

**Appendix A – Consultation Document**



**POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

**Proposal to close the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell  
Community Primary School from the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016**

**Consultation Period: 6<sup>th</sup> October – 17<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

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As Crickhowell Community Primary School is an English medium school and all neighbouring schools are also English medium schools, the consultation documentation is only available in English.

If a Welsh language copy is required, please contact the School Modernisation Team on 01597 826265, or e-mail [school.modernisation@powys.gov.uk](mailto:school.modernisation@powys.gov.uk).

## 1. THE PROPOSAL

**The authority is proposing to close the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell Community Primary School with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.**

Should the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell CP School close, alternative provision for pupils that would have accessed this centre will be provided in the following ways:

- Enhanced provision within mainstream provision
- Access to alternative Specialist Centres located in Brecon for pupils that need this type of provision

In terms of the enhanced provision that would be provided within mainstream provision, this would be based on the identified needs of the learner and would be based on inclusive principles, i.e. the learner will be supported in a mainstream class through individual differentiation, small group work and the support of a teaching assistant using programmes designed, assessed and monitored by the SENCo. Further support would be available from support services, such as the Educational Psychology Service and the Learning, Inclusion Support Team. Specifically resourced outreach services are also available from the area Special School, as well as from the Specialist Centres in Brecon. Schools can apply for exceptional funding according to the published criteria. This approach is successful in delivering good outcomes in areas where there are no Specialist Centres.

### 1.1 Background to the Proposal

Powys County Council provides education for pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) through a combination of support in mainstream classes, specialist provision located within mainstream schools and Special Schools.

In the primary sector, the authority provides Specialist Centres in a number of mainstream Primary Schools, to enable pupils with moderate to severe learning needs to access specialist provision locally. The intention is that pupils who access these classes are placed at School Action Plus, or have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Some of the Centres provide for pupils with a general learning delay, and some provide for those with Autistic Spectrum Conditions.

The authority's priorities for improvement up until 2017 are set out in the One Powys Plan for 2014-17. 'Transforming Learning and Skills' is one of the priorities within this plan, and within this priority, the Plan states that

*'There is a need to review the provision of Additional Learning Needs and Behaviour services'*

and that the authority will

*‘Work with our partners to review and re-configure services for children and young people with additional learning needs to...provide improved support for children and young people and all schools.’*

In order to work towards this, the authority commenced a review of ALN provision across the authority in February 2014. This review focussed in particular on the provision for supporting pupils with special educational needs in the early years and primary phase of education, and in particular, focussed on the specialist provision located in Primary Schools across the authority. The outcome of the review was to recommend closure or reconfiguration of the Specialist Centres, depending on the needs being addressed. Consultation took place on this proposal, and a report was considered by Cabinet in July 2014. The Cabinet’s decision was as follows:

*‘Not to proceed with the closure of the Pre-School Assessment Centres nor Specialist Units and in the short term to focus on the actions identified in the proposal section of the report.’*

Following the review, the authority has carried out further work looking at individual centres and their particular purpose and delivery. This work has highlighted the individual characteristics of each Specialist Centre, and has identified that there is significant variability in their viability.

As a result of this work, the Authority’s view is that there may be some circumstances where individual centres need to be reviewed where evidence suggests that over a number of years demand is below optimum and continuing to reduce to the point of having no children present.

There has been a significant reduction in the number of pupils accessing the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell Community Primary (CP) School, which provides for pupils with general learning delay. This means that the Centre is no longer providing value for money to the Council. At the current time, there are no pupils accessing the Centre. In September 2015, Cabinet approved the commencement of consultation on a proposal to close the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell CP School from the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

## **1.2 Reasons for the Proposal**

The reasons why the authority is proposing to discontinue the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell CP School can be summarised as follows:

- The number of pupils attending the Specialist Centre has decreased in recent years. There are currently no pupils attending the Centre.

