



Report to consider the viability of establishing Welsh-medium provision in Dolau

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1. Introduction

During 2021-22, the Council carried out the Statutory Process as outlined in the School Organisation Code on a proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, a small English-medium primary school which is located in the village of Dolau in Mid Powys, from the 31st August 2022.

On the 8th February 2022, the Council's Cabinet considered an Objection Report related to this proposal and agreed to proceed with closure of the school.

Subsequently, following the Council elections held in May 2022, the Council's new Cabinet considered a further paper related to Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, and agreed to delay implementation of the proposal by 12 months to the 31st August 2023, and to 'explore the viability of establishing a Welsh-medium primary school at Llanfihangel Rhydithon.'

The purpose of this paper is to explore the viability of introducing Welsh-medium provision in the village of Dolau on the current site of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, as agreed by Cabinet.

2. The Strategic Context

2.1 Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys

The Council's vision for Transforming Education in Powys is set out in its Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys. Originally developed and launched during 2019-20 in response to Estyn's inspection of Powys Education Services, the Strategy was updated and relaunched by the Council's new administration in July 2022. The Strategy is available on the Council's website at

<https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/9344/Transforming-Education-Strategy>.

The Strategy sets out a number of Strategic Aims which will underpin the Council's work to transform the education infrastructure over the coming years. One of these Strategic Aims sets out the Council's commitment to developing Welsh-medium education, as indicated by the Strategic Aim '*to improve access to Welsh-medium provision across all key stages*'.

This is supported by the following Strategic Objectives:

- S.O.3.1 *Move schools along the language continuum*
- S.O.3.2 *Develop new primary and secondary provision*
- S.O.3.3 *Work with Mudiad Meithrin to establish new early years provision*
- S.O.3.4 *Develop immersion opportunities*

2.2 Vision for Developing Fully Bilingual Learners in Powys

In December 2020, the Council's Cabinet approved a Vision for Developing Fully Bilingual Learners in Powys, which recognises the challenges of delivering equitable Welsh-medium provision in the county:

- *Not all parts of Powys have easily accessible primary or secondary education through the medium of Welsh – currently there is no provision in the Presteigne, Crickhowell or Gwernyfed areas.*
- *Many schools that do provide a dual-stream approach do not deliver enough of their curriculum in Welsh to satisfy their learners. Provision is patchy, and unequal in too many of the secondary schools. It is common for under half of the curriculum to be available in their language of choice for learners in the Welsh stream of secondary education from year 7.*
- *The choice of subjects taught through the medium of Welsh becomes smaller as the learner gets older, and at post-14 the provision is very poor or non-existent. This includes deficiencies in the provision by the Further Education provider. In some secondary Welsh streams, fewer than 5 GCSE subjects are delivered through the medium of Welsh, and in one case only one non-language course is taught in Welsh.*

- *There is evidence that some parents in Powys avoid choosing an education through the medium of Welsh because they are concerned that the progression available for their child within the authority will be limited.*
- *At a time when bilingual/Welsh education has grown across Wales and is often a showcase sector for other counties, Powys has been stagnant, and in some key indicators the local authority has been going backwards. This has happened despite commitments made in the Powys Welsh in Education Strategic Plans over recent years.*
- *Powys has a smaller percentage of its children learning through the medium of Welsh than the percentage of Welsh speakers in the wider population. It is believed to be the only authority in Wales where this is the case.*

2.3 Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (2022-32)

The Council has recently developed a new Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for 2022-32, which sets out how it will develop Welsh-medium provision in Powys over the next 10 years, with the aim of meeting the Welsh Government aspiration to increase the number of pupils accessing Welsh-medium education. The WESP was approved by both the current Cabinet and Welsh Government in July 2022.

The WESP sets out an ambitious target to increase the year 1 pupils being taught through the medium of Welsh in Powys by 14 percentage points to 36% by 2032. Based on the total number of Year 1 pupils in Powys in January 2021, this would require an increase of 163 Year 1 pupils being taught through the medium of Welsh.

