



Closure of Churchstoke C.P. School Consultation Report



Consultation on the closure of Churchstoke C.P. School

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If you require a copy of the document in a different format, please contact the Transforming Education Team on 01597 826618, or e-mail school.organisation@powys.gov.uk.

Consultation on the closure of Churchstoke C.P. School

1. OVERVIEW OF THE CONSULTATION

Powys County Council consulted on a proposal to close Churchstoke C.P. School. The proposal is as follows:

- To close Churchstoke C.P. School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to attend their nearest alternative schools

The consultation took place from the 14th April 2021 to the 2nd June 2021.

i) Consultation methods

The consultation documentation was available on the Council's website throughout the consultation period, and was distributed to stakeholders, as required by the School Organisation Code (2018). A separate version for pupils was also available on the Council's website throughout the consultation period.

Consultees were invited to respond to the consultation by either completing an online consultation form, filling in a paper copy of the form and returning it to the Transforming Education Team at County Hall, or by e-mailing / writing to the Transforming Education Team.

Meetings were held virtually with the following:

- Staff of Churchstoke C.P. School – 10th May 2021
- Governors of Churchstoke C.P. School – 10th May 2021
- Churchstoke C.P. School Council – 20th May 2021

ii) Responses received

A total of 347 respondents completed the consultation response form which was included in the consultation document. This included paper copies as well as responses submitted using the online response form.

In addition, 163 written responses were received from respondents, including Estyn. The response received from Estyn is provided on page 38, in-line with the requirements of the School Organisation Code.

The written responses also included an online and paper petition to 'Save Churchstoke CP School Now - Urgent', which received 1,744 signatures.

As well as responses from parents, prospective parents, members of staff and members of the community, responses were received from the following organisations:

- Churchstoke Community Council
- Chirbury Parish Council
- Worthern with Sheleve Parish Council
- Welsh Language Commissioner
- Russell George MS
- Churchstoke Little Explorers
- Churchstoke Recreation Association
- Churchstoke Football Club
- St Nicholas' House Residential and Nursing Home
- Barcud Housing Association
- We Do Tennis
- Churchstoke Tennis Club
- Active8Kids Ltd
- Language Magnet
- Abbey Construction
- Kerry Vale Vineyard
- Montgomery Waters Limited
- Girlguiding Montgomeryshire
- Co-operative Food Centre Churchstoke
- St Nicholas Church Churchstoke
- Bryn Coed Homes Limited
- Churchstoke Women's Institute
- Churchstoke Football Club
- Early Years Wales
- Inspired Building Techniques Limited
- Powys Council's Schools Budget Forum

iii) Summary of issues raised

The issues raised in the consultation responses are listed in detail in section 6 on page 41. This includes the Council's response to each issue. The following is a summary of the issues raised:

1. Comments about Churchstoke C.P. School

1. General positive comments about the school
2. Comments about the quality of provision at the school
3. Comments about pupil numbers at the school
4. Comments about the school being a small school
5. Everyone is friends at the school

6. Comments about school staff
7. Comments about the attainment of former pupils
8. Comments about the school's role in the community
9. Comments about the school buildings, grounds and resources
10. Comments about the school's catchment area / location
11. Families have chosen to attend Churchstoke School
12. Comments about extra-curricular / wraparound provision at the school

2. Comments about current / future pupil numbers

1. Comments about current pupil numbers at the school
2. Comments about future pupil numbers
3. Churchstoke is a growing village
4. Comments about housing developments in the area
5. People won't want to move to the new homes if there is no school in the village
6. Concern about the impact on housing developers
7. Comments about the LDP
8. Comments about a possible increase in people moving to the area following Covid

3. Comments about early years provision

1. Comments relating to the Early Years Provision at Churchstoke
2. Concern about the future of the Early Years Provision at Churchstoke
3. Comments about grants provided to the pre-school provision
4. Comments about alternative early years provision

4. Comments about small and rural schools

1. Positive comments about small/rural schools
2. Concerns about larger schools
3. Comments about the Council's treatment of small / rural schools

5. Impact on pupils

1. General concern about the impact of the consultation on pupil well-being
2. Comments about consultation taking place during the Covid pandemic
3. Concern about the impact on pupils of having to move to a different school
4. Concern that pupils would be separated from their friends
5. Concern about pupils' future opportunities
6. Concern about the impact of additional travel on pupils
7. Concern that pupils would no longer feel a sense of 'belonging' to the community
8. Other comments

6. Impact on protected characteristic groups

1. Benefits of Churchstoke C.P. School / small schools for pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups
2. Impact on pupils with additional learning needs
3. Impact on disabled pupils / parents
4. Impact on pupils that are eligible for free school meals
5. Impact on other protected characteristic groups

7. Impact on parents / families

8. Comments about other schools pupils might transfer to

1. Montgomery C. in W. School
2. Schools located in Shropshire
3. Concerns about available capacity in neighbouring schools
4. Comments about quality of provision in alternative schools
5. Comments about pupils transferring to provision in England
6. Comments about pupils transferring to denominational provision
7. Concern that consultation will be carried out on other schools in the area within a few years
8. Other comments

9. Comments about impact on the community

1. General concern about impact on the community/village
2. The school is the heart of the community
3. Closure of the school would mean that the community would lead to a loss of community cohesion
4. Concern about the impact on local businesses / the local economy
5. Concern about the impact on the community centre
6. Concern about the impact on other services
7. Concern about the impact on other community groups / activities
8. People would no longer want to live in Churchstoke
9. Comments about previous generations of families that have attended the school
10. Queries about what would happen to the school building / grounds
11. Comments about previous school closures
12. Other comments

10. Travel implications

1. The proposal would lead to additional travel
2. Comments about additional transport costs
3. Concern about the impact on the environment

4. Children would be unable to walk to school
5. Comments about the impact of additional travel on low income families / families without access to a car
6. Concern that it would be more difficult for parents to get to school if there was an emergency
7. Concern about traffic congestion
8. Concern about impact on pupils' access to after schools activities
9. Comments about the suitability / safety of school transport
10. Comments about flooding in Churchstoke

11. Comments about impact on the Welsh language

1. Comments about the use of Welsh at Churchstoke School
2. General concerns about the proposal's impact on Welsh
3. Concerns that the proposal would mean that Churchstoke pupils would not have the opportunity to learn Welsh
4. The proposal would not impact on the Welsh language
5. Comments about Welsh Government policy
6. Suggestions for how the Council could improve Welsh
7. Other comments

12. Comments about impact on staff

13. Financial implications

1. Comments relating to the estimated saving from closing the school
2. Comments relating to the budget share per pupil / funding formula
3. Comments about capital funding
4. Other comments

14. Comments about Council strategies

1. Vision 2025
2. Transforming Education Strategy
3. Active Travel Plan
4. Climate Emergency Declaration
5. The Powys Well-being Plan: Towards 2040

15. Comments about Welsh Government initiatives

1. Well-being of Future Generations Act
2. Other

16. Criticism of Powys County Council

17. Comments about the consultation process

1. Comments about consultation taking place during the Covid-19 pandemic
2. Comments about consultation meetings
3. Comments about consultation with parents
4. Comments about consultation with pupils
5. Comments about consultation with the early years setting
6. Suggestion that people didn't know about the consultation
7. Comments about visiting the school
8. Comments about the presumption against closing rural schools
9. Other comments about the process

18. Comments about the consultation documentation

1. Data
2. Costings
3. Comments about the Strategic Context
4. Comments about 'Why change is needed in Churchstoke?'
5. Comments about the reasons for the proposal
6. Options considered
7. SWOTs
8. Risks
9. Other comments suggesting there are inaccuracies in the document
10. Other comments about the consultation document
11. Comments about the impact assessments

19. Alternative options

1. Status Quo
2. Delay the proposal
3. Encourage more pupils to attend the school
4. Improve the provision at Churchstoke
5. Expand the school
6. More community use of the school / site
7. Invest in the school
8. Shared headteacher
9. Federation
10. Merge with another school
11. Clustering
12. Make changes to other schools
13. Invest in small / rural schools
14. Make other changes in order to save money
15. Other

20. Other comments

21. Comments in favour of the proposal

2. CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

155 respondents completed the English language consultation response form, which was available online, and 0 respondents completed the Welsh language consultation response form which was available online. 192 respondents sent the consultation response form by email in English, and 0 respondent sent the consultation response form by email in Welsh.

The quantitative findings of the questionnaire are summarised below. Written comments were also provided in the consultation response forms. The issues raised in these comments are included in Section 6 of this report.

Part 1 – About you

1. Please indicate how you are associated with the schools affected by this consultation:

Response	No.	%
Parent, carer or guardian	52	15.0%
Prospective parent, carer or guardian	22	6.3%
Governor	2	0.6%
Member of staff	5	1.4%
Member of the community	209	60.2%
Organisation	12	3.5%
Pupil	4	1.2%
No association	32	9.2%
Other	9	2.6%
Total responses	347	100.0%

2. Please specify which school you are associated with:

Response	No.	%
Churchstoke C.P. School	266	76.7%
Another school	20	5.8%
No association with any school	60	17.3%
Not Answered	1	0.3%
Total responses	347	100.0%

3. Please provide your postcode:

Response	No.	%
Montgomery	255	81.7%
Newtown	26	8.3%
Welshpool	15	4.8%
Chirbury / Minsterly	11	3.5%
Craven Arms	5	1.6%

Llanfyllin	4	1.3%
Bishops Castle	4	1.3%
Shrewsbury	2	0.6%
Bridgwater	2	0.6%
Other	11	3.5%
Total responses	312	100.0%

Part 3 – About you

4. How old are you?

Response	No.	%
Under 16	5	1.4%
16-23	18	5.2%
25-34	50	14.4%
35-44	61	17.6%
45-54	55	15.9%
55-64	46	13.3%
65-74	58	16.7%
75-84	32	9.2%
85+	5	1.4%
Prefer not to say	17	4.9%
Total responses	347	100.0%

5. What is your gender?

Response	No.	%
Male	106	30.5%
Female	221	63.7%
Gender Fluid	0	0.0%
Non-Binary	0	0.0%
Gender neutral	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	20	5.8%
Total responses	347	100.0%

6. Can you understand, speak or write Welsh?

Response	No.	%
Yes	102	29.4%
No	192	55.3%
Prefer not to say	53	15.3%
Total responses	347	100.0%

7. If you have school-aged children, are they entitled to receive free school meals?

Response	No.	%
Yes	14	4.0%

No	182	52.4%
Prefer not to say	151	43.5%
Total responses	347	100.0%

8. If you have school-aged children, do they have any additional learning needs?

Response	No.	%
Yes	23	6.6%
No	166	47.8%
Prefer not to say	158	45.5%
Total responses	347	100.0%

9. Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

Response	No.	%
Yes	22	6.3%
No	267	76.9%
Prefer not to say	58	16.7%
Total responses	347	100.0%

10. What is your ethnic group?

Response	No.	%
White	315	90.8%
Asian	0	0.0%
Black, African or Caribbean	0	0.0%
Mixed	1	0.3%
Gypsy/Traveller	0	0.0%
Other	1	0.3%
Prefer not to say	30	8.6%
Total	347	100.0%

3. CONSULTATION WITH PUPILS

Comments received from pupils are outlined below. This includes the notes of a meeting held with pupils at Churchstoke C.P. School, as well as a summary of the written responses received from pupils to the consultation exercise.

i) Meeting with the School Council of Churchstoke C.P. School

Officers from Powys County Council met virtually via Microsoft Teams with representatives from the School Council of Churchstoke CP School to discuss the consultation to close Churchstoke CP School with pupils to attend their nearest alternative schools in Powys.

The School Council group consisted of 9 pupils, two of year 2, one of year 3, two of year 4, one of year 5 and three of year 6.

Officers explained that Powys County Council was reviewing the future of schools in Powys, including Churchstoke CP School and is wondering whether or not to close the school. It was explained that there was now a period of consultation where people were being asked what they thought about the idea to close Churchstoke school. It was emphasised that this was only an idea at this time, and no final decision had been made. The views of pupils at Churchstoke CP School are a very important part of the process, and pupils were welcome to ask any questions regarding the proposal.

The pupils were asked several questions and their responses are summarised below:

Do you understand why we are here?

- Yes

What do you like about Churchstoke school?

- The staff, because they focus on each child
- The cooks and the food
- Everyone is very friendly
- Lots of help
- The learning. I'm from a Welsh-medium school in South Wales and came here with no knowledge of Maths in English, and in my previous school there were 300 people. The staff there didn't focus on each child independently as Churchstoke does.

You've seen a difference then since you've come to Churchstoke?

- Yes

Do you like the school building?

- Yes
- The big field the equipment there
- My friends
- We can do lots of sports and sport competitions

What kind of sports do you do?

- Rounders, sports day events, swimming and tennis
- Also the Community Hall, we go there in winter to do PE

Do many of you live in Churchstoke?

- Yes

Do you all walk to school?

- Not all but some do

Is there anything you don't like or could be better about the school?

- Heating in our classroom
- The size of the school building could be bigger

What's good about your learning in the school?

- Teachers give support to each individual child, and will work at their level
- We are challenged appropriately, for example one year 5 pupil is doing year 6 and 7 work.

What else do you like about your learning?

- Everything

If you could change anything what would you change?

- Maths and have Welsh maths instead
- We do Spanish and Welsh but I would like to focus on one and then learn more languages – a different one each term
- More history

Have you learnt a lot about the history of your local area? What can you tell me about Churchstoke?

- There used to be a war in Churchstoke
- The border has changed back to England and back to Wales a number of times

If you were going shopping to a big place, where would you go?

- Welshpool, Tuffins, Birmingham, Shrewsbury, Hereford, Newtown

If the school was to close, and there was no school in Churchstoke, what would be different for you?

- We would make a lot of friends
- It would be weird because I have lived my whole life in Churchstoke school and it would be weird seeing Churchstoke without a school,
- Houses are being built and there's no point building houses if there is no school in the village
- School is the main attraction to the village

What would no school in the village mean for the village?

- Nobody would want to move here, especially if people had children as they would have to take children to a different school
- The community will break apart. People would not talk to each other any more. Parents talk and meet when taking children to school. School is a very important part of Churchstoke
- Would we get to our new school in time?

Does the school get used for different things in the community?

- Brownies Guides and Rainbows use the school field
- After school club

Is the after school club very important to you and your families?

- Yes
- After school club is very important because parents are working and can pick you up later

How many go to breakfast club?

- Only 2 or 3 don't go to breakfast club
- There is a breakfast club which most go to, and that is very handy. We go because our parents are having to go to work. It's important to our families

If there was no school in Churchstoke and you went to other school do you think it would be helpful to you and your parents to go to other after school clubs?

- No, because there would be more stress on parents
- We would not be able to walk to school
- Also going on a bus to a different school, there would be no after school activities as we would have to leave when school bus leaves

Have you got younger brothers and sisters that go to Little Explorers. If there was no school in Churchstoke what would the effect be on Little Explorers?

- If there was no school you would destroy Little Explorers

How do you think that would impact on families and parents?

- I don't think the toddlers will have as many friends
- It's harder for people to make friends as a toddler. They can make friends in Little Explorers, but they would find it difficult if there was no Little Explorers
- Also Little Explorers has dinners at the school, and if there was no school they wouldn't be able to have dinners

So there would be quite an impact on Little Explorers if there was no school in Churchstoke?

- Yes

Where would you go if there was no school in Churchstoke?

- Montgomery, Montgomery, Bishops Castle, Welshpool, Welshpool, Bishops Castle, Bishops Castle, don't know, Bishops Castle

Which high school do you usually go to?

- Bishops Castle mostly. Some people go to Welshpool

If there was no school in Churchstoke, the Council is keen that children from Churchstoke have an education in Wales. Is that important for you?

- Yes, because it keeps Welsh education

Do you like learning Welsh? Ydych chi'n hoffi dysgu Cymraeg?

- Yes

- ‘Os fydddech chi yn chi yn cau yr ysgol bydd plant yn mynd i ysgolion Saesneg a bydd hynny yn golygu colli Cymraeg yn ein pentref. Bydd hynny yn golygu llai yn siarad Cymraeg.’ (*Translation: If you close the school, children will go to English schools and that would mean losing Welsh from the village. That would mean that less would speak Welsh.*)

Do you know that you follow a different curriculum in Wales? How would that affect you if you moved to a school in England

- All pupils would probably find the English curriculum much harder than the Welsh curriculum. Because we don't have Welsh spellings, we have English spellings, so the spellings are a lot harder, and a lot of stuff in England will be different to Wales and it would be all new.

What else would you lose?

- It would affect how we speak Welsh.

Anything else you would lose if you went to a school in England?

- Spanish

Is there anything else you could think of that would be worse for you if Churchstoke school closed and you went to a different school?

- One of my youngest siblings has speech problems and if going to a different school it would affect his speech and he probably would not have as many friends as he does now
- We would lose contact with some friends, but also if you made new friends in a new school, they would live further away and therefore you wouldn't be able to see them after school, only at school
- My younger sibling has no one to one by Powys, so if the school closes she would go to Bishops Castle.

Do you think that your younger sibling gets more support in Churchstoke school? Do you think that would be lost if she went to Bishops Castle?

- No, she gets more support in Churchstoke school, but Shropshire provide more one to one in Bishops Castle than Powys does
- I might be split up from my siblings
- My siblings might have to go to different schools

A lot of questions have been asked as to why the Council is doing this. One reasons is because Churchstoke is a small school. Can you tell me what do you think is good about Churchstoke because it is a small school?

- In a bigger school you probably would not get as much help from teachers as you have in a smaller school. Here teachers and staff pay more attention to you
- In a bigger school you are in a class with pupils of the same year, but here classes are mixed ages, so year 6 can help year 3 so you don't always have to go to the teachers. Teachers are busy
- I have been to a 300 pupil school and it is not better. There are fights every day
- In a bigger school we would have to work more independently without any help if you really need it. That is bad, as your education would not be as good
- Some teachers will be working with lots of different children rather than helping children that actually need the help

Is there anything which you think might be better if you went to a different school?

- More friends

Are any of you the only pupil or one of only two in your year group?

- Yes, I have been for two years, until someone else joined

Did being the only pupil in your year group make a difference?

- It did make a difference, but a good difference. As I was the only person in my year group, there was no point in me doing just abacus so I got to a stage higher than I was. I did maths with a year group above me and that definitely helped me.

Would you be going to the same secondary school as the pupil in same year group as you?

- Yes. I would be happy to go to high school with a friend I know.

When there wasn't somebody in the same year group as you, were you worried?

- It did worry me a tiny bit that I would be going to high school with nobody I knew
- I have been on my own most years. I was worried in going to high school because I had no friends, until another girl joined my class

Questions from pupils

Pupils asked the following questions. The responses provided are summarised beneath each question:

- Why do you want to close the school?

The Council need to look at the 90 primary schools it has in Powys, and from time to time we have to look at schools which are very small such as Churchstoke. The Council has to make sure it has enough schools and in the right places for the amount of pupils it has.

- Have you ever visited Churchstoke?

Yes, but not to the school.

- Have you seen the school and the new houses?

I haven't been to the school but I am hoping to visit the school in the next few weeks if we're allowed to.

- Why do you think that a school with more children will help us learn better?

It won't be just because it is a larger school. We're looking at the whole experience of school, how the learning is organised, the friendship groups. It doesn't necessarily mean you would learn better just because a school is larger, but that's what we're looking at the moment. We're looking at giving you just as good an experience that you have now, if the school closes. It's important that your learning and needs are considered, so that's why we are here today and giving you the opportunity to say what you think.

It doesn't always mean that little schools are bad, and that big schools are good. We look at the learning you have, the curriculum, whether your school is well equipped to provide the curriculum, your wellbeing, that you're having good learning experiences, that you can learn what you want to not just what school decides, making sure there are good social groups and good opportunities to mix with other children. We want to make sure that nobody is losing out. We don't necessarily think a bigger school is better than a small school, but we have to look at all schools in Powys and make sure that the opportunities are there for all the pupils in Powys.

- What will happen to the school site?

If the school closes, the Council would talk to community to see if the community would want to use the school building. If that's not possible, the Council would then sell the site and the money gained from the sale would go

to the Council education budget and used for schools and education across Powys.

- Will the money from the sale go towards our education or would it go to any education?

It would go to the education pot for the whole County, so to everybody.

- What happens to the Community Hall?

What do you think would happen?

- I don't think that the Community Hall could still continue as the school gives it money and without that money the school would be unable to run

Is the hall attached to school building?

- It's next door on the school field

Is the Community Hall used a lot by the community?

- Yes

You think if the school closes there would be an impact on the Community Hall? Do you think it would survive without the school?

- I don't think it could survive without the school.

Is it just used by the school during the school day?

- Yes, just the school uses it during the school day. We use it for PE and activities, we don't have lunch there
- Have you considered the environmental impact on the school and the wildlife on the school site?

If there was no school there, we would have to make sure that the ecology is protected as much as we can. It's an important factor. In terms of considering any environmental impact we have one of our documents in the consultation process which is an impact assessment and we consider the impact on the environment in that and if we get any more or different information about the environmental impact, we will update the document before the end of the consultation process.

- Why is it a good idea to go on a bus to school rather than walk?

We are looking at everything. If there would be no school in Churchstoke then you would have to travel further. But a lot of pupils across Powys already have to travel to school, because the County is so rural, and it is a natural part of everyday life across Powys.

- But so many buses are being used, how will that help with the environment?

It's one of the things we have to take into account. We have to look at a lot of things and balance them. If there is a need for any additional transport, we have to look at how we can minimise the impact. We would have to look at what we could do, for example electric buses.

Educating children across the County in lots of different buildings also has an environmental impact. It's balancing the environmental cost at the moment and what that would be if you were transported. You have to look at the whole picture.

- If the school closes, we have free transport to the closest schools. Fuel would cost a lot, because we would need a lot more buses.

It would not necessarily be buses, it could be a taxi or a minibus. That's still a cost to the environment but it's not quite as bad as having a big bus.

- Have you considered how closing the school would affect children's mental health and wellbeing as we would be split from our friends?

It's a difficult time, as you have been in and out of school and in bubbles over the past year.

The impact on pupil's wellbeing is very very important to the Council. We are here today so that you can tell us exactly what you think about the proposal, and we can then take back your views which will then be considered by the Council's Cabinet. If you say there would be an impact on your wellbeing, you need to tell us that and we will feed that back.

- Have you thought that parents who have been through the school would want their children to come to the school as well?

We do need to consider how important the school is to the community and the emotional connection with the school which they might not have with the school down the road.

This might not happen, but if it does, we don't want you to worry. For example if you went to High School, the schools and the teachers talk to each other

and find out about the pupils. The same would happen here, if you went to a different primary school. If you were to go to a new school we would ask you how we could help you make the move better. We would want to help you to settle in. Say what you think now but try not to worry as it might not happen, we don't know.

- What about resources like Ipads and other equipment?

If the school was to close, we would look at the equipment there and see what equipment there is in the schools you are moving to. We would spread the resources to other schools.

- What if half the pupils went to for example Bishops Castle in England and half to Powys schools. Would you share them out?

No, we would only share them out to schools in Powys, not in England.

- Will teachers be given new jobs?

It depends where there are other available jobs. It could be if all pupils go to the same school that school would need an extra teacher, and it could be that one of your teachers would go there. But it's not guaranteed. In the past everyone's situation is different, and some teachers move to other schools, and some teachers decide that they want to do something else.

- How do our parents get answers to questions that they have?

During this consultation period anyone can let us know what they think. At the end of the consultation period we will have to prepare a report and the Council will have to respond to what's been said, so any questions we get during the consultation period, we will have to respond to in the consultation report which Cabinet will consider and then decide whether or not to carry on with the process.

The children were thanked for their comments and questions, and reminded again that if they or their friends thought about any further questions or comments after today, then they should send them in by 9 June when the consultation closes.

ii) Summary of other comments made by pupils

In addition to the meeting with the School Council, 3 online responses and 16 written responses were received from pupils.

The comments raised in these responses are included in the 'issues raised' in section 6 of this report. However, they are also summarised below:

Impact on the community

- There will be a significant impact on the community if the school closes

Impact on pupils

- The well-being and mental health of the pupils may be negatively affected
- Pupils may be split from their friends in different schools

Impact on staff

- Teachers may lose their jobs

Comments about small/rural schools

- Combined age classes allow pupils to be appropriately challenged or assisted
- Larger schools may not be able to support pupils as well as a small school
- Small schools provide better learning opportunities

Comments about Churchstoke C.P. School

- Provision at Churchstoke is excellent
- Wildlife at the grounds would not be looked after as thoroughly if the school closed

Comments about pupil numbers/surplus spaces

- Housing being built near the school will cause pupil numbers to increase in the future

Impact on Welsh

- Pupils moving to schools in England may not learn Welsh as a result

4. CONSULTATION MEETINGS WITH STAFF AND GOVERNORS

Consultation meetings were held with the staff and governors of the school.

The issues raised at these meetings are summarised below:

i) Consultation meeting with Staff of Churchstoke C.P. School

- Why are the predictions for pupils' numbers, the additional learning needs, and the free school meal numbers so out of date? Updated data already exists. We have a current situation that could have been used. The paper was published in February 2021 and the data has changed considerably since then and we informed the transformation team at the meeting with the governors that there was a considerable change. It seems bizarre just to continue using what the local authority knows to be outdated data.
- I think the concern is how misleading the data is bearing how much the village has changed. It gives a very misleading picture of the school and of the situation that we have and for that to be published as part of a closure consultation, it guides people into a decision that they might make with regard to consultation and when the local authority know that the data is inaccurate, perhaps that should have been stated in the document as well as that the data is considerably out of date.
- Are the transformation team aware of the housing developments, not just in Churchstoke but also in Montgomery, Chirbury, Forden, Kerry and another surrounding catchments?
- I would disagree with you that there is a detailed analysis in the document. I think that there is very superficial analysis in the document, but the concern is will there be space for all our children in the other local schools. Will they go to one school? Will they be expected to move on because that school is full? They would certainly fill year groups up to the admissions number in some of the schools. The concern is how much it is going to fragment the village when children are being moved into one school and then find there is not room there and then have to go to a different school. The other concern is regarding siblings, where there may be room in one year group for one child but not for the other. We're concerned about families and all siblings should be in the same school.
- It (the Council reviewing the needs of any schools that accept Churchstoke pupils) is not offering any certainty to anybody. That lack of reassurance, that uncertainty is very unsettling for parents and is likely to lead them to send their children elsewhere.
- If a lot of parents choose to send their children to Montgomery, could you even guarantee that siblings will be kept together there?
- You are looking to close our school and move the children off to somewhere where there is no room for them, that's the concern. And you cannot guarantee that either. You cannot say that they have a place in Montgomery School. The

concern is that once parents have chosen, and the school will be closed it will be too late to realise how needed we are in the area.

- Surely part of the decision that must be made is whether and where children are going to go, and you do not know that? How can that then impact on the decision Powys County Council is going to make regarding school closure?
- The parental preference is overwhelmingly Churchstoke. As you say the nearest alternative school is not necessarily in Powys and it is not necessarily Montgomery but because you have not named either the uncertainty is extremely unsettling for the whole community.
- Powys are passing the buck as you expect them to go to their nearest school in Powys, which is Montgomery, which will not take all the pupils which means some of them will be going to Shropshire.
- I think what we are trying to say is that people are saying the place they want to stay in is Churchstoke.
- If it is important to Powys that pupils receive an education in Wales, they really have got to provide more security and more information to parents because at the moment there is nothing there to give any security that Powys is the place to send their children as they are not getting enough information.
- In the consultation document, page 8, it states that closing the school will improve learner entitlement and experience. Can you detail what improvements we will see and provide evidence as to the better outcomes for the children?
- You are not answering anything about the actual evidence that by closing Churchstoke School they would get better provision elsewhere. I am hearing a lot of opinion but no evidence. If we produce a self-evaluation, we have to back it up with concrete evidence and there are a lot of sweeping statements throughout this document that presents a statement with no evidence to back it. There is another statement that says people numbers in each year group are small, it is more difficult to ensure peoples are appropriately challenged. We feel that is not true, but you have not presented any evidence for that statement. For the statement that larger schools have improved ability to monitor pupil progress, again, we feel that is not true. In our small classes, in our family classes we monitor our progress very well. There is a statement saying pupil well-being is better in larger schools, we say that is not true. There is no evidence presented in any documentation we have seen. No evidence for these statements says this will be better in Montgomery. There are an awful lot of sweeping statements throughout. It says Montgomery School would be a better place to develop provision which meets the requirements of the new curriculum, without evidence. Now, that would not be acceptable from a school presenting something to Estyn or presenting its self-evaluation report to the local authority. And yet this document throughout it has sweeping statements that are opinion, not backed by the evidence, or not backed by clear and transparent evidence that everyone can sit down and look at.
- It is a generalization and that is not what we are about. What we are looking for is specifics. You have said that surplus places need to be addressed. Our

surplus places are decreasing because our pupil numbers are rising rapidly, so we are already addressing that here. The only evidence I have had mentioned still, is an inspection report from 2015, that is already six years out of date and core visits from a Challenge Advisor who has never actually visited the school at all. That does not seem to me to be up to date with current evidence and the kind of thing that should be used in a matter that is this important.

- How is Montgomery better equipped to meet children's needs?
- You said about the number being below 91 as being too small. That is an awful lot of schools you are going to have to close in North Montgomeryshire.
- So, will we have a village school in any villages or is it going to be just an amalgamation outside Llanidloes, outside Newtown, outside Machynlleth, outside Welshpool and a village school will no longer be a thing because there is not a school in a village anymore?
- So, for the likes of Trefeglwys, Caersws, Llanbrynmair, Llandinam, Llangurig you would close all of them and move them to Llanidloes or Newtown?
- One of the concerns we have is that we have not been included in any review of an area, that we have been targeted. When you look at the document, the current pupil numbers in Montgomery are 90. In other words, they are a small school. Forden with 68 is a small school, Abermule with 64 equals a small school, Leighton with 71 is a small school and Berriew with 85 pupils, a small school. All of the schools that are potentially receiving schools for our pupils are small schools themselves. One of our concerns is that the children who move from us to Montgomery will very soon have another review and have to go through the whole process again, which would be completely unfair. As you have identified, all of these schools are small schools and therefore you should be looking at reorganisation in those areas. Why us and why is the area not looked at all together?
- Montgomery is in a better condition than us, but they do not have the room to expand. There is a need for something in this area, but our pupils would move into a situation where they are going to have all this disruption again, or they have that choice of either staying with the uncertainty within Powys or to move to a stable situation in Shropshire.
- The consultation document says in terms of mitigating action, engagement with parents will happen throughout the process. So why is that not happening? Some of the staff feel that this is a human rights issue there as you are not properly engaging with the community and refusing to have a public meeting, with Churchstoke Explorers as well who are on this site. The document says they will not be affected which is patently absurd. Why is it that Powys County Council refuses to properly engage with the community?
- Parents and the community are finding a way to respond, it has more to do with engagement and how do they get their questions answered, surely a public meeting where you have direct engagement is better. Parents need the answers to the questions in order to respond, for clarification and so on.
- What about the playgroup, engaging with other professionals that will be directly affected?

- At present, the setting meet in one of our buildings. They have developed an area outside with grants from Powys County Council. They use the disabled toilet facilities and our staff toilets. They have their dinners in the school as well, so in the absence of the school, it is beyond anyone's comprehension how they could not to be affected. We have also got the fact that parents who are able to, would be more likely to take their children to the early year setting that their children would be going to school in. Their numbers would fall and would not be viable. No one here has any doubt that losing the school will be the end of the play group as well. The difficulty being the impact on the community. Those who could afford it or who are able to do so will transport their children. A third of the community that we have got are on free school meals, who do not have transport, and who cannot afford it and would be deprived of pre-school education.
- If they are really, really important, I would urge you to engage with the Playgroup Little Explorers because they give you far more detail, so if these facts really are important, then you really need to have a meeting with Explorers.
- Plans for the site is the next question. Are there plans to replace the wildlife, environmental and amenity value of the site, if it should be developed following the closure of the school?
- Is it part of the critical path and that certain things must happen before other things can happen in the area? Is the sale of our school site part of that critical path to possibly do something in the area?
- There is a concern over the community hall as well because the school make a substantial contribution to the community hall funds for the use of sports facilities. Recreation and association are quite certain that without that contribution the hall will no longer viable. That is another issue that really needs to be highlighted, losing not just the play group but the community hall as well.
- Again, engagement with the community more fully would probably help inform you. There's a couple of points in the consultation documents along the lines of "it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would impact on professional learning opportunities for staff", and there is also one that says "it is not expected that it would impact on the salary arrangements of staff". I do not understand how you can say that when the majority of staff will be made redundant?
- We have another sweeping statement that says "the children will have access to additional resources at the alternative schools". What additional resources will they have access to an alternative school that they do not have access to here?
- In terms of the leadership and monitoring, I mean I have got two classes to monitor. A larger school has more classes. I do not necessarily agree that the benefits are as great as they are stated in terms of the ability to provide better leadership within a school and better management of the school. By implication, the leadership and management in this school is being criticised simply because it is a small school, I think that is being overstated.

- When it comes to the extracurricular benefits that is all very well, provided the children can access them, and the paper itself admits that children who have to rely on free school transport cannot necessarily access the benefits of these supposed additional extracurricular activities.
- The concern is that it is going to greatly increase social division, in that the ones who can afford for their parents to go and collect them at the end of the day will be able to access the extracurricular activities, or for that matter things like concerts, parents evenings and those kinds of things, those who must rely on free school transport will not be able to. Contrary to what the document says, we have got 29% of children on free school meals here. That is a full 1/3 of the school community that we would be looking at being disadvantaged not advantaged by the transfer. The whole argument over extracurricular activities and increased extracurricular activities, is very divisive and not true.
- The difficulty is that what we are asking Montgomery to do is change what they're doing for the sake of the pupils that are coming in. It's been stated that so few pupils are coming in that the local schools won't be greatly affected by taking the pupils in and now we appear to be saying actually they're going to change what they're doing in order to accommodate the fact that some pupils will be coming to them. It is one of the contradictions in the report. I think that the concern is that you are saying that the school will not have to change what it is doing, and it won't be greatly affected, but it will have to change what it's doing.
- How do you know that we are not providing extracurricular activities such as lunchtime clubs, after school clubs, because you have not asked us, you do not know that we do not provide those already.
- It was actually in the Community Impact Assessment, and I think someone has commented on the considerable amount of extracurricular activity that we do here. I must admit I do not know what Montgomery have, but I do not think it will necessarily be greater.
- You discussed previously about masses of buses taking children to school. That is not environmentally friendly especially when Wales is trying to reduce its carbon footprint.
- Surely if you need more transport, that is going to be detrimental, and it is better to keep the children in the village where they can walk to school. Most of our children walk to school.
- One of the many concerns is that Powys have declared a climate emergency. They have policies and procedures that have supposed to be directed towards improving the carbon footprint and improving the environmental sustainability of the local authority. And yet we have proposals such as the one that is being made that actually acts against it, and that will put far more vehicles on the road and whatever we think about getting electric buses, we will not have enough electric buses to take all these children to school.
- Putting one bus on the road will not be a solution for us when the children have to go to at least three different schools. We are not talking about putting

one more vehicle on the road. We are talking about putting lots more vehicles on the road.

- There are no buses running from Churchstoke to Chirbury or Montgomery. The only bus that runs from Churchstoke to Bishops Castle is the secondary transport from Churchstoke to Bishops Castle which does not go to the same site and it is full anyway. It will mean a considerable increase of buses on the road. Also, for the ALN transport as well, you would need 2 or 3 taxis. We are not talking about just putting one more bus on the road.
- The numbers of children is an issue. If you go on Powys estimates, its 22 children to transport in September 2025, but the actual numbers are 52 plus. There are also a number of children within the community who already go to school in Shropshire. In the absence of this school, their closest school will become the school that they are going to, and Powys will be liable for transporting them as well, providing free transport. We have come up easily with 30 names. You are looking at transporting 80 children, not 20 odd, which is why I am saying the idea of one bus on the road, is nowhere near being close to accurate.
- Pupils are living within the catchment of the school, but are already attending Primary schools in Shropshire. If Churchstoke closes, then their nearest alternative school will be in Shropshire and therefore Powys would be liable to pay for their transport.
- Just a query on the consultation document, it says that Montgomery school currently has 0% of free school meals, we have 29%. The question is, is the figure for Montgomery correct and what experience have Montgomery got in meeting the needs of vulnerable children.
- I have a concern about social economic status and a divide, if our free school meal children were going to Montgomery school and if it is correct that they have zero free school meals children or disadvantaged children, they are probably not going to be happy about a massive wave of Churchstoke children coming to their school anyway. I am worried that there would be even more of a divide. With children that are maybe more disadvantaged anyway with those things such as new school uniform, new shoes etc. I worry for our children.
- Picking up on that, I think it was polling day and I was sat there giving out the forms and both Chirbury and Montgomery parents were willing to fill these forms in because they did not want our children at their schools. I was devastated by the fact that these parents from other schools are willing to fill in these forms to keep our school open as they did not want our children at their school and so many people did not know they had to fill in the consultation form. They all thought they had to sign the petition but did not know they had to fill in a consultation form. People do not know that they have to fill the consultation form.
- There is a commitment within the document to support pupils with the transition process and I can see that working within Powys schools. However my concern is with the Shropshire schools and how well Powys can engage with them, because like it or not there are going to be large number of families

who choose to send their children to an English school because there'll be free transport there because it's their closest school. It will cut down journey times for the younger pupils, the funding in Shropshire school is better and there is that bit of distrust towards Powys at the moment.

- The way we can support their transition into Shropshire is a concern if parents make that decision. Also is the fact that it will deny children access to the Welsh curriculum and to the Welsh language and the Welsh ethos. I know that it is a concern right across the wider community and the Welsh Language Commissioner has been in touch about it. How does it fit in with the local authority and the Welsh Assembly's plan to increase the use of Welsh language when so many of our pupils are being pushed across the border into England?
- I think better engagement with the community would have helped from the start. There will be a drastic effect on the Welsh ethos and the Welsh identity in the village and that is a concern to everyone who thinks that the Welsh curriculum is getting it right and that learning Welsh is the right thing to do. I do not think you would see Churchstoke as a Welsh village in anything other than name if the closure goes ahead.
- There is a feeling that the consultation has all been operated at too much of an arm's length, too remotely and not being able to have face to face meetings doesn't help. But within the community, staff, and people from Little Explorers there is a feeling of the remoteness of Powys which we feel a lot of the time anyway I think and the outlying areas of Powys are just being knocked off and far from creating an outstanding rural education system, what's being imposed is an urban rural education system on a rural area.

ii) Consultation meeting with Governors of Churchstoke C.P. School

- What I hope we can start to achieve with discussions at this meeting is to prove to you that Churchstoke school should not be closed, particularly when you're using a flawed and contradictory consultation document with inaccurate figures and facts, and without there being a presumption by you to keep rural schools open. Your actions, if you go ahead will rip the heart out of the community of Churchstoke and have a massive knock-on effect. More importantly, we intend to prove to you that you will make no financial saving. In fact, it's going to cost you more.
- The consultation document states on Page 6 that closing our school will improve learner entitlement and experience. I know this has really upset our staff. Could you please detail what improvements we would see and provide evidence of better outcomes for our children? Having had four children go through Churchstoke, I feel that without evidence, this is just the opinion of those writing the proposal or making the decision, without any evidence or any understanding of standards in Churchstoke and to what depth? Even our current Challenge Advisor has never visited the school. What input has there been to the consultation document from Challenge Advisors who provided the

information which informed this statement and where did they get their information from?

- Some would argue that you have a better educational process in a much smaller school because problems you have can be identified.
- Why have the transformation team continued to use out of date data in the consultation document in relation to number on roll, free school meals, funding per pupil, surplus places, despite the fact they were quite clearly informed that the data has dramatically changed in the past year. Why have you chosen not to use current data? Because I feel the deficiencies in the data mean that the Cabinet have been misled when they approved going forward with the proposal.
- It's annoying when we inform you of the deficiencies of the data, and nothing happened. But I appreciate you're saying you have to use a certain set of data.
- All our surrounding schools are small schools by the Welsh Government definition. Every single one of them are also small schools.
- What birth rate has been used in the consultation document? As you may be aware, because we are reasonably close to the border, our families are registered at both Montgomery and Bishops Castle medical practices. Does the source of your birth rate data reflect this? If not, why? School health services have already informed us that you have not looked at the data properly.
- The school health service have given us sort of definite information that whereas they have access to the Powys statistics on birth dates, they don't have access to the Shropshire ones. In fact, a good half of our pupils won't be recorded on there. That is something that I think the transformation team need to take into account, not just for Churchstoke but all the way up and down the border as it will be happening elsewhere as well.
- Why close the school to address the issue of low pupil numbers as stated in the consultation document, at a time when pupil numbers are growing significantly? We are forecast to have 52 pupils on roll in September 2022. This is an increase of 108% since January 2020 and it is based on current known children in the school and preschool plus those that are already known to be moving into the area who have asked for admission, so these are real people and we do have names for all of them. Playgroup is currently at capacity with 22 pre-school children on the books and this does not take into account any of the additional housing developments in progress. Why does the consultation document say that our pupil numbers are not expected to increase for the foreseeable future? Powys forecasts are demonstrably inaccurate. A projection of 22 in January 21, when actual pupil numbers were 38.
- There are still 100 houses to be built (in the area).
- Our capacity is 72. I appreciate that the Welsh Government's definition of a small school is 91 or fewer pupils. We cannot get to 91 even if we wanted to.
- We feel that the section on future need and demand in the area for additional places, page 26 of the consultation document is completely inadequate. There

has not been a proper consideration of the housing developments. It has been brushed under the carpet and ignored. There is the potential for us to reach our capacity and beyond. There just has not been a proper analysis of Powys housing development, even though the planning is all being passed by Powys, not just in Churchstoke but in the surrounding communities as well. There's some increase that's allowed within the document. But it's another hundred houses. That is not some increase. That is a major increase and to say that people numbers at the school are not expected to increase significantly is not correct. They have done and they will continue to do so.

- The slightly crazy thing is some of the houses are being built by Powys as affordable housing, so perhaps the Planning Department and the Schools Department should talk to each other a little bit? I can assure you that parents of school age children have bought quite a lot of the houses.
- It would have helped if housing and community development had actually been included in the engagement proposal. But the impact assessment actually says that they were not. Why were housing and community development not included in the impact assessment? The fact that it says in the impact assessment that they weren't included is wrong?
- In the consultation document projected pupil numbers for Shropshire schools include housing projections. Why have you not used housing projections for Churchstoke? You have partly answered this question, but I just want to emphasize it. Similarly on page 42, why have you used current capacity data and not forecast capacity with the housing data?
- In the consultation document, page 50, why does the SWOT analysis say that option one, continue as we are, would not reduce surplus places? It stands to reason that as our numbers grow, our surplus places reduce. Why does the same table also state that option one would not address the high budget per pupil? It stands to reason that as our numbers grow, our funding per pupil reduces. Can you explain your statements?
- You've mentioned a couple of times about how we're using current data. It's not current, but it's your latest current data if you like from reports that you have and that you will update things when you know what actual numbers are come this September. Actually, we're making a decision here. That is, a decision that impacts on our community forever. So actually, if in 2-3 years' time, given all the 100 extra houses, we potentially have 70, 80, 90 pupils on our roll, we surely need to be making a decision today that reflects that, not just what's currently in place. Otherwise, it's not going to be fit for purpose in the future, is it? I just think it's very short sighted to say that you will use current data to decide whether to close your school. It just worries me.
- But we also need to be looking at our numbers and I appreciate they are just estimates, but we need to be really mindful of those estimates because we can't make a decision now that impacts the community and the children and the young families in this community 2-3 years down the line. We've got to look forward.
- Can I just add to that, Churchstoke is designated a large village and it is therefore prioritized for housing and economic development.

- The consultation document states that the federation option was discounted because there are no other CP schools in the vicinity. There are in fact three CP schools under 10 miles away from Churchstoke and six more within 15 miles. There are many examples of successful federations covering distances between schools greater than 10 miles in Shropshire, and the Carno, Llanbryn-mair and Glantwymyn federation for example in Powys. The distance between those schools is greater than 10 miles. Do you not see this as a successful federation in Powys?
- The School Organisation Code states that there must be a strong reason for closure and that all other options, including federation, must be properly considered. We have no evidence that this has been done at all.
- There are three schools within 10 miles; Berriew, Leighton and Abermule.
- Merger is of course an option as well, and that's still within the proposal. The problem with that is it takes away CP provision in the area. As you said yourself, the surrounding schools are all Church in Wales. If parents want their children to have a CP education, their only option is to take their children into Shropshire. That's not something that we want to see. So, the idea of keeping CP provision within Churchstoke, allowing parents that option I think is a very powerful one and federation with one of our neighbouring CP schools. I don't see anything wrong with that.
- The consultation document states alternative CP provision is available within 10 miles, which we've just established. Will you provide free transport to these schools, bearing in mind you're depriving parents of any choice closer than this? If the CP schools are too far away for us to federate with, why are you saying that it is appropriate for our children to travel to these schools on a daily basis?
- The impact on protected characteristics of faith or belief is assessed as neutral. But if Powys do not fund transport to a CP school, there is a definite negative impact for families who do not wish their children to attend a Church in Wales School.
- In the Consultation Document, page 27-28, is the funding formula saving of £61,000 based on 52 Churchstoke pupils in September 2022? If not, then how many? I suspect your answer is no.
- Just basing these proposals on 25 pupils just makes the whole thing fatally flawed. And to be honest, Powys are looking at running into serious financial difficulties if they take it forward on the basis of 25 pupils because there just will not be 25 pupils in September 2022.
- When you've managed to model the funding formula savings based on better pupil data, would it be possible for us to see those calculations? I appreciate that it's confidential what funding other schools get, but we actually see every school's funding formula anyway, don't we? So, would it just be possible at least to know how many pupils in how many different schools? Because I know that a big concern for parents is how many different schools our children will be squeezed into? So what will be really key is how many schools you've modelled that funding formula calculation on, and how many children are going to each of those schools, so that we can understand the financial

impact of this. Because that's got to be key to any decision made. What we're really concerned about is that a decision could be taken that increases the costs of Powys County Council greatly, rather than making any savings so it would be useful if we could see that detail if that's possible.

- How many alternative schools for our children have been included in the formula calculations? We have asked for details on how the calculations are being made but have not received the information requested.
- How much does the consultation process cost? And although it's a one-off cost, why is it not being included in the finance calculation? Does this include the cost of engaging lawyers and barristers, if there is a legal challenge to any of the outcomes of a judicial review?
- This is about the transport costs, which we believe have been horrifically underestimated. We've been told that the additional transport costs of the proposal will be £19,000 per year based on £100 per day. What is the basis for £100 a day? How many buses to how many different schools? Is it based on each day and for how many pupils? I believe at the moment you thought it would just be one minibus to one school. You're going to need a minimum of five minibuses. You're also going to need two taxis for the ALN statemented pupils who can't travel on public transport. If children decide to go to Chirbury or Bishops Castle, you're also going to have to pay for the transport there. We also have about 30 children within the catchment area that, for whatever reason, have decided to be educated in Shropshire. It may be that they don't want to learn Welsh or other reasons. If you close Churchstoke school, their nearest school will be closed so you will then have to transport all of those pupils as well, so that will be about 80 pupils at an absolute minimum. How are the young children going to be transported? They can't go on a Secondary school bus because the buses are full and a year seven and year eight pupils that don't want to go on Secondary school buses. We just need to know why you have woefully underestimated your transport costs.
- Just to clarify that you are not funding them because at the moment they're not going to their nearest school. We are their nearest school. They are choosing to take them a little bit further. Parents are choosing to send them a little bit further. However, if Churchstoke closes then the school they're going to will then become their nearest school, therefore Powys, then become liable for costs.
- You made a comment before. I think you were trying to say why these children are not at Churchstoke because they're in the catchment area. What you have to understand is that the border weaves in and out and pupils that would be considered as being in the catchment area may actually be just in Shropshire, so they then go to a Shropshire school perhaps due to the choice of their parents. It may be easier for people when they work. It may be because they went to a Busy Bee's play group. It does not mean that we are a bad school which I think was sort of a suggestion coming there, some of them go to Welsh schools, some go to Forden for example.
- Some of them may go to Bishops Castle because there is actually longer childcare in Bishops Castle, and if you work you have no choice. We have

pretty good wraparound care, but they have much longer childcare there so it just may be a necessity. And of course, some people may not want the Welsh education.

- The other big factor, of course, is the significantly additional funding that Shropshire schools get compared to Powys schools. So extra funding for pupil deprivation grants, etc. ALN funding. All of their per pupil funding through the core formula budget is significantly higher and hence they can sometimes offer smaller classes or increased resources. I firmly believe it doesn't mean you necessarily get a better education that way, but some parents will believe that actually they can access more at a school that is significantly better funded which we know Shropshire is.
- Why does the map in the consultation document not show all of the Churchstoke catchment area? It appears to be centred on Chirbury village. Where I live is not shown and that really annoyed me. It omits most of the catchment including important border areas. Why does it not show the location of all the nearest schools? Bishops Castle is not shown on it, yet it is the closest to the east side of the catchment. Nor are the neighbouring CP schools named in the Impact Assessment. Now I appreciate it can be difficult with a map, but I would have thought you could have done a bit better.
- The consultation document on page 11 states pupils would attend schools with better quality accommodation. But Montgomery school building condition is also rated as poor. Can you explain how it is better accommodation than the Churchstoke building as both Churchstoke and Montgomery have identical buildings ratings, condition C and suitability B/C, but the report on Churchstoke is outdated. Since the report you've used, we have had a new disabled entrance built, and I think that makes our building a lot better.
- When it comes to the Equality Act 2010 why have you not answered question 17 Part 5 on page 26, which states will the proposal improve access for disabled pupils in accordance with the Equality Act 2010? Is it because the simple answer is, no? The statement made does not answer the question, will it improve access and which schools are fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and which partially? Specifically, is Montgomery fully or partially compliant? Will Montgomery be able to properly accommodate our disabled pupils? What about the Shropshire schools which are not included in this section at all? Was any inquiry made to Shropshire Council to check on this? Why is the impact on those disabilities assessed as neutral in the impact assessment, when the consultation document states that some of the schools are only partially compliant with the Equality Act? What about the impact of additional travel on those with disabilities? This has to be a negative impact, not neutral.
- Why have you stated in the consultation document that Montgomery school has an admission number of 21 when your admissions 21/22 document refers to Powys County Council admission arrangements and information stating that it's 17? Similarly, why are some of the Shropshire data, including income and cost per pupil figures incorrect when compared to the references?

- It's clear from the consultation document that there is insufficient capacity at Montgomery School for our children, which we are all agreed on. Do you intend to squeeze our children into other schools to fill the gaps, and how many other schools? Potentially we have as we've already said, 52 pupils needing to be accommodated. The premise of the consultation paper is that they all transfer to Montgomery. You said there are 29 spaces in Montgomery, but this number does not take into account their new development of 33 affordable homes at the bottom of the town.
- Which other Powys schools would pupils have to travel to, and have both the cost and distance to these schools been factored into consideration bearing in mind the pupils furthest from Montgomery will be the last to get a place under the Powys Admissions arrangements? How long will it take to get for existence from Pentre or Snead to a receiving Powys school if it's not Montgomery? What would happen if there was room in one year group for a pupil but not in another for their sibling? Can Powys guarantee under their admission arrangements that siblings would be kept together?
- What is going to happen in Montgomery if say our pupils go there and they fill the whole school, and then the 33 affordable houses are built by the fire station in Montgomery, which there is permission for. Where are all those children going to go?
- It's not forward thinking in my opinion (the current proposal). You need something that will go on into the future, not just now.
- Just to make the point that under the admissions criteria our pupils are going to come bottom of the pile all the time. Because distance is one of the criteria, and the pupils closest to the school would get places before those further away. Churchstoke pupils are going to be at the bottom of the pile in every school along the line. If there is no room for them in Montgomery they are even further away from the next school. So, they're kind of being dropped to the bottom of the pile all the time.
- The point I'm making it is that it is a reason not to close the school. It disadvantages pupils from the village greatly in terms of admissions because if they want to stay in Powys they are going to travel further and further into Powys. The further you expect them to travel, the more likely they are to take the Shropshire route.
- When deprived of the school payment for use, and with the cuts in funding from Powys County Council, how do you think the Community Hall will make up the shortfall in order to survive? Does the local authority appreciate how tight the finances of the Recreation Association are, and I know about this because I've only just left this committee. Do they know how much the school contributes? Do they know what effect the closure of the Community Hall would have on the local community, such as the Football Club? Would they be prepared to, for instance, grant fund the Hall?
- Regarding the Community Recovery Grant, just to clarify, that's not ongoing. That is just the Covid recovery grant. It's not something that is going to solve the problem long term.

