

Appendix C – Minutes of meetings with School Councils, Staff, Governors and Parents / Community

	Page
1. Notes of meeting with the School Councils	2
2. Minutes of meeting with Staff	6
3. Minutes of meeting with Governors	12
4. Minutes of meeting with Parents / Community	19

1. Notes of meetings with the School Councils

1.1 Meeting with pupils from Ardwyn and Oldford Schools

Marianne Evans asked pupils what they knew about the new schools

- There's going to be an English one and a Welsh one
- There will be a bigger canteen because there will be more children there

How do you feel about that?

- It will go from a little school to a big school
- Happy, can make new friends
- Bigger playground
- Excited, new computers and ipads
- Shocked because it will be massive

What would you like to see in the new schools?

- Stairs
- Big hall to eat dinner and for assembly
- Big stage
- Lots of books

How do you feel about the new English medium school being by the High School and Flash leisure centre?

- Can see our siblings in High School
- I can see my mum she works in the High School
- Can go swimming
- We can walk to the pool to keep fit

How do you feel about the Welsh medium pupils and English medium pupils having different schools?

- Sadish but I can see my friends outside of schools
- More classes
- Lots of new friends

When will it be built?

Will Maesydre be crushed?

What will be better or not better in the Welsh medium school?

- We can learn more Welsh and speak more Welsh
- Scared because there will be more pupils than there are now
- Confused because the school will be new

Is there anything else you would like to see at the new schools?

- Playstations
- Lots of maths
- Ipads
- More people in classes so more friends
- Big kitchen
- Library
- More books

- Kind teachers
- Maths on ipads
- Theatre
- Swimming pool
- More wooden floors because the carpet gets dirty
- Tree house
- More teachers

Do you have any questions?

- Which school do I go to? It will be hard to choose

1.2 Meeting with pupils from Gungrog School

Marianne Evans asked the pupils what they thought of the current schools in Welshpool

- Old
- Should be knocked down

What's going to be different?

- The school is going to be bigger

How do you feel about a new school?

- Excited
- Sad that we have to leave here
- It's a good idea

What would you like to see in the new school?

- Football pitch
- Science room
- Swimming pool
- Books
- Welsh books
- Library
- Hall for gymnastics
- Hall with a stage
- Sunshine
- Lego
- Bigger slide at the swimming pool
- Swings
- Monkey bars
- Climbing area
- Computer room
- School nurse
- Art room
- Basket ball
- Happy room (like they currently have)
- Quiet/peace room

How do you feel about leaving here and not going to Maesydre like you normally do?

- Scared because there are more pupils
- Great because we won't have to move to another school

- We will be with our brothers and sisters
- It's a long way but we can go in the car

Any questions?

- Will we have the same staff?
- Is there going to be a staff room and kitchen?
- Are we allowed school pets?
- Would Rev Steve still come to see us? (Cheers from the pupils that this could still continue)
- Are we still allowed to go to the church?
- Will there be different outdoor play areas?
- Can we do forest school still?
- Will we have a sand area?

1.3 Meeting with pupils from Ysgol Maesydre

Marianne Evans asked pupils what they knew about the new schools:

- It will be by Welshpool High School
- It will have a canteen
- Next to Flash park
- They will have lots of technology
- 360 pupils
- Church in Wales School
- Ages 4-11
- English Medium School

How do you feel about the new school?

- Destroying nature and living creatures
- Where is it going to be?
- Why are there going to be 2 schools?
- Is it going to be all years?
- How many classes?
- Will years 5 and 6 be together?
- Don't like that there are more places in the English medium school than the Welsh one
- Don't want to leave teachers
- There will be an English medium school and a Welsh medium school so what will happen to the Polish children? Where will they go?
- How will the little children find their way around a new school?

Marianne Evans asked the children to draw how they feel about the new schools and then asked them to describe what they had drawn and why they drew it.

- Happy about moving to a new school (Picture 7)
- Happy faces because they get to be in the same school as siblings. Sad face because it is crushing memories. Scared face because it might be scary because the school will be bigger. Happy because they can make more friends (Picture 1)
- Sad Maesydre is going and the Welsh stream is splitting up from the English stream – happy about making new friends (Picture 2)
- Sad for the Welsh medium school because it is smaller and they are moving away from English medium school (Picture 8)
- Happy times, looking forward to going to a new school (Picture 3)
- Wants to save the school and do repairs to it (Picture 4)

- New school happy, sad because Welsh medium and English medium will split (Picture 5)
- Happy, drew new school (Picture 6)
- Excited to meet more children, scared of change and worried about the environment (Picture 9)

Any questions?

- Will teachers have to apply for new jobs?
- Where will we be collected
- Mix years now and then we will be split up
- Will the school be open after school?
- Waste of buildings
- Killing memories
- Make new friends
- Scared of losing current friends
- Waste of money to do 2 new buildings
- The new school in Talgarth will be sick

2. Minutes of meeting with Staff

15th September 2016

Minutes of the staff consultation meeting on the proposal to establish a new English medium Church in Wales (Voluntary Controlled) (CIW) Primary School and a new Welsh medium Community Primary (CP) School in Welshpool.

Present

Gareth Jones, Senior Manager, School Central Support Services
Catherine Cottle, Human Resources Business Partner
Rachel Roberts, Human Resources Business Partner
Marianne Evans, Senior Manager, Schools Transformation

Staff Members Present

Rhian Williamson	Chris Jerman	Geraint Morgan	Jill Oliver
Dianne Jones	Katie Pryce	Catrin Davies	Heather Rowlands
Lorraine Silk	Becky George	Zoe Spencer	Angela Jones
Beth Jones	Jen Wilde	Sarah Thomas	Russell Cadwallader
Carina Love	Ann Ruszotho	Wendi Terry	Carol Barker
Sheenagh Mottram	Yvonne Naylor	Lorna Tuffin	Sue Bills
Christine Evans	David Underhill	Tanith Day	Kirsty Jones
Kathryn Halford	Clare Watkins	Valerie Hopton	Dilwyn Roberts Young
Cath Trewin	Natalie Lloyd	Danette Lloyd	Lynette Jones
Kamila Klecharczyk	Vicky Pugh	Sharon Lee	Jessica Richings
Gillian Stevens	Helen Lewis	Claire Humphreys	Gwyneth Perry
Lynsey Mills	Jill Parry	Justine Baldwin	Ann Walton
Eirian Williams	John Till	Nia Barnes	Clare Hamer
Joanne Ellis	Jane Morgan	Anna Sidwa	

Marianne Evans welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the panellists and Simon Cameron, the Church in Wales St Asaph Diocese representative. She explained that this meeting forms part of the formal and statutory consultation process.

Marianne Evans provided the background to the proposals:

In 2014 the Cabinet approved the new School Transformation Policy. The Council's School Organisation Review Panel met with the governors, headteachers, and local members for Ardwyn, Gungrog, Oldford and Maesydre School to start the conversation about shaping the future infrastructure of primary education in Welshpool. Leighton CP was also involved in discussions at this stage. In December 2015, the SORP agreed the draft recommendation for the reconfiguration on primary education in Welshpool. In January 2016, the School Organisation Review Panel (SORP) met with local stakeholders to agree the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOC) this was then submitted to Welsh Government. Cabinet agreed for us to start formal consultation. In March 2016, Welsh Government approved the SOC.