To achieve this, the WESP includes a commitment to the following:

- *Ensuring that there is access to Welsh-medium early years and primary provision in all 13 localities in Powys by:*
 - *Establishing new Welsh-medium early years provision (Cylchoedd Ti a Fi and Cylchoedd Meithrin)*
 - *Supporting English-medium/bilingual early years providers to move along the language continuum*
 - *Establishing new Welsh-medium primary schools*
 - *Supporting dual-stream/English-medium primary schools to move along the language continuum so that they can provide Welsh-medium immersion education until the age of seven or eleven*

In respect of the Ysgol Calon Cymru / Presteigne catchment areas, the WESP also sets out the following commitments:

- Continue to work with Mudiad Meithrin to establish new Cylch Ti a Fi and/or Cylch Meithrin provision in areas where no Welsh-medium provision currently exists, including the Presteigne area
- Plans for capital investment to support Welsh-medium provision in the Llandrindod Wells / Builth Wells area

- Develop new Welsh-medium primary provision in areas where no provision currently exists, including the Presteigne area
- Develop more Welsh-medium provision in the Llandrindod Wells / Builth Wells catchment area
- Continue with plans to provide access to secondary provision which meets the definition of the Welsh Government's 'Welsh-medium' category in the Ysgol Calon Cymru area.

The WESP also sets out the Council's approach to developing / introducing Welsh-medium provision across the county:

'This will be achieved in a variety of ways, dependent on the particular circumstances within each area, and will be aligned with the Welsh Government's new language categories for schools which have recently been published, as outlined below.

- *The authority will work with schools transferring to the transitional categories to develop a plan to enable these schools to transfer into one of the main categories within a maximum of 10 years.*
- *The authority will develop a programme of moving schools along the language continuum to improve access to Welsh-medium provision. This will include the following:*
- *Identifying English-medium schools to move into the T2 Transitional category to enable them to increase their Welsh-medium provision so that they meet the definition of a Category 2 Dual Language School, a Category 3 Welsh-medium School or a school that is within two categories – Category 1 and Category 3. This could be achieved in a similar way to the pilot started at Ysgol y Cribarth in September 2021, where a new Welsh-medium Reception class was introduced.*
- *Identifying schools which currently offer Welsh-medium and English-medium provision to move into the T3 Transitional category with the aim of becoming Category 2 – Dual Language schools or Category 3 – Welsh-medium schools.*
- *Where required, the authority will establish new designated Welsh-medium primary provision which meets the definition of a 'Category 3 – Welsh-medium' school. To ensure that any new provision is well placed to stimulate demand, it is expected that this type of provision would be located in Powys' main centres of population.'*

3. Existing Arrangements

3.1 Current Welsh-medium provision in the Llandrindod / Rhayader and Presteigne / Knighton areas

i) Early Years Provision

Welsh-medium early years provision is currently available in the Ysgol Calon Cymru catchment area and Presteigne catchment areas in the following locations:

Cylch Ti a Fi¹

Llandrindod / Rhayader area

Dolau Ti a Fi – Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

Ti a Fi provision is situated in Y Caban at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. It costs £1.50 to attend and is open between 12-3:30 on Wednesday afternoons.

Llandrindod Ti a Fi – Ysgol Trefonnen

Ti a Fi provision is situated at Ysgol Trefonnen in Llandrindod Wells. It costs £1.00 to attend and is open between 9:30 – 11am on Friday mornings.

Presteigne / Knighton areas

There is currently no Cylch Ti a Fi provision in the Presteigne catchment.

Cylch Meithrin²

Llandrindod / Rhayader areas

Dolau Cylch – Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

Cylch Meithrin provision is situated in Y Caban at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. It costs £14.00 to attend till lunchtime and £21.00 to attend till 2:30, and is open between 8:30 – 12:30 on Mondays and 8:30 till 2:30 on Tuesday and Thursdays.

It is CIW registered and has 12 maximum places. This provision is not supported or funded by the local authority.

Llandrindod Cylch – Ysgol Trefonnen

¹ Ti a Fi data provided by www.methrin.cymru

² Cylch data provided by www.methrin.cymru

Cylch provision is situated at Ysgol Trefonnen in Llandrindod Wells. It costs £10.00 to attend and is open between 9:00 – 11:30 on Monday to Friday. An afternoon session is open between 12:45 and 3:15pm on Monday to Friday.