- Given that Little Explorers, which is the playgroup, use our site and that the consultation document states that closure of the school would not directly affect the early years provision, what are your plans for our site and buildings? Why were the Little Explorers not included in the consultation? And why will no one at Powys County Council answer the questions they have? Why were Little Explorers given £10,000 to enhance the outdoor space shared with the school at the same time as starting a consultation to close the school? Given that the Council is currently facing significant financial pressures, do you think that this was an effective budget management or forward thinking?
- It's (Little explorers) full to the rafters because it's so successful, the children eat their meals in the school so there's intertwined provision in Churchstoke. I think that if the school closes that we know pre-school provision will go. So not only would the school go, but the pre-school provision would also go, which comes on to my next question. How does the inevitable loss of the pre-school provision in Churchstoke, which currently shares the school site, fit into the Council's plans for early years provision?
- How would you ensure that the 29% of Churchstoke pupils on free school meals – 29% not 8% as stated in the document – and those whose parents do not have transport, all of whom would rely on free school transport, are able to access extracurricular and after school activities or even breakfast club?
- You should be aware that many parents are dependent on the wrap around care currently offered at the school, meaning that the work of the parents may no longer be viable or that they would be unable to take on jobs. We have letters to prove that from Saint Nick's House and Montgomery Spring Water to back this up. What effect do you feel this would have on social disadvantage and the local economy?
- A lot of the parents of these children do not have their own transport, and that's the reason they go to Churchstoke so they can walk and then they are employed in places practically next to the school as well. I mean all that would go. You have to understand.
- A question we skipped over which is important to me is why you have undertaken not to have a wider view of provision in our area?
- Talking about this programme and if you close our school, our children only have the option to go to other small schools. What is the likelihood that our children would need to then go through this process all over again?
- One thing before you have your meeting with the School Council, the governing body know that I love a quote, usually Shakespeare. But tonight, it's going to be Anne Frank. A quote from her is "even if people are very young, they shouldn't be prevented from saying what they think". And I hope that will come out in the School Council consultation that you are doing next with our lovely pupils.

5. ESTYN

Estyn's response to the consultation is provided below:

This report has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However, Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore, as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer

Introduction

This is a proposal by Powys Council to close Churchstoke C.P. School from 31 August 2022, with pupils transferring to their nearest alternative schools.

The proposer explains clearly the reasoning behind the proposal, set against the Council's approved new 'Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys'. The strategy sets out several aims and objectives to transform the Powys education system over the next few years with the aim of providing the best possible opportunities for Powys learners, now and in the future. Two of the objectives included in the strategy are to 'improve learner entitlement and experience' and 'rationalise primary provision'. This proposal is in line with these objectives.

The council's new strategy clearly outlines several challenges facing education in Powys as identified following engagement with key stakeholders. For instance, the high proportion of small schools, decreasing pupil numbers, high numbers of surplus spaces, the condition of existing buildings and inequalities in accessing Welsh medium education and Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision.

Conclusion

Estyn believes that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards in terms of education, provision, and leadership and management.

Description and benefits

The proposer has identified a clear rationale for the proposal and gives reasons why change is necessary, including the strengths and weaknesses of the status quo. The proposer has identified four main risks to the proposal and clearly outlined mitigating actions. Examples of these are, that there being sufficient capacity at other Powys schools in the local area to accommodate all pupils, full engagement with parents throughout the process and the council providing advice and support to the school and governing body to ensure that standards and performance do not deteriorate during the transition period.

The proposer lists several advantages to the proposal, such as addressing the issue of low numbers; reducing the council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools; pupils being taught in classes with peers of similar ages; pupils attending larger schools could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities.

The proposer identifies that one of the disadvantages to its preferred option is additional travel for those pupils for whom Churchstoke C.P. School is currently the closest school. It acknowledges that this could have an impact on pupil wellbeing. Whilst the local authority provides free home to school transport to eligible pupils, it identifies that there could be an impact on pupils' ability to access after-school activities. The proposal further notes that there would impact on families due to the expectation that they to travel to school events. This could have a greater impact on children from economically deprived backgrounds. The proposer offers too little information on how these issues may be alleviated, other than its consideration that alternative primary provision would be available at several other schools located within 10 miles of Churchstoke C.P. School, which it does not consider excessive.

The proposer has considered other options, for example the status quo, establishing formal federations and merging with another local primary school to establish a new school on two sites. Whilst the proposer recognises the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative, it concludes that the preferred option is for the pupils of Churchstoke C.P. School to attend nearest alternative school in Powys.

Educational aspects of the proposal

The proposer has considered the effects of the proposal on the quality of standards, provision, and leadership and management. Consideration has been given to the latest Estyn and Ofsted inspection reports for nearby schools and concludes that it is likely that the quality of standards, provision, and leadership of the alternative preferred option is of at least equivalent quality as that provided currently at Churchstoke C.P. School.

The council's view is that the school to which it expects most pupils to transfer, Montgomery C. in W. School, would provide a curriculum which is at least equivalent to that currently provided at Churchstoke C.P. School. Pupils would transfer to a larger school, 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 school would be better placed to develop provision which meets the requirements of the new curriculum for Wales.

The proposer has undertaken a full impact assessment for each school in relation to aspects such as the possible impact on the community, the travel arrangements for pupils, costs and savings. Transport would be provided in accordance with the Council's transport policy for schools. The proposer is committed to working with the community in Churchstoke. For example, there is a village hall and should the school no longer be available, community events and activities could take place there.

The proposer has undertaken a comprehensive impact assessment for its potential impact on equality and the Welsh language. The conclusion suggests that there is no reason to believe that the nearest alternative schools would be unable to meet the needs of pupils belonging to the protected characteristic groups that would be affected, including pupils with Additional Learning Needs and pupils eligible for Free School Meals. In addition, that the proposal would not expand or reduce the availability of Welsh language provision

Presumption against the closure of rural schools

Churchstoke C.P. School is a designated rural school. The proposer identifies the reasons for formulating the proposal along with the key challenges which the school faces. The proposer outlines suitably the reasons why it considers the school is no longer viable and considers reasonable alternatives to closure. All reasonable alternatives have been considered and an assessment undertaken of their merits and viability. These include assessments of the likely impact on the quality of standards in education, on the community and the likely impact of different travelling arrangements.

6. ISSUES RAISED DURING THE CONSULTATION PERIOD

The following tables list the issues raised during the consultation period and provide the local authority's response to these issues.

1. COMMENTS ABOUT CHURCHSTOKE C.P. SCHOOL

1.1 General positive comments about the school

1.1.1	Churchstoke C.P. School provides a happy, stimulating environment.	The Council notes these positive comments about Churchstoke C.P. School
1.1.2	Churchstoke is a lovely village school where students are thriving	As above.
1.1.3	Pupils love the school	As above.
1.1.4	It's a brilliant school to go to.	As above.
1.1.5	People come to Churchstoke school because it's a good school.	As above.
1.1.6	I have heard nothing but amazing reviews about Churchstoke and the school and it is where I desperately seek to send my children.	As above.
1.1.7	This is a fantastic forward thinking school valued by its fast growing community	As above.
1.1.8	It's a safe, friendly and fun place to learn.	As above.
1.1.9	Churchstoke school is a small school, but it has an excellent record of serving the needs of the village.	As above.
1.1.10	The school supports individuals to be the best they can be within their own capabilities.	As above.
1.1.11	Churchstoke school, like others is not just made up of bricks, wood and glass. It is made up of the teachers, staff and pupils who attend it and I have to say that I could not be more proud of	As above.

	the pupils to which my son is one of them. They are hard working and crave to learn. The teachers I believe are some of the best Powys has to offer. My son is taught by both the head master and a teacher who have really had an impact on my son.	
1.1.12	After the recent pandemic our children have returned to school and been cared for and nurtured.	As above.

1.2 Comments about the quality of provision at the school

1.2.1	We have continued to develop the use of the assessment foundations insert software to record, track and plan for children's progress and are looking forward to using their Taith360 development to transfer this to the New Curriculum Framework.	Comment noted. However, all schools are responsible for monitoring and tracking the progress of all learners, throughout the academic year.
1.2.2	We continue to seek out examples of good process. In fact, some of the work that has been done pre pandemic was identified by our Challenge Advisor as good practise to be shared with other schools.	Comment noted. However, good practice in key stage 2 Science was identified pre-Covid.
1.2.3	Some of the practise at Churchstoke in preparing for the new curriculum that was found by Hayley Smith was identified to be distributed to other schools as examples of good practise. Has this happened at Montgomery? In fact the way in which we work, including the mixed age group classes lends itself to the new curriculum approach and we have been very successfully working in this way for several years at. Is there an issue in the way that we are preparing for the new curriculum in Churchstoke?	See above. The identified good practice was not specifically for preparation for the new curriculum. Revisiting the four purposes and forming a vision for Curriculum for Wales remain priorities for the school. It was noted, during the pupil consultation, that members of the School Council had very limited knowledge of their own locality or local history.
1.2.4	We continue to seek out opportunities and experiences to broaden horizons and experience, both our pupils and of staff. despite the small numbers of staff they are supported in professional development, focused on the priorities in the school	Comment noted. However, professional learning (for example, on the new ALN Act) poses a challenge where the headteacher is also the ALNCo and has a high teaching commitment.

	and staff development plans. This includes Management and Leadership training organised by Portal Education being undertaken by teaching staff.	
1.2.5	These school collaborate and work in partnership with a range of other schools, particularly those in the Clusters we are a part of. This includes formal collaborations such as shared moderation and professional development opportunities (preparation for the new curriculum, ALN and Yoga and mindfulness have been recent training undertaken with colleagues from other schools) and also informal contacts and collaborative work (including part time staff who work in other schools, and cross border contacts giving a different perspective on shared challenges). The development of skills and experience in online training and communications has been a huge boon in this. (Is this all one thing?)	<p>Attending cluster meetings during the school day poses a challenge for a headteacher with a high teaching commitment.</p> <p>The digital skills of both staff and pupils improved during the pandemic. However, the school provided no synchronous or asynchronous learning during lockdown, and limited opportunities for pupils to interact or learn collaboratively.</p>
1.2.6	Work is planned following the children's interests and motivations, and a range of local clubs, coaches and societies supported by giving local opportunities which would otherwise not be available. The Curriculum is enhanced by extra-curricular links to extend answer port the children's experiences. This helps with engaging and motivating the pupils. Staff have detailed knowledge of each pupils' individual needs and pupils get personal and individual planning and attention throughout their time in school. As a school we don't play the borderline game either, concentrating solely on those who can make statistics look better. Every child matters, every child against the individual focus to be the best that they can be. As our header says, we put children first.	It is an expectation that all schools consider the needs of individual pupils and monitor their progress accordingly.
1.2.7	The planning system developed for blending learning during lockdown is still in use as an independence and curriculum broadening tool. As during home learning the KS2 children have	'Independent learning' does not refer solely to pupils completing tasks on their own: It should include collaborative learning, independent of teachers, but

	independent learning tasks set to support the explicit teaching in the classroom.	including opportunities for pupils to learn from each and develop communication and other skills. The school provided limited opportunities for collaborative learning or pupil interaction during lockdown.
1.2.8	Before the 1st lockdown and school closure we had made good progress in introducing the four purposes to the children of, working with them to convert the purposes to “I can” statements and identifying what the children already do (both at home and in school) that fits into each, giving the children individual ‘ownership’ of the purposes. We have a well developed programme for developing independent skills and this is being revisited in the light of last years experiences and the new curriculum. This includes developing the children's problem solving skills in the widest context and the school to school support for genius hour activities has supported excellent work in this area.	Developing pupil independence remains a priority for the school.
1.2.9	In many ways we already are teaching the new curriculum and to a certain extent have been for a while, So what we are doing is adapting to what we do to the new framework. Class planning, medium and short term, is already based on the four purposes and areas of learning. There is no doubt that the pandemic, with school closures and distance learning, has changed the way in which we have had to work, and the independent expected of the children in terms of their learning. It has also delayed the preparation work which we had planned, particularly the school to school support opportunities and professional development opportunities. However, staff have joined in training through cluster, school to school support and elsewhere both on the new curriculum (on AOLEs and teaching methods, including genius	All schools are expected to be preparing for Curriculum for Wales. It is difficult to claim that any school is already teaching the new curriculum since Curriculum for Wales: The Journey to 2022 is still evolving. Revisiting the four purposes and forming a vision for Curriculum for Wales remain priorities for the school.

	hour). we now have plans to catch up with the training opportunities missed through the use of RISC and PD funding carried over from last year to buy into online courses offered by Collective Learning. These can be shared with other schools, subject to licencing arrangements.	
1.2.10	As a school we have always worked on the basis of a thematic and topic work, with a holistic curriculum and subjects being visited through active learning. We have spent a lot of time on developing the outdoor areas for use in curriculum work, not just for Foundation Phase but for Key Stage 2 as well, this is something which has benefited the play group as well. We had an established programme of working together across our classes, KS2 working with FPh until the need to separate bubbles prevented it. This included the whole school thematic weeks, based on the areas of learning. These included Enterprise Weeks where the children researched, designed and produced items for sale to parents and the wider community. We are continuing to work across the school as far as possible, albeit in separate bubbles, and on projects topical to the children's' experience. One example is a current whole school project on travel to school, with foundation phase pupils collecting and presenting data on travel distances and methods and key stage two pupils analysing the data. Real issues, real problems, real solutions, developed organically from the children's concerns and motivations.	Thematic working, a holistic curriculum and learning through real-life contexts/experiences are all to be commended. This should also include a focus on developing pupil skills.
1.2.11	The teaching is of a high quality, school in now Amber and still improving, PCC Advisor is very happy with the school, balanced budget in spite of not getting full allocation for ALN and FSM pupils.	National categories no longer apply. School Improvement Advisors do not pass judgement on how 'happy' they are with a school. The school receives its full allocations for ALN and eFSM pupils, in accordance with current procedures.

1.2.12	Churchstoke CP School provides an excellent local community resource to our children and families. Every child is treated as an individual and fully supported to reach their potential. Mixed age classes enable children to be challenged and supported easily within the classroom. Learning is based on ability rather than age. More able children work in groups with older children and those needing additional support can work with younger children on tasks to develop their confidence. This works incredibly well for the learner in Churchstoke School.	All schools are expected to treat pupils as individuals and support them to reach their full potential. For learners, there is no advantage in differentiation by organising ability groups across ages; it could pose challenges in terms of differing maturity, interests and child development (for example, a more able year 3 pupil would probably have very different reading interests and developmental needs from a low attainer in year 5, even if their attainment was similar).
1.2.13	In fact, we are very successful both in challenging pupils and supporting the less able to come up because they are in a mixed age group classes. Differentiation for purpose of challenge and support is actually easier to arrange. More able can easily work with the year groups above and less able with those below. Powys Schools have been doing it very successfully for years and it is extremely disappointing to see the hard work of everyone involved denigrated in this way. Has there ever been an issue with appropriate levels of challenge or standards in Churchstoke? Feedback from both feeder secondary schools is very positive.	See above. This reasoning does not then apply to the more able pupils in year 6. There is no denigration of the hard work undertaken by small schools, rather an acknowledgement of the difficulties presented.
1.2.14	Challenge and support is built into the mixed age classes. More able pupils are able to work naturally alongside older pupils, whilst those who need a greater degree of support can work alongside younger pupils. Ability grouping is easier to arrange in mixed age classes.	See above.
1.2.15	We have excellent links both with our feeder play group and with these secondary schools which we feed onto. Transition in both directions, even during last year's difficulties, has always been excellent. This includes the recognition of cross border issues, including pupils who transfer into Powys from England and those who transfer into England from Powys.	Effective transition is a requirement for all schools.

1.2.16	Grant funding has been well utilised to ensure good admin support, benefiting pupils and families, and finance is overseen by a very experienced Governor's Finance Committee, now supported by the Welshpool Cluster Business Manager.	Effective financial management and grant usage are requirements for all schools and monitored by the Local Authority.
1.2.17	Do you have an issue with pupil progress in Churchstoke?	Updating pupil assessments, IEPs, one-page profiles and provision maps were a priority for the school during the last support visit (16/06/21)

1.3 Comments about pupil numbers at the school

1.3.1	The school has grown over the last year from 25 to 38, and with new families moving in it is set to grow more very quickly. Having visited the new families I know they have babies and young children who will be attending our school in Churchstoke in the future.	<p>The Council recognises that there has been a slight increase recently in the number of pupils at Churchstoke C.P. School. However, this follows a period of significant decrease in numbers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan 2014 – 64 • Jan 2015 – 54 • Jan 2016 – 53 • Jan 2017 – 41 • Jan 2018 – 39 • Jan 2019 – 28 • Jan 2020 – 25 <p>The current numbers on roll are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R – 5 • Y1 – 8 • Y2 – 5 • Y3 – 5 • Y4 – 3
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Y5 – 11 • Y6 – 2 • Total – 39 <p>The Council recognises that there are a significant number of housing developments in the area which may lead to a further increase in pupil numbers at the school, and it is recognised that the playgroup has healthy numbers as well. However, as stated in the Council’s Strategy for Transforming Education, which was developed with extensive engagement with schools and other stakeholders, there is a concern that Powys has too many small schools and an inequity in terms of funding per pupil. The Welsh Government’s definition of a small school is a school with fewer than 91 pupils – Churchstoke C.P. School is currently significantly below this number.</p> <p>120 dwellings are in the process of being built or allocated in Churchstoke. The Council’s planning department uses a pupil-yield ratio of .45 pupils for each house build. Based on this ratio, the housing developments could potentially lead to an increase in approximately 54 children in Churchstoke. However, it must be recognised that this is an estimate and that such an increase would probably happen gradually over a period of time.</p>
1.3.2	There are a reasonable number on roll.	As above.
1.3.3	I think this is very short-sighted of the Council to consider this move. Churchstoke is a growing village and within the last twelve months the numbers of children have increased to 38 children in	As above.

	the school and in the Playgroup at the school 19 children. There will also be several even younger children who are not yet in Playgroup.	
1.3.4	Pupil numbers at the school are forecast to be over 50 by September next year and this does NOT include any families yet to move to the village.	As above.
1.3.5	The school has almost doubled in size in the last year or so. I think that shows that the number of pupils is not a reason to close the school!	As above.
1.3.6	I can't understand why you want to close the school now as pupil numbers are the highest they have been in a long time and will continue to go up with all the new houses being built in the area. Where are all these children going to go??	As above.
1.3.7	Pupil numbers are increasing. Since Jan 20 th they have increased by 52% because of recent housing development within the village, with more underway and more in planning, the village is growing very quickly!	As above.
1.3.8	I can't understand why you feel now is the time to close the primary school taking the preschool with it, when the pupil intake is increasing month on month.	As above.
1.3.9	Increasing pupil numbers automatically decrease the surplus capacity. By September it will be reduced to below 27% and below 19% by 2025.	As above.
1.3.10	Our surplus places are decreasing naturally as our numbers increase.	Churchstoke C.P. School has a capacity of 72. There are 39 pupils currently on roll, meaning that the school has 33 surplus places.

1.4 Comments about the school being a small school

1.4.1	Because it's a small school the staff at Churchstoke know all the children by name they know the parents and even grandparents, they know each child's character and when that child may be struggling with something they recognise it and deal with it accordingly, this is absolutely invaluable and something that will be lost in a larger school.	All schools, regardless of size, would expect teachers to know each child individually and to be able to support, challenge and nurture all children to achieve their full potential.
1.4.2	Our teachers knew each one of us individually and knew exactly how to get the best out of us. They also knew our families well so that if we were having any problems at home they could support us fully. I always felt safe and happy.	As above.
1.4.3	All people are treated respectfully and equally at Churchstoke. This is not as easy in a larger establishment where not everyone is known to everyone else.	All schools, regardless of size, are expected to treat everyone respectfully and equally.
1.4.4	My learner experience at Churchstoke was excellent. Because I was in mixed aged classes I was taught in groups based on my ability rather than just my age, often working with children older than me so that the work was appropriately challenging and always engaging. I have many friends in secondary school that went to large town primary schools and they do not talk of their primary school experience in such a positive way.	Comment noted.
1.4.5	My child has a disability. We have moved to Churchstoke from a larger school as it did not suit them.	Comment noted.
1.4.6	We had decided to move from Powys back into Shropshire, but there was no way we were going to send our son to a school that had 32+ pupils in a class, when Churchstoke had just 10 pupils in a year. So I used to travel every day for our son to attend this wonderful little school.	Comment noted.

1.4.7	The children themselves (most notably those who have transferred into Churchstoke from larger schools) have identified the fact that coming to a smaller school has improved their educational experience.	Comment noted.
1.4.8	Pupils have identified that coming to a smaller school has improved their educational experience, most notably from pupils who have transferred to Churchstoke CP School from larger schools.	Comment noted.
1.4.9	My concern is that by moving our children to a larger school, they too might slip through the net and not receive any help that they may possibly need.	All schools, regardless of size, are expected to support, challenge and nurture all children to achieve their potential.
1.4.10	Pupils are able to benefit from working with children in the year above.	Comment noted.
1.4.11	Staff know all the children and have an amazing connection with them. In a larger school and being bussed in these families wouldn't be known in the same way, the children wouldn't have the same rapport with staff who they see as other members of the community outside of school.	Comment noted. All schools, regardless of size, develop a sense of community.
1.4.12	Because Churchstoke School was relatively small and we were taught in mixed aged classes, I was able to work with friends in the years above me for maths and English as I found these subjects fairly easy.	Comment noted.
1.4.13	At school the juniors also have a daily exercise routine, which would not be provided in a larger school.	All schools are required to provide physical exercise as part of the curriculum.
1.4.14	Because it was a small school I had the opportunity to do lots of things as a whole school rather than just a class. We all looked after each other. The older children help the younger ones. I don't think it would feel like that in a large school.	Comment noted.

1.4.15	Every child is treated as an individual based on their individual needs. The staff know every child and their family well. This is the beauty of a local school serving a local community. Larger is not always better. One size does not fit all.	All schools, regardless of size, are required to meet the individual needs of all pupils.
1.4.16	Do you have an issue with pupil well-being at Churchstoke? Why do parents seek out family atmosphere of schools such as Churchstoke? parents do not want large schools. Quite the opposite, they want smaller, more family schools, where their children are known and cared for. This is one of the things that attracts families to our Powys villages. Note: the well-being statement in the last inspection report (from six years ago) was solely as a result of 'variable attendance rates', a result of using percentages inappropriately in smaller schools.	<p>The Council does not have any concerns about the wellbeing of pupils at Churchstoke C.P. School.</p> <p>The Council notes the comment about parents choosing smaller schools because of a more 'family' environment. However, there are a number of reasons for parental choice of school.</p>

1.5 Everyone is friends at the school

1.5.1	I don't want my school to close. I know everyone in my school and I can say hi and talk to them.	The Council notes these comments.
1.5.2	Friendships are made for life and the children bond together.	As above.
1.5.3	It's small and friendly [at the school].	As above.
1.5.4	I love this school also because they were lovely kind kids and lovely teachers and lovely staff.	As above.
1.5.5	It's a lovely friendly school, that helps to mould the children into caring adults.	As above.
1.5.6	The school has always been a very happy school.	As above.
1.5.7	The children all know each other and look out for each other.	As above.

1.5.8	Churchstoke school is not only a place of learning but also a school where every child is known by name, and all children know all of the staff, as our motto says “putting children first”.	As above.
1.5.9	I am thrilled at the thought of my children accessing this school in the knowledge they will be surrounded by friends and family.	As above.
1.5.10	Children can make friends with children who live in the same area. This is an important factor in any community.	As above.
1.5.11	Our school is not only one of friendship for children in its care, but also for the parents, new and old, who meet at the school gates, the playgroup, who run next the school, and the old people's home. Playgroup get to see what “big school” is like and to watch their siblings at work and play.	As above.

1.6 Comments about school staff

1.6.1	The key factor in ensuring the best opportunities for all pupils is the dedicated and passionate staff at Churchstoke, including every member of staff. Planning is focused on the individual needs, there is a high degree of teamwork and shared visions, and shared supportive family ethos. Partnership with parents is excellent, and this extends to an awareness of the needs of all, not just of the children but of the families within a wider community focus. Staff have undertaken DANGOs training, equipping them to support families with advice on benefits and support available from local and national government, making the school a ‘one stop shop’ full family support, in the absence of other alternatives in the immediate environment. This wider support is vital and the social need in the community is as high as it is in Churchstoke at present. Support is always available for those who need it, whatever the reason.	The Council notes these comments.
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1.6.2	The school has brilliant teachers.	As above.
1.6.3	The school has caring teachers.	As above.
1.6.4	The quality of the teaching at the school was to an excellent standard and the teachers treated each pupil individually.	As above.
1.6.5	The children and their families are known personally to all staff, and because of this, individual needs are catered for quickly and efficiently.	As above.
1.6.6	My teacher always made sure my work was challenging so I didn't get bored.	As above.
1.6.7	Teaching at the school has been excellent.	As above.
1.6.8	The teachers are great and always encourage pupils to do their best.	As above.
1.6.9	The teachers at the school are doing a fantastic job with my child and are helping him build his confidence and achieve work goals.	As above.
1.6.10	The staff are very patient, they treat the children as people not just a number.	As above.
1.6.11	The staff all know the children personally.	As above.
1.6.12	The head and staff know every parent and pupil.	As above.
1.6.13	Concerns that the number of pupils has decreased at Churchstoke C.P. School due to leadership at the school.	As above.

1.7 Comments about the attainment of former pupils

1.7.1	I attended Churchstoke school and feel that I got an exceptional education.	The Council notes these comments.
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1.7.2	As an ex-pupil, I have nothing but happy memories. This village school set a strong base in my education, give me confidence, and inspiration to achieve, which led me to get a university degree. Looking at ex-pupils they have gone on to achieve great jobs, why put a stop to this success? Clearly smaller schools achieve greatness too!	As above.
1.7.3	Each of my grandchildren attended Churchstoke school and had a very happy and secure start to their education. All have degrees and successful careers. Without this secure grounding I doubt if these careers would have been achieved.	As above.
1.7.4	I am a proud Mum to children who have all thrived through their Primary school years in Churchstoke School. One is studying for a degree, another two are starting their GCSEs at the top of their classes and another who is on the autistic spectrum is receiving amazing support which is allowing her to flourish and challenge herself and is also now pushing her abilities above her expected levels.	As above.
1.7.5	My son did very well at Churchstoke School, progressed very well and obtained a first class honours in masters degree and is now just looking to move up the housing ladder and without the help and dedication to his maths in Junior School he may not be where he was today.	As above.
1.7.6	Our son attended this wonderful village school. Before that he attended the nursery school next door to the school, so the move from nursery school to primary was made all that much easier with the teachers introducing themselves to all the children and parents. Our son has gone on to a fantastic career in the Royal Navy.	As above.
1.7.7	I have three daughters who all went on to study at University.	As above.

1.7.8	When I went to secondary school, I was put in the top set for every subject because of the excellent start I had had in Churchstoke School. I would not have had a better learning experience in another school and certainly not a larger one where I would have been constrained to learning with pupils of the same age.	As above.
1.7.9	I went from Churchstoke Primary School to a large secondary school but this didn't phase me at all because my primary school teachers made sure I was a confident and independent learner ready for secondary school life. I had such a good start at Churchstoke Primary School that I went into all the top sets at secondary school and achieved 11 A* grades at GCSE. I do not believe I could have had any better learning experience at any other primary school, contrary to what you say.	As above.
1.7.10	I attended the school from 2006 until 2013. The teaching standards in my experience were outstanding and the school allowed me to push myself and reach my potential, which propelled me into the top sets once I reached secondary school, and I left with fantastic GCSEs.	As above.
1.7.11	I attended Churchstoke Primary School. I am now about to leave high school and go to college with excellent prospective grades even given everything we have been through this last year. Personally I put this down to the start I received in Churchstoke Primary school.	As above.
1.7.12	The students who feed into high school from Churchstoke have, in my experience, had a very well rounded and high quality education. They are often amongst our highest achievers in their cohort and have always clearly thrived in this setting.	As above.

1.8 Comments about the school's role in the community

1.8.1	The school and playgroup are an essential part of the community. We organise annual events which are always supported well by those in the village, many of whom attended the school themselves. These events allow older members of the community to get involved with social events and help to tackle rural isolation which is prevalent in the aging rural communities. The children have a fantastic relationship with the residents in the adjoining care home, and regularly go in to visit and sing to them, which is greatly appreciated, and a number of our student's parents work in the home.	The Council has recognised the central role that the school plays in the community in the draft Community Impact Assessment. This will be updated to include information gathered during consultation.
1.8.2	The school is part of the community	As above.
1.8.3	The school has strong links with all the community, bringing people together at the events they have, like harvest festivals, Christmas concerts, various fundraising they have held over years like bingo events, fun days, barbecues etc. All family and friends, and community are invited to these events. It brings people together.	As above.
1.8.4	Events by Churchstoke School are enjoyed by most of the community in Churchstoke.	As above.
1.8.5	The church and the school work well together	As above.
1.8.6	The school has connections with the Church as far as putting on school plays and after school clubs.	As above.
1.8.7	The church and churchyard are used by the school as an educational resource; school Harvest Services and Christmas concerts are held in church; mock 'wedding services' and 'baptism services' are held with the children acting out the roles; church and school work together for fundraising events at Christmas; church members have run themed Activity Days for all the	As above.

	children in school; every summer our church presents Youth Bibles to all year 6 school leavers; various members of our church family have run an After School Club and run 'Open the Book' in school and taken school assemblies.	
1.8.8	The church is nearing completion of a major building project in church, adding toilets, extending the kitchen, creating a meeting room, developing exhibition space for displays and adding a stage at the front. We undertook this in the knowledge that it would benefit the school and make the church building far more usable for schoolchildren. We would feel very depressed if there were no school to use these new facilities!	As above.
1.8.9	Children visit local old people's care homes which provide a positive effect on residents welfare and cheers them up. If the school closes this would be lost.	As above.
1.8.10	Prior to Covid-19 we often had school children attend St Nicholas House and take part in activities with us and come and sing at Christmas. Some of our residents also like to enjoy the Christmas concerts and harvest festivals that the children put on. Residents like to walk around the corner or have a ride out in the wheelchair to see the children and remember their own childhood memories.	As above.
1.8.11	The children visit St Nicholas House and take harvest gifts and sing Christmas carols. The residents also join the children to watch sports day and other fundraising events.	As above.
1.8.12	There is a nursing home in Churchstoke, Saint Nicholas house, where in the past residents have enjoyed it watching children's events from the school. If Churchstoke school closed this would not be able to happen.	As above.
1.8.13	The children visit the nursing home and the old people love to see them.	As above.

1.8.14	The links between the school and Saint Nicholas House has such a positive effect on the mental health of our residents, seeing children brightens their day.	As above.
1.8.15	Prior to the pandemic the children regularly visited the residents at St Nicholas House. We would really like this to continue when the pandemic is over.	As above.
1.8.16	The link between our home and school is so important and essential that it remains in the village, some residents are blessed with family close by and others are not so for these individual visits from the children are so important to the happiness and well-being. Not only is this school a positive for our residents but very important in the welfare of the children, social interactions with the elderly give them many benefits to, and insight into history from the wheel storytellers and teachers respect and understanding of individuals.	As above.
1.8.17	The school enjoys excellent support from the community, not just parents and Friend of the School, but also wider community, including local businesses and societies. We have been able to access good funding from Friends of the School and from local grant providers to ensure that the children have access to a good range of quality resources and experiences.	As above.
1.8.18	Churchstoke is a thriving community and the school is one of the reasons that make it so.	As above.
1.8.19	The school is the centre of the community.	As above.
1.8.20	The school is the hub of the community.	As above.
1.8.21	It is a small school, but it is central to the Churchstoke community and is a key reason why the village has continued to thrive.	As above.

1.8.22	The school is really at the heart of the village and enables families to meet other members of the community.	As above.
1.8.23	The school provides opportunities for new parents to meet and socialise and its use of the community hall keeps the facility from becoming unviable.	As above.
1.8.24	The school is at the very heart of the community, offering a warm, supportive, inclusive education and vital family support to those living in and around the village.	As above.
1.8.25	The school is important for social cohesion, it is a meeting place for parents, grandparents and friends. This is important for everyone's sense of well-being.	As above.
1.8.26	Surely the school is a vital service to a fast growing village, the school helps support the local supermarket (co-op) the local church, and the village community hall, and keeping the community active, young and old. The school is only going to increase in pupils due to the housing being built so why close it??	As above.

1.9 Comments about the school buildings, grounds and resources

1.9.1	The school building and community hall in Churchstoke is in good condition	<p>According to Welsh Government's condition survey carried out in 2009, the condition and suitability of the school were graded as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition – C Poor • Suitability – B/C Good to Bad <p>The Council commissioned a new condition survey in 2020 which concluded that the school's overall condition was a C-. This survey did not consider</p>
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		suitability therefore was not included in the Consultation Document. Other schools named in the document have not yet received an updated condition assessment, therefore the 2009 data was used for all schools, including Churchstoke C.P. School.
1.9.2	It is considered that the school site in Churchstoke is adequate in terms of provision of buildings and space.	As above.
1.9.3	Back in 2009 the school buildings were considered poor. Why hasn't anything been done for improvement – still poor 2019.	<p>The Council prioritises building improvement work at schools according to a scoring matrix.</p> <p>Since 2009, the Council has carried out the following works to Churchstoke C.P. School:</p> <p>2013 – £145,000 on DDA extension works. 2014 – £27,900 on new boiler and controls 2020 – £1,000 on replacing water tank</p> <p>The school also receives funding for repairs and maintenance as part of its delegated budget.</p>
1.9.4	We have children who struggle physically, as a school we have full disability facilities to aid these learners	Comment noted.
1.9.5	We have the best disabled facilities	Comment noted.
1.9.6	The school should stay open, it has the best disabled facilities in the area. They have the best general facilities in the area, Montgomery have none.	<p>Montgomery C. in W. Primary School's condition and suitability are outlined below, based on the 2009 condition assessment, which is comparable with Churchstoke C.P. School.</p> <p><u>Montgomery C. in W. School</u></p>

		<p>Condition – C Suitability – B/C</p> <p>The Council has identified within the Major Improvements Programme that there are some adaptations needed at Montgomery C. in W. School to improve accessibility.</p>
1.9.7	Churchstoke school has all modern disabled facilities to cater for any disabled children.	Comment noted.
1.9.8	Churchstoke was adapted a few years ago for disabled access if you close the school you have just wasted a load of (our) tax payers money	Comment noted.
1.9.9	The school has full disabled access and toilets for use for those with special needs. I am concerned that other schools may not have these facilities to our standards.	Comment noted.
1.9.10	Churchstoke C.P. School is fully equipped with disabled facilities and therefore the Council should consider this as a strong reason to retain our school for the future.	Comment noted.
1.9.11	Churchstoke got facility for disability: toilets, ramps, door. Well catered for.	Comment noted.
1.9.12	The school site is safe for pick up and drop with large car parking and turning space	Comment noted.
1.9.13	There is also plenty of suitable parking for parents during drop off and collection times of day.	Comment noted.
1.9.14	There is a safe drop off and pick up area nowhere near a busy road. Other schools don't have this safe option, I know because I have to pass them on my way to work.	Comment noted.
1.9.15	There is a good car park to pick children up safely.	Comment noted.

1.9.16	Churchstoke school has space around it for expansion, car parking and community hall.	Comment noted.
1.9.17	It is a very good little school with plenty of space around it.	Comment noted.
1.9.18	A lovely space all around the school. When I am outside with the children I always think how lucky we are to be in this lovely school.	Comment noted.
1.9.19	The sports field and play park next to the school are wonderful assets as well as the community hall. What a shame to see it all go to waste if the school was to close.	Comment noted.
1.9.20	The school has great facilities as there is a football field and playing fields, a village hall and a big car park	Comment noted.
1.9.21	It's a lovely school with great facilities either in house or right on the doorstep.	Comment noted.
1.9.22	The school has better facilities than many other schools.	Comment noted.
1.9.23	I understand that that the current sports facilities are excellent at Churchstoke school. This needs to be given consideration.	Comment noted.
1.9.24	The Community Hall is designed as both a meeting space and a sports facility. It has been described by a professional sports teacher as providing the children of Churchstoke School with 'better facilities than any other primary school in the area.' The proposal to close the school will deny these facilities to the pupils.	Comment noted.
1.9.25	The community of Churchstoke built a sports hall for the community 26 years ago, with the specific intent of enabling the local primary school to use this facility. I am unaware of any other primary school nearby that has such excellent sports facilities for their pupils.	Comment noted.

1.9.26	The school is fully equipped and modernised to be in a good position to cater for an increased number of pupils that are moving into the village. This makes a strong point for the Council to consider.	Comment noted.
1.9.27	The school is well located near to a main road but far enough away for the children to be as safe as possible. The community being next to the school gives great opportunities for when doing plays etc.	Comment noted.
1.9.28	There is no room for expansion at other local schools, unlike Churchstoke.	Comment noted.
1.9.29	Churchstoke School has by far the best site position for parking, playing sport with the recreation field and the Community Centre next door. The alternative schools do not have the space for all the pupils in the coming years, there is no off-street parking creating an extra danger for pupils getting out of the car and getting through the school gates.	Comment noted.
1.9.30	As a school we are amply equipped with ICT facilities with one chrome book per 2 children, as well as ipads, PCS and Codable hardware.	There has been significant investment in digital equipment in all schools over the last two years as part of the Welsh Government Education Technology Programme. Most Powys primary schools now have a better ratio of devices than one device per pair of children.

1.10 Comments about the school's catchment area / location

1.10.1	In my time at Churchstoke school at least 3 other local schools closed, and joined us, so it is already serving a large area.	The Council notes these comments about the school's catchment area.
1.10.2	The school has a large catchment area.	As above.

1.10.3	Several years ago a number of small schools locally were closed and Churchstoke was built to accommodate them and stills covers those increased areas.	As above.
1.10.4	The community of Churchstoke is geographically very widespread.	As above.
1.10.5	Since Mellington primary school was closed many years ago this school seems to be important.	As above.
1.10.6	The school is embedded in the community having grown out of the closure of Mellington and Hyssington over the years. These bonds hold a community together	As above.
1.10.7	A bigger societal impact to consider is that Churchstoke is uniquely positioned in this area as a hub for the main routes from Welshpool, Newtown and Montgomery.	As above.
1.10.8	I believe that the significance of the location of Churchstoke Primary means that it should remain open.	As above.

1.11 Families have chosen to attend Churchstoke School

1.11.1	Families have also bought homes in Churchstoke or moved here for the main reason of being able to send their children to Churchstoke CP school.	The Council notes these comments.
11.11.2	People are moving to the area because of the school.	As above.
1.11.3	The school in the village was one of the reasons we moved here.	As above.
1.11.4	We wouldn't have chosen to live in Churchstoke had we wanted our children to go to a big school.	As above.

1.11.5	Families have chosen Churchstoke, built houses and homes with their children's learning considered based on the excellent school provision available.	As above.
1.11.6	Several of our volunteers chose to move to Churchstoke because of the school provision (for their own children), making use of new houses and the sense of belonging to a village that is so tangible there.	As above.
1.11.7	Parents have moved from Sarn to Churchstoke so that their children can attend Churchstoke school, to make this more convenient and possible due to work commitments.	As above.
1.11.8	I have friends who have moved to the children from other schools to Churchstoke because it is a good school and they're very impressed with how their kids are doing.	As above.

1.12 Comments about extra-curricular / wraparound provision at the school

1.12.1	The school provides plenty of extra-curricular opportunities for learners as well with baking clubs, forest school, and Gardening clubs that have been run, as well as after school club and outside organisations we also work with to provide tennis club as well, which if the school were to close, the children would not have access to.	The Council notes these comments.
1.12.2	My daughter attends all after school clubs and activities in Churchstoke village. These include Churchstoke Tennis Club, and after school club provided by little explorers which is the pre school located on Churchstoke school premises.	As above.
1.12.3	There is a breakfast club which helps parents who need to go to work.	As above.

1.12.4	There is a breakfast club and after school clubs which help parents out as they need to go to work.	As above.
1.12.5	The children have access to after school club 2 days a week from 3:30 to 5:30pm with programmed activities and light snacks provided.	As above.
1.12.6	There is also a very successful after school club that was set up in November 2020 that will attract children that we have previously lost to other schools.	As above.
1.12.7	There is junior tennis coaching after school on a Wednesday.	As above.

2. COMMENTS ABOUT CURRENT / FUTURE PUPIL NUMBERS

2.1 Comments about current pupil numbers at the school

2.1.1	Churchstoke is a growing community with many new housing developments, this has resulted in an increase in pupil numbers at the school, there are 38 pupils currently on the school role.	<p>The Council recognises that there has been a slight increase recently in the number of pupils at Churchstoke C.P. School. However, this follows a period of significant decrease in numbers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan 2014 – 64 • Jan 2015 – 54 • Jan 2016 – 53 • Jan 2017 – 41 • Jan 2018 – 39 • Jan 2019 – 28 • Jan 2020 - 25
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		The Council recognises that there are a significant number of housing developments in the area which may lead to further increase in pupil numbers at the school, and it is recognised that the playgroup has healthy numbers as well. However, as stated in the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education, which was developed with extensive engagement with schools and other stakeholders, there is a concern that Powys has too many small schools and an inequity in terms of funding per pupil. The Welsh Government's definition of a small school is a school with fewer than 91 pupils – Churchstoke C.P. School is currently significantly below this number.
2.1.2	At Churchstoke CP school, pupil numbers are increasing, with 52% increase in pupil numbers since January 2020. This is a result of housing developments in Churchstoke village, which has seen a dramatic increase in families with young children.	As above.
2.1.3	The school has already benefitted from additional pupils following the first phase of building, this is a sign that pupil numbers will grow with every phase.	As above.
2.1.4	Churchstoke school has struggled for numbers for many years and yet planning permission has been granted for at least two brand new estates, aimed in the most part at bringing in families. As a resident, this has been a change that, it was assumed, would at least ensure the future of the school and has been accepted as such.	As above.
2.1.5	Numbers have gradually declined over the years (as have many other schools), but with the building of new houses numbers have started to increase.	As above.

2.1.6	I am aware that this is a small village school and in the past numbers of pupils were low, however it has been great to see so many children arriving in Churchstoke due to the newbuild family housing which is still continuing and will mean even more children needing school places and pre-school.	As above.
2.1.7	The school has had hardly any pupils for the last five years and it has stayed open. Now Churchstoke has two new housing estates built and being built and quite a few new children and families to the area, and now you want to close the school when it is really needed. I am confused how you can be even contemplating shutting with all the new influx to the school.	As above.
2.1.8	The number of pupils currently in reception at the school is higher than recent years and I believe that the number will only increase due to the residents of Churchstoke increasing.	As above.

2.2 Comments about future pupil numbers

2.2.1	If the number of children has fallen in recent years it will surely increase again, once all the housing is completed.	<p>The Council acknowledges that pupil numbers have increased and are forecasted to rise again, as identified in the Consultation Document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan 2022 – 39 pupils • Jan 2023 – 44 pupils • Jan 2024 – N/A • Jan 2025 – N/A <p>The Council recognises that there are a significant number of housing developments in the area which may lead to further increase in pupil numbers at the school, and it is recognised that the playgroup has</p>
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		<p>healthy numbers as well. However, as stated in the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education, which was developed with extensive engagement with schools and other stakeholders, there is a concern that Powys has too many small schools and an inequity in terms of funding per pupil. The Welsh Government's definition of a small school is a school with fewer than 91 pupils – Churchstoke C.P. School is currently significantly below this number.</p> <p>120 dwellings are in the process of being built or allocated in Churchstoke. The Council's planning department uses a pupil-yield ratio of .45 pupils for each house build. Based on this ratio, the housing developments could potentially lead to an increase in approximately 54 children in Churchstoke. However, it must be recognised that this is an estimate and that such an increase would probably happen gradually over a period of time.</p>
2.2.2	By September 2022, pupil numbers are expected to reach approximately 52, this number does not include families moving into the village.	As above.
2.2.3	Pupil numbers are ALREADY forecast to be 52 by September 2022 and this does not include any new families or new home owners	As above.
2.2.4	Churchstoke is a growing community with more families moving into the village, and therefore pupil numbers will increase at quite a fast rate over the next few years.	As above.
2.2.5	Churchstoke school could easily double in size with all the new builds.	As above.

2.2.6	The growth of the village and building proposals will have a great impact on the pupil numbers at the school and the community.	As above.
2.2.7	Numbers might be low at the moment, but they will go up as more families move into the village.	As above.
2.2.8	In a year or so the school will be full again with all the houses that are being built.	As above.
2.2.9	With lots more houses being built in Churchstoke, means there will be more children in the future that will be needing the school & pre-school.	As above.
2.2.10	A lot of houses have been built in Churchstoke that are yet to be occupied, and when they are, I'm sure there'll be a huge increase in demand for the school!	As above.
2.2.11	Up-to-date figures show numbers at the school are growing and with the influx of residents will soon reach capacity and close to average costs per pupil.	As above.
2.2.12	The predicted pupil numbers make it obvious that a school in Churchstoke is needed and this rise in our pupils on role automatically makes the lower and in line with other Powys schools.	As above. The Council recognises that increasing pupil numbers while maintaining current funding levels would reduce the budget share or cost per pupil.
2.2.13	The increasing pupil numbers automatically decrease the surplus capacity. Powys state ours is 50% at present (although in fact it is 47%), this will reduce to below 27% by September 2022 and below 19% by 2025.	The Council recognises that increasing pupil numbers would reduce the surplus places at the school.
2.2.14	Our surplus capacity is currently 47% however by September 2022 it will already be down to under 27% and 19% by 2025, which could be greater after housing developments.	As above.

2.2.15	Churchstoke CP School's capacity is 72. At 52 on roll (expected September 2022 based on current known pupils in the school and pre-school) the surplus capacity would be 28%. At 72 on roll (forecast based on additional 40 houses currently being built) the surplus capacity would reduce to 0%. The further 60 houses planned will see the number on roll rise well above 90 on roll at which point there will be need for increased capacity at the school.	As above.
2.2.16	Increased pupil numbers automatically reduce the surplus spaces in school. Predicted numbers suggest we would reach our capacity figure, eliminating surplus places.	As above.
2.2.17	Powys is concerned about Surplus places but as the village grows at a fast rate predicted numbers would mean the school reaching capacity and thus eliminating any surplus places	As above.
2.2.18	It is predicted full capacity will soon be reached in Churchstoke School. Most of the pupils will have no choice but to attend their nearest school out of Powys, even though their parents pay their council tax to Powys.	As above.
2.2.19	The proposal really seems to be a retrograde step, considering that the village is expanding in size with current and proposed developments ongoing. Even if only some of these houses are brought by families, it would increase the number of actual or potential people in the school.	The Council notes these comments about the impact of current and planned housing developments.
2.2.20	There are 60 new houses being built in Churchstoke at this moment. If half of the new houses had just one child in primary school, that's another 30 to the list of pupils already there.	As above.
2.2.21	Churchstoke has expanded very much in the last few years and I understand that 28 social housing properties have recently been completed and occupied. Some of these are for older residents	As above.

	<p>but already the school number has increased by 14 children. The pre-school group has also increased from this development. The actual number of children on this development is 27 with 13 of them being pre-school or at other schools. There are 40 houses being constructed at the moment ten of which are for social housing. There is also planning permission for approximately, another 45 houses. As the average on the 28 houses equals one child per household then that is 95 children.</p>	
2.2.22	<p>Number on roll is used as an indicator for school closure, but the number of pupils in a school will fluctuate. In some parts of the UK schools will be built to serve a new housing development and then as the years go by there are less children as they transfer to secondary and the working world. As the housing development matures it is anyone's guess as to how many children will be available to attend the school. This is where primary teachers need to be aware of how schools can progress through federation and the "executive headteacher" THAT CAN SAVE THE SCHOOL FOR THE COMMUNITY although the teaching structure will change and offer new opportunities for staff development.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
2.2.23	<p>Powys estimated that by September 2022 our school would contain 21 children, running as it currently is it will be closer to 52 children and this does not include any children coming to live in the new developments still under way.</p>	<p>The School Organisation Code requires authorities to publish five year forecasts of pupil rolls, which the Council base on the PLASC January data.</p> <p>These projections are based on postcode-linked live birth data and historical cohort survival rates for individual schools. New external factors and changes that have no historical bases can not be included in forecasting models. The 2020 PLASC return shows an increase in inaccuracy from the previous 2 years. There have been many new factors making NOR</p>

		<p>predictions at primary school level difficult to built into a statistical model. However, analysis comparing the predicted figures for Jan 2020 with the actuals recorded in PLASC show that, for Powys as a whole, the model over-estimated by 9.2%. 53% of schools were no more than 5% different from their forecast NOR and 76% no more than 10% different. Housing developments aren't included within this methodology.</p> <p>However, the Council also includes a second set of projections which are up to three year projections based on the latest information held by the Council's finance team. This data is verified with the schools during the financial surgeries.</p> <p>The difference between both sets of projections shows that the first set of data predicts an increase whilst the finance data indicates a small increase.</p>
2.2.24	<p>We do not know how Powys has arrived at their future predictions for pupil numbers at the school but they appear to be way off the mark. We would also question what they have based their current information on. In January 2021 there were actually 38 children in the school, Powys predicted 21 - based on what? I believe it is predicted that there could be as many as 58 by 2025. That doesn't include new families that would occupy the latest housing development.</p>	As above.
2.2.25	<p>The consultation document also states projected pupil numbers (birth rate) for January 2021 was 22 reducing to 16 in January 2025. These figures are completely incorrect. Actual numbers in the school and pre-school are evidence that the birth rate is very</p>	As above.

	different to that quoted in the consultation document. It is my belief that the consultation document only includes birth rate data for families registered at Powys medical practices. Many of the families in Churchstoke are registered with Bishop's Castle Medical Practice in England. Using incorrect data in a consultation document is inexcusable.	
2.2.26	The proposal brought forward stating that there is no likelihood of numbers changing significantly within the school is disappointing and inaccurate. We know that your prediction for future numbers has been produced from inaccurate information as you only use birth rate figures from the Powys Health Board when at least half of the community actually use Bishops Castle doctors.	As above.
2.2.27	What birth rate data has been used in the CD? Our families are registered at both Montgomery and Bishop's Castle medical practices. Does the source of your birth rate data reflect this? If not, why not? (School Health Service have already informed us that it does not.)	<p>The forecast model is drawn from Live Birth information supplied directly from the Office of National Statistics (ONS).</p> <p>Live Birth data from the ONS is used as it includes all births within the Powys boundary rather than what medical practice a family is registered with.</p> <p>Each year in September the Office for National Statistics (ONS) releases anonymised live birth data by postcode for the academic year ending 12 months previously. Hence in September 2020 data for 2018/19 was made available. As the pupil level annual school census (PLASC) provides data on pupil postcodes it is possible to calculate the proportion of the school population accessing each school from similar home postcodes. These percentages can then be applied to the live birth data to generate forecasts for the Reception year group in each school 5 years hence.</p>

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2.3 Churchstoke is a growing village

2.3.1	Churchstoke school is in a growing village.	The Council notes these comments about the impact of current and planned housing developments.
2.3.2	Churchstoke is a growing community which most definitely needs a village school.	As above.
2.3.3	The school should not close, it will affect the growth of the village.	As above.
2.3.4	The closure would have a profoundly negative impact on the growing community of Churchstoke.	As above.
2.3.5	Having moved to Churchstoke over three years ago, I have seen the village grow rapidly, even in that short time, attracting new, young families to the community and promoting the age diversity of the area. It was therefore astonishing to learn that Powys County Councillors are now considering the closure of the only primary school in the village and indeed for several miles, putting the future of the village at risk of being severely damaged.	As above.
2.3.6	I think in a village the size of Churchstoke it is essential to maintain the primary school. Churchstoke is growing rapidly and should therefore definitely not be thinking of closing its school.	As above.
2.3.7	With Churchstoke's population ever increasing and taking away such a big part of the community, this is going to have a massive impact on all children, parents and grandparents in the village.	As above.
2.3.8	Churchstoke is a growing, attractive, large village for young families and it will be a devastating blow to the community to lose the primary school.	As above.

2.3.9	A growing community with lots of new build houses and more planned.	As above.
2.3.10	Churchstoke is a growing community with more children so why close the school now?	As above.
2.3.11	Although the village is at present small, it is growing and expanding. New houses have been built and planned to be built. Family homes with children of all ages.	As above.
2.3.12	Churchstoke is a growing community with many new houses being built, which will have more families moving into them.	As above.
2.3.13	Churchstoke is a very popular village that is growing fast, the preschool is at maximum capacity, numbers of pupils are growing.	As above.
2.3.14	Churchstoke is growing rapidly with mainly affordable housing. I see an influx of families, maybe one parent or not so well off parents who maybe cannot afford a car and are moving to this area to be in a self contained, well provided community.	As above.
2.3.15	Being as the village is expanding dramatically it just seems mad to close the school.	As above.
2.3.16	Churchstoke is an expanding rural community with new housing.	As above.
2.3.17	A local school is always at the heart of any community, Churchstoke is now a growing community, with a considerable amount of new homes being built. More and more new families with young children are now moving into the village who will need easy access to a local school.	As above.
2.3.18	Churchstoke is an area in absolutely high demand at present, in one of the worst periods this Country has ever seen, this means that there is going to be a population boom and the main beneficiary of this will be the school and village itself which	As above.

	ultimately means, the school will remain profitable for many years to come.	
2.3.19	As the major retailer of food and home products in the area we have seen a significant rise in our sales especially on home products as new build houses in the village are being sold and new families move into the area.	As above.
2.3.20	Situated at the junction of two main roads, with good facilities, land, and easy access to Newtown, Welshpool and the towns of Shropshire, Churchstoke is ripe for further development over the coming years.	As above.

2.4 Comments about housing developments in the area

2.4.1	Lots of houses are being built in Churchstoke for families, this will bring more children to the area.	The Council notes these comments about the current and planned housing developments, not only in Churchstoke but also in the wider area.
2.4.2	Many new houses have been built or are under construction, of a type designed to appeal to families which I suspect would not have been built had the school not existed.	As above.
2.4.3	With all the new builds going up and the demand for housing extremely high, this makes no sense as the more people that settle in the area, the bigger the school will ultimately become and now people will be debating (us included) on whether to move to the area or not because of an ultimately poorly conceived idea to save money by closing the smaller schools.	As above.
2.4.4	There is continual new housing being built in Churchstoke and even possible planning for developments going through that residents don't yet know about.	As above.

2.4.5	30 houses are presently being built with planning for many more, the likelihood of lots more children moving to the village.	As above.
2.4.6	40 more houses are currently being built with 45 proposed self build along with a number of small developments so it is possible Churchstoke school could be full in the near future.	As above.
2.4.7	At least 45 houses / family homes recently built – more planned for village / Churchstoke. At least one school child in each.	As above.
2.4.8	Churchstoke has expanded in the last few years and is going to expand in the future. There are 40 houses being constructed at the moment, 10 of which are for social housing. There is also planning permission for approx. another 45 houses which could easily push the number of children needing primary education to over 100. There is also a lot of potential building land available in the future.	As above.
2.4.9	Churchstoke school is vital for the village with an ever increasing population within Churchstoke alone. There has recently a new housing estate been built with 28 houses and a number of families with young children recently moved in. There is also a new housing development in Churchstoke under construction. There is approximately 40 new homes of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom which will no doubt house new families that will rely on a school within the area.	As above.
2.4.10	Against the backdrop of around 100 new houses under construction and granted planning in the village this proposal seems even more incredulous	As above.
2.4.11	Churchstoke school may be small at the moment, but with Powys County Council granting planning permission for nearly 100 new homes, why on earth take away one of the most important resources if not the most important resource away. It will be one of the things that new families moving to the village will want “a	As above.

	village school". This village needs and wants to keep its school "to stay open".	
2.4.12	The council should be considering that Churchstoke is a growing village with some 100 new houses being delivered now and in the near future. It is our understanding that these are a mix of social and open market and have been designed to attract families to the village. Thus increasing the need for a pre school and school to be retained in Churchstoke.	As above.
2.4.13	120 new homes in Churchstoke is without doubt going to bring in a larger number of primary school age children.	As above.
2.4.14	It seems illogical to close a school due to lack of numbers when the numbers of children have increased by over a third this year with the first phase of new family housing in the village being built and over 70 more houses yet to be built. Why build so many new affordable family homes but remove the services that are vital for those families like childcare provision and schooling?	As above.
2.4.15	Churchstoke has approximately 120 family homes, either recently constructed, in construction, or have been granted planning permission. These family homes will add to pupils numbers in Churchstoke School.	As above.
2.4.16	Recently Mid Wales Housing have built some houses and now there is a 'for profit' development of some 40 houses or so, and I also believe the council own some land which is likely to be earmarked for housing. I believe the potential increase in pupil numbers as a result of this development will reduce/remove the surplus places in the school, which I believe is the council's concern	As above.
2.4.17	We are currently building 30 homes at Ridgeway View Church Stoke along with Mid Wales Housing who are building another 10,	As above.

	all 40 of these homes will be available to buy under either the “Rent to buy Wales” or the “Help to buy Wales” initiatives which are both Welsh government backed schemes aimed at helping young couples and families buy their own home in Wales.	
2.4.18	Barcud is looking forward to a further 10 family size mix of properties being let in 2021 due to popular demand for families wishing to live within the village.	As above.
2.4.19	It also puzzles and annoys me that after circa 30 new housing association and ‘local needs’ houses being built and more in the pipeline that Powys council education authority can't recognise the current and proposed new student influx our school has to cope with now and in the near future which will make it extremely viable.	As above.
2.4.20	Powys County council has recently permitted the building of 45 new homes in Churchstoke, and there are 28 new homes, that are for rent from Mid-Wales Housing Association, which are now fully occupied. A further 13 new homes are currently being built right next door to my own home in Maes Neuadd. Overall there are 120 new homes that have either recently been built or are being built in Churchstoke. Given this current level of housing investment, it is beyond belief that Powys County Council is not looking at the longer-term needs of the community.	As above.
2.4.21	Are the Transformation Team at all aware of the housing developments, not just in Churchstoke but also in Montgomery, Chirbury, Forden, Kerry and other surrounding catchments?	As above.
2.4.22	I am also concerned that with all the new houses being built in Churchstoke, Montgomery and Chirbury where are all these children going to go ?	As above.

2.4.23	Churchstoke is a thriving village with many new homes. This is the same as in areas such as Chirbury and Montgomery, villages thriving with plans to build many new homes.	As above.
2.4.24	Housing developments are continuing in the village meaning an increase in pupil numbers at both the school and pre-school. There are currently a further 120 houses either in planning stage or being built in the village which is almost definitely going to bring more children to the village. Not only this but the local schools in the area also have planning for more houses, Montgomery (34 homes at planning stage), Chirbury (40 homes in planning), Forden (32 outline planning stage) and Kerry (62 close to completion). If all these houses bring more children to the area then these schools will not have enough space to accommodate our children.	As above.
2.4.25	In view of increasing housing developments not just in Churchstoke but also in Montgomery (at least 34 homes at the planning stage), Chirbury (at least 40 homes in planning), Forden (32 at outline planning stage and beyond) and Kerry (62 close to completion) CCC believes the risks to delivery of a successful educational service with sufficient capacity are high.	As above.
2.4.26	Powys Council must be aware that there are a number of potential family housing developments in the surrounding area which will have an impact on the capacity of neighbouring schools to accommodate the children from Churchstoke if this closure goes ahead. Montgomery (at least 34 homes at the planning stage), Chirbury (at least 40 homes in planning), Forden (32 at outline planning stage and beyond directly by the school) and Kerry (62 close to completion, Marton (20 in the preplanning phase), Hope (9 in the planning system) and Worthen has been designated a hub with 55 new homes proposed.	As above.

2.4.27	There are a lot of houses being built in Churchstoke, Kerry, Sarn and Chirbury.	As above.
2.4.28	Montgomery and Chirbury villages have planning permission for more houses to so that means more children for their school. So where would ours go??	As above.
2.4.29	In addition to our numbers growing there are also housing developments in planning stages in all the surrounding areas of the proposed alternative schools. There is a real risk of having insufficient local capacity for the number of pupils involved.	As above.
2.4.30	A proposed school closure when new housing estates are being built is short-sighted.	As above.
2.4.31	Why grant planning permission to build an estate when there are plans to close the school?	As above.
2.4.32	I think you should not give planning permission for all these new houses in Churchstoke and then decide to close the school!	As above.
2.4.33	I think Powys County Council should review the amount of new affordable homes that have been granted planning permission in the village. With this information they can gather a more accurate picture of how vital the school is to the village. In five years time there may be a school crisis where a number of children have no avenue to attend a well school and learn about our beautiful language and culture.	As above.
2.4.34	The rate at which Churchstoke & surrounding villages are growing means that more young families will be in the area and all fighting for places in nearby schools.	As above.
2.4.35	2020 saw the introduction of 28 new homes at Orchard Close, Churchstoke. A total of 27 under 11 year olds (six, 0-3 yrs and twenty-one 4- 11 yrs) currently occupy the new family properties.	As above.

2.4.36	When you consider that PCC themselves have (very recently) passed planning for in the region of 120 houses in the village which by historic reference will equate to circa 0.5 children per house therefore 60 children , how can Councillor Phil Davies possibly suggest that pupil numbers are not expected to rise in the foreseeable future?	As above.
2.4.37	A further 40 houses are in the process of being built. On the basis of 0.5 primary age pupils per house (as per the housing development completed last year) this could potentially bring a further 20 primary age pupils to the school taking our forecast on roll to over 70.	As above.

2.5 People won't want to move to the new homes if there is no school in the village

2.5.1	You must be aware of all the new homes being built in Churchstoke surely there will be new children moving into them, won't their parents consider whether there is a village school before buying one of them.	The Council notes these comments about the current and planned housing developments. Community Impact Assessment.
2.5.2	Do you really think families will move to the village with no school in the village?	As above.
2.5.3	Families will not want to come to a village with no school. It is one of, if not the most important, factor in making a move to a new place, especially if you are parents of young children. What is the point of new housing if you have to transport your child somewhere else to be educated?	As above.
2.5.4	Churchstoke is an expanding community with many new houses either recently completed or just being built. As many of these new homes are affordable housing it is to be expected that they will be occupied by younger adults with children and a local	As above.

	school will probably be the reason for them locating to Churchstoke!	
2.5.5	No account has been taken of the new estate being built in Churchstoke (120 houses). These are affordable houses which many young couples will be able to afford bringing children to a village with no school. Who will buy them now?	As above.
2.5.6	The presence of the school attracts both developers, and families that subsequently move into the homes, and provide much needed regeneration of the village population. Indeed we have already seen this start to happen as younger families have begun to move to the village.	As above.
2.5.7	People are buying the new houses with a proviso that there is a school in the village.	As above.
2.5.8	One of the reasons the houses on new developments are being bought is because of the school being in walking distance.	As above.
2.5.9	The prospect of moving into a village where parents can watch their children walk to school means so much to those families.	As above.
2.5.10	A school such as Churchstoke attracts buyers to the village especially as we have a good size Coop in the village and a post office.	As above.
2.5.11	Families have moved here with the expectation that their children will attend the village school.	As above.
2.5.12	The houses being built are family sized and therefore the children will need a school close by.	As above.
2.5.13	Many new family homes have recently been built in the village and others are under construction. Once these are all occupied there are likely to be many more children who will boost the school's roll. This will in turn lead to further growth in local housing	As above.

	and further demand for local school places. In this way, the school helps to create a virtuous circle of local growth. Without the school, the opposite is likely. There will be far less incentive for young families to live in Churchstoke, so the village will follow the pattern of other rural communities and become a place for old people and second homers - an unsustainable position in the long term.	
2.5.14	The growth of population in the village is at an all time high and yet the last of the new homes are not due for completion until I believe next year. Many of these sales will be in the knowledge that in the village there are amenities of a shopping centre, post office, pub, takeaway and of course the school. Being a rural area, should the school close then there is less chance of the new houses, many of which are affordable homes, being sold, as parents may not be able to arrange daily travel to other schools.	As above.
2.5.15	We have really strong interest and properties reserved for occupation in June this year, I would say that somewhere in the region of 85% of prospective purchasers are asking about the nearest primary school and are thrilled to hear that it is in the village and within easy walking distance.	As above.

2.6 Concern about the impact on housing developers

2.6.1	From a developer's point of view we would like you to keep the school open as having a local school is a key factor for most buyers also with us building more houses in the area this will provide more pupils for the school if it stays open	The Council notes this comment.
2.6.2	We feel that this could potentially cause a massive effect on our chances of selling our new build properties as a developer we	As above.

	pride ourselves in building quality family homes and have been building on land in Churchstoke for quite some time now.	
2.6.3	Concern that closure of the school would impact on the business of local tradesmen who work on building new homes and renovating barn conversions.	As above.

2.7 Comments about the LDP

2.7.1	Churchstoke has been identified for many years in the LDP as a village to expand. However, much of the land which was identified for housing has not been used until fairly recently.	The Council notes these comments about the Local Development Plan.
2.7.2	The LDP also says “that at least 25% of the planned housing growth in Powys will be directed to Large Villages”. Consequently Churchstoke has over 100 houses either just completed, under construction or with extant planning permission. Churchstoke is growing so surplus places at the school will be eliminated in the next few years with the consequent reduction in the cost per pupil.	As above.
2.7.3	At a time when the village population is growing at its fastest rate ever, and will continue to expand, based on the Local Development Plan, the decision to close the school is wrong and is not in the best interests of the pupils and parents in the village in the short and long term.	As above.
2.7.4	Churchstoke is also classed as a larger village, which will mean further housing is considered here along with the 120 houses already being build or with planning approval.	As above.
2.7.5	The Powys LDP classifies Churchstoke as ‘Large Village’, meaning it is a focus “for development in order to reinforce and enhance their attractiveness as places to live and work and their ability to provide and sustain community services and facilities”.	As above.

	The LDP states that for Large Villages accommodate “at least 25% of the Plan’s housing growth and up to 20% of the Plan’s employment land” and “a significant proportion of new housing development required will be directed to Large Villages. This will be through commitments and new allocations and on suitable sites within the development boundary”. CCC is of the view that business case for proposed closure is inconsistent with the aspirations if the LDP for Churchstoke as a growing large village and seems myopic beyond comprehension.	
2.7.6	Churchstoke is designated a Large Village in the current Local Development Plan (LDP) which is defined as “smaller in population than towns and provide services to their own and surrounding communities”. I contend that as in most large villages in Powys this includes a school.	As above.
2.7.7	As Churchstoke is a large village, it is prioritised for housing and economic development under the local development plan, another reason Churchstoke school should not close. Churchstoke is a village that at present is growing very quickly, so it needs a school in the village now more than ever.	As above.
2.7.8	Powys County Council classifies Churchstoke as a large village meaning that it is ear marked for substantial growth, surely closing the school is inconsistent with the growth of the village.	As above.
2.7.9	The local development plan sets out the strategy for meeting the future needs of the county’s communities. It makes provision for the 4500 new houses to be built by 2026 including 952 affordable homes. The LDP focuses development and economic opportunities on powers is market Towns and larger villages. Churchstoke is classified as a larger village under the LDP, and therefore is prioritised for housing and economic development.	As above.

2.8 Comments about a possible increase in people moving to the area following Covid

2.8.1	I find the closure of Churchstoke Primary School an odd proposition, given the clear growth spike small communities like this are going to see in the post-COVID world.	The Council considers the ONS Population Estimates for forward planning purposes across a range of services. The latest data shows that in 2019, there were 5746 in-migrants into Powys from the rest of the UK. In 2020, this fell to 5,442. There is no evidence that Powys is expecting a significant increase in in-migration.
2.8.2	It is a common trait of the human brain to park long term success, in order to satisfy immediate gratification. In this case the immediate gratification is making short term savings, and the long term being a period of serious growth in rural areas over the next decade. Small villages like Churchstoke will see a boom with town and city workers flooding to quieter areas in the country to raise families. Office working is a dying concept. The reality is businesses are cutting desk space and saving millions by encouraging their employees to work from home for large parts of the week where possible.	As above. The aim of the proposal is not to make short term savings. The aim of the proposal is to improve entitlement and experience for all learners. As stated in the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-30, the Council faces a challenge due to the high proportion of small schools in the county and the lack of equity amongst schools. Churchstoke C.P. School teaches children in two classes of mixed aged groups. With such low pupil numbers the teacher-pupil ratio is notably different to many other schools in the area, and due to the Council's funding formula, the school's funding per pupil is higher than the Council's average. This does not provide equity across the education system – teachers in larger schools are required to provide the same education as smaller schools for less funding per pupil. Powys' Strategy is intended to improve equity across the education system and to ensure an improvement for every pupil's learning entitlement and experience.

2.8.3	I doubt very much if there is sufficient space at other 'local' schools which are at least 5 to 10 miles away because there is a definite shift since Covid for the population to move to rural areas.	<p>The capacity of other local Powys schools is as follows:</p> <p><u>Forde C. in W. School</u> 59 pupils on roll. 102 capacity</p> <p><u>Abermule C.P. School</u> 70 pupils on roll. 92 capacity</p> <p><u>Berriew C.P. School</u> 88 pupils on roll. 106 capacity</p> <p><u>Leighton C.P. School</u> 71 pupils on roll. 91 capacity</p>
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3. COMMENTS ABOUT EARLY YEARS PROVISION

3.1 Comments relating to the Early Years Provision at Churchstoke

3.1.1	Over the past few years the playgroup, Churchstoke Little Explorers, has been able to develop a brand new 3+ setting within the school grounds. We have recently had a grant of £10,000 to refurbish the outdoor area. Playgroup moving permanently onto the premises allowed us to offer more hours for preschool children and this has seen a great uptake with 22 children currently on the register proving this combined setting is attractive to young families who are choosing to move into the village. This is allowing us to provide a more cohesive service, especially as they now run an afterschool club which is attractive to many working parents who may not have accessed the school before, alongside	The Council recognises that Churchstoke Little Explorers is a thriving early years setting. The Council provided a grant of £10,000 to the setting as part of the Welsh Government's Childcare Offer Capital Grant, which has enable the setting to offer more hours, which has increased the numbers of children on register.
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	the already flourishing breakfast club in school. So, by September 2022, when you are proposing to close the school, there will very likely be over 70 children at the setting with 52 in school and 20+ in Churchstoke Little Explorers. Change is happening and a village school is still very much needed.	
3.1.2	The school has an excellent preschool group with the next best to nursery education as formerly provided by Powys. This is what children and their parents need or alternative education will be available in Shropshire.	As above.
3.1.3	Little Explorers pre-school playgroup – at the moment there about 20 children who attend and they meet in a demountable classroom with in the grounds of the school and they are the biggest group in Powys.	As above.
3.1.4	Churchstoke Little Explorers is located on the Primary School site with the school premises being used for staff and disabled toileting and school dinners being provided to the preschool setting.	As above.
3.1.5	In the village is also a playgroup connected to the school with 19 children. The playgroup supports the childcare offer and 3+ funding	As above.
3.1.6	As you are aware the school also has an excellent playgroup within its grounds, “Churchstoke Little Explorers”, which is currently running at capacity. A high percentage of the children that attend this group then go on to school there. They have good contact with the school and have their dinners in the school, so becoming accustomed to their future surroundings. The numbers from the playgroup that feed into the school do not appear to have been taken into account.	As above.

3.1.7	The pre-school (run on the site of the school) has 22 children currently attending; we are able to provide accurate figures for the next at least 3 upcoming years of intake for the School. The pre-school also shares its facilities with the School, staff toilets, disabled toilets, attending the school for dinner each day allowing the children to have the option of a fresh, hot cooked meal. They also share the school field so they can carry out forest school activities with the children.	As above.
3.1.8	Churchstoke Little Explores operates from the school site in Churchstoke and provides childcare from 9:00am – 3:00pm for children in the area. Notably many of the families using this childcare do not drive and access the childcare setting by walking to it from within the village.	As above.
3.1.9	There are 19 Children attending the attached preschool (which is currently running at capacity) all with intentions to attend Churchstoke CP school.	As above.
3.1.10	There has also been an increase in numbers at the pre school groups on school land and were given a grant to modernise the mobile classroom on the school land. There are 40 children attending during week.	As above.
3.1.11	Churchstoke Little Explorers is thriving and at capacity. This is the best indication that the future numbers for the school will increase significantly.	As above.
3.1.12	Play group is operating at capacity this scenario is set to continue, with further housing development in the village (over 60 further family homes) either at late stages of completion or planned.	As above.
3.1.13	Are you aware that there are currently 24 children 2-4 years old attending our setting?	As above.

3.1.14	Churchstoke Little Explorers is up to capacity, with 22 children attending.	As above.
3.1.15	The pre-school is at full capacity.	As above.
3.1.16	Many of the children attending pre-school also feed into the primary school in Reception Class and the number of children in pre-school is continuing to grow year-on-year. These young children should not be forced to have to travel long distances from their homes or away from their crucial friendship groups in their rural community because of a money saving exercise for the council.	As above.
3.1.17	The pre-school is also a vital element of Churchstoke CP School, and it appears no consideration has been given to this when proposing the school closure.	As above.
3.1.18	Churchstoke Little Explorers (Playgroup), Tea and Tots (Mother and Baby Group) and After School Club operate from the building in the school grounds.	As above.
3.1.19	Are you aware that our numbers in Churchstoke little explores are actually higher than those in other areas? And the additional groups it offers with mothers and toddlers and an afterschool club, which we recognised, was a reason for children attending other schools. On a personal note tea and tots has given me support and friendships with being a first time mum whilst familiarising my daughter to the playgroup setting which has really helped her settle with no problems, any parents wish!	As above.
3.1.20	You have not looked at the numbers in the attached pre-school – at capacity most days.	As above.
3.1.21	I do believe the whole set up at Churchstoke CP School including Churchstoke Little Explorers (Playgroup) and Tea and Tots (mother and baby group) has been completely overlooked as they	As above.

	all operate from the school premises – they work very closely together, playgroup having lunch in the school and attending social events together, playgroup consisting of 22 children most accessing childcare offer and 3 plus funding which is limited in this area if you wanted to replicate that. There is also a very successful after school club that was set up in November 2020 that will attract children that we have previously lost to other schools.	
3.1.22	My child attends the Little Explorers Nursery and has thrived in this environment in so many ways. He is more confident, he feels safe and always comes home with a smile on his face. The staff are amazing always there to support the children and parents. The nursery is a real asset to the community and I hope it continues to thrive.	As above.
3.1.23	The Early Years setting is heavily linked with the school creating excellent transition for pupils.	As above.

3.2 Concern about the future of the Early Years Provision at Churchstoke

3.2.1	With the closure of the school we will face closure of the Preschool	<p>The Council has recognised in both the Consultation Document and the draft Community Impact Assessment that there may be a detrimental impact on early years provision if Churchstoke C.P. School closed.</p> <p>This will be updated to include information gathered during consultation.</p> <p>The Council is aware that Little Explorers is situated in a building on the grounds of Churchstoke C.P. School</p>
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		<p>and has a lease with the Council. Should the school close, the Council's Corporate Asset Policy would be followed. This would include consideration of a community asset transfer or a sale on the open market via different methods. The Council's policy is to dispose of any surplus assets.</p> <p>There would need to be consideration and dialogue about the impact of this on the early years facility. There may be an option to transfer the asset to the setting.</p>
3.2.2	If the school shuts we will lose the pre-school.	As above.
3.2.3	There will be no play group if you close this school.	As above.
3.2.4	Preschool will close with a massive loss to the community especially lower income families.	As above.
3.2.5	The closure of Churchstoke School would also mean that the Pre School in the grounds would be closed as well.	As above.
3.2.6	Churchstoke Little Explorers would close should consultation to close Churchstoke Primary School be successful.	As above.
3.2.7	Closure of the school will also put the pre-school, a vital service, at almost certain risk of closure.	As above.
3.2.8	I wanted to raise concerns about the impact on the childcare setting Churchstoke Little Explorers.	As above.
3.2.9	All children are entitled to a pre-school education and if school closes so will little explorers due to being held in a school building.	As above.
3.2.10	Closing the school would leave Churchstoke Little Explorers with no home.	As above.

3.2.11	Also if the school closed then Churchstoke little explorers would have to close as they use school premises which at the moment is thriving.	As above.
3.2.12	If you remove the school then you will directly impact Little Explorers taking away our building. A building that is used 5 days a week 9-3 and then additional hours for after school clubs. It is a thriving pre-school that needs some consideration during this decision when it feeds children into the school.	As above.
3.2.13	Without the school Churchstoke Little Explorers cannot survive.	As above.
3.2.14	There is a risk that if Churchstoke is closed, then this will impact/risk the closure of the pre-school setting, 'Little Explorers', as it is on the same site as the school. Early years education is vital for children and the effect of this needs to be factored in.	As above.
3.2.15	The pre school meet in the school building and share many of the schools resources. They would have nowhere to meet.	As above.
3.2.16	The pre-school currently uses a number of areas of the primary school building and grounds, where are they to go should the school close?	As above.
3.2.17	Will Churchstoke Little Explorers continue to be able to lease their building from Powys County Council should the school closure go ahead?	Churchstoke Little Explorers would continue to be able to lease their building from the Council should the school closure go ahead. If the Council decides to dispose of the school, then further discussions would need to take place about the setting's building and lease agreement.
3.2.18	Given that Little Explorers use our site and that the Consultation Document states that closure of the school "would not directly affect the early year's provision", what are your plans for our site and buildings?	As above.

3.2.19	Will the plans include selling of the premises currently occupied by Churchstoke Little Explorers therefore leaving us with no accommodation and directly causing us to close? Or do you have an alternative premises you envisage us leasing of you to continue to provide and Early Years Setting on Childcare setting in Churchstoke used by the wider rural community?	As above.
3.2.20	If the closure of the school also means the closure of the pre-school provision then Churchstoke as a village will become a transit village with folks living here but not belonging. The benefits of pre-school provision in any village is far ranging. Not only allowing the children to learn through play, which we know is the best foundation for later learning, but also provides a learning source for parents, peer support, essential in these times of ever diminishing professional support for parents.	As above.
3.2.21	Closure of the school would mean that parents (where they are able to do so) will take their pre-school children to the play group that feeds their nearest available school. All of that will be left will be those who are not able to take their children to alternative provision and play group would not be viable on this basis.	As above.
3.2.22	Powys states that the attached pre-school would be unaffected by the closure of the school, this is quite blatantly incorrect as families would no longer wish to send their children to a preschool without a local school, it would be extremely hard for those children to make lasting friendships only to be split up when being moved to other schools further afield.	As above.
3.2.23	Without to follow unschooled in the village is likely that parents will choose to send their children to another play group where there is a school that they can naturally progress to this will inevitably lead to the possible closure of the play group.	As above.

3.2.24	How does the inevitable loss of the pre-school provision in Churchstoke which currently shares the school site fit into the councils plans for early years provision?	As above.
3.2.25	Have you taken into account that if you close this school you close the play group as well?	As above.
3.2.26	Loss of pre-school and foundation education in the area, leading to loss of childcare provision, making life difficult for working parents.	As above.

3.3 Comments about grants provided to the pre-school provision

3.3.1	The pre-school little explorers has also recently received a £10,000 grant from Powys County Council and now they face closure. Another waste of money if it closed.	The Council wishes to ensure that all settings are able to benefit from the Welsh Government's Childcare Offer Capital Grant, regardless of whether a school is under review.
3.3.2	We are a very popular setting and have recently received a Powys Grant of £10,000 to update our outside area which is great for the kids to be able to benefit from outdoor space tailored to their needs.	Comment noted.
3.3.3	The preschool on the same premises has just received £10000 for refurbishment only for it now to be facing closure as a direct consequence of their proposal.....total misuse of clearly troubled finances.	As above.
3.3.4	Our newly (March 2021) refurbished outdoor area will go to waste if the school closure goes ahead. This was money granted to our setting by the Welsh Government for use in our Local Authority of Powys. Does this not seem a waste of precious funds for it only to be forced to close within 18 months of it being provided?	As above.

3.3.5	You are saying it's about finances, yet £10,000 was given to preschool to revamp the outdoor area, now you want to close the doors, it doesn't make any sense.	As above.
3.3.6	How is it good use of Powys' funding to allow a grant of £10,000 to Little Explorers at the same time as proposing to close the school?	As above.
3.3.7	Why were Little Explorers given £10,000 to enhance the outdoor space shared with the school at the same time as starting a consultation to close the school? Given that the council is currently facing significant financial pressures do you think this was effective budget management?	As above.
3.3.8	You have just given them £10,000 to do up there outside area and now you are threatening to take that away, now that's a waste of money!!	As above.

3.4 Comments about alternative early years provision

3.4.1	If the pre-school is closed many young children would be unable to access early years' provision as they rely on the fact that it is local and within walking distance of their home. There is no free transport for early years' children to access provision elsewhere. With 30% FSM in the primary school, it is a hugely important resource for our vulnerable families.	<p>The Council has recognised that there may be a detrimental impact on early years provision if Churchstoke C.P. School closed.</p> <p>The draft Impact Assessment will be updated to include information gathered during consultation, such as the impact on low income families if the setting closes and they don't have access to transport.</p>
3.4.2	There would be no transport system to allow the under fives to access pre-school provision in other villages. This could have a very detrimental effect on these children and their parents.	As above.

3.4.3	There is no free transport to neighbouring early years settings.	As above.
3.4.4	Lack of transport would mean alternative out of village [pre-school] provision would not be available to low income families.	As above.
3.4.5	Many parents do not drive and so should this pre-school setting close, children will be unable to access early years education.	As above.
3.4.6	If this provision closed then parents without access to a car would not be able to get their children into a childcare setting pre-school age creating a socio-economic divide in our village which is not what we want for our children.	As above.
3.4.7	There would be an increase in special deprivation and division, with the more well off able to access early years provision and the less well-off and those without transport unable to do so.	As above.
3.4.8	If Little Explorers is closed as a result of Churchstoke School being closed, it will mean that very young children will have to be transported some distance to be able to attend a similar facility. This again impacts on cost, the environment and also on the wellbeing of these young children.	As above.
3.4.9	Given that there is no free transport to for early years children, what provision will be available to parents without transport to get pre-school children to any sort of early years provision?	If there was no early years provision in Churchstoke, parents would need to arrange their own transport to another early years provider. The Council recognises that this would be difficult for parents without access to a car.
3.4.10	It will drive young families out of the area who require access to important childcare facilities such as the 3+ setting of Churchstoke Little Explorers, and with it many of the area's vital key workers who are parents to the children of the school will be forced to move away to areas with better service provisions for their childcare needs.	Comment noted.

3.4.1 1	Where is your suggested alternative setting for children that require childcare e.g. 9am-5pm for working parents? The suggested alternative early years provision settings do not have as extensive opening hours as our setting does.	The Council recognises that should there be no early years provision in Churchstoke then parents would not be able to access the same hours of childcare easily within the vicinity, without going to childminders or childcare providers further afield. The Council recognises that this would have a significant impact on working parents, and this will be included in the updated Impact Assessments.
3.4.1 2	What provision do you expect Foundation Phase children to attend that would walk to access our facility? Does this mean that they will miss out on those hugely formative years of early education and social interaction should they not drive or afford the travel costs to alternative setting outside the village of Churchstoke?	The Council recognises that, should Churchstoke C.P. School close, pupils who currently walk to school would no longer be able to do so. However, free home-to-school transport would be provided for eligible pupils to their nearest school in Powys i.e. if they live more than 2 miles from their nearest school in Powys.
3.4.1 3	The Consultation Document names alternate early years providers. What surplus capacity is there in the alternative early years provision? The suggested alternative early years provisions do not have capacity to admit all of our current children.	Montgomery Pre-School is currently funded for the provision of 16 places. They have capacity during all sessions provided Tuesday to Friday. Busy Bees Nursery in Chirbury has an admission number of 12 and Long Mountain CofE Primary School's nursery setting has an admission number of 11.
3.4.1 4	Churchstoke CP school provides a dedicated building and set up for the provision of early years child care; which is something Montgomery does not have.	Comment noted. However, whilst it is recognised that Churchstoke Little Explorers operates from its own facility and that Montgomery Pre-School operates from the Community Centre next to Montgomery C. in W. Primary School, neither Estyn nor Care Inspectorate Wales identified any negative issues with the learning environment at Montgomery Pre-School in their latest inspection reports.

3.4.1 5	Many parents would choose early years provision in England, with consequent damage to the area's Welsh identity.	Comment noted.
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4. COMMENTS ABOUT SMALL AND RURAL SCHOOLS

4.1 Positive comments about small/rural schools

4.1.1	As someone who grew up in a village with a small school, I know how much a child's education extends beyond the classroom environment. It is far more beneficial for the children, when it is a local school with a strong and passionate community behind it.	The Council has recognised the central role that the school plays in the community in the draft Community Impact Assessment. This will be updated to include information gathered during consultation.
4.1.2	I know all too well the benefits of a smaller school. Students thrive from the extra care and attention they receive, which may otherwise be lost in a large class of 30+. They feel safe and secure, building on communication and team building skills as they learn to work alongside their peers (who may be older or younger) rather than just being with students their exact age.	The Council notes these comments about smaller schools. The aim of the proposal is to improve entitlement and experience for all learners. As stated in the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-30, the Council faces a challenge due to the high proportion of small schools in the county and the lack of equity amongst schools. Churchstoke C.P. School teaches children in two classes of mixed aged groups. With such low pupil numbers the teacher-pupil ratio is notably different to many other schools in the area, and due to the Council's funding formula, the school's funding per pupil is higher than the Council's average. This does not provide equity across the education system – teachers in larger schools are required to provide the same education as smaller schools for less funding per pupil. Powys' Strategy is intended to improve equity across the education

		<p>system and to ensure an improvement for every pupil's learning entitlement and experience.</p> <p>It is clear that the Council's expenditure on children in the smallest schools is very generous, but through all of the engagements with stakeholders and the subsequent development of the Strategy to Transform Education in Powys, it is very apparent that there needs to be a vision for a stronger entitlement for all learners in Powys and equity for learners across the county. That vision, as the education professions moves towards the realisation of the new Curriculum for Wales does require the Council to pursue a transformational vision that secures an attractive entitlement and equity for all learners, professional learning for all staff and secure leadership across all schools.</p> <p>High levels of flexibility and organisation are needed in lesson planning to ensure that teaching caters for both age groups and all abilities within the class. This additional workload is a risk that the education profession needs to manage together, given the limited numbers of teachers to carry the additional roles and responsibilities in a very small school. Two-class schools not only have fewer qualified teachers in school to design the curriculum, but generally the limited numbers of staff will in all probability between them have a narrower range of disciplinary-specific expertise for the learners in that school than would probably be the case in a large school. In a larger school, each member of staff can lead on a specified</p>
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		area where they may have an appropriate background and in which they can continue to gain growing levels of expertise. Effective learning and teaching requires disciplinary-specific expertise which will become increasingly relevant in developing a curriculum as learners progress. Although the guidance promotes inter-disciplinary approaches, it also recognises the importance that disciplinary-specific expertise plays in such approaches.
4.1.3	You are completely ignoring the benefits of family schooling in local community schools with mixed age groups. It is actually proving to be easier to differentiate work between more and less able students as they can naturally work alongside the year above or below. The new curriculum almost encourages this from what I have seen, for children to work independently, of which one of our teachers was being recommended to other schools for best practice. My daughter was actually the only student in her year group for two years. Initially I was concerned, as your automatic response to the situation would be. However, I have found that there has been no detriment to her learning and friendships she has made within school, in fact quite the opposite, she has become very confident amongst her peers and very caring and considerate to younger pupils.	As above.
4.1.4	It is not always a benefit allowing children to be taught in classes that are with peers of similar ages, however, there are many benefits to children when taught in key stages in small community schools. These children grow up learning how to help each other, and it also makes it easier to differentiate work for the more and less able these children are able to work alongside those in the	As above.

	year above or below giving them a greater advantage to the stage of their individual learning.	
4.1.5	I think children feel more confident in a smaller school where they would have more attention.	Small schools do not necessarily mean that pupils have more attention as the classes usually have up to four year groups within each class. 'More attention' is not a measure of the quality of provision; it can encourage over-dependence on adults.
4.1.6	Smaller classes allow teachers to get to know their pupils and assess needs of their pupils because they can spend more time with them.	As above.
4.1.7	A small school provides tailored education to meet more individuals specific needs.	As above.
4.1.8	In the lovely country schools the children thrive from having a smaller school and get more teacher time.	As above.
4.1.9	Village schools are local for a reason. The care and dedication of the staff in small classes, meaning each child can have the attention that he or she may need, and is not just a name and number on a register.	As above.
4.1.10	Smaller village schools bring great qualities including smaller class sizes, more focused adult:child 1:1 care.	As above.
4.1.11	Small schools are amazing for allowing children to thrive & grow.	All schools, regardless of size, are expected to support, challenge and nurture all pupils to achieve their potential.
4.1.12	Small class sizes make it easier to monitor pupil progress. In larger schools pupils can be 'lost'. we know every pupil, every family.	As above.

4.1.13	I for one given the choice would always choose a small village school over a large school where children become just another number.	All schools, regardless of size, are expected to treat every pupil as an individual.
4.1.14	These smaller rural schools are essential to many many children. Taking the opportunity away from them where they have more chance of reaching their potential and thriving as an individual is heart breaking. Many children don't have the confidence when in a larger school and lose them self. Small schools are highly beneficial.	As above.
4.1.15	A small school is better for learning properly.	The quality of education is dependent on the quality of teaching, not the size of the school.
4.1.16	Smaller classes mean a better education.	As above.
4.1.17	As the Estyn report on Small Schools in Wales says, schools of all sizes can provide a high-quality education for pupils.	As above.
4.1.18	There is countless evidence which shows that pupils benefit from a smaller, more focussed learning environment.	As above.
4.1.19	My children have been much more confident, resilient and happy whilst attending smaller schools. With smaller classes, the children have more interaction with their teachers and are able to grow, learn and develop in a safe, friendly environment.	Comment noted.
4.1.20	A small rural school gives a huge amount of 'other' often not considered extra benefits that a larger school lacks – this is well-documented.	Comment noted.

4.2 Concerns about larger schools

4.2.1	These big schools are ok if your child is in a small class or specialist room but otherwise if your child struggles they will get unnoticed and left out, if you're not clever there you don't have any hope.	All schools, regardless of size, are required to support, challenge and nurture all pupils to meet their full potential.
4.2.2	Larger schools do not automatically mean better education	The quality of education in any school is dependent on the quality of teaching, and not the size of a school.
4.2.3	Larger schools do not always mean better	As above.
4.2.4	The claim that larger schools will provide a better standard of education across all subjects has not been proven by any data provided.	As above.
4.2.5	Larger schools are not for all, pupils and their parents should be treated as individuals and they should be given a choice, large schools with large class numbers can prove very overwhelming for some and it is very easy for them to become lost and overlooked.	As above.
4.2.6	There are more pupils and staff in a larger school and so more to deal with. Increasing the non contact time as schools get bigger is necessary to meet the additional workload, it does not make leadership better or schools more successful.	See 4.1.2
4.2.7	Can you explain why you feel larger is better for children? What evidence do you have that this is true?	See 4.1.2

4.3 Comments about the Council's treatment of small / rural schools

4.3.1	Children are individuals and 'one size does not fit all'. Why does Powys County Council consistently ignore and suppress the benefits of local community village schools? Parents both know the benefits and actively seek out these schools. Many small	See 4.1.2
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	Powys schools have been providing an excellent education for years. Our communities recognise this, why does Powys County Council not do so?	
4.3.2	Bigger schools aren't better schools!! Children who need support get much better education in a local village school, not these super schools. The Council really need to look at what they are considering doing.	As above.
4.3.3	Powys are constantly negative about small schools, but they have many positives.	As above.
4.3.4	Pupils state that they prefer smaller schools but Powys County Council consistently downplay and rubbish the undeniable benefits of small schools education.	As above.
4.3.5	The Council is discriminating against rural children who should have access to established Primary Schools within their local community in Wales.	The Council is not discriminating against rural children – the aim of the proposal is to improve learner experience and equity for all learners and to ensure equity across the system.

5. IMPACT ON PUPILS

5.1 General concern about the impact of the consultation on pupil well-being

5.1.1	Moving school may affect the children's mental health. It may stop their children from learning properly.	The Council recognises that any school reorganisation process creates a period of uncertainty for all involved, including children. The Council is committed to supporting schools and learners, including through periods of change. An experienced member of staff from the Council is supporting school leaders
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		<p>effectively to help them manage possible changes for their learners.</p> <p>It is also expected that school governors, staff and parents support the children to ensure that there isn't a detrimental impact on their wellbeing.</p> <p>Schools receiving pupils as a result of a school closure are expected to work with the closing school, the pupils and their families to provide full support to pupils to ensure a smooth transition.</p>
5.1.2	If the school did close it would affect their mental health for the other pupils.	As above.
5.1.3	The upset and anxiety it will cause to children are already at the school and feel content, safe, and secure. I feel strongly about this and urge powers council to reconsider.	As above.
5.1.4	This will cause unnecessary anxiety.	As above.
5.1.5	I am a parent of a child in Churchstoke CP school and am very concerned the impact of closing her school will affect her mental health and well-being. She is settled into her school. She has formed strong friendships and feels safe in her school, and with the staff she knows.	As above.
5.1.6	My primary concern is for the health and wellbeing of my child, he is a highly sensitive child who has suffered greatly through the pandemic with not seeing his friends and family, the thing he looked forward to the most was the day he went back to school and things could get back to somewhere near normal, he was in tears the day he heard that Powys had plans to close his school and I absolutely believe that after everything he has been through	As above.

	this past year this would have a detrimental effect on his mental health.	
5.1.7	I am concerned about the children's mental health and well-being and my boys going back to square 1 with change this will have a negative impact on them.	As above.
5.1.8	I believe that closing Churchstoke school would be damaging to the children's developmental, emotional and mental health needs.	As above.
5.1.9	The effect the closure of the school would have on these pupils would be detrimental to their health and well-being.	As above.
5.1.10	I think the council should consider the mental health of all the children that attend the school and pre school.	As above.
5.1.11	The wellbeing of the children should far outweigh the costs, and should be at the forefront of the council's minds.	As above.
5.1.12	Unfortunately, we know everything comes down to money, but when you are making your decisions about school closures please ensure that you also consider the welfare and wellbeing of the children as being of paramount importance.	As above.
5.1.13	Concern about the mental and emotional wellbeing of the children who are growing up here.	As above.
5.1.14	I am deeply concerned about the impact on the mental health and well-being of the current pupils aged 4-11 suddenly being uprooted from a school where they know everyone, a school they can walk to and join in extra curricular activities. A lot of children struggle with the transition at 11 to secondary school. How are kids this age going to cope?	As above.
5.1.15	You go on about children's mental health but that's a joke.	As above.

5.1.16	I believe the school closure would mean unnecessary stress, pressure, potentially leading to mental health issues and behavioural issues as some children struggle with being uprooted, having their education disrupted, being separated from the friends and having to travel further to school.	As above.
5.1.17	Children's mental health is already seeing rise, a global pandemic and then now taking their school a sense of security from them shameful!	As above.
5.1.18	Children at the school are happy, please don't make them sad.	As above.
5.1.19	The children are clearly very happy, how sad it is that their happiness and safety is not being taken into account. I feel this proposal is very short sighted – I do hope it does not come to fruition.	As above.
5.1.20	Young children do not need stress or unhappiness put upon them to satisfy the need of a team who seem, apparently to follow the American education system, where children disappear into the mass of pupils.	As above.

5.2 Comments about consultation taking place during the Covid pandemic

5.2.1	Children have experienced enough disruption to their education over the past year from Covid-19, closing the school would only add to this.	The Council recognises that any school reorganisation proposal creates a period of uncertainty and concern for local stakeholders. However, in order to address the issues raised by Estyn regarding the organisation of its schools, it is necessary to continue with the development and consultation on proposals during the current pandemic. The Welsh Government provided non-statutory guidance for local authorities to manage consultations during periods of lockdown. The level and
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		detail of responses received to all recent consultations outlines that stakeholders have engaged fully in the consultations, even though there have been restrictions in place.
5.2.2	First of all I'd like to say that I think your timing of this is horrible, we're in the middle of a pandemic and children have already suffered enough without having to worry about their school closing.	As above.
5.2.3	Children have had a very difficult year 2020 to 2021.	As above.
5.2.4	Closing the school, especially at this time of stress for everyone due to the unprecedented restrictions caused by the covid pandemic, would add extra worry and confusion to the children. It is widely acknowledged that children have been detrimentally affected by not being able to attend school as normal for such a long time. To announce the closure of school and pre-school here, just as our children are getting a bit of normality returning, I think is putting their needs – mental health – behind other plans in terms of importance.	As above.
5.2.5	I think after the last 18 months of a world wide pandemic u have taken advantage of the situation and all of this will damage the children's mental heath.	As above.
5.2.6	The stress on the staff and children at a time of such uncertainty and disruption due to the pandemic has been bad and to now threat to close the school now is unkind and cruel to the children.	As above.
5.2.7	It is unfair and cruel to put these young children under such pressure and stress, particularly in the midst of a global pandemic.	As above.
5.2.8	We are concerned pupils will suffer mentally, having been through COVID restrictions, and to be moved and split will cause anxiety.	As above.

5.2.9	During the last year children have been through an awful lot due to the coronavirus pandemic, without being made to suffer even more by closing their school.	As above.
5.2.10	Every news bulletin talks of the importance of getting every child back into school for both educational and emotional reasons. And yet you choose this time to bring further turmoil to these same children by proposing to close their school!	As above.
5.2.11	Please explain to me after the year these children have had in a world wide pandemic how changing school and friends and all the worries that goes with this is good for my children's mental health?	As above.
5.2.12	The Mental Health of these children who are already attending the school and pre school with COVID they have already had to adjust to the changes that has caused now the council is asking them to adjust again to going to another school which it traumatising to young children they need a Safe,Happy Stability.	As above.
5.2.13	As a result of COVID children's education has been greatly affected and acknowledged by all – surely every effort should be made to avoid any further disruption to children's education, especially young children who are arguably more easily affected.	As above.
5.2.14	Plases do not disrupt our children, in such traumatic time with COVID. There has already been effected having to loose so much valuable learning, I feel that the closure of our school will effect their education even more and their mental health.	As above.

5.3 Concern about the impact on pupils of having to move to a different school

5.3.1	The closure of the school would have an adverse effect on pupils being moved to different area schools.	Schools receiving pupils as a result of a school closure are expected to work with the closing school, the pupils and their families to provide full support to pupils to ensure a smooth transition.
5.3.2	It will be a source of upheaval for those kids to have to resettle in another school.	As above.
5.3.3	Pupils feel safe at the school and might not like another school.	As above.
5.3.4	Pupils trust their teachers at Churchstoke and don't want teachers they don't know.	As above.
5.3.5	Moving schools is a traumatic experience for children of any age for many reasons.	As above.
5.3.6	The pupils have learned to adapt to their peers and get along nicely, moving schools may increase the chances of bullying due to them standing out more because they are new. This isn't something we want or need surely? Kids need to feel safe and secure in a place of education, forcing them to move schools will cause a massive amount of stress for them, they're only kids they shouldn't be scared at this age.	As above.
5.3.7	Expecting my daughter to travel by bus every day to another school where she knows no one, does not know the location, does not know the teachers will be very frightening to a child her age, and she will not feel safe. She feels safe in Churchstoke CP school where she has settled, and settled in the community of Churchstoke. It is very unfair to just assume she will adjust to a new environment, I know she will not.	As above.
5.3.8	I have witnessed how difficult it can be for children to move to a school with already established friendship groups.	As above.
5.3.9	Pupils don't want to get taught by other teachers.	As above.

5.3.10	My children have only just moved to this school and mentally it would be detrimental to them having recently moved schools on top of the pandemic we have had to face as well as moving home. They love their school and have settled in really well.	As above.
5.3.11	To put some pupils in a larger school could be detrimental to their learning if they are sensitive.	As above.
5.3.12	Large schools do not meet all children's needs.	As above.
5.3.13	Moving children to a bigger school doesn't necessarily mean they will get a better education.	As above.
5.3.14	Education of our children will be comprised by bigger classes and unknown environments.	As above.
5.3.15	If certainly won't improve the educational opportunities of the children to be torn from friends and a familiar environment and thrust into a strange and much larger one.	As above.
5.3.16	The children in the school are settled and happy, many will have to go to different schools, some in another country which is absolutely not fair.	As above.
5.3.17	Pre-school infants would be most affected and less secure knowing parents or carers are not nearby.	As above.
5.3.18	What support will be provided to pupils during the transition period? In particular some staff have been extremely concerned by comments made by parents from Chirbury that they do not want children from Churchstoke in their school. How will PCC ensure there is support for transition into Shropshire schools that will tackle this problem?	The Council would contact all alternative schools to ensure that they are able to work with the closing school and its pupils and families to ensure a smooth transition. This would be the same for schools in Powys and Shropshire.
5.3.19	I would never want to move school because I used to go to a small school before I came here. If this school closed, I would	The proposal is to close Churchstoke C.P. School and pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative school in

	have to go back to my old small school again. I don't want to so please don't close our school.	Powys. However, parents can apply for a place for their child(ren) at any school.
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5.4 Concern that pupils would be separated from their friends

5.4.1	A lot of the children will be split up in having to travel different directions to a future school.	<p>The Council acknowledges that children and families would need to go through a period of change, should Churchstoke C.P. School close. It also understands that this is a real concern for children, especially if friendship groups go to different schools. However, children are able to be part of friendship groups even if they attend different schools and are able to become part of new friendship groups.</p> <p>All schools that receive pupils as a result of a school closure are expected to work with the closing school, the pupils and their families to provide full support to ensure a smooth transition and help pupils settle into their new schools.</p>
5.4.2	All the kids will be split from their friends' primary school is where lifelong friends start.	As above.
5.4.3	Children could be at different schools so losing the friendships made in the local village.	As above.
5.4.4	Children don't want to leave their friends	As above.
5.4.5	Pupils are concerned that they might get split up from their friends	As above.
5.4.6	The local children will be split up from the start.	As above.

5.4.7	Pupils that have lots of friends in Churchstoke School might find it hard to make new friends.	As above.
5.4.8	I feel that this will have a negative affect on the pupils attending this school due to them having to move to other locations away from friends they have made in this current one.	As above.
5.4.9	Pupils will possibly be split up from their friends due to limited spaces in proposed alternative schools.	As above.
5.4.10	Children have suffered enough without having to possibly leave friends and / or siblings if there isn't room in the new school.	As above.
5.4.11	I also think if it did close it would make people sad and unhappy because they possibly could not see their friends and they could be split up.	As above.
5.4.12	There is one thing that will be upsetting if the school closes, which is friends splitting up! I think of this because there will not be enough room for everyone to go to the same school and people might choose different schools and it will be very sad.	As above.
5.4.13	The children of Churchstoke would be split 4 ways, friendships would be lost and they could lose their Welsh identity. Once again their welfare has not been taken into consideration.	As above.
5.4.14	To split the pupils between four schools is very unfair to all concerned in this manner.	As above.
5.4.15	If you close a school it will cause mayhem in a child's learning, because they will be separated from close friends if they go to different schools which will cause anxiety and depression which certainly will affect their learning which will add extra pressure on parents.	As above.
5.4.16	Surrounding schools are currently larger than Churchstoke school, but not one school has the surplus capacity to	As above.

	accommodate all pupils from Churchstoke. Pupils would be split between several schools, fragmenting the community.	
5.4.17	If Churchstoke School closes it will mean they will not even be with the friends they have made in our school as they will be possibly be split between 3 schools or even have to travel further afield.	As above.
5.4.18	It would end up with children from one village being split between numerous primary schools, this can be very damaging to friendship bonds especially when then transferring on to high schools.	As above.
5.4.19	Students would be spread across different schools.	As above.
5.4.20	Pupils would be split up between 4 different schools, ripping the community apart.	As above.
5.4.21	Have you considered how closing the school would affect children's mental health and well-being when you split them from their friends?	As above.
5.4.22	You will spilt families and friendships across schools.	As above.
5.4.23	Children having to be bused to various local schools, as no one school has sufficient capacity to take all the children, has a negative effect. Friends will be split up and there is even the danger of siblings not being able to attend the same school.	As above.
5.4.24	Having young children from the same community 'farmed out' to different primary schools will impact on their ability for social inclusion as a year group and will impact negatively socially.	As above.
5.4.25	Have you thought about what happens with siblings if they can't get in to the same school and how this will effect them? How they might be split up from friends?	As above.

5.4.26	Of the schools suggested as alternatives, not one of them has space for all the pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School meaning peer groups and even sibling s may be split up, this would shatter the community in Churchstoke.	As above.
5.4.27	Pupils have formed friendships which began in Churchstoke toddler group. They went to Churchstoke play group with the same friends, and now attend Churchstoke CP school with these same friends. They have all formed very close friendships, and yet they will all be forced to attend different schools. How is this fair? It is certainly not in their best interests, yet Powys County Council just expect them to accept this situation because they are children and will probably be fine.	As above.
5.4.28	This saddens me to think that my child who has been attending the attached pre school Churchstoke little explorers since he was 2. The bonds he had formed and relationships he has made are very strong, it would be devastating for him and his friends if they were not able to attend the school that they already have strong links with	As above.
5.4.29	If children are educated away from their own village, they will naturally make friends from outside their community. This means that any social interaction after school and during holidays is greatly curtailed, and the children could become depressed, anxious and lonely.	As above.
5.4.30	Sending children to different schools outside of the village will be detrimental to their interaction with friends who would not live in the village. At this age they need their friends nearby to be able to make strong bonds and parents would know the families with whom their children interact with, which has to be a very important safety factor.	As above.

5.4.31	Pupils are concerned that they won't make friends in a different school.	As above.
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5.5 Concern about pupils' future opportunities

5.5.1	It will affect children's futures. Deprive them of their human rights future careers.	<p>The aim of the proposal is to improve learner entitlement and experience, and to ensure equity across the system. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative school in Powys would be Montgomery C. in W. School. Some pupils may also choose to attend schools in Shropshire, in particular Chirbury CofE School.</p> <p>The Council's view is that Montgomery C. in W. School would provide education for pupils which is of at least equivalent quality as that provided at Churchstoke C.P. School, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on standards and progress overall.</p> <p>Whilst the Council does not have direct experience of the provision at Chirbury CofE School, the school's last Ofsted inspection which was carried out in December 2019 judged the school's overall effectiveness and quality of education to be Good, therefore it is likely that the provision is of at least equivalent quality as that provided at Churchstoke C.P. School.</p>
5.5.2	Attending a school outside Wales would narrow down the children's chances of getting jobs which require some understanding of Welsh when there older.	The Council agrees that having an understanding of Welsh is certainly a benefit in the Welsh job market, and therefore the Council's preference is that, in the event that Churchstoke C.P. School closes, then pupils

		would transfer to their nearest schools in Powys. However, the Council also recognises that some parents may choose a Shropshire school for their child(ren).
5.5.3	If they attended a school outside Wales, pupils would be disadvantaged, having to play catchup, also when seeking a job needing Welsh qualifications.	As above.
5.5.4	What study has been done on the effect of standards of transferring from the Welsh to the English education system? How will children who do so be supported by Powys County Council? Can Churchstoke School cease to prepare these pupils for the New Welsh National Curriculum and instead prepare them for the change to the English one? If so, how can we teach and prepare for two different National Curriculums alongside each other?	<p>All schools in Wales are expected to prepare for the implantation of the new Curriculum for Wales and the Council would not support Churchstoke C.P. School ceasing in its preparations.</p> <p>The Council is not aware of any study about impact on standards of transferring from the Welsh education system to the English education system. The proposal is for Churchstoke C.P. School to close and for pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative school in Powys. This is to ensure that they have the opportunity to access the Curriculum for Wales.</p> <p>If parents whose children currently attend Churchstoke C.P. School choose to send their child(ren) to a Shropshire school, then the Council would expect the receiving school to work with Churchstoke C.P. School to ensure a smooth transition for these pupils.</p>

5.6 Concern about the impact of additional travel on pupils

5.6.1	The children will suffer having to travel further afield	The Council recognises that there would be additional travel required for pupils who currently live closer to
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		Churchstoke C.P. School. However, the Council's view is that this would not be excessive.
5.6.2	The children will be tired before they arrive for 1st lesson	As above.
5.6.3	Children will be tired from travel	As above.
5.6.4	I'm disappointed that they will face a further commute, which can be tiring for youngsters.	As above.
5.6.5	Being on buses for long periods makes it a very long day for youngsters and not conducive to a good mindset or learning mode.	As above.
5.6.6	The additional time taken up in the travelling may also lead to an adverse effect on the children due to tiredness therefor affecting their ability to study and greater risk of accident.	As above.
5.6.7	Closing cause more cars on roads and make more stress on parents and children. Resulting in more absence less education.	As above.
5.6.8	Have any thought being given to the stress caused to pupils and parents if they have to travel miles to school at the beginning and end of every day?	As above.
5.6.9	How the extra time traveling a day might effect them?	As above.
5.6.10	Having children from the junior school travel further for their education will more than likely effect the children's sleeping pattern so they will feel sleep deprived among other things such as mental health etc.	As above.
5.6.11	How is it in the 'best interest' of the pupils.....? Travelling further to school making their school day longer.	As above.
5.6.12	Pupils will be scared travelling to a school and place they don't know all by themselves on a bus.	As above.

5.6.13	Being transported by bus could be quite traumatic to young children when they already have a perfectly good school that they feel happy and safe in which helps them to learn.	As above.
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5.7 Concern that pupils would no longer feel a sense of ‘belonging’ to the community

5.7.1	The sense of “belonging” to a place will disappear.	The Council has recognised, in the draft Community Impact Assessment, the central role that the school has in the community of Churchstoke. This will be updated to include information gathered during consultation.
5.7.2	It would diminish the sense of community that is gained from attending a local school	As above.
5.7.3	Transporting children to different schools breaks the link with the community and the village will suffer	As above.
5.7.4	I believe it is so important for children to be educated where they live - not to travel away from their community.	As above.
5.7.5	Being bussed in to another school, besides the cost, logistics etc is detrimental to the sense of belonging for these very young children. There will be plenty of that when they get to high school and further. These toddlers and pre-teens need a school in their community to be part of that community. Please don't take that away from them and those yet to come.	As above.

5.8 Other comments

5.8.1	Again rural young people put at a disadvantage	The Council is not putting rural young people at a disadvantage. The aim of the proposal is to improve learner entitlement and experience for all learners, and to ensure equity across the system.
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5.8.2	'Local schools for local children' is the best way of ensuring equality of opportunity for the children of Churchstoke and its locality.	As above.
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6. IMPACT ON PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC GROUPS

6.1 Benefits of Churchstoke C.P. School / small schools for pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups

6.1.1	Many parents of disabled children choose to send their children to a small school because of just that. The fact it is a small school. A school that has less children meaning more one to one support and learning. Less children in a small school means that disabled children can be prioritised. Less children means less bullying, a factor that is common for children with disabilities. Small schools are essential for the education of any person who falls under the equality act. The council needs to consider this, nothing has been mentioned of the sort by them so far. If you close the school, you need to outright say that you are damaging the education and wellbeing of disabled children at Churchstoke school because that is the truth.	<p>The council does not accept that pupils with disabilities have greater one to one support in small schools, compared to larger schools. The council does not agree that pupils, including those with disabilities, are less likely to be bullied in small schools. There is no evidence in the council to support this.</p> <p>The council believes that the wellbeing of all pupils, including those with disabilities, can be equally well supported in any school in Powys. All schools in Powys have had the same opportunities for training and guidance in supporting pupils' wellbeing and mental health and have access to online resources. All schools in Powys have been provided with training in the new ALN act and code and equally able to support the needs of pupils with disabilities.</p>
6.1.2	Churchstoke is a small school and children with SEN are provided for exceptionally.	The council acknowledges this comment. This is true of other schools in Powys.
6.1.3	Churchstoke school is equipped for disabilities for children either at the school or the children at the schools playgroup.	The council acknowledges this comment. This is true of other schools in Powys.

6.1.4	Churchstoke CP School has an excellent reputation for supporting pupils with protected characteristics and is the choice of a number of local parents for precisely this reason. These pupils and their parents would be profoundly disadvantaged by the closure of the school.	The council acknowledges this comment. This is true of other schools in Powys; therefore, we disagree that pupils and parents would be disadvantaged by the closure.
6.1.5	Churchstoke CP School is particularly successful in responding to and caring for local children with protected characteristics and loss of the school would impact negatively on this group.	As above.
6.1.6	Our SEN children, they are so settled and happy. Great disability facilities!	Comment noted.
6.1.7	Every pupil is a person at Churchstoke primary school, not one is left behind. It' s catered for all needs of the attending pupils	Comment noted.
6.1.8	Churchstoke school is an all-inclusive setting and pupils are all welcomed and treated equally. The pupils who struggle socially who currently attend Churchstoke will find their education greatly disrupted.	The council acknowledges this comment. This is true of other schools in Powys; therefore, we disagree that pupils who need support would be disadvantaged by the closure.
6.1.9	Being a smaller school pupils with any additional needs get more one on one and help.	The council considers that pupils with additional needs across all schools are able to access equal help and support.
6.1.10	I also believe that a smaller school with less children is in fact a benefit to the children with special needs, that has been evident by how pupils have thrived and came on in all aspects of his education.	The council does not agree with this comment. This is also true of larger schools in Powys.
6.1.11	Churchstoke is a small school, which gives the flexibility to cater for the above protected characteristics.	The council accepts this comment. This is also true of larger schools in Powys.

6.1.12	Local schools are so much better for people with protected characteristics as they feel safer, have more support and are better managed.	The council does not agree with this comment. This is also true of larger schools in Powys.
6.1.13	The needs of pupils that have moved to Churchstoke from larger schools have been better met as they slipped through the net in the larger school.	The council does not agree with this comment.
6.1.14	Nearly one third of pupils have additional learning needs – disability is one of them. They are far better catered for locally where parents can engage properly with the school and teachers and there is general support for them and their families within the village.	The council accepts this comment.
6.1.15	There has been a dramatic increase in the amount of children having FSM and also children with ALN. These children are better suited to smaller schools and are able to achieve better in class sizes where they're not lost.	The council does not agree with this comment. This is also true of larger schools in Powys.
6.1.16	Village schools and smaller classes mean one to one pupils find it easier to mix with mainstream pupils, who are also able to help with their wellbeing.	The council does not agree with this comment. This is also true of larger schools in Powys.
6.1.17	The pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated the already increasing issue of mental health and SEBD in young children of primary age. These children and those on the autistic spectrum are known to benefit hugely from known and smaller environments.	The council accepts this comment.

6.2 Impact on pupils with additional learning needs

6.2.1	29% of pupils have additional learning needs	The council accepts this comment.
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6.2.2	Those attending the school with special educational needs feel happy safe and secure with staff they work closely with, a school like an extended family and smaller class sizes.	The council accepts this comment.
6.2.3	A huge impact on the several children who have SEN.	The council does not accept this comment. Other schools in the area will be equally able to support pupils with ALN.
6.2.4	For pupils with SEN, the proposal would cause more stress.	The council does not accept this comment. Other schools in the area will be equally able to support pupils with ALN.
6.2.5	There are a few children with SEN in the school. Moving schools would be very detrimental for these children.	The council does not accept this comment. Other schools in the area will be equally able to support pupils with ALN.
6.2.6	Children with ALN will have their everyday routines disrupted, which will have a negative impact on their well-being.	The council accepts this comment but will work with schools to support transition.
6.2.7	There are children with additional needs who have grown attached to staff and would require additional funding to get transported to a school further away.	The council accepts this comment but will work with schools to support transition and transport.
6.2.8	There are now a number of children with ALN who are currently settled and thriving at the school. Closure of the school would be very detrimental to them. Most of these children currently walk to school with their parent. The need for transport to a distant school would also have detrimental effects.	As above
6.2.9	Concern about pupils who are statemented, who have to have one to one care which includes the disabled toilets and changing facilities in the school. They would not handle change or having to travel on public transport.	The council accepts this comment but will work with schools to support transition and transport.

6.2.10	Would have a detrimental impact on any pupils with autism who are thriving at Churchstoke.	The council accepts this comment. Other schools in the area will be equally able to support pupils with ALN.
6.2.11	Would have an impact on pupils with ADHD/autism that currently go to the school, the move would have an impact on them mentally, socially, emotionally and academically.	The council accepts this comment. Other schools in the area will be equally able to support pupils with ALN.
6.2.12	Pupils with SEN who can currently walk to school safely with parents will be left feeling vulnerable in places they don't know and with people they don't know.	The council accepts this comment but will work with schools to support transition and transport.
6.2.13	Children with SEN who currently walk to Churchstoke School safely with their parents will be left in a vulnerable situation, they will need to be transported to school with one to one support by taxi. If the school closes, so will the preschool located on the premises. Parents who cannot drive will be unable to travel to take their children to other preschools.	As above.
6.2.14	Our SEN children are so settled and happy, where will they go? Will they have taxis with a carer to travel with them?	The council accepts this comment but will work with schools to support transition and transport.
6.2.15	Children with additional learning needs / disabilities need special transportation which will be an extra cost to the council.	The council accepts this comment but will work with schools to support transition and transport.
6.2.16	Pupils with SEN / disabilities need to be part of a local community.	The council accepts this comment.

6.3 Impact on disabled pupils / parents

6.3.1	Children who have disabilities will be greatly impacted by Churchstoke school closing. They are thriving in our school and get excellent support. Churchstoke has extremely good disabled facilities which meet their needs. They are happy and secure in this school.	The council accepts this comment. Other schools in the area will be equally able to support pupils with ALN.
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6.3.2	I have many concerns over the impact on children with disabilities from the school closing. There are children at the school currently with disabilities that need extra help and support from staff at all times. Closing the school would make it harder for these children, having a negative impact on their education.	The council does not accept this comment. Other schools in the area will be equally able to support pupils with ALN and those who have disabilities.
6.3.3	Disability- you will disrupt routine, you will need further money on private taxi and escorts, larger class sizes will not help there learning or confidence. Could lead to isolation problems.	As above. There is no evidence that larger classes negatively impact children's confidence or create problems with isolation. The greater school population may make it easier to develop friendships where there are more pupils with similar challenges.
6.3.4	The extra distance involved in travelling to other schools would seriously impact people with disabilities.	The council accepts this comment but will work with schools to support transition and transport.
6.3.5	The proposed alternative transport to other schools is a high school bus, a bus that does not cater at all for wheelchair users.	The council accepts this comment but will work with schools to support transition and transport. We have extensive experience in securing transport for pupils with a range of additional learning needs and disabilities.
6.3.6	Children with disabilities can be taken in their wheelchairs to school, much easier and safer for parents to take them rather than struggling getting child and wheelchair into a car.	See above.
6.3.7	It would be difficult for disabled parents to travel far away and disabled children who might need special transports would feel different to their friends.	See above.
6.3.8	Well-being of disabled pupils will be affected by extra travelling and parents being further away if there is a health issue for example.	See above.
6.3.9	Moving children with disabilities out of the village will cause immense emotional pressure on the individual children and	See above.

	families. The teachers and people of the village know their families and problems and will protect them.	
6.3.10	Disabled parents and children would have to travel further to school and this isn't always possible	See above.

6.4 Impact on pupils that are eligible for free school meals

6.4.1	Low income families relying on free school transport would be restricted in their involvement with any new school. This would further exacerbate social inequality.	The Council recognises that there would be an impact on low income families' ability to attend the school for meetings or activities if they did not have access to transport. This will be reflected in the updated impact assessments.
6.4.2	Low income families would undoubtedly suffer and be unable to take part in after school extracurricular activities, thus increasing social inequality.	As above.
6.4.3	Low income families relying on free school transport would be unable to engage well with a school outside the village and social inequality would increase.	As above.
6.4.4	The less well off families will be the most affected and this will make the gap between richer and poorer families even greater.	As above.
6.4.5	The school at present has a breakfast club and after school groups, no school is available for children of essential workers and children at risk from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. The school has children at risk attending getting free school meals.	As above.

6.5 Impact on other protected characteristic groups

6.5.1	Closure will impact anyone with protected characteristics	The Council has recognised the impact on protected characteristic groups in the Draft Equality Impact Assessment. This will be updated to include information gathered during consultation.
6.5.2	This closure will have an impact on ALL pupils and future pupils so of course it will also affect those with protected characteristics, they are woven through society and our community!	As above.
6.5.3	100% people with one of the protected characters will be the most effected. They won't be able to receive as much 1:1 support and are likely to feel overwhelmed in large classes	As above.
6.5.4	Women would be disadvantaged as mothers and workers.	As above.

7. IMPACT ON PARENTS / FAMILIES

7.1	Closure of the school would mean a lot of juggling for parents to arrange the school/working week.	The Council recognises that, should Churchstoke C.P. School close, then parents would need to adapt to new arrangements.
7.2	Loss of the care facilities offered by the school, including Breakfast Club and After School Clubs, will make it difficult for working parents.	Montgomery C. in W. Primary School would be the nearest school for the majority of pupils currently at Churchstoke C.P. School, and has a Breakfast Club and after school clubs.
7.3	The school has a breakfast club and after school activities which provide local jobs and also give parents the opportunity to work because their children are looked after and they can pick them up on their way home	As above.
7.4	Without access to the school's breakfast club, working mothers would have to terminate their employment.	As above.

7.5	Working mothers need to access breakfast club and afterschool club for their job.	As above.
7.6	As a working mother I can organise myself with the wrap around care that is received at Churchstoke CP School to carry out my position, there is adequate and safe drop off and pick up locations with plenty of room at the school	As above.
7.7	Concern about the amount of travelling parents would have to do, and the impact on parents jobs with loss of time taking and fetching their children.	As above.
7.8	More difficult for working parents as more time needed to find childcare and more time to take and fetch children from childcare.	As above.
7.9	Has any consideration been given to the fact that those on low income or unemployed would be unable to access breakfast or after school clubs due to reliance on school transport? Are PCC aware that many parents are dependent on the wrap around care currently offered by the school, meaning that their work may no longer be viable or that they would be unable to take on jobs? (We have letters from local employers, including St Nicholas's House and Montgomeryshire Spring Water, that back this up.) What effect do they feel that this will have on social disadvantage and the local economy?	The Council will update the draft impact assessments to take account of these issues.

8. COMMENTS ABOUT OTHER SCHOOLS PUPILS MIGHT TRANSFER TO

8.1 Montgomery C. in W. School

8.1.1	We believe the Montgomery school building to be in a similar state of repair to Churchstoke, therefore, there is no advantage at all, as far as we can see, in the children going to this school.	The building condition and suitability of Montgomery C. in W. Primary School is similar to that of Churchstoke C.P. School. The Council's view is that Montgomery C. in W. School would provide education for pupils which is of at least equivalent quality as that provided at Churchstoke C.P. School.
8.1.2	Montgomery school is limited for parking, the road is single track and can get very busy. More pupils from other areas mean more cars. I walk my children to school, which makes life so much easier, but I see how hectic it can get during drop off, pick up time.	The Council recognises that Montgomery C.P. School has access issues but the school manages this well with supervision during drop off and pick up times.
8.1.3	Montgomery is probably oversubscribed and presents huge parking and transport difficulties. It's almost impossible to drive through Montgomery now, as it is.	Montgomery C. in W. School is not over-subscribed. The school's capacity is 119 and there are currently 88 pupils on roll, meaning that there are 31 places available at the school.
8.1.4	Montgomery school is a listed building with limited space and is pushed to its limits at drop off and collection times.	The Council notes this comment.
8.1.5	Montgomery school will be over capacity due to the addition of 30-60 new houses - there will be no space for children from outside of Montgomery	The Council recognises that there are current and planned housing developments in Montgomery – according to Powys' Local Development Plan there are two allocations for 50 and 53 unit respectively. The Council's planning department uses a pupil-yield ratio of .45 pupils for each house build. Based on this ratio, the housing developments could potentially lead to an increase of approximately 46 children in Montgomery. However, it must be recognised that this is an estimate and that such an increase would probably happen gradually over a period of time.

8.1.6	<p>The nearest Welsh primary school you are suggesting that pupils move to from Churchstoke – Montgomery CinW school is a school I have moved my children from – this is due to the large class size and my son not progressing as well as I feel he could have, I moved him to another local small primary school and he is now thriving. If you look at the figures for Montgomery you will see that in the past 18 months alone a significant number of children, well into double figures have left Montgomery CinW primary to attend other local primary schools due to various issues across age groups within the school – to be suggesting a school where sadly a lot of pupils/parents have experienced significant enough issues to remove them from as replacement school for pupils from Churchstoke to me is really not right.</p>	<p>The Council notes this comment. 18 pupils have requested an in-year transfer from Montgomery C. in W. Primary since January 2020.</p>
8.1.7	<p>It would appear that Montgomery School does not have spare capacity for all the children who presently attend Churchstoke School.</p>	<p>It is recognised that there isn't sufficient capacity for all the pupils from Churchstoke C.P. School at Montgomery C. in W. Primary School. However, it is highly likely that not all parents would choose Montgomery C. in W. Primary School if Churchstoke C.P. School closed.</p>
8.1.8	<p>Montgomery has 29 spaces which does not allow for the 36 on the roll at Churchstoke and does not take into account the new building work in Montgomery.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
8.1.9	<p>Montgomery school is already full, under resourced and reliant on parent fundraising - education in Wales is already under funded, and cannot be stretched any further without a negative effect on the students.</p>	<p>Montgomery C. in W. Primary School is not over-subscribed and is funded in accordance with the Council's funding formula.</p>
8.1.10	<p>There is no room to expand at Montgomery.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>

8.2 Schools located in Shropshire

8.2.1	It has been suggested that Chirbury would be another choice. However that school is already full because schools have closed in Shropshire and there is no room to expand.	The capacity of Chirbury CofE Primary School is 84, and the current number on roll is 72 which indicates that the school is almost full.
8.2.2	I know with Chirbury they are having lots of trouble with parking in mornings and afternoons as there is a lot of children there. They have staggered drop off/pick up times now, how can they cope with more vehicles and children? Staff there are already trying to cope with large classes. Also very importantly Chirbury will be starting building on large new housing estate there soon. Again more families in the area, Chirbury will not be able to function with all these large numbers of children going there.	There is currently planning permission currently under consideration for a hybrid application for 40 dwellings in Chirbury which are a mixture of affordable housing and market housing. ¹ As part of the Shropshire Local Plan 2016-2038, currently under review there is a total of 14 dwellings identified for Chirbury. ²
8.2.3	I'm concerned about the impact on Chirbury Primary School should high numbers of pupils from Churchstoke go to Chirbury, especially as there is going to be a big housing development in Chirbury in the coming years so pupil numbers will increase with that.	As above.
8.2.4	The community has full capacity at Chirbury despite federating to save Stiperstones into the group. The Chirbury site has limited amenities and toilets etc and already lacks classroom space.	As above.
8.2.5	At the moment there only seems to be 3 schools in the area where the children now at Churchstoke CP school could go. Montgomery, Chirbury and Bishops Castle. I understand that Montgomery and Chirbury have their own planned development. This only leaves Bishops Castle. I am told that at the moment there are 38 children in Churchstoke School and by September 2022 there could be as many as 53 children attending. Are all	The Powys LDP makes provision for an additional 54 dwellings in Montgomery. A planning application for 33 affordable dwellings is currently under consideration on a site outside the LDP housing area. ³ There is planned housing development in Chirbury as listed in 8.2.3.

¹ 21/01136/FUL - Shropshire Planning Portal

² Regulation 19: Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan 2016 to 2038, pg 174

³ 20/2118/FUL – Powys Planning Portal

	these children going to find a place in Bishops Castle school? I think that would be very doubtful.	
8.2.6	Bishops Castle Primary School is overloaded with children already.	The capacity of Bishops Castle Primary School is 175 with currently 135 pupils on roll.

8.3 Concerns about available capacity in neighbouring schools

8.3.1	I just wonder where are our children supposed to go to school as the villages around us have their own planned developments building family homes which would use up the vacant places in their schools. There would not be places for our children, they will not have priority in any of the proposed schools for them to move to.	<p>The proposal is to close Churchstoke C.P. School and for pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools in Powys. The nearest school in Powys for the majority of pupils currently attending Churchstoke is Montgomery C. in W. Primary School which has a capacity of 119 with 88 currently on roll. Other Powys schools in the vicinity are shown below. All these schools have available places.</p> <p><u>Forde C. in W. School</u> 59 pupils on roll. 102 capacity</p> <p><u>Abermule C.P. School</u> 70 pupils on roll. 92 capacity</p> <p><u>Berriew C.P. School</u> 88 pupils on roll. 106 capacity</p> <p><u>Leighton C.P. School</u> 71 pupils on roll. 91 capacity</p>
8.3.2	Where is it expected that these children should go? All surrounding primary schools are at capacity as it is without the	As above.

	proposal to absorb the children who would be attending Churchstoke Primary School.	
8.3.3	Are there places even available in other schools within the wider area to facilitate pupils from the Churchstoke area?	As above.
8.3.4	It will put such a strain for surrounding schools if Churchstoke were to close.	As above.
8.3.5	Our current children will struggle to fit in the proposed Powys and Shropshire schools let alone the future generations.	As above.
8.3.6	Montgomery and Chirbury both have major housing plans which will soon fill any vacant spaces in those schools.	The Council recognises that there are housing developments in these areas.
8.3.7	Montgomery, Chirbury and Forden all have housing developments of their own in the planning so where will our children go when the children in those communities will have priority?	As above.
8.3.8	Neighbouring villages of Montgomery and Forden and Chirbury also have planning for lots of new homes meaning their schools will be full too.	As above.
8.3.9	Chirbury School cannot take the Churchstoke pupils because they have housing development planned. They will need space for Chirbury people. It's the same in Montgomery school. They have housing development and space only for their pupils. The nearest Shropshire school except Chirbury is Bishops Castle and they are full up and no spare space for pupils.	As above.
8.3.10	I don't think there are any other options the school should not be closed. From what we hear plans to send children to Chirbury, Montgomery or Bishops Castle schools, will not work as most are full or nearly full. What do you do when children can't get places at schools reasonably near to their homes?	As above.

8.3.11	Houses are being built in surrounding villages so there will be less room in other schools to accommodate more children. Other villages don't want our children to attend their schools as then there won't be places for their own children.	As above.
8.3.12	Any families moving into the area will have nowhere to send their children.	As above.
8.3.13	Even providing transport to local Welsh primary schools will not help as these schools have little availability (Montgomery and Kerry, for example).	As above.

8.4 Comments about quality of provision in alternative schools

8.4.1	The quality of teaching in these schools is not greater than what they are receiving now and more children per classroom means they will receive less "teacher-time", which can only harm their academic success. Therefore, I see no logical argument for this past supposed financial benefit to the council, with blatant disregard for the quality of the school experience for the children of the village.	Individual 'teacher time' is not a measure of the quality of provision; it can create an overdependence on adult input.
8.4.2	Do you believe there will be better Pupil/Teacher ratios at the alternative schools?	As above.
8.4.3	Why do you think that a school with more children will help us learn better?	The number of pupils in a school does not, in itself, determine the quality of educational provision.

8.5 Comments about pupils transferring to provision in England

8.5.1	I would most likely choose a school in England because of the reviews at the other Powys school.	Comment noted.
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8.5.2	If the proposal were to go ahead, due to the location of the school on the border between England and Wales, many pupils next best alternative will be a primary school across the border in Shropshire.	Comment noted.
8.5.3	There are not enough spare spaces in neighbouring Montgomery school which would mean that many children in the area would have to receive their primary education across the border in Shropshire where they would no longer be able to access the Welsh curriculum.	Comment noted.
8.5.4	As Churchstoke is so close to the border several parents may end up transferring to an English primary school as this may logistically be a better choice for them, the opportunity to learn Welsh and add to pupils Welsh heritage would be lost.	Comment noted.
8.5.5	Closure would take children out of the county into England - this is not desirable for Welsh children and the Welsh nation	Comment noted.
8.5.6	Being a border school and rural you will be driving children away from Powys! So if you believe our children will get a better education in England then go ahead with your plans.	Comment noted.
8.5.7	If Montgomery is the closest school and it becomes oversubscribed, people may be forced to send their child to an English school.	Comment noted.
8.5.8	The uncertainty and lack of security over restructuring plans for the rest of the area mean that parents are far more likely to choose the secure Shropshire option over the insecure Powys, particularly for younger pupils who may have to undergo the disruption of further transformation plans.	Comment noted.
8.5.9	In your vision you say each child will receive "high quality, inspiring education." However, Powys will have no control over this as many of the children will choose Shropshire over Powys.	Comment noted.

8.5.10	I am appalled that in print schools outside Powys are listed as alternatives. Surely Powys can educate its own residents?	The proposal is to close Churchstoke C.P. School and for pupils to transfer to their nearest school in Powys. This is to ensure that the pupils have the opportunity to access the Curriculum for Wales.
8.5.11	Many of the students here already attend secondary in England. Closure could mean families will opt to send children to the associated primary school in Bishops Castle, this out of Wales entirely	Comment noted.
8.5.12	Many families will choose to send their children to an English school because: Powys will have to supply free transport there as it will be their nearest available school; it avoids the uncertainty of further restructuring in the Powys area; the funding of Shropshire schools is better than it is in Powys; the outlook of the area is towards England and Shropshire, rather than Wales and Powys; there is a lot of ill-feeling and distrust of Powys County Council in the area.	Comment noted.
8.5.13	Without transparency of local plans for schools and simply by not having a school in a border village you will most certainly lose Powys children to Shropshire schools. Churchstoke will lose its Welsh identity.	Comment noted.

8.6 Comments about pupils transferring to denominational provision

8.6.1	Churchstoke is a community school, the nearest Powys school is a church school. Some parents would not want their children to attend a religious school.	There are many Church in Wales primary schools in Powys, and Montgomery C. in W. Primary School is a voluntary controlled school. C. in W. schools provide the same type of education, and are also working towards implementation of the new Curriculum for Wales. Whilst C. in W. schools do have a distinct
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		Christian ethos, they operate within a supportive and inclusive environment.
8.6.2	All of our surrounding Powys schools are CinW schools. Why are Powys County Council restricting choice by closing the only CP school in the vicinity? The Consultation Document identifies neighbouring CP schools that parents could send their children to, but will they provide free transport to these schools?	The schools named in the Consultation Document are those that are closest to Churchstoke. If a parent wished for a non-denominational school for their child(ren), then they have the right to apply for a place at any community primary school. However, free home-to-school transport would only be provided to eligible pupils to their nearest school therefore parents would be responsible for transporting their children that school.
8.6.3	Closure and the proposed transport of pupils to a Church in Wales School in Montgomery would adversely impact the protected characteristic 'religion or belief', for the reason that to transport Churchstoke pupils to a Church in Wales School would be unfair to families who are not of Christian faith and those who choose to be of no faith.	<p>The Council has recognised that the proposal would have an impact on the protected characteristic 'religion or belief' in the draft Equality Impact Assessment. This will be updated to take account of information gathered during consultation.</p> <p>Many pupils that attend Church in Wales schools are non-denominational. All schools have to provide a form of daily collective worship, therefore, pupils attending a Church in Wales school or a non-denominational school would have the opportunity to partake in collective worship.</p>
8.6.4	The preferred school in the consultation document for pupils to move to is Montgomery as the nearest one. This means that children who are not of a Church in Wales background will be pressurised to attend a religious school. The majority of families here have no religious affiliation and should not be in a position to send their children to a school that does.	There is no pressure on families attending a Church in Wales school to be Christian or have any affiliation with the Church. If a parent wished for a non-denominational school for their child(ren), then they have the right to apply for a place at any community primary school. However, free home-to-school transport would only be provided to eligible pupils to

		their nearest school therefore parents would be responsible for transporting their children that school.
8.6.5	Churchstoke is a school without any affiliation to a religious belief. Sending the pupils to a religious school is a serious concern. In many counties, state and school have to be kept separate, to maintain equality and diversity.	As above.
8.6.6	Not all parents want their children to go to a Church school.	As above.
8.6.7	The two closest schools planned for pupil relocation are both church of England/Wales, not all families have the same religion. So they would be forced to travel further to access their educational needs.	As above.
8.6.8	The closest next options being a church in Wales or Church of England school and not a community primary school also does not offer a diverse alternative to the current provision.	As above.
8.6.9	Has there been any consideration of Catholic pupils who may want to attend St Marys in Newtown as an alternative?	Parents can apply for a place for their child(ren) at any school.

8.7 Concern that consultation will be carried out on other schools in the area within a few years

8.7.1	Surrounding Powys schools have not yet been reviewed by the transformation team and Powys' own timetable suggests this will happen within the next five years. This means our children face the prospect that within their primary years of schooling will have all the disruption and uncertainty to face again. Once is too often and has an effect on our children's mental health and well being, to do it twice to children is unacceptable.	The Council has an ambitious Strategy to Transform Education across the county, and all catchment areas will be reviewed during the lifetime of the Strategy. In accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, the planning and development of effective school organisation proposals is crucial to the Welsh Government's goal of transforming education in Wales and providing better educational outcomes. The Council has a duty to manage its schools infrastructure to ensure equity across the whole system and to
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		<p>ensure that learner entitlement and experience is improved.</p> <p>Should Churchstoke C.P. School close, then the Council cannot guarantee that an alternative school that pupils may transfer to won't be subject to a review in future.</p>
8.7.2	<p>Giving the children a chance to continue their education at an alternative Powys school means parents will need to be choosing Montgomery C in W school or next nearest St. Michaels school (Kerry). However, these Powys schools have not yet been reviewed by the transformation team and suggestions indicate this is likely to happen within the next 5 years. This means parents have more uncertainty that their children may have to go through the same process a few years down the line. This is not acceptable and for that reason parents are more likely to choose to send their children to an English school where there is more certainty. The effect this would have on the Welsh language and identity of the village would be devastating.</p>	As above.
8.7.3	<p>Can you guarantee that if my children have to move that they won't have to go through all this again when you start looking at other Powys school I DONT THINK YOU CAN OR WILL!</p>	As above.
8.7.4	<p>Given PCC's current drive to close small rural schools I am also afraid that if my children transfer to another Powys rural school, in the not too distant future, that they would face the prospect of any alternative school that they go to closing too.</p>	As above.
8.7.5	<p>I am worried for my children's mental health and wellbeing as if we move to a Powys school then they will have to go through the same process in their new school within 5 years.</p>	As above.

8.7.6	<p>You have not released any information about your future plans for transformation in all schools in our area, if you are considering a new 'hub' for example, then parents should know so they have an informed choice for the future. Fears are that if they choose another Powys school, they will have to go through this exhausting process of consultation all over again, being moved from pillar to post, going through this process twice is unacceptable. I believe this will result in parents choosing Shropshire alternative schools, which is another concern I will deal with in another point. Therefore, we should not be closing now and at the very least be included in any future consultations for whole areas to have a say instead.</p>	As above.
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8.8 Other comments

8.8.1	<p>If Montgomery was full, which other Powys schools would our pupils have to travel too, and has both the cost and distance to these other schools been factored into considerations? Bearing in mind the pupils farthest from Montgomery will be the last to get a place under Powys admissions arrangements, how long will it take to get for instance from Pentre or Snead to a receiving Powys schools if it is not Montgomery? What would happen if there is room in one year group for a pupil but not in another for their sibling can powers guarantee under their admission arrangements that siblings will be kept together?</p>	<p>Should Churchstoke C.P. School close, Montgomery C. in W. Primary School becomes the nearest Powys school for the majority of pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School. All applications from parents will be treated equally.</p> <p>Where a school is over-subscribed, all applicants will be considered against the oversubscription criteria set out below when allocating school places. This is with the exception of children looked after, children previously looked after, or children with a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or a local authority maintained individual development plan (IDP), will be given priority before these criteria are considered.</p>
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		<p>The following criteria are applied, in order of priority when allocating primary school places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The presence of an elder sibling residing at the same household, with the household being the nearest primary school, when the pupil commences at the school. To qualify, primary siblings must be in Reception to Year 6 and, in the case of an All-Through school, secondary siblings must be in Years 7 – 13. b. The primary school is closest to the location of the home. c. Any medical and social needs relating to the individual child where attendance at particular school is essential. Evidence will be required to accompany the application form. d. The presence of an elder sibling residing at the same household, with the household NOT being the nearest primary school, when the pupil commences at the school. To qualify, primary siblings must be in Reception to Year 6 and in the case of an All-Through school, secondary siblings must be in Years 7 – 13 e. The location of the home in relation to the school and alternative schools if the primary school applied for is not the one which is closest to the home location.
8.8.2	Our children are the further away from the schools so will be at the bottom of the pile for admissions and siblings, friends and family will be split up and fighting for places.	As above.

8.8.3	Not only are these other neighbouring schools who will have to absorb the pupils schools near to their maximum class sizes they are already struggling to cope with traffic and drop off and pick up times.	<p>The current class structure in Montgomery C. in W. Primary School is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception: 14 pupils • Year 1/2 class: 23 pupils • Year 3/4 class: 28 pupils • Y5/6 class: 24 pupils
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9. COMMENTS ABOUT IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

9.1 General concern about impact on the community/village

9.1.1	Losing the school will have a negative impact on the community	The Council has recognised in both the Consultation Document and draft Community Impact Assessment, that there would be a detrimental impact on the community should Churchstoke C.P. School close. The Community Impact Assessment will be updated to include information gathered during consultation.
9.1.2	It will be a very sad day for Churchstoke if this proposal goes ahead.	As above.
9.1.3	The school is part of the community and should not close.	As above.
9.1.4	To lose the school in Churchstoke would be just so sad, for the people of Churchstoke and surrounding communities	As above.
9.1.5	Churchstoke school is vital to the community of Churchstoke as well as neighbouring villages.	As above.
9.1.6	Closing the school will destroy this community.	As above.
9.1.7	Closing the school will kill the community.	As above.

9.1.8	It would be a terrible loss to the Community.	As above.
9.1.9	Closing the school would hugely inhibit the community spirit in the village.	As above.
9.1.10	Keep Churchstoke CP School open to keep the community thriving. It is the heart of the village in the community. Without the school, the village will slowly be destroyed.	As above.
9.1.11	I disagree with plans to close this school. I think it will take the soul out of the community.	As above.
9.1.12	The school is essential to the continued success of Churchstoke as a village.	As above.
9.1.13	Closing the school would be bad for the village and the local school children.	As above.
9.1.14	There will only be adverse effects from shutting this school. This will have a very negative effect on this happy and flourishing village.	As above.
9.1.15	Closing local amenities always has an adverse effect on the community.	As above.
9.1.16	Closing such a lovely hardworking school would be devastating for the community and also for Wales.	As above.
9.1.17	I would ask you reconsider please and keep the lifeblood of this village OPEN	As above.
9.1.18	I urge the council to reconsider their decision and ensure that the school remains open for the sake of the children already attending and for the sake of the viability of the whole village.	As above.
9.1.19	The presence of a school is an essential component of the community, and am sure its presence is part of the reason why the village has continues to thrive.	As above.

9.1.20	The school is essential to the survival of the village.	As above.
9.1.21	Rural schools appear expensive and an “easy?” financial gain achieved if closed. Primaries are involved in the real life of the local community and fully develop the children in belonging to the community.	As above.
9.1.22	Closing the school will have major ramifications through the village, contact between children and the care home, closure of village hall and preschool class, fewer jobs, more children going to schools in England, no Welsh Language, no youth activities.	As above.
9.1.23	If the school closes, it will affect the community massively such as the village hall, care home, church, as well as others, as the school works closely with these.	As above.
9.1.24	The detrimental knock-on effect would be felt by the local community for years to come. If I were a part of the local council, I wouldn't want the responsibility of mental health issues, a drop in approach to learning or prolonged sadness and suffering that the children, families and staff would inevitably experience to be my responsibility.	As above.
9.1.25	Open your eyes to the bigger picture and how this decision will impact not only our children's education and health but also the negative impact on the health and well being of all residents in the community of Churchstoke.	As above.
9.1.26	Closure of the school will have a negative impact on the social dynamics of the village.	As above.
9.1.27	I think this proposal is a backward step for Churchstoke because of the community feeling in the village, the growing attendance in school, a thriving playgroup section to provide pupils for the future, local shops, businesses, construction of affordable housing	As above.

	etc, everything in place to provide a friendly, local, caring environment for the children.	
9.1.28	To remove the school would mean that during the day, life would drain out of the village. Instead of the sound of our children going to and from school and at play there would be nothing! Apart from the sound of extra road traffic taking these children who knows where!	As above.

9.2 The school is the heart of the community

9.2.1	The school is the heart of the community.	The Council recognises the central role that Churchstoke C. in W. Primary has in the community. A draft Community Impact Assessment has been published which will be updated to take account of information gathered during consultation.
9.2.2	You will be taking away the heart of the community.	As above.
9.2.3	The heart of the village will be lost if the school is closed.	As above.
9.2.4	It is the heart of the village and community. Without the school the village will slowly be destroyed.	As above.
9.2.5	The school is the heart of the community and I urge you to keep this much needed facility open.	As above.
9.2.6	It's the heart of the ever expanding village.	As above.
9.2.7	Closing the school would tear the heart out of the community as it would effect so many other thing dreadfully!	As above.
9.2.8	To remove the school, and the pre-school would result in a village without a heart. The school provides so much more than a place of education; it provides community cohesion.	As above.

9.2.9	Churchstoke is a strong thriving community that would be torn apart by the closure of its school, it is the heart of our family and should not be closed	As above.
9.2.10	If you take a school out of a community you take the heart out of the community, you also lose the feeling of community.	As above.
9.2.11	A village school is the very heart of a community and small children need to feel that they are part of that community from a very early age.	As above.
9.2.12	Local village schools are the hub of the community, children make friends with their neighbours, parents get to know the people who live in the village.	As above.
9.2.13	The community needs to keep their village school. It is the heart of the village where many children can walk to and from.	As above.
9.2.14	Closing Churchstoke School will ruin the heart of the village community by sending children in 4 different directions.	As above.
9.2.15	Why do you think you have the right to rip the heart out of the community?	As above.
9.2.16	Churchstoke school is the hub of a great community and it will be devastating if the school goes.	As above.
9.2.17	The school and the village hall are the nucleus of Churchstoke – it must be saved.	As above.
9.2.18	Our primary school is at the heart of our local community. COVID and the past 12 months' pandemic restrictions have proven how vital our local community is. The school is a part of the community bringing together young and old, families and friends.	As above.

9.3 Closure of the school would mean that the community would lead to a loss of community cohesion

9.3.1	The school brings the community together	The Council has recognised in both the Consultation Document and draft Community Impact Assessment, that there would be a detrimental impact on the community should Churchstoke C.P. School close. The Community Impact Assessment will be updated to include information gathered during consultation.
9.3.2	The school brings young and old together through many events throughout the year	As above.
9.3.3	The school plays an important role in cohesion, social goods and community involvement / well-being – these goods and services should be central to decision-making	As above.
9.3.4	If the school closes, the community will become fractured.	As above.
9.3.5	This is a close knit community that will be torn apart.	As above.
9.3.6	You will rip apart the community, split friends and families and put all these children on expensive polluting buses.	As above.
9.3.7	The pupils will be split between at least four new schools ripping the community apart .	As above.
9.3.8	Pupils would be split between several schools both in England and Wales, fragmenting the community.	As above.
9.3.9	If local children were unable to go to Churchstoke C.P. school and were split between other schools this would divide the community.	As above.
9.3.10	Splitting up the children in the community by sending them to at least 4 new schools would further affect the community negatively and ensure the children lost any sense of belonging, pride etc. in the village. There are enough studies that show the impact this could have on future societal problems in the village.	As above.

9.3.11	As you can't guarantee capacity at the receiving schools a scatter gun approach will completely destroy the community within and outside of the school!	As above.
9.3.12	Closing the school is the start of the rot setting in the village. Community is created by shared experiences. With families dispersed and children not growing up together, I fear what will become of the village.	As above.
9.3.13	The community in Churchstoke will be forcibly pushed apart by a decision to close the school.	As above.
9.3.14	Churchstoke is a fragmented village, divided by a very busy main road, widely spread out and with little communal space - as such a sense of community is harder to achieve. The school is a focus for community and provides the village hall for community clubs.	As above.
9.3.15	By removing the school you are removing heritage links, damaging culture and community tradition, taking away so many events and opportunities from the school and the pupils to engage within their local area and with different age groups in their home village.	As above.
9.3.16	We should be keeping communities together, not ripping them apart especially at the current time when we have a coronavirus pandemic. The less travel, the better for everyone if we are all to remain safe and well, especially children.	As above.

9.4 Concern about the impact on local businesses / the local economy

9.4.1	The retail outlets in the village would also suffer.	The Council has recognised in both the Consultation Document and draft Community Impact Assessment, that there would be a detrimental impact on the community should Churchstoke C.P. School close.
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		The Community Impact Assessment will be updated to include information gathered during consultation.
9.4.2	Local businesses would find it difficult to recruit and retain staff without the wraparound care offered by the school, including breakfasts club and after school club.	As above.
9.4.3	Local businesses will find it difficult to recruit and retain staff without the care facilities offered by the school, which includes Breakfast Club and After School clubs.	As above.
9.4.4	Without the breakfast and afterschool clubs it will be difficult for our working parents to keep our large village businesses supplied with staff to which we have 3 – St Nicolas House, Coop and Montgomeryshire Water Plant. It would put unnecessary strain on them in an area that is hard to recruit at the best of times.	As above.
9.4.5	Village support is important to local businesses. It makes staffing issues easier having a school close by that they could easily collect their children and a school brings families into an area, which is what businesses rely on.	As above.
9.4.6	I am concerned that our diverse village would attract an older generation meaning less opportunity for our local businesses to generate staff.	As above.
9.4.7	Tuffins now Coop, less footfall, jobs in Churchstoke, Sunday market, reduced to virtually nothing.	As above.
9.4.8	Our Churchstoke businesses rely on the support network of the school to be able to employ their staff – Coop and Montgomeryshire Waters employ 120 employees alone without including St Nicholas House which is extremely reliant on the school support network. It will be a retirement village with no hope for the local businesses to secure workforce.	As above.

9.4.9	Without a school in the village, Churchstoke becomes a less attractive place for families to live. As a rural business which already has a small local population this is a worrying prospect as the majority of our cafe customers are local residents and thus will have a noticeable negative impact on our much needed day to day income. The closure also makes recruiting and retaining staff problematic, resulting in reducing childcare access for staff with children.	As above.
9.4.10	It would impact on the availability of staff to St Nicholas House.	As above.
9.4.11	Residents of St Nicholas House like to see children playing, going to and from school etc.	As above.
9.4.12	You would impact on the positive benefits experienced by residents of St Nicholas House of the relationship which currently exists between the home and the school.	As above.
9.4.13	As a local business, such a closure will have a potentially very negative impact on us and the immediate local economy.	As above.
9.4.14	As a business, We Do Tennis would also be affected, and we engage the services of a young local tennis coach from Churchstoke. The negative impact of a school closure could also impact his ability to work in the village.	As above.
9.4.15	Pubs, the shop and businesses all benefit from a school being in the village. If the school closes the pubs etc are likely to be affected also, as who will want to move here if they cannot walk their children to school as many families do not benefit from a car.	As above.
9.4.16	People within the surrounding area, tradesmen, local businesses with all be impacted by this decision. Local businesses are accessible to local people without a school there is a huge risk of people relocating and the potential members wanting to move to	As above.

	the area could be hugely discouraged with no access to a local school.	
9.4.17	We have just started a business here too and closing the school will impact on our business as people will not want to move into a village without a school. This will again impact our children as it will prevent our business from building and make it harder for us to provide for our children.	As above.
9.4.18	The lack of a school would be a significant factor against further growth and will depress the local economy.	As above.
9.4.19	There is also an impact on the economy and environment. Business and planners will not find the village attractive without a school to support families who may move to the area.	As above.
9.4.20	Closure of the school will mean that more people will shop elsewhere.	As above.
9.4.21	Situated at the junction of two main roads, with good facilities, land, and easy access to Newtown, Welshpool and the towns of Shropshire, Churchstoke is ripe for further development over the coming years. The lack of a school would be a significant factor against further growth and will depress the local economy.	As above.

9.5 Concern about the impact on the community centre

9.5.1	Members of the committee of CSRA are the trustees for and manage Churchstoke Community Hall on behalf of the local community. The impact assessment on the proposed closure, produced by Powys County Council, states at several points that, in the event of closure, 'community facilities' would continue to be provided at the Community Hall. However, the impact assessment fails totally to acknowledge that the hall is managed as a joint use	The Council has recognised in both the Consultation Document and draft Community Impact Assessment, that there would be a detrimental impact on the community should Churchstoke C.P. School close. The Community Impact Assessment will be updated to include information gathered during consultation.
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	<p>facility between the school and CSRA, and that the school is a regular user of the hall. The Community Hall is designed as both a meeting space and a sports facility. It has been described by a professional sports teacher as providing the children of Churchstoke School with 'better facilities than any other primary school in the area.' The proposal to close the school will deny these facilities to the pupils. A significant element of CSRA's annual income derives from the joint use agreement with PCC, and loss of this income would put the future of the Community Hall in jeopardy. Therefore, closure of the school, and the consequent loss of income to CSRA, will threaten the provision of the hall facilities to the entire local community. Further, loss of the Community Hall potentially would threaten the loss of the adjoining community recreation land, including the football field. CSRA and the school have a close working relationship, including in the employment of staff to clean and caretake the Community Hall. The proposed closure puts these jobs under threat.</p>	<p>Should Churchstoke C.P. School close, it would be the responsibility of the Community Centre's Management Committee to ensure its viability.</p>
9.5.2	<p>A significant element of CSRA's annual income derives from the joint use agreement with PCC, and loss of this income would put the future of the Community Hall in jeopardy. Therefore, closure of the school, and the consequent loss of income to CSRA, will threaten the provision of the hall facilities to the entire local community. Further, loss of the Community Hall potentially would threaten the loss of the adjoining community recreation land, including the football field.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
9.5.3	<p>There has been a huge effort from a new committee to make the community hall successful for the residents of Churchstoke and beyond. If the primary school, that is situated next to the community hall, is forced to close then it will be detrimental to the village hall, the local football club, the children's groups, the over 60's groups, and all other possible clubs and events that are</p>	<p>As above.</p>

	being proposed to start at the hall as soon as Covid restrictions are lifted.	
9.5.4	What would happen to the community hall?	As above.
9.5.5	Concern that the community hall would close.	As above.
9.5.6	Concern about the impact on the village hall.	As above.
9.5.7	Concern that the village would lose the community hall and tennis courts.	As above.
9.5.8	Churchstoke needs the village hall to remain.	As above.
9.5.9	I fear should the school close the village hall which was built with money raised mainly by the community will also close and the site would be given over to further development.	As above.
9.5.10	Do they know what effect the closure of the hall would have on the local community?	As above.
9.5.11	Likely loss of the village hall and all the activities that supports.	As above.
9.5.12	The village hall is also on the same site and is used a great deal by the school.	As above.
9.5.13	The school is the main user of the community hall (sports hall). It was built as a joint-use facility.	As above.
9.5.14	And together with all this we will lose our village hall which relies on school income and therefore lose our important community clubs.	As above.
9.5.15	The community hall will close as it will no longer be able to survive financially without the income it gets from the school.	As above.
9.5.16	The hall would have to close as without the contribution from the school it would not be viable.	As above.

9.5.17	The adjacent community hall will inevitably close as the school is a significant user of the facility. This will then impact the wider community and take away a valued resource.	As above.
9.5.18	Concern about possible loss of the village hall which is reliant on school income and therefore loss of community clubs.	As above.
9.5.19	What about the Village Hall which received income from the school for using it for activities? The community will in that case lose the village hall as well.	As above.
9.5.20	The village hall will probably close because I know how it depends on Friends of School events for income.	As above.
9.5.21	The school is the hub of our village and funds the community centre so without the school we would lose this which the villagers worked so hard to fund when we first had it built.	As above.
9.5.22	Do they know how much the school contribute to the village hall?	As above.
9.5.23	When deprived of the school payment for use, and with cuts in funding from PCC, how do you think the Community Hall will make up the shortfall in order to survive?	As above.
9.5.24	Would the Council be prepared to grant fund the hall?	As above.
9.5.25	Do the local authority appreciate how tight the finances of the Recreation Association are?	As above.
9.5.26	There is also the knock on effect. Concerning the Community hall, will this and the playing field playing areas and football club also closed?	As above.
9.5.27	Where will all the local organisations go to meet if the village hall closes?	As above.
9.5.28	In the case of Churchstoke school, we would lose our village hall. Where then to hold events & village clubs?	As above.

9.5.29	Our rural school is at the heart of our community and a great deal of village life is reliant on it, including the support that the school gives to the village hall that will potentially be lost as they will have lost a large proportion of income meaning no central location for our local clubs including guides, brownies, football etc.	As above.
9.5.30	There is a need to review the impact that closure of the school would have on local community clubs with the closure of the village hall.	As above.
9.5.31	We would lose all our sports and social clubs from the village which keeps us functioning as a close-knit community as their base is the community centre.	As above.
9.5.32	The community hall is unlikely to survive without the community school. This would be bad for groups such as brownies and rainbows, snooker, after funeral teas, weddings and other parties and local community events also the football pitch requires the community hall.	As above.
9.5.33	If the school were to close, I believe the village hall would also close and a huge loss to the communities. So many groups/events which help to keep a sense of community but crucially provide a hub for the older, potentially isolated members of the community.	As above.
9.5.34	Community hall & all clubs that use it will then close; including football club & playing field & play areas. A great number of people enjoy the playing field (as do the dogs!)	As above.
9.5.35	The football team relies on the village hall for use of the changing rooms and showers and the kitchen to provide refreshments at home games. Without the village hall the football team would lose these facilities and no longer be able to run.	As above.

9.5.36	We are hoping to start a dance class in the village hall once life returns to normal. No chance if the school goes as so does the village hall.	As above.
9.5.37	I don't foresee the hall as viable without the school using it, which would sacrifice our community space and the youth groups which use it such as the thriving Rainbows, Brownies and Guides Units which bring children from a wide area together and which my daughters have and still enjoy. The football club would also be directly affected as they need to have the use of changing and shower facilities within the community hall. The local tennis club runs coaching sessions with strong links to the school too.	As above.
9.5.38	The school closure would cause social and economic cost to people across the community. Why expand the village and then take away the amenities as possibly the village hall that relies on the usage of the school will also close making Churchstoke an expanding village with no school or village hall which are both hubs of village life.	As above.

9.6 Concern about the impact on other services

9.6.1	Unfortunately, once you lose a school, you start to lose other services	The Council has recognised in both the Consultation Document and draft Community Impact Assessment, that there would be a detrimental impact on the community should Churchstoke C.P. School close. The Community Impact Assessment will be updated to include information gathered during consultation.
9.6.2	Closing Churchstoke School would rip the heart out of the community and I believe Churchstoke would soon become a ghost town.	As above.

9.6.3	Concern about the long-term effects on the village and the other services in the area, we don't want any more "Ghost Towns" which is what happens when you loose a school.	As above.
9.6.4	The removal of vital services from rural areas over the last decade is heart-breaking, and it is fairly obvious from the support the school has received recently, not only from within the village but from surrounding areas and others that are feeling the same isolation and lack of care for rurality and their reliance on services, that closing the school will be a devastating blow for the local economy.	As above.
9.6.5	The Doctor's has gone, the village will shrink further.	As above.
9.6.6	Other services, such as transport, would no doubt diminish to as demand decreased (or is that all part of the intention? If there are only a few people left, perhaps the local authority feels it does not matter if those few lack decent services?)	As above.

9.7 Concern about the impact on other community groups / activities

9.7.1	The school closure will impact the local care home and the local church, as the school is deeply integrated within the wider community.	The Council has recognised in both the Consultation Document and draft Community Impact Assessment, that there would be a detrimental impact on the community should Churchstoke C.P. School close. The Community Impact Assessment will be updated to include information gathered during consultation.
9.7.2	There would be a detrimental impact on the local old people's home.	As above.
9.7.3	The Tennis Club relies on children from the school in order for it to continue as there are a number of children from the school	As above.

	receiving tennis coaching and hopefully these children and their parents will help the club to have a future.	
9.7.4	The school is situated in a position next to the tennis courts and for obvious reasons is a source of participation for the tennis club with local children and families seeing the tennis courts and joining the club.	As above.
9.7.5	As a member of Churchstoke tennis club I would hope the school remains open as we strongly need the pupils from the school to survive. At the moment we have a number of children from the school receiving tennis lessons and hopefully this will continue into the future.	As above.
9.7.6	Closing the school would be a negative step for the area and our tennis club would be affected. The tennis club was down to 8 members and close to closing. A new coaching programme for juniors was set up in 2019 (mainly local children from Churchstoke School) and the club has began to prosper again. We have generated income from membership to have the courts painted and a local person from Churchstoke has qualified to become a tennis coach. I fear the school closing will destroy this improvement to date and close the tennis club as a secondary affect.	As above.
9.7.7	The football clubs thrives on a succession of new members, all of whom have a strong community spirit and identity and who work so well together in a friendly and thriving village.	As above.
9.7.8	The WI enjoy working closely with staff, parents and children during community events	As above.
9.7.9	Over the years we have seen in Girlguiding the impact on communities of school closures. Towns and villages with schools, such as Berriew and Abermule, are able to sustain Girlguiding	As above.

	units (If not all four sections, at least some of them). But villages without schools, such as Llandyssil, seem to lose all their Girlguiding units, with girls joining units in nearby towns or villages instead. This movement is in no small way connected with the loss of the school; the girls make friends further afield and then want to be with them for extra-curricular activities too. This then impacts further on the sense of loss of community, with girls and parents no longer feeling so much a part of their very local area. If Churchstoke school closes I am very concerned that we will lose our Girlguiding units too. The effect of any closure will ripple outwards in so many different ways.	
9.7.10	Losing the school would also be a loss for the community with the events a school brings such as fetes, plays, concerts and sports days.	As above.
9.7.11	Leisure activities in the area rely on children and their parents will stop when school closes the heart of the community goes with it.	As above.
9.7.12	Events and activities associated with the school will cease.	As above.
9.7.13	There would be a negative impact on all the local groups attached to the school building and grounds.	As above.
9.7.14	Closing the school would greatly affect the happiness of residents and staff at St Nicholas House.	As above.
9.7.15	Residents at St Nicholas Care Homes have built a relationship with the school and its pupils, this would be lost and have a negative impact on their well-being	As above.
9.7.16	Children visit the local care home which has a positive effect on residents welfare. If the school closes this would be lost.	As above.

9.8 People would no longer want to live in Churchstoke

9.8.1	Closing the school means that people will move elsewhere.	The Council has recognised in both the Consultation Document and draft Community Impact Assessment, that there would be a detrimental impact on the community should Churchstoke C.P. School close. The Community Impact Assessment will be updated to include information gathered during consultation.
9.8.2	Closing the school, and its associated playgroup, will actively discourage families from relocating to the village.	As above.
9.8.3	Who will want to move to the area with a young family if there is not a local school?	As above.
9.8.4	The village is expanding with new housing therefore it is vital school is retained in order for the village to attract young families.	As above.
9.8.5	What family will think of buying a house in a village where there is no school? This has a danger of leaving a dormitory where people commute to work and only returned to the village of to sleep.	As above.
9.8.6	People working in the village will leave jobs to new areas near new schools.	As above.
9.8.7	Removing this would force families to consider having to relocate away from the village to live closer to prospective schools - also taking investment and opportunities away from the village.	As above.
9.8.8	Not only that but it will mean a reduction in new young families moving into the village. Surely rural areas like this should be looking to attract younger people to move in, not continuing the trend of driving them out to cities?	As above.
9.8.9	If the school closes I believe many families will leave to be closer to any schools that may have room for the increasing number of	As above.

	children in our village. This would condemn us to being an elderly community instead of the thriving village it is at present.	
9.8.10	Business and planners will not find the village attractive without a school to support families who may move to the area.	As above.
9.8.11	The school closing would mean it would be unviable for me to purchase a house in this community. How many other families must feel the same way.	As above.
9.8.12	Closure of the school could draw away young families from the village.	As above.
9.8.13	It will drive young families out of the area who require access to important childcare facilities such as the 3+ setting, and with it many of the area's vital key workers who are parents to the children of the school will be forced to move away to areas with better service provisions for their childcare needs.	As above.
9.8.14	Without the school as an attraction, the village may not be even able to entice young families to move into the area.	As above.
9.8.15	Without the school, the attractions of living in Churchstoke that would greatly diminish for young families and the village would no doubt turn into yet another inhabited predominantly by retired people, doomed to a slow decline as they died off.	As above.
9.8.16	If there were no school in Churchstoke it would have a detrimental effect on the community: fewer people would want to move here and those who live here would feel more isolated as there would be no place for young families to gather, play and grow. These are the things that build community.	As above.
9.8.17	Young people won't move to the area or stay in the area and raise their own family if school options are few and far between. Closing	As above.

	the school would have a long-term effect on the age of the population in the village.	
9.8.18	No one would want to move to Churchstoke without the school being there so what is the point of building the houses.	As above.
9.8.19	People move to the area because there is a school in walking distance.	As above.
9.8.20	Closing the school would negatively impact on house values in the local community.	As above.
9.8.21	If the school were to be shut down then it would make Churchstoke a less attractive place to live for families and may reduce the cost of housing.	As above.
9.8.22	You will make our community less desirable and drive down house prices.	As above.
9.8.23	The only thing you will achieve will be to destroy a growing Welsh village, as without it the village will be less attractive place for young families, families with children to live. Fewer families will move into the village reducing the value of houses and affecting all local businesses.	As above.
9.8.24	Churchstoke is classified as a large village under LDP and prioritised for housing and economic development. Without a school the village will be less attractive for families to live. There is already an ageing population.	As above.
9.8.25	Closure will impact on all of the above and the whole community & growth of the village & village life. House prices could be affected. Families / people will be forced to move away.	As above.
9.8.26	This decision will irreversibly damage the fabric of this long-standing community, make the village less desirable to young	As above.

	families and drive away potential investment and local economic growth.	
9.8.27	Without our school there is a danger that Churchstoke will just become a retirement village, which is not good for anyone's mental wellbeing.	As above.
9.8.28	The village will face an aging population as people only seek to move to the countryside in retirement, yet there will be a lack of key workers in care homes. This is a long-term issue which we are already seeing evidence of and as a young person who will want to move back to their local community, it is disappointing that the Senedd does not seem to consider the viewpoint of rural communities, or of communities who live on the border who seek to access national resources such as the Welsh curriculum.	As above.
9.8.29	We struggle to recruit local people in this area and this is because we don't encourage our young adults to the area – why would a young family move into a village with no playgroup and school providing breakfast and after school club for support to help them work.	As above.

9.9 Comments about previous generations of families that have attended the school

9.9.1	Churchstoke has had a school for the community for over 200 years, please do not allow this heritage to be lost forever.	The Council notes these comments.
9.9.2	I was a pupil at the school in the 1940's, it has been at the centre of village life before then and ever since.	As above.
9.9.3	We are a 5 generation family attending Churchstoke school so feelings run very deep.	As above.

9.9.4	Having three generations of the family receiving education through school here in Churchstoke, I think it would be a let down for the community, should the present school close.	As above.
9.9.5	Churchstoke is also made up of families that have grown up in the village themselves, where their parents went to school, where they went to school and now where they want their children to go.	As above.

9.10 Queries about what would happen to the school building / grounds

9.10.1	What will happen to the school site?	Should Churchstoke C.P. School be closed, the Council's Corporate Asset Policy would be followed. This would include consideration of a community asset transfer or a sale on the open market via different methods. The Council's policy is to dispose of any surplus assets.
9.10.2	What are your plans for the building and grounds of Churchstoke School should closing it be successful?	As above.
9.10.3	What will the Council do to the school building? Sell it? For what purpose? What will happen to the field alongside the school currently used by Churchstoke Football Club?	As above.
9.10.4	What are your plans for our site? What plans do you have to replace the wildlife, environmental and amenity value of the site?	As above.
9.10.5	And what will happen to the building and the land maybe Powys council are thinking they may use the land to build more houses? Then where will the children from those houses go to school.	As above.
9.10.6	If you close the school you will use the land to build houses, more family homes with no school for the children to go to.	As above.

9.10.7	Is there a greedy company wanting to build more properties instead of keeping this school open?	As above.
9.10.8	What will happen to the lovely school and pre school that we have in Churchstoke will they sell the land to building companies who will build more house for families and then where will the children go to school?	As above.
9.10.9	A derelict school in the village is also not desirable for the local residents and may attract unwanted vandalism.	As above.
9.10.10	Is the school site part of a critical path and that certain things must happen before other things can happen in the area? Is the sale of the school site part of that critical path to possibly do something in the area?	As above. The school site is not part of any 'critical path'.

9.11 Comments about previous school closures

9.11.1	As someone who lives locally, I have already seen the impact shutting a school down has on a village-just take Sarn for example. Which since the school has closed has slowly lost other amenities such as a post office and pub. The school is the very heart of rural life, a place where people come together and thrive and Churchstoke as a community will undoubtedly suffer if this proposal does go ahead.	The Council notes these comments.
9.11.2	Look what happened to Sarn. Think very carefully before you take this action.	As above.
9.11.3	Having been through school closure with my child who attended Hope School, I know first hand how it can effect a community and the children.	As above.

9.11.4	Having previously worked in Shropshire I have experienced at first hand the significant disruption and upset caused when these ill-conceived closures take place.	As above.
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9.12 Other comments

9.12.1	Closure would also be likely to reduce health and care advice in the community by losing school staff trained to provide advice on a wide range of council and national services from the local area.	Comment noted.
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10. TRAVEL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The proposal would lead to additional travel

10.1.1	It would be unfair for young children to have to travel a long way to school.	<p>The Council has recognised that, should Churchstoke C.P. School close, then there would be additional travel required for all pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School to their nearest alternative school in Powys.</p> <p>The current average travel distance for pupils attending Churchstoke C.P. School in September 2021 is 1.6 miles, with the maximum travel distance being 8 miles. If there is no school in Churchstoke and pupils travel to their nearest alternative schools in Powys, the average distance travelled would increase to 7.9 miles and the further distance would be 16.2 miles.</p>
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		<p>If pupils transferred to their nearest alternative school (i.e. in Shropshire or Powys) then the average travel distance would increase to 5.2 miles, with the maximum travel distance remaining at 8 miles.</p> <p>The Council does not consider these travel distances to be excessive.</p> <p>Free home-to-school transport would be provided for eligible pupils to their nearest alternative school in Powys. However, if a parent chose a school in England for their child(ren), and this was their nearest school, then the Council would provide free home-to-school transport to this school.</p>
10.1.2	Children will have to travel a fair distance just to go to school everyday.	As above.
10.1.3	Children under 5 need to stop in their local school, not have to travel miles to school.	Comment noted.
10.1.4	The thought of all the kids having to be bused off every morning and afternoon to and from school is ridiculous.	Comment noted.
10.1.5	Very young children would have to be transported to and from other schools.	Comment noted.
10.1.6	Children already have to travel far enough when they are 11 years old, they shouldn't have to when they are 3.	Comment noted.
10.1.7	It's not acceptable that children as young as four years should have to travel by bus to neighbouring schools when they have a perfect school where they live	Comment noted.

10.1.8	The additional travel will normalise a long commute for young children. This increases the length of their day and decreases valuable time they spend with their family.	Comment noted.
10.1.9	Busing children around areas is not good for them.	Comment noted.
10.1.10	Sitting on a bus going to and from school has a negative effect on the pupils' well-being.	Comment noted.
10.1.11	The alternative schools are miles away.	See 10.1.1.
10.1.12	It's unacceptable for the children of Churchstoke to have to travel to neighbouring villages for their education.	Comment noted.
10.1.13	More people will require transport or will need to use their own to travel at least 8 MILES to the nearest school. 16 miles per day x number of pupils x number of school days	See 10.1.1.
10.1.14	My child that can currently walk to school will need to travel up to 20 minutes in the car to the nearest school I would be happy for them to attend in Wales.	See 10.1.1
10.1.15	It's not fair for children as young as 4 to have to travel on school buses for up to 45 minutes each way (as mentioned in your document to close Churchstoke C.P. School).	See 10.1.1.
10.1.16	I do not see the logic in developing a 'village' and then taking away the school so that children have to be transported to a school some miles away either in private transport or council-funded transport.	Comment noted.

10.2 Comments about additional transport costs

10.2.1	The transport alone for the predicted pupil numbers (which are rising rapidly) is going to be extortionate. This money could be used to update the school facilities.	Estimated additional transport costs of £19,500 for current pupils have been included within the estimated annual savings of approximately £50,000.
10.2.2	The cost of transporting the children to the proposed nearest schools will be very expensive	As above.
10.2.3	To bus children to schools outside our area, this will cost.	The proposal is for Churchstoke C.P School and for pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative school in Powys. However, parents can apply for a place for their child(ren) at any school. If a parent chooses their nearest school and it is located in England, the Council would provide free home-to school transport. The original transport calculation in the Consultation Document was based on the proposal outlined above. However, a re-calculation has been carried out based on pupils transferring to Chirbury as their nearest school in England. The additional transport costs would range between approximately £32,000 and £44,000 instead of the £19,500 quoted above.
10.2.4	There will be a high cost of transporting children to other schools.	See 10.2.1 and 10.2.3
10.2.5	The cost of travel, the waste of council money to save money doesn't make sense to me.	See 10.2.1 and 10.2.3
10.2.6	If the school closes the cost of transportation to other schools will be astronomical.	See 10.2.1 and 10.2.3
10.2.7	Having to provide transport to other schools and having to provide staff on the transport to supervise the children would surely going to cost more in the long run as they will be more children with all the houses being built.	See 10.2.1 and 10.2.3
10.2.8	I believe that the travel costs will be high and outweigh the savings of the school closure.	See 10.2.1 and 10.2.3

10.2.9	Are the council aware of all the extra transport costs this will entail?	See 10.2.1 and 10.2.3
10.2.10	Has the extra cost to Powys County Council for providing transport for the children to alternative schools been properly and professionally calculated and audited?	Estimated costs and savings are undertaken by appropriately qualified and experienced staff and based on the best information available at the time they are calculated and are subject to change. The calculations are reviewed by a range of officers and sensitivity analysis is also carried out.
10.2.11	As more pupils would have to travel by bus, should Churchstoke primary school close, this would increase the school transportation costs to the local authority. It has been highlighted to me that it is felt the increased costs have been underestimated in the consultation documentation.	See 10.2.1 and 10.2.3
10.2.12	Given the increasing size of the village and the exorbitant cost Councils are charged by transport companies, should the numbers of new families increase beyond your predications, the cost of transport will increase too.	See 10.2.1 and 10.2.3
10.2.13	Does not include additional pupils in the future from the housing developments.	Comment noted.
10.2.14	Are the Local Authority aware of the number of children that they will have to provide free transport to, and how many schools?	See 10.2.1 and 10.2.3
10.2.15	Cost. From what I can gather the number of children who will have to be transported is not clear. Therefore, it is not known whether this proposal is even cost effective.	See 10.2.1 and 10.2.3
10.2.16	We have been told that the additional transport costs of the proposal will be £19,000 per year based on £100 per day. What is the basis for £100 per day? How many minibuses to how many different schools it is based on each day, and for how many pupils?	This figure is based on the proposal described in the consultation document, transporting 25 pupils to one school within Powys.

10.2.17	<p>With revenue saving being a main reason for closing the school I believe that you have grossly underestimated transport costs if the school were to close (£19,000). Considering that your data in relation to pupils is incorrect, also the fact that pupils will need transporting to as many as 4 different schools. Also Churchstoke school closure would make pupils not currently attending the school eligible for transport to their closest school. On top of this the need for a designated taxi provision for pupils with ALN. The actual figure for transportation costs is at least £76,000!</p>	<p>The drivers for the Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys is equity of educational provision across the authority, to improve learner entitlement and improve best learning outcomes/education, not solely to save money.</p> <p>The pupils not currently attending Churchstoke CP school who would become eligible for transport to their closest school would be accommodated within the estimated costs set out in 10.2.3.</p> <p>Should separate taxi provision be required this would cost approximately £11,000 to £14,000.</p>
10.2.18	<p>I also believe that the amount quoted for transportation has been underestimated. A more realistic figure is £100,000; this would wipe out any projected savings anticipated by the closure of the school.</p>	<p>See 10.2.1, 10.2.3 and 10.2.17.</p>
10.2.19	<p>Figures quoted for the transport of children to schools out of the village are underestimated, and research suggests a figure of £100,000 to be nearer the mark, wiping out any savings that would be made by closing the school.</p>	<p>See 10.2.1, 10.2.3 and 10.2.17.</p>
10.2.20	<p>The plan to bus the current pupils from Churchstoke to the nearest schools in Chirbury and Montgomery must also be properly calculated to include the future increase in pupil roll, as new families have settled in the village because it offers excellent schooling and social facilities. Indeed, these were key promotional factors by the building developers, who have built houses to attract young families. If the school closure is sanctioned, the properly researched figure of around £100,000 is far more likely to be the real cost of transporting the pupils. This</p>	<p>See 10.2.1, 10.2.3 and 10.2.17.</p>

	includes the increased number of future pupils, and those pupils who currently go to other primary schools, who will also be entitled to have their travel paid for as there will no longer be a local school. Powys County Council, I implore you to use accurate data and qualified researchers in your efforts to balance your books!	
10.2.21	Research suggests a figure of a £100,000 approximately to transport the children out of the village for education, which would wipe out any savings	See 10.2.1, 10.2.3 and 10.2.17.
10.2.22	The transport cost that you have estimated will be more like £100,000 because there are more pupils than you have estimated and also with 2 pupils with SEN statements they will need private taxis. Also by closing the school all the children in the village that don't go to Churchstoke for different reasons would then be eligible for transport as the nearest school would then be closed.	See 10.2.1, 10.2.3 and 10.2.17.
10.2.23	The additional transport costs need to be properly and fully costed out. I have been advised by a school transport provider that as a guide a figure of between £10 and £15 per pupil per day is a reasonable estimate of school transport costs. Based on 77 pupils (52 + 25) at £10 per day, transport costs would be £146,300 per annum. This completely wipes out any expected revenue saving through the funding formula of closing Churchstoke CP School and would result in significantly higher costs per annum to the Council than continuing to keep the school open.	See 10.2.1, 10.2.3 and 10.2.17.
10.2.24	The cost to transport all our children to other schools has been massively under-estimated in your proposal. There will be no savings made once you correctly cost this additional transport.	See 10.2.1, 10.2.3 and 10.2.17.

10.2.25	It would make economic sense to keep the school open rather than pay high costs for transporting the children to other schools far away.	See 10.2.1, 10.2.3 and 10.2.17.
10.2.26	What if parents cannot afford the transport costs?	If parents choose their nearest school and live more than 2 miles from it then their child/children would be eligible for free home to school transport.
10.2.27	What will be the cost of transporting these children to other schools? Are parents expected to foot the bill for this also?	See 10.2.26.
10.2.28	Who is going to pay the costs of getting children transported? Many parents cannot afford extra costs.	See 10.2.26.
10.2.29	Transporting our children to other schools will not be cost effective, and probably in a few years free transport will be withdrawn again to save costs...	See 10.2.1, 10.2.3, 10.2.17 and 10.2.26.
10.2.30	By expecting small children to travel on buses to school is both unfair and not as cost effective as you believe. Your estimated costs are not correct and more likely to be £100,000 when fully calculated as you have not considered the additional children who will be requiring transport when you make our closest school England, for our large catchment area and for the different school locations. Seems backward that you feel a cheaper option is to bus children across different schools, across different countries, clearly highlights you have not considered the location of our border school.	See 10.2.1, 10.2.3 and 10.2.17.
10.2.31	Powys CC has also underestimated the transport costs for transporting the pupils who will be in the school in Sept 2022 to their new schools. The assumption seems to be that all pupils will travel to the same school, but they have not accepted the fact that there are at least 3 different nearest available schools which could receive the pupils from different parts of a wide	See 10.2.1, 10.2.3 and 10.2.17.

	<p>Churchstoke catchment. Furthermore, there would be the need for designated taxi provision for some pupils with ALN who could not use normal school transport. CCC understands there are at least 21 children resident in the community who already travel into Shropshire for their primary school education, and, if Churchstoke were to close, Powys County Council policy provides that it would have to provide free transport for them as their current school would become the nearest available school to their home. Thus, Powys CC will need to provide free transport to as many as 73 children to 3 different schools in September 2022, including 2 in Shropshire. CCC questions whether this could be done for the figure quoted in the consultation document (an additional £19,000 above current costs) and believes the real figure would be at least £76,000 extra, not including the ALN costs. The costs involved with transport would therefore wipe out the indicated savings and there would be no revenue savings to the council. CCC believes the opposite is the case, and that the costs will increase as pupil numbers rise.</p>	
10.2.32	<p>No account is taken of the fact that there are 20 children in the village who are currently attending a primary school in Shropshire and have to pay for their own transport. If Churchstoke school closes, then their nearest school is the one they are attending and Powys will then be liable to have to pay for their transport too.</p>	See 10.2.3.
10.2.33	<p>There are the 52 children that we know about who will be in the school as of September 2020. This is set to rise to at least 58 by September 2025 and does not include any from new housing developments. There are another 30 or so children in the village who already go to school out of catchment and if Churchstoke closes PCC will also have to provide free transport for them to</p>	See 10.2.1, 10.2.3 and 10.2.17.

	<p>their current school as it will become the nearest available school. In the east of the catchment the nearest available school is bishop's Castle Primary School, and some families will choose this. Some residents with out of county schooling already go there and Powys would have to provide free transport for them at. For most of the catchment Chirbury CinW Primary School is the nearest available school and many families will choose this. Some residents with out of county schooling already go there and Powys would have to provide free transport for them as well. In the far West of the catchment there is the odd property where St Michael's CinW Primary School is the nearest available school. Powys would have to provide free transport from these properties. There are some families around Bluebell and Bachelde where Montgomery CinW Primary School would be the nearest available school. Powys Would have to provide free transport for them, and for any other pupils from the catchment who want to go there. Once Montgomery is full, they would need to provide transport for any further pupils to the next nearest alternative Powys school.</p>	
10.2.34	<p>Powys have also said that if they closed the school then they would provide free transport for our children to the nearest school. I am aware that Powys have said that this transport would cost 319,000 a year, where in fact the actual transport costs would be closer to 376,000. Powys stated that with closing the school and the transport costs being 319,000 they would be saving money. If the actual costs come up to around 376,000 then there will not be a lot of saving going on!! And the 376,000 doesn't include the cost of paying for pupils requiring a taxi service and ALN pupils.</p>	See 10.2.1, 10.2.3 and 10.2.17.
10.2.35	<p>Consideration has not been taken into account that there are at least 3 different schools to get pupils to from Churchstoke</p>	See 10.2.1, 10.2.3 and 10.2.17.

	<p>catchment; not to mention additional transport (taxis) for children with ALN. There are also at least 21 children currently living in Churchstoke who choose to send their children to Shropshire schools; if Churchstoke were to close this school would automatically become their nearest meaning they would automatically become eligible for free transport. From September 2022 there could be as many as 73 children requiring transport to school from the area, which will completely wipe out the estimated costs of £19,000, looking at a figure closer to £76,000 (this does not include the cost of taxi). No revenue saving to the council whatsoever!</p>	
10.2.36	<p>Transport costs for pupils have been underestimated; they are based on the assumption that all pupils in the school as of September 2022 will travel to the same school.</p>	See 10.2.1, 10.2.3 and 10.2.17.
10.2.37	<p>The breakdown that they provided said the assumption was that it was to one Powys school only and no cross border. That assumption is fatally flawed, and we need to stress that this will just not be the case, and that Powys, under their transport policy, are required to transport some pupils from different areas of the catchment to both Chirbury and Bishop's Castle as these are the nearest alternative schools, as well as to Montgomery and beyond in Powys when Montgomery is full or individual year groups reach their admissions number.)</p>	See 10.2.1, 10.2.3 and 10.2.17.
10.2.38	<p>There are 4 pupils who travel from Churchstoke to Forden and if Montgomery is full, and you have to provide free transport to Forden from Churchstoke, will you include these 4 pupils?</p>	Powys County Council's current Home to School Transport Policy provides for free home to school transport to a pupil's nearest available school where the pupil lives more than 2 miles from that school.
10.2.39	<p>From proposals seen, the extra cost in transporting these children is much higher than anticipated, more than would be saved from not shutting the Churchstoke school. Sending our</p>	See 10.2.1, 10.2.3 and 10.2.17.

	children to English Schools (the closest alternative) means less cost to PCC, unless your going to pay Shropshire to educate our children.	
10.2.40	There could be as many as three buses running out of the village each morning, how is this cost effective?	See 10.2.1, 10.2.3 and 10.2.17.
10.2.41	It will never save money, year on year this transport will cost money or do you hope everyone will go to Shropshire?	See 10.2.1, 10.2.3 and 10.2.17.
10.2.42	Children with special needs would need to be transported separately from the other children at a additional cost to the additional cost of transportation to another school.	See 10.2.17.

10.3 Concern about the impact on the environment

10.3.1	What about the environment?	The Council has recognised in the draft Impact Assessment that there would be an environmental impact from additional travel. This will be updated to include information gathered during consultation.
10.3.2	You will cause extra pollution to our environment.	As above.
10.3.3	The closure of Churchstoke school would lead to increased air pollution due to the increase of density of traffic on the road	As above.
10.3.4	There would be more buses on the road which again increase carbon emissions and increase costs that Powys are aiming to cut.	As above.
10.3.5	If the school were to close people would have to travel to another school, which would increase air pollution.	As above.
10.3.6	The extra pollution this will cause is unacceptable.	As above.
10.3.6	The proposal will increase carbon footprints	As above.

10.3.7	What about the carbon footprint for all this relocation?	As above.
10.3.8	This will add to the carbon emissions for the county which I believe has declared a climate emergency	As above.
10.3.9	Concern about the added pollution to the environment as it increases families carbon foot print.	As above.
10.3.10	Transporting pupils to other schools is a negative impact on the environment.	As above.
10.3.11	Less CO2 emissions – from longer transport miles – Powys CC has a commitment to reducing CO2 emissions and meeting sustainability goals. The measure of local school closure would be counter to that.	As above.
10.3.12	The negative environmental impact of transporting pupils by bus should also be considered, as this goes directly against the Government’s aim to reduce our carbon footprint.	As above.
10.3.13	The environmental impact on the transporting of children to schools in other villages is what should be considered more fully.	As above.
10.3.14	Transportation of children whether it be buses or by car or taxi is going to increase emissions, additional traffic on roads, not economical when we are encouraged and advised to live smarter and greener lives for our future!!	As above.
10.3.15	Have you thought about the consequences it will have with carbon footprint, emissions due to more parents having to travel	As above.
10.3.16	It’s not environmentally friendly running buses miles when services can be on the doorstep.	As above.
10.3.17	Bus travel around the countryside is not very “green” compared to walking a few 100 yards.	As above.

10.3.18	The green issue- children having to be transported elsewhere is not only costly and time consuming, but the diesel fuel buses are environmentally unfriendly.	As above.
10.3.19	Pupils would all have to be taken to school by transport making more carbon monoxide into the air, which everyone is trying to reduce it.	As above.
10.3.20	Should you be encouraging more environmentally damaging transport in these times when there is so much in the press from the Welsh assembly and the UK government about doing what we all can to protect the environment and guard against climate change.	As above.
10.3.21	With climate change we are asked to travel less, this does not seem to apply to you.	As above.
10.3.22	With ever growing arguments regarding climate change, removing the option to reduce traffic and carbon emissions seems very stupid.	As above.
10.3.23	What about the environment? All children would have to be driven to school	As above.
10.3.24	I am really worried about the impact of climate change on my generation. Your proposal to bus all of the children in Churchstoke and its catchment area to other schools when currently they can walk makes me very angry. Why is the impact on the environment not a priority to you? My generation will have to pay for your lack of consideration.	As above.
10.3.25	I feel that if you were to close Churchstoke school, the parents of those children would then have to travel to other near by schools to drop them off, which goes against the councils idea of lowering carbon footprint. Less walking and cycling to school and more emissions into the atmosphere.	As above.

10.3.26	The Council should be encouraging families to stay local to ease stress on the local transport which is very poor anyway, to ease the environmental impact of the extra mileage.	As above.
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10.4 Children would be unable to walk to school

10.4.1	A lot of the children walk to school, which is better for the environment.	<p>The Council has recognised that pupils who currently walk to school in Churchstoke would no longer be able to do so. Free home-to-school transport would be provided for eligible pupils to their nearest alternative school in Powys. If a parent chooses a school in England for their child(ren) and that school is their nearest alternative school, then the pupils would be eligible for free home-to-school transport provided by Powys County Council.</p> <p>The Council also recognises that for 76% of pupils, Churchstoke C.P. School is their nearest school and they live within walking distance to the school.</p>
10.4.2	Our children walk to school. It saves pollution, the cost of transport and is good exercise for the children.	Comment noted.
10.4.3	The school is in a great location to walk to school for village children. I help with pick-ups of my granddaughter and regularly walk and call at the park after school promoting an active lifestyle while being kind on the environment which is so important for our future generations.	Comment noted.
10.4.4	Children are currently able to walk to school. But if it closes they will be forced to use transport adding to the carbon footprint.	Comment noted.

10.4.5	Children can walk to this school - therefore saving vehicle use - better for environment too.	Comment noted.
10.4.6	If your children can walk to school it is better for the environment as well as their health and well being	Comment noted.
10.4.7	The majority of children in Churchstoke currently walk or cycle to school every day. If the school closes every child will have to be transported by bus or car to an alternative school outside of the village.	Comment noted.
10.4.8	How is shipping kids to another school when there's a perfectly good one in walking distance any good for the environment?	Comment noted.
10.4.9	Being able to walk to school is both healthy for our environment and us and also essential for low-income parents and like myself those who rely on grandparents for childcare who can access the school easily.	Comment noted.
10.4.10	Children will no longer be able to walk to school, which will also increase the rates of childhood obesity.	Comment noted.
10.4.11	Children would not be able to enjoy the benefits of walking to school.	Comment noted.
10.4.12	Why do you think it is a good idea for pupils to go on a bus to school rather than walk?	The aim of the proposal is to improve learner entitlement and experience for all learners and to improve equity across the system.
10.4.13	We are taught by our parents and school that walking and cycling is really good for our health and well-being. If you close Churchstoke school all of the children will have to go to another school by bus or car this is not good for the children's health or for the environment with all the extra pollution from the vehicles. Why would you want this to happen?	As above.

10.4.14	Primary schools should be situated close to the community they serve. Children need to walk to school, not be dropped off by their parents or a bus. Exercise and fresh air is an important part of the school day.	Comment noted.
10.4.15	It may not see a massive issue but actually walking back and forth to school is more than just a walk, it teaches our children many skills and how to look after their planet. It also provides them with exercise and a chance to let of any excess energy before needing to sit and learn throughout their school day. THIS has a huge impact on how children can learn and evidence e tells us that excessive is so important for our health and wellbeing and allows us to focus and concentrate more effectively. You are willing to take that option away from children and families which will I inevitably have a huge impact on how children learn and perform within the classroom.	Comment noted.

10.5 Comments about the impact of additional travel on low income families / families without access to a car

10.5.1	Closing the school will mean more families will be struggling financially with having to take their children by car. Where at the moment a lot of children walk to school.	Should Churchstoke C.P. School close, free home-to-school transport would be provided to eligible pupils to their nearest alternative school in Powys i.e. if a pupil lives 2 miles or more from their nearest school.
10.5.2	Almost 30% of pupils currently at the school are eligible for free school meals. Transport costs will disproportionately impact the parents of these children. Sending a child to a distant school would severely limit the ability of families to engage with a school outside of the village and would increase social inequality.	The Council recognises that this is an area of concern. This will be included in the updated impact assessments.
10.5.3	I know there are a number of children from low-income families. It would worry that these children would become more vulnerable if the school was to close. And they would have to attend an	As above.

	alternative school. The impact and cost of travel would greatly adversely these children especially under such times where families are economically stretched with the number of lockdowns.	
10.5.4	Transportation costs to these other schools is massive issue also for the parents in Churchstoke since we are not in the most affluent of areas and public transport is almost non existent	As above.
10.5.5	Social integration - poor families would be isolated in another school where their reliance on public transport	As above.
10.5.6	I live in social housing and will not be able to afford to put my pre-school age children on a bus elsewhere, nor would I want to! And I cannot afford to run a car twice a day so how am I going to manage this?	Free home-to-school transport would be provided for eligible pupils to their nearest alternative school in Powys.
10.5.7	Lack of transport would mean the alternative out of village provision would not be available to low income families or to families that don't drive.	As above.

10.6 Concern that it would be more difficult for parents to get to school if there was an emergency

10.6.1	I live in the community of Churchstoke and very much enjoy living here as it has everything I need without the use of the car. This alone is one reason why having a school within walking distance is important for large village. It does not isolate those who cannot drive and prevents stressing out parents when there are situations when their child needs collecting urgently.	If a child becomes ill at school, and parents don't have access to a car to collect the child, the school would need to make alternative arrangements to get the child home. This is an issue that many parents face especially if they are working and if their work is located at a distance from the school.
10.6.2	What happens if a child becomes ill during school and needs collecting	As above.

10.6.3	Most of our families walk to school... some families don't have transport of their own, so how are they to collect children if poorly??	As above.
10.6.4	Another important fact is at any chance of illness or other problems in school the parents can currently get to the school in a very short time.	As above.
10.6.5	Parents who are unable to drive will not be able to collect their children if they become ill or have medical appointments. Will Powys County Council pay for a taxi to collect her and bring her home to ensure she is safe?	As above.
10.6.6	I would imagine a school bus would be put on but what if there is an accident or pupils becomes ill how would they get home?	As above.
10.6.7	It would be difficult in emergency situations to get the children from another school, particularly in families where no / only one parent drives.	As above.

10.7 Concern about traffic congestion

10.7.1	If the school shuts it will mean increase in traffic as families have to drive to get their kids to school, more 4x4s clogging up the roads in the morning, brilliant.	<p>Should Churchstoke C.P. School close, free home-to-school transport would be provided for eligible pupils to their nearest alternative school in Powys. It is not expected that there would be more private transport needed, as pupils would be transported on a bus.</p> <p>However, if parents chose a school in England for their child(ren) and this was their nearest alternative school, they would be eligible for free home-to-school transport as well. It is recognised that this would increase the number of home-to-school transport on the roads.</p>
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10.7.2	The proposal would lead to cluttering up the narrow country roads.	As above.
10.7.3	There will be more traffic on the road i.e. school busses, taxis for the vulnerable also some children might be forced to English schools across the border.	As above.
10.7.4	Transporting children to other schools either in Wales or in England will increase traffic on roads that already suffer from too much traffic.	As above.
10.7.5	If each family has two children in the school, that's another 50 cars making 2 journeys each for the 'school drop off' journey - something the local roads are already ill-equipped to deal with, and hardly ticks any 'green' boxes.	As above.
10.7.6	Increasing traffic with multiple transport is a step backwards.	As above.
10.7.7	New housing developments being built will increase traffic on the roads due to the need to drive to other schools.	The Council recognises that new housing developments would lead to increased traffic.
10.7.8	Concern about parking problems at the proposed alternative schools	Comment noted.
10.7.9	Parents may turn to using private vehicles instead of public transport, which will make parking at the other schools more dangerous.	Comment noted.

10.8 Concern about impact on pupils' access to after school activities

10.8.1	After school activities will not be available to children who use school transport.	The Council has recognised in the draft Impact Assessments that there would be an impact on some pupils' ability to access after-school clubs if reliant on home-to-school transport – these will be updated to include information gathered during consultation.
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		<p>Closure of Churchstoke C.P. School would result in additional travel to school for pupils for whom Churchstoke is currently their closest school. Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, it is also acknowledged that there could be an impact on some pupils' ability to access after school activities, and this could impact on the ability of parents to take part in school events, meetings etc. This would also mean that pupils who are currently able to walk to school would be unable to do so.</p> <p>However, the alternative schools also have pupils that rely on home-to-school transport and they are experienced in ensuring that all pupils are able to take part in a range of extra-curricular activities to enrich their experiences at those schools.</p> <p>It must also be noted that extra-curricular activities are also available in the area which are provided by other organisations, and children would also be able to continue to access these, if Churchstoke C.P. School closed.</p>
10.8.2	Pupils would have to leave school at the end of the day and would be unable to join in after school activities.	As above.
10.8.3	Children are unlikely to be able to access after school clubs as they will need to go home on the bus.	As above.

10.8.4	Children that are being taken to alternative schools cannot go to after school activities.	As above.
10.8.5	Children will miss out on after school activities because of transport problems.	As above.
10.8.6	Most children walk to school at present and are able to make use of 'out of school' activities, not so if they go to a school some miles away.	As above.
10.8.7	If they have a bus to catch at the end of the day, this naturally excludes all age children from any after school clubs which is not good as it stops them from interacting with their peers.	As above.
10.8.8	The proposal will increase social division, only the ones who can afford for their parents to go and collect them at the end of the day will be able to access extracurricular activities etc.	As above. This concern is noted.

10.9 Comments about the suitability / safety of school transport

10.9.1	The road access to Montgomery primary is not suitable for coaches and so minibuses would be needed. Is there sufficient minibus capacity in the area for all of the transport routes that would be needed?	In accordance with the Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy, the appropriate type of transport would be provided.
10.9.2	The secondary transport vehicles, in either direction, are completely unsuitable for younger pupils. In the case of Bishop's Castle the primary and secondary school are on completely different sites, and there is no coach access to the primary school. There is no safe walking route between the two, even if chaperones were provided.	Secondary school transport is appropriate for primary-aged pupils and shared transport is standard practice across the county.
10.9.3	Putting youngsters on buses opens up the time for bullying, harassment and threats.	This Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy is aligned with the All Wales Travel Behaviour Code and

		as such, by applying for free / discretionary school transport learners will be expected to follow the Code.
10.9.4	Concern that pupils would feel scared because there would be strangers on the bus.	Comment noted.
10.9.5	Parents are rightfully worried about sending 5 year old kids on a bus full of grown kids.	Comment noted. However, secondary school transport is appropriate for primary-aged pupils and shared transport is standard practice across the county.
10.9.6	School buses are dangerous for young and other protected groups without supervision	Many pupils in Powys rely on safe home-to-school transport throughout their time at primary and secondary school.
10.9.7	Safeguarding of young children being forced to use school transport is a major concern to those who may qualify for the service and I certainly wouldn't like my grandchild travelling 10 miles on a school bus with older children with only a driver to supervise in this day and age.	As above.
10.9.8	If Churchstoke CP School closes and I have no choice but to travel to school by bus, will Powys County Council be employing someone everyday to supervise all of the primary aged children while travelling to school on the bus for Health & Safety reasons, for example ensuring children do not remove seat belts, do not get up and walk around the bus etc.	The Council does not provide supervision on home-to-school transport.
10.9.9	There would be more risk of traffic accidents should the children have to travel to a school further afield	The transport operators are required to carry out a safety risk assessment of every route.
10.9.10	The additional travel will risk the lives of these children, especially during bad weather etc.	There is no evidence that home-to-school travel risks the lives of children.
10.9.11	This would also increase the risk factor of accidents to children and parents and create more wear and tear to under-serviced highways.	As above.

		Roads are continually used and are subject to wear and tear.
10.9.12	The worst aspect of this policy shift is the certainty of injuring and road tragedy of forcing Churchstoke folks to risk themselves.	As above.
10.9.13	Worst still is the known extra risk to life + limb of having to travel further for parents and children. Over years deaths and injury will occur more due to this policy shift.	As above.
10.9.14	Transporting children to other schools either in Wales or in England will put children at risk from injury or worse due to the ever-increasing volume of very large HGVs travelling at speeds of 60mph plus on roads not suited to such traffic.	As above.

10.10 Comments about flooding in Churchstoke

10.10.1	Flooding in Churchstoke village is also becoming a frequent event in winter, this will prevent any children leaving the village to attend a school outside of the village every time there is flooding, resulting in the children losing out on a lot of education.	The Council notes this comment.
10.10.2	There are risks of flooding where the children couldn't get to schools further afield	As above.

11. COMMENTS ABOUT IMPACT ON THE WELSH LANGUAGE

11.1 Comments about the use of Welsh at Churchstoke School

11.1.1	Churchstoke has always provided a large amount of opportunity to engage with the Welsh language. Specifically, it's location on the border means it is one of the few local schools for children to begin and develop their speaking of the Welsh language.	The Council notes these comments about the teaching of Welsh and Welsh culture in Churchstoke C.P. School.
11.1.2	We work hard at learning Welsh in Churchstoke School, a Welsh teacher comes in every week and the children love it.	As above. All schools in Powys are required to make provision for Welsh skills and standards: this should not depend on weekly sessions from the Swyddogion y Gymraeg team but rather, be part of every school day.
11.1.3	The Welsh language and culture was a key part of my education at Churchstoke School.	As above.
11.1.4	Churchstoke School encourages the use of the Welsh language and culture.	As above.
11.1.5	Churchstoke, being in Wales, teaches and supports the Welsh language which is a declining language and therefore vital that we retain schools in Wales to help our children learn Welsh.	As above.
11.1.6	Churchstoke delivers in English medium but provides a core Welsh curriculum offering as do all Powys schools.	As above.
11.1.7	Children get great Welsh provision at Churchstoke School. This language is then shared with the community during concerts and community events.	As above.
11.1.8	The school encourages local families to learn their Welsh cultural heritage.	As above.
11.1.9	Pupils learn about Welsh culture and heritage in school through Welsh language lessons or competitions like the Eisteddfod.	As above.
11.1.10	The school provided us all with a deeper understanding of the Welsh culture we were born into, I learnt to speak and write basic	As above.

	Welsh, I competed annually in the school Eisteddfod competition, participated in area sport competitions with other Welsh schools and I was even part of the Urdd Club which allowed me to go on a residential school trip and meet other children from around the County, children of my parents' friends.	
11.1.11	The school teaches the Welsh curriculum and is the only body in the village that promotes Welshness as well as teaching the Welsh language.	As above.
11.1.12	Churchstoke School offers learning through the medium of Welsh.	Churchstoke C.P. School is categorised as an English-medium school but teaches Welsh as a second language.

11.2 General concerns about the proposal's impact on Welsh

11.2.1	It would have a huge adverse effect.	<p>The Council is committed to improving access to Welsh-medium provision in order to increase the number of children who are fully bilingual. The proposal is to close Churchstoke C.P. School and for children to transfer to their nearest alternative schools in Powys. This is to ensure that they have the opportunity to access the Curriculum for Wales. Pupils would therefore continue to learn Welsh at the alternative schools.</p> <p>The Council recognises, however, that should Churchstoke C.P. School close and parents choose a school in England for their child(ren), then they would no longer have the opportunity to learn Welsh at those schools, and that this would have a negative impact on the Welsh language in the area, where it is not widely</p>
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		used currently in any case. The Council will update the draft Impact Assessment to include information gathered during consultation, such as the impact on Welsh.
11.2.2	Closing the school can only have a negative effect on Welsh language learning and use.	As above.
11.2.3	I believe closing Churchstoke school would have an adverse effect on the Welsh language, this should be given great consideration.	As above.
11.2.4	The Welsh Language will die in Churchstoke.	As above.
11.2.5	The proposal would have a devastating effect on the Welsh language and identity of Churchstoke village. In effect it would cease to be a Welsh community in anything but name.	As above.
11.2.6	The Welsh language here will disappear with us being so close to the border.	As above.
11.2.7	Welsh language use will decline even further.	As above.
11.2.8	This is a very English part of Wales with a very low % of Welsh speakers. Losing this school can only entrench that position.	As above.
11.2.9	Churchstoke has the 3 rd lowest Welsh speaking community in Wales. If you remove the school and many of the children relocate to English ones, the language in this village will die off.	As above.
11.2.10	If you close the school we will lose the Welsh language.	As above.
11.2.11	Closing the school is the most unWelsh thing I think a Welsh council could possibly do.	As above.

11.2.12	Depending on the lottery of where pupils are re-located the effects will be, at best, neutral and, at worst, the total loss of the use of the Welsh language.	As above.
11.2.13	I am yet to be convinced by the council how the school closing will in any way positively affect the opportunities for the children to use the Welsh language. I believe it has been completely disregarded and forgotten about and only mentioned now by the council because it has been highlighted as a major concern for parents.	As above.
11.2.14	Welsh language in the area would die out! In a country where the Welsh Government are proposing 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050 why would you be actively encouraging the closure of small rural Welsh schools that are so close to the English border? These children will be pushed to English education and the Welsh language will be lost. It is proven that learning the Welsh language helps children later on in life to learn other languages. Do not take our Welsh identity away from us!	As above.
11.2.15	As a border area of Wales, the degradation of the Welsh language, as well as other aspects of Welsh culture, is plain to see. This is a great loss for the Welsh cultural identity. Having small schools which not only teach the Welsh language but other key events of Welsh history, which form a vital part of the rich tapestry of Welsh culture, is pivotal at maintaining Welsh identity. The closing of Churchstoke would mean that many of the local pupils would be forced to go to English schools. This would only add to the loss of Welsh cultural identity on the border, further exacerbating it's decline at a time when it should be encouraged and nurtured to help maintain one of the oldest languages and cultures on the European continent.	As above.

11.3 Concerns that the proposal would mean that Churchstoke pupils would not have the opportunity to learn Welsh

11.3.1	It would remove the opportunity to learn and speak Welsh for a number of children.	<p>The Council is committed to improving access to Welsh-medium provision in order to increase the number of children who are fully bilingual. The proposal is to close Churchstoke C.P. School and for children to transfer to their nearest alternative schools in Powys. This is to ensure that they have the opportunity to access the Curriculum for Wales. Pupils would therefore continue to learn Welsh at the alternative schools.</p> <p>The Council recognises, however, that should Churchstoke C.P. School close and parents choose a school in England for their child(ren), then they would no longer have the opportunity to learn Welsh at those schools, and that this would have a negative impact on the Welsh language in the area, where it is not widely used currently in any case. The Council will update the draft Impact Assessment to include information gathered during consultation, such as the impact on Welsh.</p>
11.3.2	The majority of pupils would be lost to English schools so will lose the Welsh language.	As above.
11.3.3	Any pupils transferring to English schools would obviously have less opportunity to learn Welsh.	As above.
11.3.4	Pupils transferring to Shropshire Primary Schools will be deprived of the opportunity to learn the Welsh language and experience Welsh culture through education, contributing to the decline in Welsh language and culture.	As above.

11.3.5	Pupils attending schools in England would be deprived of the opportunity to learn Welsh and to be immersed in the culture of the country they live in.	As above.
11.3.6	Welsh children should be entitled to go to a Welsh school.	As above.
11.3.7	Welsh pupils will have limited options to go to a Welsh school.	As above.
11.3.8	Following the implementation of this decision, there will be a number of current and future pupils who will be restricted from learning the Welsh language.	As above.
11.3.9	By moving children to schools in Shropshire they will not have the opportunity to learn Welsh as it is an English school. This goes directly against what the Welsh assembly have said in regards to Welsh children having the right to learn Welsh.	As above.
11.3.10	Welsh children living on the border have as much claim to being Welsh as any other children in Wales, they should not be excluded from accessing the same opportunities or curriculum.	As above.
11.3.11	Pupils attending primary school in England but then attend a secondary school in Powys would be disadvantaged as they wouldn't have studied any Welsh – they would be way behind those who studied Welsh in a primary school in Wales.	As above.
11.3.12	Pupils may be sent to border schools in England where there will be no opportunities for them to learn Welsh or foster their Welsh identity. This may impact adversely for them upon transition to High School, where currently Welsh is compulsory to GCSE at Welshpool High School, the nearest secondary provider to the village.	As above.
11.3.13	Less children will choose Welshpool High School as they won't have learnt any Welsh in primary school – you will be pushing kids into England.	As above.

11.3.14	By losing children to English schools the opportunity to learn Welsh in primary and secondary will be lost to pupils, which will affect their employment opportunities in Wales in the future. Also cultural events eg Eisteddfod, Urdd, St David's Day.	As above.
11.3.15	If a child wishes to move onto a Welsh secondary school they won't have the confidence in speaking Welsh or have lost all learning of that as it will not be taught in English schools and a lot of jobs in Wales require Welsh speaking candidates so this could affect their job career in the future.	As above.
11.3.16	Welsh children are entitled to receive Welsh language studies – many jobs especially in the public sector require Welsh to be spoken	As above.
11.3.17	Welsh language is very important in Wales, it's needed for jobs, that's why we need to teach our children Welsh for the careers in further future.	As above.
11.3.18	The Welsh language is now a pre-requisite for being able to apply for many jobs. If the parents of these children, Welsh residents, are forced to send them to schools located in England, those schools will not have Welsh on the curriculum. Without having been taught the Welsh language the children will be at a disadvantage when seeking work.	As above.
11.3.19	Sending children to Shropshire schools is suicide for their future careers. Any job funded by the Welsh Government requires the ability to be a Welsh speaker. Welsh residents have the right to be educated in Wales.	As above.
11.3.20	As a border authority, any transfer of children from the LA to England would impact on the promotion of the Welsh language, and from the child's perspective, create a situation where the exciting developments the new Welsh curriculum has to offer will	As above.

	be missed through parental choices of transferring children to a closer school in Shropshire.	
11.3.21	Those pupils being moved to primary schools in Shropshire will no longer benefit from their entitlement to the Welsh language curriculum, which has a direct impact on the learning and promotion of the Welsh language and culture. I cannot stress enough how valuable this is for primary children living in Churchstoke, who will benefit greatly from learning Welsh at such a young age, especially when they start to learn other European languages at secondary school.	As above.
11.3.22	Powys's own goal after the Estyn inspection is to increase opportunities for children to learn Welsh. Even though we live in an English speaking area and do not have access to Welsh language education you are now even taking away the basic Welsh lessons from our children.	As above.
11.3.23	As part of Curriculum Cymreig, children should be given the opportunity to learn about characteristics of their locality. Children would be denied this opportunity if the school closed as they would have to learn about the historical and geographical features of other places such as Montgomery or Chirbury.	As above. During the consultation meeting held with pupils, it was noted that members of the School Council had very limited knowledge of the history of their locality.

11.4 The proposal would not impact on the Welsh language

11.4.1	Welsh is not commonly used in Churchstoke so the impact on using the Welsh language would be minimal.	The Council is committed to improving access to Welsh-medium provision in order to increase the number of children who are fully bilingual. The proposal is to close Churchstoke C.P. School and for children to transfer to their nearest alternative schools in Powys. This is to ensure that they have the opportunity to access the Curriculum for Wales. Pupils would
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		<p>therefore continue to learn Welsh at the alternative schools.</p> <p>The Council recognises, however, that should Churchstoke C.P. School close and parents choose a school in England for their child(ren), then they would no longer have the opportunity to learn Welsh at those schools, and that this would have a negative impact on the Welsh language in the area, where it is not widely used currently in any case. The Council will update the draft Impact Assessment to include information gathered during consultation, such as the impact on Welsh.</p>
11.4.2	Those wanting to learn Welsh can go to Kerry only a couple of minutes drive away or Montgomery. Churchstoke is not a Welsh speaking community	As above.
11.4.3	Churchstoke is not a Welsh speaking area. If parents want their children to learn through the medium of Welsh they would live somewhere where this facility is available. Learning a small amount of Welsh in the primary is useful for going to a Welsh Secondary but not an English one or an English Primary where some of the pupils would have to go to if their school was closed.	As above.
11.4.4	The Welsh language is of less benefit socially and economically in the wider world than the English language, the emphasis should be on providing pupils with the social, educational and personal wherewithal to develop in the global environment in which we currently live.	The Council does not agree with this comment. The Welsh language is of significant social and economic importance as more workplaces recognise the benefits of bilingualism.
11.4.5	Welsh can be taught to English speaking children as easily anywhere else. Teach them to read and do maths.	As above.

11.5 Comments about Welsh Government policy

11.5.1	<p>The government is seeking to have 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050 in accordance with Section 78 of the Government of Wales Act 2006. The document “Cymraeg 2050 a million Welsh Speakers” states “Education is central to our vision, but we must ensure our young people come out of the education system ready and proud to use the language in all contexts”.</p>	<p>The Council is committed to improving access to Welsh-medium provision in order to increase the number of children who are fully bilingual. The proposal is to close Churchstoke C.P. School and for children to transfer to their nearest alternative schools in Powys. This is to ensure that they have the opportunity to access the Curriculum for Wales. Pupils would therefore continue to learn Welsh at the alternative schools.</p> <p>The Council recognises, however, that should Churchstoke C.P. School close and parents choose a school in England for their child(ren), then they would no longer have the opportunity to learn Welsh at those schools, and that this would have a negative impact on the Welsh language in the area, where it is not widely used currently in any case. The Council will update the draft Impact Assessment to include information gathered during consultation, such as the impact on Welsh.</p>
11.5.2	<p>The proposal is anti-Welsh and against all recognised policies from Welsh government.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
11.5.3	<p>The Welsh Government have been promoting the development of Welsh speaking communities since the 2013 “Increasing the number of communities where Welsh is the main language Report” of the Task and Finish Group. It called upon the education system to be progressive across the higher percentage areas so that all young (and older) people can become fluent and confident</p>	<p>As above.</p>

	in using Welsh and English. How is closing a local community primary school achieving this?	
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11.6 Suggestions for how the Council could improve Welsh

11.6.1	Provide incidental Welsh in English option schools	<p>As all schools need to deliver the Welsh context as part of the new curriculum, there should be no differential between schools.</p> <p>One of the key characteristics of the four purposes in the Curriculum for Wales is to develop ambitious, capable learners who can communicate effectively in different forms and settings, using both Welsh and English. All learners should have appropriate pathways for learning Welsh and English to enable them to develop the confidence to use both languages in everyday life. All Powys schools are well supported with excellent resources from the Athrawon Bro Team to enable teachers to teach Welsh. Staff from nearby schools have attended the sabbatical Welsh language course with further staff attending the sabbatical course in Newtown in September 2021. Opportunities to use Welsh within and beyond the classroom (including on digital platforms) support learners to use Welsh confidently and appreciate its usefulness to communication in a bilingual Wales and again all Powys schools are effectively supported with rich resources from the Athrawon Bro Team. Schools, through effective pupil voice fora, known as the 'Criw Cymraeg' plan a range of activities to increase the use of Welsh outside the classroom. Facilitating the use of</p>
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		Welsh, through planned linguistic progression in every phase of education from ages 3 to16, and as part of a whole-school approach, offers opportunities for all learners to develop bilingually and this is a key priority for all schools in Wales.
11.6.2	Provide more Welsh lessons, make it more accessible for parents to attend Welsh classes such as a clwb Cwtch.	As above.
11.6.3	Offer staff more opportunities to learn the language so they can all engage with the children in Welsh	As above.

11.7 Other comments

11.7.1	The indications in the consultation document are that Powys County Council (a Welsh County) are happy to have Welsh children taught in England. That cannot be right!	<p>The Council is committed to improving access to Welsh-medium provision in order to increase the number of children who are fully bilingual. The proposal is to close Churchstoke C.P. School and for children to transfer to their nearest alternative schools in Powys. This is to ensure that they have the opportunity to access the Curriculum for Wales. Pupils would therefore continue to learn Welsh at the alternative schools.</p> <p>The Council recognises, however, that should Churchstoke C.P. School close and parents choose a school in England for their child(ren), then they would no longer have the opportunity to learn Welsh at those schools, and that this would have a negative impact on the Welsh language in the area, where it is not widely used currently in any case. The Council will update the draft Impact Assessment to include information</p>
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		gathered during consultation, such as the impact on Welsh.
11.7.2	Parents living in Wales should have the right for their children to learn the language just as other countries provide children access to their native language and heritage. By taking away this opportunity you are discriminating against the Welsh language.	The Council is not discriminating against the Welsh language as the proposal is for pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools in Powys.

12. COMMENTS ABOUT IMPACT ON STAFF

12.1	The loyal staff would lose their jobs, teachers, cooks, playground assistants etc, many who have been there many years.	Should the school close, Staff currently employed at Churchstoke C.P. School would be subject to a management of change process and be supported fully throughout the process.
12.2	Concern about a loss of jobs of the great teachers and support staff!	As above.
12.3	Teachers and staff would lose their jobs.	As above.
12.4	Will the teachers be given new jobs?	As above.
12.5	We don't want our loyal staff, teachers, cook, cook assistants, cleaners, etc to also lose their jobs.	As above.
12.6	There are people who work at school who do not drive and are slightly older, therefore to find other employment would be difficult.	As above.
12.7	Closure of our preschool setting could result in the loss of 4 jobs of young women from Powys, with a further knock on affect of them having to relocate along with their young families further potentiating the problem of an ageing and diminishing population	The Council is not proposing to close Churchstoke Little Explorers, but has recognised that there may be an impact on the setting should the school close,

	in Powys. Exacerbating the problem of low income for the area and low population growth. Is this not discriminating women who are also mothers in equal opportunities for work and financial security in Powys?	particularly as the setting is on the school grounds and shares some facilities.
12.8	CSRA and the school have a close working relationship, including in the employment of staff to clean and caretake the Community Hall. The proposed closure puts these jobs under threat.	The responsibility for staff at the Community Centre lies with the Centre's Management Committee.
12.9	On the page 22 of the Consultation Document it says that "it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would impact on professional learning opportunities." How is this the case when the majority of the staff, if not all, will be losing their jobs? How can there be no impact on their professional learning opportunities when the staff are made redundant? Similarly, how is the impact on salary arrangement of current staff neutral (as suggested by the Impact Assessment), when they will in all likelihood be made redundant?	The document is referring specifically to whether any staff would be affected by differential in pay if they were to move to another role. Due to the terms and conditions of employment, this would not be the case – staff would be able to move across to new roles on their current teaching point or on a similar increment point if a support member of staff. The point around professional learning opportunities indicates that staff would still be able to access professional learning from other employment rather than also arranged through their current school e.g. national, regional or Powys wide development.

13. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13.1 Comments relating to the estimated saving from closing the school

13.1.1	There is often no advantage financially to close a school in a rural location.	The driver for the Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys is equity of educational provision across the authority, to improve learner entitlement and improve
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		<p>best learning outcomes/education, not solely to save money. However, reducing the range of funding per pupil will allow for reinvestment across the authority.</p> <p>Although relatively small, savings estimates are based on the best information available at the time they are calculated and are subject to change for example due to changes in pupil numbers, parental choice, staff changes etc. The calculations are reviewed by a range of officers and sensitivity analysis is also carried out.</p>
13.1.2	The costs thought to be 'saved' will often not be realised – the new teachers, transport will be the same often	See 13.1.1.
13.1.3	And I think you are completely off with your figures for how much that is going to cost.	See 13.1.1.
13.1.4	I am also concerned as the payer of Council Tax that the closure of the school is going to end up being considerably more expensive than keeping it open. The financial analysis in the document is based on totally incorrect figures, both in the number of pupils, the growth of the village and the cost of transportation.	<p>Powys County Council always strives to provide value for money in the delivery of its services, constantly seeking out cost savings and efficiencies, including service transformation across all service areas.</p> <p>As stated above the driver for change is based on improving educational provision across the county not solely financial and savings estimates are based on the best information available at the time they are calculated.</p>
13.1.5	Money saved by closing the school (a dubious calculation) will soon be wiped out by the negative effects it will bring.	See 13.1.1.
13.1.6	When a more realistic figure for additional transport costs is considered, I see no financial saving to be made from the closure	See 13.1.1.

	of the School so there is no benefit to closure when compared to status quo.	
13.1.7	Powys council know the price of everything but the value of nothing. Their decision is so short sighted, yet when the economics are scrutinised, it doesn't even save money.	See 13.1.1.
13.1.8	It's saddening to see that the council are only thinking of the costs they would save if the school closed rather than the children and the lives that could be damaged as a result. I think the council should take into consideration the future potential costs, rather than just the financial implications of the present.	See 13.1.1.
13.1.9	The idea of closing the school is obviously purely being made on financial terms and not what is best for the local community.	See 13.1.1.
13.1.10	It is incredibly clear that the main purpose of this proposal is to save revenue for the council and to create revenue through the lump sum they expect to receive from the sale of the site.	As stated above the driver for change is based on improving educational provision across the county not solely financial and savings estimates are based on the best information available at the time they are calculated. While the consultation document mentions the potential for a capital receipt, it is not quantified and is not the driver for this proposal.
13.1.11	Let's not kid ourselves this is not about improving the pupils' education it's about saving money and the cost to transport all these children to other schools would surely cost more long term.	See 13.1.1.
13.1.12	To destroy a community for purely economic reason cannot be right.	The aim of the proposal is to improve learner entitlement and experience and to ensure equity across the system. The Council has recognised, in the draft Community Impact Assessment, that there could be a detrimental impact on the community should there

		be no school in Churchstoke. This will be updated to take account of information gathered during consultation.
13.1.13	Child welfare and education should be the prime concern NOT MONEY SAVING.	The aim of the proposal is to improve learner entitlement and experience and to ensure equity across the system, not solely to save money. However, reducing the range of funding per pupil will allow for reinvestment across the authority.
13.1.14	A totally flawed proposal that appears to be following a script rather than backed up by evidence..... A money saving exercise????	<p>The case for change is clearly set out in the consultation document. The Council is facing the combined challenges of a high proportion of small schools, decreasing pupil numbers, high numbers of surplus places, issues with building condition of some schools and ongoing financial pressure combined with inequity of provision. The Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-2030 sets out the Council's priorities in addressing these challenges which includes the aim to "improve learner entitlement and experience' and this aim includes an objective to 'rationalise primary provision'. The decision to consult on the closure of Churchstoke CP School is in line with these priorities.</p> <p>As stated above, the aim of the proposal is to improve learner entitlement and experience and to ensure equity across the system, not solely financial and savings estimates are based on the best information available at the time they are calculated.</p>
13.1.15	Obviously, closing the school has the potential to save some money in the short term. By the same token, no longer collecting	Comment noted.

	<p>rubbish, running trains or buses, repairing roads or requiring developments to obtain permission before going ahead would also save money. I don't see that having a local school is any less of an essential, especially when the demand for it is set to grow as all the new build in Churchstoke become occupied.</p>	
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13.2 Comments relating to the budget share per pupil / funding formula

13.2.1	<p>Increasing numbers of pupils would reduce the high cost per pupil, which Powys County Council figures have been based on outdated numbers of 25 pupils, and not the correct figure of 38. Within four years the cost per pupil is expected to reduce to approximately £4600 per pupil, close to the powers average figure.</p>	<p>One of the drivers for the Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys is equity of educational provision across the authority and reducing the range of funding per pupil at different schools will contribute to this.</p> <p>The budgeted cost per pupil is based on the actual pupil numbers on the pupil count date prior to the start of the financial year, on which their funding for the financial year is based.</p> <p>The budget share per pupil during 2020-21 was £7,475 which was based on 27 pupils, which was the most up-to-date information available at the time that the consultation document was compiled.</p> <p>The 2021-22 budget share per pupil is £6,932 and is based on 36 pupils (actual pupil numbers in November 2020). Current pupil numbers are 39, and the school is predicting that pupil numbers will rise over the next few years, but it is unclear how the £4,600 per pupil figure has been arrived at.</p> <p>Powys Primary Cost per pupil</p>
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		<p><u>2021-2021</u> Average: £4,384 Lowest: £3,276 Highest: £11,912</p> <p><u>2021-2022</u> Average: £4,617 Lowest: £3,473 Highest: £8,412</p> <p>Details of budgets per pupil for all schools can be found here: https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Local-Government/Finance/Revenue/Delegated-School-Budgets/delegatedschoolbudgetsperpupil-by-school</p>
13.2.2	The cost of “per” pupil figures quoted by PCC are historic and based on old pupil numbers. The predicted number for September 2022 is £4600, very close to the Powys average.	See 13.2.1.
13.2.3	This decision appears to be for short-term economic gain. The local school does currently incur higher average costs per pupil, however, based on estimated calculations from accurate data, the likely impact will be of pupil numbers increasing to 52 by September 2022, which will lower the average cost to around £4,600 per pupil, very close to the national average, and subsequently reducing the surplus placed in the school.	See 13.2.1.
13.2.4	Pupil numbers are growing and will likely continue to grow due to the housing developments. As pupil numbers grow, the cost pupil will decrease.	Comment noted.
13.2.5	The Consultation Document gives details of the funding per pupil for our neighbouring Shropshire and Powys schools. It is quite clear that Shropshire schools enjoy far greater funding per pupil	The Council recognises that there is difference in the quantum and distribution of funding between Powys and Shropshire.

	when schools of a similar size are compared. This has already been commented on by parents.	
13.2.6	I was saddened to hear at the Cabinet meeting on 9 February a Cabinet member state that they had to address the inequality of funding per pupil across schools. In such a rural authority it is inevitable there will be variances in funding per pupil across schools unless the aim is to have one very large super school in the middle of Powys. Surely the focus should be on equality of opportunities for children in Powys. Children in rural communities deserve the opportunities a local school gives them in the same way that children in larger towns do.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>The driver for the Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys is equity of educational provision, to improve learner entitlement and best learning outcomes/education, not solely to save money. However, reducing the range of funding per pupil will allow for reinvestment across the authority.</p>
13.2.7	This is a short-sighted cost cutting idea that will have long term impacts	See 13.2.1.

13.3 Comments about capital funding

13.3.1	There was also an article at the top of page 7 of County Times 5 th February - Doubts over financial viability of schools programme. In this article it talks about the Welsh Government would pick up 65 percent of the tab, leaving Powys County Council to fund the remaining 35 percent. It says that future waves of school buildings would cost about £300 million. Then in the County Times, 19 th February the figure rises again and is now “£550 Million to £600 Million will be need to make the council’s school transformation vision a reality”. Surely it would be a lot better to improve some of the schools that already exist.	<p>The Council’s ambition is to implement a major capital investment programme that will ensure that schools in Powys have inspiring, environmentally sustainable buildings that can provide opportunities for wider community activity, including where possible childcare services, early years, ALN, multi-agency support and community and leisure facilities. This will also include developing a reliable, high quality digital infrastructure.</p> <p>The Council’s current 21st Century School Programme is approximately £200m, with funding split between the Welsh Government and the Council.</p>
13.3.2	There will be a cost to the council to build bigger schools.	Comment noted.

13.4 Other comments

13.4.1	Small schools run very lean financially.	<p>The Council's ambition is to implement a major capital investment programme that will ensure that schools in Powys have inspiring, environmentally sustainable buildings that can provide opportunities for wider community activity, including where possible childcare services, early years, ALN, multi-agency support and community and leisure facilities. This will also include developing a reliable, high quality digital infrastructure.</p> <p>The Council's current 21st Century School Programme is approximately £200m, with funding split between the Welsh Government and the Council.</p>
13.4.2	It's so disappointing that the Council's reasoning is based on cost equality and comparisons with other schools and villages. The reasoning should be based on equal opportunities for all children.	<p>The driver for the Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys is equity of educational provision, to improve learner entitlement and best learning outcomes/education, not solely to save money. However, reducing the range of funding per pupil will allow for reinvestment across the authority.</p>
13.4.3	I do think you have probably factored in the sale of the school site into your cash provisions, but the school site was given to you for the school so morally it should come back to the village if you were to close the school and keep our pre school so that our villagers can benefit from early years childcare.	<p>While the consultation document mentions the potential for a capital receipt, it is not quantified. All surplus assets are subject to the process of disposal as outlined in the Council's Asset Management Policy. Some schools that have closed have been transferred to other service areas e.g. housing or to a community. In other case they have been sold to third parties. This provides the Council with a capital receipt that is then re-invested in the Council's corporate budget, which in turn supports education.</p>

13.4.4	It would be useful to know the financial impact of payments to Shropshire for additional Powys pupils.	Powys County Council would not make payments to Shropshire Council for Powys pupils that attend mainstream schools in Shropshire.
13.4.5	<p>The School Forum wishes to comment on the financial implications of these proposals for the overall schools' delegated budget. At our last meeting we agreed on the importance of making sure that any savings accruing from transformation proposals are retained within the overall schools' delegated budget. This is fundamental to the overall transformation programme being taken forward by the Council. One of the main tenets of the overall programme is to reduce the overall number of schools so that the existing level of funding could be shared more equitably and resolve the existing problem of some schools having insufficient resources. There is a common sentence in each of the reports which says "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". This falls a long way short of guaranteeing that the savings will be retained within the overall schools' delegated budget. Essentially this means that it will be up to the Council each year to decide on whether the funding should be retained for schools or not. This approach is very worrying as it could lead to the overall schools' delegated budget being reduced as a result of the Council deciding that savings should be reinvested elsewhere. That runs very much against the overall plan to share the existing resources amongst a smaller number of schools and could result in the same problem we have now – not enough funding to run all the schools. Against this background can you please, when reporting back to the Cabinet on the results of the consultations for each of these schools, report the concerns of the Schools' Forum as set out above and change the approach to how savings</p>	The Council notes the comment of the School Forum.

	are to be treated, i.e. that they are ring fenced for use within the schools' delegated budget.	
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14. COMMENTS ABOUT COUNCIL STRATEGIES

14.1 Vision 2025

14.1.1	<p>Powys County Council has a Strategic Vision 2025, which sets out their aims and objectives for the future. These aims and objectives focus on developing a vibrant economy, leading the way in providing effective, integrated health and care in a rural environment, strengthening learning and skills, and supporting residents and communities. CCC is of the view that closure of Churchstoke School would have a negative effect on all of these and as such would be contrary to Powys' declared strategic plan. Closure may damage the local economy as families would not want to move to a village without a school, and it would leave local businesses struggling to recruit staff, and parents relying on after school and breakfast clubs would be left without support and unable to work.</p>	<p>The Council has identified the detrimental impact on the community of Churchstoke in the draft Community Impact Assessment which will be updated to take account of issues raised during consultation.</p>
14.1.2	<p>Powys County Council have a policy called vision 2025, setting out their objectives for the future. These objectives focus on developing a vibrant economy, leading the way in providing effective, integrated health and care in a rural environment, strengthening learning and skills, and supporting residents and communities. Closing Churchstoke CP school would have a negative effect on all of these, and as such would be contrary to Powys' declared policies. It will damage the local economy as house prices will be driven down as people with families will not</p>	<p>As above.</p>

	<p>want to move to a village with no school. It will leave businesses struggling to recruit staff as parents rely on after school and breakfast clubs, leaving parents with no support and unable to work. It will reduce health and care advice as school staff are trained to provide advice on a wide range of council and national services, and this would be lost to the local area. Far from strengthening learning and skills, the disruption and separation from the neighbours, plus the loss of focused close support, would it damage learning, skills, and pupil well-being. It obviously completely fails to support local residents and the community in which we live. Powys have already recognised the catastrophic effect on the local community with the division of the community, the loss of Welsh identity, and increased socio-economic divisions.</p>	
14.1.3	<p>Powys Vision 2025 Policy includes an objective of supporting residents and communities. How does the decision to close the school support the community of Churchstoke?</p>	<p>The aim of the proposal is to improve learner entitlement and experience and to provide equity across the whole system.</p>
14.1.4	<p>How does it fit with the vision 2025 objective of supporting residents and communities? How does this fit with the Sustainable Development Principles of Collaboration (working with others in a collaborative way to find shared sustainable solutions), involvement (involving a diversity of the population in the decisions that affect them) or integration (taking an integrated approach so that public bodies</p>	<p>The aim of the proposal is to improve learner entitlement and experience and to provide equity across the whole system.</p> <p>The Council has consulted with all stakeholders in order to hear their views about the proposal. Cabinet will be required to consider this Consultation Report before making any further decisions about the future of the school and will consider a number of impact assessments which considers the impact of the proposal on a range of themes.</p>
14.1.5	<p>How does the local authority think the fragmentation of the community will affect the well-being of the children and the</p>	<p>The Council has recognised the detrimental impact that this proposal would have on the community of</p>

	community as a whole? Does this fit in with the Powys Vision 2025 community aims?	Churchstoke in its draft Community Impact Assessment, which will be updated to take account of information gathered during consultation.
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14.2 Transforming Education Strategy

14.2.1	Regarding the comments by Councillor Phyl Davies, cabinet member for Education and Property, who states “We are committed to transforming the learner experience and entitlement for our learners and will achieve this by delivering our Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-2030”, three out of the four proposed alternative schools are in England. I ask you, how does transferring pupils to a primary school in Shropshire, England, support the Powys education strategy? Furthermore, in what way does transporting young pupils several miles by bus, rather than enabling them to experience walking to a local school with their parents be “in the best interest of the learners” and give them “the best possible start they deserve”? I would also suggest that closing a local Welsh school and bussing the children to alternative schools in Shropshire gives the message to our young villagers that Welsh schools are sub-standard to those in England.	<p>The proposal is to close Churchstoke C.P. School and for pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools in Powys. This is to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to access the Curriculum for Wales.</p> <p>The named alternative schools in the document recognise the fact that these are the nearest schools to Churchstoke. If a parent chose to attend their nearest school and that was in England, the Council would be responsible for providing free home-to-school transport for those pupils.</p> <p>The Council has recognised that pupils who currently walk to school would no longer be able to do so.</p>
14.2.2	I strongly disagree that the closure of Churchstoke school will ensure, as per The Vision Statement: 'All children..will experience a high-quality, inspiring education...' or 'better learner entitlement and experience'. This is a worthy aim - and one I wholeheartedly support - but this closure is not going to achieve it. The nearest primary school to Churchstoke is Chirbury, part of the Shropshire Hills Federation. I am aware the decision was taken there to protect the future of each school.	The aim of the proposal is to improve learner entitlement and experience and to provide equity across the whole system.

14.2.3	<p>Having read the Estyn report of July 2019 we are struggling to understand the link between this report which focuses mainly on secondary education and post 16 education and the mass closure of Powys primary schools.</p>	<p>Following Estyn’s criticism of the Council’s education services in its 2019 inspection, the Council’s new Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-30 was developed following an extensive engagement exercise with schools and other stakeholders. One of the challenges facing Powys, as identified in that engagement exercise, was the fact that the county has too many small schools:</p> <p>i) High proportion of small schools</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The aim of the proposal is to improve learner entitlement and experience and to provide equity across the system.</p> <p>The strategy sets out several aims and objectives to transform the Powys education system over the next few years with the aim of providing the best possible opportunities for Powys learners, now and in the future. Two of the objectives included in the strategy are to ‘improve learner entitlement and experience’ and ‘rationalise primary provision’. This proposal is in line with these objectives.</p>
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14.2.4	Estyn's report published last year, does not mention anywhere the closure of lots of small rural primary schools, but that the provision for post 16 year education in Powys needed addressing.	As above.
14.2.5	We believe that the recommendations made by Estyn have been taken out of context. A letter and email that we have from Estyn agree with us. Nowhere is there a recommendation to close small rural primary schools in fact there should be a presumption to keep rural schools open!	<p>As above.</p> <p>The Welsh Government's School Organisation Policy 2018 includes a section entitled:</p> <p>1.8 Presumption against the closure of rural schools.</p> <p>This outlines the additional considerations that local authorities/proposers need to carry out when formulating and consulting on proposals related to rural schools.</p>
14.2.6	Your Education Transformation Plan for wanting to provide a better education system provides me with little confidence that you are thinking about what is best for these children when you are willing to close a school that has more positive Estyn reports than proposed schools you will send these children to. Not to mention the traffic light system you award schools with in Powys.	<p>The Council does not have any concerns over the quality of education provided at any of the alternative schools and believe that pupils will not be disadvantaged.</p> <p>All the alternative schools are regarded as 'self-improving' schools, according to the latest National Categorisation in 2019.</p> <p>Estyn, in its response to this consultation, has concluded that 'It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education in the area.'</p>
14.2.7	The Transformation Strategy 2020-2030 has great plans for education but is short sighted and lacks individuality, something	See 4.1.2.

	that should be a core part of education. Some children need smaller friendly schools to achieve best outcomes. Big school, big classes do not work for everyone and children will get lost in the system. I note your new initiatives and I question how closing our school will help when you are actually making your targets less achievable.	
14.2.8	One aim is to 'Improve access to Welsh-medium provision across all key stages' By closing Churchstoke school which sits on the boarder you will be forcing Powys children for an education in England where no Welsh language will be provided! This will then force pupils to follow to an education in England and consequently diminish the Welsh language further and remove choice for jobs.	See 11.2.1.
14.2.9	Powys are restructuring sixth form provision but keeping all sixth forms open, in a bid to stop students from being lost to England. This undoubtedly has links to our case, and if it is reasonable for the local authority to undertake the whole restructuring of sixth form provision in order to achieve that aim, then keeping border schools open for the same reason, must be reasonable	Comment noted.
14.2.10	Losing pupils across the border should not be an option for a Powys schools transformation project.	Comment noted.
14.2.11	Where did the figure of 91 come from? This I believe was meant for city schools NOT rural	The figure of 91 is defined by the Welsh Government in The Education (Small Schools) (Wales) Order 2014: 'A small maintained school is a school that contains fewer than 91 registered pupils on the third Tuesday in the January'.
14.2.12	You said that a school with below 91 pupils is too small, that's a lot of schools that will have to close in North Montgomeryshire. Will there no longer be any schools in villages?	As above.

		The Council's Strategy for Transforming Education identifies the large number of small schools in Powys as a challenge, however that does not mean that all small schools will close.
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14.3 Active Travel Plan

14.3.1	There seems to be little if any acknowledgement of the Powys CC Active Travel Plan. The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 aims to make Wales a walking and cycling nation. Its purpose is to enable more people to undertake active travel for short journeys instead of using motorised vehicles where it is suitable for them to do so. The Act requires the county council to produce active travel maps and deliver year on year improvements in active travel routes and facilities and requires it to promote active travel journeys in exercising their functions under this Act. CCC is of the view that the business case for closure fails to take into account the obligations of the county council under the Act, and that closure will result in less, not more, active travel within the community.	The Council has recognised that pupils who currently walk to school in Churchstoke would no longer be able to do so, and appreciates that this does not promote active travel. Whilst the Council recognises the importance of active travel, the aim of the proposal is to improve learner entitlement and experience and to provide equity across the system.
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14.4 Climate Emergency Declaration

14.4.1	Powys County Council declared a climate emergency on 24th September 2020. This included an ambition to reduce its carbon emissions to net zero, in line with the Welsh public sector target of 2030. CCC is of the view that the business case for closure fails to take into account its own declaration and the public, and moral, obligations that come with it. It would seem to be at odds with	The Council has recognised in the draft Impact Assessment that there would potentially be a negative impact on the environment due to additional travel.
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	Powys Public Service Board (of which the county council is part) preparation of a county wide Carbon Positive Strategy.	
14.4.2	Taking children away from their home village for school is contrary to PCC's stated agenda to cut carbon emissions, prevents children walking or cycling to school, and increases traffic on rural roads.	As above.

14.5 The Powys Well-being Plan: Towards 2040

14.5.1	The plan, launched by the Public Service Board in July 2018, contains 4 local objectives and 12 well-being steps to achieve those objectives. It sets out what the Public Service Board wants Powys to look like in 2040 and has been developed to provide a long-term vision of well-being in Powys. The community council maintains that the impact of closure on community life will be severe. As a simple, and obvious, example of closure being a designed 'failure of future' is the impact on the Preschool Playgroup which is thriving at full capacity. There appears to be no proposals to cope with the adverse impact on this vital part of community life and no accompanying proposals to cope with transport to alternative setting. CCC is of the view that the business case for closure fails to take into account the Plan or the 4 Local Objectives or the 12 steps, and that it is hard to see how Well-being could be delivered successfully if the focal points of life of a growing community of Churchstoke which the school supports is removed.	Comment noted. The Council has considered the impact of the proposal on the wellbeing goals in the draft impact assessment which will be updated to take account of information gathered during consultation.
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15. COMMENTS ABOUT WELSH GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

15.1 Well-being of Future Generations Act

15.1.1	<p>The Welsh Government has a series of wellbeing goals and ways of working which it required by law (Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015) to be followed by local government. These cover goals of 'A Prosperous Wales', 'A Resilient Wales', 'A Healthier Wales', 'A Wales of Cohesive Communities', 'A Globally Responsible Wales', 'A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language', and 'A More Equal Wales'. The proposal to close the school damages every one of these. CCC believes that closure would - with the additional transport (many pupils currently walk to school but would be unable to do so if the local school closed) – have a negative effect on carbon footprint and sustainability, exacerbated by a reduction in local employment opportunities and income which would drive the economy out of the area into England. It also believes there would be a reduction in social resilience, with the less well-off families not able to access the full range of support which is currently on offer in the area. CCC is of the view that there would be a negative impact on equality, an increase in social division and decreased community cohesion as children all from the same community attend different schools and those with lower socio-economic backgrounds become unable to access the additional activities and support from school. CCC believes closure will have a negative impact on healthy and active lifestyles as children would no longer walk to school. It is also of the view that there will be a loss of Welsh identity and, as the school is an important body in the area which actively promotes and uses the Welsh language, there would be a devastating impact on the Welsh identity and language in the area.</p>	<p>The Council has considered the impact of the proposal on the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 in its draft Impact Assessments which will be updated to take account of information gathered during consultation.</p>
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15.1.2	The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 also requires Welsh administration to 'improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales' and specifically mentions the role that places of education have in meeting this objective. Public bodies have an obligation to set, and meet, their published well-being goals	As above.
15.1.3	Under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, public bodies must demonstrate that they are using the sustainable development principle to shape their work. The proposal to close Churchstoke CP school breaches this. With the change from most pupils walking to school to being driven to school would have a negative impact on sustainability due to additional travel arrangements, with a greatly increased carbon footprint. There would be a negative impact on community involvement and engagement with residents being remote from provision, both physically and emotionally. Lack of local knowledge would have a damaging effect on safeguarding, particularly in view of the cross border split of the community. There would be a drastic reduction in the integration of services into the local community, with the removal of the only Powys service based in the village, Powys County Council involvement with the local community would cease	As above.
15.1.4	The wellbeing of future generations act 2015, requires all levels of Welsh administration to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well being of Wales. To do this they must set and publish well-being objectives. These objectives will show how each public body will work to achieve the vision for Wales set out in the wellbeing goals. Public bodies must then take action to make sure they meet the objectives they set.	As above.

15.1.5	The proposal impedes on the Welsh Government wellbeing goals as additional transport will have a negative effect on sustainability with a vastly increased carbon footprint and a reduction in local green spaces; not to mention a negative impact on healthy and active lifestyles.	As above.
15.1.6	The proposal is contrary to Sustainable Development Principles Under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – Public bodies must demonstrate that they are using the sustainable development principle to 6 shape their work. CCC believes that the proposal to close the school goes contrary to this principle: A change from many pupils walking to school to being driven to school would have a negative impact on sustainability due to additional travel arrangements, with a increased carbon footprint; There would be a negative impact on community involvement and engagement with residents being remote from local service provision, both physically and emotionally; Lack of local knowledge would have a damaging effect on safeguarding, particularly in view of the cross-border division of the community; There would be a reduction in the integration of services into the local community, with the removal of a key Powys service based there, and Powys County Council direct involvement and engagement with the local community would cease.	As above.
15.1.7	Transporting children in multiple directions from the village would be detrimental to the local environment, it would increase the carbon footprint of our children as well as impact the feeling of community in the village as the children will lose the opportunity to connect with residents or learn about their local heritage. Under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, public bodies must demonstrate that they are using the sustainable development principle to shape their work. The proposal to close	As above.

	Churchstoke school breaches this. The negative effects it will have on the community outweigh any positive effects by a mile!!!	
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15.2 Other

15.2.1	PCC would be going against Welsh government's aim for all Welsh children to be educated to the Welsh standards (by closing the school).	The proposal is to close Churchstoke C.P. School and for pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative primary schools in Powys. This is to ensure that they have the opportunity to access the Curriculum for Wales.
15.2.2	Quite apart from the local considerations, the announced closure seems to fly in the face of Wales's nation development framework, which sets out the strategic plan for Wales over the next 20 years.	As above.
15.2.3	The consultation document focuses on the Education Strategy, but fails to address or refer to the broader National Development Framework for Wales. This framework focuses on supporting rural areas, and states that Wales needs to attract and retain younger people through supporting job opportunities and community services in these areas. It is concerned with ensuring that communities are age balanced and any depopulation is reversed thus equalising any social imbalances.	The Council has recognised in its draft Community Impact Assessment that there would be a detrimental impact on the community of Churchstoke should the school closed. This will be updated to include issues raised during consultation.
15.2.4	The Welsh government wants vibrant rural areas were services to meet the needs of those living there in a sustainable way. Strategic and local development plans must develop policies that support rural areas.	The Council recognises that Powys is a largely rural county with a sparse population, and access to services is challenging depending on where people live. However, in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, the planning and development of effective school organisation proposals is crucial to the Welsh Government's goal of transforming education in Wales and providing better educational outcomes. The Council has a duty to

		manage its schools infrastructure to ensure equity across the whole system and to ensure that learner entitlement and experience is improved.
15.2.5	The Welsh Government's definition of a 'small school' as one with less than 91 pupils is completely unrealistic in very rural areas. This number may be fine in the cities and small towns across Wales but in these very rural parts, of which Powys covers 1/3 of the land mass and is almost entirely VERY rural this has to be challenged.	Comment noted.

16. CRITICISM OF POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

16.1	I've witnessed so many inefficiencies in PCC, look at these before selling granny's sliver. If this school closes you will be liable for neglect.	The Council practises sound financial management. Powys County Council always strives to provide value for money in the delivery of its services, constantly seeking out cost savings and efficiencies, including service transformation across all service areas. Audit Wales reviews the Council's financial reporting and sustainability each year and also undertakes value for money reviews. The Auditor General gave an unqualified true and fair opinion on the Council's financial statements for 2019-20 (the latest available currently). Audit Wales also reviewed transformation at Powys County Council during 2019-20 and concluded that overall the Council is well placed to deliver its transformation programme while acknowledging that Covid-19 presents new challenges and risks to the programme.
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16.2	Why should we be expected to pay increasing council tax payments when all you are doing is removing more and more from us.	The aim of the proposal is to improve learner entitlement and experience for all learners and to provide equity across the authority.
16.3	How will people be expected to pay the forever-increasing council tax when you remove essential parts of the community?	As above.
16.4	We pay enough Council Tax – if the Council cut down on the waste there would be plenty of money to finance education – Education is essential.	As above.
16.5	I would not be prepared to continue to pay high council tax if you keep removing such services from an already rural area.	As above.
16.6	From a parent point of view I would hate to think so many children will be thrown out of their routine, I would feel let down by the council for making this decision as being a member of the community paying taxes/council tax in the area to be told our children no longer have a local school where they felt safe and settled at because the council refuse to fund it anymore.	As above.
16.7	I pay my council tax to Powys County Council, not Shropshire, so our children's education should be received in Powys.	The proposal is to close Churchstoke C.P School and for pupils to transfer to alternative schools within Powys. All parents have the right to choose the school in which their children are educated.
16.8	There seems to be no joined up thinking between the departments within Powys County Council with the use of incorrect/outdated information employed to justify the closure plans.	All data was correct at the time of writing and the sources are referenced. The Council recognises that there are housing developments in the area as outlined in the Consultation Document.
16.9	I'm not a statistician but liaising with the environmental department within the Council may throw up conflicting strategies	As above.

	here, I think. Joined up thinking within the strategic arm of any County Council would be useful.	
16.10	There seems to be no cooperative thinking within Powys, why build family homes and then take away a school?	As above.
16.11	The decision of the County Council to seek to close Churchstoke CP school points to a lack of joined up thinking as if each department within the council was instructed to come up with plans to reduce its budget. So the education department thinks that it can cut costs by closing a number of primary schools without consideration of the fact that the planning department has approved the construction of in excess of 60 new homes in the village, which will doubtless bring in children of primary school age.	As above.
16.12	On one hand you encourage more housing, reduction in car journeys, supporting local community, physical activity and the preservation of the Welsh language. By closing the school you make it that people can't walk to school from the new homes you permit which encourages exercise, reduces car journeys and promotes a local community atmosphere.	Comment noted.
16.13	I'm not aware of any political candidates prior to recent election including within its stated objectives the closure of thriving local schools. If the proponents of the suggestion to close the schools truly believe in the correctness of their proposals, they should stand down and invite re election to endorse the plan. If they then retain their position on the council, I think they would then have far more moral justification to see their plans through. Until then, I hope they reconsider their misguided attempts to condemn yet another small community to an unnecessary decline.	Comment noted.

16.14	IT IS UTTER MADNESS - It is time some of these people sitting in offices and who don't even know the area around Churchstoke can make decisions that change the WHOLE COMMUNITY - KNOCK THIS ON THE HEAD NOW AND USE SOME COMMON SENSE	The aim of the proposal is to improve learner entitlement and experience for all learners and to provide equity across the system.
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17. COMMENTS ABOUT THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

17.1 Comments about consultation taking place during the Covid-19 pandemic

17.1.1	The school has been working hard over the last few months to interpret different guidelines to ensure continued safety and high teaching standards, even in the virtual world. I can speak for the entire committee when I express how shocked and disappointed we were that a consultation to close our school has come during a global pandemic, when the wider community cannot get involved in a meaningful way. Eluned Morgan MS, Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Welsh Language released a statement in October 2020 acknowledging the 'mental health impact of coronavirus' and committing that they 'will support people and communities' during these difficult times, however I fail to see how the mental health of our staff, children, parents or wider community has been considered at all. The continuation of the transformation plans for education regardless of the Covid-19 pandemic simply allows the Council to plough through with closures without properly engaging with the community.	The Council recognises that any school reorganisation proposal creates a period of uncertainty and concern for local stakeholders. However, in order to address the issues raised by Estyn regarding the organisation of its schools, it is necessary to continue with the development and consultation on proposals during the current pandemic. The Welsh Government provided non-statutory guidance for local authorities to manage consultations during periods of lockdown. The level and detail of responses received to all recent consultations outlines that stakeholders have engaged fully in the consultations, even though there have been restrictions in place.
17.1.2	The promotion of Children's Mental Health week the day after the announcement of our school closing highlighted the fact that we are still experiencing a global pandemic and children, families,	As above.

	teachers, and the wider community are finding it extremely tough right now let alone trying to find a way to actively consult when we are in lockdown for a fair process of openness and transparency.	
17.1.3	This is not the time to be closing schools in the middle of a pandemic.	As above.
17.1.4	What a time to try and close such a brilliant, hardworking school during a pandemic.	As above.
17.1.5	Why has this all been started in the middle of a pandemic? This consultation should not be taking place now. This should be taking place once life returns to something like normal.	As above.
17.1.6	We are in the middle of a pandemic and the children and families have had so much uncertainty and stress and change to deal with over the last year already, and now to propose this closure within the middle of all this, is frankly, absolutely disgusting.	As above.
17.1.7	How can you even contemplate starting this ridiculous proposal when we are in the middle of a Pandemic? It seems to me that this is why you have decided to do it now.	As above.
17.1.8	The announcement of the intended closure of Churchstoke and the three other schools involved, while the country is in a lockdown due to COVID, smacks a cynical attempt to get an unpopular move through while people are at least able to oppose it.	As above.
17.1.9	The proposed closure is coming at the wrong time. In the middle of a pandemic is not the time to be expecting people to see clearly and make informed decisions.	As above.
17.1.10	I am a concerned mum that feels anger and disappointment that you can take the heart from this community during a Global	As above.

	<p>pandemic. During this process you promised a fair consultation. Well if you believe this to be fair it is no wonder you are making such poor decisions regarding education.</p>	
17.1.11	<p>The timing of this proposal could not have come at a worse time. After the upheaval of home learning during lockdown and the stress that pupils, parents and teachers have experienced over the last 12 months. To now be faced with the school closure is truly shocking.</p>	As above.
17.1.12	<p>This is all happening within the middle of a pandemic, where children and families have been affected more than enough already – this will and is massively impacting on the mental health of all within the village.</p>	As above.
17.1.13	<p>In the Covid situation primaries will have supported children and families as they did in the Foot and Mouth epidemic. This is hardly the time to face parents and children with the trauma of school closure.</p>	As above.
17.1.14	<p>After a very tough year this is the last thing parents want to worry about!</p>	As above.
17.1.15	<p>I am concerned that consultations are taking place during the pandemic when public face-to-face meetings can't take place and some people are unable to use the internet and so may not have been able to feed into this consultation.</p>	As above.
17.1.16	<p>I do not think these consultation should take place in the middle of a pandemic. Our whole village needs to engage in this and as things are there can be no meetings where things can be discussed other than remote meetings. The children of this village have been through one of the most unsettling times of their young lives.</p>	As above.

17.1.17	In order to achieve a fair process it is essential we get our say and can ask questions, despite you continuing to consultation during a global pandemic and government restrictions.	As above.
17.1.18	It is certainly not a good time to even be considering school closure as we are in a pandemic when face to face public consultation is forbidden. Parents and children have undergone huge hardship and difficulties during the past year, with home schooling techniques told on the mental wellbeing of everyone. This added worry is something which the whole community could do without	As above.
17.1.19	I find it cruel that Phil Davies says and can I quote 'Staff at our schools have been through a big change as the council responds to the Covid-19 pandemic and I would like to thank them for their commitment during this extremely difficult period' Then retract that by threatening to close the school and leave these remarkable hardworking staff without a job. Its shameful to consider a school closure at this time and I among many have lost a lot of respect for the Powys council if the decision is made that the school is no longer needed.	As above.
17.1.20	This proposed action should have been postponed for at least 12 months. Likewise for the other schools involved. I have been reliably informed that there will be no consultation with parents, other than through this written process. I do not know why but is completely unacceptable as the parents and children of the school must have first say and their views must be respected. Have we lost sight of The Children Act 1989 – 'the needs of the child are paramount'? The views of the community also should have been able to be heard prior to this more formal consultation process.	As above. There is no requirement within the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code to hold public consultation meetings, and, in fact, the Council had moved away from this approach during the last round of school consultations. A consultation meeting was held with the governors, staff and School Council. A children's version of the consultation document was also available for pupils. Minutes of the meeting with the School Council can be found on page 9.

17.1.21	We have had problems getting any response from Powys County Council due to the fact that staff are working from home due to COVID restrictions.	Comment noted. All Council staff are contactable even though they are working from home.
17.1.22	We were told at the start of the process that undertaking consultation during a pandemic would not affect the ability of the community to engage.	This is correct – the community has made its views known as can be seen in this Consultation Report.

17.2 Comments about consultation meetings

17.2.1	I find it hard to believe that you are not holding a meeting with all involved to discuss the reasons further for the closure of Churchstoke school.	<p>Covid regulations were in place during the consultation period, making it difficult to hold meetings with all stakeholders, and this is not a requirement of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code.</p> <p>However, consultation meetings were held with governors, staff and the School Council during the consultation on Microsoft Teams.</p>
17.2.2	I think you owe staff, parents but mainly the children a chance to discuss this with a meeting. The effect it is having on the pupils is devastating.	As above.
17.2.3	I put it to you that we have a meeting (via zoom/teams) to discuss these points further as I feel it is only fair so as to be able to hold a fair and transparent consultation period.	All stakeholders have been given the opportunity to express their views in this consultation, as evidenced in this Consultation Report.
17.2.4	Why couldn't PCC do a zoom or Microsoft teams call so that people could give their say if they weren't allowed face to face because of the virus.	There is no requirement within the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code to hold public consultation meetings, and, in fact, the Council had moved away from this approach during the last round of school consultations.

		A consultation meeting was held with the governors, staff and School Council. A children's version of the consultation document was also available for pupils. Minutes of the meeting with the School Council can be found on page 9.
17.2.5	We have not been given the chance of a public meeting, even via Zoom. This has caused so much upset and stress within our community, our families and our children, and to be honest I think you should be ashamed of yourselves.	As above.
17.2.6	Why have Powys County Council consistently refused to hold a public meeting, even virtually?	As above.
17.2.7	I am writing to request the date please for the prospective parent/ community meeting in regards to the closure of Churchstoke school?	As above.
17.2.8	I'm writing to ask when a meeting will be held for parents and the community to discuss the potential closure of the school and the catastrophic affect it will have on the school, the children and the community?	As above.
17.2.9	I was wondering when you are going to hold a public meeting (assuming via teams or zoom) for our community to enable a fair & transparent process?	As above.
17.2.10	In regards to the consultation process that has started to close Churchstoke school, I am wondering when there will be an open meeting to discuss this with the parents?	As above.
17.2.11	I am writing to you as a parent of two children currently attending Churchstoke County Primary School, which is currently under consultation to close, to enquire when the meeting between yourselves and the parents of the affected school children and community that was promised will actually be taking place?	As above.

17.2.12	I am writing to you as a parent of 2 children who currently attend Churchstoke school and another child who is due to start there this September. I'm writing to find out when the meeting will be between yourselves and parents.	As above.
17.2.13	Please can you let me know when a public meeting will be held for parents and members of the community regarding the consultation to close Churchstoke Primary School. Obviously I understand that during these unprecedented times this is difficult to do face to face but can something face to face virtually be set up with you so a public and transparent engagement can occur. We were assured this would happen even though the consultation is being held during a global pandemic, as it would in times pre COVID-19.	As above.
17.2.14	Please could you let me know when you will be holding a public meeting for the parents regarding the consultation to close Churchstoke Primary School. I understand a face to face meeting can't go ahead but will something virtually be set up? We were told this would happen even though consultation is being held during a global pandemic, as it would in times pre COVID-19.	As above.
17.2.15	This response [saying there will not be a meeting arranged for parents and the community to ask questions about the consultation] has left me in shock! We were promised a fair consultation and this in my eyes is completely unfair! We are at risk of our school closing and our community being ripped apart, yet you feel it's acceptable for us to be able to just respond! What about all the questions we have? Is our voice not important? It seems you just want to hear us but not actually listen. This hurts as we are just parents and community members wanting to do best by our community, our loved ones and our home.	As above.

17.2.16	I believe if times were different and covid was not making this battle harder then you would be considering a meeting.	As above.
17.2.17	And how about a community meeting like other schools under “consultation” had?	As above.
17.2.18	Powys are also supposed to do a public meeting so they can hear the concerns of the parents and local community regarding closing the school Powys have refused to facilitate any form of meeting.	As above.
17.2.19	You have not given us a fair proposal and prevented us from speaking out in meetings.	As above.
17.2.20	Parents not being able to attend a public meeting (teams or zoom) A limited conversation with teachers and staff and governors and no consideration for making the community aware of the situation who do not contain access to internet.	As above.
17.2.21	I would urge the Local Authority to arrange a meeting with the School’s Governing Body and Community Leaders before any final decision is made regarding the school’s future.	As above.
17.2.22	My worries have been proved correct after the 1 ½ hour teams meeting we were allowed with the transformation team, where we couldn’t even ask all of the questions we had. Also, the lack of engagement with our playgroup (Churchstoke Little Explorers), parents and community. The community have questions that need answering to make informed decisions about the future impact. What came across in the meeting is that you simply do not have time as the transformation team are dealing with so many proposed changes in Powys which is clearly NOT engaging fully with communities affected as you stated when you started.	<p>The consultation meetings held with staff and governors included all relevant officers and wasn’t a meeting with the Schools Transformation Team.</p> <p>A meeting took place with Churchstoke Little Explorers but this wasn’t a formal consultation meeting.</p>

17.3 Comments about consultation with parents

17.3.1	Parent consultation is essential.	Consultation with parents was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code. Parents have responded to the consultation and have made their views known.
17.3.2	No consultation with parents WHY? Covid cannot be blamed, if so then present proposal to close the school should also be postponed until covid is over and people can meet and obtain more up to date review. Makes sense.	As above.
17.3.3	I am disgusted that parents have not had a say. I really don't think the people who decided to close the school have any thought of how this has and will affect our young pupils, who have had the pandemic to deal with and the threat of moving to a new school. Powys "super" schools are not the answer - parents do not want this.	As above.
17.3.4	Under the RISKS section of the document it states that 'Engagement with parents to take place throughout the process'. This is not happening and I refer to my earlier statement where parents understand there will be no consultation process with them. How can this be the correct or indeed moral way to proceed. Surely the children and the parents are the most important people in this process. If the Council believes this is the correct solution for Churchstoke (rather than the best solution for the Council) then it must give valid reasons to gain the support of the parents and children. Without direct consultation this is not possible and leaves parents, in particular, with the view that the decision has been made and this is purely an exercise which the Council are required to go through.	As above.

17.3.5	On page 13 the Consultation Document says as a mitigating action "engagement with parents to take place throughout the process." Why is this not happening? Some other staff feel that peoples Human Rights are being infringed by Powys County Councils refusal to fully engage with the community over the decisions which affect them.	As above.
17.3.6	Why have Powys County Council consistently refused to engage with the wider community, including those directly affected by the proposed changes, such as parents and playgroup? The Consultation Document (p13) says that there will be engagement with parents throughout the process. Why then have you refused to meet with them as part of the consultation process?	As above.
17.3.7	How do our parents get answers to the questions which they have?	The Council is required to provide responses to issues raised during the consultation within this Consultation Report.

17.4 Comments about consultation with pupils

17.4.1	Why have the children have been treated as an afterthought in the process? They barely get a mention in the document, except as data and the offer of a meeting with the School Council only right at the end of the consultation. Shows that their views are not as valuable. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child gives them the right to be treated fairly, how is this fair to leave them as the last in the process?	<p>A meeting with School Council's is a requirement of any school reorganisation proposal, and is not an afterthought. The Consultation Document and draft impact assessments include sections considering the impact on pupils.</p> <p>A children's version of the consultation document was also available for pupils, and the responses provided by pupils are noted on page 9.</p>
17.4.2	You should ask our children what they want for future of their school	As above.

17.5 Comments about consultation with the early years setting

17.5.1	PCC did not have the decency to inform the pre-school setting of the school entering a process to possibly close as they believe it won't be impacted.	The consultation document was sent to Churchstoke Little Explorers on 21 st April 2021. A response was received from the setting as part of this consultation.
17.5.2	You have not informed the pre-school of the consultation.	As above.
17.5.3	Have Little Explorers been consulted during this process?	As above.
17.5.4	You have also overlooked Churchstoke Little Explorers	As above.
17.5.5	As a setting that leases our building from you and also provide early years education on your behalf as a Local Authority we have been very dismayed to have no formal individual correspondence or personal communication regarding the closure of the school and how this affects us as a setting working on your behalf. What a shame we haven't been recognised as an important part in the transformation of education in Powys. We would very much welcome you to visit our setting and discuss your future plans for early years education and childcare in the Churchstoke area.	As above.
17.5.6	Churchstoke little explorers pre-school that rents a building of the school has had no communication of u at all.	As above.
17.5.7	Why have the County Council refused to hold a meeting with play group? Why have you not included Little Explorers in the consultation?	A meeting was held with Churchstoke Little Explorers however this wasn't a formal consultation meeting.
17.5.8	Why were Little Explorers not included in the consultation, and why will no one at Powys County Council answer the questions which they have?	As above.

17.5.9	I find it disgusting that you haven't spoken to Churchstoke Little Explorers, you say that it won't effect them but how can it not when they are on the same site???	As above.
17.5.10	We feel it is very important that our views and concerns at Churchstoke Little Explorers are heard.	As above.

17.6 Suggestion that people didn't know about the consultation

17.6.1	It's a good job that the campaign group has spread the word about what's happening I would have thought PCC would have things on social media and posters or leaflets or something but I haven't seen anything and it seems its been down to the community to give people information, especially those like my nan who wouldn't know how to work social media, the community have been amazing.	The Council publicised the consultation in the local press, on social media, posters were also put up in the village and an information video was also made. All stakeholders outlined in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code were notified and sent a link to the consultation documentation.
17.6.2	I believe that the consultation process for or school has been a farce from the beginning. Powys, inline with their procedures for the consultation where supposed to inform members of the Churchstoke community. But as of yet they have not done this. Any information that has been handed out has been through the efforts of our Save the School campaign group. We have made signs, banners, leaflets and notice boards highlighting the plans that Powys have. The children have even recorded a song along with a video which has been viewed a lot on both facebook and Youtube.	As above.
17.6.3	All the parents like myself are confused to why Churchstoke primary hasn't been added to the consultation PCC website it seems really unfair that with the time given for the consultation that a lot of people wouldn't see it to have there say could you find out why this as happened.	As above. The consultation documents were published on the Council's webpage (https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/10567/Churchstoke-C.P.-School) on 21 st April 2021.

17.6.4	Another concern I would like to address is Churchstoke CP school has not been added to the current consultation on at Powys County Council website even though the consultation started 5 days ago this is unfair as people in the community not directly linked to the school will be unaware of the consultation has begun, and we are limited to the number of days to respond to this consultation it is very unfair.	As above.
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17.7 Comments about visiting the school

17.7.1	No one has visited our school since a brief visit from Lynette Lovell in early March 2020. The school's current Challenge Advisor has never visited, and the most recent appropriate evidence is from Challenge Advisor visits in the 2018 to 2019 academic year (which found much in the way of good practise).	The present School Improvement Advisor has been linked to the school since September 2020, during which time, all support visits have been virtual. The Portfolio Holder for Education and Property visited the governing body at the school.
17.7.2	Have you ever visited Churchstoke? Have you seen the school and the new housing? Why not?	Officers of the Council have visited the school over many years.
17.7.3	Visit Churchstoke to see new houses & proposals.	Comment noted.
17.7.4	The council should visit the school to see the improvement that have been made to the school and pre school.	Comment noted.
17.7.5	Our children and community deserve better treatment than this from Powys CC. You cannot make these life changing decisions about a whole community from your Offices in Llandrindod Wells, without seeing first hand what is on offer in the school and the wider community.	Comment noted.
17.7.6	County Councillors should visit this school on a school day and see how busy, thriving and successful it is. You don't have to be an educator to see the obvious.	Comment noted.

17.7.7	Have they looked at planning records or visited the village during the preparation of the proposal?	Information about housing developments was considered in the development of this proposal, as outlined in the Consultation Document.
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17.8 Comments about the presumption against closing rural schools

17.8.1	The school organisation code clearly states: The code has a presumption for the non-closure of small schools and small schools are to remain open if at all possible. Therefore, you MUST adhere to the guidance given in the School Organisation Code! Keep Churchstoke school open.	<p>The Welsh Government's School Organisation Policy 2018 includes a section entitled: 1.8 Presumption against the closure of rural schools.</p> <p>This outlines the additional considerations that local authorities/proposers need to carry out when formulating and consulting on proposals related to rural schools.</p>
17.8.2	The School Organisation Code includes a presumption against closure of rural schools. Whilst I appreciate this does not mean a rural school cannot be closed, it does require that proposers must show they have considered federation as an alternative with a clear assessment undertaken of its merits and viability. However, the proposal to close Churchstoke CP School consultation document just says that this option has been discounted for us with no detailed analysis of this option. This, again, leaves the proposal to close our school open to judicial review.	The Council's approach is to consider options for federations/mergers within the local geographic vicinity. The nearest Powys school to Churchstoke is Montgomery C. in W. Primary School and, as it is not possible to federate a denominational school with a community school, this option was discounted.
17.8.3	Under the school organisation code, the council have to provide a very strong case for the closure of a small rural school, this document is not such one. It has been written using old data, inaccurate numbers and insufficient evidence.	The Council has complied with the legal process outlined in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code.

17.9 Other comments about the process

17.9.1	Is this even legal?	The Council has complied with the legal process outlined in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code.
17.9.2	The proposal to close Churchstoke CP School from 31 August 2022 as presented to Cabinet on 9 February is based on out of date data, incorrect data and completely misleading information which leaves it wide open to judicial review.	The data in the Churchstoke C.P School Consultation Document was correct at the time of writing and the data sources are referenced.
17.9.3	It feels like this has all been decided already behind closed doors without a chance for local people who will be affected to have a say.	No decisions have been made. Cabinet will consider this consultation report before making a further decision on the proposal.
17.9.4	It is felt that your decision has already been made.	As above.
17.9.5	My first comment is that from reading the consultation document it would appear the decision to close the school has already been made and this is purely a legal exercise.	As above.
17.9.6	The timing of the announcement of the plans and the consultation period (during Covid), the possible vested interests of the proponents of the suggestion (i.e. ownership of coach company with schools contracts) and the fact that annual savings through the closure will not be directly ploughed back into education all raise significant questions re motivations for the proposals.	The aim of the proposal is to improve learner entitlement and experience for all learners, and to provide equity across the system. The Council confirms that there are no vested interest in this proposal.
17.9.7	As there seems to be an unfortunate overlap, between the start of this process and the planning permission/building works now happening in the village, further consideration is surely needed.	The Council is aware of the housing developments in the area.
17.9.8	I really hope that time will be taken to read each and every response you receive.	All responses are read.
17.9.9	Did the Council inform the developers, occupiers and proposed occupiers of the new houses? Did the planning officers take this proposal into consideration when granting planning permission?	All stakeholders that are listed in the Consultation Document received information about the consultation.

		If planning permissions for housing developments were granted prior to February 2021, then planning officers would not have been aware of this proposal.
17.9.10	The way you have approached this consultation has not treated us fairly as members of our community, you allow us to respond to the consultation but give us no opportunity to really engage. Letting us speak but not really be heard!	All issues raised during the consultation are included within this consultation report.

18. COMMENTS ABOUT THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENTATION

18.1 Data

18.1.1	Pupil numbers stated in the document are incorrect, they're not set to decrease over the next 5 years as stated. In fact by September 2022 we are due to have 52 children on roll.	The data in the Churchstoke C.P. School Consultation Document was correct at the time of writing and the data sources are referenced.
18.1.2	Pupil numbers stated in the consultation document are incorrect; they're not set to decrease over the next 5 years as stated. In fact, by September 2022 the school is due to have 52 children on roll not the 21 stated in the document. Numbers are set to continue to rise to at least 58 by 2025. This figure does not take into account possible increase in pupil numbers due to the new housing developments currently taking place in the village.	As above.
18.1.3	The predictions for future pupil numbers are incorrect, it was stated that there would be 22 pupils in the school in January 2021, there are in fact 38 pupils on role. Accurate predictions, taking into account birth rates from all surgeries used by the residents and current population numbers should be in the region of 53 pupils on role by September 2022 and rising. For	As above.

	information this does not include the potential for additional pupils from new housing development.	
18.1.4	The figures you are using for the consultation are for less pupils than we actually have in school and are not for the 52 pupils which we know would be coming to the school in September 2022. This is very misleading for people looking at the consultation papers, if it wasn't for the community sifting through and giving the correct figures would they be considered at all?	As above.
18.1.5	My first comment is that the authors of the report that was published in February had not bothered to check with the headmaster to check on numbers before submitting the report. The school numbers have increased by at least 10 so figures given were inaccurate.	The data in the Churchstoke C.P. School Consultation Document was correct at the time of writing and the data sources are referenced. There are currently 39 pupils on roll at the school.
18.1.6	Powys say in the consultation document that we have 36 pupils attending the school, where in fact we have 38 pupils. We also have 19 children in preschool who will also attend Churchstoke school.... Our School is growing!	As above.
18.1.7	The proposal to close Churchstoke CP School consultation document states that the number of pupils at the school is currently 36 and that 'they are not expected to increase significantly for the foreseeable future'. I strongly challenge this statement.	The Council acknowledges that pupil numbers are increasing, but this is not a significant increase according to the finance projections in the Consultation Document.
18.1.8	Create an updated and more accurate forecast of pupil numbers over the next five years with more houses in the village being built.	The data in the Consultation Document was correct at the time of writing and the data sources are referenced. Whilst Powys' projections do not include housing developments, the Council notes the comments about

		the current and planned housing developments, not only in Churchstoke but also in the wider area.
18.1.9	The pre-school (run on the site of the school) has 22 children currently attending, we are able to provide accurate figures for the next at least 3 upcoming years of intake for the school.	Comment noted.
18.1.10	The surplus capacity of the school will automatically decrease with the increase in pupil numbers; surplus capacity at the school is currently 47% not 50% as stated in the consultation document. This will reduce again to 27 % by September 2022 and below 19% by 2025.	The Council recognises that surplus places at the school will decrease as pupil numbers increase.
18.1.11	The cost per pupil figures quoted in the consultation document are historic, based on old pupil numbers. The predicted figure for Sept 22 is £4600, very close to the Powys average.	<p>The cost per pupil at Churchstoke C.P. School according to the Council's Section 52 Budget Statement is as follows:</p> <p><u>2020/2021</u> Churchstoke C.P. School - £7,475 Powys Average: £4,264</p> <p><u>2021/2022</u> Churchstoke C.P. School - £6,932 Powys Average: £4,617</p> <p>It is not clear how the predicted figure of £4,600 has been calculated.</p>
18.1.12	As our pupil numbers are rising again it is estimated that our cost per pupil will be around £4600 per pupil which is close to the Powys average figure.	As above.

18.1.13	<p>Churchstoke CP School's funding per pupil of £7,475 quoted in the consultation document based on a number on roll of 25 (January 2020) is also out of date. Churchstoke delegated budget share per pupil for 2021/22 based on a number on roll of 36 (November 2020), is £6,666 with a Powys average (Primary) of £4,641. Data for other Powys primary schools shows that a school of 49 on roll receives £5,244 per pupil, and a school of 71 on roll receives £4,369 per pupil (this is lower than the Powys average). Whilst I appreciate the funding formula is not wholly driven by numbers on roll, it is reasonable to expect similar per pupil funding for Churchstoke CP School in the future as our numbers grow.</p>	<p>The cost per pupil at Churchstoke C.P. School according to the Council's Section 52 Budget Statement is as follows:</p> <p><u>2020/2021</u> Churchstoke C.P. School - £7,475 Powys Average: £4,264</p> <p><u>2021/2022</u> Churchstoke C.P. School - £6,932 Powys Average: £4,617</p> <p>As pupil numbers grow the cost per pupil tends to reduce.</p>
18.1.14	<p>FSM at Churchstoke is underestimated in the consultation document and has actually increased dramatically since the completion of 23 social houses in the area. The percentage of FSM now stands at 29% a huge increase to the figures given in the document. Not only this but there has been a great increase in children with ALN also, 29% again a huge increase to their figures stated in the document.</p>	<p>The latest information from Teachers Centre (23/09/21) shows that 26.3% of pupils are eligible for FSM at Churchstoke C.P School and this has increased significantly since January 2020.</p>
18.1.15	<p>The figures for Free School Meals that they have used are wrong, being based on the PLASC data from January 2020. They have 8% (3 pupils) but our actual current FSM is 29%.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
18.1.16	<p>The Consultation Document, on page 48, says that Montgomery school currently has 0% FSM. Churchstoke has 29%. Is this figure for Montgomery correct, and if so what experience does Montgomery school have a meeting the needs of these vulnerable children? We have 29%, not 8% as stated in the consultation document.</p>	<p>The latest information from Teacher Centre (23/09/21) shows that there are no children eligible for free school meals at Montgomery Church in Wales Primary School. This school is able to meet the needs of other vulnerable groups of learners, therefore the council</p>

		has no concern that the school would not be able to support these pupils.
18.1.17	On add page 40 of the proposal document it states that the admission number for Montgomery school is 21, but when applying for a school place on page 26 it shows the admission number for Montgomery is 17, meaning there is no room in every year group for our children.	<p>The Council accepts that there is an error on page 40 of the Consultation Document – the correct admission number for Montgomery C. in W. School is 17.</p> <p>The school has a capacity of 119 and there are currently 88 pupils on roll, meaning that there are 31 places available at the school.</p>
18.1.18	Why have you stated in the CD that Montgomery school has an admission number of 21 when your Admissions 2021/22 document referred to (Powys County Council Admission Arrangements and Information 2021/22] states that it is 17?	As above.
18.1.19	In the consultation document (p41) Projected pupil numbers for Shropshire schools include ‘with housing’ projections. Why have you not used ‘with housing’ projections for Churchstoke and Montgomery pupil projections? Similarly, on p42 why have you used current capacity data and not forecast capacity with new housing data? The inclusion of housing is obviously a key point for us PCC have not acknowledged the level of housing development, both in construction and planned. It is essential that any decision taken now must be fit for purpose in the longer term. Churchstoke is designated a large village in the LDP and is therefore prioritised for housing and economic development. In view of the significant housing developments in the area, why have Housing and Community Development not been engaged in the proposal? The fact that PCC have failed to engage Housing and Community Development is a failing in the document as they will have the plans to develop social housing across the county and therefore in Churchstoke (and	<p>Powys’ projections do not include housing developments.</p> <p>The Council is aware of the current and planned housing developments in the area and information was supplied by the Housing Department and from the LDP.</p> <p>The Council acknowledges that a period of informal engagement with the school would have provided more local information.</p>

	Montgomery). That said, a simple query to planning would reveal both the fact that as a designated large village and with the current level of development / planning both community and therefore school are set to grow. Why did no one even talk to the school before drafting the proposal so that a lot of the inaccuracies and out of date information could have been corrected before issuing the documents? The process has been conducted as a remote paper exercise when local knowledge could have been obtained at the start.	
18.1.20	In the CD p25 why do Pupil numbers for some schools differ to those available via reference 8, despite at most a month difference in stated dates.	The information listed on the 'Get information about schools' service from GOV.UK is updated in line with Pupil Census requirements in England and will change at different viewpoints. All data was correct at the time of writing.
18.1.21	Why are some of the Shropshire data including income and cost per pupil figures incorrect when compared to the references?	As above.
18.1.22	Most of the Data used in this Consultation is either incorrect or out of date.	All data was correct at the time of writing and the sources are referenced.
18.1.23	Trying to close a school based on inaccurate and historical data is foolish.	As above.
18.1.24	Officers in the Council have access to current data but chose not to include it in the consultation document, opting instead to include out of date data to make their case for closure. This is underhand at best.	As above.
18.1.25	Why does the report have out of date information in it? With something this important you should do a better job. Did you cut and paste it – it's rubbish.	As above.
18.1.26	Why are the pupil numbers, the predictions of future numbers and the numbers for Additional Learning Needs and Free School	As above.

	Meals so out of date and inaccurate? The paper was produced this spring, so up to date numbers and details were easily available via Teacher Centre.	
18.1.27	Why have the transformation team continued to use out-of-date data in the Consultation Document in relation to Number on Roll, Free School Meals, funding per pupil, surplus places despite the fact they were quite clearly informed that the data has dramatically changed in the past year? Why have you chosen not to use current data? Why have data from sometimes Jan 2020, sometimes Nov 2020, but nothing up to date. We informed the Transformation Team of the deficiencies in their data at the initial meeting, but this has been completely ignored. The deficiencies in the data mean that the cabinet had been misled when they approved going forward with the proposal. There is no consistency in the data used (sometimes schools that have already been closed are included in cumulative data, but at other times they are excluded.)	As above.

18.2 Costings

18.2.1	In the Consultation Document (p27 / 28) - Is the funding formula saving of £61,000 based on 52 Churchstoke pupils at September 2022? If not then on how many? How many alternative schools for our children have been included in the formula calculations? We have repeatedly asked for details on how the calculation has been made but have not received the information requested. How much has the consultation process cost and, although it is a one off cost, why is this not included in the finance calculation? Does this include the cost of engaging lawyers and barristers if there is a legal challenge to any of the outcomes via Judicial Review?	<p>The formula funding saving included in the consultation document was based on the 39 funded pupils moving from Churchstoke CP School to Montgomery CinW school, as used in the 2020-21 funding formula. Had 52 pupils been used in the calculations, transferring from one school to another as above, the funding formula saving figure would not change.</p> <p>The pupil numbers projected by the school for September 2021 was 41 but actual pupil numbers were 38. The school's pupil number projections for</p>
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		<p>September 2022 as per the submitted and approved budget is 51 but these are yet to be confirmed.</p> <p>It was assumed that all pupils would go to Montgomery C. in W. Primary School. It is recognised that there isn't sufficient capacity for all the pupils from Churchstoke C.P. School at Montgomery C. in W. Primary School. However, it is highly likely that not all parents would choose Montgomery C. in W. Primary School if Churchstoke C.P. School closed.</p> <p>The costings do not include any legal costs. Savings estimates are based on the best information available at the time they are calculated and are subject to change for example due to changes in pupil numbers, parental choice, staff changes etc. The calculations are reviewed by a range of officers and sensitivity analysis is also carried out.</p> <p>The consultation process costs are minimal and are related to printing hard copies on request and postage.</p>
18.2.2	Your estimated transport costs are £19,000; our estimated transport costs are £76,000+.	<p>Free home-to-school transport is only provided to a pupils' nearest school if further than 2 miles away, therefore if a parent was to choose for their child(ren) to attend a school that isn't their nearest school, then the parent is responsible for getting the child(ren) to and from school.</p> <p>It was estimated that it would cost an additional £100 per day to transport the children that required the home</p>

		to school transport to Montgomery C. in W. Primary School on top of the current transport arrangements. See also 10.2.1, 10.2.3 and 10.2.17.
18.2.3	The transport costs used in the consultation document to calculate the £50,000 savings from closure of the school seem to be wildly underestimated. Under the proposal, the cost of transport for pupils has been factored in at an additional £19000 which is essentially an additional mini bus to the one already used by the school. However, if the proposal were to go ahead, pupils could reasonably decide to be educated at either Montgomery, Chirbury or Bishops Castle which are in three different directions. To utilize 2 mini bus to transport 30-50 pupils in three different directions does not seem feasible. Add to this the few pupils who currently attend Churchstoke CP School that would require specific transport requirements due to special needs and the possibility that some pupils may opt for other schools than the 3 listed above the additional (and more realistic) costs due to transport will wipe out the calculated savings from the closure.	See 18.2.3, 10.2.1, 10.2.3 and 10.2.17.
18.2.4	The school transport costs are also grossly underestimated at £19000; after consulting a bus company, they quoted a cost of around £10 per pupil per day. 190 days of school attendance. £1900 per pupil per year 38 pupils=£72200 also not in the document is the cost of transport of the 20 pupils travelling to Shropshire schools, which PCC will have to pay transport for as their schools will become the closest schools if Churchstoke closes. 20 pupils at 1900=£3800 transport being nearer £110000 all going against PCC active transport policy and low carbon policy Churchstoke is a fast-developing village with 26 houses just built with 16 school children living there.	See 18.2.3, 10.2.1, 10.2.3 and 10.2.17.

18.2.5	<p>Powys have also vastly underestimated the transport costs for getting the pupils who will be in the school in September 2022 to their new schools. Their assumption is that all pupils will travel to the same school but they have not accepted the fact there are at least three different nearest available schools to get the pupils too from different parts of the church stoke catchment. On top of this there would be the need for designated taxi provision for some pupils with ALN who could not use normal school transport. In addition, there are at least 21 children resident in the village who already travel to Shropshire for their primary school education, and, if Churchstoke word to close, Powys County Council would have to provide free transport for them as their current school would become the nearest available school to their home. Powys Are in fact looking at having to provide free transport to as many as 73 children to three different schools in September 2022, including two in Shropshire. This simply cannot be done for the figure quoted in the consultation document (an additional £19,000 above current costs). the real figure would be at least £76,000 extra, not including the ALN costs, and would probably be higher. The costs involved with transport would wipe out the indicated savings and there would be no revenue savings to the council. Quite the opposite, it would cost the council a considerable amount of money every year if they closed the school and the amount is only going to increase as pupil numbers rise.</p>	See 18.2.3, 10.2.1, 10.2.3 and 10.2.17.
18.2.6	<p>The additional costs of transport if Churchstoke School closed are quoted in the consultation document as being £19,000 per annum. Powys' Finance Officer has confirmed this is based on 25 pupils being transported to Montgomery Primary School. This figure has been hugely underestimated. In September 2022 (the point the school would close) transport would be required for 52 pupils from Churchstoke CP School to several alternative schools</p>	See 18.2.3, 10.2.1, 10.2.3 and 10.2.17.

	(as there is not enough capacity in Montgomery for all of our children) PLUS around 25 primary age children who currently live in the Churchstoke catchment but for reasons such as parents' work and family support choose to take their child to neighbouring schools (mainly Bishop's Castle Primary and Chirbury Primary schools in England). If Churchstoke CP School closes, in many cases these neighbouring schools become the child's closest school and so the Council would be responsible for picking up the transport costs for these pupils too.	
18.2.7	By September 2022 there will be 52 pupils (these a 'named children' as they are in the village now!) All of these will have to be transported to their schools at no cost by PCC in addition to those residing in the catchment who choose other schools at present (Circa 20) PCC indicate a cost of £100 per pupil per day so this transport would cost over £1m per school year.	The number of pupils predicted for September 2022 as per the budget approved by the Governing Body and submitted to the authority is 41. See 18.2.3.
18.2.8	The Council will save the cost of running costs the school but there will be redundancy costs to factor in and all the administrative costs.	Comment noted.

18.3 Comments about the Strategic Context

18.3.1	The 2019 Powys LA Estyn inspection report is being quoted as the source of closure issues, but the only recommendations around organisation of provision is non maintained, post 16, Welsh medium education and secondary education. Not maintained by primary schools. The report talks about rationalisation, but not wholesale closure, and the focus is secondary schools, not primary. The closure of rural primary schools is not an Estyn recommendation.	The Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys was developed as a response to Estyn's criticism of the Council. However, it was also shaped by a significant engagement exercise which developed the Case for Change. This concluded that the Council has too many small schools with concern about inequity across the sector.
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18.4 Comments about ‘Why change is needed in Churchstoke?’

18.4.1	Leadership of the school is challenged by implication, and that it is stated that in the alternative school the head teacher would have more non-contact time and suggested that the school would be better managed as a result. What evidence do you have that this reduces the workload (as there are more pupils and staff to manage therefore more heads to deal with and higher workload) and what evidence do they have that there is a problem with leadership and management at Churchstoke.	The School Improvement Team works with a range of schools across Powys. The schools where the headteacher has dedicated leadership time and a limited teaching commitment have more time to focus on leadership and management issues in their school.
18.4.2	If the building is in poor condition this is the responsibility of the Council since it owns the building and would benefit from the closure and subsequent sale. On reading through the Consultation Document none of the proposed alternative schools are in better condition than Churchstoke	The Council recognises that the quality of accommodation at the alternative schools named in the document are the same standard as Churchstoke C.P. School.
18.4.3	In the consultation document on page 9 it states that the building of Churchstoke County primary school is band C which is poor, and yet the alternative is to send the children to another school which is also in the same building condition? How is this improving learner entitlement and provision?	The Council recognises that the condition grading of Montgomery C. in W. Primary School is the same as that for Churchstoke C.P. School. However, improving learner entitlement and provision refers to the fact that pupils would transfer to a larger school and the benefits of a larger school are described elsewhere in this report.
18.4.4	To enable pupils to attend schools with better quality accommodation. CCC believes this is simply not the case, as the school identified to receive Churchstoke pupils is in the same category as Churchstoke School as regards building condition. These alternative schools have accommodation the rated as the same as Churchstoke School.	The Council recognises that the quality of accommodation at the alternative schools named in the document are the same standard as Churchstoke C.P. School.

18.5 Comments about the reasons for the proposal

18.5.1	<p>To specify the first reason to close Churchstoke as ‘would address the low numbers’ is no reason at all. Whilst I appreciate the need for every school to do its best to be financially viable, cost alone cannot be the reason.</p>	<p>Low pupil numbers has been identified as a challenge for Churchstoke C.P. School and, if the school closed, then the issue of low pupil numbers would be addressed.</p> <p>The aim of the proposal is to improve entitlement and experience for all learners. As stated in the Council’s Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-30, the Council faces a challenge due to the high proportion of small schools in the county and the lack of equity amongst schools. Churchstoke C.P. School teaches children in two classes of mixed aged groups. With such low pupil numbers the teacher-pupil ratio is notably different to many other schools in the area, and due to the Council’s funding formula, the school’s funding per pupil is higher than the Council’s average. This does not provide equity across the education system – teachers in larger schools are required to provide the same education as smaller schools for less funding per pupil. Powys’ Strategy is intended to improve equity across the education system and to ensure an improvement for every pupil’s learning entitlement and experience.</p>
18.5.2	<p>To reduce the Council’s overall surplus capacity in primary schools - You must maintain some surplus capacity for any new pupils and anyway, the primary importance is to maintain a local presence, to maintain local schools as a part of the community. We are seeing the gradual destruction of local villages. The Post Offices are closing, churches are being closed (for the same reason as being “unviable”)</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>

18.5.3	To provide a revenue saving to the Council I suggest this is what it is all about. I understand the need for councils to control an ever shrinking budget but education is critical. The need to maintain our local communities is critical otherwise you will only be left with a homogeneous region with no identity.	The driver for the Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys is equity of educational provision across the authority, to improve learner entitlement and improve best learning outcomes/education, not solely to save money. Closing the school would provide a revenue saving to the Council in terms of the overall schools budget.
18.5.4	To enable pupils to be taught in classes with peers of similar ages - This is not a problem (the teachers are perhaps better qualified to comment on that) mixing classes stretch the younger pupils	The Council's view is that there are challenges in delivering education in very small schools, as noted in 4.1.2.
18.5.5	To enable pupils to attend schools with better quality accommodation. I doubt if they see it like that. Has anyone asked them where they would like to go to school?	The Council recognises that the quality of accommodation at the alternative schools named in the document are the same standard as Churchstoke C.P. School. The Council has consulted with pupils and their views have been recorded in this consultation report.
18.5.6	The Consultation Document on p11 states 'pupils would attend schools with better quality accommodation' but Montgomery School's building condition is also rated as 'Poor'. Can you explain how it is better accommodation than Churchstoke's building? Both Churchstoke and Montgomery have identical building ratings for condition (C) and suitability (B/C). The report used so outdated that we have had had our new disabled entrance and disabled facilities built.	As above. The Council commissioned a new condition survey in 2020 which concluded that the school's overall condition was a C-. This survey did not consider suitability therefore was not included in the Consultation Document. Other schools named in the document have not yet received an updated condition assessment, therefore the 2009 data was used for all schools, including Churchstoke C.P. School.
18.5.7	Looking at the advantages and disadvantages table on page 12 of the consultation document, it has been stated that closure of the	Due to the low number of pupils at Churchstoke C.P. School, the Council's view is that the impact on other

<p>school would have a minimal impact on any other school, where is the evidence for this? Churchstoke County Primary school has 32% FSM (free school meals) the alternative school Montgomery has 0% FSM, how would this rise in FSM not impact other schools that are not, nor their community prepared and supported for this? It also states that there is a 'possible loss of early years provision on the Churchstoke School site' this is not a possible, this would be a definite. Little explores shares its facilities with the school, closing the school would mean that parents who do not drive would not be able to send their children to Pre school, and if Powys offers transport for pre school, this takes away from whatever estimates in savings (£50,000) Powys were hoping to make.</p>	<p>schools would be minimal. Montgomery C. in W. Primary School is able to meet the needs of other vulnerable groups of learners, therefore the Council has no concern that the school would not be able to support pupils eligible for free school meals.</p> <p>The Council recognises that there could be an impact on Churchstoke Little Explorers should the school close.</p>
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18.6 Options considered

<p>18.6.1 The consultation document states that the federation option was discounted because there are no other CP schools in the vicinity. There are in fact 3 CP schools under 10 miles away from Churchstoke, and 6 more within 15. Whilst there are many examples of successful federations covering distances between schools greater than 10 miles in Shropshire, the Carno, Llanbrynmair and Glantwymyn federation is an example in Powys. The distance between Carno and Glantwymyn is greater than 10 miles. Do you not see this as a successful federation in Powys? Can we have evidence of why federation has been discounted as an option for us, as in our opinion, and that of others who are advising us, this is in contravention of the School Organisation Code?</p> <p>The 3 schools within 10 miles are Berriew, Leighton and Abermule. The 5 further are Guilsfield, Trewern, Maesyrrhandir,</p>	<p>When considering options for schools, the Council considers schools in close geographic proximity, and the closest Powys school to Churchstoke is Montgomery C. in W. School. It is not legally possible to federate a denominational school and a community school and therefore federation options were not considered.</p> <p>Carno, Llanbrynmair and Glantwymyn federation was proposed by the schools themselves following a review of schools in the catchment area, although the Council was supportive. These three schools are neighbouring schools within the same geographic locality.</p>
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	Hafren, treowen, Pengloddfa. The School Organisation Code states both that there must be a strong reason for closure and that all other options, including federation, must be properly considered. We have no evidence that this has been done.	Whilst there would be some benefits to federating Churchstoke C.P. School and another C.P School, this alone would not address all the challenges facing the school, as outlined in the Consultation Document. The school would continue to have low pupil numbers, a high cost per pupil, building condition issues. Federation may improve leadership at the school, but the headteacher arrangements would be a decision for the federation's governing body.
18.6.2	The School Organisation Code says that federation with local schools must be considered. This appears to have been blatantly overlooked as it has been said that there are no schools to which Churchstoke could federate with. Quite the contrary, Leighton, Berriew, and Abermule are all within 10 miles so would be ideal for federation	As above.

18.7 SWOTs

18.7.1	In the consultation document (p50) why does the SWOT analysis say that Option 1 - continue as we are - would not reduce surplus places? It stands to reason that as our numbers grow our surplus places reduce. Why does the same table also state that Option 1 would not address the high budget per pupil? Again, it stands to reason that as our numbers grow our funding per pupil reduces. Can you explain your statements? How many surplus places are there in the new Welshpool C in W school and in the planned Ysgoll Gymraeg y Trallwng, and how does this fit in with the aim of reducing surplus places in Powys primary schools?	The SWOT analysis was based on the birth rate pupil projections which shows that pupil numbers are projected to decrease therefore the reasoning was that the status quo would not address surplus places or high budget per pupil. The new schools in Welshpool have a high number of surplus places in order to ensure space for future growth.
18.7.2	In the consultation document, on page 50, both Option 3 and Option 4 state as a weakness that Churchstoke pupils would still	'Churchstoke pupils would still be taught separately' refers to the fact that with Option 3 and Option 4, pupils

	be taught separately. Can you explain why this is a weakness? Is there any problem with teaching and provision at Churchstoke, and if so why have we not been told about it?	would continue to be taught in 2 mixed age classes of four years. The Council's view about the challenge that gives teachers is outlined in previous sections of this document. Section 1.2 of this report outlines the Council's views about the quality of education at Churchstoke C.P. School.
18.7.3	In the Consultation Document, on page 52 option five states as its strengths 'pupils would be taught in classes with similar ages'. pupils are taught in classes with similar ages in Churchstoke and we teach on ability rather than just age, which we argue is easier to deal with mixed ages. Can you explain how alternative Powys schools, teaching in age groups, provides a better education for our children and what evidence do you have for the statement.	As above.
18.7.4	In the Consultation Document, on p52 - Can you explain why you have not included in Option 5 weaknesses "there would be no access to CP locally? You mentioned it in Option 4.	The Council accepts that 'there would be no access to CP locally' should have been included as a weakness in Option 5 as well as Option 4.
18.7.5	There appears to be selectivity when the strengths and weaknesses have been selected, one which suits the picture PCC want to paint.	The SWOTs have been developed in a completely objective manner.

18.8 Risks

18.8.1	The risk table on pg 13 of the consultation document identifies the risk of insufficient capacity in nearest schools as medium however the likelihood is actually closer to high as there is documented development and planning permission in both Montgomery,	Comment noted.
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	Chirbury and Bishops Castle which has not been factored into the capacity numbers of the table on pg 24/ 25.	
18.8.2	The document states that there is a medium risk of insufficient capacity at local alternative provision, so children would be transported to several schools. What kind of scattergun approach is this? How does that support learner entitlement and experience? How does that ensure 'high-quality, inspiring education'? Are siblings going to end up at different schools? If children are unhappy at school, they will not learn.	The proposal is to close Churchstoke C.P. School and for pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools in Powys. For the majority of pupils in Churchstoke, the nearest school in Powys would be Montgomery C. in W. Primary School.
18.8.3	The second risk of parents wanting to take their children to Shropshire instead of Powys is again medium, when it should actually be high, as the majority of parents surveyed have stated that they would take their children to Shropshire, a very small portion would go to Powys, this would impact significantly on the transportation costs, estimates of one bus would not be accurate and Powys would be needing at least 3 buses to transport children out of county, not including the SEN children at the school who require one to one support. This would also impact heavily on the experience of the Welsh language and culture in the area.	Comment noted.

18.9 Other comments suggesting there are inaccuracies in the document

18.9.1	It's completely outrageous that you have been able to produce such a document that does not even contain factual and truthful information. I am aware these areas have been brought to your attention however you have chosen not to amend your document are therefore this cannot be classed as a FAIR consultation.	The Consultation Document complies fully with the requirements of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code. All data was correct at the time of writing and the sources are referenced.
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	Welsh Government and Powys promise to attempt every possible alternative before even considering closure however this has been dismissed and your possible options drawn up within this document that is based on fiction not FACTS	
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18.10 Other comments about the consultation document

18.10.1	In the consultation document, it states that closure of the school "would not directly affect the early years provision" I'm afraid I would have to disagree with you there! have you visited our site? do you know our set up? I would suggest not, as we currently are open 5 days a week and we share facilities with the school such as: Going to school each day for dinner (this gives children the chance to be provided with a hot, freshly cooked meal); Have access to their disabled toilets; Share the Schools 'staff toilets'; We also use the school grounds to be able to carry out forest school activities.	The Council has recognised in the draft Community Impact Assessment that there could be an impact on early years provision in Churchstoke should Churchstoke C.P. School close. This will be updated to include information gathered during consultation.
18.10.2	The proposal to close Churchstoke CP School consultation document states that the closure of the school 'would not directly affect the early years' provision'. This is completely untrue. Little Explorers is currently at capacity with 22 children attending. It is situated on the school grounds and shares dining facilities and staff toilets with the school as well as outdoor space. Closing the school will result in the inevitable closure of the pre-school which has developed significantly over recent years to be the high quality, much valued provision that it is today.	As above.
18.10.3	I also note that the consultation documents highlight 'implementation of the proposal to close the school would not directly affect the early years provision which is available on site, it is possible that this could impact on the provision's viability in	As above.

	the longer term.’ As there is no local equivalent space for the childcare setting and that a proposed benefit to Powys is the capital derived from the sale of the school estate, it does seem inevitable that there will be a direct impact on the early years setting at some point.	
18.10.4	You state “if the school was to close pupils would be attending schools better equipped to meet the requirements of the national curriculum”, although your consultation document confirms that the schools proposed for our children to transfer to, are no better equipped in this regard.	Teachers with no or low teaching commitments have more dedicated leadership time than that available to the headteacher of Churchstoke C.P. School, who has a high teaching commitment. Therefore, they are able to plan for changes, such as Curriculum for Wales, the ALN Act and organise monitoring processes for the school around their leadership time. They are also able to release other staff to conduct monitoring and take part in professional learning, in line with their leadership responsibilities. This is much more difficult for a headteacher with a high teaching commitment.
18.10.5	The Consultation Document states (p6) that closing our school will improve learner entitlement and experience. Could you please detail what improvements we would see and provide evidence of better outcomes for our children? Without evidence this is just opinion. Do those writing the proposal or making the decision have evidence or any understanding of standards in Churchstoke, and to what depth. Even our challenge adviser has never visited the school. What input has there been to the consultation document from Challenge Advisors? Who provided the information which informed this statement, and where did they get their information from?	As above. All school reorganisation proposals, including this one, are developed with significant input from the Challenge Advisors and using evidence from the termly reports.
18.10.6	On page 8 of the Consultation Document it states that closing our school will improve learner entitlement and experience. Can	Teachers with no, or low, teaching commitments have more dedicated leadership time than that available to

	<p>you detail what improvements we will see and provide evidence of better outcomes for our children? What evidence for provision or standards in Churchstoke are they using? What schools are they comparing this to, and how was that evidence obtained? What for instance, is Montgomery offering above and beyond what we detailed in the impact assessment questionnaire? Or is this just a sweeping opinion statement, based on no evidence whatsoever? When we produce self evaluation documentation, we have to back up all of our statements with evidence. Why is this not the same for the closure proposals?</p>	<p>the Headteacher of Churchstoke C.P. School, who has a high teaching commitment. Therefore, they are able to plan for changes, such as Curriculum for Wales and the ALN Act, and organise monitoring processes for the school around their leadership time. They are also able to release other staff to conduct monitoring and take part in professional learning, in line with their leadership responsibilities. This is much more difficult for a Headteacher with a high teaching commitment.</p>
18.10.7	<p>On page 10 of the consultation document states “because pupil numbers in each year group are small, it is more difficult to ensure pupils are appropriately challenged.” Can you explain the evidence behind this statement? Or is this just a sweeping opinion statement, based on no evidence whatsoever? When we produce self evaluation documentation, we have to back up all of our statements with evidence. Why is this not the same for the closure proposals?</p>	<p>Non-teaching headteachers have more dedicated leadership time due to their not having a class responsibility. Therefore, they are able to organise monitoring processes for the school around their leadership time. They are also able to release other staff to conduct monitoring, in line with their leadership responsibilities. This is much more difficult for a headteacher with a high teaching commitment such as the headteacher at Churchstoke C.P. School.</p>
18.10.8	<p>The Consultation Document (p18] states ‘alternative CP provision is available within 10 miles’. Will you provide free transport to these schools bearing in mind you are depriving parents of any choice closer than this. The Powys Transport policy says no! If these CP schools are too far away for us to federate with, why are you saying that it is appropriate for our children to travel to these schools on a daily basis?</p>	<p>It is factually correct that alternative C.P. provision is available within ten miles of Churchstoke C.P. School. However, free home-to-school transport would only be provided to the child’s nearest alternative school in Powys, and in the case of the majority of Churchstoke pupils, this would be Montgomery C. in W. Primary School.</p>
18.10.9	<p>On page 18 of the consultation document states that larger schools ‘have an improved ability to monitor pupil progress.’ Can you explain why this is and what evidence you have for that statement? Or is this just a sweeping opinion statement, based</p>	<p>Non-teaching headteachers have more dedicated leadership time due to their not having a class responsibility. Therefore, they are able to organise monitoring processes for the school around their</p>

	on no evidence whatsoever? When we produce self evaluation documentation, we have to back up all of our statements with evidence. Why is this not the same for the closure proposals?	leadership time. They are also able to release other staff to conduct monitoring, in line with their leadership responsibilities. This is much more difficult for a headteacher with a high teaching commitment such as the headteacher at Churchstoke C.P. School.
18.10.10	On page 20 the consultation document states that Montgomery school would be better placed to develop provision which meets the requirements of the new curriculum. Can you explain why and what evidence you have for that statement? Or is this just a sweeping opinion statement, based on no evidence whatsoever? When we produce self evaluation documentation, we have to back up all of our statements with evidence. Why is this not the same for the closure proposals?	See above. Revisiting the four purposes and forming a vision for Curriculum for Wales remain a priority for the school (June 2021).
18.10.11	It is stated that the total number of pupils attending Churchstoke is relatively small, and transfer would not have a significant impact on nearby primary schools in Powys. What about if the pupils moving in fill all available spaces in a year group up to the admissions number in Montgomery, then further families arrive in Montgomery? How would those pupils be accommodated?	Should Churchstoke C.P. close and Montgomery C. in W. Primary School becomes the nearest Powys school for Churchstoke pupils, then they would automatically be included within the catchment area of Montgomery C. in W. Primary School. All applications for places at the school would be treated equally. If the school becomes over-subscribed, then the Council would consider applications based on the over-subscription criteria in the Council's Admissions Policy.
18.10.12	The Consultation Document, on page 22 says that the children will have access to additional resources at the alternative schools. What are the additional resources that our children will have access to at alternative schools that they don't have access to at Churchstoke School? Again, another sweeping statement backed by absolutely no evidence. What is it that we are lacking in Churchstoke? Can they guarantee additional	As 18.10.4

	resources, regardless of which Powys school the children end up in?	
18.10.13	On p23 regarding vulnerable groups the Consultation Document states that 'in the short term these pupils would need to transfer to alternative schools'. What is meant by this? Exactly what is meant by "in the short term"? How long is "the short term"? How many alternative schools? All these alternative schools to their peers, or the same alternative schools that their peers would be attending? Are the alternative schools suitable to meet their needs?	<p>The reference to short-term in the context of the impact on vulnerable groups is meant to express that the impact would be short-term as pupils would be supported in their transition to alternative schools, therefore it is not expected that the impact of change would be long-term.</p> <p>The term 'alternative schools' refers to those schools outlined in the Consultation Document and reflects that parents have the right to choose any school for their child(ren).</p> <p>The Council does not have any concern that any of the alternative schools would be able to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with ALN.</p>
18.10.14	Regarding vulnerable groups, the consultation document states on page 23 that 'in the short term these pupils would need to transfer to alternative schools'. Do you mean that they would not go to the same school as their peers? I suspect that this is just badly worded, and means that just like their peers they would have to go to alternatives to Churchstoke.	As above.
18.10.15	Why is the section on future need / demand in the area for additional places on p26 of the Consultation Document (section iv) so inadequate? Quote: "Pupil numbers in Churchstoke CP School are low, however it is acknowledged that some increases had been seen in pupil numbers recently, as a result of new housing developments in the village. The Council's latest projected pupil figures for the school suggests that pupil	The Council recognises that there are significant housing developments in the area and accepts that this could impact on pupil numbers.

	<p>numbers at the school are not expected to increase significantly over the coming years, however it is possible that further housing developments planned for the village will lead to an increase in the demand for places in the area". Where is the analysis of housing development in the area and surrounding areas? The "some increase" is in fact a 52% increase, from 22 to 38. The housing developments are not yet finished. On top of the "some increase" they allow, there are at least another 100 houses to come (that's just Chalky's, the County Council site and Delves' opposite, and at the bottom and top of Hall Bank. There are others.) in other words nearly 4 times as many as we have seen so far. In view of the planning allowed PCC must be aware that the statement about pupil numbers not being expected to increase significantly is simply not true.</p>	
18.10.16	<p>When it comes to the Equality Act 2010 why have you not answered the question 17 (v) on p26, which states "will the proposal improve access for disabled pupils in accordance with the Equality Act 2010"? Is it because the simple answer is no? The statement made does not answer the question "will it improve access." Which schools are fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and which partially? Specifically is Montgomery fully or partially compliant? Will Montgomery be able to properly accommodate our disabled pupils? What about the Shropshire schools, which are not included in this section at all. Was any inquiry made to Shropshire County Council to check on this? Why is the impact on those with disabilities assessed as neutral in the impact assessment, when the Consultation Document states that some of the other schools are only partially compliant with the Equality Act? What about the impact of additional travel</p>	<p>Montgomery C. in W. School is partially compliant with the Equality Act 2010.</p>

	on those with disabilities? This has to be a negative impact, not neutral.	
18.10.17	The following question is included in the consultation document 'Will the proposals Improve access for disabled pupils in accordance with requirements under the Equality Act 2010?', given Churchstoke is compliant, and the consultation document has stated that the alternative schools are 'either compliant, or partially compliant', why has this question not been answered? Is it because the answer is 'No, the proposals will not improve access but potentially inhibit access.'?	As above.
18.10.18	The majority of our children currently walk or cycle to school. Is it better for children to walk to school, or is it better for them to go by bus? On page 29 of the consultation document you state that it is unlikely that walking or cycling to alternative schools would be possible. How is it 'unlikely'? How much research has been done on safe routes to alternative schools (on foot, by bike, or by vehicle), as even the slightest local knowledge would tell you that there are no safe routes possible on foot or bike, and access to Montgomery is poor. How does closing our school and transporting 52 plus children by bus or other vehicle to school every day fit with the Council sustainable environment plans? How does the proposal contribute to fighting climate change? What sort of transport would be provided to safely take a lot of 4-5 year olds to school every day? Would they have a chaperone? What about booster seats?	<p>The Council has used the term 'unlikely' to reflect the fact that the majority of children currently walk or cycle to school, and not all pupils currently walk or cycle to school.</p> <p>Officers have discussed travel and transport issues with the Council's Transport Unit, who have supplied information about routes.</p> <p>The Council has recognised in the draft Impact Assessments that there would be a potential negative impact on the environment due to the additional travel.</p> <p>Pupils would be accommodated on appropriate transport in line with the Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy. There is no requirement for booster seats on coaches. The Council does not provide supervision on Home-to-School Transport.</p>
18.10.18	It is also stated that pupil well being is better in larger schools. What evidence do you have for this?	The wellbeing of pupils is not dictated by the size of the school, rather than by the systems and processes

		in place to support pupils' wellbeing. Larger schools generally have greater capacity for professional development to train staff in specific wellbeing programmes, and also, to monitor and track pupil wellbeing.
18.10.19	The map provided in the consultation document omits most of the catchment, including important border areas. Why does it not show the location of all the nearest alternative schools? Bishops Castle is not shown at all yet is the closest to the east side of the catchment, nor are the other neighbouring CP schools named in the impact assessment.	The Council accepts that the map does not show all the schools in the vicinity.
18.10.20	The map in the Consultation Document omits most of the school catchment and most of the named possible receiving schools.	As above.
18.10.21	The consultation paper contradicts itself in many cases e.g. nothing to do about saving money it states, yet money saving is main concern, regarding pupil costs and selling off the school site will save money	<p>The Council is proposing to close Churchstoke C.P. School for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To address the issue of low pupil numbers • To reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools • To provide a revenue saving to the Council • To enable pupils to attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities • To enable pupils to be taught in classes with peers of similar ages • To enable pupils to attend schools with better quality accommodation • To enable pupils to continue to access provision in Powys

18.10.22	The Consultation Document states “Churchstoke CP School is not currently forecasting a cumulative deficit budget”. Could you not think of a more negative way to say “The school has a balanced budget”?	Comment noted.
18.10.23	There are two major flaws in the reasoning given in the consultation document: 1) it acknowledges the current growth in housing in Churchstoke, but then ignores the possibility of a resulting growth in pupil numbers, 2) it states that there are no other local CP schools with which Churchstoke could federate, but then says there ARE local CP school options which would not be too far for Churchstoke pupils to travel to.	<p>The Consultation Document states the following:</p> <p>Pupil numbers in Churchstoke C.P. School are low, however it is acknowledged that some increase has been seen in pupil numbers recently, as a result of new housing developments in the village. The Council’s latest projected pupil figures for the school suggest that pupil numbers at the school are not expected to increase significantly over the coming years. However, it is possible that further housing developments planned for the village will lead to an increase in the demand for places in the area.</p> <p>The Council does not currently include potential housing developments in its pupil projections.</p> <p>The Council’s approach to merger or federations is to consider schools that are within a close geographic vicinity.</p>
18.10.24	The consultation document does not consider the development of the houses around the village, which even if half of those houses supplied one child, would see pupil numbers rise significantly over the next few years. The consultation document also does not take into account the development that is happening around Montgomery and Chirbury, so predicted places at alternative schools cannot be guaranteed.	<p>The Consultation Document states the following:</p> <p>Pupil numbers in Churchstoke C.P. School are low. However, it is acknowledged that some increase has been seen in pupil numbers recently, as a result of new housing developments in the village. The Council’s latest projected pupil figures for the school suggest that pupil numbers at the school are not</p>

		<p>expected to increase significantly over the coming years. However, it is possible that further housing developments planned for the village will lead to an increase in the demand for places in the area.</p>
18.10.25	<p>With little regard given for the education of the pupils, the Consultation Document states that regarding the sending of pupils to alternative schools (the option currently being pursued) 'it is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact' on the progress of students and the quality of teaching. It provides no educational positives behind sending pupils to alternative schools, nor does it align with the change needed in Powys according to the Consultation Document. The consultation document states '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'. Yet the very same Consultation document acknowledges 'a number of pupils live closer to alternative provision in Shropshire, and therefore it is possible that they would transfer to this provision'. The Consultation Document raises the issues of the low number of pupils and surplus capacity as reasoning for the closure, but with 120 new homes in Churchstoke these problems will certainly be addressed. Pupil number forecasts suggest at least 52 pupils by September 2022, reducing the predicted per pupil cost to £4600. The immediate discounting of a federation is ironic when one of the alternative schools offered, Chirbury, has formed a successful federation with Norbury considering the distance between Churchstoke and Chirbury is 10.3 miles and the distance between Chirbury and Norbury is 10.8 miles.</p>	<p>The proposal is to close Churchstoke C.P. School and for pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools in Powys, but also, for the majority of pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School, the nearest school in Powys would be Montgomery C. in W. Primary School and the view of the Council's primary experts, and Estyn as shown in its response to this consultation, is that implementation of the preferred option is not anticipated to have a negative impact on progress of students or the quality of teaching.</p> <p>The proposal is for pupils to transfer to their nearest school in Powys to ensure that they have access to the Curriculum for Wales and access to the Welsh language. However, the Council recognises parental preference which could mean that some parents choose a Shropshire school for their child(ren) which means that they would not have access to the Welsh language in these schools.</p> <p>The Council recognises that there are significant housing developments in the area that could impact on pupil numbers.</p>

		The Council's approach to merger or federations is to consider schools that are within a close geographic vicinity.
18.10.26	The Welsh language is not mentioned in the proposal document which is extremely disappointing.	Section 18 (v) of the Consultation Document considers the impact on the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and the impact assessments considers the impact on the Welsh language as well.
18.10.27	Why has the hugely detrimental impact of splitting our children up from their friends and neighbours by placing them into bits of spare capacity and other schools not been acknowledged in the Consultation Document?	The nearest alternative school in Powys for the majority of pupils at Churchstoke is Montgomery C. in W. Primary School. Therefore, it is expected that most pupils would transfer to this school.
18.10.28	You have not considered the impact of the school closing on the village hall, pre-school, or the village/community.	The Council has recognised that there could be a detrimental impact on the community in the draft Community Impact Assessment which will be updated to take account of information gathered during consultation.
18.10.29	I am concerned that the individual decision to close each of the ten schools in the local area has not been made with reference to the closures of the rest and that we will be left with inadequate provision and overflowing classrooms. Each consultation so far has said the ideal result for PCC would be closure with children travelling to the nearest alternative. Figures have been given for the numbers of children attending each alternative but not taking into account the influx from all of the other school closures. In addition, no allowances have been made for the current boom in residential construction or the local development plan, in particular the high number of affordable	There are no other proposals relating to schools in the vicinity of Churchstoke.
18.10.30	I am absolutely stunned to read this 63 page document produced by the County. I have never seen such a weak	Comment noted.

	document produced by any education authority. The argument for closure is extremely weak. It is full of poor unsubstantiated data and assumptions. Had this proposal come out 6 years ago it would probably have been a fair proposition. However, we are talking about a village that has seen an unprecedented growth in the last 3 years with more to come.	
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18.11 Comments about the impact assessments

18.11.1	Why does the aim or purpose in the Impact Assessment simply restate the proposal? Is the aim simply to close the school, because that is what is stated.	The impact assessment documentation outlines the proposal because that is what is being assessed.
18.11.2	When the proposal removes local support, including Dangos train staff who support the whole community, why does the impact assessment suggest no impact on health and care? Dangos training equips frontline staff to support the community with advice on benefits etc.	The impact assessments are published as draft during the consultation process. They are then updated to include information gathered during consultation.
18.11.3	The impact assessment states that it is “not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have a negative impact on standards” and this is identified as a good impact? It is neutral. There would have to be a positive impact on standards if it were to be a good impact.	Comment noted.
18.11.4	Why does the offer of home to school transport for pupils living in Churchstoke to their nearest school in Powys change a poor impact to neutral? The transport offer also applies to local Shropshire schools so it is no more likely that pupils will choose to stay in Powys.	The provision of free home-to-school transport to Powys schools improves the impact judgement for the Wellbeing Goal of Opportunities for persons to use and promote the Welsh language because, without this provision, the nearest schools are in England and therefore the impact would be worse.