Marianne Evans explained the proposal is to establish and build a new English medium Church in Wales primary school with a pupil capacity of 360 plus early years. And to establish a new Welsh medium Community Primary School with a capacity of 150 plus early year provision.

Gareth Jones confirmed that current Welsh stream pupils at Maesydre would go back to Ardwyn School and the current English stream pupils at Ardwyn would need to move to either Oldford School or Gungrog School. From September 2017 the English medium infant school will operate from the Gungrog and Oldford sites and English medium junior school from the Maesydre site. Welsh medium education for all years will operate from the Ardwyn site.

The reasons for the proposal are:

The buildings are of poor condition with a mixture of condition B/C, some of the buildings are fairly old and require maintenance. The current challenging educational model, with a complex mixture of infant schools feeding into a junior school, English medium school and a dual stream school. To accommodate predicted demand for Welsh medium primary school education. The present situation does not allow for Welsh medium education to grow as it has done in Newtown. The need to provide faith based education. To address the current surplus places at the schools, with Ardwyn and Gungrog being more than 24% and Ysgol Maesydre at 19% and the drop in pupils accessing primary education within Welshpool Town.

Marianne Evans explained the statutory process and that formal meetings will be held with staff, governors, parents and the wider community and pupils. On the 18th October, when consultation closes, a consultation report will go to full Council for discussion before the Cabinet makes decision on whether to publish a statutory notice and to proceed with the process or not. This will happen in November/December. If Cabinet proceeds with the proposal we could expect a final decision by February. Marianne Evans explained how everyone can respond to the proposals.

Catherine Cottle explained that the purposed of the meeting is not to discuss individual employment contracts or definite timescales, but to understand concerns and how staff feel about the process and proposals.

Question – What age will the nursery provision be?

From September 2017, there will be a change in the age of admission and this academic year will be the last nursery intake. Children will not start school until the September following their fourth birthday.

Question – Are you expecting current 3 plus settings to take on the extra number of pupils?

There will be another work stream outside of this formal consultation process to look at the changes, but those who will be contracted to deliver playgroup provision will be expected to take on those numbers. The authority will be obligated to provide 10.5 hours of provision.

Question – Has there been any thought given in making the school into a more community centred school like Trefonnen, with health and education facilities under one roof?

This hasn't been discussed yet but community facility and early years is affordable.

Question – Will there be a community hall at both schools?

Yes

Question – The proposals for the two schools is quite clear, however one thing that we as schools do not want to miss out on is our Additional Learning Needs provisions, which has taken us years to build up. We want to keep that standard, it is needed and we would be lost without it.

Discussions have taken place with Keith Brelstaff, senior manager for Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion and it has been agreed that current provision will be replicated at both schools.

Questions – You should consider provision for pre-school when building a new school which is going to improve education. Continuity for parents is essential as it supports them with transition, this works very well currently in Gungrog. Continuity is good for the wellbeing and social skills of the children and the interface with parents is essential, especially as we have parents from vastly different backgrounds.

Marianne Evans explain that one issue they struggled with is the size of the school. We initially ended up with numbers of 420 for the English medium school and 120 for the Welsh medium school, which has now changed to a 360 place school and a 150 place school. Do you think that these numbers are reasonable?

Comment – 150 is better than 120. It's good to be optimistic and this would be a great opportunity for Welsh to grow in this area.

Question – Why will the two new schools be on separate sites? I know this is explained and is clear in the consultation document and that there are site constraints, but why build the schools at opposite sides of the town, this seems ludicrous. It's a long way to walk from this side of the town to the new English medium school site and vice versa if you live near the Flash centre.

In terms of the site for the new schools, we did look at a lot of possible sites however none of them were big enough for the schools to be built on the same site. It was a task to find a site big enough and there wasn't one big enough in the town. The current sites are only big enough to accommodate the current number of pupils. The chosen sites do not pose simple solutions for the authority, there are issues with access here at the Maesydre site and there are issues around the canal at the Welshpool High School site.

Comment – We have heard that parents who will closer to the Welsh medium school will send their children there despite them currently receiving English medium education because the school will be closer to them.

Comment – I feel that by having on Welsh-medium school and one English-medium school, there will be a divide in the town and I don't think that is a good thing. I'd prefer one site with 2 schools.

Question – We have heard that the building at Neuadd Maldwyn will be demolished. Are you saying that the new Welsh medium school would be built at the back of Maesydre, because if these buildings are demolished then this site would be huge. What is the plan for the rest of the site?

There is a process that the authority follows in dealing surplus land. Following the completion of the projects. If it is determined that there is more land than the school requires, the authority would declare it surplus land and it would go through the formal process. In the Gwernyfed area where we are building five new primary schools, 2 new schools will be declared surplus and it is likely in the long term that these parcels of land will be utilized as housing developments. But, there are processes to follow and we will be keeping you informed with progress.

Question – What if this school is listed? What's the plan for the school?

The school building is not listed

Comment – More than half the teachers present would prefer to have the schools on one site.

Question – You say that you want Welsh medium education to grow in Welshpool, but there is no Welsh medium secondary school here. Are there any other proposals?

Yes we would like to see Welsh medium education grow. The authority is currently looking at Welsh medium secondary provision in North Powys. A business case will be going to Cabinet in the next few months on this. We currently transport Welsh medium pupils from Welshpool to Llanfair Caereinion High School. The review is for a category 2A school, we are looking at all potential areas.

Comment – There has been lots of talk about this in the area, saying that Llanfyllin could become an English medium school and Llanfair Caereinion a Welsh medium school.

The review is currently on going.

Comment – If Welsh medium education grows here in Welshpool and continues to grow in Newtown then this could pose a significant capacity problems at Llanfair Caereinion.

This is another reason why we are currently reviewing the situation and why a business case will be presented to Cabinet soon.

Comment – What do you mean by a Church in Wales school?

There are two types of Church in Wales School – controlled and aided. Controlled schools are led and funded by the local authority, and aided schools are led by the church and funded jointly by the church and the local authority.

Question – As UCAC representative, there's a number of unions here tonight and we are grateful to be here and have the opportunity to be a part of the consultation. There's discussion around the consultation period but the authority must ensure that discussion go further than the formal consultation – every member of staff needs to be confident in the process and to have their voices heard. How important is communicating in the process?

It's important that everyone gives their opinion and has the opportunity to do this. It's very important that there is clear communication. Betsan Ifan, the project manager has been in regular contact with the Headteacher and this is how we will continue to communicate with the teachers – there was an informal meeting around Easter time with the teachers.

Question – Can you go through the process, what are the timescales?

The Consultation period finishes on the 18th October 2016. The Consultation Report will then be published and discussed by Council first followed then by Cabinet. Cabinet has three choices; they can decide to abandon the proposal completely, they can request that another proposal is brought back to Cabinet or they can continue with the proposal. If they decide to continue with the proposal then we would enter the objection period which you can voice your objections to the proposal, which would then go back to Council and Cabinet. If it is decided to continue with the process then we expect a final decision to be made in spring 2017. Following that the Shadow Governing Body would then be established and we would want to see an equal representation from all 4 schools. There will be two shadow governing bodies established – one for the English medium school and

one for the Welsh medium school. Their first decision would be to appoint the Headteacher and together they would establish a staffing structure. How the shadow governing body recruit the Headteacher and the staff would be up to them, the authority would offer them support in this process. The governing bodies can choose to open the positions to external recruitment or they can ring fence them for the current staff of the 4 schools, this is what the local authority would strongly advise they did. The authority has launched a Voluntary Severance Scheme (VSS). The shadow governing body can decide whether they want to discuss this scheme with staff. The shadow governing bodies could come together to look into this scheme and Powys County Council will speak to the Headteachers on how this scheme could possibly support them.

