

Options Appraisal

**Ysgol Dyffryn Banw and
Ysgol Llanerfyl**

July 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to set out the business case for the future organisation of primary education in the Banwy Valley.

Ysgol Dyffryn Banw and Ysgol Llanerfyl are two small Welsh-medium primary schools situated in the Banwy Valley in North Powys. Ysgol Dyffryn Banw is a Community Primary School, whilst Ysgol Llanerfyl is a Foundation Church in Wales School.

The schools are situated approximately 2.5 miles apart, and serve the villages of Llanerfyl, Llangadfan and Y Foel, along with the surrounding rural area.

Current pupil numbers¹ at the two schools are as follows:

	N2	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Ysgol Dyffryn Banw	0	2	2	1	7	4	4	6	26
Ysgol Llanerfyl	2	3	4	6	1	5	5	5	32
TOTAL	2	5	6	7	8	9	9	11	57

¹ Teacher Centre, 6th July 2018

2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

2.1 Policy context

The Council has recently agreed a new School Organisation Policy, which sets out the council's aspiration for developing the educational infrastructure in Powys. The policy states Council's aims for the Powys schools infrastructure, which are as follows:

'The Council aspires to ensure that Powys has the right number of schools in the right place, and in the right condition, for the current and future pupil population.

The Council aims to have an educational model which fulfils the following:

- Provides all learners with the opportunity to achieve their potential
- Has high quality, resilient leadership and management
- Has high quality learning environments, with the long term aim that all schools will be assessed as condition A or B
- Has a greater focus on collaboration and partnership working, in order to enable schools to provide the best possible opportunities for learners
- Enables schools to operate effectively and efficiently within the funding available
- Increases demand for Welsh-medium provision and provides access to provision which will enable pupils to become confident Welsh speakers
- Develops our schools into establishments that are central to community activity
- Has a high quality ICT infrastructure that will enable all schools to provide enhanced opportunities for learners
- Provides access to high quality early years provision
- Provides support for learners with additional learning needs which aligns with the requirements of the new Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act
- Provides access to high quality post-16 provision in schools, which is attractive to learners, financially sustainable and minimises learner travel'

Further to this, the Policy states that:

'In order to move towards a more efficient schools network, a new Delivery Plan will be implemented with a greater focus on working in partnership with schools and the communities they serve, and on alternative models of delivering education, such as collaboration models, federation, multi-site schools and all-through schools.

The Council's Delivery Plan will focus on delivering the following priorities:

- Secondary schools to become 'all-through schools', or part of multi-sited arrangements

- Small primary schools² to be part of formal collaborations / federations / amalgamations
- Remove infant / junior split by creating ‘all-through’ primary schools
- New Welsh-medium provision to be established
- Improvements to the Powys schools estate, either as part of the Welsh Government’s 21st Century Schools Programme or as part of the Council’s Asset Management Programme
- A new model for delivering post-16 provision to be implemented
- Transforming the delivery of support for pupils with additional learning needs

In addition to the above priorities, the Council will encourage all schools to:

- Identify areas where staff and / or services can be shared across more than one school in order to improve efficiency
- Develop the use of ICT links between school sites to provide distance learning opportunities’

2.2 Information about the two schools

	School Type	Language Category	Admission Number
Ysgol Dyffryn Banw	Community Primary School building owned by PCC with a community centre attached to the school.	Welsh-medium	8
Ysgol Llanerfyl	Foundation Church in Wales School building owned by the Pricilla Foster Trust. School responsible for its own admissions.	Welsh-medium	7

2.2.1 Pupil Numbers

i) Current pupil numbers³

	N2	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Ysgol Dyffryn Banw	0	2	2	1	7	4	4	6	26
Ysgol Llanerfyl	2	3	4	6	1	5	5	5	32

² The Welsh Government defines a ‘small school’ as a school that contains fewer than 91 registered pupils in the Education (Small Schools) (Wales) Order 2014: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2014/1133/made>

³ Teacher Centre, 6th July 2018

TOTAL	2	5	6	7	8	9	9	11	57

ii) **Historical pupil numbers⁴**

	Jan. 2011	Jan. 2012	Jan. 2013	Jan. 2014	Jan. 2015	Jan. 2016	Jan. 2017
Ysgol Dyffryn Banw	45	50	46	38	35	33	28
Ysgol Llanerfyl	47	51	42	41	38	37	35
TOTAL	92	101	88	79	73	70	63

iii) **Projected pupil numbers**

	January 2019	January 2020	January 2021	January 2022	January 2023
Ysgol Dyffryn Banw	22	18	17	13	15
Ysgol Llanerfyl (R-Yr6)	28	30	29	31	28
TOTAL	50	48	36	44	43