- The Specialist Centre has the capacity to provide for a maximum of 12 pupils, therefore there are 12 surplus places, which is 100% of the Centre's capacity.
- Alternative provision is available either through enhanced support in mainstream provision at Crickhowell CP School or neighbouring schools, or specialist provision in neighbouring catchments.
- Due to the small number of pupils that have been attending the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell CP School, the Centre no longer provides value for money to the Council.

### 1.3 Options considered

#### i) Status Quo

The authority has considered the Status Quo - to continue to provide a Specialist Centre at Crickhowell CP School. The strengths and weaknesses of this option are listed below:

Strengths	Weaknesses
Retention of Specialist provision in the Crickhowell catchment	Inefficient use of resources
	Inefficient use of space within the school
	Restricted social and learning opportunities for pupils accessing the Specialist Provision on a full time basis
	High level of surplus places within the Specialist Centre

#### ii) Closure of the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell CP School

The second option available to the authority is to close the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell CP School. The strengths and weaknesses of this option are listed in the following table:

Strengths	Weaknesses
More efficient use of resources	Loss of specialist provision in the Crickhowell catchment
Greater opportunities for mainstream inclusion in local community schools for pupils with complex learning difficulties	Loss of outreach opportunities from the expertise of the specialist teacher
Reduction in surplus places in specialist provisions	Possible additional travel for some pupils from the Crickhowell catchment in the future
Greater opportunities for being	Possible risk to the education of

within a mixed peer group with social as well as learning opportunities	the individual in the mainstream setting and greater demands on the teachers in terms of differentiation
Freeing up of the room within the school for other uses	

Having considered both of these options, and the strengths and weaknesses associated with each, the Authority considers that closure of the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell CP School is the most appropriate solution.

#### 1.4 Risks associated with the Proposal

The following risks are associated with the proposal to close the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell CP School:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Probability</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Response Strategy</b>
Neighbouring specialist provisions do not have capacity to provide for any additional demand from the Crickhowell catchment	Low	High	Support within mainstream provision with outreach from specialist centres or the special school
Learners are unable to manage the length of journey to the alternative provision	Low	High	Support within mainstream provision with outreach from specialist centres or the special school
Poor progress for the individual learners who would have attended the specialist centre if they are working within the mainstream setting	Low	High	Outreach from specialist centres and special schools as well as the authority's advisory teaching team

## 2. DETAILS OF AFFECTED SCHOOLS

### 2.1 General School Information

Crickhowell CP School is located in the Usk Valley between the towns of Brecon and Abergavenny. It is an English medium school and serves the town of Crickhowell. In addition, a large number of pupils from outside the traditional catchment area attend the school.

The majority of pupils at the school are taught in mainstream classes, however the school also hosts an area Specialist Centre which provides for pupils with moderate and specific learning difficulties.

The following table provides general information about Crickhowell CP School:

School Type	Language Category	Admission Number	Capacity	Pupil numbers PLASC Jan 2015 (R – Yr 6)	Age Range
Community Primary	EM	36	237 + 30 nursery places	215	4-11

### 2.2 Pupil numbers

#### 2.2.1 Current and Historical Pupil Numbers

The following table shows the number of Reception to Year 6 pupils that have been attending Crickhowell CP School since January 2011, based on PLASC information.

	January 2015	January 2014	January 2013	January 2012	January 2011
Crickhowell CP School	215	219	210	204	203

PLASC also provides information about the number of pupils that are accessing the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell CP School. This information is summarised in the following table:

	January 2015	January 2014	January 2013	January 2012	January 2011
<b>Registered in Class SC<sup>1</sup></b>	1	1	2	0	0
<b>Pupils in Special Classes<sup>2</sup></b>	3	12	10	8	9

At the current time, no pupils are attending the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell CP School.

### 2.2.2 Projected Pupil Numbers

The following table shows the pupil projections for Reception to Year 6 pupils at Crickhowell CP School for the next 4 years.

January 2016	January 2017	January 2018	January 2019	January 2020
227	211	207	209	209

No new pupils are expected to be admitted to the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell CP School.

