

# Public Document Pack

Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee – 29-06-2022

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LEARNING AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT BY ZOOM ON WEDNESDAY, 29 JUNE 2022

PRESENT: County Councillor R G Thomas (Chair)  
County Councillors M Beecham, A W Davies, B Davies, G D Jones, A Kennerley, C Kenyon-Wade, I McIntosh, L Roberts, L Rijnenberg, J Thorp, G Morgan.  
Co-Opted Members: K. Chedgzoy, S. Davies and M Evitts

Cabinet Portfolio Holders In Attendance: D A Thomas (Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation) and P Roberts (Cabinet member for a Learning Powys)

Officers: Marianne Evans (Senior Manager - Education Services), S Llewellyn (Service Manager for Curriculum for Wales and Professional Learning), Emma Palmer (Director of Corporate Services), Mari Thomas (Finance Manager), Georgie Bevan (Head of Education), Caroline Turner (Chief Executive), Lynette Lovell (Director of Education and Children), Eurig Towns (Senior Challenge Advisor) and Wyn Richards (Scrutiny Manager and Head of Democratic Services)

### 1. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

As there were no nominations received for Vice-Chair it was:

**RESOLVED that the appointment of a Vice-Chair be deferred until the Autumn 2022.**

### 2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors D Meredith and S J Beecham.

### 3. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

The Committee received the following declarations of interest from Members:

Item 8 – Llanbedr Church In Wales School:  
County Councillor M Beecham, declared a personal and prejudicial interest as a parent of a child attending Llanbedr School.

### 4. DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

The Committee did not receive any disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

### 5. CURRICULUM FOR WALES AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

#### Documents Considered:

- Report of the Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys – Curriculum for Wales and Professional Learning (including Thematic review on curriculum)

**Issues Discussed:**

- The report sets out the introduction of the new curriculum for Wales from September 2022. For primary schools roll out is mandatory from September 2022. Secondary schools who wish to roll out the curriculum to Year 7 are encouraged to do so but this is not mandatory until 2023 when roll out to Years 7 and 8 will happen at the same time.
- The new curriculum is about the four purposes. There are 27 mandatory statements of what matters across 6 areas of learning and experience.
- The curriculum framework requires each school to design its own curriculum and assessment requirements. It is acknowledged this is a significant challenge for schools.
- An added element for small schools is their capacity to manage the considerable workload of engaging with the wide range of professional learning required by the new curriculum in addition to the wider transformation agenda.
- Most of the schools are engaging positively with the curriculum for Wales. Allocating time for school staff to engage in additional time for professional learning has been challenging.
- The roll out is supported by 19 pedagogy leads, 3 for each of the 6 areas of learning and experience, except science which has an additional pedagogy lead.
- Powys has invested in professional learning and providing practitioners with a high quality entitlement which is easily accessible. The Powys Professional Learning Offer for 2022-2023 has already been published for schools in advance of September to incorporate this with the school's own professional learning needs.
  
- Questions:

Question	Response
An area of concern is that pre-school in approved settings whilst not compulsory is the earliest education provision for children and they are introducing the new curriculum from September. There is no information about pre-school education which should be included in the report. There is also no information about the next steps in relation to pre-school provision.	There is additional guidance for pre-schools and this could be included in the report, and the report does not link with the Early Years phase team.  The foundation phase team supports pre-school settings. Powys was one of two authorities who piloted the early years curriculum developments, so Powys has been trialling some of this in our settings.
Is the structure different for settings.	The support for settings is coming from the early years advisory teachers.
It was stated that most schools are engaging positively with the curriculum for Wales, which suggests that not all are engaging positively. A great deal of training is being provided but time for accessing this training could be a problem particularly for small schools. Is this	All schools are engaging. What the report was trying to reflect was the continuum and the capacity to engage with all aspects of the curriculum for Wales guidance. All schools have prepared a vision and engaged with the 4 purposes. Reports are being prepared for the

