

Transforming Education in Powys

Options Appraisal

Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys sets out a number of aims and objectives to transform the Powys education system over the next few years, in order to provide the best possible opportunities to Powys learners now and in the future. One of the objectives included in the strategy is to 'Reconfigure and rationalise primary provision'.

The purpose of this paper is to identify a preferred option for the future of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.

Current pupil numbers¹ at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School are as follows:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	7	10	2	8	5	0	5	37

¹ Finance NOR – 2020 Pupil Count Day (6th November 2020)

PART A – THE CASE FOR CHANGE

2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

2.1 POLICY CONTEXT

Following the inspection of Powys Education Services carried out by Estyn in the summer of 2019, the Council carried out a strategic review of schools during 2019-20, which led to the development of a new Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys. The strategy, which was developed following engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, was approved in April 2020.

The strategy sets out a Vision Statement and Guiding Principles which will underpin the Council's work to transform the Powys education system over the coming years. The Vision Statement is as follows:

All children and young people in Powys will experience a high-quality, inspiring education to help develop the knowledge, skills and attributes that will enable them to become healthy, personally fulfilled, economically productive, socially responsible and globally engaged citizens of 21st century Wales.

In addition, the strategy outlines a number of aims and objectives, which include an objective to 'Reconfigure and rationalise primary provision' in order to improve overall learner entitlement and experience in Powys.

To take forward this objective, the Council is reviewing the smallest schools in Powys, with the aim of identifying solutions for these schools which will meet the objective to 'Reconfigure and rationalise primary provision', in order to ensure that education in Powys is delivered through an affordable, resilient infrastructure which provides the best possible opportunities to learners, now and in the future.

2.2 WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN POWYS

Powys is a large, rural authority. Covering a quarter of the landmass of Wales, it contains only 4.2% of the population, making it the most sparsely populated county in Wales. Delivering services across such a large, sparsely populated area is challenging and expensive.

Whilst there has been some reorganisation activity in Powys over recent years, the county's schools' infrastructure largely remains similar to that which was in place 20 years ago.

The Council's new Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys outlines a number of challenges facing education in Powys, which were identified following engagement with key stakeholders during the autumn term 2019 and spring term 2020.

The following is a summary of the main challenges facing the Council:

i) High proportion of small schools

Based on PLASC 2019 figures, there were 33 small primary schools in Powys – this is approximately 40% of the primary provision in the county. 21 schools had fewer than 50 pupils, and for those schools the budget share per pupil is generally higher than the Powys average for primary schools.

ii) Decreasing pupil numbers

Pupil numbers have decreased over the past decade, and are expected to decrease further over the next five years. Pupil numbers in the primary sector in Powys are expected to decrease by approximately 4% by 2025.

iii) High number of surplus places

Based on PLASC 2019 figures, there was 18% surplus capacity in Powys primary schools. With pupil numbers across Powys projected to decrease overall over the coming years, the proportion of surplus places across the county will continue to increase.

iv) Building condition

Whilst the Council has invested in its school's estate through the 21st Century Schools Programme and the Asset Management Plan, building condition remains an issue across Powys, with associated maintenance costs.

v) Financial pressures

The Council is currently facing significant financial pressures in general. This is affecting all service areas, including the schools' sector. There are significant variations in the budget share per pupil across Powys schools, ranging from £3,726 to £11,912 in the primary sector.

vi) Inequality in access to Welsh-medium education

In contrast to other areas of Wales, there has been no growth in Welsh-medium pupil numbers in Powys over recent years. Significant changes are needed to the Welsh-medium offer in Powys to reverse the trend of the

last few years and ensure that all Powys learners can access comprehensive Welsh-medium provision throughout their educational careers.

vii) Limited post-14 and post-16 offer

In September 2019, the Council's Cabinet considered a report on post-16 provision, which outlined a number of challenges facing the sector, including decreasing learner numbers, financial challenges and sustainability of the curriculum offer, including Welsh-medium provision.

viii) Inequality in access to SEN provision

Within Powys, pupils with special education needs (SEN) attend a range of settings, including special schools, specialist centres, the pupil referral unit (PRU) as well as mainstream schools.

Currently, not all pupils are educated in the setting that meets their needs best, and depending on where pupils live, they have access to a different quality and type of provision.

ix) Historical lack of political decision making

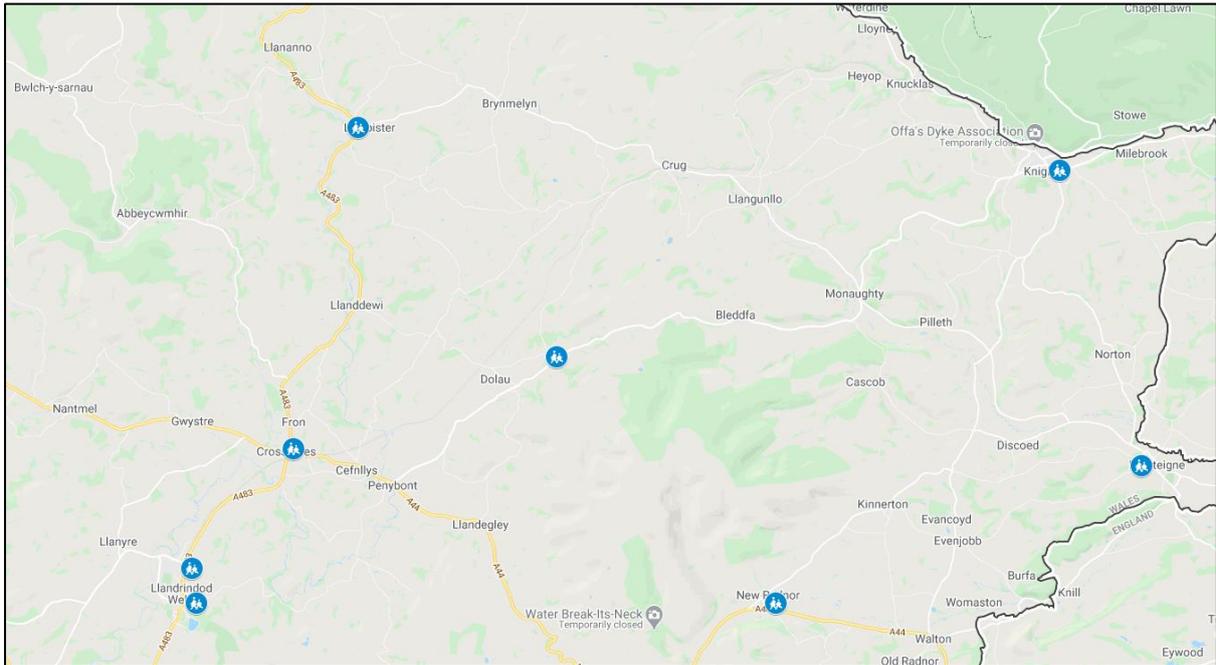
Although there have been some developments in terms of the schools' infrastructure over recent years, the Council's failure to implement a number of high-profile proposals in the last few years has left a legacy in Powys, and there has been a reluctance to embark on large scale reorganisation of education provision since then.

3. WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN DOLAU

3.1 THE CURRENT SITUATION

Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is a community primary school located in the village of Dolau in Mid Powys.

The following map shows the location of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and nearby schools:



Blue – Powys Schools

The following primary schools are located within 10 miles of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School²:

School	Distance from Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School by road (miles)
Crossgates C.P. School	5.211 miles
Llanbister C.P. School	7.217 miles
Ysgol Trefonnen C. in W. Community School	7.930 miles

² School Distances by Road - Council's Business Intelligence Team

Llandrindod Wells C.P. School	8.668 miles
Franksbridge C.P. School	9.916 miles

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

	School Type	Language Category	Admission Number	Rural School? ³
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	Community Primary School building owned by Powys County Council	English medium	5	Yes

Pupil Numbers

i) Current pupil numbers⁴

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	7	10	2	8	5	0	5	37

ii) Historical pupil numbers⁵

	Jan. 2014	Jan. 2015	Jan. 2016	Jan. 2017	Jan. 2018	Jan. 2019	Jan. 2020
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	38	29	31	35	35	29	33

iii) Projected pupil numbers (Birth rate)⁶

³ Annex F of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2018) (<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/school-organisation-code-second-edition.pdf>) includes a list of 'rural schools', to which the 'Presumption against the closure of rural schools' applies.

⁴ Finance NOR – 2020 Pupil Count Day (6th November 2020)

⁵ PLASC 2020

⁶ Powys Schools Service Projections based on PLASC & Birth Rates

	Jan. 2021 ⁷	Jan. 2022	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	34	32	36	34	33

iv) Projected pupil numbers (Finance projections)⁸

	Jan. 2021	Jan. 2022	Jan. 2023	Jan. 2024	Jan. 2025
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	37	38	44	N/A	N/A

Building Capacity and Condition

i) Capacity

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

	Current Capacity ⁹	Currently Filled	Surplus Capacity
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	36	37 (102.7%)	-1 (2.7%)

ii) Building condition¹⁰

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

	Condition	Suitability	Access to hall on site
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	B Good	B Good	Yes – community hall

Quality of Education

⁷ These are the projected figures based on PLASC 2020 information, therefore include a projection for January 2021. PLASC 2021 information and projected pupil numbers based on PLASC 2021 are not yet available.

⁸ Powys Finance Projections – February 2021

⁹ Welsh Government School Places Return – August 2020

¹⁰ Premises Data Return to Welsh Government – 2020

i) Estyn

	Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School
Date of Inspection	March 2019
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Follow up activity	School will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations.

ii) School Categorisation¹¹

	Standards Group	Improvement Capacity	Support Capacity
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	N/A	B	Green

Financial information

i) Cost per pupil (Section 52 Budget Statement, 2020/2021)

	Budget share per school	Budget share per pupil	Notional SEN budget	Non ISB funds devolved to the school
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	£208,000	£6,304	£7,000	£0

¹¹ 2019. Categorisations were not carried out in 2020 due to Covid-19.

Powys average (Primary)	N/A	£4,264	N/A	N/A
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Home to school travel

i) Closest school

An analysis of pupil travel patterns has been carried out, based on the 33 pupils that were attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School in January 2020. The closest provider for all of these pupils is as follows:

	Pupils attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	48.5%
Crossgates C.P. School	36.4%
Llandrindod Wells C.P. School	9.1%
Knighton C. in W. School	6.1%

Based on this information, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School was the closest school for 48.5% of the pupils on roll in January 2020.

If there was no school in Dolau, the closest school for the pupils on roll in January 2020 would be as follows:

	Pupils' closest school should there be no school in Dolau
Crossgates C.P. School	75.8%
Llanbister C.P. School	9.1%
Llandrindod Wells C.P. School	9.1%
Knighton C. in W. School	6.1%

ii) Average travel distance

The average travel distance for all pupils on roll in January 2020 attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is 3.8 miles.

If there was no school in Dolau, the average travel distance for all pupils on roll in January 2020 attending the school to attend their closest alternative provision would be 3.6 miles.

iii) Furthest travel distance

Of the pupils that were on roll in January 2020 attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, the furthest travel distance to the school for those pupils for whom Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is the closest provider is 5.01 miles.

If there was no school in Dolau, the furthest travel distance to the nearest alternative provision would be 6.4 miles.

Equalities Information

i) Free School Meals¹²

	Number of pupils who had a free school meal on Census day
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	0.0%

ii) Pupils in care¹³

	Number of pupils in care
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	0.0%

iii) SEN/ALN¹⁴

	School Action	School Action Plus	Statement
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	3.0%	3.0%	0.0%

Early Years Provision

There is no maintained early years / pre-school provision on the school site, however a Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi meets on site.

¹² PLASC 2020

¹³ PLASC 2020

¹⁴ PLASC 2020

3.2 WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED IN DOLAU

The following is a summary of the main challenges facing Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School:

i) Low pupil numbers

Current pupil numbers¹⁵ at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School are as follows:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	7	10	2	8	5	0	5	37

The Welsh Government defines a 'small school' as a school with less than 91 pupils. Pupil numbers are significantly lower than this. Whilst a small increase is projected over the next couple of years based on information received by the Council's Finance Team, they are expected to remain low for the foreseeable future.

ii) High budget share per pupil

Based on the Council's Section 52 Budget Statement for 2020-21, the school's budget share per pupil during 2020-21 was £6,304. This is significantly higher than the Powys average of £4,264. Llanfihangel Rhydithon is ranked the 8th highest school in Powys by budget share per pupil¹⁶.

iii) Temporary leadership arrangements

Leadership at the school is provided by the headteacher of Llanelwedd C. in W. School, as part of a long term temporary arrangement. This is a part time arrangement, with a teacher in charge responsible for the school whilst the acting headteacher is not on the site. This limits the time available to focus on leadership of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.

iv) Combined age classes

The small pupil numbers at the school mean that pupils are taught in whole key stage classes, with Key Stage 2 in one class and Foundation Phase in another class. Because pupil numbers in each year group are small, it is more difficult to ensure all pupils are appropriately challenged.