Question – Does this scheme extend to Headteachers and deputies?

The scheme doesn't specifically say that it doesn't extend to the Headteachers and deputy Headteachers. Every school has business critical roles, roles in which the school cannot operate without and the Headteacher post is one of them, therefore it is likely that it will not be relevant to Headteachers and deputy Headteachers.

Question – Would everyone on the shadow governing body at the Welsh medium School be Welsh speaking?

The shadow governing body would be made up of those who can and cannot speak Welsh. The authority could provide support to the shadow governing body with translation.

Question – If staff were to finish in August when will deadline be for VSS?

It would depend whether your school implement the scheme – every school need to justify why they need to make the redundancy in the first instance. If the school does support the VSS then you would need to have a conversation about this with the Headteacher. Where a school supports the scheme the timeline for staff hoping to finish under VSS on 31st August 2017 requires expressions of interest to be submitted by 30th January 2017.

Question – If you are a teacher in an English medium stream currently but are fluent Welsh Speaker, could you apply for a position in the Welsh medium School and have the same chance of getting a job there as those who have already taught in a Welsh medium Stream?

Yes that is possible. We would expect the vast majority of the staff at the Welsh medium school to be fluent Welsh Speakers. This is not necessarily the case in the other schools at the moment because Ardwyn and Maesydre are dual-stream schools.

Question – What would happen to the English medium teachers?

They would be part of the same HR process as the Welsh medium teachers. The shadow governing body will need to decide whether the posts will be ring-fenced, supported by Powys County Council. It is worth noting that when we undertook a similar reorganisation process down in Ystradgynlais that no members of staff were made redundant and those who left, left because they wanted to.

Question – Will there be an opportunity outside of the formal consultation process for staff to have time to discuss this? We should end up with the same amount of staff, within reason, with exception of the head? Where will be the opportunity for staff to discuss this? For those staff who are unsure what they want? You are looking at ages 5-11 and where there is an opportunity to

work part time we should be able to, which would suit the new staff and then you have staff who want to work for you.

There is a separate consultation process regarding your employment which would only happen if Cabinet decide to proceed with the proposal. You also need to consider the change of age of admission where there will be a separate consultation process and staff may be made redundant. We cannot pre-empt the cabinet decision. If there is a member of staff who speaks Welsh or staff who want to brush up on their Welsh skills then that would be a good suggestion but these are discussions that you could have with the Headteacher. We cannot advise you on things to do because it may be seen that we are pre-empting what Cabinet may decide.

Comment – We understand this but it’s just to give people a peace of mind, it feels very uncomfortable that we cannot have answers now.

We fully understand this, we will do everything we can to support you as staff throughout the process. We may be in a position to evaluate what can be done following the closure of the formal consultation period. But we cannot do anything that may pre-empt the cabinet decision.

Comment – It is concerning that we may not have a job, we all have bills to pay and children to put through college. I am really concerned, the process of being a teacher is not like any other recruitment process. There are set points in the year where jobs come up and if this consultation process doesn’t match that then we have a problem.

This point was acknowledged.

Marianne Evans ended the meeting, there were no further questions and reminded people that if any of them were governors then they were welcome to stay for the governors meeting which followed.

3. Minutes of meeting with Governors

15th September 2016

Minutes on the governors consultation meeting on the proposal to establish a new English medium Church in Wales (Voluntary Controlled) (CiW) Primary School and a new Welsh medium Community Primary (CP) School in Welshpool.

Present

Ian Roberts. Head of Schools Service
Marianne Evans. Senior Manager, Schools Transformation
Gareth Jones. Senior Manager, School Central Support Services
Jane Thomas. Professional Lead, Finance

Governors Present

Morag Bouley	Sarah Humphreys	Wendi Terry
Richard Holden	Justine Baldwin	Anna Sidwa
Francesca Jump	Yvonne Naylor	Shane Squibb
Ann Walton	Alison Bowen	Anne Jones
Lynsey Mills	Jane Howells	Julia Ellis
Karen Kerr	Sue Bills	Brendan McWhinnie

Apologies

Sheila Davies
Jenny Wilson
Beth Martin
Cllr Pritchard
Derek Simms
Cllr Holloway

Ian Roberts welcomed everyone to the meeting. He reminded everyone that this meeting is part of the formal consultation process, which started on 5th September and will end on 18th October. This is not the only way to respond to the proposal. You may email us or send a response in the post, all the details are in the consultation document. We first took this to cabinet on 26th January 2016, cabinet gave permission to carry on with the proposal to close Ardwyn, Gungrog, Maesydre and Oldford Primary Schools and to establish two new build schools. One Welsh medium CP school on the current site of Maesydre and one English medium CiW school on a site close to Welshpool High School. What officers will do is to attempt to answer any questions you may have about the proposal, if we are unable to answer any questions then the question will be answered in the Consultation Report. The report has been published within 13 weeks of the Consultation period ending. We are hoping to take the report to cabinet as soon as possible after the consultation. The Cabinet can decide one of three options. They can continue with the proposal, or to require officers to draft an alternative proposal and the third option is they can abandon the proposal. If they decide to continue with the proposal then we would publish the statutory notice. It is essential that we get the funding from Welsh Government and we could lose the funding if we haven't made any progress with this proposal by March 2019. It is a very tight deadline but it is achievable.

Marianne Evans introduced Simon Cameron who was representing the Church Diocese and will help answer any questions about the Church in Wales aspect of the proposal.

Question – Why is the meeting next week ticket only?

The public consultation meeting is a ticketed event so we have an understanding of how many people will be attending for health and safety reasons. It also gives us a chance to arrange any additional rooms. This does not mean that you can only go if you have a ticket. We need to comply with fire regulations. We have only started the ticketing system this year and so far everyone who has wanted to go have been able to attend. There are plenty of tickets left at this point. All tickets are free and if you have any difficulty booking them then you can contact the Schools Transformation Team and we will help you with this.

Question – Councillor Pritchard sends his apologies and cannot attend this evening’s meeting, but he is very vocal in that the new English medium school will be a Church in Wales school; most of us believed that the Welsh medium school would be Church in Wales, we are concerned that it seems to have switched from the initial discussions we have had. We live or aspire to live in a secular society and this is a concern.

The proposal has not changed, it was always planned that the English Medium School would be the Church in Wales school not the Welsh Medium. Councillor Pritchard was in the initial meeting and therefore would have known this. There was always a clear indication that the English Medium School was to be the Church in Wales School. We had a meeting with the chair of governors and representatives and this was agreed. You use the word secular, to attend a Church in Wales school you do not have to go to church regularly or be a Christian. A Church in Wales school follows the same syllabus as a community primary school. Church in Wales schools in Powys invites pupils from all denominations.

Simon Cameron - If a community primary school becomes a Church in Wales schools there is one slight tweak in the paper work but everything stays the same. The schools are almost identical.