It is CIW registered and has 24 maximum places. It was last inspected in 2019. This provision is supported and funded by the local authority.

Rhayader Cylch – Rhayader C. in W. School

Cylch provision is situated at Rhayader C. in W. School in Rhayader. It costs £10.00 a session (8:45 to 11:15 or 11:15 to 3:30), £3.50 for breakfast and £4.50 for 11.15 to 3:30, and is open between 8:00 – 3:30 on Monday to Thursday.

It is CIW registered and has 24 maximum places. This provision is supported and funded by the local authority.

Presteigne / Knighton areas

There is currently no Cylch Meithrin provision in the Presteigne / Knighton areas.

ii) Primary Provision

Llandrindod / Rhayader area

Welsh-medium primary provision is currently delivered in the Llandrindod area at two dual stream primary schools – Ysgol Trefonnen in Llandrindod Wells and Rhayader C. in W. School.

Current Welsh-medium pupil numbers at the two schools are as follows³:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Rhayader C. in W. School	16	7	15	14	7	7	9	75
Ysgol Trefonnen	9	11	12	14	17	9	21	93
Total	25	18	27	28	24	16	30	168

The following table provides information about Welsh-medium pupil numbers (R-Yr6) in the Llandrindod area over the last 4 years:

³ Teacher Centre, 1st July 2022

	PLASC 2019	PLASC 2020	PLASC 2021	July 2022
Rhayader C. in W. School	61	66	65	75
Ysgol Trefonnen	89	86	91	93
Total	150	152	156	168

Whilst pupils in the Llandrindod and Rhayader areas can access Welsh-medium provision at a dual stream primary school, there is currently no opportunity for Welsh-medium pupils to access a designated Welsh-medium primary school.

Presteigne / Knighton area

There is currently no Welsh-medium primary provision in the Presteigne / Knighton area.

iii) Secondary Provision

Secondary Welsh-medium provision in the area is delivered at the Welsh-medium stream of Ysgol Calon Cymru, a dual sited secondary school which provides Welsh-medium and English-medium provision in Builth Wells, and English-medium provision in Llandrindod Wells. This provision is also available to any pupils living in the Presteigne / Knighton areas who access Welsh-medium provision.

In the secondary sector, the number of Welsh-medium pupils attending the Builth Wells Campus of Ysgol Calon Cymru during the 2021-2022 academic year was as follows:

Year	Number of Welsh-medium pupils
7	15
8	13
9	29
10	20
11	21
12	16
13	16
Total	130

The total number of Welsh-medium pupils (years 7-11) over the last 4 years has been as follows:

	PLASC 2019	PLASC 2020	PLASC 2021	July 2022
Builth Wells Campus YCC	101	130	139	130

The Council is currently undertaking a review of Ysgol Calon Cymru's current operating model, and has identified a preferred way forward which could result in changing the model, and potentially establishing a new Welsh-medium all-age school in Builth Wells. Initial engagement on the preferred way forward was carried out during 2021-22, and a report outlining the findings of this exercise has been published. Further work is currently being undertaken to determine how to proceed.

3.2 Current provision at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

The following is a summary of key data relating to Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School:

Pupil Numbers

i) Current pupil numbers⁴

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	2	3	5	10	2	7	5	34

ii) Historical pupil numbers⁵

	Jan. 2016	Jan. 2017	Jan. 2018	Jan. 2019	Jan. 2020	Jan. 2021	Jan. 2022
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	31	35	35	29	33	37	35

iii) Projected pupil numbers (Birth rate)⁶

	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025	Jan. 2026	Jan. 2027
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P.	41	40	36	39	36

⁴ Teacher Centre, 9th November 2022

⁵ PLASC

⁶ Powys Schools Service Projections based on PLASC & Birth Rates

School					
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Building Capacity and Condition

i) Capacity

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

	Current Capacity⁷	Currently Filled	Surplus Capacity
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	36	34 (94.4%)	2 (5.6%)

ii) Building condition⁸

In 2009, Welsh Government carried out condition and suitability assessments of the school.