### 2.3 School Building Condition

The Welsh Government's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Survey identified that the quality of accommodation at Crickhowell CP School is as follows<sup>3</sup>:

Condition	Suitability	Sustainability
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<sup>1</sup> This figure is the total number of pupils registered in the Specialist Centre and accessing the Centre full time

<sup>2</sup> This figure indicates the total number of pupils accessing the Specialist Centre. However, the majority of these pupils are registered in mainstream classes.

<sup>3</sup> The categories used in the Welsh Government's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Survey are defined as follows:

Category A	Good
Category B	Satisfactory
Category C	Poor
Category D	Bad



B	B/C	C
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## 2.4 Quality of education

### 2.4.1 Estyn

Crickhowell CP School was last inspected by Estyn in May 2014. The grades awarded are included in the following table:

	Grade
The School's Current Performance	Good
The School's Prospects for Improvement	Good

At the time of the inspection, there were 5 pupils in the Specialist Centre. The inspection report makes the following specific references to the Specialist Centre and the school's provision for additional learning needs in mainstream classes:

*'In the specialist centre, all pupils communicate effectively with adults and each other through a variety of language strategies. The pupils in the specialist centre make significant progress from starting points that are normally well below average.'*

*'The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is a strong feature of the school. It is well planned and co-ordinated efficiently in both the specialist centre and mainstream classes. The school has developed an effective system to identify pupils' learning needs and produces child-friendly individual education plans. It provides a well-structured programme of support for pupils' needs. The pupils in the specialist centre integrate successfully into the day-to-day life of the school. All pupils mix well in both formal and informal activities. The quality of provision in the specialist centre is effective.'*

### 2.4.2 National School Categorisation System

The Welsh Government, Local Authorities and Regional Consortia evaluate and assess schools and place them in a support category using the following:

- A range of performance measures
- A self-evaluation by the school on its capacity to improve in relation to leadership and teaching and learning
- An assessment of the school's self-evaluation by challenge advisers in the regional consortia, agreed with the local authority.

Schools are categorised as either green, yellow, amber or red depending on the level of support they require, with schools in the green category needing the least support and those in the red category needing the most intensive support.

In the 2014/15 academic year, Crickhowell CP School was categorised as a school in the 'yellow' category.

### **2.4.3 Impact of the Proposals**

#### **i) Impact on the provision at Crickhowell CP School**

As the proposal is not proposing any changes in respect of mainstream education provision at Crickhowell CP School, there will be no impact on the school's ability to deliver the full curriculum at the foundation phase and in each key stage of education nor on outcomes, provision or leadership and management at the school.

Special Educational Needs provision at Crickhowell CP School is provided by the school using its delegated budget. This would be unaffected by the closure of the specialist centre. Crickhowell CP School is justly proud of its inclusive policy, and meets a range of needs from mild to complex. As with all schools, the SENCo provides specialist knowledge and co-ordinates support for children that have a range of Special Educational Needs. Closure of the Specialist Centre would not have any discernible impact on provision to learners with Special Educational Needs in the school.

#### **ii) Contribution to the quality of SEN provision in South Powys**

Schools across Powys are supported by the authority's educational psychology and sensory support teams to meet the needs of pupils in mainstream schools. The authority's new learning support advisory team provides additional support to schools, and helps schools identify and respond to pupils' needs. By supporting schools to enable children to remain at their local schools rather than having to travel to a Specialist Centre, the authority's inclusion agenda is moved forward.

The decrease in the number of children being referred to the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell CP School is evidence that mainstream services are responding to need, and south Powys is in a good position to demonstrate that with support, schools can demonstrate their knowledge and expertise as well as their commitment to children with a range of special educational needs.

## **3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

### **3.1 Financial Implications**

The budget for all Specialist Centres are held centrally by the authority. For the 2015/16 academic year, the total budget allocated to the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell CP School is £75,350. This is based on providing a teacher and an LSA for the Centre, as well as an allowance for training.