<p>the major issue or are some schools not in the right headspace to engage with the new curriculum.</p>	<p>Minister as to preparedness of schools. There has been a high level of preparation but there is no expectation that everything will be in place by September.</p> <p>The pandemic has affected the practitioner design of the curriculum. Schools are starting to think about the continuum of learning up to 16 which includes cross school phase conversations. This is a journey and we are all at different places on the continuum.</p>
<p>Are there opportunities for small schools to work together to design elements of the curriculum and spread the burden.</p>	<p>Yes this is why cluster working is so important as there are leads within the cluster. Working together has been emphasised with everyone supporting each other.</p>
<p>The curriculum is an inspiring way forward and beneficial for learners. In relation to the 6 areas for learning and experience, the vast number of schools are defined as small schools. In the vast majority of schools teachers will have to take on at least 2 areas of responsibility which puts a lot of work on teachers. Would we use the experience of teaching assistants in settings as well. Are Powys using the whole teaching and support team.</p>	<p>Teaching Assistants are important to supporting the teaching and learning that is going on in relation to the new curriculum, which is why they joined the cluster Inset day on Monday. This is also a priority for the Minister in terms of the professional learning entitlement for Wales and professional learning for Teaching Assistants is an important part of the agenda moving forward. However there are different responsibilities for teachers and Teaching Assistants and whilst Teaching Assistants might not lead on an area of learning and experience they can support and add capacity.</p>

**Outcomes:**

- **Noted.**

<b>6.</b>	<b>LLANFIHANGEL RHYDITHON SCHOOL</b>
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**Documents Considered:**

- Report of the Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys – Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

**Issues Discussed:**

- The Cabinet Member advised the Committee that the report is not a proposal to revisit the original Cabinet decision but merely to delay the implementation of the original decision for one academic year to enable

- some additional investigative work to be undertaken into Welsh Language provision in the East Radnorshire catchment area.
- This also provides an opportunity to look at the community impact of the schools closure.
- Questions:

Question	Response
<p>How much is this going to cost Powys. As we are so far ahead with the process how many current pupils have applied to go to other schools and how will this impact on work that has already been done.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Response: There have been no applications to date to move pupils to another school.</p> <p>Parents and governors have made no commitments to move pupils so there is no impact on the planned budgets of other schools. There will be an impact on the budget process in the next financial year because there will be an element covering the summer term within the allocation of funding which would have otherwise been available to schools. This year's costs have been covered by contingency budgets.</p>
<p>How many pupils are in the school at present. Whilst welcoming the intention to make Welsh Medium provision available in East Radnorshire, what number of pupils would you be willing to start with for an initial Welsh medium school.</p>	<p>Officer Response: There are 36 pupils on roll currently and there will be 34 pupils in September.</p> <p>In relation to Welsh Medium the point of delaying the implementation is to gain an assessment of the potential numbers of Welsh language pupils in the catchment to assess whether there is viability and how to manage a progression from where the current school is now to a fully Welsh Medium school.</p>
<p>Of the 34 pupils how many are from within the catchment area</p>	<p>Officer Response: From the pupil numbers at consultation more than half the pupils at the school lived closer to other schools.</p>
<p>Concerned about the cost implications for other learners in Powys.</p> <p>Why could the transfer of the building to the community not be considered outside the school closure programme.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Response: The reason for including the transfer of the building to the community was to commit the Council to doing the work.</p> <p>In relation to Transition, the Cabinet member advised that with the timings</p>

<p>In relation to the changes in transition arrangements, what might be the difference in transition arrangements be in a year's time to now.</p> <p>If one of the reasons for closure was the condition of the building would this not still be an issue if it was a Welsh Medium school. There is an issue of maintenance during the next year whilst its open and the further work if it becomes a Welsh Medium school.</p>	<p>on the current proposals, the notice would have meant keeping staff on to the end of the Christmas term. The new arrangements will mean that transition can happen at the end of a school year giving staff the opportunity to move to another post and allowing pupils to transition at the end rather than the middle of a year which is less disruptive.</p> <p>Officer Response: The school building condition was not one of the key reasons cited for closure as it is a category B school so not in a poor condition. If there is a longer time life for the school there will be ongoing maintenance costs, which would be £6k for the boiler and £40k for closing off the school ground.</p>
<p>If the school is only remaining open to eventually become a Welsh Medium school it could lead to a decline in pupil numbers. What would be an acceptable figure for the number of pupils in twelve months time being taught through the Medium of Welsh to justify keeping the school open.</p> <p>Why has the change in decision been made by the new Administration.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Response: If this becomes a Welsh Medium school this would be a transition.</p> <p>The previous scrutiny view was there were other considerations that needed to be considered in terms of the wider transformation agenda. The decision was therefore taken to bring those proposals forward and examine them and then take a decision and not give pupils and parents false hope.</p> <p>Officer Response: How this transition would come about would be the subject of another proposal. As examples the Bro Hyddgen and Dyffryn Trannon proposals were for a staggered approach, starting at the foundation phase.</p> <p>This paper does not revisit the proposal. The School Organisation Code gives an opportunity to delay the implementation of a proposal. If it was a new proposal there would be need for a new process. Irrespective of the current review, the school would need to close in August 2023.</p>