	Condition	Suitability	Access to hall on site	Estimated Backlog Maintenance⁹
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	B Good	B Good	Yes – community hall	£138,460.76

Quality of Education

i) Estyn

	Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School
Date of Inspection	March 2019
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good

⁷ Welsh Government Planning of School Places Return – October 2022

⁸ Premises Data Return to Welsh Government – 2022

⁹ Backlog maintenance figures uplifted using CPI base rates on year of condition survey or base date of 2016.

Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Follow up activity	School will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations.

Financial information

i) Cost per pupil (Section 52 Budget Statement, 2022/2023)

	Budget share per school	Budget share per pupil	Notional SEN budget	Non ISB funds devolved to the school
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	£95,372.00	£6,539.79	£2,696.00	£1,150.00
Powys average (Primary)	N/A	£4,656.50	N/A	N/A

Welsh language skills of current staff at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

Information about the Welsh language skills of current school staff is provided by the School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC). The latest SWAC information from November 2021 provides the following information about the Welsh language skills of staff at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School:

i) Number of staff by Welsh language ability

	Number of teachers	Total Number of staff (including teachers)
No Welsh language skills	0	1
Entry Level	2	3
Foundation Level	0	2
Intermediate Level	2	2
Advanced Level	2	2
Proficient Level	0	0
Information not yet obtained	0	0
Total	6	10

ii) Number of staff by teaching / working through the medium of Welsh

	Number of teachers	Total Number of staff (including teachers)
Teaching / working through the medium of Welsh in current post	0	0
Able to teach / work through the medium of Welsh but not doing so in current post	1	1
Not able to teach / work through the medium of Welsh	2	6
Teaching Welsh as a subject only (*for teachers teaching up to NC year 6 only)	3	3
Total	6	10

iii) **Number of teaching staff by Welsh Language ability and whether they are currently working through the medium of Welsh**

	Teaching / working through the medium of Welsh in current post	Able to teach / work through the medium of Welsh but not doing so in current post	Not able to teach / work through the medium of Welsh	Teaching Welsh as a subject only (*for teachers teaching up to NC year 6 only)
No Welsh language skills	0	0	0	0
Entry Level	0	0	2	0
Foundation Level	0	0	0	0
Intermediate Level	0	0	0	2
Advanced Level	0	1	0	1
Proficient Level	0	0	0	0
Information not yet obtained	0	0	0	0
Total	0	1	2	3

3.3 Census data relating to Welsh language skills in Dolau

The 2011 census provides the following information about the Welsh language skills of residents of the Llangunllo LSOA:

Welsh Speakers by LSOA, Census 2011 and Census 2021

Census 2011 – 8%
Census 2021 – 7.1%

Welsh Language Skills by LSOA, Census 2011 and Census 2021

Census	Can speak, read and write Welsh	Can speak and read but cannot write Welsh	Can speak but cannot read or write Welsh	Can understand spoken Welsh only	Other combination of skills	No skills
2011	6.0%	0.6%	1.4%	2.4%	1.5%	88.1%
2021	5.4%	0.4%	1.1%	2.9%	1.5%	88.7%

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4. Options Appraisal

4.1 Possible Options

The scope of this report is to consider the feasibility / viability of establishing Welsh-medium provision in the building currently occupied by Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School in Dolau.

The following options have been identified which would result in the establishment of Welsh-medium provision in Dolau:

Option	Description
1	Change the language category of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School from English-medium to Welsh-medium on a phased basis, starting with pupils in the early years then phasing in each year as these pupils move through the school.
2	Establish a new Welsh-medium school on the current site of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. This would mean closing Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, opening a new Welsh-medium school starting with Foundation Phase pupils and extending the provision as these pupils move through the school.
3	Establish a Welsh-medium stream at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School to operate alongside English-medium provision.