If the Specialist Centre were to close, it is estimated that the savings to the authority for the period from January until the end of the financial year would be approximately £24,000. The annual saving to the authority following closure of the Centre is estimated to be approximately £67,000. This is based on the total cost of the Centre as stated above, minus the cost of providing additional support to pupils within mainstream provision at the school, which is estimated to be approximately £8,500.

This calculation does not include any possible redundancy costs.

### **3.2 Land, buildings and resources**

The Specialist Centre is currently located in a classroom at Crickhowell CP School. No capital funding would be required in order to achieve the proposal.

If the Specialist Centre were to close, the classroom would be returned to the school to use as appropriate. The authority, in conversation with the school, is currently investigating the possibility that the classroom currently occupied by the specialist centre could be utilised by the authority for 2 afternoons a week, to run an area resource library that could be accessed by teachers from across the south Powys area. The library would be staffed by an LSA funded by the authority.

### **3.3 Staffing**

Currently there is 1 Learning Support Assistant employed by the Local Authority who worked in the centre and is now supporting learners in the school. This member of staff is currently employed on a permanent full time contract. Therefore, approval of the proposal would lead to potential redundancy for 1 member of staff.

If a decision is made to proceed with the closure of the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell CP School, formal redundancy procedures would be followed in respect of this member of staff. The council will make every effort to redeploy employees who are formally at risk of redundancy and are registered on the Council's redeployment register.

In this particular case, there may be opportunities for alternative employment within the school following any establishment of an area resource library at Crickhowell CP School, as described in 3.2.

### **3.4 Transport and Travel**

In the event of closure of the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell CP School, transport would be provided to pupils in accordance with the authority's transport policy.

For pupils accessing mainstream provision, transport would be provided to Crickhowell CP School if this was the closest school to the pupil's home address, and if they live two miles or more from the provision. For pupils living closer to a school other than Crickhowell CP School, transport would be provided to the closest school to the pupil's home address, if they live two miles or more from the provision.

For pupil's requiring access to specialist provision, transport would be provided in accordance with the authority's transport policy if the pupil lives two miles or more away from the provision.

### **3.5 Admissions**

Local management admissions panels are in place for each specialist centre hosted by the authority. Should the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell CP School close, any requests for admission by pupils living in the Crickhowell catchment area to alternative Specialist Centres would be considered by that Specialist Centre, or by the local authority where a Statement applies.

### **3.6 Equality and Community Impact Assessments**

In accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2013), the Authority is required to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment and a Community Impact Assessment in respect of any proposal to change school provision. Information about these assessments is provided below.

#### **3.6.1 Equality Impact Assessment**

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out in respect of the proposal to close the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell CP School. This assessment can be viewed on the Council's website:

<http://www.powys.gov.uk/en/schools-students/plans-for-powys-schools/>

This Assessment has found that the proposal could have an impact on pupils with additional learning needs. However, the Authority is

confident that pupils currently accessing the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell CP School, and any pupils who might require this type of provision in the future can have their needs met, either by accessing alternative specialist provision or through enhanced provision within mainstream provision.

### **3.6.2 Community Impact Assessment**

#### **i) Current links with the community**

Crickhowell CP School has extensive links with the community. The school building is used extensively by the local community, and is used for a range of community activities, including Zumba, judo, football and by a local church group. In addition, an after school club is provided at the school.

Other links with the community are achieved through school governors, partnerships with the local Rotary club, working with the town council and regular visits to the school by the local church group. The school also has strong links with the local high school and with local sporting organisations. All pupils at the school benefit from these community links, including pupils with special educational needs.

There are no specific links between the Specialist Centre and the community.

#### **ii) Impact of the proposal on the community**

As no change is proposed to the mainstream provision at Crickhowell CP School, it is not anticipated that closure of the Specialist Centre will have any impact on the school's links with the community and the community's ability to use school facilities for the range of activities that currently take place in the school.