	<p>In respect of the process, a request for a judicial review was made and declined, then there was an oral hearing as part of an appeal and the appeal was not allowed as the court deemed the Council's process to be correct.</p>
<p>Would any due process start at the end of the twelve month delay. Ysgol Tregynon and Bro Hyddgen are larger schools with a higher percentage of pupils who are Welsh speaking. Llanfihangel Rhydithon probably has an average of six pupils per year and it is uncertain how many of those are Welsh speaking. Therefore, the numbers would be small for a transition.</p> <p>The main issue is the use of the educational budget and the report does not contain information about the anticipated educational outcomes for the pupils following this process, with around £150k top sliced off the education budgets.</p> <p>In respect of the current school, we would expect to see significant educational outcomes or improvements for the £150k being spent and there is no evidence to support this. It would seem that the outcome on this school and others in the county will be negative with less funding available to schools.</p> <p>What would you understand to be the minimum size for a viable Welsh Medium School.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Response: The intention is to look at the Welsh Medium potential in the East Radnorshire area. Within the WESP there is a desire to have Welsh Medium education at the primary level in the East Radnorshire area, but there is no idea of the level of demand or the best location for this as yet.</p> <p>The viability of a Welsh Language offering would be in the next paper following this review, but the current focus is on the potential provision.</p> <p>The outcome will be that children will be able to be educated through the medium of Welsh in the catchment.</p> <p>With regard to numbers, we cannot pre-judge any investigation as the review will look at the potential for Welsh Medium education in the catchment.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Finance questioned the £150k impact during the review period because £76.8k will come from delegated schools contingency budget to keep the school open until the end of March 2023 which will not impact on any other education setting. For the period 2023-24 the impact will be £32.3k which will have an impact on the overall delegated schools budget but not have an impact on individual school budgets. In relation to the maintenance costs there could be an additional cost if there is a need to move boiler which will come from the capital budget.</p>
<p>How much is in the contingency budget, is it limited and if it is all used</p>	<p>Officer Response: The boiler costs might not necessarily</p>

<p>where will the funding come from.</p>	<p>come out of the schools contingency budget, but out of the come out of the major improvements programme. Some of the contingency budget has been committed but there is sufficient in this budget to cover these proposed costs.</p> <p>With the school major improvements budget which is a capital budget of £4.5m in the current year. The contingency fund is set at the beginning of the year and is currently £555k and has about £288k committed so far. The contingency budget is top sliced from the schools delegated budget. What is left at the end of the year is distributed across the schools.</p>
<p>The Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys is thanked for recognising the need for Welsh Language provision throughout Powys. It has been questioned if this is the right site. If the school was closed now and this is not the right site, is there an advantage of keeping this open for twelve months and opening it as a Welsh Medium school later, and incurring additional cost.</p> <p>How many pupils are currently fluent in Welsh in this school as in Caereinion the numbers speaking Welsh is 64%.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Response: The core element of retaining the school open is it allows a migration through a continuum as with the current number it makes the move to Welsh Medium sustainable. It is essentially the same as Caereinion is going through, as pupils move through the age groups Welsh speakers come in you migrate to a fully Welsh medium school, rather than opening a school with one class with one year cohort in it.</p> <p>If we are going to grow the Welsh Language we are going to start working in areas where we will have small numbers, but with a commitment from the community to go down that route. If we do not have that commitment, we could only have Welsh Medium education in areas where there are many Welsh speakers so we will not achieve our target. There is a commitment in this community by establishing a Cylch and Ti a Fi Group.</p>
<p>Are there any conditions in the WESP about what is required before opening a new Welsh School such as population in the area.</p>	<p>Officer Response: Ideally we would develop Welsh Medium provision where we could guarantee growth. Generally they are developed in towns so this is something which needs to be</p>