4.2 Assessment against Critical Success Factors

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

Critical Success Factor	Description
1 – Strategic fit and business needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The option must align with the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2022-2032, to include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address the challenges facing education in Powys, as outlined in the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2022-2032 - Align with the Vision and Guiding Principles outlined in the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2022-2032

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Align with the Strategic Aims and Objectives outlined in the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2022-2032 • The option must optimise the benefits of the Council's Transforming Education Programme • The option must align with the aspirations of the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for 2022-32
2 – Value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The option must optimise the resources available for the delivery of learning • The option must provide value for money in the delivery of learning
3 – Potential achievability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The option must be politically acceptable at local, county and national level • The option must be achievable within current legislation • The option must be operationally achievable / physically achievable
4 – Supply-side capacity and capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The option must secure sufficient appropriate resources and expertise to be deployed within Powys to achieve the investment objectives
5 – Potential affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the option is affordable within the forecasted revenue of participating organisations • The extent to which the option is affordable within the forecasted capital funding of participating organisations

The options have been scored against the critical success factors using the following system:

- ✓ - meets the criteria
- ? – may meet the criteria
- X – does not meet the criteria

The following is a summary of the evaluation given for each option:

Critical Success Factor	Option 1: Change the school's language category from EM to WM on a phased basis	Option 2: Establish a new Welsh-medium school on the current site of Llanfihangel	Option 3: Establish a Welsh-medium stream at the school to operate alongside
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		Rhydithon C.P. School	English-medium provision
1 – Strategic fit and business needs	?	?	X
2 – Value for money	X	X	X
3 – Potential achievability	?	?	X
4 – Supply-side capacity and capability	?	?	X
5 – Potential affordability	X	X	X
Total ✓	0	0	0
Total X	2	2	5
Total ?	3	3	0

This assessment suggests that all 3 options fail to fully meet any of critical success factors. However, options 1 and 2 will be taken forward for further assessment, including a SWOT analysis and financial evaluation.

Option 3, which is to establish a Welsh-medium stream at the school to operate alongside the English-medium provision, is discounted at this stage because it failed to meet any of the critical success factors. The reasons for discounting this option are as follows:

- The school is already a small school. Introducing a Welsh-medium stream at the school would result in two very small streams.
- The school building does not have an additional classroom available which could accommodate a Welsh-medium class alongside English-medium classes.
- The capacity of the current building means that the school would continue to be a small school, with limited ability to grow its numbers without additional capital investment.
- Does not meet the aspiration of the Council's WESP to develop new Welsh-medium provision in Powys' main centres of population in order to stimulate demand.

4.3 SWOT Assessment of shortlisted options

SWOT assessments have been carried out of options one and two as outlined above, in order to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of each option, and any opportunities or threats associated with them.

These have been developed with input from officers working in the Transforming Education Team, the Schools Service, the Finance Team and the HR Team.

Option 1:

Change the school's language category from English-medium to Welsh-medium on a phased basis, starting with pupils in the early years then phasing in each year as these pupils move through the school

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain primary provision in the village of Dolau - Minimum impact on pupils currently accessing English-medium education at the school – the provision would continue until they left school - Pupils joining the school would have the opportunity to study through the medium of Welsh and develop full bilingual skills - Potential to increase the number of pupils studying through the medium of Welsh in the locality and in Powys - Could be attractive to families who wouldn't choose the current Welsh-medium provision in the area - More opportunities could be offered through the medium of Welsh - Would support the aim of the Council's Transforming Education Strategy to improve access to Welsh-medium provision - Would contribute towards the targets in the Council's WESP - Would contribute towards the Welsh Government's 2050 target of 1m Welsh speakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It would take a number of years for the school to become fully Welsh-medium - Most of the current staff at the school do not have the language skills needed to work in a Welsh-medium school - New resources would need to be purchased to ensure the school is equipped to teach through the medium of Welsh - Parents not wishing their children to have Welsh-medium education might choose to send their children to other English-medium schools - There is no current evidence of demand for Welsh-medium provision in the area - Possible additional transport costs - Likely to be unpopular with some members of the local community, seeing English medium education being disadvantaged at the expense of Welsh-medium education - Difficulty recruiting Welsh-medium teaching staff and other staff in a predominantly English language catchment - Cost per pupil would continue to be high and potentially increase - The school's capacity means that pupil numbers in each year group would continue to be small, making it

	<p>more difficult to ensure all pupils are appropriately challenged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The school would remain a small school, making it more difficult for pupils to benefit from the new Curriculum for Wales and extra-curricular activities – The school would continue to be run by the same governing body, who have no experience of Welsh-medium education – There would be no opportunity to realise a capital receipt from the sale of the Dolau site – The Council would not realise the financial saving expected following the closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School – Would be a costly way of introducing additional Welsh-medium education in the area – Need for a statutory reorganisation process to change the school’s language category – Combined age classes would continue and the age range within the combined classes would widen – Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision – The Council would still need to maintain the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building – Would not reduce surplus places
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Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Opportunity to further promote the Welsh-medium provision available to attract more pupils to Welsh-medium provision, including pupils who might currently travel out of catchment – Opportunities for further collaboration with other neighbouring schools to provide increased opportunities for pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Llanfihangel Rhydithon school only has capacity for 36 pupils. If the school was successful as a Welsh-medium school, it would have no ability to expand. – Possible effect on pupil numbers at other schools with a Welsh-medium stream in the catchment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recruitment of a Welsh speaking headteacher / staff would be a challenge. - May not be sufficient population in the local area to ensure continued growth of the provision – new Welsh-medium provision tends to succeed in more populated areas
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Option 2:

Establish a new Welsh-medium school on the current site of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain primary provision in the village of Dolau - Pupils joining the school would have the opportunity to study through the medium of Welsh and develop full bilingual skills - Potential to increase the number of pupils studying through the medium of Welsh in the locality and in Powys - More opportunities could be offered through the medium of Welsh - Improvement in pupils' Welsh language skills through improved Welsh ethos - Would support the aim of the Council's Transforming Education Strategy to improve access to Welsh-medium provision - Would contribute towards the targets in the Council's WESP - Would contribute towards the Welsh Government's 2050 target of £1m Welsh speakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The school would be phased in as pupils move through the school years, and would be very small initially - Parents in the local area not wishing their children to have Welsh-medium education might choose to send their children to other English-medium schools - Possible additional transport costs - A further reorganisation process would be needed to establish a new school - May be unpopular with some members of the local community, seeing English medium education being disadvantaged at the expense of Welsh-medium education - Difficulty recruiting Welsh-medium teaching staff and other staff in a predominantly English language catchment - Cost per pupil would be high - School capacity means that pupil numbers in each year group will be small, making it more difficult to ensure all pupils are appropriately challenged. - No opportunity to realise a capital receipt from the sale of the Dolau site

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council would not realise the financial saving expected following the closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School - Would be a costly way of introducing additional Welsh-medium education in the area - The Council would still need to maintain the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building - Would not reduce surplus places - Would not lead to a financial saving - Would not address the high budget per pupil - Combined age classes would continue - Additional Welsh language resources would be needed at extra cost - Would take a long time to implement - Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision
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Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The school would be a new school, with a new name, new identity, new governing body, new staff, which would provide an opportunity for a new start - Opportunity to further promote the Welsh-medium provision available to attract more pupils to Welsh-medium provision, including pupils who might currently travel out of catchment - Opportunities for further collaboration with other neighbouring schools to provide increased opportunities for pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Llanfihangel Rhydithon school only has capacity for 36 pupils. If the school was successful as a Welsh-medium school, it would have no ability to expand. - Possible effect on pupil numbers at other schools with a Welsh-medium stream in the catchment - Introduction of the new curriculum - would be difficult to provide educational opportunities which meet the requirements of the new curriculum - Recruitment of a Welsh speaking headteacher / staff would be a challenge. - May not be sufficient population in the local area to ensure continued growth of the provision – new

	Welsh-medium provision tends to succeed in more populated areas
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4.4 Financial Evaluation of shortlisted options

Both shortlisted options have been compared with the status quo (closing the school from 31 August 2023) and the comparative costs are set out in the table below. It should be noted that the per pupil allocations have not been included within the estimated delegated funding for either option as it is assumed that all pupils would attend a Powys school in the status quo and in both options, so those costs would remain the same (the estimated saving for school closure already takes account of this). The phasing in of the Welsh medium is assumed to start in September 2024 for both options. The phasing in of the Welsh medium is assumed to start in September 2024 for both options.