As no pupils from the Crickhowell catchment are currently accessing the Specialist Centre, it is not anticipated that the loss of this facility from Crickhowell would have a negative impact on the community of Crickhowell.

## **4. CONSULTATION DETAILS**

### **4.1 Who will we Consult with?**

The Council will consult with the pupils, parents, governors and staff of Crickhowell CP School. A copy of the consultation document will also be provided to all those required in accordance with the School Organisation Code 2013, which includes the following:

- The Governing Body of Crickhowell CP School
- Parents, carers, guardians and staff of Crickhowell CP School
- Pupils of Crickhowell CP School
- The governing bodies of neighbouring primary schools
- The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authorities
- The Welsh Minister for Education & Skills
- Neighbouring Local Authorities
- Local Powys County Councillors
- Town and Community Councils in the Crickhowell area
- The AM for Brecknock & Radnor and regional AMs for the area
- The MP for Brecknock & Radnor
- Estyn
- Teaching and staff trade unions
- ERW
- The Regional Transport Consortium
- The Police & Crime Commissioner for the area
- The Early Years and Childcare Partnership

### **4.2 The Consultation Period**

The consultation period for the current proposal to discontinue the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell CP School from the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 will commence on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2015 and will end on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

### **4.3 The Statutory Process**

Consultation on this proposal will follow the guidelines set out by the Welsh Government in the School Organisation Code (2013). The process is summarised below:

#### **4.3.1 Consultation**

Consultation will start on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2015 and will end at 5pm on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2015. Feedback from the consultation will be collated and summarised, and a report will be presented to the Council's Cabinet either towards the end of the autumn term 2015 or at the beginning of the spring term 2016. The Council's Cabinet will consider the report and the feedback received during the consultation period, and will decide whether to proceed with the proposal, to make changes to the proposal or to not proceed with the proposal. If the Cabinet decides not to proceed, that will be the end of this proposal for the foreseeable future.

### **4.3.2 Statutory Notices**

If the Cabinet decides to proceed, a Statutory Notice will be published, which will give a period of 28 days for people to submit written objections.

If there are objections, the Council will publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and the Authority's response to them within 28 days of the end of the objection period. Only written objections submitted during the statutory notice period will be considered in this report. Comments submitted as part of the consultation period will need to be re-submitted in writing during the statutory notice period if they are to be considered as objections.

A further report will be presented to the Council's Cabinet, which they will consider alongside the objection report, in order to decide whether or not to approve the proposal.

### **4.3.3 Implementation**

If the Cabinet approves the proposal, it will be implemented in accordance with the date given in the Statutory Notice or any subsequently modified date.

## **4.4 How to respond to the Consultation**

A consultation questionnaire is attached to this document, and is also available on the Council's internet site at <http://www.powys.gov.uk/en/schools-students/plans-for-powys-schools/>. Alternatively, you can respond in writing.

Completed questionnaires and other written responses should be sent to the following address:

*School Modernisation Team, Powys County Council, County Hall, Llandrindod Wells, LD1 5LG*

*E-mail: [school.modernisation@powys.gov.uk](mailto:school.modernisation@powys.gov.uk)*

If you have any further questions about this proposal, you can contact the School Modernisation Team using the above contact details, or on (01597) 826265.

**5. RESPONSE FORM – SPECIALIST CENTRE, CRICKHOWELL CP SCHOOL**

Please provide your comments in the space provided. You can use additional sheets if necessary.

1. Please let us know your views on the proposal to close the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell CP School, including any alternatives to the proposal you think we should consider:

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2. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent, member of staff, governor)

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3. Name (optional)

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- 4(a). Would you like to be informed of the publication of the consultation report?

Yes  No

- 4(b). If you answered 'Yes', please provide an e-mail address or postal address:

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Completed questionnaires should be sent to the following address, to arrive **no later than 5pm on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2015**:

*School Modernisation Team, Powys County Council, County Hall, Llandrindod Wells, LD1 5LG*

*E-mail: school.modernisation@powys.gov.uk*