Question – It is still a Christian school, what if you don’t want a Christian education?

The Church believes that education is something everyone has a right to, this is the ethos of the Church and this is reflected in the work the Church is doing. The purpose is not to impose Christianity, the pupils can inform their own faith and make sense of it, and helps them see that they can be a meaningful part of this world.

Question – Why does it have to be a Christian School?

It’s no more Christian than any other Powys School. All schools, by law, have to follow a collective act of worship every day. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the act of worship and also Religious Education lessons in both Community Primary schools and Church in Wales Schools.

Question – About the multi sited school, what will be the set up at the English medium school for the interim arrangements?

Oldford and Gungrog would remain the same. Ardwyn will become a Welsh medium school so English medium pupils there would have to move to either Oldford or Gungrog. Welsh stream pupils at Maesydre would have to go to Ardwyn but the English stream students would remain.

Question – From a financial point of view and specifically the interim arrangements, normally we set budgets in April, but this does not coincide with opening the new schools in September 2017. When will the financial situation catch up with the new school situation?

The budget for the year would be broken up and the school would get part of the budget. So if the school opens in September then the budget the school gets would be from September to the following April and then the following year the school would get the full budget for the year.

Question – So we would do the budget as if the school was going to be open for the year?

Yes, there will be other things that need to be factored in such as schemes and establishing a staffing structure. But that process should be concluded by April so you should have more of an idea about the budget then.

Comment – The age of admission will be changing and we may have to make redundancies. There may be some very hard decisions to be made.

Question – In Ardwyn there is currently only 10 students in the Welsh stream, the issue that may present itself is that the parents may want to move their children sooner rather than later so their children can build their social groups in school. Speaking as a parent, you could argue that it is in the best interest of the child to move them sooner so it is easier on them. To what extent should we persuade parents not to do that?

We just had a situation in Mid Wales, where we were consulting on the closure of Nantmel CiW School. When we consulted on this at the start of the summer term there were 28 pupils there, Cabinet made their final decision on Tuesday 13th September and there are only 15 pupils there. So just under half the pupils moved to a new school before the final decision had been made. As an authority we cannot say what you should do and I think that as a governing body you should do the same. You could tell them that there is a proposal which is out of the hands of anyone in this room, the conversation could possibly be different after a decision has been made but until then you shouldn't advise parents on what they should, but instead leave it to them.

Question – So the governing body must be neutral and leave the decision up to the parents?

Yes, the authority has been approached by parents who have questioned whether transport would be effected if they moved their children early.

Question – Is there a trigger point? We only need 5 pupils to leave

We cannot persuade the parents or advise them on what to do, ultimately the decision has to be theirs.

Question – It is very nice to see Ian here to represent the authority. Speaking as a parent, I have concerns about the general location of the proposed school. The location of the English medium school would mean taking away play area space from the High School. Considering the age of the pupils from a health and safety prospective, they are very young and the road next to it is still a trunk road and a bypass. It's all very well talking about funding but it's the practical issues that need to be considered. I found it all very confusing about which proposals were being taken forward, we need to go with what is best for the pupils and that is why we are here this evening. Local politics come into play and we don't have Leighton School here with us tonight. What I would like to see in these consultation meetings is good communication but having a top table on the stage in Theatr Clera could be very daunting. Any concerns we have, have been addressed by the local Headteachers and the governing body but we need to make sure that the support mechanism is in place in each school. I have witnessed some anxiety about issues and there are

responsibilities that we have such as paying our mortgages and rent. We have a responsibility to reassure everyone.

It is very essential to have a good communication strategy in place. The health and wellbeing of the pupils is paramount and the location of the schools have raised some discussions already and we would ensure that it is safe for the pupils. We know that the top table approach may seem daunting, we have tried drop in sessions but if a lot of people turn up then these turn into meetings. If there is a general feel from the Headteachers that parents would like drop-in sessions at the local schools then we can accommodate this. We are aware of the anxiety and the stress the uncertainty may cause. We cannot promise that there will be enough jobs for everyone as we need to be open and transparent with staff at every opportunity. We expect the Headteachers to try and work with their staff at these points and the local authority have a responsibility to support the Headteacher with this. Issues and anxieties from the staff was brought up in the staff meeting. At the end of the consultation process we can arrange meetings with all the governors to plan a way forward. If these meetings are held during the consultation then it will be seen as pre-empting the decision by Cabinet.

Question – Does the HR department have the capacity for all this? There are a lot of processes going on at the same time.

The voluntary severance scheme will improve the capacity and support that HR will be able to provide. We will make sure that the support is there for you.

Question – Would parents who currently sit on the governing body be able to sit on the shadow governing body if their child has left school?

They can sit on the shadow governing body but they wouldn't be able to sit on the permanent governing body.

Question – Can you go through the shadow governing body process?

If you turn to page 20 in the consultation document, you can find the information about the process and establishing the shadow governing body. These are the current regulations and it's possible there may be some changes this academic year. What we would be looking for with the is; 4 or 5 parent governors, 3 LEA governors, 1 teacher governor, 1 staff governor, 3 or 4 Foundation governors, 1 community governor, 1 headteacher. We would expect that there would be an equal representation of all schools. If a governor sits on the shadow governing body then they would also sit on the current governing body as well so they would need to evaluate whether they can be on 2 governing bodies at the same time. We invite expression of interest from everyone, if there are more expressions of interest then there are available seats then there is a process we need to follow. All new schools with shadow governing bodies have the support of the local authority clerking these meetings.

Question – Would all the governors on the shadow governing body for the Welsh medium school have to speak fluent Welsh?

Not necessarily, there will be translation facilities available.

Question – From the point of view of the governors of Ardwyn and the Welsh stream, when will they be able to start spending their budget? There are things that will need to be done such as translation.

In terms of the normal process the new school budget doesn't come into action until September 2017. When we joined the primary school and secondary school in Machynlleth, the shadow governing body had a few discussions and identified priorities, such as the Headteacher and the staffing structure followed then by naming the school and the uniform.

Question – Can you clarify why the governors on the shadow governing body are from the current governing bodies?

The shadow governing body will be formed from the current governing bodies. The membership and size of the governing body will be appointed in accordance with Welsh Government regulations.

Question – Is there no opportunity for the chair of the shadow governing body to be impartial?

The chair is voted in by the shadow governing body.

Question – Will there be an equal split by category for the shadow governing body posts? Or will there be a balance across the whole governing body?

It would depend entirely on how many show an interest. Ideally we would have an equal representation from all schools.

Question – There are governors here who are on more than 1 governing body. How will that work with the shadow governing body?

They can still show an expression of interest and we would have to have conversations following this. The local authority would be there in the recruitment process to make it impartial.

Question – I would like to thank the team for arranging the document to be publish in Polish, which has made things easier for us when explaining the process to them. They are able to read it in a language they can fully understand. Have you thought about any Polish translation at the Public consultation meeting? We do have a member of staff who speaks Polish, I'm not sure how confident she would be but she will be at the event. Could drop in sessions be possible for the Polish community?

We have looked into whether it would be possible to simultaneously translate Welsh and Polish on the same headsets and unfortunately this isn't possible. What we will do for the public meeting though is, we as panellists can stay behind so that if someone wants to ask a question or to clarify matters in Polish, we can arrange for that to happen if your Polish speaking member of staff would be ok to help us out with that.

