

Response to the Pre-Consultation response received by the Diocese of Swansea and Brecon in respect of Llanbedr C. in W. School

Comment	Response
<p><u>Concerns over Timing of the Proposal</u></p> <p>The timing of the consultation over the Christmas period and in the midst of a global pandemic has been challenging. Upon reflection, the pre-consultation documentation could have been distributed at a more appropriate time.</p>	<p>These concerns are noted. The School Organisation Code states the following:</p> <p>‘In the case of proposals to reorganise schools for which land and/or buildings are held on trust or which have a designated religious character, the proposer must conduct consultation with the trustees and/or appropriate religious body before the consultation document is published. The proposed must allow 28 days for the receipt of comments and must have due regard to those comments before any decision is made to proceed to general consultation.’</p> <p>The Council started consultation with the Diocese on the 1st December 2020, and this ended on the 14th January 2021. As a recognition of the fact that the consultation was taking place of the Christmas period and the pandemic, the period allowed to provide a consultation response was in excess of the 28 days which is required.</p>
<p><u>Concerns of how Llanbedr Church in Wales Primary School fit into Powys Strategy.</u></p> <p>The Powys Strategy for Transforming Education clearly indicates ambitious new plans for schools in Powys, that will provide high quality teaching and learning environments and the commitment to deliver an improved learner offer for the children and young people in Powys, which the diocese fully supports. The emphasis for the diocese is to provide the best possible opportunities to Powys learners now and in the future and we believe that Llanbedr Church in Wales School is delivering this. Considerable progress has been made since the last Estyn and Section 50 Inspection, with the strategic leadership of the Headteacher providing firm direction for the current and future high standards within the</p>	<p>Comment noted. Llanbedr C. in W. School has been categorised as a green school in the latest school categorisations carried out in 2019, and fully acknowledges the quality of provision offered at the school.</p> <p>As outlined in the options appraisal in respect of Llanbedr C. in W. School, the challenges in respect of the school relate mainly to pupil numbers and budget share per pupil.</p>

<p>school. This is reflected in visits from the Challenge Advisor and the Diocesan Director of Education.</p>	
<p>Reflecting upon one of the strategic objectives to develop a network of all-age schools based around the current secondary locations, it is difficult to see how this objective relates to Llanbedr Church in Wales School. After reviewing the five reports already published on proposals in other areas, in line with the Powys Strategy, there are currently no plans proposed for the Crickhowell area. Are the children who attend Llanbedr Church in Wales Primary School therefore, not part of this objective? One proposal could be the building of an all-age Church in Wales School in Crickhowell, as discussion are taking place between the diocese and Crickhowell High School to become a Church in Wales School.</p>	<p>Whilst the new Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys includes an objective to ‘Develop a network of all-age schools based around the 13 current secondary school locations’, this is a long term strategy, and it is not possible to take forward this objective in all areas at once.</p> <p>As well as this objective, the Strategy also includes an objective to ‘Reconfigure and rationalise primary provision’. In order to implement this objective, the Council has been reviewing its smallest schools, of which Llanbedr C. in W. School is one.</p>
<p><u>Christian Ethos</u></p> <p>Llanbedr Church in Wales School is a VA, voluntary aided, school, with a very distinctive and strong Christian ethos running throughout the heart at what it does, providing the best possible opportunities for all the pupils, staff, and local community. Emphasis is placed upon enhancing and growing the existing links with the church and local community by the schools, with a high regard for wellbeing. This is in the line with the diocese education vision on wellbeing, using the Biblical quote of John 10:10, “I came so that everyone would have life, and have it fully”. This is being achieved at Llanbedr Church in Wales Primary School, with regular monitoring visits from the Diocesan Director of Education, who works in partnership with the school. Church Schools are at the heart of the Church in Wales’s mission, who faithfully serve children and parents of all faiths and of none, providing a high-quality education of the whole child and enriching their communities. This is being achieved at Llanbedr Church in Wales Primary School.</p> <p>With this overarching focus, the school is distinctly different from community schools in the area, and upon reading the documentation, the Christian ethos and rural school community links have not been fully considered and do not feature in the preferred option given.</p>	<p>The Council notes the voluntary aided Church in Wales status of Llanbedr C. in W. School. The need to ensure continued access to church places is fully acknowledged.</p> <p>Reference is made to the provision of church places in the SWOT assessments included in the pre-consultation version of the Options Appraisal, and the document considers options which involve Llangattock C. in W. School as the nearest church school, to ensure the continued provision of church places.</p> <p>The full options appraisal to be considered by Cabinet considers the impact on demand for schools of a designated religious character in section 10.2:</p> <p><i>Llanbedr C. in W. School is a Church in Wales school. Alternative C. in W. provision is available at Llangattock C. in W. School, which would enable pupils to access a school of the same religious character, should they wish to continue to attend a Church in Wales school.</i></p>