¹⁵ Finance NOR – 2020 Pupil Count Day (6th November 2020)

¹⁶ Section 52 Budget Statement 2020/2021

PART B – OPTIONS FOR LLANFIHANGEL RHYDITHON C.P. SCHOOL

4. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

The following options have been identified which could potentially provide a solution.

Option	Description
1	Status quo – continue as a standalone school
2	Federation with Crossgates C.P. School
3	Federation with Llanbister C.P. School
4	Merge with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school on two sites
5	Merge with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school on two sites
6	Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, retain the site as part of Crossgates C.P. School
7	Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, retain the site as part of Llanbister C.P. School
8	Merge with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school on the Crossgates site
9	Merge with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school on the Dolau site
10	Merge with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school on the Llanbister site
11	Merge with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school on the Dolau site
12	Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools

5. SWOT ANALYSIS OF EACH OPTION

SWOT analyses for each of the four options are provided below.

Option 1: Status quo – continue as a standalone school

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Dolau - There would be no additional transport costs - No requirement for a reorganisation process - No change for staff - No impact on pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to be low, according to projections - Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision - Would still need to maintain the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building - Would not reduce surplus places - Would not lead to a financial saving - Would not address the high budget per pupil - Would not provide permanent leadership arrangements
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunities for further collaboration with other neighbouring schools to provide increased opportunities for pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of the new curriculum – would be difficult to provide educational opportunities which meet the requirements of the new curriculum - Ability to recruit/secure new headteacher in small school

Option 2: Federation with Crossgates C.P. School

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Dolau - There would be no additional transport costs - More opportunities could be provided to pupils and staff - Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils would continue to attend school in the same location - Would provide permanent leadership at Llanfihangel Rhydithon - Pupils would continue to attend school at the same location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to be low, according to projections - Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils would still be taught separately - Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision - Would still be required to maintain the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building - Would not reduce surplus places - Would not lead to a financial saving - Would not address the high budget per pupil

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant difference in the size of the two schools
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity for further collaboration across the sites - More opportunities for networking and sharing good practice - Opportunity to secure permanent leadership through shared leadership across the federation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of the new curriculum – would be difficult to provide educational opportunities which meet the requirements of the new curriculum on the Dolau site - May not be attractive to Crossgates C.P. School

Option 3: Federation with Llanbister C.P. School

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Dolau - There would be no additional transport costs - More opportunities could be provided to pupils and staff - Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils would continue to attend school in the same location - Would provide permanent leadership at Llanfihangel Rhydithon - Pupils would continue to attend school at the same location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to be low, according to projections - Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils would still be taught separately - Would not lead to a rationalisation of primary provision - Would still be required to maintain the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building - Would not lead to a financial saving - Would not address the high budget per pupil
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity for further collaboration across the sites - More opportunities for networking and sharing good practice - Opportunity to secure permanent leadership through shared leadership across the federation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of the new curriculum – would be difficult to provide educational opportunities which meet the requirements of the new curriculum on the Dolau site

Option 4: Merge with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school on two sites

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Dolau - There would be no additional home to school transport costs - More opportunities could be provided to pupils and staff - Could provide a financial saving to the Council - Would provide permanent leadership arrangements on the Dolau site - Pupils would continue to attend school at the same location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small numbers would remain at Llanfihangel Rhydithon - Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils would still be taught separately - Would still need to maintain the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building - Both schools would lose their identity - Would also impact on staff at Crossgates C.P. School - Significant difference in the size of the two schools – would have a disproportionate impact on Crossgates C.P. School
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunities for further collaboration across the sites - More opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of the new curriculum – would be difficult to provide educational opportunities which meet the requirements of the new curriculum on the Llanfihangel Rhydithon site

Option 5: Merge with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school on two sites

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Dolau - There would be no additional home to school transport costs - More opportunities could be provided to pupils and staff - Could provide a financial saving to the Council - Would provide permanent leadership arrangements on the Dolau site - Pupils would continue to attend school at the same location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to be low, according to projections - Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils would still be taught separately - Would still need to maintain the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building - Both schools would lose their identity - Would also impact on staff at Llanbister C.P. School
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunities for further collaboration across the sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of the new curriculum – would be difficult to provide educational opportunities which meet the requirements of the new

- More opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff	curriculum on the Llanfihangel Rhydithon site
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Option 6: Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, retain the site as part of Crossgates C.P. School

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Dolau - There would be no additional home to school transport costs - More opportunities could be provided to pupils and staff - Could provide a financial saving to the Council - Would provide permanent leadership arrangements on the Dolau site - Pupils would continue to attend school at the same location - Minimal impact on staff at Crossgates C.P. School - Crossgates C.P. School would retain its identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to be low, according to projections - Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils would still be taught separately - Would still need to maintain the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building - Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would lose its identity - Significant difference in the size of the two schools
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunities for further collaboration across the sites - More opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of the new curriculum – would be difficult to provide educational opportunities which meet the requirements of the new curriculum on the Llanfihangel Rhydithon site

Option 7: Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, retain the site as part of Llanbister C.P. School

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would retain provision in Dolau - There would be no additional home to school transport costs - More opportunities could be provided to pupils and staff - Could provide a financial saving to the Council - Would provide permanent leadership arrangements on the Dolau site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to be low, according to projections - Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils would still be taught separately - Would still need to maintain the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupils would continue to attend school at the same location - Minimal impact on staff at Llanbister C.P. School - Llanbister C.P. School would retain its identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would lose its identity
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunities for further collaboration across the sites - More opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of the new curriculum – would be difficult to provide educational opportunities which meet the requirements of the new curriculum on the Llanfihangel Rhydithon site

Option 8: Merge with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school on the Crossgates site

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More opportunities could be provided to the pupils - Could provide a financial saving to the Council - Would reduce surplus places - All staff would have the opportunity to apply for positions at the new school - Improved opportunities for staff from working in a larger school - Pupils would all be taught in one location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional travel for those pupils for whom Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is currently the closest school - Additional transport costs - Pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would have to transfer to a new location - Loss of provision from Dolau - Impact on the Dolau community - Would impact on Crossgates staff as well as Llanfihangel Rhydithon staff - Potential reduction in staffing requirements - Both schools would lose their identities
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to realise a capital receipt from sale of the Dolau site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Possible reduction in staffing requirements at the new school

Option 9: Merge with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school on the Dolau site