2.2.2 Building Capacity and Condition

i) **Capacity**

The following table provides information about the current capacities of the two schools and the assessed maximum capacities:

	Current Capacity	Maximum Capacity
Ysgol Dyffryn Banw	72 + 10 nursery / reception	99 + 10 nursery / reception
Ysgol Llanerfyl	44 + 5 nursery / reception	59 + 5 nursery / reception

ii) **Building Condition**

⁴ PLASC

In the Spring of 2018, the Council commissioned HOWPS to carry out updated condition and suitability assessments of the two schools.

Detailed reports have been provided for two schools, however the overall assessments are as follows:

	Condition	Suitability
Ysgol Dyffryn Banw	C Generally poor	B Generally satisfactory
Ysgol Llanerfyl	B Generally satisfactory	C/D Poor to bad This assessment is based on the perceived limitation of having no hall, and the significant limitations due to conversion and extension of the original property

2.2.3 Quality and standards of education

i) Estyn

The following table summarises the last Estyn inspections of the two schools:

	Ysgol Dyffryn Banw	Ysgol Llanerfyl
Date of Inspection	September 2016	November 2014
School's Current Performance	Good	Adequate
Prospects for Improvement	Good	Adequate
Follow Up Activity	No follow up activity	Estyn Monitoring Estyn Monitoring visit January 2016 – the school was judged to have made good progress, and was removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn monitoring

School Categorisation

The latest categorisations of the two schools in accordance with the National School Categorisation System for 2017 are as follows:

	Standards Group	Improvement Capacity	Support Capacity
Ysgol Dyffryn Banw	N/A	A	Green
Ysgol Llanerfyl	N/A	C	Yellow

2.2.4 Financial information

i) Cost per pupil (2018/19)

	Budget share per school	Budget share per pupil	Notional SEN budget	Non ISB funds devolved to the school
Ysgol Dyffryn Banw	£156,330	£6,013	£5,493	£6,025
Ysgol Llanerfyl	£152,093	£5,432	£7,105	£6,020
Powys average (Primary)	N/A	£3,752	N/A	N/A

ii) Current budgetary position (as of 1st May submittal by full governing body)

	2017/18 Actual Cumulative Outturn	2018/19 Budget	2019/20 Budget	2020/21 Budget
Ysgol Dyffryn Banw	£28,525	£15,582	(£1,576)	(£23,536)
Ysgol Llanerfyl	£19,422	(£969)	(£25,852)	(£50,624)

2.2.5 Home to school travel

i) Closest School

An analysis of pupil travel patterns has been carried out, based on the 58 pupils that were attending Ysgol Dyffryn Banw and Ysgol Llanerfyl in November 2017. The closest Welsh-medium provider for all of these pupils is as follows:

	Pupils attending Ysgol Dyffryn Banw	Pupils attending Ysgol Llanerfyl	Total
Ysgol Dyffryn Banw	25	1	26
Ysgol Llanerfyl	0	29	29
Ysgol Llanbryn-mair	0	2	2
Ysgol Gymraeg Y Trallwng	1	0	1

ii) Average Travel Distance

The current average travel distance for all pupils currently attending Ysgol Dyffryn Banw is 4.01 miles.

The current average travel distance for all pupils currently attending Ysgol Llanerfyl is 1.79 miles.

If there was no school in Banw, the average travel distance for all current pupils attending the two schools to attend provision in Llanerfyl would be 3.31 miles.

If there was no school in Llanerfyl, the average travel distance for all current pupils attending the two schools to attend provision in Banw would be 3.57 miles.

(Note: in this section, 'all pupils' includes pupils for whom Ysgol Dyffryn Banw or Ysgol Llanerfyl is not their closest provider of Welsh-medium education)

iii) Furthest Travel Distance

Of the pupils that currently attend Ysgol Dyffryn Banw, the furthest travel distance to the school for those pupils for whom Ysgol Dyffryn Banw is the closest Welsh-medium provider is 8.48 miles. If there was no school in Banw, the furthest distance to the nearest alternative provision at Llanerfyl would be 10.01 miles.

Of the pupils that currently attend Ysgol Llanerfyl, the furthest travel distance to the school for those pupils for whom Ysgol Llanerfyl is the closest Welsh-medium provider is 4.71 miles. Should there be no school in Llanerfyl, the furthest distance to the nearest alternative provision at Banw would be 5.85 miles.

2.2.6 Equalities information⁵

i) National identity

(Pupils aged 5 or over on the 31st August 2017)

	Welsh	English	Scottish	Irish	British	Other	Refused	Not supplied	Total pupils
Ysgol Dyffryn Banw	12	1	0	0	11	0	0	0	24
Ysgol Llanerfyl	11	2	0	0	14	0	0	0	27

ii) Ethnic Group

(Pupils aged 5 or over on the 31st August 2017)

	White British	Other known ethnicity	Information not yet obtained	Total pupils
Ysgol Dyffryn Banw	24	0	0	24
Ysgol Llanerfyl	25	0	2	27

iii) English as an Additional Language

	EAL pupils
Ysgol Dyffryn Banw	0
Ysgol Llanerfyl	0

iv) Free School Meals

	Number of pupils who had a free school meal on Census day
Ysgol Dyffryn Banw	3

⁵ PLASC January 2018

Ysgol Llanerfyl	0
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v) Pupils in care

	Number of pupils in care
Ysgol Dyffryn Banw	0
Ysgol Llanerfyl	0

vi) SEN

	School Action	School Action Plus	Statement
Ysgol Dyffryn Banw	5	4	0
Ysgol Llanerfyl	5	0	0

vii) Welsh at Home

	Does not speak Welsh at home	Does speak Welsh at home
Ysgol Dyffryn Banw	23	3
Ysgol Llanerfyl	8	24

2.2.7 Early Years Provision

One early years provider – Cylch Meithrin Dyffryn Banw – serves pupils from the whole area. This setting meets in Llanerfyl village hall. The setting receives 3+ funding from the Council.

4. CASE FOR CHANGE

4.1 Existing arrangements – the problem with the status quo

The case for change is based on the need to ensure that Welsh medium primary education in the Banwy Valley is sustainable.

The current challenges are:

- Low numbers of pupils at both schools – the Welsh Government’s definition of a ‘small school’ is schools with under 91 pupils. Ysgol Dyffryn Banw and Ysgol Llanerfyl currently have 57 pupils between them.
- Pupil numbers have fallen significantly over the last few years and are projected to decrease further.
- Both schools provide high quality education, but the low pupil numbers is creating increasing challenges for both schools – educationally and financially.
- Financial sustainability of both schools – deficit budgets forecasted for the next two years, which is even more challenging to address given the size of both schools.
- Both schools provide high quality education through the medium of Welsh – however, free home-to-school transport is now provided to pupils who wish to have an English medium education and 26 pupils are accessing this provision and travelling to Llanfair Caereinion CP’s English stream.
- Both schools have condition/suitability issues which are explored further below.

During discussions with both governing bodies, it was agreed that **the most suitable way forward would be for the two schools to come together, to ensure that there would be one larger school in the area.**

The scope of this business case, therefore, include **options to establish a single primary school in the area.** Clustering, collaboration and federation are discounted as options at this stage as these would not enable the creation of a single school and are therefore outside the scope.

As the condition/suitability of both school sites is a key consideration in this assessment, Heart of Wales Property Services was commissioned to provide an updated evaluation of both sites. The information received in these evaluations is summarised below.

i) Maintenance costs

The council commissioned HOWPS to carry out updated condition assessments of the 2 current school buildings. These assessments included an estimate of the maintenance expenditure that would be required on the two school buildings over the next 5 years.

These estimated costs are summarised in the following table:

Year	Ysgol Dyffryn Banw	Ysgol Llanerfyl
0 – 2018	£87,500.00	£0.00
1 – 2019	£271,050.00	£54,250.00
3– 2020	£20,500.00	£94,750.00
3 – 2021	£7,225.00	£3,700.00
4 – 2022	£2,000.00	£8,500.00
5 – 2023	£0.00	£16,500.00
5 year total	£388,275.00	£177,250.00

ii) Condition and suitability assessment

HOWPS also assessed the suitability of both schools to accommodate up to 60 pupils and any works required to remodel the schools to meet the requirements of Building Bulletin 98 for primary schools.

The assessment received was as follows:

	Ysgol Dyffryn Banw	Ysgol Llanerfyl
Summary of assessment	<p>The teaching accommodation at Banw is broadly of the appropriate size, however the current provision is within 4 small classrooms. The learning resource area is smaller than expected but is offset by over-provision within the general classrooms. It is considered that internal alterations could be made to open the classrooms into 2 teaching bases.</p> <p>The school is over-provided with halls and dining facilities.</p> <p>Staff and administration areas are only a quarter of the current design area.</p>	<p>The teaching accommodation at Llanerfyl is broadly of the appropriate size, however the current provision is within three classrooms and these cannot easily be re-configured into 2 classes.</p> <p>The school does not currently have a hall or dining room.</p> <p>Staff and administration areas are around half of the current design area.</p> <p>Overall, the school is around half the size required by current guidelines for teaching 60 children.</p>

	<p>Overall, the school is (including the halls and dining facilities) around a quarter larger than that would be required from the design targets. However, any imposition of modern targets on a school designed to earlier standards is problematic, and will inevitably lead to a compromised design solution. That said, it is considered that the school could accommodate 60 pupils by the construction of a relatively small extension to provide an enhanced staff room, disabled toileting and storage.</p>	<p>The greatest shortfall is the absence of a multi-purpose hall, but additional staff, admin, storage and toileting space is also required. An extension of 250m² would meet the headline shortfall, but planning this effectively would be problematic given the current arrangement of the school over two floors.</p>
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5. AVAILABLE OPTIONS AND IDENTIFYING THE PREFERRED OPTION

In order to assess the advantages and disadvantages of potential options, options will be evaluated according to how well they meet the key objectives and critical success factors.

5.1 Investment Objectives

The investment objectives are as follows:

1. To deliver a sustainable model of high quality primary education for the pupils of the Banwy Valley
2. To ensure that primary provision is delivered in the most strategic location to serve the Banwy Valley
3. To provide education in good quality teaching and learning environments
4. To provide a more efficient education infrastructure

5.2 Critical Success Factors

Options will also be appraised against the following Critical Success Factors:

Critical Success Factor	Description
1 – Strategic fit and business needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The options must satisfy all 5 investment objectives and business needs • The option must optimise the benefits as presented in the Main Benefits Criteria • The option must be aligned with and promote the national, regional and local strategies presented in sections 6 and 7
2 – 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
3 – Potential achievability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The option must be acceptable to learners, staff, governors and the wider community • 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 – 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

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5.3 Options Considered

A range of options were considered that could potentially provide a solution.

Option	Description
1	Establish a new school operating across the two current sites
2	Establish a new school operating from the current Dyffryn Banw site
3	Establish a new school operating from the current Llanerfyl site
4	Establish a new school operating from a new site in the area

5.4 Advantages and disadvantages of all options

SWOT analysis' for each of the four options are provided below. As well as input from officers, these also reflect comments provided at a drop in session held with parents on the 7th February 2018.

Option 1: A new school operating across the two current sites

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in both villages - Bringing the two schools together under a new name and a new headteacher would bring the communities and the pupils together - Benefits in terms of leadership and management - More opportunities could be provided to the pupils - There would be no additional transport costs - Possibly the most straightforward option 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There would still be small numbers of pupils on each site - Pupils would still be taught separately - Would still be running two buildings which would mean twice the cost - Would not reduce surplus places in the area - Would not lead to a financial saving to the council
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Possibility that the schools could separate again if numbers were to increase - Opportunity to include Cylch Meithrin / Ti a Fi on one of the sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the future, it's possible that parents would opt for one site over the other - Possible conflict between church school and community school

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Option 2: A new school operating from the current Dyffryn Banw site

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is the larger site of the two and could accommodate all current pupils in the area - There are more facilities on this site e.g indoor hall, dining hall, large playground and playing fields, plenty of parking - All pupils would be together in the same place which would have a positive impact on the opportunities which could be offered to them - Would reduce surplus places in the area - Would lead to a financial saving to the council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There would be no provision in Llanerfyl - Not having primary provision in the village would impact on the Llanerfyl community - Additional transport would be required for Llanerfyl pupils - Would be more difficult for Llanerfyl pupils to access after school activities - The council would not benefit from any sale of the Llanerfyl site as it isn't owned by the council - Some investment would be needed in the Dyffryn Banw building - There are no safe walking / cycling routes to the school - Would be less convenient for Llanerfyl parents, many of whom work in the opposite direction - Current pupil projections are lower for Dyffryn Banw than Llanerfyl
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sufficient space to accommodate any growth in pupil numbers in the future - Opportunity to accommodate early years provision on the site - Opportunity to bring the two communities together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some Llanerfyl parents may choose for their children to attend a different school - Concern that Llanerfyl pupils would not travel up the valley to Banw

Option 3: A new school operating from the current Llanerfyl site

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current numbers at Llanerfyl are slightly higher than Banw, therefore this would be a more convenient location for the majority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There would be no provision in Llangadfan - Not having primary provision in the village would impact on the Llangadfan community

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current pupil projections at Llanerfyl are higher than Dyffryn Banw - Building is currently in a better condition than Banw - All pupils would be together in the same place which would have a positive impact on the opportunities which could be offered to them - Would reduce surplus places in the area - Would lead to a financial saving to the council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concern about the impact on Banw Community Hall if there was no school located on the site - Sale of the Banw site could be difficult due to the co-location of the community centre - Additional transport would be required for Llangadfan pupils - Would be more difficult for Llangadfan pupils to access after school activities - Capacity of the building is lower than Dyffryn Banw's - No separate dining area / canteen - No access to a hall on the school site – pupils have to walk up the road - Access to the school is down a narrow lane – this could be problematic if there were more pupils attending the school - Limited parking on the site - Capital investment would be required to provide additional facilities - Currently there is nowhere to accommodate Cylch Meithrin / early years provision on the site
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity for capital receipts from the sale of the Banw site – this could be used to invest in Llanerfyl school e.g. better parking, bigger playing field - Llanerfyl is more central in the area which meant that it could attract Welsh-medium pupils from Llanfair and the area - There is land nearby which could be purchased to extend the car park and buildings - Opportunity to bring the two communities together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some Banw parents may choose for their children to attend alternative schools

Option 4: A new school operating from a new site in the area

Strengths	Weaknesses
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would be a fresh start for the area - Could be located in a central location which would be equally accessible to the two communities - All pupils would be together in the same place which would have a positive impact on the opportunities which could be offered to them - Would reduce surplus places in the area - Could lead to a financial saving to the council - Any new building would include all required facilities, disabled access, early years provision, a hall, playing fields etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are already two buildings in the area - Would be an expensive option - No land has currently been identified
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to access 21st Century Schools funding from the Welsh Government - Could attract pupils from further afield 	

5.5 Financial Assessment

i) A new school operating across the two current sites

Current Estimated funding 18/19 – 2 schools	£308,423
Total	£308,423
Revised Estimated Funding/Costs	
1 school across 2 sites	£321,577
Management saving	£4,679
Total	£316,898
Saving / (Cost)	(£8,475)
Estimated Saving / (Costs)	(£8,475)

ii) A new school operating from the current Dyffryn Banw site

Current Estimated funding 18/19 – 2 schools	£308,423
Current Catering Costs	£27,596
Total	£336,019

Revised Estimated Funding/Costs	
1 school 1 site (Dyffryn Banw)	£227,265
Catering costs	£24,572
Total	£251,837
Saving / (Cost)	£84,182
Estimated Additional Transport Costs	£34,956
Estimated Saving / (Costs)	£49,226

iii) **A new school operating from the current Llanerfyl site**

Current Estimated funding 18/19 – 2 schools	£308,423
Current Catering Costs	£27,596
Total	£336,019
Revised Estimated Funding/Costs	
1 school 1 site (Llanerfyl)	£213,065
Catering costs	£24,572
Total	£237,637
Saving / (Cost)	£98,382
Estimated Additional Transport Costs	£34,956
Estimated Saving / (Costs)	£63,426

iv) **A new school operating from a new site in the area**

It is not possible to estimate the cost of this option at this stage as it would be dependent on the size / location of the new school. Should this option be taken forward, a detailed financial appraisal would need to be carried out as part of a business case process.

5.6 Options Appraisal

The options were appraised against the investment objectives and critical success factors using the following simple scoring methodology:

- X Does not meet the objective
- ? May meet the objective
- ✓ Meets the objective
- ✓✓ More than meets the objective

	Option 1: New school across 2 sites	Option 2: New school in Banw	Option 3: New school in Llanerfyl	Option 4: New school in a new location
1 – To deliver a sustainable model of high quality primary education for the pupils of the Banwy Valley	X	✓	✓	?
2 – To ensure that primary provision is delivered in the most strategic location to serve the Banwy Valley	✓	✓	✓✓	?
3 – To provide education in a fit-for-purpose learning environment	?	✓	?	✓✓
4 – To provide a more efficient education infrastructure	x	✓	✓	?
Critical Success Factors				
Strategic Fit	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Potential Affordability	x	✓	✓	?
Potential Achievability	x	✓	✓✓	x
Value for Money	x	✓	✓✓	x
No. of ticks	2	9	11	4

6. Conclusion and Preferred Option

6.1 Summary of Options Appraisal

The options appraisal is summarised below:

Investment Objective 1 – To deliver a sustainable model of high quality primary education for the pupils of the Banwy Valley

Option 1 is considered unsuitable.

Options 2, 3 and 4 – Merging the two current schools on either site or a new site would provide a model of provision that could potentially be sustainable in the future – however, even with a merger of both schools, they are significantly below the Welsh Government's threshold for a small school.

Investment Objective 2 – To ensure that primary provision is delivered in the most strategic location to serve the Banwy Valley

Option 3 (Llanerfyl) scores higher because the current pupil numbers at Ysgol Llanerfyl are slightly higher than at Ysgol Dyffryn Banw, therefore this would be a more convenient location for the majority. Also, pupil projections at Ysgol Llanerfyl are higher than at Ysgol Dyffryn Banw. Parents are already travelling in to Llanerfyl to attend the Cylch Meithrin.

Investment Objective 3 – To provide education in a fit-for-purpose learning environment

Option 2 (Ysgol Dyffryn Banw) more than meets this objective. This is the larger site of the two and could accommodate all current pupils in the area. There are more facilities on this site e.g. indoor hall, dining hall, large playground and playing fields, plenty of parking. In terms of suitability, the building was categorised as 'B', 'generally satisfactory'. However, the condition of the school is categorised as 'C', which means that the overall condition is assessed to be 'generally poor'. Capital investment would be required to improve the condition of the school.

Ysgol Llanerfyl has many challenges in terms of suitability, and was assessed as 'C/D' – 'poor to bad'. However, the condition of the school is categorised as 'B', which means that the overall condition is assessed to be 'generally satisfactory'. The main issue in terms of suitability is that the school has no hall. However, this is similar to many other schools in Powys. The school does have access to, and makes use of, the village hall, which is located a short walk away from the school. Pupils are fully supervised when they walk to the hall. Capital investment would be required to improve the suitability of the school.

The option that scores the highest is a new school built on a new site, as this would be built to Building Bulletin 99 standard.

Investment Objective 4 – To provide a more efficient education infrastructure

Option 2 (Banw) and Option 3 (Llanerfyl) both meet this objective. The costs of running and maintaining two separate buildings would reduce as there would only be one building to maintain. Fewer staff would be required as all the pupils would be taught in the same setting. Both options would provide a financial saving.

Option 4, a new build on a new site, also has the potential to be more efficient in terms of running costs, however an additional capital outlay would be required.

Option 1 is the least efficient of the options.

Critical Success Factors

- **Strategic Fit**

As all the options involve the merger of both schools to create a single school, they all meet the authority's aspirations for schools, as outlined in the School Organisation Policy.

Strengthening Welsh medium education is also a key part of the authority's WESP.

- **Potential affordability**

Option 1 does not meet this CSF because maintaining both schools with such low numbers is unsustainable.

Option 2 and 3 meet this criteria.

Option 4 could meet this criteria, however additional capital outlay would be required which may make this unaffordable.

- **Potential achievability**

Option 1 is not achievable as both schools have recognised that this is not a sustainable model.

Option 2 (Banw) is supported by some parents as evidenced in the informal consultation, however Option 3 (Llanerfyl) has scored higher because it also has the support of some parents, and also has the support of the Diocese, a key stakeholder.

Option 4 was not supported by many parents during the informal consultation.

- **Value for Money**

The option that scores highest is Option 3 (Llanerfyl). There is a higher revenue saving to the authority.

Ysgol Dyffryn Banw school/site is owned by Powys County Council. If the site was no longer required for educational purposes, it could potentially provide a capital receipt or re-investment potential for the authority.

Ysgol Llanerfyl is owned by the Priscilla Foster Trust, and therefore there would be no opportunity for the authority to receive a capital receipt should the site no longer be required for educational purposes.

