



## **Proposal to close Churchstoke C.P. School**

### **Updated Impact Assessments**

**October 2021**

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# Proposal to close Churchstoke C.P. School

## Impact Assessments

### 1. Introduction

Powys County Council is consulting 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 transfer to their nearest alternative schools in Powys

In line with the Council's policy, an Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out which incorporates the Welsh Language, Equalities, Well-being of Future Generations Act, Sustainable Development Principles, Communication and Engagement, Safeguarding, Corporate Parenting, Community Cohesion and Risk Management.

In addition, the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2018) requires local authorities to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment and Community Impact Assessment in relation to all school reorganisation proposals. For proposals which affect teaching through the medium of Welsh, local authorities are also required to carry out a Welsh Language Impact Assessment.

**These impact assessments were provided in draft form during the consultation period and have been updated following the consultation.** The Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out based on the latest PLASC information available. The Community Impact Assessment has been carried out with input from the affected school.

## 2. Integrated Impact Assessment

The Impact Assessment (IA) below incorporates Welsh Language, Equalities, Well-being of Future Generations Act, Sustainable Development Principles, Communication and Engagement, Safeguarding, Corporate Parenting, Community Cohesion and Risk Management, supporting effective decision making and ensuring compliance with respective legislation.

<b>Service Area</b>	Schools Service	<b>Head of Service</b>	Emma Palmer/Lynette Lovell	<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	Cllr Phyl Davies
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<b>Proposal</b>
To close Churchstoke C.P. School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools

<b>Outline Summary / Description of Proposal</b>
In February 2021, the Council's Cabinet approved carrying out consultation on the following proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To close Churchstoke C.P. School from the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools</li> </ul>

1. Version Control (services should consider the impact assessment early in the development process and continually evaluate)

Version	Author	Date
1	Transforming Education Programme Officer	January 2021
2	Senior Manager Schools Transformation	January 2021
3	Transformation Team	October 2021

2. Profile of savings delivery (if applicable)

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	TOTAL
£	£	£29,166.67	£20,833.33	£	£50,000

3. Consultation requirements

Consultation Requirement	Consultation deadline/or justification for no consultation
Public consultation required	Consultation in accordance with the School Organisation Code was carried out between the 14 <sup>th</sup> April and the 2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2021

#### 4. Impact on Other Service Areas

**Does the proposal have potential to impact on another service area? (Have you considered the implications on Health & Safety and Corporate Parenting?)  
PLEASE ENSURE YOU INFORM / ENGAGE ANY AFFECTED SERVICE AREAS AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY**

Adult Services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children's Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Commissioning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Highways, Transportation and Recycling	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Housing and Community Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Legal and Democratic Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Property, Planning and Public Protection	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Transformation and Communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Workforce and OD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Data Protection Impact Assessment**

Will the proposal involve processing the personal details of individuals? Yes  No   
Is Powys County Council the data controller? Yes  No   
If you have answered yes to either of the above you will be required to complete, as a minimum, the screening questions on the data protection impact assessment.  
For further advice please contact the Data Compliance Team.

#### 4a Geographical Locations

**What geographical area(s) will be impacted by the proposal? (Chose all those applicable)**

Powys	<input type="checkbox"/>
North	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mid	<input type="checkbox"/>
South	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brecon	<input type="checkbox"/>
Builth and Llanwrtyd	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crickhowell	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hay and Talgarth	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knighton and Presteigne	<input type="checkbox"/>
Llandrindod and Rhayader	<input type="checkbox"/>
Llanfair Caereinion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Llanfyllin	<input type="checkbox"/>
Llanidloes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Machynlleth	<input type="checkbox"/>
Newtown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welshpool and Montgomery	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ystradgynlais	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. How does your proposal impact on Vision 2025?

<b>Council's Well-being Objective</b>	<b>How does the proposal impact on this Well-being Objective?</b>	<b>IMPACT</b> Please select from drop down box below	<b>What will be done to better contribute to a more positive impact or to mitigate any negative impacts?</b>	<b>IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION</b> Please select from drop down box below
<b>The Economy</b>	Implementation of the proposal would have a potential impact on employment opportunities in	Poor		Poor

<p><b>We will develop a vibrant economy</b></p>	<p>Churchstoke as there would no longer be a school in the village.</p> <p>It is also possible that the loss of the school, and potentially loss of families from the area would have a negative impact on recruitment for lower paid key worker jobs in the area, and the ability of other employers in the area to recruit to roles. There could also be an impact on local businesses in the village and the surrounding communities. Concern has also been raised that the absence of a school in the village could lead to a reduction in house prices.</p> <p>Concerns were raised during consultation about the possible loss of early years provision in Churchstoke should the school close, as Churchstoke Little Explorers is co-located with the school and shares facilities. There was concern not only on the potential loss of employment for staff at the setting, but also the fact that the setting is the only provider of full day care in the area, and without this provision available locally, there could be an impact on parents working arrangements.</p>			
<p><b>Health and Care</b> <b>We will lead the way in providing effective, integrated health and care in a rural environment</b></p>	<p>Concerns were raised during consultation about the potential negative impact on the health and wellbeing of pupils who would no longer be able to walk to school – the majority of pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School walk to the school.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Whilst the Council recognises that this is an issue, there would be opportunities for pupils to take part in physical activities at their alternative schools to ensure good health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>
<p><b>Learning and skills</b> <b>We will strengthen learning and skills</b></p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Good</p>		

	<p>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> <p>It is the Council's view, as confirmed by its education specialists, that delivering the new curriculum will be significantly more challenging and place greater demands on teachers in very small 2 class schools. This does not mean that it would be impossible to deliver the curriculum in these schools, but it is clear that the skills required by teachers will need to be very wide ranging to support the full and effective fulfilment of the curriculum's high ambitions.</p> <p>Should the Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Churchstoke C.P. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools in Powys. 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>			
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	<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. The overall aim of the proposal is to improve learning opportunities for pupils.</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 schools 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>			
<p><b>Residents and Communities</b> <b>We will support our residents and communities</b></p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Churchstoke, as there would be no provision in the village, and therefore potential loss of any community facilities associated with the school.</p> <p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School. 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>Very Poor</p>	<p>Home to school transport to be provided for pupils living in Churchstoke to their nearest school in Powys to ensure that they continue to access a Welsh education.</p> <p>Community hall to continue to be available to the community for community activities.</p>	<p>Very Poor</p>

	<p>Numerous concerns about the proposal's impact on the community were raised during the consultation, these included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General concern about impact on the community/village</li> <li>• The school is the heart of the community</li> <li>• Closure of the school would mean that the community would lead to a loss of community cohesion</li> <li>• Concern about the impact on local businesses / the local economy</li> <li>• Concern about the impact on the community centre</li> <li>• Concern about the impact on other services</li> <li>• Concern about the impact on other community groups / activities</li> <li>• People would no longer want to live in Churchstoke</li> <li>• Comments about previous generations of families that have attended the school</li> <li>• Queries about what would happen to the school building / grounds</li> <li>• Comments about previous school closures</li> </ul> <p>Whilst the proposal is that pupils transfer to alternative Powys schools, it is possible that some pupils would transfer to alternative schools in Shropshire, and therefore would access education in England. This could impact on the Welsh identity of Churchstoke. Concerns were raised about this issue during the consultation.</p> <p>A separate draft community impact assessment has been carried out which includes input from</p>			
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	the school. This has also been updated to reflect comments made during the consultation.			
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<b>Source of Outline Evidence to support judgements</b>
Consultation report

6. How does your proposal impact on the Welsh Government’s well-being goals?

<b>Well-being Goal</b>	<b>How does proposal contribute to this goal?</b>	<b><u>IMPACT</u></b> Please select from drop down box below	<b>What will be done to better contribute to a more positive impact or to mitigate any negative impacts?</b>	<b><u>IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION</u></b> Please select from drop down box below
<p><b>A prosperous Wales:</b> An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.</p>	<p>The aim of the proposal to close the school is to ensure the best possible opportunities for learners in the area now and in the future, to ensure that resources are used efficiently and proportionately across Powys schools, ensuring better strategic management of the Powys schools estate.</p> <p>Should Churchstoke C.P. School close, it is proposed that pupils transfer to alternative schools in Powys in order to ensure that they can benefit from the new Curriculum for Wales, the new, innovative curriculum for Wales which will be implemented from September 2022. This should lead to developing a skilled and well-educated population.</p> <p>However, it is recognised that, due to Churchstoke’s location on the border of Powys and Shropshire it is possible that parents would choose a Shropshire school for their child(ren) if Churchstoke C.P. School close. This would mean</p>	Poor		

	that they would not be able to benefit from the new Curriculum for Wales.			
<p><b>A resilient Wales:</b> A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).</p>	<p>Implementation of the proposal would require additional travel for pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P School for whom this is their closest school. This would have a negative environmental impact as more home to school transport would need to be provided to transport pupils to alternative schools.</p> <p>Whilst the proposal is that pupils transfer to alternative Powys schools, it is possible that some pupils would transfer to alternative schools in Shropshire, and therefore would access education in England.</p> <p>Information gathered during consultation shows that a number of pupils from the Churchstoke area are already choosing to attend schools in Shropshire. If Churchstoke C.P. School was to close, then the Council would be required to provide transport to both their nearest alternative schools in Powys and also their nearest alternative schools. The nearest alternative schools for current Churchstoke C.P. School are in Shropshire. This would mean transporting more pupils on home-to-school transport.</p>	Poor		Poor
<p><b>A healthier Wales:</b> A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.</p> <p><b>Public Health (Wales) Act, 2017:</b> Part 6 of the Act requires for public bodies to undertake a health impact assessment to assess the likely effect of a proposed</p>	<p>Implementation of the proposal would result in closure of Churchstoke C.P School, with pupils transferring to alternative schools. It is acknowledged that this could have a negative impact on the mental well-being of pupils, staff and other stakeholders associated with the school during the transition period, however the</p>	Poor	An experienced member of staff from the Council is supporting school leaders effectively to help them manage possible changes for pupils. The Council would also expect pupils to be fully supported by their teachers and other staff at the school during any period of uncertainty, to minimise the impact on their well-being.	Neutral

<p>action or decision on the physical or mental health of the people of Wales.</p>	<p>long term aim is to provide improved learning opportunities for all learners.</p> <p>A significant number of comments were received during the consultation about the impact on pupil well-being due to the consultation taking place during the current pandemic, creating an additional pressure on their well-being during a difficult time.</p> <p>Whilst the proposal is that pupils transfer to alternative Powys schools, it is possible that some pupils would transfer to alternative schools in Shropshire, and therefore would access education in England. This could impact on their Welsh identity.</p>		<p>Support will be provided to pupils during the transition period to enable them to transfer effectively to their new schools. The receiving school would work closely with the closing school during the transition to identify and address areas of concern amongst pupils and families. The headteacher of the receiving school would be able to meet with families to discuss concerns, and there would be opportunities for families to visit the receiving schools and meet teachers and other pupils.</p> <p>Process to be concluded as quickly as possible to minimise the period of uncertainty for pupils, staff and other stakeholders.</p>	
<p><b>A Wales of cohesive communities:</b> Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected Communities.</p>	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Churchstoke as there would be no provision in the village, and therefore potential loss of any community facilities associated with the school.</p> <p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P School. 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>Churchstoke C.P. School is located close to the community hall. Should the school close, the community hall would continue to be available for community activities. Whilst the proposal</p>	<p>Very Poor</p>	<p>Home to school transport to be provided for pupils living in Churchstoke to their nearest school in Powys to ensure that they continue to access a Welsh education.</p> <p>Community hall to continue to be available to the community for community activities.</p>	<p>Very Poor</p>

	<p>would not impact on the community hall, it is acknowledged that the potential loss of income to the hall from school activities no longer needing to take place could impact on the community hall.</p> <p>Numerous concerns about the proposal's impact on the community were raised during the consultation, these included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General concern about impact on the community/village</li> <li>• The school is the heart of the community</li> <li>• Closure of the school would mean that the community would lead to a loss of community cohesion</li> <li>• Concern about the impact on local businesses / the local economy</li> <li>• Concern about the impact on the community centre</li> <li>• Concern about the impact on other services</li> <li>• Concern about the impact on other community groups / activities</li> <li>• People would no longer want to live in Churchstoke</li> <li>• Comments about previous generations of families that have attended the school</li> <li>• Queries about what would happen to the school building / grounds</li> <li>• Comments about previous school closures</li> </ul> <p>Concerns were also raised about the potential impact of the school closure on Churchstoke Little Explorers, the pre-school setting that is co-located in a building at the school with shared facilities.</p>			
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	<p>Whilst the proposal is that pupils transfer to alternative Powys schools, it is possible that some pupils would transfer to alternative schools in Shropshire, and therefore would access education in England. This could impact on the Welsh identity of Churchstoke.</p> <p>A separate draft community impact assessment has been carried out which includes input from the school. This has also been updated to reflect comments made during the consultation.</p>			
<p><b>A globally responsible Wales:</b> A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.</p> <p><b>Human Rights - is about being proactive (see guidance)</b></p> <p><b>UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:</b> The Convention gives rights to everyone under the age of 18, which include the right to be treated fairly and to be protected from discrimination; that organisations act for the best interest of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and the right to be heard.</p>	<p>The aim of implementing the proposal is to provide the best possible opportunities to learners, enabling them to reach their full potential.</p> <p>The Council has carried out consultation on the proposal, which included consultation with pupils, ensuring that all affected by the plans have had the opportunity to give their views.</p>	Neutral		

**A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language:** A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.

*Incorporating requirements under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards*

Well-being Goal	How does proposal contribute to this goal?	<u>IMPACT</u> Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to a more positive impact or to mitigate any negative impacts?	<u>IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION</u> Please select from
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				drop down box below
<i>Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and treating the Welsh language no less favourable than the English language</i>	<p>Churchstoke C.P School is an English-medium school, therefore it is not anticipated that implementation of the proposal would impact on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, or on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language should pupils transfer to alternative schools in Powys.</p> <p>However, it is possible that some pupils could choose to attend alternative provision in Shropshire. This would mean that they would no longer access a Welsh curriculum, and Welsh would no longer be a part of the curriculum. This would mean that they would no longer have an opportunity to learn Welsh, and to use the Welsh language. Concern that pupils would transfer to alternative schools in Shropshire and therefore would no longer access a Welsh curriculum / have the opportunity to learn Welsh was raised in the consultation responses.</p>	Poor	The proposal is for pupils to transfer to their closest alternative schools in Powys – this is to ensure that they get an opportunity to access the Curriculum for Wales and to develop their Welsh language skills. Home to school transport to be provided for pupils living in Churchstoke to their nearest school in Powys to ensure that they continue to access a Welsh education.	Neutral
<i>Opportunities to promote the Welsh language</i>	<p>Churchstoke C.P School is an English-medium school, however as it is located on the Powys / Shropshire border. Should pupils transfer to alternative schools in Powys, they would continue to be exposed to the Welsh language.</p> <p>However, it is possible that some pupils could choose to attend alternative provision in Shropshire. This would mean that they would no longer access a Welsh curriculum, and Welsh would no longer be a part of the curriculum. This could also impact on the Welsh identify of Churchstoke and opportunities to promote the Welsh language in Churchstoke.</p>	Poor	The proposal is for pupils to transfer to their closest alternative schools in Powys – this is to ensure that they get an opportunity to access the Curriculum for Wales and to develop their Welsh language skills. Home to school transport to be provided for pupils living in Churchstoke to their nearest school in Powys to ensure that they continue to access a Welsh education.	Neutral

<p><i>People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation.</i></p>	<p>Implementation of the proposal would lead to the closure of Churchstoke C.P. School, with pupils transferring to their nearest alternative schools in Powys. The nearest Powys school for the majority of pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School is Montgomery C.i.W Primary School, which is a larger school than Churchstoke. It is anticipated that being part of a larger school would result in additional opportunities for pupils to take part in sport, art and other extra-curricular activities.</p> <p>The comments received during the consultation period suggest that there a number of extra-curricular activities happening at Churchstoke C.P. School. The comments received also suggest that due to the size of the school, pupils have more opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities and whole school activities than in larger schools. However, all the other alternative schools provide a range of extra-curricular activities that are teacher-led.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about the impact on poorer families, with the number of children eligible for free school meals having increased significantly at Churchstoke C.P. School between 2020 and 2021. Comments suggest that these families would be at an even greater disadvantage due to not having access to their own transport, and reliant on public transport.</p> <p>The Council acknowledges that it may be difficult for some pupils to access after school activities due to reliance on home to school transport.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>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 activities.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>
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**A more equal Wales:** A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).  
 Incorporating requirements under the *Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 and the Social Economic duty (2020)*.

<b>Well-being Goal</b>	<b>How does proposal contribute to this goal?</b>	<b><u>IMPACT</u></b> Please select from drop down box below	<b>What will be done to better contribute to a more positive impact or to mitigate any negative impacts?</b>	<b><u>IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION</u></b> Please select from drop down box below
<i>Age</i>	The proposal would impact on primary aged pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P School. The proposal aims to provide improved educational opportunities for all affected pupils.	Neutral		
<i>Disability</i>	<p>The proposal would impact on any pupils with disabilities currently attending Churchstoke C.P School. The proposal aims to provide improved educational opportunities for all affected pupils, including any pupils with disabilities.</p> <p>Comments received during the consultation expressed concern about the impact on pupils with additional learning needs if they had to be taught in larger cohorts, with the view that small schools / classes enable more 1:1 support. The Council's view is that pupils with additional learning needs would be fully supported at any of the alternative schools.</p> <p>Concerns were also raised about Montgomery C.i.W School in terms of accessibility, noting that Churchstoke C.P. School had been adapted to improve its accessibility. The Council would need to ensure that any school building is accessible and meets the needs of learners with disabilities.</p>	Neutral		

<b>Gender reassignment</b>	No impact.	Neutral		
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b>	No impact.	Neutral		
<b>Race</b>	The proposal would impact on all primary aged pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P School, including pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups due to their race. The proposal aims to provide improved educational opportunities for all affected pupils.	Neutral		
<b>Religion or belief</b>	The proposal aims to provide improved educational opportunities for all pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P School, regardless of their religion or belief.  In the consultation period, comments were received which expressed concern that many of the alternative schools near to Churchstoke are Church-in-Wales school and that if Churchstoke C.P. School closed, the choice of a community primary school would not be available.	Neutral	There is no pressure on families attending a Church in Wales school to be Christian or to have any affiliation with the Church. If a parent wished for their child to attend a non-denominational school, they could apply for a place at any community primary school.	
<b>Sex</b>	The proposal aims to provide improved educational opportunities for all pupils currently attending Churchstoke .C.P School, regardless of their sex.	Neutral		
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	The proposal aims to provide improved educational opportunities for all pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P School, regardless of their sexual orientation.	Neutral		
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	No impact.	Neutral		
<b>Socio-economic duty</b>	The aim of the proposal is to provide improved educational opportunities for all pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P School, including any eligible for Free School Meals. The number of	Poor		

	<p>pupils attending Churchstoke C.P. School that are eligible for Free School Meals has increased over the last year or so – PLASC 2021 indicates that 28.9% of pupils at the school were eligible for Free School Meals. These pupils would continue to receive free school meals at any alternative school that they would transfer to.</p> <p>Should the proposal be implemented, there would be no school in Churchstoke. This would mean that pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School would need to travel to their nearest alternative provision. Whilst home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils, it is possible that this would impact on pupils' ability to access extra-curricular / after school activities, and that this impact would be greater in respect of pupils from lower income households. There would also be an impact on the parents of these pupils in terms of accessing school activities. Concern was raised during the consultation period about the proposal's impact on the ability of pupils from lower income households in particular to access after school activities, and that the proposal could cause a social divide.</p>			
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**Source of Outline Evidence to support judgements**

Consultation report

7. How does your proposal impact on the council's other key guiding principles?  
**Sustainable Development Principle (5 ways of working)**

Principle	How does the proposal impact on this principle?	<b>IMPACT</b> Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to a more positive impact or to mitigate any negative impacts?	<b>IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION</b> Please select from drop down box below
<p><b>Long Term:</b> Looking to the long term so that we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.</p>	<p>Whilst pupil numbers at Churchstoke C.P. School have decreased over the last few years, they are now increasing. There are a number of large housing developments in the area that may lead to an increase in pupil numbers in Churchstoke in the future. It is also noted that a number of pupils from the Churchstoke area are already travelling to other schools, particularly schools in Shropshire. Churchstoke Little Explorers is also a thriving pre-school setting, funded for 19 places. This suggests that Churchstoke C.P. School should have a higher roll than it currently has.</p> <p>The pressure on school places at alternative schools has also been noted and therefore the proposal as it currently stands has a negative impact on this principle.</p>	Very Poor		
<p><b>Collaboration:</b> Working with others in a collaborative way to find shared sustainable solutions.</p>	<p>Full consultation has been carried out, which has enabled all interested parties to give their views. This included an opportunity to suggest any alternative options for the school.</p>	Good		
<p><b>Involvement (including Communication and Engagement):</b> Involving a diversity of the population in the decisions that affect them including:</p> <p><b>Unpaid Carers:</b></p>	<p>Full consultation has been carried out in accordance with the School Organisation Code. This provided an opportunity for all interested parties to give their views on the proposal, including any unpaid carers. A Consultation Report has been prepared which outlines the issues raised in the consultation responses, and</p>	Good		

<p><i>Ensuring that unpaid carers views are sought and taken into account</i></p>	<p>this will be considered by Cabinet Cabinet when determining how to proceed.</p> <p>Concerns were raised during the consultation period about the consultation taking place during the pandemic, and that this meant that some members of the community were unable to give their views. However, a significant number of responses were received to the consultation which does not support this view.</p>			
<p><b>Prevention:</b> <i>Understanding the root causes of issues to prevent them from occurring including:</i></p> <p><b>Safeguarding:</b> <i>Preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children, young people and adults with health and social care needs who can't protect themselves.</i></p>	<p>The aim of the proposal to close the school is to ensure the best possible opportunities for learners in the area now and in the future, and to ensure better strategic management of the Powys schools' estate.</p> <p>Ensuring appropriate safeguarding arrangements is a key aspect of any school organisation proposal. The intention is that the proposal would maintain or improve the safeguarding arrangements for all pupils.</p>	<p>Good</p>		
<p><b>Integration:</b> <i>Taking an integrated approach so that public bodies look at all the well-being goals in deciding on their well-being objectives.</i></p>	<p>No impact.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>		
<p><b>Powys County Council Workforce:</b> What Impact will this change have on the Workforce?</p>	<p>Implementation of the proposal would impact on all current staff at Churchstoke C.P. School as there would no longer be a school in Churchstoke, therefore staff would be subject to a Management of Change process.</p> <p>Full consultation has been carried out in accordance with the School Organisation Code. This process was supported by relevant LA teams (e.g. HR), and included a consultation meeting</p>	<p>Poor</p>		

	with staff, which ensured that they had an opportunity to give their views.  A member of the HR team met with the staff informally at the start of the process.			
<b>Payroll:</b> How will this impact salary, any overtime/enhanced payments etc? Does this affect any particular group of employees? E.g. Male/Female dominated workforce. Does this proposal comply with the Councils Single Status Terms and Conditions?	Implementation of the preferred way forward could impact on salary arrangements for current staff at Churchstoke C.P. School.	Neutral		
<b>Welsh Language impact on staff</b>	Churchstoke C.P. School is an English-medium school, therefore it is not anticipated that there would be a Welsh language impact on staff	Neutral		
<b>Apprenticeships:</b> Has consideration been given to whether this change impacts negatively, or positively on Apprenticeships within the service?	No impact	Neutral		

<b>Source of Outline Evidence to support judgements</b>
Consultation report

8. What is the impact of this proposal on our communities?

<b>Communities</b>	<b>How does the proposal impact on residents and community?</b>	<b>IMPACT</b> See impact definitions in guidance document	<b>What will be done to better contribute to a more positive impact or to mitigate any negative impacts?</b>	<b>IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION</b> See impact definitions in guidance document	<b>Source of Outline Evidence to support judgement</b>
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Churchstoke	<p>There would be a significant impact on the community of Churchstoke as there would be no provision in the village, and therefore potential loss of any community facilities associated with the school.</p> <p>Additional travel would be required for pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P School. 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>Churchstoke C.P. School is located close to the community hall. Should the school close, the community hall would continue to be available for community activities. Whilst the proposal would not impact on the community hall, it is acknowledged that the potential loss of income to the hall from school activities no longer needing to take place could impact on the community hall.</p> <p>Numerous concerns about the proposal's impact on the community were raised during the consultation, these included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General concern about impact on the community/village</li> </ul>	Major	<p>Home to school transport to be provided for pupils living in Churchstoke to their nearest school in Powys to ensure that they continue to access a Welsh education.</p> <p>Community hall to continue to be available to the community for community activities.</p>	Major	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school is the heart of the community</li> <li>• Closure of the school would mean that the community would lead to a loss of community cohesion</li> <li>• Concern about the impact on local businesses / the local economy</li> <li>• Concern about the impact on the community centre</li> <li>• Concern about the impact on other services</li> <li>• Concern about the impact on other community groups / activities</li> <li>• People would no longer want to live in Churchstoke</li> <li>• Comments about previous generations of families that have attended the school</li> <li>• Queries about what would happen to the school building / grounds</li> <li>• Comments about previous school closures</li> </ul> <p>Concerns were also raised about the potential impact of the school closure on Churchstoke Little Explorers, the pre-school setting that is co-located in a building at the school with shared facilities.</p> <p>Whilst the proposal is that pupils transfer to alternative Powys schools, it is possible that some pupils would transfer to</p>				
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	<p>alternative schools in Shropshire, and therefore would access education in England. This could impact on the Welsh identity of Churchstoke.</p> <p>A separate draft community impact assessment has been carried out which includes input from the school. This has also been updated to reflect comments made during the consultation.</p>				
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9. What are the risks to service delivery or the council following implementation of this proposal?

<b>Risk Identified</b>	<b>Inherent Risk Rating</b> Impact X Likelihood (See Risk Matrix in guidance document)	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Residual Risk Rating</b> Impact X Likelihood (See Risk Matrix in guidance document)
<p>Insufficient capacity at nearest Powys school to accommodate all pupils at Churchstoke C.P. School. 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. Due to the significant housing developments in both Churchstoke and Montgomery and the wider area, there is a strong possibility that pupil numbers in the area will increase over the next few years.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Review the current proposal.</p>	<p>Medium</p>
<p>Parents of pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School choose for their children to attend provision in Shropshire instead of transferring to alternative schools in Powys.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Engagement with parents to take place throughout the process on the benefits of the Curriculum for Wales.</p>	<p>Medium</p>
<p>Period of uncertainty for Churchstoke C.P. School if a statutory process is carried out and implemented which might have a negative effect on standards at the school.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>The Council to provide advice and support to the school and governing body to ensure that standards and performance do not deteriorate during the transition period</p>	<p>Medium</p>

Uncertainty for staff whilst the process is ongoing	Medium	Engagement with staff to take place throughout the process and staff to be kept informed of developments	Medium
Negative impact on pupils wellbeing which has already been affected due to the pandemic.	High	An experienced member of staff from the Council is supporting school leaders effectively to help them manage possible changes for pupils. The Council would also expect pupils to be fully supported by their teachers and other staff at the school during any period of uncertainty, to minimise the impact on their well-being.	Medium

10. Overall Summary and Judgement of this Impact Assessment?

The aim of the proposal is to improve the educational provision for learners. However, whilst this impact assessment has identified some positive aspects, in particular relating to learning and skills and ensuring the best strategic management of the Powys schools' estate, the assessment has also identified some negative aspects. These primarily relate to the pressure on school places at alternative schools should Churchstoke C.P. School close. This is due to the potential increase in pupil numbers due to significant number of housing developments in Churchstoke and the wider area, plus the fact that a number of pupils from Churchstoke are already choosing to attend Shropshire schools. This suggests that Churchstoke C.P. School should have a higher roll than it currently has.

Other negative aspects include the impact on the community of Churchstoke due to loss of educational provision from the village, and the associated additional travel requirements for pupils. In addition, whilst the proposal is that pupils would transfer to alternative schools in Powys, it is possible that some pupils would transfer to provision in Shropshire, which would mean that they would no longer access a Welsh curriculum, and could impact on the Welsh identity of the village of Churchstoke. Another negative is the impact on general well-being, particularly due to the consultation having taken place during the pandemic.

11. Is there additional evidence to support the Impact Assessment (IA)?

**What additional evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?**

Full consultation has been carried out on the proposal. The impact assessment has been updated to reflect the feedback received.

12. On-going monitoring arrangements?

**What arrangements will be put in place to monitor the impact over time?**

The Transforming Education Programme Board will continue to monitor impact over time.

**Please state when this Impact Assessment will be reviewed.**

This impact assessment will be reviewed at each stage of the process

13. Sign Off

Position	Name	Signature	Date
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<b>Impact Assessment Lead:</b>	Sarah Astley		
<b>Head of Service:</b>	Lynette Lovell		
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr Phyl Davies		

14. Governance

<b>Decision to be made by</b>	Cabinet	<b>Date required</b>	23 <sup>d</sup> March 2021
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### 3. Equality Impact Assessment

## Powys County Council

### Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)



<b>Proposal</b>	To close Churchstoke C.P. School from the 31st August 2022, with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools
<b>Service Area</b>	Schools Service
<b>Date of Assessment</b>	October 2021
<b>Lead Person undertaking the assessment</b>	SA
<b>Relevant Head of Service who has agreed this assessment</b>	LL

The Equality Act 2010, requires that public sector organisations in the exercise of their functions, pay due regard to the following ‘general duty’:

- (a) Eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;**
- (b) Advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;**
- (c) Fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.**

*The protected characteristics include: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, sex and sexual orientation. This assessment also includes a consideration of impact upon people and communities whose language of choice is Welsh.*

The specific regulations for Wales [Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011] require public sector bodies to monitor relevant policy and practises and then assess and report on the impact based upon an analysis of relevant data and evidence.

#### 1. AIM or PURPOSE

In April 2020, the Leader approved a new Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys, which sets a number of aims and objectives to transform the Powys education system over the next few years. One of the objectives is to ‘Reconfigure and rationalise primary provision’.

Powys County Council is consulting 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 transfer to their nearest alternative schools in Powys

## 2. OBJECTIVES

**Please state the current business objectives of the change proposal.**

The Council is proposing to close Churchstoke C.P. School for the following reasons:

- 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

## 3. BENEFITS and OUTCOMES

**i) What are the intended benefits or outcomes from the change proposal?**

The benefits of the proposal are:

- Would address the issue of low pupil numbers
- Would reduce the Council's overall surplus capacity in primary schools
- Revenue saving to the Council
- Pupils would attend larger schools, which could provide a wider range of educational and extra-curricular activities
- Pupils would be taught in classes with peers of similar ages

- Pupils would attend schools with better quality accommodation
- Minimal impact on any other schools
- Would enable pupils to continue to access provision in Powys

#### 4. CORPORATE RELEVANCE

##### How does this change proposal relate to Vision 2025?

Learning and Skills is one of the four priorities outlined in Corporate Improvement Plan 2020-25: Vision 2025. Within this priority, the Plan includes a commitment to 'Improve our schools infrastructure'.

#### 5. DATA USED

##### 5.1. What data has been used to conduct this assessment?

Tick/shade boxes as appropriate.

Profiling of service users, providing a breakdown of who uses the service by the protected characteristics.	✓
Service user satisfaction rates, broken down by the protected characteristics.	
Qualitative data (analysed against the protected characteristics) which provides evidence about current services users experience accessing the service.	
Qualitative data gathered from those that are not currently using the service.	
Complaints monitoring against the protected characteristics.	
Wider research reports and findings.	
Relevant service based Equality Impact Assessment.	

##### 5.2. Are there any gaps in the data?

Yes ✓

Please state the gaps:

- No qualitative data is currently available

How will the gaps be addressed going forward?

- Qualitative data will be collected as part of the forthcoming consultation process.

No

## 6. DATA ANALYSIS

### 6.1 Quantitative

**Summarise the key quantitative data analysis results, providing key headline statistics.**

Include data that relates to existing provision and also data relating to proposal. E.g. statistics generated from a consultation questionnaire.

**Key questions:**

- i) Are certain groups currently underrepresented in service user figures? Will a change affect this?
- ii) How do satisfaction levels compare across the protected characteristic groups? How will a change affect this?

### PLASC January 2021

Based on the information provided in the school's PLASC return in January 2021, the following pupils belong to the protected characteristic groups:

- Free school meals: 28.9% of pupils are eligible for Free School Meals
- ALN: 28.9% of pupils have special educational needs. Of these, 13.2% of pupils are on School Action, 13.2% of pupils are on School Action Plus and 2.6% of pupils have statements
- Disabilities: 28.9% of pupils have additional learning needs
- English as an Additional Language: 5.3% of pupils are identified as EAL pupils.
- Ethnicity: The ethnic group of 94.7% of pupils in the school is White British. 5.3% of pupils belong to ethnic groups other than White British.
- Looked after Children: 0.0% of pupils are looked after.

This information shows that a proportion of pupils that belong to the protected characteristic groups will be affected by this proposal. In particular:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 28.9% of pupils at Churchstoke C.P. School are eligible for Free School Meals. This is higher than the Powys average for primary schools (15.4%)</li> <li>- 28.9% of pupils at Churchstoke C.P. School have additional learning needs. This is higher than the Powys average for primary schools (20.0%)</li> </ul> <p>The proposal to close Churchstoke C.P. School would impact on all pupils currently attending the school, including those pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups.</p>
<p><b>6.2 Qualitative</b>  <b>Summarise the key qualitative data analysis, providing key themes or patterns.</b>  Include data that relates to existing provision and also data relating to proposal. E.g. protected characteristics focus group on the proposal.</p> <p><b>Key questions:</b></p> <p><b>i)</b> Do certain groups have a different service user experience? How will a change affect this?</p> <p><b>ii)</b> Have any areas for improvement been communicated by particular groups? Will a change have an impact upon these views?</p> <p><b>iii)</b> What are the reasons behind some groups not using the service? How will a change affect this position?</p> <p><b>iv)</b> What has consultation on your proposals revealed about impact on the protected characteristics?</p>	<p>Full consultation has been carried out on the proposal relating to Churchstoke C.P. School, which included consultation with pupils at the affected schools. This has provided qualitative data in respect of the proposal, and any additional impact on pupils that belong to protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>The following comments were raised about the proposal’s impact on the protected characteristic groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is more beneficial for pupils belonging to protected characteristic groups to attend Churchstoke C.P. School / small schools</li> <li>- The proposal would impact on pupils with ALN / SEN that attend Churchstoke C.P. School</li> <li>- The proposal would impact on pupils with disabilities attending the school, particularly as the school has good disabled facilities which may not be available at alternative schools</li> <li>- Impact on low income families, particularly in respect of ability to access after school / extracurricular activities</li> <li>- Concern that most of the nearby schools are denominational schools, therefore it would be more difficult for pupils to access a C.P. school.</li> </ul>

## 7. EqIA RESULT

Based on an analysis of the available qualitative and quantitative data, please tick/shade the appropriate box opposite to provide the EqIA assessment result.

<b>The proposal does not present any adverse impact on equality.</b> [Proceed to question 10]	
<b>The proposal presents some adverse impact on equality.</b> [Proceed to question 8]	✓
<b>The proposal presents significant impact on equality</b> [Proceed to question 8]	

## 8. AREAS for IMPROVEMENT

<p><b>Please provide detail of weak or sensitive areas of the proposal identified by the assessment.</b></p> <p><b>i)</b> Which protected characteristic groups are particularly affected?</p> <p><b>ii)</b> Will people on low incomes be affected?</p> <p><b>iii)</b> Will Welsh speakers be affected?</p>	<p>i) The protected characteristic group most affected by the proposal would be pupils with additional learning needs. 28.9% of pupils at the school have additional learning needs, this is higher than the Powys average for primary schools. Comments received during the consultation expressed concern about the impact on pupils with ALN if they had to be taught in larger cohorts, with the view that small schools / classes enable more 1:1 support.</p> <p>Comments were also received expressing concern about the impact on pupils with disabilities, particularly as Churchstoke School building has good disabled facilities, which may not be available at alternative schools.</p> <p>Concerns were also raised that most of the nearby schools are denominational schools, therefore should the Council proceed with the proposal, it would be more difficult for pupils to access a C.P. School.</p> <p>ii) 28.9% of pupils attending Churchstoke C.P. School are eligible for Free School Meals. This is higher than the Powys average for primary schools and the percentage has increased significantly since 2020. Concerns were raised in the consultation about the proposal's impact on low income families, particularly in relation to access to after school / extra curricular activities.</p>
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	<p>iii) Churchstoke C.P. School is an English medium school, therefore the proposal will not directly affect Welsh speakers. However, as a border school, concerns were raised in the consultation that parents would choose alternative schools in Shropshire instead of an alternative school in Powys, and that this would impact on pupils' ability to access the Curriculum for Wales and to have the opportunity to develop their Welsh language skills.</p>
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## 9. EQUALITY IMPROVEMENT

<p><b>9.1 Having identified problematic aspects to the proposal, how will this now be addressed?</b></p> <p><i>i.e. Are you able to involve (in some capacity) people from protected characteristic groups, Welsh Speakers, people on low incomes, to assist you in this process?</i></p> <p><b>i)</b> Can the impact be mitigated, and how will this be done?</p> <p><b>ii)</b> Does the proposal require modification to reduce or remove this impact?</p> <p><b>iii)</b> Should the proposal be considered for removal, owing to the degree of impact it is likely to have?</p>	<p>Should the proposal be implemented, Churchstoke C.P. School would close, and pupils would transfer to alternative schools. This would have a significant impact on pupils currently attending Churchstoke C.P. School, including any pupils belonging to the protected characteristic groups that attend the school, as some additional travel would be required in order to attend their nearest alternative school.</p> <p>Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposal would impact on pupils belonging to the protected characteristic groups that attend the school, 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.</p> <p>The protected characteristic group most affected by the proposal would be pupils with ALN. However, the Council's view is that pupils with additional learning needs would be fully supported at any of the alternative schools. Concern was also raised about the impact on disabled pupils as the Churchstoke building has good disabled facilities, which may not be available at alternative schools. Should the Council proceed with the proposal, there would be a need to ensure that any school building these pupils transfer to is accessible and meets the needs of the learners.</p> <p>There would be significant impact on pupils with protected characteristics, including those with additional learning needs, those eligible for free school meals and on opportunities to use the Welsh language. It is therefore proposed that the proposal be considered for removal.</p>
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	The proposal does not require modification to reduce or remove the impact on protected characteristic groups.
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**9.2 Will the management of the impact as outlined in 9.1, be included in the Service Improvement Plan?**

<p><b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Date added.....</p> <p>Reference.....</p>	<p><b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If no, please explain why not:  <b>Need was not identified at time of writing Service Strategy</b></p>
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#### 4. Draft Community Impact Assessment – Churchstoke C.P. School

i) Information on the proportion of pupils from the catchment area that attend the school

The closest providers for pupils attending Churchstoke C.P. in January 2020<sup>1</sup> was as follows:

School	% of Pupils
Churchstoke C.P. School	80.0%
Bishop's Castle Primary School	8.0%
Long Mountain CofE Primary School	4.0%
Montgomery C. in W. School	4.0%
Penygloddfa C.P. School	4.0%

This suggests that 80% of pupils attending the school were attending their closest primary school, whilst 20% of pupils attending the school live closer to other primary schools.

#### Updated information – September 2021

This information has been updated to reflect PLASC 2021 data which shows that the closest current school for pupils is as follows:

School	% of Pupils
Churchstoke C.P. School	76%
Bishop's Castle Primary School	8%
St Michael's C.i.W VA School	5%
Montgomery C.i.W Primary School	3%
Bishop's Castle School	3%
Long Mountain CofE Primary School	3%
Ysgol Gymraeg y Trallwng	2%

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<sup>1</sup> PLASC 2020

If there was no school in Churchstoke, the nearest alternative schools for pupils would be as follows:

School	% of Pupils
Chirbury CofE Primary School	74%
Bishop's Castle Primary School	11%
St Michael's C. in W. School, Kerry	5%
Montgomery C. in W. Primary School	5%
Long Mountain CofE Primary School	3%
Welshpool C. in W. Primary School	2%

**ii) After-school clubs and extra-curricular activities provided by the school**

The school provides the following after-school clubs and extra-curricular activities:

- Cooking, coding, film club and Criw Cymraeg, guitar lessons, a series of enterprise activities
- Joint activities with the local Tennis Club and Churchstoke Bowling Club.
- Breakfast Club.
- After School Club which supports both the school and pre-school setting.
- Village Youth Club.
- Rainbows, Brownies and Guides, currently the only youth provision in the village outside school and pre-school.
- Charity fund raising is undertaken on an extracurricular basis, both for local and national appeals.
- The school have been involved in local history and environmental projects.
- Due to the school's location within the geographical landscape, it has been the only Powys/Welsh representation in Buzz in the Borders via The John Muir Trust and The Stiperstones and Corndon Living Landscape project. Without this participation there would be dramatically reduced opportunities for local community participation in cross border initiatives such as this.

**iii) Any other facilities or services the school accommodates or services the school provides**

The school accommodates or provides the following other facilities or services:

- The local playgroup, Churchstoke Little Explorers, and Churchstoke Parent and Toddler Group, which also use both an outdoor area and the

school field/forest school area. They have just received a £10,000 grant from Powys County Council Small Grants Scheme to develop the outdoor area and work is due to start during February half term.

- The school library which is also used by voluntary groups (e.g. Rainbows, Brownies and Guides)
- The school is a key holder for the Community Hall, which is on the school site.
- Heart defibrillator which belongs to the school but is available to all in the local area.

#### **iv) Other use by the community of the school building**

The school building is used by the community to provide the following activities:

- The school grounds are used as access to the Community Hall for all those using the hall.
- The school grounds are used by Churchstoke Football Club to access changing rooms.
- The school grounds are used by Rainbows, Brownies and Guides. It is also expected that a Scout Group will use the school grounds once the COVID-19 restrictions are over.
- The school field and forest school area is used for forest school activities for playgroup, toddlers and voluntary groups.

The school grounds have been used for church and nursing home fetes, and for overflow parking for large funerals

#### **v) Other links between the school and the community**

- With the neighbouring residential and nursing home, St Nicholas House. This has included visits from the children to perform for the residents and is very important for the health and well-being of both the residents and the children.
- St Nicholas' Church, including joint fund raising and social activities, plus support for Sunday School. Church leaders, WI and Mother's Union provide input into school assemblies, lessons and extra-curricular activities.
- With the local Co-op and Churchstoke Shopping Centre, with children visiting to perform for the public and to gain first-hand experience of the world of work.
- A Clothing Bank for the recycling of unwanted clothes.
- The school lends equipment to Playgroup, Toddlers, Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and other voluntary bodies, and the school gymnastics equipment is available to the public.
- The school supports youth participation in the local tennis club lessons and at the local Bowling Club.
- School and Friends of School events are community gatherings, open to the whole community. Many residents of St Nicholas' House, other older residents, vulnerable members of the community and those with pre-school families rely on these events for social interaction. Little else brings the community together, younger with older, including secondary age ex-pupils.

- The school is the repository for local history after closure of the local history group several years ago. A regular part of school work is to ensure that both written and verbal local history is kept alive, including photographic records of changes within the community.
- Due to school location within the geographical landscape, the school provides the only Powys/Welsh representation in Buzz in the Borders via The John Muir Trust and The Stiperstones and Corndon Living Landscape project. Without this both projects would lack any Welsh perspective.
- Close links to education and training on both sides of the border, particularly with feeder secondary schools, crucially The Community College, Bishop's Castle (which is the closest secondary school and therefore the main feeder secondary), ensuring continuity of learning, wellbeing and safeguarding on transfer.

**vi) If accommodation, facilities or services are provided by a school, where would they be provided in the event of closure?**

Should the proposal be implemented, then the intention is that all existing Churchstoke pupils would transfer to their nearest alternative school, and Churchstoke C.P. School would close. It is acknowledged that this would mean that there would be no school in Churchstoke, meaning that any community facilities provided by the school would no longer be available.

However, there is a Community Centre in Churchstoke, which would continue to be available to the community, and which could be used for community events. It is possible that closure of the school could impact on the Community Centre, due to the loss of any financial contributions by the school, however it is also possible that there would be increased use of the Community Centre should there be no school in the village.

**vii) Distance and travelling time involved in attending an alternative school of the same language category**

Should the proposal be implemented, then the intention is that all existing Churchstoke pupils would transfer to their nearest alternative school in Powys. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative Powys schools would be Montgomery C. in W. School, Forden C. in W. School, Abermule C.P. School, Leighton C.P. School, Berriew C.P. School and St Michael's C. in W. VA School.

An analysis of pupils attending Churchstoke School in January 2020 suggests that the furthest distance to their nearest alternative school in Powys for pupils for whom Churchstoke School is currently the closest school would be 8.8 miles. The furthest distance to their nearest school regardless of location would be 4.6 miles.

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 could impact on the ability of parents to take part in school events, meetings etc.

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

Should the Council proceed with the statutory process and eventually implementation of the preferred option, support would be provided to pupils and their parents as part of the transition process, to ensure full engagement with their closest alternative schools.

**ix) Any wider implications e.g. impact on public transport provision, wider community safety issues**

- Concern about the impact on the local pre-school and toddler groups would not be viable if there was no school in the village – a number of families do not have transport to access the nearest alternatives and there is little public transport.
- Local knowledge is important in order to safeguard families.
- Monitoring of local safeguarding issues, including specific identification and preventative teaching work on local community issues (the danger spots on the main road play areas, areas where children congregate, the community field etc.) would be more difficult if the school was closed.
- On-going development of 60+ social and affordable houses within the village.
- Many of the pupils currently walk to school – this would not be possible if there was no school in Churchstoke.
- Impact on the Welsh language and Welsh identity in the village, particularly as a high proportion of families would be likely to choose alternative provision in Shropshire.
- Concern about community division due to pupils attending provision in a number of different locations.
- Flooding from the Camlad and Caebitra Rivers which occurs on an annual basis can prevent travel out of the village and would mean that pupils would not be able to access school outside the village

**x) Additional considerations for rural schools**

The School Organisation Code includes a number of additional considerations that are likely to be relevant when carrying out a community impact assessment for a rural school closure. As Churchstoke School is identified as a rural school, these factors are considered below.

- **Whether closure would encourage families with school-age children to leave the community or discourage young families from moving to the community**

Information received from the school suggests that a range of services and activities are provided by the school which could be attractive to families and which increase the attractiveness of the community to potential young families, such as the pre-school and toddler groups which are held on the site.

Should there be no school in Churchstoke, it is likely that there would be an impact on facilities associated with the school, which could have an impact on families with school-age children, and which could encourage these families to leave the community or discourage young families from moving to the community.

- **What impact closure might have on other services provided locally, for instance if the school is the only remaining public building in a community**

Information received from the school suggests that a wide range of services are provided in the school, and that the playgroup and the parents and toddler group would be particularly vulnerable should there be no school in Churchstoke.

Whilst there is a Community Hall in Churchstoke which would continue to be available should there be no school in the village, therefore community activities, events and other services could be provided 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.

- **Whether, or not, the school is a real hub of community life, used for other purpose – such as public meetings, local events, fetes surgeries, and other get togethers – which would either cease or be diminished by being required to move elsewhere**

Information received from the school suggests that a wide range of events and activities take place in the school, and that there are many links between the school and the community. School events and Friends of the School events are whole community events, which bring the whole community together. There is a Community Hall in Churchstoke which would continue to be available should there be no school in the village, therefore community activities, events and other services could be provided here. However, it is acknowledged that without the school, it is possible that there would be a reduction in the number of events and activities available.

- **Whether or not the loss of the school, and potentially families, will have a detrimental effect on the wider economy of the community**

It is possible that the loss of the school, and potentially families would have a negative impact on recruitment for lower paid key worker jobs in the area, and on the ability of other employers to recruit to roles, including residential and care staff, shop staff and agricultural work.

In addition, should closure of the school lead to fewer young families moving to the village, this could also impact on businesses in the village and surrounding

communities, such as the three pubs, the shops at Churchstoke Shopping Centre, local tradesmen etc.

Concern has also been expressed that the absence of a school in the village would lead to a reduction in house prices.

- **How parents' and pupils' engagement with the alternative school and any facilities it may offer could be supported (e.g. how pupils, (particularly any less advantaged pupils) will be helped to participate in after school activities)**

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

It is acknowledged that there would be an impact on pupils' ability to participate in after school activities as there would be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities/events.

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

The information received from the school indicates that the school currently plays an important role in the community, and that there are extensive links between the school and the community. Concern has been expressed that closure of the school would lead to social problems and isolation, and would impact on the Welsh identity of Churchstoke as it is possible that families would look to schools in Shropshire for alternative provision rather than schools in Powys.

Whilst there is a Community Centre in Churchstoke, information received from the school suggests that closure of the school would mean that the Community Centre was not viable, which would impact on community groups in the village, with the loss of activities for children and young people, the elderly and families.

## **xi) Issues raised during the consultation period**

A number of comments were received during the consultation period which related to the proposal's impact on the community.

These comments are listed in full in the consultation report produced in respect of this proposal along with the Council's response to the points raised, and are also summarised below:

- **Travel implications**
  - o The proposal would lead to additional travel
  - o Comments about additional transport costs

- Concern about the impact on the environment
- Children would be unable to walk to school
- Concern that it would be more difficult for parents to get to school if there was an emergency
- Concern about traffic congestion
- Concern about impact on pupils' access to after schools activities
- Comments about the suitability / safety of school transport
- Comments about flooding in Churchstoke

- **Impact on the community**

- General concern about impact on the community/village
- The school is the heart of the community
- Closure of the school would mean that the community would lead to a loss of community cohesion
- Concern about the impact on local businesses / the local economy
- Concern about the impact on the community centre
- Concern about the impact on other services
- Concern about the impact on other community groups / activities
- People would no longer want to live in Churchstoke
- Comments about previous generations of families that have attended the school
- Queries about what would happen to the school building / grounds
- Comments about previous school closures

- **Comments about early years provision**

- Comments relating to the Early Years Provision at Churchstoke
- Concern about the future of the Early Years Provision at Churchstoke
- Comments about alternative early years provision

- **Comments about impact on Welsh language/identity**

- Comments about the use of Welsh at Churchstoke School
- General concerns about the proposal's impact on Welsh
- Concerns that the proposal would mean that Churchstoke pupils would not have the opportunity to learn Welsh
- The proposal would not impact on the Welsh language
- Comments about Welsh Government policy

**xii) Conclusion**

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.