Question – These drop in sessions that have been mentioned, how would they work?

We could have one to one chats with parents who need clarification on matters, but we will need time to think about how this would work. If we introduce something now then we would have to extend the consultation process, which will have an effect on the timescales in setting up the new schools. First of all we will gage how the parents meeting goes, and take it from there.

Question – On page 14 of the consultation document where it has the risks, it states that children from the smaller surrounding village schools may want to attend the new schools which would affect the number of pupils attending those village schools. The word on the street is that parents

are panicking because they don't want to send their children to a super school and are wanting to send them to the village schools.

We believe that once the parents have a visual of a new 21st Century school building and all the facilities to go with it then I think you are more likely to gain from the village schools. Once they are up they will like it. There are currently around 100 pupils who live in Welshpool who access education outside of the town.

Question – Ardwyn is expecting a visit from Estyn very soon as we are due an inspection. When the new school opens, does the clock completely reset and should we expect an early inspection?

When a new school opens they normally wait until there is 2 years of data. If the school opens September 2017 the earliest they would inspect would be autumn term 2019. We are writing to the chief HMI to say that the Welshpool schools are currently under consultation. The sooner the cabinet is able decision the better. Usually Estyn will not inspect a school within 2 terms of the school closing.

Question – What I am concerned about is the parking.

There are regulations that we have to supply so many parking spaces for so many pupils. We are working with the highways department on this.

Question – You are trying to discourage Welshpool pupils from going elsewhere to access Welsh Medium education. Children will go to a primary school where their friends will go. If they cannot access good quality Welsh medium secondary education then what is the point?

We are currently doing a business case, reviewing Welsh medium secondary education in North Powys. The difficulty with Welsh medium education at the moment is that it is a postcode lottery in regards to the number of subjects a student can study through the medium of Welsh.

Question – Could this issue be a stumbling block for this proposal?

If we use Ysgol Dafydd Llwyd in Newtown as an example, about 95% of those students go to Llanfair Caereinion High School for Welsh Medium education. They only had around 75 pupils in that school in Dafydd Llwyd when it opened, currently they have around 200 so travelling between Newtown and Llanfair Caereinion doesn't seem to be a prohibiting factor for parents choosing Welsh medium education. Although Dual stream schools offer the same academic opportunities for pupils it doesn't offer them the same ethos and culture as a Welsh medium school.

Question – When will the Headteacher be appointed? Will it be one of the current Headteachers?

There is a process, so once the shadow governing body is established one of their first priorities will be to appoint a Headteacher. They can decide to advertise the position or they can ring fence it to the current Headteachers which is what the authority would advise them to do. We would need to look at the capacity of the Headteacher to work on the new schools. But we would be looking at the spring term.

Question – A bigger school will mean a higher pay grade, who will fund that?

It will be in the new budget.

Ian Roberts thanked everyone for coming and reminded them they can still let us know their views until the 18th October.

4. Minutes of meeting with Parents / Community

20th September 2016

Minutes of the public consultation meeting on the proposal to establish a new English medium Church in Wales (Voluntary Controlled) (CiW) Primary School and a new Welsh medium Community Primary (CP) School in Welshpool.

Darren Ivey welcomes everyone to the meeting.

Councillor Arwel Jones paid tribute to Councillor Ann Holloway from Welshpool who had passed away yesterday, a minute silence is held.

Darren Ivey explains that he is from Opinion Research Services (ORS), and that he will be facilitating the meeting and making sure the meeting is run smoothly.

The panel introduces themselves

Ian Roberts. Head of Schools Service

Marianne Evans. Senior Manager, Schools Transformation

Gareth Jones. Senior Manager, School Central Support Services

Jane Thomas. Professional Lead Finance

Councillor Barry Thomas. Leader for Powys County Council

Councillor Arwel Jones. Portfolio Holder for Education

Darren Ivey goes through the housekeeping for the evening and explains that tonight is about getting your views and to answer any questions you may have about the proposals and reassure any worries.

Ian Roberts gave a brief presentation on the proposal, the reason for the proposal and the next steps. He explains that tonight is the opportunity to ask any questions about the proposal and if there are questions that the panel are unable to answer then they will be answered in the Consultation report. There are other ways to respond to the proposal, you can respond by email, writing in or by an online response form which is on the webpage. The proposal is to establish a new English medium Church in Wales (Voluntary Controlled) (CiW) Primary School and a new Welsh medium Community Primary (CP) School in Welshpool, in proposing this we do realise that there are consequences for the current schools.

We are proposing two brand new buildings which would require capital investment from Powys County Council and match funding from Welsh Government through their 21st Century schools programme. Welsh Government are supportive of this proposal and we think that it is an exciting project for us and for the town of Welshpool. If the proposal goes through then we are proposing from September 2017, to establish two new primary schools ahead of the new builds to ensure staff are protected as much as possible in terms of job rights. We are changing the age of admission which would bring about some huge changes and we need to make sure that the staff here in these four schools are not disadvantaged by that. The interim proposal would mean that Gungrog and Oldford would continue to operate as they are, providing English medium education for nursery age to year 2. Maesydre School would only provide English medium education for years 3 to 6 and Welsh stream students would need to either transfer to English medium education to transfer back to Ardwyn which would provide Welsh medium education only for nursery age to year 6 and English stream students currently in Ardwyn would need to either stay for Welsh medium education or transfer to Gungrog or Oldford. If the proposal goes through and planning is approved that the new

school buildings would open in 2018/19, the English medium school which is planned to be on the Welshpool High School site is subject to approval, health and safety etc. to make sure that the health and safety of the children is not put at risk. It is proposed that the Welsh medium school will be on the current Maesydre site.

The reasons for the proposal are as follows:

- 1: The current school buildings are in poor quality with a mixture of condition B/C. Ysgol Maesydre hasn't changed much in the last 30 years and if you look at the current buildings of the other schools they are in need to some repairs.
- 2: There is a complex mixture of junior, infant and dual stream schools here in Welshpool. If we were to establish a new infrastructure now, we wouldn't propose the current structure we have currently in Welshpool. We have 3 infant schools going into 1 junior school where potentially there are different work schemes and behaviour strategies. It is harder to bridge that gap into junior school.
- 3: To accommodate predicted demand for Welsh-medium primary school education, the dual stream numbers at Ardwyn and Maesydre are not significantly high. We are looking to consolidate the numbers and grow Welsh medium education, so children are submerged in Welsh language activities from the start, similar to what we have with Ysgol Dafydd Llwyd in Newtown.
- 4: The need to provide faith based education, we need to make it very clear that it is not secular and you do not need to go to church regularly to attend a church in Wales school. Church in Wales schools follow the same curriculum as community primary schools. As parents you have the right to remove your child from act of worships and Religious Education lessons in Church in Wales schools just as you can in Community Primary Schools.
- 5: To address the current surplus places at the schools, with Ardwyn and Gungrog being more than 24% and Ysgol Maesydre at 19%. There have been a decline in young people in the town over a number of years and we want to consolidate this and not spend money on empty chairs.