	<p>considered when the review is undertaken.</p>
<p>As a parent most people would welcome a stay of execution on a school closure but the concern is for the health and mental well-being of the children and the teachers and parents. The delay will still cause a strain on children, teachers and parents and there needs to be a clear set of deadlines communicated to the school. \children almost need a fresh start rather than a twelve months delay.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Response:                  Would agree with the point. Because of the tight timetable to the end of term that is why the report has been brought forward. Appropriate timeframes have been discussed with officers. The key dates outside the council's control is the publication of the census data on the Welsh language which is expected towards the end of 2022. It is hoped to take a paper and decision to Cabinet early in 2023.</p> <p>Officer Response:                  The decision to close the school has been made. This report is about delaying the implementation rather than changing the decision about closure. Any proposals about Welsh Medium provision would be new and separate and would need to go through the provisions of the School Organisation Code.</p>
<p>From the perspective of parents, pupils and staff this delay will cause uncertainty. What support will be put in place by the Council to keep stakeholders informed about developments.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Response:                  No work has been undertaken on a communications and engagement plan as yet until the decision is taken by the Cabinet. The expectation is there will be proactive engagement with the governing body, parents, pupils and the community. There will be regular engagement but the process has not been decided as yet. This information will be shared with the public as well.</p> <p>Officer Response:                  We were looking at putting effective transition arrangements in place for pupils and learners. Due to the delay and as parents have not gone through the admissions process t has been difficult to start the transition process. We will need to work with the schools particularly around pupils' well-being and to ensure that pupils have visits to schools and pastoral support for pupils and staff.</p>
<p>Has any redundancy process been</p>	<p>Officer Response:</p>



started with any of the staff at the school.	No
<p>It appears that there are only two options available at the end of the review, either closure or the school becoming Welsh Medium.</p> <p>The concern is what is the percentage certainty of this school becoming a Welsh Medium school.</p>	<p>Officer Response: Even for the school to become a Welsh Medium school it will need to close. There is no option for it to be reopened as an English Medium school.</p>
<p>If a Welsh Medium school were to open on this site it would not open immediately after the closure of the school as an English Medium school.</p> <p>Therefore, the option to keep it open at a cost is not viable as it is not clear that there is much benefit.</p>	<p>Officer Response: That is correct about the opening of a Welsh Medium school.</p>
<p>The report does not include an estimation of costs for transformation. Would be this be an additional cost</p>	<p>Officer Response: There would be some cost but that would be minimal.</p>

### Outcomes:

Scrutiny made the following observations:

<p>1. The Committee received assurances that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to date none of the current pupils had applied to move to other schools</li> <li>• with regard to concerns about the potential budgetary impact on other schools in the County if the proposal were agreed, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation indicated that impact on the budget for 2022-23 would be funded from the delegated school contingency fund (£76.8k) and the impact on school budgets in 2023-24 (£32.3k) would be minimal and for the summer term only.</li> </ul>
<p>2. The Committee received clarification that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the proposal was to allow time to gain an understanding of the potential to establish a Welsh Medium primary provision in the East Radnorshire area which might, or might not, be situated on the Llanfihangel Rhydithon school site, once the present school closed in August 2023.</li> <li>• of the 34 pupils that would be at the school from September, over half of these pupils lived closer to other schools.</li> <li>• the condition of the school (Category B) was not one of the reasons considered for the closure of the school.</li> <li>• the report was not revisiting the original closure proposal. The School Organisation Code allows the Council to delay implementation of the decision to close the school. However, any new proposal coming forward (such as opening a Welsh Medium school) would be subject to the processes set out in the School Organisation Code.</li> <li>• There were ongoing maintenance costs which would need to be funded, but that costs such as a replacement boiler would be funded from the capital budget and that there was sufficient in the capital budget to fund this.</li> </ul>

3. The Committee questioned:

- why matters such as the transfer of the building to the community could not be considered outside the school closure process.
- the Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys's assertion that this site could become a site for a new Welsh Medium primary school. The WESP (Welsh Education Strategic Plan) states that new provision would be considered where the Council could guarantee growth in numbers of pupils. The Committee was of the view that numbers in any new Welsh Medium provision in this area were likely to be initially extremely small, and remain so for a number of years. The Committee asked what the minimum requirement would be for a viable new Welsh Medium school, but the Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys could not provide this information until the review had been completed.
- the advantage of keeping the school open for a further year:
  - as the review of Welsh Language provision could be undertaken independently of the school closing and as the school would have to close in any case prior to any different provision (such as a Welsh Medium provision) being opened on the site so there would be a time delay between the two events.
  - particularly if the location was not deemed suitable following the review to host Welsh Medium provision for the area.