<p>Llanbedr Church in Wales Primary School is distinctive from other schools in the cluster:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian ethos runs through the heart of the school and is the main reason many families join the school from other areas especially where families live in remote/rural areas; • A number of pupils have been admitted into the Christian ethos of the school after having previous difficulties in other schools, one following discussions with ALN officers. The preferred option means that if the school were to close before 2024/25 these pupils would return to the schools where they were experiencing difficulties; • Llanbedr Church in Wales School plays a vital role in the promotion of community cohesion both within the school and in working with the parishes to reach out to the wider community that it serves. • Llanbedr Church in Wales School has a strong commitment to the development of the spiritual dimension both in the formal and the hidden curriculum. A Sunday School was started at the school in 2018 and last year Messy Church and an after-school club, which organises community events for children and their families. • Church events involving the school are well attended by the local community and the three parishes. The Christmas Services, Harvest Festivals, Easter Services, Lent lunches, and Remembrance Services are popular events with high attendance. The last event at the Church the school had brought all the chairs from the school and there were still many that had to stand. For community members who live in remote areas these Christian events led by the school are their community links. • Rev. Chris Bowler was due to start confirmation classes with the pupils, but in the present climate this did not begin, although families are still interested. This is the next stage in the pupils' religious and spiritual journey. • There is a strong welsh dimension in the school and the school also holds an annual Eisteddfod which receives over one hundred entrants from the community for the different categories, linking to the traditions of Welsh Christianity. 	<p>These comments about the provision at Llanbedr C. in W. School are noted.</p>

<p>The preferred emerging option as set out in the Options Appraisal would result in only 2 pupils attending a Church in Wales School. Nearly all pupils will lose the strong Christian school ethos along with the sense of rural community cohesion that this school brings.</p>	<p>As indicated above, the Council notes the Church in Wales status of Llanbedr C. in W. School. Alternative Church in Wales provision is available at Llangattock C. in W School, which is located less than 3 miles away from Llanbedr C. in W. School.</p> <p>The need to ensure continued access to church places is fully acknowledged.</p>
<p><u>Number on roll</u></p> <p>Within the documentation provided the number on roll from Powys calculations differ from what Llanbedr Church in Wales School actually have on roll at the present time. Currently, Llanbedr Church in Wales Primary School has on roll: Nursery: 5; and Reception to Year 6: 44.</p>	<p>The pupil numbers in the documentation are the pupil numbers that were attending the school on the Finance pupil count date in November 2020. It is acknowledged that pupil numbers change frequently at all schools, however even with the additional pupils, the school remains small.</p> <p>Pupil numbers are provided for pupils from Reception to Year 6 as these are the pupils funded by the Council. However as a VA School, it is acknowledged that Llanbedr C. in W. School is responsible for its own admissions arrangements, and that the school admits nursery aged pupils.</p>
<p><u>Housing Development in the school's catchment area</u></p> <p>Upon reviewing the current and proposed housing stock in the catchment area, there is an opportunity for the school grow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is already planning in place and passed for over 130 houses. A large number of these dwellings will be affordable housing which will more than likely add to the number of children requiring school places. • The first development of 70 house is due to start building at any time and it is more than likely that this site will be added to with more housing in phase 2. This housing is in the Vale of Grwyney Community Council area 	<p>These comments regarding possible and planned housing developments in the area are noted, however there is no guarantee that any new developments in the area would result in a significant number of additional pupils at Llanbedr C. in W. School.</p>

which covers Llanbedr School. In fact, Llanbedr School is the only primary school in the Vale of Grwyney.

- With other development of 60 houses is in Crickhowell and a large development going through planning in Llangattock, this will again increase the need for school places in the Crickhowell area.