymru of operating as a dual-sited secondary school, and would enable the school to focus on improving standards of education in a single-stream, single-sited school in improved accommodation.

- 9.3 Should Cabinet approve the commencement of the statutory process in respect of the recommendation, the impact assessment would be updated throughout the process, to take account of feedback received.

10. Recommendation

- 10.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approves commencing the statutory process on the following proposals:

Phase 1 (September 2027):

- To establish a new Welsh-medium all-age school (4-18) on the current Builth campus of Ysgol Calon Cymru.
 - o Initially the school would share the Builth campus with Ysgol Calon Cymru, using part of its building and sharing some facilities.
 - o This would be a temporary arrangement until there has been capital investment on the Llandrindod site under Phase 2.
- To change the language category of Builth Wells C.P. School to English-medium.
 - o Pupils in the Welsh-medium stream at Builth Wells C.P. School would move to the new Welsh-medium all-age school.
- To change the language category of Ysgol Calon Cymru from dual stream to English-medium.
 - o Pupils in years 7, 8 and 9 in the Welsh-medium stream of Ysgol Calon Cymru in September 2027 would transfer to the new Welsh-medium all-age school. The Welsh-medium stream of Ysgol Calon Cymru would be phased out by September 2029.

Phase 2 (September 2029 at the earliest):

- Following capital investment on the Llandrindod Wells campus to accommodate all Ysgol Calon Cymru pupils and improve existing facilities, Ysgol Calon Cymru would close its Builth Wells campus and operate solely from the Llandrindod campus.
 - o Pupils from Ysgol Calon Cymru's Builth Wells campus would move to the Llandrindod Wells site.

- The Welsh-medium all-age school would take over the whole of the Builth Wells site.

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