4. The Committee expressed concern:

- regarding the significant cost of delaying the closure with no additional educational outcomes for pupils.
- that use of the delegated school contingency fund is top sliced off all school delegated budgets and therefore unavailable to other schools in the county if spent in full.
- regarding the health and well-being of pupils, staff and parents at the school as the closure of the school was continuing and for any delay there needed to be a very clear communications plan to inform pupils, staff and parents.
- that support was made available for pupils and teachers to ensure an effective transition to new arrangements once the school closed.
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5. The Committee was supportive of the need to establish a Welsh Medium provision in the East Radnorshire area.

**Scrutiny's Recommendation to Cabinet:**

- 1 That the Committee is supportive of the establishment of a Welsh Medium provision in the East Radnorshire area.
- 2 That the Cabinet is asked to consider and respond to the Committee's questions and concerns as set out in Sections 3 and 4 of the observations above.

<b>7.</b>	<b>WORK PROGRAMME</b>
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**Documents Considered:**

- Draft Work Programme

**Issues Discussed:**

- There is a need for a discussion with officers regarding potential items to populate the work programme.

**Outcomes:**

- **Noted.**

<b>8.</b>	<b>LLANBEDR CHURCH IN WALES SCHOOL</b>
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County Councillor M Beecham declared a personal and prejudicial interest and withdrew from the meeting.

<b>9.</b>	<b>REPORT</b>
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**Documents Considered:**

- Report of the Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys – Llanbedr Church in Wales School

**Issues Discussed:**

- The Cabinet Member advised the Committee that:
  - This is similar in nature to the previous report, but different in reasoning.
  - Throughout the process there has been emphasis on the benefits of catchment reviews. Although this came forward as a single proposal, in the past six months there have been a number of changes in the catchment with changes in staffing at schools within the catchment. This has opened up the possibility of a wider transformation within the area.
  - This area will be a priority as other changes need to be put in place, therefore a review of the whole catchment will be undertaken including the Llanbedr site, so that wider options can be considered before Llanbedr formally closes. This will be a priority for the transformation team and is part of the wider commitment to gain a better understanding of provision, needs and the best way to deliver that in a complex catchment in view of its proximity to catchments of schools in other authorities.
- Questions:

Question	Response
<p>This closure was not referred to Welsh Ministers within 28 days which was required if this was to go ahead. Have we missed the boat on this.</p> <p>Perhaps the Council should not have taken the referral into account as we have now lost time. The report should have been clearer about the reason the school had to stay open for longer.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Response: There was an option for the Church in Wales to make an objection to the Minister, but this did not happen as expected. Therefore, processes were not moved forward and the earliest that the school could close in term of staffing would be the end of the Christmas term.</p> <p>Officer Response: This is a Church in Wales voluntary aided school and as such the Governing Body and the Diocese can make a referral to Welsh Government after the final decision by Cabinet. The Diocese did notify the Council that it was going to make a referral but no referral was made and the council advised of this by Welsh Government after the 28 day deadline.</p>
<p>Unclear of the costs of keeping the school open. There is a more significant cost to keeping the school open for twelve months.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Response: In respect of staffing costs, as a result of the delay redundancy notices have not sent out to staff. That delays things by a term so we are already incurring much of the cost savings that were being made.</p> <p>Officer Response: Because of the timing of the decision after school budgets were issued, the whole of the funding for the 2022-23 financial year has been delegated to the schools. Once the decision was made a budget for five months was re-issued which is the £59k set out in paragraph 4.3. The additional revenue cost would be the £39.5k for the rest of the academic year. In terms of major improvements the total cost of £111.8k some of which may not need to be used in one year. It is likely that about £98k will need to be spent in the one year.</p> <p>In terms of staffing, teachers would need to be in post until Christmas due to their terms and conditions by comparison to Teaching Assistants</p>