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More opportunities could be provided to the pupils - Could provide a financial saving to the Council - Would reduce surplus places - All staff would have the opportunity to apply for positions at the new school - Improved opportunities for staff from working in a larger school - Pupils would all be taught in one location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional travel for those pupils for whom Crossgates C.P. School is currently the closest school - Additional transport costs - Pupils currently attending Crossgates C.P. School would have to transfer to a new location - Less convenient for the majority of pupils - Current Crossgates pupils may live closer to other schools - Loss of provision from Crossgates - Impact on the Crossgates community - Would impact on Crossgates staff as well as Llanfihangel Rhydithon staff - Potential reduction in staffing requirements - Would not be acceptable to Crossgates school - Both schools would lose their identities - Dolau school is too small to accommodate the merged school - Significant investment would be needed in the Dolau site to accommodate Crossgates pupils
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to realise a capital receipt from sale of the Crossgates site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant investment would be needed in the Dolau site to accommodate Crossgates pupils - Unlikely that the Dolau site would be large enough to accommodate a school of the size required – a new site may be required

Option 10: Merge with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school on the Llanbister site

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More opportunities could be provided to the pupils - Could provide a financial saving to the Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional travel for those pupils for whom Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is currently the closest school - Additional transport costs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would reduce surplus places - All staff would have the opportunity to apply for positions at the new school - Improved opportunities for staff from working in a larger school - Pupils would all be taught in one location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would have to transfer to a new location - Pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School may live closer to other schools - Loss of provision from Dolau - Impact on the Dolau community - Would impact on Llanbister staff as well as Llanfihangel Rhydithon staff - Potential reduction in staffing requirements - Both schools would lose their identities - Investment would be needed in the Llanbister site in order to accommodate Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to realise a capital receipt from sale of the Dolau site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investment would be needed to the Llanbister site to accommodate Llanfihangel Rhydithon pupils. - The Llanbister site may not be large enough to accommodate a school of the size required

Option 11: Merge with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school on the Dolau site

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More opportunities could be provided to the pupils - Could provide a financial saving to the Council - Would reduce surplus places - All staff would have the opportunity to apply for positions at the new school - Improved opportunities for staff from working in a larger school - Pupils would all be taught in one location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional travel for those pupils for whom Llanbister C.P. School is currently the closest school - Additional transport costs - Pupils currently attending Llanbister C.P. School would have to transfer to a new location - Less convenient for the majority of pupils - Current Llanbister pupils may live closer to other schools - Loss of provision from Llanbister - Impact on the Llanbister community - Would impact on Llanbister staff as well as Llanfihangel Rhydithon staff

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential reduction in staffing requirements - Would not be acceptable to Llanbister school - Both schools would lose their identities - Investment would be needed in the Dolau site to accommodate Llanbister pupils
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to realise a capital receipt from sale of the Llanbister site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investment would be needed to the Llanfihangel Rhydithon site to accommodate Llanbister pupils. - The Llanfihangel Rhydithon site may not be large enough to accommodate a school of the size required.

Option 12: Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School - Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools - Revenue saving to the Council - Pupils would attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum - Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities - Pupils would attend schools with permanent leadership arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional travel for those pupils for whom Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is currently the closest school - Additional travel costs - Pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would have to transfer to alternative provision - Loss of provision from Dolau - Impact on the current staff of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School - Impact on the Dolau community
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to realise a capital receipt from sale of the Dolau site 	

6. IMPACT OF EACH OPTION

The likely impact of each option on quality and standards, the community and travelling arrangements is considered below:

Option	Likely impact on quality and standards	Likely impact on the community	Likely impact of different travelling arrangements
Option 1: Status Quo – continue as a standalone school	There would be no impact on quality and standards – pupils would continue to attend the current provision at Dolau.	There would be no impact on the community – provision would continue to be available in Dolau.	There would be no impact on travel arrangements – pupils would continue to attend school in Dolau.
Option 2: Federation with Crossgates C.P. School	<p>The impact on quality and standards would be minimal. Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to operate as a stand alone school, however the school would be federated with Crossgates C.P. School, meaning that one joint governing body would be responsible for both schools. There would also be the potential for shared leadership across the two schools.</p> <p>Establishment of the federation could lead to opportunities to share staff / resources across the federation, which would have a positive impact on quality and standards.</p>	<p>The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Dolau.</p> <p>However, one joint governing body would be responsible for both schools, therefore there could be a perceived reduction in community involvement in management of the school, depending on the make up of the federated governing body.</p> <p>In addition, it is possible that joint activities would take place on the Crossgates site as the larger site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Dolau site.</p>	<p>There would be no impact on travel arrangements – pupils would continue to attend school in Dolau.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>

<p>Option 3: Federation with Llanbister C.P. School</p>	<p>The impact on quality and standards would be minimal. Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would continue to operate as a stand alone school, however the school would be federated with Llanbister C.P. School, meaning that one joint governing body would be responsible for both schools. There would also be the potential for shared leadership across the two schools.</p> <p>Establishment of the federation could lead to opportunities to share staff / resources across the federation, which would have a positive impact on quality and standards.</p>	<p>The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Dolau.</p> <p>However, one new governing body would be responsible for both sites, therefore there could be a perceived reduction in community involvement in management of the school, depending on the make up of the federated governing body.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current Dolau site.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>
<p>Option 4: Merge with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school on two sites</p>	<p>It is anticipated that this option would have a positive impact on quality and standards through the establishment of one larger school, with a larger number of pupils and a larger team of staff.</p> <p>Whilst pupils would continue to attend separate sites, therefore would not benefit from all being taught together, this option would</p>	<p>The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Dolau.</p> <p>However, one new governing body would be responsible for both sites, therefore there could be a perceived reduction in community involvement in management of the</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current Dolau site.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>

	<p>provide additional opportunities for staff expertise and resources to be shared across both sites.</p>	<p>school, depending on the make up of the governing body.</p> <p>In addition, it is possible that joint school activities would take place on the Crossgates site as more pupils attend this site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Dolau site.</p>	
<p>Option 5: Merge with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school on two sites</p>	<p>It is anticipated that this option would have a positive impact on quality and standards through the establishment of one larger school, with a larger number of pupils and a larger team of staff.</p> <p>Whilst pupils would continue to attend separate sites, therefore would not benefit from all being taught together, this option would provide additional opportunities for staff expertise and resources to be shared across both sites.</p>	<p>The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would continue to be available in Dolau.</p> <p>However, one new governing body would be responsible for both sites, therefore there could be a perceived reduction in community involvement in management of the school, depending on the make up of the governing body.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current Dolau site.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>
<p>Option 6: Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, retain the site as part of Crossgates C.P. School</p>	<p>Implementation of this option would result in closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, however provision would continue on the current site.</p>	<p>Provision would continue to be available in Dolau. However, the site would be managed by the current governing body of Crossgates C.P. School, therefore there could be a perceived reduction in community</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current Dolau site.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>