18.11.5	Both goals listed on page 10 of the impact assessment relate to the use of the Welsh language and are assessed as Impact 'Poor'. The mitigation for both states transport will be provided to nearest school in Powys to ensure access to a Welsh education, which is shown to mitigate both options to 'Neutral'. Given the proximity of Shropshire schools, and the fact the offer of free transport surely applies to the nearest Shropshire schools should the parent/pupil decide to go across the border for education, how does this mitigation make it any less likely that pupils will be lost to Shropshire schools and therefore miss out on the opportunity of a Welsh education?	As above.
18.11.6	The impact on the protected characteristic of faith or belief is assessed as neutral, but if Powys do not fund transport to a CP school there is a definite negative impact for the families who do not wish their children to attend C in W school.	Comment noted.
18.11.7	In the Impact Assessment document on page 11 reviewing the goal of 'A more equal Wales - Disability', given the above, how has the impact on disability been assessed as 'Neutral' if some of the alternative options are less compliant with the Equality Act 2010 than Churchstoke?	Comment noted. This will be included in the updated impact assessments. Churchstoke C.P. School and Montgomery C. in W. School are both partially compliant with the Equality Act 2010.
18.11.8	Similarly in the Impact Assessment Corporate Relevance section, p21, why does the statement not reflect the fact that within the Vision 2025 table the impacts are recorded as more negative than positive?	The 'corporate relevance' section on page 21 asks 'How does this proposal relate to Vision 2025' and the response is factual and outlines the commitment to 'improve our schools infrastructure'.
18.11.9	The risks to service delivery are high, with sufficient local capacity for the number of pupils involved, particularly in view of housing developments not just in Churchstoke but also in Montgomery (at least 34 homes at the planning stage), Chirbury (at least 40 homes in planning), Forden (32 at outline planning	Comment noted. This will be included in the updated impact assessments.

	stage and beyond directly by the school) and Kerry (62 close to completion).	
18.11.10	Some of the judgments made in the Impact Assessment are bizarre, and we would like to know how they have been arrived at.	The impact assessments are developed through discussion with a number of officers from different departments.
18.11.11	On p25 of the Impact Assessment, question 7 has the first option ticked. (The proposal does not present any adverse impact on equality.) The instruction given is Proceed to question 10. Where is question 10? Despite the fact that no adverse effect has been found (incorrectly), areas for improvement have been identified, but none of these are actually areas for improvement but instead are simply inaccurate statements (the number of FSM pupils being out of date and inaccurate, and an assumption that because we are an English medium school no Welsh speakers in the school (which is incorrect.)	There is an error in the formatting of the impact assessment template document. The impact assessment are published as draft and will be updated to take account of information gathered during consultation.

19. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

19.1 Status Quo

19.1.1	Keep the school open	Comment noted.
19.1.2	Do not close Churchstoke C.P. School	Comment noted.
19.1.3	Do not close the school, think again, please do not destroy our village and community	Comment noted.
19.1.4	Do not close this growing community school.	Comment noted.
19.1.5	Don't close it!! Help it to continue to thrive!	Comment noted.
19.1.6	Don't close the School! Don't close the pre-school!	Comment noted.

19.1.7	I don't think the school should close because it is the only school in the village.	Comment noted.
19.1.8	It's not a good idea however you look at it to close the school.	Comment noted.
19.1.9	I think the most obvious option is for Churchstoke CP School to continue as a standalone school.	Comment noted.
19.1.10	Keep Churchstoke CP school open to keep the community thriving.	Comment noted.
19.1.11	Leave it open, accept that some schools will have smaller numbers and that is why parents choose them!	Comment noted.
19.1.12	Please keep this school open for the local children.	Comment noted.
19.1.13	There is only one other option to consider - let pupil numbers grow by keeping the school open.	Comment noted.
19.1.14	Keep the school open as an independent school.	Comment noted.
19.1.15	To keep the school open, as there will be huge demand for places for children, as Churchstoke continues to develop, with many new young families evident in the village.	Comment noted.
19.1.16	Simply look at the real facts and plan for the future. There is significant current and planned increase in housing stock and inevitably there will be a significant increase in children in the village. There is no sense in closing a school to transport 80-100 children to multiple other schools, most of which will be in another country. The main option that the council should be considering is to scrap the proposal.	Comment noted.
19.1.17	As there are enough local children to fill the school with more houses being built, please keep this school which mostly keeps itself. Churchstoke has always looked after their village as you can obviously see. Please leave it alone!	Comment noted.

19.1.18	Don't close it! Save money moving all our children and transporting them elsewhere to help support our wonderful school instead!	Comment noted.
19.1.19	Following the pandemic lockdowns and the recent year that the pupils and staff have worked hard to endure, we do not believe that further upheaval is timely or appropriate. Funding to recover from the pandemic in a familiar setting should be the council's priority. Not cost saving exercises for the benefit of larger school sites.	Comment noted.
19.1.20	The fact that our circumstances have changed significantly in the last year and for the future, we have a strong case to remain open as all other local schools. There is no strong case to close our school anymore. It will have more negative than positive effects for the council and the community.	Comment noted.
19.1.21	I appreciate that the numbers of children currently attending the school are low but I believe that the council should consider ways for the school to 'breathe in' before 'breathing out' and expanding once more. Is there more that the council could do by way of providing data-rich projections of the number of children coming through pre and primary school in the locality? Is there more that the council could do to support and promote the current position rather than to simply close it?	Comment noted.

19.2 Delay the proposal

19.2.1	Postpone proposal for a set period to allow to see changes in number of pupils from extra homes	Comment noted.
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19.2.2	Delay the closure to enable to school to prove that its viable, by delaying closure for 3-5years it will give the new housing time to build and for families to show an interest in the local school.	Comment noted.
19.2.3	The Council must postpone this process for at least 12 months. Hopefully the recovery from the pandemic will be over then and true face to face consultation will be able to take place. It will also give a truer reflection of the number of children attending, following the expansion of new family homes in the village. Many people move to villages because of the school. If there is no school then the village becomes a transit area and/or with an elderly population needing support from other areas of the Council. If we have a mixed age range within the village then all ages support each other effectively.	Comment noted.
19.2.4	As the area has recently had a lot of new houses built and as a nation we have only just started recovery from the on going pandemic I feel its only fair the school is given time to see how the numbers fair in the coming years as well as keeping the school open as a stable part of the local children's lives that have already lost so much normality over recent times.	Comment noted.
19.2.5	Now is not the time to close a school. Now is the time to look again at the needs of children, parents, and teachers.	Comment noted.
19.2.6	With the existing circumstances caused by the pandemic restricting the council's ability to follow due process, surely any decision needs to be postponed until the proper and due process can be carried out. Rather than trying to force through a decision during a time where the large and vocal opposition cannot put forward their case. This would also give the council time to explore all options and the prospective pupil numbers are likely to look vastly different by that point.	Comment noted.

19.3 Encourage more pupils to attend the school

19.3.1	I think the council should encourage more parents to send children to Churchstoke school.	Comment noted.
19.3.2	Boosting numbers by making the school a place people want to send their children to	Comment noted.
19.3.3	The council could help further support the school in highlighting Churchstoke as space for young families to locate and have their children grow.	Comment noted.
19.3.4	It needs to be highlighted more on the good that they do and not have this negativity on proposed closure to gain pupil numbers to encourage potential new people to the area	Comment noted.
19.3.5	Use of school and village hall premises to raise the profile of the school. The school to engage in community projects?	Comment noted.
19.3.6	Make improvements to the school and address why parents in the catchment area of the village have been choosing to educate their children elsewhere	Comment noted.
19.3.7	PCC seem concerned about the lack or reducing number of working people and children in the county. Perhaps they should consider keeping the schools open to attract the demographic rather than closing them down and putting people off living in the county. Perhaps concentrate your efforts on other ways to draw people to the area rather than spending time on this.	Comment noted.
19.3.8	Churchstoke school would have far more pupils going to it if school holidays for Shropshire and Powys were the same as many go to Bishops Castle high school. Also, Shropshire spend more on pupils than Powys, again invest in the children.	Comment noted.

19.3.9	Revise current holiday/public holiday to be organised on a national level on par with Shropshire schools. It makes childcare/year planning more suitable for parents who have children in senior Shropshire schools and Churchstoke primary. Numbers would increase for children attending the school who live locally.	Comment noted.
19.3.10	After reading about the transformation of sixth forms within Powys to allow all sixth forms to remain open so that students are not lost to England, surely this same principle applies to border primary schools too and you should be doing all you can to keep them open and make them attractive to parents.	Comment noted.

19.4 Improve the provision at Churchstoke

19.4.1	Replace the headteacher	Comment noted.
19.4.2	Get rid of the headteacher	Comment noted.
19.4.3	A better headmaster.	Comment noted.
19.4.5	Reflect on the school's leadership i.e. headteacher	Comment noted.
19.4.6	Review how the school is being managed	Comment noted.
19.4.7	Is there a problem maybe with the running / staffing of Churchstoke school?	Comment noted.
19.4.8	Please have a think about reshuffling the leadership team. If after a couple of years under new leadership, numbers have not greatly improved, then close the school, but at least give someone else a chance to make a difference.	Comment noted.

19.4.9	If there are problems at the school, these should be sorted not just brushed under the carpet of another school. Please reconsider the proposed closure and save rural schools.	Comment noted.
19.4.10	Have a look at the teachers, make sure all teachers are actually qualified to teach.	Comment noted.
19.4.11	Rather than simply closings the school ways in which the school can be improved is a much better idea. For example the nursery and reception class being linked to make the progression between nursery and school easier for the children. Maybe someone that can lead the school with new ideas.	Comment noted.
19.4.12	Consider the reasons why the school roll has fallen over recent years - a number of families have already opted to send their children to neighbouring border schools for example Chirbury. Why is this? If it is to do with the quality of education provided by the school in Churchstoke, then address those issues directly. If it is to do with the management and leadership of the school, and its governing body, address those issues. Budget recovery plans can be drawn up to condense classes until the village has the natural demographic with which to expand provision.	Comment noted.
19.4.13	It should maybe be looked into why people in the area don't use Churchstoke primary school. If all the local families in the surrounding village's used it then it would be full.	Comment noted.
19.4.14	Maybe if you focussed on improving instead of shutting.	Comment noted.
19.4.15	Improving the school they have here in Churchstoke. The numbers have already increased in the last twelve months and will increase more in the near future.	Comment noted.
19.4.16	A wider curriculum expansion e.g. more Welsh language classes, horticultural growing flowers and vegetables. New teacher often brings more ideas to stimulate the children	Comment noted.

19.4.17	The Council should be offering this wonderful school the support it deserves not threatening it with closure	Comment noted.
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19.5 Expand the school

19.5.1	Use Churchstoke school site to build a larger school for the area.	Comment noted.
19.5.2	Expand and develop the school	Comment noted.
19.5.3	I would consider expanding the school, not demolishing it.	Comment noted.
19.5.4	Consider extending Churchstoke school. More houses mean more families.	Comment noted.
19.5.5	Extend and invest in Churchstoke School to encourage more children to use this school.	Comment noted.
19.5.6	The school has the room to extend with lots of safe parking and is a prime space for a Super School.	Comment noted.
19.5.7	The School site has the potential to be developed further and would then be able to accommodate more pupils from other local schools.	Comment noted.
19.5.8	Perhaps the school should be expanded, due to the increasing size of the community and to keep pace with this expansion, this may reduce the polarisation that is sure to follow closure of local schools.	Comment noted.
19.5.9	Due to the substantial development of Churchstoke, the Council should be upgrading the school rather than closing it.	Comment noted.
19.5.10	If anything provide funding to do up school provide extra buildings for the extra pupils it will get due to new builds in the future.	Comment noted.
19.5.11	The school could do with upgrading and possibly expanding given the rising number of children in the village.	Comment noted.

19.5.12	I see no other option but to expand education in Churchstoke as the village is growing in size. Other local villages are expanding too e.g. Sarn and Kerry! Where are the children to go – home education?!	Comment noted.
19.5.13	The Council should be making Churchstoke CP School larger as there will be an imminent needs for places for pupils from Chirbury with all the building going on here and in surrounding villages of Sarn and Kerry. Montgomery is growing also, so where do we send all these children? Please consider the long term impact.	Comment noted.
19.5.14	Stop thinking about closing it and enlarge it. Perhaps you could turn the village hall in two classrooms and use all the facilities within it enhance social skills with in the younger generation eg cookery lessons/ craft session/ drama/ board games/ specialist corners for pupils who need extra help/ personal hygiene/ breakfast club./ after school activities/ public speaking skills - all of these things will help the pupils in the future. Add onto the existing hall and extend it enough to allow indoor sports like table tennis/outdoor cricket/football/netball,table tennis. Yes please think outside the box and get the community involved to raise money.	Comment noted.
19.5.15	With at least 50 new houses being currently built and many more at planning stage, it would make perfect sense to make Churchstoke school into a new super school, it has plenty of land around it and is in a quiet position for children to be dropped off away from main roads. I know that the new Ridgeway site on Castle road with the exception of one property all have children of primary school age who would be attending the school.	Comment noted.
19.5.16	Maybe develop the site where possible to ensure that it's offering maximum benefit to the community.	Comment noted.

19.5.17	The school site is also a large site that is prime for expansion should you wish to expand the pre-school for the feed into the school – we would certainly be very interested in this to develop our business strategy.	Comment noted.
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19.6 More community use of the school / site

19.6.1	Use it for local community groups	Comment noted.
19.6.2	Use it for clubs, after hours slimmers world etc	Comment noted.
19.6.3	With thought, planning and efficiency rather than unnecessary bureaucracy the building could be used for more local benefit. Entertainment, library use, adult education, local food markets, physical exercise, general community gatherings	Comment noted.
19.6.4	If the number of children really are that low, the maintenance costs for the property becomes disproportionate to the value, in which case are there alternatives uses for the rooms that would support the school, (e.g. community groups, evening classes), etc.?	Comment noted.
19.6.5	The community hall is struggling, or so I am lead to believe. The school hall could be combined to accommodate all the extra children coming to reside in the village. The Guides Scouts, WI, and other groups could all benefit from retaining the existing facilities this complex could provide.	Comment noted.
19.6.6	Perhaps a place for intergenerational activities as you look for alternatives to day centre provision for older people, a place for organisations to hold drop in and outreach sessions with people to reduce the need and costs of travel for locals.	Comment noted.

19.6.7	The school could be used during holiday times rather than sitting empty.	Comment noted.
19.6.8	The school building could be better used, before and after school, with voluntary and paid members of the community offering their time for breakfast and after school care; keeping children safe and offering a breadth of experience, while parents find their way through the minefield of work options as we emerge from this crisis.	Comment noted.

19.7 Invest in the school

19.7.1	Put proper investment in.	Comment noted.
19.7.2	Give the school sufficient funding to stay open.	Comment noted.
19.7.3	Investment in before and after school provision.	Comment noted.
19.7.4	Investing in the Welsh scheme to enhance to culture of the country, and provide a further desire for others to send from out of area to this school.	Comment noted.
19.7.5	I really think you should be investing in the school and community, rather than trying to pull it apart.	Comment noted.
19.7.6	Invest in the school as it is the children's education at stake.	Comment noted.
19.7.7	The grounds are lovely and big at Churchstoke - why not invest in that school	Comment noted.
19.7.8	It should have money spent on it to improve the facilities, or is it already in the pipeline to build something else there?	Comment noted.
19.7.9	I think the council should have had more foresight and kept the school in a decent condition! That's what I think you should do is to improve the condition and let us give our children the school	Comment noted.

	they deserve. I think your £100,000 for transport [to alternative schools] would help maintain the school!	
19.7.10	Powys already don't invest in much at all. Why not invest in the future? Invest in children and the Welsh education that they deserve.	Comment noted.
19.7.11	Help to develop the area around the school site and also Churchstoke Little Explorers, this would mean more spaces for children in an ever growing village.	Comment noted.
19.7.12	The council should properly plan the future numbers for Churchstoke school and properly plan the investment to ensure it thrives.	Comment noted.
19.7.13	Keep the school open, make it greener with solar panels and other alternative energy supply. Encourage parents to walk/bike to school with their children, less traffic and congestion.	Comment noted.
19.7.14	Another option for the bureaucrats in Powys CC is to send someone round with a pot of paint. Spend a few pounds so the building doesn't decay. You are the same as the Glazers are to Manchester United. The roof leaks at Old Trafford Too!!	Comment noted.
19.7.15	Surely it would make more sense to invest money into the buildings that already exist, rather than going over budget by millions of tax payers money on wooden cladded primaries like the new Welshpool Church in Wales Primary.	Comment noted.

19.8 Shared headteacher

19.8.1	I think that if they need to cut costs then they can share a headteacher with another local school.	Comment noted.
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19.8.2	Could a combined head teacher with a neighbouring school be considered?	Comment noted.
19.8.3	Cluster with another nearby primary school, share a headteacher & cut out a massive salary by employing a standard teacher.	Comment noted.
19.8.4	Sharing head teachers to save money but keep these schools open	Comment noted.
19.8.5	Share a headteacher with another local primary to reduce costs	Comment noted.
19.8.6	Do as many areas in Shropshire do, share Headteachers and you would save thousands.	Comment noted.
19.8.7	In Shropshire several schools share a head teacher which cuts down the costs and also guarantees the budgets per school go further. Surely you could do the same in Powys.	Comment noted.
19.8.8	Perhaps instead of the children travelling to another school the teachers could move between schools only having one Headmaster.	Comment noted.
19.8.9	I think that you should look at a different business model to promote children into Churchstoke school. Shared management would be good for the school to have different ideas and save wage costs across a few schools. By doing this you will save our community from being fragmented and money being spent across the border instead of in our local businesses.	Comment noted.
19.8.10	To save the Welsh language from the village I think you do have to consider a better business model with shared management. We need to keep the school base in the village due to the very real possibility of losing children to Shropshire and to keep our pre-school open.	Comment noted.
19.8.11	One of the issues affecting small schools is how to ensure the clear leadership needed. Maybe there is benefit to the suggestion	Comment noted.

	<p>of merging schools under one headteacher whilst children continue in the same building. Has this been fully researched? I'm aware of the complexities of Montgomery as a C in W school, but it appears that other authorities in Wales have found an answer to this.</p>	
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19.9 Federation

19.9.1	<p>Federating with another primary to share resources but keep both sites open.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
19.9.2	<p>Look at a federation? Other smaller schools are succeeding with a federation and meeting the needs of village children.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
19.9.3	<p>How about making a federation/partnership or leaving it as it is? Bussing little kids to England is not the answer here, people!</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
19.9.4	<p>Federating with another Welsh school in the area.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
19.9.5	<p>A Federation of local community primary schools would benefit all those schools without losing the huge benefits of having a community based school in Churchstoke.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
19.9.6	<p>Federation could be a real opportunity for Churchstoke CP School and I would be really interested in exploring this option further with the local authority. We have to be allowed this opportunity as an alternative to closure.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
19.9.7	<p>Federating with other schools in the area, sharing resources etc. This has worked in some schools locally.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
19.9.8	<p>A federation of local primary schools would keep a school in the village and could enrich the learning experiment for pupils giving security to all schools involved.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>

19.9.9	Federation with a nearby primary school to share budgeting/resources/have executive leadership.	Comment noted.
19.9.10	Federate with another or several Welsh Rural Primary Schools so the may work together to provide access to Welsh language learning by pulling together resources financially and educationally so there is a chance for the Welsh language to remain in even border communities of Wales.	Comment noted.
19.9.11	You are happy to try and squeeze our children into these schools why not Federate with them instead?	Comment noted.
19.9.12	A federation would be best. More shared funding resources, staffing. It would reduce costs and enable the school to stay open. The Council should be putting this option forward.	Comment noted.
19.9.13	Federation but keep sites open. Back office operation streamlining and cost saving. I don't know about their books to know what sort of a state they are in but there are always options! Listen to the senior leadership team and governors. Work with them to find the right solution.	Comment noted.
19.9.14	I think the council should be considering a federation. This would be the best step forward. Join with another local school, share a head teacher, share resources. This would reduce funding costs and breathe new life into the school. There is so much to gain from a federation.	Comment noted.
19.9.15	If the school becoming part of a federation with other schools in the area this would still allow Churchstoke school to remain open if the funding is an issue there would be only need to employ one head teacher for the federation.	Comment noted.
19.9.16	Allowing Churchstoke to Federate with other schools in the area would be a beneficial option.	Comment noted.

19.9.17	Don't close it, consider school federation to save money as basically that's what PCC bottom line is	Comment noted.
19.9.18	As an alternative to closing the school site in Churchstoke, the local authority should fully explore the option of retaining a primary school provision in Churchstoke by including the school site as part of a federation of primary schools in the area.	Comment noted.
19.9.19	Although we would prefer Churchstoke CP School to stay open as a stand-alone school we as the Governing body would be very happy forming a Federation with a neighbouring school and we can't understand why it has been completely discounted?	Comment noted.
19.9.20	A federation option has been discounted by Powys without proper consideration, this should be reviewed again.	Comment noted.
19.9.21	Powys gave a variety of options for what could happen to the school as a result of it closing. A federation was one of them. But Powys no have rejected the idea of the school being federated with others. I want to know why????	Comment noted.
19.9.22	The Federation option has been discounted without proper consideration, it is suggested that other CP schools are too far for a federation and yet our children are expected to travel to other schools.	Comment noted.
19.9.23	We don't agree with the Powys CC statement that Federation is discounted and are of the view that Federation is possible with other nearby schools at Leighton, Abermule and/or Berriew.	Comment noted.
19.9.24	Far more appropriate would be a federation with other schools. I understand that's not possible with a Church in Wales school such as Montgomery, but there are others near enough to federate with such as Abermule and Berriew. This has worked very successfully in other areas in Wales - even in Powys. This	Comment noted.

	is the preferred option in Shropshire which also has a large number of small schools and has proved to work very well.	
19.9.25	There are at least 3 CP schools under 10 miles away and 5 more within 15 miles which the school could Federate with.	Comment noted.
19.9.26	A possible other option that had previously been discounted but should be reconsidered is Federation. The consultation document states 'This is not a viable option as there are no other C.P Schools in the vicinity which Churchstoke C.P. School could federate with...'. However, the consultation document also states '...alternative C.P provision is available within 10 miles of Churchstoke, ensuring that non-Church in wales provision would continue to be available to those pupils who wished to access it.' These statements appear to contradict each other. How can the alternative schools be too far away to federate with but not too far away to transport pupils too as an alternative if Churchstoke were to close. There are examples of federation working over greater distances than would be required here, so I think this option should be reconsidered.	Comment noted.
	Federation, that will be an option to consider. The Council suggests that pupils could travel to the nearest community primary school but the federation with them would not be possible/ Why? Will it be cheaper for the Council to transport via buss children all around the county, is it mor beneficial for children to spend hours a day in buss instead of walking to school in the fresh air.	Comment noted.
19.9.27	Consider federating with one or more other local CP schools. This option was discounted on the basis of not being "a viable option as there are no other C.P. Schools in the vicinity which Churchstoke C.P. School could federate with". However, the consultation document states elsewhere: "alternative community	Comment noted.

	primary provision is available within 10 miles of Churchstoke C.P. School at Abermule C.P. School, Forden C.P. School and Berriew C.P. School, as well as at Bishops Castle Primary School in Shropshire, therefore community primary provision is available in the local area for any pupils not wanting to attend a Church in Wales school."	
19.9.28	However, Federation has also been dismissed, when it is a viable alternative. There are three County Primary Schools within 10 miles of the school. Federations of other schools are in this sort of range so why has this not been considered? This definitely has to be considered before closure. It seems the most obvious answer to 'rationalise primary provision' by federating them all over the county to me. It keeps communities together and thriving and helps schools to work together to 'improve learner entitlement and experience'.	Comment noted.
19.9.29	The federation option has been discontinued by Powys without proper consideration. They suggest that pupils could travel to the nearest community primary school but that federation with them would not be possible.	Comment noted.
19.9.30	However, there has been no reason given as to why federation was not considered.	Comment noted.
19.9.31	I question why you will not consider a federation? This option seems so viable it keeps a school in our village, it keeps or friendships and communities and would open doors of opportunity without removing any and would imagine save you money.	Comment noted.
19.9.32	Why has PCC dismissed federation Shropshire schools have federated and it works Chirbury, Norbury and Stipperstones	Comment noted.

	Schools and Clunbury Bucknell and Newcastle Schools some are over 10 miles apart	
19.9.33	A federation with other Welsh schools, there are viable options in the area which have not been properly addressed. Considering the vastly underestimated costs of transport for the children to new schools as well as the opportunity costs of educational quality for the children (as outlined extensively in my points above), a federation would be an appropriate way to both maintain the community by providing essential services, as well as cut costs for the Council.	Comment noted.
19.9.34	We believe that we are allowed to form a Federation with a C in W school if required. There are many examples of very successful federations in Powys and neighbouring Shropshire.	Comment noted.
19.3.35	Federation with another school should be considered. Although the nearest Powys school is a Church in Wales school I do not think such an arrangement is out of the question. Churchstoke could become part of a church school. If that is not possible the school could federate with another CP school. Proximity is not important as it has worked in other areas eg Carno gp and in Shropshire	Comment noted.
19.3.36	Can Churchstoke school not remain open and instead be federated with Montgomery or another school to share a headteacher?	Comment noted.
19.3.37	The Council should considered join together to form a federation ie: Churchstoke and Montgomery saving costs of staffing.	Comment noted.
19.3.38	Federation with local schools, other than Montgomery Church in Wales school. This has worked really well in other areas. The	Comment noted.

	consultation document seems to have just dismissed this with little thought and justification.	
19.3.39	If funding is low why not federate like Chirbury and Stiperstones have done or Newcastle on Clun and Bucknell.	Comment noted.
19.3.40	There are many very successful examples of federations in Shropshire – a rural authority like Powys with many small rural schools, and the Carno, Llanbrynmair and Ysgol Glantwymyn federation in Powys is, as far as I'm aware, working very successfully.	Comment noted.
19.3.41	The benefits of federating have been tremendous and I do not understand why it has been discounted here. There is a parity of distance between Chirbury and Norbury schools and there would be between, for example, Churchstoke and a Welshpool primary. In an age of technology, it clearly is possible to successfully manage two schools, even when the physical distance between is considerable.	Comment noted.
19.3.42	Federation is an obvious opportunity, although as the Head has a high teaching load the saving may not be high. There are examples of schools working together in other regions of Powys that are over 10 miles, the internet bring us all closer together, distance learning too. Remaining open with the known increase in pupils.	Comment noted.
19.3.43	Federation with another rural primary school. Staffing can always be altered/improved on to ensure sustainability, progression and success at a school. By federating with another rural primary school or two I feel this could be achieved providing an even better future for Churchstoke Primary School and Churchstoke Little Explorers whilst still cutting costs for the council. If the school should close it will be gone forever whereas if federation	Comment noted.

	was considered this rural school in a thriving village and community could go from strength to strength and improve on its low numbers enabling rural children to attend their local school whilst still reducing costs for the council.	
19.3.44	Federation with other schools. This would cost cut staffing costs, i.e. only one headmaster required, and there would be other benefits: richer education due to diversity, consistent standards applied across all schools in the federation, buildings utilised and not being left to dereliction, cost savings associated with central admin function.	Comment noted.
19.3.45	I do hope you reconsider the federation model as with shared management it would be an extremely effective school given that you are not going to make the savings from the travel that you have highlighted in your consultation document	Comment noted.
19.3.46	To save our pre-school setting I hope you re-consider a Federation idea of shared management which will bring new ideas to our school and ultimately our playgroup which we would welcome. It will also save costs across a collection of schools using shared resources.	Comment noted.
19.3.47	Federation with other nearby schools would mitigate the adverse effects on the Welsh language.	Comment noted.

19.10 Merge with another school

19.10.1	A merger with another school.	Comment noted.
19.10.2	Merger - this is not considered but should be looked into.	Comment noted.
19.10.3	Joining schools together.	Comment noted.
19.10.4	Join up schools but don't close them.	Comment noted.

19.10.5	Could the school not amalgamate with Abermule school?	Comment noted.
19.10.6	In view of the significant number of new houses being built, considered whether to pair Churchstoke and Montgomery schools with one weighted towards Welsh and the other to English.	Comment noted.
19.10.7	They could run smaller schools as one with different buildings so the teachers move round the schools so you would only need one of each subject teacher and better time table planning so a better use of staff, this would also benefit the children by getting them used to different people in their school.	Comment noted.

19.11 Clustering

19.11.1	More should be done to support and encourage clusters of schools. This has worked with multi academy trusts in England, and although the academy model does not exist in Wales, it has been proven that grouping schools together has enabled economies of scale to be generated by sharing resources.	Comment noted.
19.11.2	In order to address the need for a broader curriculum and a wider expertise of teaching staff, PCC should consider that more can be made of school cluster groups / amalgamating small schools in a locality - to maintain individual identities and sites but to share staff. I think the council should consider grouping small primaries under one head teacher with assistant heads who are Heads of centre... expertise and staff can be shared to ensure a manageable Workload and increase pupil curriculum offer - with staff seconded from one school to another for full/ half days... class shares for example. In this way a KS1 teacher with an expertise in literacy and expressive arts and a KS1 teacher with expertise in maths, science and technology could share their time	Comment noted.

	and skills for planning across two classes in two different schools. Staff across 2,3or 4 small schools can take responsibilities for different aspects and for wcho improvement. The covid19 pandemic has taught us that teachers can teach across m'soft teams and that professionals in different locations can effectively meet up on Teams... this makes skill-sharing across different school sites practical, accessible and realistic. In this way children and families SHOULD in our modern world be able to have the best of both worlds - benefitting from small, local community schools whilst also benefitting from a larger and broader-based staff team. PCC SHOULD be thinking creatively for alternative solutions to school closures ... technology enables cost effective team working and creative solutions	
19.11.3	Keeping the school open and combining other schools to join with our school.	Comment noted.

19.12 Make changes to other schools

19.12.1	Close Chirbury School and Montgomery and expand Churchstoke. The others have no space to expand, no parking available and Churchstoke could accommodate this with plenty of parking and space.	Comment noted.
19.12.2	Closing other schools and keeping Churchstoke open. Churchstoke has car parking facilities, community hall and pre-school and has room to expand.	Comment noted.
19.12.3	If you need to fill the superschools, close a school closer not ours.	Comment noted.

19.13 Invest in small / rural schools

19.13.1	Invest in small schools, look at the many pros of a small school rather than the very few cons.	Comment noted.
19.13.2	Invest in the small schools, bring them up to standard again. Parents do now want to send their children to big schools.	Comment noted.
19.13.3	Get Powys/Senedd to fund small rural schools.	Comment noted.
19.13.4	PCC should appeal to the Welsh Assembly government to protect and champion our rural communities. This should include protecting rural schools such as Churchstoke for current and future generations.	Comment noted.

19.14 Make other changes in order to save money

19.14.1	Make savings in other areas.	Comment noted.
19.14.2	Take money from other Powys projects	Comment noted.
19.14.3	The Council should rethink the way they spend their money instead of shutting schools which we need.	Comment noted.
19.14.4	Restructure to save money	Comment noted.
19.14.5	Cutting the fat cats pay amongst the council to subsidise the school which is something the community wants.	Comment noted.
19.14.6	Would you and all the councillors at Powys accept a pay cut? Can you advise whether the number of councillors in Powys are too many?	Comment noted.
19.14.7	Stop spending on stupid things then you wouldn't have to close schools to make your money back. That's always your easy resort to things.	Comment noted.
19.14.8	You could spend the money you intend to pay for transport and put towards keeping the school going. If you have money spare	Comment noted.

	at the end of your financial year put that towards keeping the school going. Make the money savings in your offices by cutting down on the number of bosses and managers and spend that money on the schools instead. Put more money into education budget.	
19.14.9	Perhaps cut back on council allowances. I work for Powys county council in some capacity and it is run appallingly in my experience. Obviously I can only comment on what I have seen and know from personal experience. There are many other areas that would survive with cost cuts that would be as detrimental as you closing a school that supports and involves itself in the whole community.	Comment noted.
19.14.10	If the school is being closed because of costs, surely the council can find money elsewhere to avoid such action that has long-term impacts for a future generation – selling off assets; further raising of council tax on 2nd homes; reduce costs of verge and hedge cutting across Powys to also help improve biodiversity and wildlife	Comment noted.
19.14.11	Could fundraising efforts by the local community also be considered to help finance the school?	Comment noted.
19.14.12	Generating an income from promotion of the site for other uses alongside schooling.	Comment noted.

19.15 Other

19.15.1	In fact all schools in the cluster should have been looked at together	Comment noted.
19.15.2	Make it compulsory to transfer to a Welsh school	Comment noted.

19.15.3	Making sure there are sufficient places for our children in alternative schools close by but in Wales!	Comment noted.
19.15.4	Perhaps the freedom of parents being able to send their children wherever they choose should be stopped. Support your local school and community.	Comment noted.
19.15.5	Set up a trust or such and get a will giving leaflet and you would be surprised how much money you could get in	Comment noted.
19.15.6	The council should offer more support to the existing staff who are doing a great job in a challenging environment.	Comment noted.
19.15.7	Speaking to your other departments and working together. If you make planning permission for housing you have to consider access and parking. Why do you not also have to consider where all these family's can educate their children? You make an application to the council for a festival: event licence you have to make provision for off road stacking vehicles to queue off the highway so not to cause disruption. Toilet facilities etc yet encourage growth of the village with homes and take away education facilities.	Comment noted.
19.15.8	Use Churchstoke as a template for tolerance and availability to all protected characteristics. Churchstoke CP school is a prime location in rural Wales to implement this!	Comment noted.

20. OTHER COMMENTS

20.1	A petition has been set up by the parents and community of church stoke which currently has almost 1500 signatures, a clear message that Churchstoke school is needed and should not be closed. The children of Churchstoke school have also	The Council notes the petition and also the video from the pupils of Churchstoke C.P. School.
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	voiced their views through a video with all of them singing that they do not want their school to close. Their views must also be considered by Powys County Council and this clearly expresses their views that they do not want to attend any other school apart from Churchstoke school.	
20.2	According to the United Nations convention on the rights of the child, our children have many rights to be protected and safe, and the interests of a child must be top priority in all decisions and actions that affect them. Article 12 also states every child has the right to express their views and their views should be considered and taken seriously. I hope all of their rights will be taken into consideration.	The Council has a duty to listen to the views of children in any school reorganisation process.
20.3	How will the proposal improve safeguarding, particularly in view of cross border issues? We often have problems engaging with Children's Service and other statutory bodies in England. Local knowledge and information will be lost.	The Council's safeguarding team would need to ensure that there are strong links with services outside of the county.

21. COMMENTS IN FAVOUR OF THE PROPOSAL

21.1	Closure is the only option	Comment noted.
21.2	The school has been underperforming for a number of years with local parents choosing to use Bishop's Castle and Kerry due to the lack of quality and diversity the staff have in their ability to deliver a high standard of education. Closing this school will allow the children who attend there to have a better education at better performing schools with a more varied child mix and to not be taught by second rate farmers wives with little or no idea about life skills and a diverse world that our children face.	Comment noted.

21.3	I agree with the proposal. The school's budget share per pupil during 2020-21 was £7,475. This is significantly higher than the Powys average of £4,264. This level of disparity is unjustified and unfair to all other learners in Powys.	Comment noted.
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7. FURTHER ASESMENT AND CONCLUSION

The School Organisation Code includes some additional steps to be undertaken in respect of the consultation report for proposals relating to the closure of rural schools. This section addresses these requirements.

7.1 Further assessment of the proposal and alternatives

Following consultation, the Council has carried out a further assessment of the proposal and the alternatives identified in the proposal paper on the likely impact on quality and standards in education, the likely impact on the community and the likely effect of different travelling arrangements.

The revised assessments, which take account of further information that has come forward through the consultation or otherwise, are provided in the table 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 Churchstoke.	There would be no impact on the community – provision would continue to be available in Churchstoke.	There would be no impact on travel arrangements – pupils would continue to attend Churchstoke C.P. School.
Option 2: Federation with another school	Discounted – N/A	Discounted – N/A	Discounted – N/A
Option 3: Merge with Montgomery C. in W. School to establish a	It is anticipated that this option would have a positive impact on quality and standards through the	The impact on the community would be minimal – provision would	Pupils would continue to attend school on the current site of Churchstoke C.P. School.

<p>new school on two sites</p>	<p>establishment of one larger school, with a larger number of pupils and a larger team of staff.</p> <p>However, this option does not address the challenge of teaching mixed-aged classes, as pupils would continue to be taught in two classes of four year groups on the Churchstoke site, but it would provide additional opportunities for staff expertise and resources to be shared across both sites.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>continue to be available in Churchstoke.</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>In addition, it is possible that joint school activities would take place on the Montgomery site as more pupils attend this site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Churchstoke site.</p> <p>Comments have been made about the impact on Churchstoke Little Explorers should there be no school in Churchstoke, due to the setting being on the school site and sharing resources with the school. As this option keeps a school in Churchstoke, there would be no impact on the setting. Many comments were made about the importance of the setting for working families in providing childcare and wraparound provision, and therefore this option</p>	<p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>
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		enables that provision to continue in Churchstoke.	
Option 4: Close Churchstoke C.P. School, but retain the site as part of Montgomery C. in W. School	<p>Implementation of this option would result in closure of Churchstoke C.P. School, however provision would continue on the current site. Churchstoke C.P. School are both in the yellow support category based on the 2019 categorisations, therefore it is not anticipated that the impact on quality and standards would be negative.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>However, this option does not address the challenge of teaching mixed-aged classes, as pupils would continue to be taught in two classes of four year groups on the Churchstoke site, but it would provide additional opportunities for staff expertise and resources to be shared across both sites.</p>	<p>Provision would continue to be available in Churchstoke. However, the site would be managed by the current governing body of Montgomery C. in W. School, therefore 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 Montgomery site as more pupils attend this site, which could lead to a reduction in activity on the Churchstoke site.</p> <p>Comments have been made about the impact on Churchstoke Little Explorers should there be no school in Churchstoke, due to the setting being on the school site and sharing resources with the school. As this option keeps a school in Churchstoke, there would be no impact on the setting. Many comments were made about the importance of the setting for</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current site of Churchstoke C.P. School.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>

		working families in providing childcare and wraparound provision, and therefore this option enables that provision to continue in Churchstoke.	
Option 5: Close Churchstoke C.P. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools in Powys	<p>Implementation of this option would mean that pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School would transfer to their nearest alternative schools in Powys. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative Powys school would be Montgomery C. in W. School.</p> <p>Based on the latest categorisations carried out in 2019, both Churchstoke C.P. School and Montgomery C. in W. School are categorised as Yellow schools. The Council's view is that quality and standards at Montgomery C. in W. School would be at least as good as the provision at Churchstoke.</p> <p>Pupils would also be able to benefit from being taught in age-appropriate classes, and although this may be in mixed aged groups, there wouldn't be more than 2 years in any class.</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Churchstoke as there would be no provision in Churchstoke.</p> <p>It is clear that a wide range of extra-curricular activities are available to pupils at Churchstoke C.P. School. Should there be no school in Churchstoke, pupils would transfer to alternative schools. These would be larger schools, and the expectation is that at least a similar range of activities would be available for pupils. However, it is acknowledged that pupils would need to travel to the alternative schools, which could impact on their ability to access activities, particularly where these take place after school.</p> <p>The information received by the school also suggests that there are extensive links between the</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Churchstoke School. For the majority of pupils, Churchstoke C.P. School is their closest school, and most walk to 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>It has been noted that pupils reliant on home-to-school transport would be unable to participate in Breakfast Club or after-school activities.</p> <p>Concerns have been raised about the impact on low income families or those without access to their own transport, and that it would be more</p>

	<p>This option also enables pupils to transfer to schools in Powys where they would be able to benefit from the new Curriculum for Wales, and to develop their Welsh language skills.</p>	<p>school and the local community, and that many community activities are arranged in the school which are accessed by the community. It is therefore acknowledged that closure of the school could have an impact on the community in terms of the services and activities available.</p> <p>An area of concern has been on the potential impact on Churchstoke Little Explorers, the pre-school setting that provides early years education and childcare provision, due to the setting being co-located in a building at the school and use of shared facilities. There was concern that this setting provides full day support for working parents who may be impacted if this provision was no longer available. However, the closure of the setting due to closure of the school is not a given, and the setting could continue to operate if there was demand in the area. Further discussions would be required with the setting if the Council was to proceed with an asset transfer or sale of the site, should the school close.</p>	<p>difficult for them to pick up children from after-school clubs or to attend the school for other activities.</p>
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		<p>Should there be no school in Churchstoke, any school facilities used by the community would no longer be available. There is a Community Hall in Churchstoke which would continue to be available, therefore community events and activities could take place here. However, it is acknowledged that the Hall relies on the support of the school, and that closure of the school could also impact on the viability of the hall in the longer term.</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 in Churchstoke.</p>	
<p>Option 6: Close Churchstoke C.P. School, pupils to attend nearest alternative schools</p>	<p>Implementation of this option would mean that pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School would transfer to their nearest alternative schools in Powys. For the majority</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Churchstoke as there would be no provision in Churchstoke.</p>	<p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Churchstoke School. For the majority of pupils, Churchstoke C.P.</p>

	<p>of pupils, the closest alternative schools would be Chirbury C. of E. School which is located in Shropshire.</p> <p>Chirbury C. of E. School was last inspected by Ofsted in December 2019, when the school's overall effectiveness was judged to be Good. It is likely therefore that the quality and standards at the school would be comparable to that available in Churchstoke C.P. School.</p> <p>If parents chose schools in Shropshire for their child(ren), it must be noted that they would not have the opportunity to access the new Curriculum for Wales or to develop their Welsh language skills.</p>	<p>It is clear that a wide range of extra-curricular activities are available to pupils at Churchstoke C.P. School. Should there be no school in Churchstoke, pupils would transfer to alternative schools. These would be larger schools, and the expectation is that at least a similar range of activities would be available for pupils. However, it is acknowledged that pupils would need to travel to the alternative schools, which could impact on their ability to access activities, particularly where these take place after school.</p> <p>The information received by the school also suggests that there are extensive links between the school and the local community, and that many community activities are arranged in the school which are accessed by the community. It is therefore acknowledged that closure of the school could have an impact on the community in terms of the services and activities available.</p> <p>An area of concern has been on the potential impact on Churchstoke Little Explorers, the pre-school</p>	<p>School is their closest school, and most walk to 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>It has been noted that pupils reliant on home-to-school transport would be unable to participate in Breakfast Club or after-school activities.</p> <p>Concerns have been raised about the impact on low income families or those without access to their own transport, and that it would be more difficult for them to pick up children from after-school clubs or to attend the school for other activities.</p>
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		<p>setting that provides early years education and childcare provision, due to the setting being co-located in a building at the school and use of shared facilities. There was concern that this setting provides full day support for working parents who may be impacted if this provision was no longer available. However, the closure of the setting due to closure of the school is not a given, and the setting could continue to operate if there was demand in the area. Further discussions would be required with the setting if the Council was to proceed with an asset transfer or sale of the site, should the school close.</p> <p>Should there be no school in Churchstoke, any school facilities used by the community would no longer be available. There is a Community Hall in Churchstoke which would continue to be available, therefore community events and activities could take place here. However, it is acknowledged that the Hall relies on the support of the school, and that closure of the school could also</p>	
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		<p>impact on the viability of the hall in the longer term.</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 in Churchstoke.</p>	
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7.2 Further reasonable alternatives

The other alternatives which were suggested in the consultation responses received are outlined in section 18 of the 'issues raised in the consultation period' section of this report, including the Council's response to these alternatives. These are as follows:

- 19.1 Retain the status quo
- 19.2 Delay the process
- 19.3 Encourage more pupils to attend the school.
- 19.4 Improve provision at Churchstoke C.P. School
- 19.5 Expand the school
- 19.6 More community use of the school/site
- 19.7 Invest in the school
- 19.8 Shared head
- 19.9 Federate with another school

- 19.10 Merge with another school**
- 19.11 Clustering**
- 19.12 Make changes to other schools**
- 19.13 Invest in small/rural schools**
- 19.15 Other**

The assessment of 19.1,19.2,19.3, 19.4, 19.6, 19.7, 19.8, 19.12 and 19.13 are included within the assessment for Option 1 ‘Status Quo’ in the table above and are not subject to further assessment as ‘reasonable alternatives’.

19.5 ‘expand the school’ and 19.7 ‘invest in the school’ will not be subject to further assessment as a ‘reasonable alternative’ because the school currently has a number of surplus places, therefore there is no requirement to expand the school, and this will not meet the challenges faced by the school as outlined in the Consultation Document.

19.6 ‘more community use of the school/site’ will not be subject to further assessment as a ‘reasonable alternative’ as this would not address the challenges faced by the school as outlined in the Consultation Document, and it is noted that the school already has links with the community, with Churchstoke Little Explorers being co-located with the school.

19.11 ‘clustering’ will not be subject to further assessment as a ‘reasonable alternative’. Schools in Powys already operate on a ‘cluster’ basis with significant collaboration happening on all levels (e.g.). The Council is planning the implementation of cluster business managers to provide additional business and administrative support to schools. Therefore, on this basis, this alternative option won’t be evaluated further.

19.10 ‘merge with another school’ has been re-assessed in the table above.

Therefore, the only ‘reasonable alternative’ option taken forward for further assessment 19.9 ‘federate with another school’. Please note that this would need to be a community primary school in Powys, and therefore discounts all Church-in-Wales schools, as it is not possible to legally federate denominational and community primary schools.

Alternative Option	Likely impact on quality and standards	Likely impact on the community	Likely impact of different travelling arrangements
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<p>Option 19.9 Federate with another school.</p>	<p>Implementation of this option would result in Churchstoke C.P. School formally federating with another community primary school in Powys. The nearest community primary schools to Churchstoke are Abermule C.P. School, Berriew C.P. School, and Leighton C.P. School.</p> <p>The Council has no concerns about the quality and standards of education at these three schools and therefore it is likely that standards would remain as good as the current provision.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>However, this option does not address the challenge of teaching mixed-aged classes, as pupils would continue to be taught in two classes of four-year groups at Churchstoke C.P. School, but it would provide additional opportunities for staff expertise and</p>	<p>Provision would continue to be available in Churchstoke.</p> <p>Comments have been made about the impact on Churchstoke Little Explorers should there be no school in Churchstoke, due to the setting being on the school site and sharing resources with the school. As this option keeps a school in Churchstoke, there would be no impact on the setting. Many comments were made about the importance of the setting for working families in providing childcare and wraparound provision, and therefore this option enables that provision to continue in Churchstoke.</p>	<p>Pupils would continue to attend school on the current site of Churchstoke C.P. School.</p> <p>However, some additional travel may be required between schools in order to access activities and events.</p>
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	resources to be shared across both sites.		
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7.3 Conclusion

The Council has considered the issues raised in the consultation exercise and has also carried out a further assessment of the proposal, the original options and alternative options identified during the consultation with consideration of the likely impact on quality and standards in education, the likely impact on the community and the likely effect of different travelling arrangements.

A significant issue that has been highlighted throughout the consultation is the amount pupils from the area who are choosing to attend schools in Shropshire – this suggests that the number on roll at Churchstoke C.P. School should be much higher than the current position. It is also noted that the level of housing developments completed and planned, not only in Churchstoke itself but in the surrounding areas, both in Powys and in Shropshire could lead to an increase in the number of children living in these areas in future, and it is essential that the Council ensures that there are sufficient places for these children in its schools. Another concern that has been highlighted is the potential loss of pupils across the border to Shropshire schools, and that this proposal could potentially disadvantage pupils from accessing the new Curriculum for Wales or developing their Welsh language skills.

Therefore the conclusion of this consultation exercise is that this proposal should not proceed further but that further consideration of options takes place to address the issues identified at the school and outlined above.