The table also includes the estimated budget per pupil for each year for each option. The 2022-23 budget per pupil for Llanfihangel Rhydithon is £6,540 and the Powys average primary school budget per pupil for 2022-23 is £4,657.

	Status Quo	Option 1	Option 1	Option 2	Option 2
Financial Year	Estimated Savings from closure	Delegated Funding excl. per pupil allocation £	Budget per pupil (incl. per pupil allocation) £	Delegated Funding excl. per pupil allocation £	Budget per pupil (incl. per pupil allocation) £
2023-24	(45,200)	37,600		(41,700)	
2024-25	(77,500)	88,000	8,433	18,800	22,434
2025-26	(77,500)	112,900	8,109	82,200	13,190
2026-27	(77,500)	112,400	7,667	81,200	10,108
2027-28	(77,500)	113,200	8,596	80,300	8,334
2028-29	(77,500)	113,400	8,817	79,400	7,273
2029-30	(77,500)	78,200	6,848	78,600	6,568
2030-31	(77,500)	67,700	5,779	67,700	5,779
Total over 8 years	(587,700)	723,400		446,500	
Difference from Status Quo	N/A	1,311,100		1,034,200	

Ongoing annual savings / additional running costs	(77,500)	67,700		67,700	
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Option 1 means that the school does not close at 31 August 2023 and continues to operate in English medium only from September 2023 to August 2024. It then operates in both languages until the English medium stream is fully phased out in August 2029. For formula funding purposes, it has been assumed that the school would be funded in the same way as a dual stream school from September 2024 until 31 August 2029 (when the final year of English medium learners leave year 6). This means that both the English medium provision and the Welsh medium provision would receive top ups over and above the per pupil allocations, due to the low pupil numbers at the school. This ensures that the school receives sufficient funding to be able to deliver education in both languages during this transition period.

Option 2 means that that the current school would close on 31 August 2023 and remain closed for one academic year. There would therefore be an estimated saving of £77,500 split over 2 financial years (£45,200 in 2023-24 and £32,300 in 2024-25). Option 2 then assumes a new WM school would start in September 2024 with 5 learners in Reception which is estimated to cost £42,600 for the two terms in the 2024-25 financial year. £6,000 has been added to the costs for the academic year that the school is empty, to allow for any incidental costs of mothballing the school building for 12 months. The school would be a single medium school so would only receive the small school top up (£70,000 per year until over 30 pupils when it changes to £60,000) plus the £3,000 per year bilingual administration top up.

5. Conclusion

In the additional assessments carried out of the two options, a large number of disadvantages / threats have been identified for both options. In addition, the financial evaluation of the two options indicates that the two options would result in an additional cost to the Council of between £941,600 and £1,283,100 over 8 years.

It is therefore concluded that establishing Welsh-medium provision in Dolau is not viable.

The reasons why the 2 shortlisted options are not considered to be viable are as follows:

Option	Reasons for discounting
<p>Option 1:</p> <p>Change the school's language category from English-medium to Welsh-medium on a phased basis, starting with pupils in the early years then phasing in each year as these pupils move through the school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There would be an additional cost to the Council of £1,311,100 over 8 years compared with the Status Quo - The capacity of the current building means that the school would continue to be a small school, with limited ability to grow its numbers without additional capital investment - Changing the current school's language category would mean that the school would continue to be run by the same governing body and staff who do not have experience of delivering Welsh-medium education - Does not meet the aspiration of the Council's WESP to develop new Welsh-medium provision in Powys' main centres of population in order to stimulate demand.
<p>Option 2:</p> <p>Establish a new Welsh-medium school on the current site of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There would be an additional cost to the Council of £1,034,200 over 8 years compared with the Status Quo - As the new provision would be phased in, the school would initially be operating with very small numbers of pupils - The capacity of the current building means that the school would continue to be a small school, with limited ability to grow its numbers without additional capital investment - Does not meet the aspiration of the Council's WESP to develop new Welsh-medium provision in Powys' main centres of population in order to stimulate demand.