	<p>Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School is currently in the green support category based on the 2019 categorisations whilst Crossgates C.P. School is in the yellow support category. However, there are no concerns in relation to quality and standards at Crossgates C.P. School, and the Council's view is that provision for pupils would be at least equivalent to the current provision.</p> <p>In addition, the school would be a larger school, with a larger number of pupils and a larger team of staff, which could have a positive impact on the opportunities available for pupils and staff. Whilst pupils would continue to attend separate sites, therefore would not benefit from all being taught together, this option would provide additional opportunities for staff expertise and resources to be shared across both sites.</p>	<p>involvement in management of the school.</p> <p>In addition, it is possible that joint school activities would take place on the Crossgates site as more pupils attend this site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Dolau site.</p>	
<p>Option 7: Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, retain the site as part of</p>	<p>Implementation of this option would result in closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, however provision would continue on the current site.</p>	<p>Provision would continue to be available in Dolau. However, the site would be managed by the current governing body of Llanbister C.P. School, therefore</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current Dolau site.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools</p>

<p>Llanbister C.P. School</p>	<p>Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School is currently in the green support category based on the 2019 categorisations whilst Llanbister C.P. School is in the yellow support category. However, there are no concerns in relation to quality and standards at Llanbister C.P. School, and the Council's view is that provision for pupils would be at least equivalent to the current provision.</p> <p>In addition, the school would be a larger school, with a larger number of pupils and a larger team of staff, which could have a positive impact on the opportunities available for pupils and staff. Whilst pupils would continue to attend separate sites, therefore would not benefit from all being taught together, this option would provide additional opportunities for staff expertise and resources to be shared across both sites.</p>	<p>there could be a perceived reduction in community involvement in management of the school.</p> <p>In addition, it is possible that joint school activities would take place on the Llanbister, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Dolau site.</p>	<p>in order to access activities and events.</p>
<p>Option 8: Merge with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new</p>	<p>It is anticipated that this option would have a positive impact on quality and standards through the establishment of one larger school,</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Dolau as there would be no provision in the village.</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P.</p>

<p>school on the Crossgates site</p>	<p>with a larger number of pupils and a larger team of staff.</p> <p>All pupils would attend one site, which would provide further benefits to pupils from being part of larger cohorts of pupils, and improved opportunities to share staff expertise.</p>	<p>However, merging with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school would provide opportunities for the Dolau community to be involved in the process of establishing the new school, and would aid community involvement in the new school.</p> <p>Should the school close, the Council would need to determine the future use of the building. Should the Council declare the building to be surplus to requirements and seek to sell the building, this would mean that the school's facilities would no longer be available to the community.</p> <p>The school is co-located with a community hall. Should the school close, the community hall would continue to be available for community activities. Whilst the proposal would not impact on the community hall, it is acknowledged that the potential loss of income to the hall from school activities no longer needing to take place could impact on the community hall.</p>	<p>School for whom this is currently the closest school.</p> <p>Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, there would also be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities / events.</p>
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<p>Option 9: Merge with Crossgates C.P. School to establish a new school on the Dolau site</p>	<p>In general, it is anticipated that this option would have a positive impact on quality and standards through the establishment of one larger school, with a larger number of pupils and a larger team of staff. All pupils would attend one site, which would provide further benefits to pupils from being part of larger cohorts of pupils, and improved opportunities to share staff expertise.</p> <p>However, it is unlikely that the Dolau site would be able to accommodate all pupils, therefore there would be a negative impact on the quality of provision should all pupils be taught in the current Dolau building.</p>	<p>There would be a positive impact on the Dolau community as this option would retain provision in Dolau and would lead to a significant increase in pupil numbers, safeguarding provision in the village for the future.</p> <p>However, there would be a negative impact on the Crossgates community as there would no longer be provision in Crossgates. Whilst merging the two schools to establish a new school would provide opportunities for the Crossgates community to be involved in the process of establishing the new school to aid community involvement in the new school, however as Crossgates is the larger village with a significantly larger school, it is likely that the Crossgates community would consider this option to be disproportionate.</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Crossgates C.P. School.</p> <p>Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, there would also be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities / events.</p>
<p>Option 10: Merge with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school on the Llanbister site</p>	<p>In general, it is anticipated that this option would have a positive impact on quality and standards through the establishment of one larger school, with a larger number of pupils and a larger team of staff.</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Dolau as there would be no provision in the village.</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School for whom this is currently the closest school.</p>

	<p>All pupils would attend one site, which would provide further benefits to pupils from being part of larger cohorts of pupils, and improved opportunities to share staff expertise.</p> <p>However, it is unlikely that the Llanbister site would be able to accommodate all pupils, therefore there would be a negative impact on the quality of provision should all pupils be taught in the current Llanbister building.</p>	<p>However, merging with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school would provide opportunities for the Dolau community to be involved in the process of establishing the new school, and would aid community involvement in the new school.</p> <p>Should the school close, the Council would need to determine the future use of the building. Should the Council declare the building to be surplus to requirements and seek to sell the building, this would mean that the school's facilities would no longer be available to the community.</p> <p>The school is co-located with a community hall. Should the school close, the community hall would continue to be available for community activities. Whilst the proposal would not impact on the community hall, it is acknowledged that the potential loss of income to the hall from school activities no longer needing to take place could impact on the community hall.</p>	<p>Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, there would also be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities / events.</p>
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<p>Option 11: Merge with Llanbister C.P. School to establish a new school on the Dolau site</p>	<p>In general, it is anticipated that this option would have a positive impact on quality and standards through the establishment of one larger school, with a larger number of pupils and a larger team of staff. All pupils would attend one site, which would provide further benefits to pupils from being part of larger cohorts of pupils, and improved opportunities to share staff expertise.</p> <p>However, it is unlikely that the Dolau site would be able to accommodate all pupils, therefore there would be a negative impact on the quality of provision should all pupils be taught in the current Dolau building.</p>	<p>There would be a positive impact on the Dolau community as this option would retain provision in Dolau and would lead to an increase in pupil numbers, safeguarding provision in the village for the future.</p> <p>However, there would be a negative impact on the Llanbister community as there would no longer be provision in Llanbister. Whilst merging the two schools to establish a new school would provide opportunities for the Llanbister community to be involved in the process of establishing the new school to aid community involvement in the new school, however as Llanbister School is larger, it is likely that the Llanbister community would consider this option to be disproportionate.</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llanbister C.P. School. As the school already serves a very large, rural catchment area, it is likely that this would result in very long journeys to school for pupils.</p> <p>Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, there would also be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities / events.</p>
<p>Option 12: Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools</p>	<p>Implementation of this option would mean that pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would transfer to their nearest alternative schools. For the majority of pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Dolau as there would be no primary provision in Dolau.</p> <p>Should the school close, the Council would need to determine</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C. in W. School for whom it is currently the closest school. However, the analysis of pupil travel distances carried out suggests that</p>