Based on the HOWPS assessment, a greater level of investment would be required in the current Ysgol Dyffryn Banw building compared with the Ysgol Llanerfyl.

Option 4 scores the lowest because of the additional capital outlay that would be required.

6.2 Preferred option

Options 1 and 4 are **discounted** because they scored the lowest against the investment objectives and the critical success factors.

From the assessment that was carried out, there is very little to differentiate the two school sites as a base to establish a new school. However, the main differences are in the following areas:

- a) Strategic location – Llanerfyl scores higher
- b) Learning environments – Ysgol Dyffryn Banw scores higher
- c) Potential achievability – Llanerfyl scores higher
- d) Value for money – Llanerfyl scores higher

On this basis, the **preferred option** is to establish a new school on the Llanerfyl site.

6.3 Risks

However, as with all school reorganisation proposals, there are risks associated with this options. The following risks have been identified in respect of the preferred option:

- i) Based on the current pupil projections, there would still be less than 50 pupils in the new school in a few years time
- ii) Pupils may transfer to other schools instead of the proposed new school, which would impact on pupil numbers
- iii) As the new school would be a small Welsh-medium school in a rural area, it may not attract a headteacher
- iv) Welsh Government may not provide capital funding for investment in a school of this size
- v) The current configuration of the school at Llanerfyl may cause challenges for the new school in relation to curriculum delivery following the introduction of the new curriculum

6.4 Denominational status and category of the new school

6.4.1 Denominational status

Ysgol Dyffryn Banw is currently a non-denominational Community Primary school whilst Ysgol Llanerfyl is a Foundation Church in Wales school. Any new school established could either be a Community Primary School or a Church in Wales school.

The survey of parents carried out in the spring of 2018 asked parents to specify their preference in terms of the denominational status of any new school. 25% of respondents stated that they would prefer the school to be a Community Primary School, 29% stated that they would prefer the school to be a Church in Wales Primary School, whilst 43% of parents stated that they had no preference. 3% of respondents did not answer this question.

The nearest alternative Church in Wales provision is located in Castle Caereinion, approximately 10 miles from Llanerfyl. However, this is an English-medium school. The nearest alternative Welsh-medium Church in Wales provision is in either Rhayader C. in W. School or Trefonnen C. in W. School, Llandrindod. Both of these are dual stream schools, located approximately 40 miles from Llanerfyl.

In order to continue to provide access to Welsh-medium Church in Wales provision in Llanerfyl, and as this is supported by the views of parents as expressed in the survey carried out in the spring of 2018, the preferred option is that the new school is a Church in Wales primary school.

6.4.1 Category of the new school

A Church in Wales school can either be a Voluntary Controlled school or a Voluntary Aided school. These two categories are broadly defined as follows⁶:

- **Voluntary controlled schools** – these are run by a voluntary organisation (in Wales this is typically the Roman Catholic Church or the Church in Wales) and yet closely controlled by the local authority. The local authority employs the staff and sets the entrance criteria, but the school land and buildings are owned by a charity (often the church) which appoints some members of the governing body.
- **Voluntary aided schools** – these are run by a voluntary organisation and enjoy greater policy and financial independence than voluntary controlled schools. They tend to be religious or faith schools, in Wales typically the Roman Catholic Church or Church in Wales. The governing body employs the staff and sets the entrance criteria and the school buildings and land are usually owned by a charity (often the church).

⁶ Taken from <http://law.gov.wales/publicservices/education/school-and-other-education-for-children/Schools-maintained-by-local-authorities/?lang=en#/publicservices/education/school-and-other-education-for-children/Schools-maintained-by-local-authorities/?tab=overview&lang=en>

Ysgol Llanerfyl is currently a Foundation school. It is no longer possible to establish a new Foundation school. The closest category to a Foundation school is a Voluntary Aided school, because similarly to Foundation schools, Voluntary Aided schools have control over their own admissions arrangements.

The Welsh Government provides a more attractive rate for capital funding related to Voluntary Aided schools. Typically, capital developments as part of the 21st Century Schools programme attract 50% of funding from the Welsh Government, with the remaining 50% coming from the Local Authority. However, for Voluntary Aided schools, the Welsh Government provides 85% of funding, with the remaining 15% coming from the Local Authority and/or the Diocese.

Based on these factors, the preferred option is to establish a new Voluntary Aided Church in Wales primary school in Llanerfyl.