<p>The costs are higher than for the other school. How much could be saved if this delay was for one term rather than a full year.</p> <p>If this does continue for the twelve months, what are the potential outcomes.</p> <p>With other catchment reviews also being proposed, is there capacity in the transformation team to undertake this catchment review in a short timescale.</p>	<p>Officer Response: In terms of staffing issues the redundancy process has not started. Whilst the process has not started there are opportunities for staff also to be redeployed within the Authority if the decision to close goes ahead. In terms of Estyn we did have in October / November 2021 the endorsement from Estyn that in respect of the recommendations the Council is making strong progress. Estyn still visit the Council on a regular basis and still look at the programme for transformation.</p> <p>Cabinet Member Response: Headship arrangements in other schools in the catchment are fluid currently so this was an area that officers were already looking at, this report just opens up the scope and provides the opportunity to look at other opportunities.</p>
<p>The Council is considering catchment reviews for two of the schools being closed but not the third. Why is the Brecon catchment not being reviewed.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Response: The Committee and Cabinet are only looking at two school proposals, and it would not be appropriate to comment in relation to Cradoc.</p>
<p>Why are you not expanding reviews into all catchment areas.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Response: The vision for education in Powys is to look at single schools on multiple sites and phase one of the Cradoc / Mount Street proposal is consistent with that vision.</p> <p>The Cabinet be seeking to reassure Estyn that these are specific reviews and will not affect the programme overall.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Finance advised that with regard to the delegated budget the impact for the two proposals is £200k. £120k of that is coming from the contingency fund. Schools have already set their budgets so any funding remaining in the contingency fund would be additional funding, so the impact on delegated budgets would only be around £80k.</p>

	<p>Officer Response:                  With regard to maintenance costs taking both proposals into account there is a potential impact of £137.8k. However, £110k may not materialise so potentially the cost is only £27.8k.</p>
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**Outcomes:**

Scrutiny made the following observations:

<p>1. The Committee received clarification that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• senior staffing changes in the area had provided an opportunity for a wider area review to be undertaken and therefore it was appropriate for this review (which would include Llanbedr school) to be undertaken before the decision on the school was implemented. This was already planned in Wave 2 of the transformation programme.</li> <li>• there had been a delay in issuing the closure notice for the school to close on 31st August 2022, as the Council was of the understanding that the Church in Wales Diocese proposed to make an objection to the Minister, which in the event did not happen.</li> <li>• in relation to staffing costs, redundancy notices had not been issued to staff.</li> <li>• in relation to the budget the delay in closure of the school would require reinstating the full year budget of £59k (which can be funded from the delegated schools contingency budget) and a further budget of £39.5k for 2023-24 (to August 2023 which will need to be funded from the overall schools delegated budget).</li> <li>• major improvements at the school had been identified at £111k but only £98k was likely to be required for one year.</li> <li>• in relation to the maintenance costs, this had been estimated at £137k. However, £110k may not be required so the likely cost was £27k.</li> <li>• in response to the Committee’s concerns about possible Estyn comment regarding delays in the transformation programme, the Director of Education indicated that Estyn had endorsed that the Council was making strong progress in implementing changes, and were monitoring progress which included the transformation programme. The Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys advised that he would be reassuring Estyn that the Council was reviewing these two schools only and not delaying the overall transformation programme.</li> <li>• there had been no applications from existing pupils to move schools.</li> <li>• it was projected that pupil numbers in the catchment area as a whole would be reducing which included a potential impact on the High School following the building of a new High School in Abergavenny by Monmouthshire Council.</li> </ul>
<p>2. The Committee expressed concern regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the significant costs of keeping the school open for a year with no additional educational outcomes.</li> <li>• that use of the delegated school contingency fund is top sliced off all school delegated budgets and therefore unavailable to other schools in the county if spent in full.</li> <li>• the capacity of the transformation team to undertake a catchment review</li> </ul>

<p>in such a short timescale.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the impact of the delay on the welfare of pupils, staff and parents by the delay.</li><li>• the need for effective communications of timescales for the review to stakeholders.</li><li>• the potential for further Estyn criticism of the Council for delaying the transformation programme, which had been the case previously which led to a period of Estyn monitoring of the Council's Education Service.</li></ul>
<p>3. The Committee commented that the only apparent advantage to keep the school open would be for the catchment review to be completed which would remove the risk of pupils moving to a school which might subsequently be earmarked for closure.</p>

**Scrutiny's Recommendation to Cabinet:**

**1 That the Cabinet considers the Committee's observations as set out above.**

9.1. Exempt Item

**RESOLVED to exclude the public for the following item of business on the grounds that there would be disclosure to them of exempt information under categories 2 and 3 of The Local Authorities (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007).**

The Monitoring Officer has determined that categories 2 and 3 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules applies to the following item. His view on the public interest test (having taken account of the provisions of Rule 14.8 of the Council's Access to Information Rules) was that to make this information public would disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

These factors in his view outweigh the public interest in disclosing this information. Members are asked to consider these factors when determining the public interest test, which they must decide when considering excluding the public from this part of the meeting.

9.2. Confidential Appendix

**Documents Considered:**

- Confidential Appendix.

**Outcomes:**

- **Noted.**

**County Councillor R G Thomas (Chair)**

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