	<p>C.P. School, the closest alternative school would be Crossgates C.P. School.</p> <p>Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P School is currently in the green support category based on the 2019 categorisations whilst Crossgates C.P. School is in the yellow support category. However, there are no concerns in relation to quality and standards at Crossgates C.P. School, and the Council's view is that provision for pupils would be at least equivalent to the current provision.</p> <p>In addition, Crossgates C.P. School is a larger school, with a larger number of pupils and a larger team of staff, which could have a positive impact on the opportunities available for pupils and staff.</p> <p>Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, a small number of pupils would live closer to other schools, in particular Llanbister C.P. School, Knighton C. in W. School and Llandrindod C.P. School. These schools are all in</p>	<p>the future use of the building. Should the Council declare the building to be surplus to requirements and seek to sell the building, this would mean that the school's facilities would no longer be available to the community.</p> <p>The school is co-located with a community hall. Should the school close, the community hall would continue to be available for community activities. Whilst the proposal would not impact on the community hall, it is acknowledged that the potential loss of income to the hall from school activities no longer needing to take place could impact on the community hall.</p>	<p>Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is the closest school for only 57% of current pupils.</p> <p>Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, there would also be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities / events. This would impact on pupils for whom Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is currently the closest school.</p>
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	<p>the yellow support category based on the 2019 categorisations, therefore there are no concerns about the provision pupils would receive should they transfer to these schools.</p>		
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7. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

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

Critical Success Factor	Description
1 – Strategic fit and business needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The option must align with the Council’s Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-2030, to include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address the challenges facing education in Powys, as outlined in the Council’s Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-2030 - Align with the Vision and Guiding Principles outlined in the Council’s Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-2030 - Align with the Strategic Aims and Objectives outlined in the Council’s Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-2030 • The option must optimise the benefits of the Council’s Transforming Education Programme
2 – Value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The option must optimise the resources available for the delivery of learning • The option must provide value for money in the delivery of learning
3 – Potential achievability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The option must be achievable within current legislation • The option must be operationally achievable • The option must be physically achievable
4 – Potential affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the option is affordable within the Council’s forecasted revenue • The extent to which the option is affordable within the forecasted capital funding available to the Council

Each option has been assessed against the Critical Success Factors based on the following criteria:

✓ – Meets ? – Could meet x – Does not meet

The assessment for each option is as follows:

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Option 9	Option 10	Option 11	Option 12
1 – Strategic fit and business needs	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2 – Value for money	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	?	x	✓	✓	✓
3 – Potential achievability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓
4 – Potential affordability	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x	✓
Total ✓	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	2	4
Total x	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	3	2	2	0
Outcome	Discount	Possible	Discount	Discount	Discount	Preferred						

8. EMERGING PREFERRED OPTION

Based on the work carried out, the emerging preferred option for Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is:

Option 12: Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools

The reasons for this are:

- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School
- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools
- Revenue saving to the Council
- Pupils would attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum
- Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities
- Pupils would attend schools with permanent leadership arrangements

- Meets all of the critical success factors

Further consideration of this option will now be carried out, to include consideration of the factors outlined in the School Organisation Code.

PART C – FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF PREFERRED OPTION

The Welsh Government's School Organisation Code outlines factors to be considered when developing school organisation proposals. Consideration is given below to the impact of the preferred option, closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, on the factors outlined in the Code.

9. QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN EDUCATION

9.1 Likely impact on standards and progress overall, of specific groups and in skills

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Crossgates C.P. School.

Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is currently in the green support category based on the 2019 categorisations whilst Crossgates C.P. School is in the yellow support category. However, there are no concerns in relation to quality and standards at Crossgates C.P. School, and it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on standards and progress overall.

Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, a small number of pupils would live closer to other schools, in particular Llanbister C.P. School, Knighton C. in W. School and Llandrindod C.P. School. These schools are all in the yellow support category based on the 2019 categorisations, therefore there are no concerns about the provision pupils would receive should they transfer to these schools.

This would also apply in respect of pupils belonging to specific groups, such as pupils eligible for Free School Meals, pupils for whom English is an Additional Language, Looked after Children and pupils with Additional Learning Needs. Based on PLASC 2020 information, there are no pupils eligible for Free School Meals, Looked after Children or pupils for whom English is an Additional Language at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. There are a number of pupils with Additional Learning Needs, however the number of pupils belonging to this group is small. It is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on the standards and progress of these pupils.

This is also the case in respect of the impact on the skills of all pupils, including literacy, numeracy and ICT. Pupils would transfer to larger schools, which would provide improved opportunities to share staff expertise and

resources, and which have an improved ability to monitor pupil progress in these aspects.

9.2 Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

In the short term, it is possible that there would be an impact on pupils' wellbeing, as they would need to transfer from Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School to alternative schools. It is possible that pupils could choose to transfer to different schools, which could have a further impact on their wellbeing. However, the receiving school(s) would provide full support to the pupils during the transition period, to minimise any negative impact on them.

For some pupils, implementation of the preferred option could result in additional travel, which could have an impact on pupil well-being. However, alternative primary provision would be available at a number of other schools located within 10 miles of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. It is not considered that the additional travel time required to alternative provision would be excessive.

In the longer term, the intention is that implementation of the preferred option would have a positive impact on pupil wellbeing and attitudes to learning as they would transfer to larger schools with larger cohorts of pupils, providing improved social and extra-curricular opportunities.

9.3 Teaching and learning experiences

9.3.1 Quality of teaching

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Crossgates C.P. School, however a small number of pupils would live closer to other schools, in particular Llanbister C.P. School, Knighton C. W. School and Llandrindod C.P. School.

The Council has no concerns about the quality of teaching at Crossgates C.P. School or the other schools named above, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on the quality of teaching experienced by pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.

9.3.2 The breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school

would be Crossgates C.P. School, however a small number of pupils would live closer to other schools, in particular Llanbister C.P. School, Knighton C. in W. School and Llandrindod C.P. School.