It is important for us to hear your views tonight, if you are supportive of the proposal we would like to know and we would also like to hear any concerns you may have. You may bring up some points that we nor the cabinet have thought about. Councillor Arwel Jones and Councillor Barry Thomas are here tonight to observe and to listen to what you have to say, however they are not here to specifically answer any questions. We also have Simon Cameron here who is representing the Asaph Diocese and will be on hand to answer any questions you may have about the Church in Wales aspect of the proposal.

Question – The proposal is a very positive thing for Welshpool and only good things can come from this. You say that you are hoping to develop Welsh medium education and to grow the numbers. What is the point in the trying to do this if there isn't a Welsh medium secondary school in Welshpool?

We are looking at building a 150 place Welsh medium school, which would mean building in surplus places as there are currently a total of only 60 to 70 students currently access Welsh medium education in Ardwyn and Maesydre. However we are hoping to replicate what happened in Ysgol Dafydd Llwyd, there was only 75 pupils in the school to start and now they currently have around 200 which is projected to rise to 250 in the next five years. The Welsh Government are hoping to increase the number Welsh speakers by 2050 and also increase the number of pupils accessing Welsh Medium education. In terms of transitioning from Primary to Secondary, we are currently writing a business case at the moment which looks at Welsh medium education in North Powys, we are looking at the possibility of a category 2A school in North Powys which would mean that 80% of subjects would be available through the medium of Welsh. If pupils want to continue with Welsh medium education into Secondary School currently they would usually go to Llanfair Caereinion or Llanfyllin High School. A lot of pupils have to travel to access Welsh medium education, in Newtown

the majority of pupils in Ysgol Dafydd Llwyd travel to Llanfair Caereinion to receive Welsh Medium education. This is a different type of provision that they are receiving, the immersion isn't the same in a dual stream school as it is in a Welsh medium school. We are planning the 150 place Welsh medium school so that it can be easily extended if it is needed.

Question – I am concerned about the size of the English medium school and the number of pupils that will be attending it. Would the junior and infants be separate at lunchtimes? Also the class size is worrying me because they are currently in smaller classes.

It will be one primary school from the start of the academic year after their 4th birthday until they are 11. There are regulations for class sizes that we have to adhere to which is no more than 30 pupils per classroom but Welsh Government want to decrease that to 25. Most of the primary schools in Powys are all through primary schools, there are only 5 infant schools and 3 junior schools. They would be taught in single year or two aged group class rooms and because there would be six classes, the times for break and lunchtime can be staggered. All of that organisation will be for the shadow governing body to decide. The school will be designed to have separate lunch times and break times and like other newly built schools the school will be secure with a defined fence line.

Question – What thought has gone into the provision of transport with the English Medium school in particular because it will be close to where we are tonight, I don't own a car so it was enough of a distance to come here. If my child comes to the English Medium School, it would be difficult to bring our child to school and then get to work on time. What provision will be in place for those who live in town?

Children must live more than 2 miles away from their school to qualify for free transport measured by the nearest walking route. That would mean that no pupils would qualify for free transport to the English medium school. We would need to work with local public transport to see what arrangements can be put in place.

Question Darren Ivey – What would you like the authority to consider?

Comment – We are aware that in some circumstances arrangements are made with local taxi companies. Welshpool has a bus service, perhaps the Council can work with them to provide services running to the school at the right time. I don't think there would be many obstacles to a local company to provide that.

To be entitled to free home to school transport then you must live more than 2 miles away from your closest school. We are working with private companies to make arrangements with transport however there would be a charge for that.

Comment – I appreciate that there would be a charge for this service as it would not be in the policy however you need to think about those who might not be able to meet this.

Comment – I am concerned about the impact this proposal is having on the staff and pupils. The continuity of the staffing is already an issue with some of the parents. We know we have good staff but they are worried about having to reapply for their position.

It would be very naïve to think it wouldn't have an impact on staff and we know the staff are worried about it. Some of us met with the staff last Thursday and this was brought up. What the authority would suggest is that the staff positions are ring-fenced to the current staff in the four schools. The

authority will establish the shadow governing body and the first thing they would do is to recruit the Headteacher and then the budget would be allocated to them and they can establish a staffing structure, recruiting the teaching staff and non-teaching staff. What we cannot do right now is to guarantee jobs for all staff.

Question – Who is going to fund the shortfall when the numbers aren't there currently? I come from teaching in Shropshire and there's funding there for the entire provision.

Welsh medium education will be based at Ardwyn for the first 12 months and that will give us an idea of how the staff structure will be planned. The English medium schools we are keeping very similar to how they are now for the first 12 months where after that this will change. The authority has the right to agree how many pupils it will fund in the future. The fact that we are moving into a new school system from September would make the transition easier because they will then move with their teachers into the new schools. It will be easier on them compared with if they went straight to the new schools.

Question – In terms of the transition arrangements I have children at Ardwyn. The transition means that there is going to be an additional transition for those in the English Stream at Ardwyn. In terms of knowing when the proposal will go through, how is this help go through with the implementing in September 2018?

The SOC has been presented to Welsh Government to seek views on proposed new build. Next step is the OBC then a FBC. This is a totally different process to the current consultation. There is no agreement in principle from the Cabinet, they have simply asked us to consult. The processes are aligned but are separate. This process takes us up to the 18th October. After this ends we collate all the views that come in and prepare a consultation report. This will then be taken to full council to debate and then to Cabinet to make a decision. If Cabinet agree to continue with the proposal then we would publish the statutory notice which people can then send in their objections to the proposal during the objection period which is 28 days. We are looking to have the final decision from Cabinet by the spring. We have to say here that it is important to follow these to secure Welsh Government funding. We will then have to establish a shadow governing body. There are 2 different processes going on at the same time but they both come together in the end.

Comment – I'm just trying to understand how it will all work, I didn't fully understand how it works. There is a lot of reference about surplus places in the document, from September 2017 it would mean that my child would have to go elsewhere for English medium education, it's a lot of upheaval for pupils in his situation. We are hearing that the other schools are at capacity and pupils cannot not decide which one they would like to go to.

There are two aspects when working out surplus places, there's calculation is based on the physical use of the buildings at the time. My belief is that there are available spaces in the schools, as an authority we have to make sure that there is enough capacity for all pupils at the named receiving school. You have to work out the physical running costs of the building but also the total overall cost of running the building. The cost per pupil rises significantly when a school drops below 50 pupils. We don't want to put pupils in larger class sizes, it's about putting them in classes of appropriate size. With the change in age of admission, what we are going to see across Powys is a significant number of redundancies, this does impact the infant schools more than an all through school. We didn't want them to be making those decisions 12 months in advance, that's why we wanted to do the interim. It is a tight timescale but it is achievable.

Comment – We have already made our views known, no doubt we would be adding to this. There are 3 areas of concern for us. The travel situation from Oldford to the other side of town. I still feel that the situation is bound to rise where a 5 year old is going to find his way to school at the busiest time in the town. Currently we have 3 CP schools and 1 CiW School. These will be combined into a CiW school, parents in Welshpool will have to send their children to a faith school. I go to Gungrog School quite often. In the corner of the hall there is an altar. In the playground there are crosses. I didn't see any Jewish symbols or Islamic symbols, there is no way a parent can withdraw their child from seeing this. We are calling you to reconsider the faith school question.

I work for the CiW Diocese of St Asaph. We don't run faith schools, we run church schools. Faith schools are for the faithful, and have admissions criteria. Church schools are there for the community, if there is a faith element, this is not a desired outcome. At Gungrog, you will see various artefact, there are Islamic designs there. Children are invited to explore other faiths. You do see crosses and peace doves but it's not just Christian symbols around the school. Church schools are not here to brainwash or indoctrinate your children, this is a big misconception of CiW Schools. A good Church school looks much like a good community school. The education in our country was invented by the Church and the ability to access free education was something introduced by the Church. We're not trying to take over the educational establishment. The Church is a statutory provider of education, it is very difficult for the local authority to remove faith provision where it existed previously. We don't want all schools to be church schools, but we do believe Church Schools add value. We want it to be clear that we're not trying to brainwash or indoctrinate anyone. We want everyone to look at the world we live in and look at other religions and encourage the children to do the same. We would be concerned to find a school where pupils were being indoctrinate, where this was being taught as the only religion. In a Church School, a safe place for children to look at the bigger questions of life. The wall in Gungrog isn't called a church wall or a faith wall it is called a peace wall.

Comment – I understand what you say about the peace wall and bringing children to know that Christianity is part of our history. It is still Christian crosses on the wall, the diocese still go there and the priest lets the children dress up in his gowns.

I have taught in different types of schools. I introduced Diwali in a CiW and in a CP school I invited the clergy in to share their robes. I understand what you are saying and I think there is a misrepresentation of CiW Schools. Going back to transport, pupils are entitled to free transport when they live more than 2 miles away from the school. However we do declare some routes as unsafe routes. I would be very shocked if there were children aged 5 walking from Oldford to their current or any other school unaccompanied.

Comment – There is quite a large Polish community in Welshpool. I will understand if this is something that you cannot say, but the Polish teaching assistants that we have here are very important to us and sometimes they are the only way to communicate between parents and teachers. Many times parents have not been able to explain things to the teacher and the teaching assistant has been able to help. Please keep in your minds that this is important for us and we need that sort of provision to continue.

It adds a richness and diversity to the community. Children need to be supported in their mother tongue. I am convinced that whoever will be the new Headteacher of the new schools, will see the need to have people employed who can support this.

Comment – This is a response to the man who spoke about CiW School. I have two daughters who have come back from school talking about impact bus, this is the most religious thing I have heard them speak about. As we are a Christian area, our children do not come across other religions very often, it is important that they understand from a young age what other religions there are, a CiW School can do as can other schools.

Church in Wales Schools follow the same syllabus as CP Schools. The impact bus goes to all schools, CiW and Community primaries. It is the duty of all schools to teach about the world.

Question – Preschool provision is provided in the infant schools and they can attend from the age of 2. When the school moves, will there still be provision at the schools? When the age of admission changes, children won't start until they are nearly 5 will this affect preschool provision?

The change in age of admission will include extending the 3+ provision from 10.5 hours per week to 12.5 hours per week. The Welsh Government are looking at extending childcare provision for families of 3 and 4 year olds where both parents work so that over time they can access 30 hours. The project board has not yet decided how to look at the setting currently in Welshpool. It is planned that when the school move to the new sites that the preschool provision will as well.

Question – Will the parents have an input into choosing the headteachers?

We will have to establish a shadow governing body, and there will be parent governors on that.

Comment – My children go to Gungrog, I am pleased that it will be a Church in Wales school. My children went onto Maesydre and there isn't the same input there. I find it strange that the man thinks my children are being brainwashed. I suggest that you go and visit these children and you can see that they are all rounded children.

Question – I have a question about the provision for Welsh medium pupils at secondary school. My children went through the Welsh stream at Maesydre which isn't a proper Welsh stream. I think the Welsh medium school is well overdue. My children went to High School just as the Welsh medium provision was removed but Welshpool High School has done what they can. When you speak about North Powys, travel is a real issue. We weren't able to send our children to Llanfair Caereinion so they went to Welshpool. There is no point in sending your child to a Welsh medium primary school if there is no Welsh medium secondary school for them, this is a real issue for us. In the schools now some of them have mixed age groups in a class, and I think in the new school when there will be one age group per class, it will be better for them. The buildings are a mess, and not fit for purpose but at Maesydre we have tried our best we could but it is still a mess. If this proposal doesn't go ahead, what are the alternatives? I think it is very important that we are aware of this.

The consequences if this does not go through is that we could lose Welsh Government funding for the new builds in Welshpool. Further consideration would be to see if the Council could afford capital investment for the whole build. With current austerity it would be difficult to see where this additional investment would come from at the moment it is 50/50 funding from Welsh Government and the Council. In terms of, do things need to change in terms of structure? My view is that they do, but this isn't a criticism of the standards of teaching. If the proposal doesn't go through in time to secure Welsh Government funding then we would start looking at how to change the infrastructure based on used the current sites. Another issue is that we have allocated the funding in Welsh Governments Band A funding for this project and this ends in March 2019 so unless these schools are built by March 2019 we will lose the funding. Welsh Government has made it clear that we

cannot use funding from Band A and Band B together, Band B will be 2019 to 2024 which will be used on other projects. If we do not get this funding secured then the funding could possibly be allocated to other projects within Powys. Also Powys will lose the opportunity to do something good for Welshpool. This is a huge opportunity to develop Welsh medium education in Welshpool. You only have to look at Ysgol Dafydd Llwyd to see the success that they have had, why can't Welshpool replicate this.

Question – You seem to have some good plans for the Welsh medium primary school but not for the Welsh medium secondary school. You start them off on a good path which then ends abruptly.

Currently in Powys we have a postcode lottery when it comes to Welsh medium secondary education, it varies significantly. If you look at the whole of Powys, the most opportunities are in Llanfair Caereinion and Ysgol Bro Hyddgen. We are also looking at a business case looking at establishing a Welsh medium secondary school. The Council are committed to looking at this in the very near future. If you live in Welshpool you are entitled to transport to the closest Welsh medium secondary school, so pupils will get free transport to Llanfair Caereinion.

Question – I have lived in Welshpool for 18 years and been a governor at all 4 schools in that time, as far as I am concerned, this is a great opportunity for Welshpool and for the children. The current situation isn't something we would want to set up if we were looking for something to set up here. I would like to thank Powys County Council, there are some issues and it's good to listen to everyone's points here tonight. This is a really fantastic opportunity.

Question – We have already spoken about the transport challenges for the Oldford area, the other related issue is the number of parents that will be driving their children to school. The better the public transport is, the less this additional traffic will be, so this is very important. It is very important that our staff are not disadvantaged, there is currently the voluntary severance scheme currently being put on offer, it is important that the staff here have the information about the staffing levels at the new schools in time for them to apply for the scheme.

We are currently in the statutory consultation period at the moment and it wouldn't be right to be involved in these talks until it has ended on the 18th October. The shadow governing body will decide whether or not they offer the voluntary severance scheme, but after the consultation period has ended we will have the relevant talks with the governing bodies and staff. We are working with the highways team in regards to the parking spaces and they will be very strict on how many parking spaces we need.

Question – What will happen to the old schools?

We have an asset disposal process, part of Gungrog would go back to the church as they own part of it and the authority own the other part. We have already had some interest in one of the sites from another public body. Otherwise we would be looking to dispose for capital receipts.

Comment – Because we have this marvellous opportunity, I would like to see the school being as inclusive as it can be. We currently have pupils who are transported out for SEN provision, it would be nice in the new schools to have the provision there for them.

Some schools are more inclusive than others. The aim across Powys is to be able to maintain provision in their local schools. We will be working with staff to make sure that the schools are inclusive as they could be. We are looking to ensure that places are available for pupils living in the catchment area of Welshpool, there has been a trend for pupils to travel to schools outside of

Welshpool. We would expect pupils who currently travel out of Welshpool to stay here for education and for the surplus places to decrease.

Comment – Oldford has a very good SEN unit, we have small classrooms for children with ALN and this is very important for these children.

Question - We talked about transport for access to the English medium school. My children walk to school and I would quite like them to be able to walk to the new school for exercise. I don't know how many of you walked along Salop Road tonight to get here, but the pavement is very narrow. Are there any considerations for any alterations to the footpath, such as widening it?

We liaise with other departments in the authority to make sure there is a safe walking route for them to get to school.

Comment – There are issues regarding the safety of the route to school and the congestion in the town. Would like to point out that if the route to school and the transport were sorted then this would be one of the best things you could do.

Question – I am second language Welsh and I have had my education through Welsh. I think that it's a great opportunity in Welshpool for people to learn in Welsh. My parents didn't speak Welsh. I can speak Welsh fluently because I had my whole education through Welsh. My parents always said when I was little that there wasn't enough support for English speaking parents to send their children to Welsh schools. Has there been any discussion about what support can be given to parents?

It's good that you think this is a great opportunity. We, as the Council will look at how the schools will work with the community and with parents alongside Welsh for Adults and Mentrau Iaith. Dafydd Llwyd School holds Welsh Lessons for parents, it's important that the same thing happens here. It's important that parents have the confidence to put their children through Welsh education – It's a leap of faith.

Question – It's important that parents have information about learning Welsh. They read English a lot slower and parents worry about this because they don't understand that they start working in English later on.

This is the opportunity to increase the profile of Welsh Education training throughout the County. It's an opportunity in Welshpool to work with partners like Menter Maldwyn

Question - You said that the schools are in a state of repair. What provision will there be in the new school, will there be money put aside to maintain the building?

Schools are funded in accordance with the fair funding formula, which includes an allocation for repairs and maintenance. A report went to Cabinet that said there is a need for schools to invest their budgets in repairs and maintenance. Welsh Government don't want to build schools that will then need to be replaced in 30 years, Ysgol Trefonnen which has recently in the last few years had a new school replaced a building that was 35 years old. We want to build schools that are going to last 60 years.

Questions – Will the uniform be the same as now or will there be separate uniforms for the Welsh school and the English school?

That would be up to the governing body and the headteacher, but they will need to be mindful of the cost and if they do decide a new uniform then they need to make sure it is affordable. Sometime they have come up with a badge which you can then sew directly on to uniform to keep costs down.

Question – Welshpool have recently just had a new badge, we now have all four schools on one badge. We wouldn't want the Welsh school to have a different badge to the English school.

There may be a few changes which is normal, to the badge or the wording. I was excited when I found out that you put all four schools onto one badge here. I'm sure the Headteacher and the governors will work with the parents to do this. There is one community and I think that everyone will work together for a smooth transition.

Question – My son attends Gungrog and they are a healthy school. The dentist visits them and so does the nurse. Will this continue in the new school?

There is a nurse allocated to the area, it is up to the governing body whether they want that to continue and I would be surprised if it didn't continue.

Question – A small percentage goes out of Welshpool for education, I think it may be larger. Do you have the exact figures? I think many of the smaller schools are reliant on those numbers, what would the repercussions be? I think many parents will want to send their children to a new build school.

Information shared with schools suggests that there are around 100 pupils whose home is closer to the one of the four schools but are accessing education outside of Welshpool. Until this actually happens we cannot predict what will happen. We need to make sure that all pupils have access to a fair broad education. As we move on we may be looking at federations, amalgamations etc. There may even be a move to close some schools but until it happens it is very difficult to predict the future. I will be surprised if parents decide to move their children out of their current provision to other schools, but perhaps children in preschool.

Question – If it is decided that the sites are not suitable, is there an alternative? If the planners or highways decide they don't think it's suitable.

I don't see there being a problem with the Maesydre site. There is an issue with the other site though, part of it is on a flood plain. We have been told that it is possible to construct a school on that site, however it will be restricted.

Question – So if it is deemed unsuitable, that would be the end of it?

I'm not saying that. We have had discussions and have looked at various sites which had other issues. We are fairly confident that the sites we have are developable.

Question – You say you don't wish the children to be segregated, but surely by having two sites they will be. Lots of children have friends in the schools they are currently in. Would Welsh Government fund a dual stream school?

The proposal was always to have two schools. We did look for a site that could have the two schools on but there wasn't a site big enough. There is no indication from Welsh Government that they wouldn't fund a dual stream school but we wanted to continue with two schools. Having an English

medium school and a Welsh medium school meets Welsh Governments aspirations to raise the number of those in Welsh medium education.

Question – Surely by having an English medium school and a Welsh medium school on separate sites then the Welsh medium pupils won't get to mix with children from other cultures.

It is a very valid point but in some schools in Powys we have children from other backgrounds, Polish for example that go to Welsh medium schools. Pupils also go to football and clubs so they have the opportunity there so it would only be when they are in school that they are separate. It would be welcomed that children from other cultures attend Welsh medium schools.

Question – Maesydre starts school at 8:50 and finishes at 3:25, those times are very close to when the high school starts and finishes. Are you going to change the times?

The decision will rest with the shadow governing body working with the local authority. The Welsh medium school would serve the whole catchment and we would be looking at having joint transport with the secondary school. Ysgol Dafydd Llwyd changed their start and finish times so the transition was smoother.

I have two points, which I have heard that people are worried about cut backs, this is a golden opportunity and it should be welcomed that the Council are intending to invest in the education in Welshpool. It will mean a lot to current pupils and those in the future. Friday, I was speaking with officers in Blaenau Gwent. They intend to establish 4 Welsh medium schools in the future but they don't have the capital funding. If the people of Welshpool don't take this opportunity, the money will go elsewhere like to Blaenau Gwent and they will welcome it.

Comment – I wish this had happened a few years ago, I just watched my son go from Ardwyn to Maesydre and it is difficult for them to go from being the eldest in the school to being the youngest.

Comment – I have heard people saying English school and Welsh school but it is an English medium school not an English School. We have had a Welsh stream for a few years now and it has been a massive failure and it hasn't grown. What we really have is an English medium school with some Welsh classes, when the children go out to play it is in English. The benefit of having a Welsh medium school is that they can live through Welsh and not just someone who is able to speak Welsh in a classroom. My children have done well but they get confused when someone speaks Welsh to them outside of the classroom.

Darren Ivey – I feel like there is a lot of support here for this proposal, although there are some concerns and I think you have given the officers and the members some things to think about.

Ian Roberts explains the next steps of the process. He emphasises the importance of keeping everyone informed of the whole process. The consultation period ends on the 18th October and it is important that we receive your views. All of the details are in the consultation document. You have given us a lot to take back and think about.

Councillor Arwel Jones seconded what Ian Roberts said and on behalf of the leader and himself he thanked everyone and explained that it has been very beneficial to hear your views, every issue raised will have a response in the consultation report. Thank you for your questions and sharing your views with us.