The Council's view is that Crossgates C.P. School and the other schools named above would provide a curriculum which is at least equivalent to that currently provided at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. Crossgates and the other schools are larger schools, therefore the expectation would be that there would be an improvement in the breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum provided to pupils, and that the alternative schools would be better placed to develop provision which meets the requirements of the new curriculum.

9.3.3 The provision of skills

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Crossgates C.P. School, however a small number of pupils would live closer to other schools, in particular Llanbister C.P. School, Knighton C. in W. School and Llandrindod C.P. School.

The Council has no concerns about the provision of skills at Crossgates C.P. School or the other schools named above, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on the provision of skills for pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.

9.4 Care, support and guidance

9.4.1 Tracking, monitoring and the provision of learning support, personal development and safeguarding

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Crossgates C.P. School, however a small number of pupils would live closer to other schools, in particular Llanbister C.P. School, Knighton C. in W. School and Llandrindod C.P. School.

It is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on tracking, monitoring and the provision of learning support, personal development and safeguarding for pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. It is anticipated that the arrangements at Crossgates C.P. School and the other schools named above would be at least equivalent to the arrangements at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.

9.5 Leadership and Management

9.5.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers, self evaluation processes and improvement planning

Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school would be Crossgates C.P. School, however a small number of pupils would live closer to other schools, in particular Llanbister C.P. School, Knighton C. in W. School and Llandrindod C.P. School.

Crossgates C.P. School has a permanent headteacher, whilst Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. has a long term shared temporary headteacher arrangement. Whilst Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School was categorised as Green in the latest categorisations carried out in 2019 and Crossgates C.P. School was categorised as Yellow, both have been categorised as having an improvement capacity of B. In addition, Crossgates C.P. School is larger than Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, therefore it is expected that the headteacher would have more time available to focus on leadership and management.

The Council's view is that should the preferred option be implemented, leadership and management at the alternative school would be at least as good as the current arrangements at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.

This would also be the case for any pupils transferring to the other schools named above, all of which were categorised as Yellow in the latest categorisations carried out in 2019.

9.5.2 Professional learning

It is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would impact on professional learning opportunities. Staff currently employed at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would be subject to a management of change process.

9.5.3 Use of Resources

Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is projecting to be in a surplus budget position over the coming years. Whilst there are no concerns about the use of resources within the school, there are concerns about use of resources overall within the Powys schools infrastructure. As indicated on page 5 above, one of the main challenges facing the Powys schools infrastructure is the high proportion of small schools in the county. Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is among the smallest schools in the county, and the budget share per pupil at the school is higher than the Powys average for primary schools.

Closure of the school would reduce the number of schools in Powys, and would enable the Council to use its resources more effectively for the benefit of all Powys learners.

Should the emerging preferred option be implemented pupils would transfer to larger schools, ensuring more effective use of the Council's resources.

In addition, larger schools often have more resources available in terms of number of staff and educational resources, therefore pupils would benefit from the opportunity to access these resources.

9.6 Impact on vulnerable groups, including children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Implementation of the preferred option would result in the closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. It is acknowledged that there would be an impact on any pupils belonging to vulnerable groups currently attending the school, including any pupils with SEN, and that in the short term, these pupils would need to transfer to alternative schools.

Based on January 2020 PLASC information, 1 pupil at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School was on School Action, and 6 pupils were on School Action Plus. There were no statemented pupils.

Whilst the preferred option would impact on these pupils, as they would be required to move to alternative schools, there is no reason to believe that the schools to which they might transfer would not be able to meet their needs.

Should the option be implemented, the Council would work with Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School and the receiving schools to ensure an effective transition for any vulnerable children, including children with SEN, and their families.

9.7 Ability of the school/schools which are the subject of the proposals to deliver the full curriculum at the foundation phase and each key stage of education, including the quality of curriculum delivery and the extent to which the structure or size of the school is impacting on this

Should the emerging preferred option be implemented, Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would close and pupils would transfer to alternative schools, therefore Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School would no longer need to deliver the curriculum to any key stages.

Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, pupils would transfer to alternative schools. This would lead to an increase in pupil numbers at the schools to which the pupils wish to transfer. However current pupil numbers at

Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School are small, and therefore the number of pupils likely to transfer to each year group is low, therefore the impact on alternative schools is not likely to have a significant impact on their ability to deliver the full curriculum at the foundation phase and in each key stage of education.

In some schools, it is possible that an increase in pupil numbers would improve their ability to deliver the curriculum, however depending on the class structure and current breakdown of pupils, it's likely that some schools would need to make adjustments to their class structure in the short term to accommodate any additional pupils.

10 NEED FOR PLACES AND IMPACT ON ACCESSIBILITY OF SCHOOLS

10.1 Will the alternative provision have sufficient capacity and provide accommodation of at least equivalent quality for existing and projected pupil numbers?

The following table shows the number of spaces available and the building condition of schools providing English-medium education located within 10 miles of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School:

School	Capacity ¹⁷	Current pupil numbers ¹⁸	Available spaces	Filled capacity	Building Condition	Building Suitability
Crossgates C.P. School	210	131	79	62.4%	B	A
Llanbister C.P. School	45	61	-16	135.5%	C	B
Ysgol Trefonnen C. in W. Community School	189	208	-19	110.1%	A	A
Ysgol Cefnlllys	258	218	40	84.5%	B	B
Franksbridge C.P. School	44	42	2	95.5%	B	B

¹⁷ Welsh Government School Places Return – August 2020

¹⁸ Finance NOR – 2020 Pupil Count Day (6th November 2020)

This suggests that there are sufficient places at Crossgates C.P. School to accommodate all current and projected pupils at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School although a number of the other nearby schools are at or over capacity.

The condition of the Crossgates building is assessed as condition B. This is the same as the condition of the Llanfihangel Rhydithon building, therefore pupils would be able to continue to access accommodation which is of at least equivalent quality as the current accommodation at Llanfihangel Rhydithon.

10.2 Is the alternative provision sufficient to meet existing and projected demand for schools of the same language category and (if relevant) designated religious character?

As indicated in the table in section 10.1 above, there is sufficient English-medium capacity within 10 miles of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School to accommodate the school's current and projected pupil numbers.

Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is a community primary. As indicated in the table in section 10.1 above, the majority of the other schools in the area are also community primary schools, ensuring that pupils could continue to access community primary provision should there be no school in Dolau.

10.3 What will be the nature of journeys to alternative provision and resulting journey times for pupils including SEN pupils?

Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is the closest school for only 48.5% of current pupil. As indicated in the table in section 10.1 above, there are alternative primary places available at other schools within 10 miles of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. Should Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School close, it is not considered that the length and nature of journeys for pupils for whom Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is currently the closest school to alternative provision would be excessive. This includes journeys for SEN pupils. One-way journeys to alternative provision would not be in excess of 45 minutes.

Should there be no school in Dolau, there would be a reduction in travel time / distance for pupils attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School for whom this isn't currently the closest school should they transfer to their closest school.

11 RESOURCING OF EDUCATION AND OTHER FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 What effect will the proposals have on surplus places in the area?

Implementation of the preferred option would lead to an overall reduction in surplus places in the area.

11.2 Do the proposals form part of the local authority's 21st Century Schools Investment Programme and contribute to the delivery of sustainable schools for the 21st Century and to the better strategic management of the school estate?

The review of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School does not form part of the local authority's 21st Century Schools Investment Programme.

However, the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys identifies a number of issues relating to the overall Powys schools' estate, including a high proportion of small schools, a high number of surplus places and issues with building condition. The Strategy includes a strategic objective to 'Reconfigure and rationalise primary provision', which aims to address these issues, to ensure better strategic management of the Powys school estate. The review of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is being carried out in order to meet this objective.

11.3 What are the recurrent costs of proposals over a period of at least 3 years and is the necessary recurrent funding available?

There are no recurrent costs associated with this proposal.

11.4 Will additional transport costs be incurred as a result of the proposal?

It is not anticipated that additional transport costs would be incurred as a result of the change, it is assumed that the current bus would be used at no additional cost to the Authority.

11.5 What are the capital costs of the proposal and is the necessary capital funding is available?

It is not anticipated that capital funding would be required in order to implement the emerging preferred option. As indicated in the table in section 11.1 above, there are sufficient places at schools located within 10 miles of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School to accommodate all current and projected pupils.

11.6 What is the scale of any projected net savings (taking into account school revenue, transport and capital costs)

It is estimated that this would result in annual revenue savings to the Council of around £59,000 per annum. This overall figure comprises a potential saving on schools' delegated funding of over £52,000 and savings on catering costs of around £6,600.

11.7 Without the proposals, would the schools affected face budget deficits?

Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is not currently forecasting a deficit budget.

11.8 Will any savings in recurrent costs be retained in the local authority's local schools budget?

Any savings would be reinvested in the Council's corporate budget and any reinvestment in the schools' system would be agreed as part of the annual budget planning cycle.

11.9 Will the proceeds of sales (capital receipts) of redundant sites be made available to meet the costs of the proposal or contribute to the costs of future proposals which will promote effective management of school places?

Any capital receipts received from sale of the Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School site would be reinvested into the Schools Transformation programme in order to improve the educational provision across Powys.

12 OTHER GENERAL FACTORS

12.1 What impact will the proposals have on educational attainment among children from economically deprived backgrounds?

Implementation of the preferred option would impact on any pupils from economically deprived backgrounds currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. All pupils currently attending the school, including any from economically deprived backgrounds, would need to transfer to alternative schools. Free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with Council's home to school transport policy, however it is acknowledged that there would be an impact on families due to the requirement to travel to school events, which could have a greater impact on children from economically deprived backgrounds.

Based on PLASC figures from January 2020, no pupils attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School were eligible for FSM, therefore it is likely that the proportion of children from economically deprived backgrounds is minimal.

12.2 Any equality issues, including those identified through equality impact assessments

Initial consideration of equalities information recorded through PLASC suggests that there are no significant equality issues in respect of pupils currently attending Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School. Should the Council

proceed with the statutory process in respect of the preferred option, equality impact assessments would be carried out and regularly reviewed throughout the process to ensure that any issues are identified and fully considered.

12.3 Whether the school / schools involved are subject to any trust or charitable interests which might be affected by the proposals, for example in relation to the use or disposal of land.

Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School is not subject to any trust or charitable interests which might be affected by the proposals.

13. SPECIFIC FACTORS IN THE CONSIDERATION OF SCHOOL CLOSURES

13.1 Whether the establishment of multi-site schools might be considered as a means of retaining buildings, or the reasons for not pursuing this option

A range of options have been considered in respect of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, these are outlined in section 4 of this document, as well as an assessment of each option which includes a summary of the weaknesses / threats associated with each.

Pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School are low, and are not projected to increase significantly over the coming years. Establishing a multi-site school would not address this issue.

13.2 Whether alternatives to closure, such as clustering, collaboration or federation with other schools, might be considered or the reasons for not pursuing these as an alternative

Federation of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School with Crossgates C.P. School and Llanbister C.P. School are two of the options considered in section 4 of this document. An assessment of these options has been carried out, which includes a summary of the weaknesses / threats associated with this option.

Pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School are low, and are not projected to increase significantly over the coming years. Becoming part of a federation with another school would not address this issue.

13.3 Whether the possibility of making fuller use of the existing buildings as a community or educational resource could be explored

The Council's view is that making more use of the existing building as a community or educational resource would not address the issues identified in respect of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School.

Pupil numbers at the school are low, and are not projected to increase significantly over the coming years.

13.4 The overall effect of closure on the local community (including the loss of school based facilities which are used by the local community)

Implementation of the preferred option would mean that there would no longer be provision in Dolau. It is acknowledged that this would have a negative impact on the Dolau community, including the loss of primary provision from the village of Dolau, and a possible loss of any community facilities associated with the school from the village.

A draft community impact assessment, with input from the school, has been carried out. Should the Council proceed with the statutory process in respect of the preferred option, this draft community impact assessment would be published as part of the consultation documentation. This would be updated throughout the process to reflect any feedback received, and would be considered by the Council's Cabinet as part of the decision making process.

13.5 How parents' and pupils' engagement with the alternative school and any facilities it may offer could be supported

Should the Council proceed with the statutory process and eventually implementation of the preferred option, support would be provided to pupils and their parents as part of the transition process, to ensure full engagement with their new schools. The nature of this support would depend on the needs of the parents / pupils, however this could include meetings with new headteacher and receiving schools to ease transition into their new school.

14. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Based on the options appraisal carried out and further consideration of the preferred option against the factors outlined in the School Organisation Code, the preferred option is as follows:

Option 12: Close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools

The reasons for this are:

- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers at Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School

- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools
- Revenue saving to the Council
- Pupils would attend larger schools, which would be better equipped to meet the requirements of the new curriculum
- Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities
- Pupils would attend schools with permanent leadership arrangements
- Meets all of the critical success factors

It is recommended that a paper is considered by the Council's Cabinet, requesting approval to commence consultation on a proposal to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools.