

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

**CABINET EXECUTIVE
14 December 2021**

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Phyl Davies
Portfolio Holder for Education and Property

REPORT TITLE: Mount Street Infant School, Mount Street Junior School
and Cradoc CP School

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Further to the decisions made by Cabinet on the 23rd December 2020 and the 26th January 2021, the Council has carried out consultation on the following proposal:

Phase 1

- To close Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc C.P. School
- To establish a new English-medium primary school for pupils aged 4-11 on the current sites of Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc C.P. School.

Phase 2

- To make a regulated alteration to transfer the school to a new school building on a new site in Brecon
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet members of the responses received to the consultation and to determine whether or not to proceed with the statutory process to continue with the proposal.
- 1.3 The report is supported by the following appendices:
- **Appendix A** – Consultation Document
 - **Appendix B** – Consultation Report
 - **Appendix C** – Minutes of meetings with School Council, Governors and Staff
 - **Appendix D** – Updated Impact Assessments
 - **Appendix E** – Cradoc CP School Impact Assessment
 - **Appendix F** – Cradoc School Council Impact Assessment
 - **Appendix G** – Comments from the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee (To follow)

2. Background

Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys

- 2.1 On the 14th April 2020, a new Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys was approved by the Leader via a delegated decision.
- 2.2 The Strategy was developed following extensive engagement with a range of stakeholders during two separate periods between October 2019 and March 2020. The Strategy sets out a new vision education in Powys, as follows:

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

- 2.3 The new strategy also sets out a number of guiding principles which will underpin the transformation of education in Powys. These are as follows:
- *A world class rural education system that has learner entitlement at its core*
 - *Schools that are fully inclusive, with a culture of deep collaboration in order to improve learner outcomes and experience*
 - *A broad choice and high quality of provision for 14 – 19 year old learners, that includes both academic and vocational provision, meeting the needs of all learners, communities and the Powys economy*
 - *Welsh-medium provision that is accessible and provides a full curriculum in Welsh from Meithrin to age 19 and beyond*
 - *Provision for learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN)/Additional Learning Needs (ALN) that is accessible as near to home as is practicably possible, with the appropriate specialist teaching, support and facilities that enables every learner to meet their potential*
 - *A digitally-rich schools sector that enables all learners and staff to enhance their teaching and learning experience*
 - *Community-focused schools that are the central point for multi-agency services to support children, young people, families and the community*
 - *Early years provision that is designed to meet the needs of all children, mindful of their particular circumstances, language requirements or any special or additional learning needs*
 - *Financially and environmentally sustainable schools*
 - *The highest priority is given to staff wellbeing and professional development*

- 2.4 The new strategy sets out a number of Strategic Aims and Objectives, to shape the Council's work to transform the Powys education system over the coming years. One of the Strategic Aims of the Strategy is to *'improve learner entitlement and experience'* Within this aim, the Strategy sets out a Strategic Objective to *'rationalise primary provision'*.
- 2.5 The preferred way forward for the Mount Street schools and Cradoc CP School was outlined the Programme Business Case that was considered by Cabinet on the 29th September 2020. A number of options were considered and assessed, and further information was also included in the paper considered by Cabinet on the 23rd December 2020.

The Consultation Period

- 2.6 Consultation on the proposals affecting Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc C.P. School commenced on the 25th February 2021 and ended on the 12th May 2021.
- 2.7 The consultation document was available on the Council's website throughout the consultation period. The document was also distributed to stakeholders as required by the School Organisation Code (2018). The consultation document that was issued is attached as Appendix A.
- 2.8 Consultees were asked to respond to the consultation by either completing the online consultation form, filling in a paper copy of the form and returning it to the Transforming Education Team, or by writing to the Transforming Education Team.
- 2.9 During the consultation period, virtual meetings were also held with the following:
- Staff at Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc C.P. School
 - Governors at Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc C.P. School
 - School Councils at Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc C.P. School

The minutes of these meetings are attached as Appendix C, and the issues raised in the meetings are included in the Consultation Report (Appendix B).

Consultation Responses

- 2.10 229 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, 53 written responses were received from respondents including Estyn, by e-mail or post.

- 2.11 The written responses included an online and paper petition to 'Save Cradoc Primary School!', which was signed by 1,275 people.
- 2.12 As well as responses from parents, prospective parents, governors, members of staff and members of the community, responses were received from the following organisations:
- Governing Body of Mount Street Infants School
 - Governing Body of Cradoc C.P. School
 - Brecon Town Council
 - Yscir Community Council
 - Merthyr Cynog Community Council
 - Trallong, Penpont and Llanfihangel Nant Bran Community Council
 - Cradoc Community Working Group
 - Cradoc C.P. School PTA
 - Cool Kids @ Cradoc
 - NEU Cymru
 - Powys School Forum
- 2.13 Estyn's response to the consultation is provided on page 45 of the Consultation Report (Appendix B).
- 2.14 The consultation response form asked respondents to answer a number of questions. The findings are provided in full on pages 7 to 9 of the Consultation Report (Appendix B).

Consultation Findings

- 2.14 As part of the consultation, a consultation response form was issued, which was completed by 229 respondents. 30.1% of respondents indicated that they were associated with Mount Street Infants School, 4.4% of respondents indicated that they were associated with Mount Street Junior School, 12.7% of respondents indicated that they were associated with both Mount Street Infants School and Mount Street Junior School, 32.8% of respondents indicated that they were associated with Cradoc C.P. School, 1.7% indicated that they were associated with another school and 16.2% of respondents indicated that they were not associated with any school.
- 2.15 The issues raised in the written responses to the consultation and those raised in the consultation meetings, are listed in the Consultation Report (Appendix B) from page 49 onwards, along with the Council's response to these issues.
- 2.16 The issues raised relate to the following headings:

1. Comments about the current schools

1. Mount Street Schools
2. Cradoc C.P. School
3. Other general comments about the current schools

2. Comments about Phase 1 of the Proposals

1. Concern about the impact on quality of provision
2. Concern about the impact on pupils
3. Concern about loss of each school's individual identity / awards
4. Concern about loss of school identity
5. Concern about loss of school awards
6. Concern about mixing rural and town schools
7. Concern about changes to leadership arrangements
8. Other comments about changes to staffing arrangements
9. Concern that Phase 1 would continue for longer than intended
10. Financial impact of Phase 1
11. Comments about buildings
12. Other concerns about Phase 1
13. Other questions about Phase 1 of the Proposals

3. Comments about Phase 2 of the Proposals

1. Funding has not yet been secured for Phase 2
2. There is insufficient information about Phase 2 therefore a separate consultation should take place
3. Comments about the impact on pupils
4. Comments about the new building
5. Comments about the size of the new school
6. Comments about the proposed site
7. Comments / queries about what would happen to the current buildings
8. Comments about the impact on the community
9. Comments about travel implications
10. Pupils would transfer to other schools
11. Queries about admissions arrangements
12. Other comments / queries

4. Other comments

1. General comments about the impact on pupils
2. General comments about the impact on staff
3. Comments about the impact on parents / families
4. Comments about the impact on protected characteristic groups
5. Comments about small / rural schools

6. Comments about other schools / Proposals
7. Financial implications
8. Comments about Council / Welsh Government strategies
9. Criticism of Powys County Council
10. Comments about the consultation process
11. Comments about the Consultation Document
12. Alternative options
13. Comments about the impact on Welsh
14. Comments in favour of the Proposals

3. Advice

3.1 Based on the findings of the consultation, and further assessment of the options in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code in terms of the Presumption Against Closure of Rural Schools, the advice of officers is that the Council should proceed with the proposals to amalgamate Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc C.P. School to create a new primary school that would initially operate from the current three sites before moving to a new building in the future, by publishing a Statutory Notice.

3.2 The reasons for this are outlined below:

- One new, larger school would be established which would offer enhanced opportunities for pupils
- Would enable staff expertise and good practice to be shared across the entire primary age range
- All staff at the three schools would have the opportunity to secure positions in the new school
- More flexibility and personal development opportunities for staff
- Parents of pupils currently attending Mount Street Infants would not have to re-apply for admission to junior phase
- Improved transition arrangements between Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 for pupils attending Mount Street Infants
- Potential to attract capital funding to provide a new building
- Would reduce the Council's surplus places in primary schools
- Would lead to rationalisation of the primary school estate
- Financial saving to the Council
- Improved transition arrangements from years 5 – 8 enabling pupil to have access to the facilities in Brecon High school such as science laboratories
- A new larger school which would meet statutory requirements for accessibility and inclusion

- 3.3 It is anticipated that the Statutory Notice would be published in January 2022, and that a further report, summarising any objections received, will be considered by the Council's Cabinet in March 2022.
- 3.4 Whilst the consultation period proposed amalgamating the three schools from September 2022, the delay in the Consultation Report being considered by Cabinet means that this implementation date will no longer be achievable.
- 3.5 It is therefore advised that the implementation date for Phase 1 of the proposals, amalgamation of the three schools to establish one new school, is moved to September 2023, and that the proposed implementation for Phase 2 of the proposals is moved to 2025/26.
- 3.6 It must also be noted that implementation of this proposal does not preclude the schools from being a part of future reorganisation proposals.

4. Resource Implications

- 4.1 The amount of funding provided to schools is driven by the funding formula. Any change to the formula funding provided will impact on the Council's revenue budget. Based on the current formula, the phased approach would deliver the following estimated annual revenue savings to the Council:

Phase 1: £16,181. There would be no additional transport costs associated with this phase, although there would be some additional set-up costs.

Phase 2: The move to a new building would result in additional estimated revenue savings in delegated funding amounting to **£184,306** per annum and **£35,760** for catering functions. It is currently projected that there would be no additional transports costs as current bus routes can accommodate this model.

The Council is currently reviewing the schools' funding formula and, if this is approved by Cabinet then the impact on the delegated funding would need to be re-calculated.

The consultation document highlights the issue with building condition at the current schools which are all rated as poor, with backlog maintenance costs estimated at £2.328 million.

- 4.2 Implementation of Phase 2 will require capital funding. At this stage early estimates of the capital investment required is approximately £9 - £10 million, funding remains available within the uncommitted amount already included in the 21st Century Schools funding envelope provided by Welsh Government. The Council has included the development of new schools in the Brecon catchment in its revised Strategic Outline

Programme for the 21st C Schools Programme. Should these proposals be approved by Cabinet, then the Council would commission the first stages of the design process, and develop a Strategic Outline Case for the approval of Cabinet and the Welsh Government. It would then further work up the plans through the RIBA stages, and develop an Outline Business Case, again for Cabinet and Welsh Government approval. Following this, a Full Business Case would be prepared, and once approved by Cabinet and the Welsh Government, construction would commence.

- 4.3 At a 65% intervention rate the Council would need to fund an estimated £3.5m of capital. If the Welsh Government's contribution to the project was not available, the Council would fund the project directly from its own capital programme, through a combination of capital receipts and borrowing. If the Council were to fund the whole scheme from borrowing this would increase the charges to the revenue budget by £0.5 million per annum over the life of the asset. Should Welsh Government provide 65% of the funding for the scheme, the impact on the revenue budget would be reduced to £0.175 million per annum over the life of the asset. This is not currently funded although the pressure on the revenue budget in future years is recognised in the Medium Term Financial Plan. The savings identified in 4.1 may be used to cover these costs but it would be removing funding from the overall schools delegated budget. The borrowing amount could be reduced by the capital receipts that become available as a result of the sites vacated (estimated at approximately £500,000 - £800,000) or other surplus properties sold.

- 4.4 The Scheme for Financing Schools also states the following in section 3.7.2:

‘In order to ensure effective stewardship of the resources available to schools, the Authority may impose additional restrictions on a school scheduled to close, including but not limited to:

- Restriction of expenditure to agreed plans
- Removal of powers of virement’

The Council will consider the use of these powers of intervention where appropriate.

- 4.5 Implementation of the proposal would require involvement from a number of service areas, including staff from the Schools Service, HR and Finance.
- 4.6 The Council's Schools Budget Forum responded to the consultation in respect of Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc C.P. School. Their response included the following:

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

- 4.7 The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) notes the content of section 4 of the report. The contribution from Welsh Government to the project is subject to the 21st Century Schools business case process, Welsh Government provide an approval 'in principle' following successful submissions of SOC/OBC's and grant is secured following approval of a full business case. Without this approval there is a risk that the council will have to fund the project in full. The estimated costs mentioned in 4.2 are indicative at this stage and will be confirmed during the design and business case process. This does not increase the capital programme at this point as the commitment has already been included, however any borrowing will be incurred in future years and will increase costs in the revenue budget. The FRM for future years includes the costs required to fund the 21st century schools programme for full delivery of Band B. The MediumTerm Financial Plan is based on estimated funding scenarios and uncertainty remains on what future funding settlements will provide and the council will need to bridge the budget gap currently reported in order to meet its ongoing commitments. Capital receipts and utilising the revenue

savings from the delegated budget will reduce the impact on the revenue budget and should be considered as part of the Councils budget development and capital strategy.

I acknowledge the Schools Budget Forum's desire to have a guarantee on the savings being reinvested into the schools' delegated budget. However, it is not appropriate to ring-fence in this way. The funding allocated to all services has to be considered collectively and the Council will prioritise its resources in order to deliver its objectives. This approach has seen investment in Education over recent years.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Legal: the recommendations can be accepted from a legal point of view
- 5.2 The Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: "I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report".

6. Comment from local member(s)

- 6.1 Cllr Iain McIntosh:

I am writing in my capacity as Yscir County Councillor to formally object to the proposal to close Cradoc CP School and merge it with both Mount Street schools into a new larger school in Brecon.

In response to the original Brecon cluster proposal, I forwarded a copy of 1,161 signatures obtained via the online petition I created here; <https://bit.ly/RebuildCradoc>, and 7 scanned pages consisting of 114 signatures obtained by hand within the community, to the education department and portfolio holder. The online petition currently stands at 1,207 signatures This results in a current total of **1,321** people who have signed the petition to express their objections against the proposal to close Cradoc CP School, and instead, build a new one on the current school site.

I also attach a copy of the impact assessment prepared by the Save & Rebuild Cradoc School group. This was also forwarded to the education department and portfolio holder at Powys County Council. In the absence of an impact assessment from this authority, I fully endorse it.

My objection to the proposal to close Cradoc CP School is based on the following 25 points;

- 1. **Rural status;** Cradoc CP School is a medium sized rural school serving the wide rural Yscir ward and beyond. Welsh Government guidance states that rural schools should be treated differently to urban schools when considering closure as they have a protected

status. The project proposal to close Cradoc CP School includes the closure of Mount Street Juniors and Mount Street Infants schools, then merge all three into one new school in Brecon. As the project involves two urban schools and one rural school, no extra consideration has been given to Cradoc CP School's rural status, separate to the two Brecon town schools, as Powys County Council are treating all three schools as one 'project'.

2. **Lack of impact assessment – community cohesion;** As the three schools within the proposals are considered as one project, only one impact assessment has been created by Powys County Council. This impact assessment does not take into account any of the differences between the three schools or, the impact on Cradoc village's community cohesion. The impact on community cohesion should be taken into account when preparing school closure proposals in line with Powys County Council and Welsh Government guidance and policy.
3. **Preferred option;** The preferred option expressed by myself, three community councils, the governing body and parents would be to save and rebuild Cradoc CP School. Our preferred option was presented to Powys County Council's education department, but not included as part of the final proposal. I believe the exclusion of this option is grossly unfair and gives decision making cabinet members the impression that this option is not worthy of consideration. A new proposal should be drawn up to replace the current one, with this option included and fairly assessed, taking into account the wishes of the Yscir community, parents, the governing body and community councils.
4. **Powys County Council Constitution;** Within this authority's constitution, at 13.2 (Principles of Decision Making), it states;

13.2 All decisions of the Council will be made in accordance with the following principles:

- 13.2.4 a presumption in favour of openness
- 13.2.6 consideration of any alternative options

At point no.3 (**Preferred option**) above, it is clear an alternative option (the preferred option) is available, but it has not been considered as part of the proposal. The act of not considering this alternative option contravenes this authority's constitution at part 13.2.6. The exclusion of the alternative option also contravenes this authority's constitution at part 13.2.4.

5. **Funding;** External funding is available to build community halls/centres for the benefit of communities throughout the country. This option should have been considered, to include a new school building as part of the same project, to reduce costs and increase community facilities within the Yscir ward.

6. **Pupil mental health & wellbeing;** I don't believe this has been fully taken into account when considering the impact of children who would be forced to leave their current rural education setting within the community and move to a much larger urban school.
7. **After school clubs & activities;** as a three school project impact assessment has been created, instead of for Cradoc CP School, the impact on the school's after school clubs and other activities has not been accurately assessed or taken into account.
8. **Catchment area;** Throughout the consultation process, governors, parents and I were informed that Powys County Council had concerns about the number of pupils attending Cradoc CP School from outside its catchment area. On querying this, I was informed that the council do not have catchment maps, but when checking the council's Geodiscoverer website I discovered that there are indeed catchment maps available. The one that is available for Cradoc is inaccurate as it represents a far smaller area than where pupils currently travel from. I therefore question the council's claim that too many pupils come from outside a catchment area they claim does not exist? I have also attached a copy of the current Cradoc CP School catchment area held by Powys County Council and draw your attention to the one prepared by the Save & Rebuild Cradoc School group in the attached impact assessment at page 10.
9. **Children's responses;** Cradoc CP School pupils were only given 5 working days to respond to the minutes of a meeting between Powys County Council and the school council. I do not believe this is in line with article 12 of the UN convention on the rights of children.
10. **Consultation during lockdown;** I do not believe the consultation process has been held at the right time. Under normal circumstances, the public would have the right to hold meetings to discuss the proposals and form a cohesive community response. That right has been taken away from them by holding this consultation process during the Covid-19 lockdown period.
11. **Projected school places;** The current Brecon cluster School Transformation Proposals don't provide enough school places. Current predicted numbers don't include the amount of new houses that are likely to be built within the area, increasing the amount of children that need to attend our schools.
12. **Phasing delays;** The current proposal, being presented to cabinet, is based on a multi-phase approach. The first phase will involve merging staff into one body, with one head teacher, but no actual new school development is predicted to happen for up to five

years. The second phase, involving the building of a new larger school is not certain, it is based on the assumption that enough funding will arrive. If it doesn't, this will result in Cradoc CP School children receiving a sub-standard learning experience, due to the current state of the school building, for many years ahead. Our children deserve better than that! Plans for a new school in Cradoc should be prepared without further delay, to make sure education that meets the new curriculum is delivered as soon as possible.

13. **Cynefin**; The Welsh Government's new school curriculum mentions Cynefin, which is defined as "The place where we feel we belong, where the people and landscape around us are familiar, and the sights and sounds are reassuringly recognisable. Though often translated as 'habitat', Cynefin is not just a place in a physical or geographical sense: it is the historic, cultural and social place which has shaped and continues to shape the community which inhabits it.". If Cradoc CP School children are forced to move to a different school then not only will this meaning be lost, it will have a detrimental impact on local children, which is in breach of the new curriculum.
14. **Transforming Education Strategy**; On the 14th April 2020, a new Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys was approved by the Leader via a delegated decision. One of the strategy's guiding principles is to have "*Community-focused schools that are the central point for multi-agency services to support children, young people, families and the community.*" – This proposal goes against that principle as it will have devastating consequences on Yscir children, young people, families and the community, by having their school, as the central point for their community, removed.
15. **Disruption to pupils**; When I joined the Cradoc CP School governing body in 2019 one of the first tasks I took on was to try and have a new school built in Cradoc. I arranged meetings between myself, the school and Powys County Council. During one of the meetings, the then portfolio holder for education, Cllr Myfanwy Alexander and education officers agreed that a new school could be built next to the current building, on the playing field. This would result in minimal disruption, an easy transfer of pupils from the old building to the new building, followed by the removal of the current building to place a new playing field in its footprint. However, within the current proposals the education department claim building a new school would not be feasible due to excessive disruption? This claim is in no way accurate at all and should be removed from the proposals.
16. **Saving money**; There is no doubt that it would cost less money to build one new school in Brecon, to house both Mount Street and Cradoc schools, rather than a new school for two mount street schools and a separate new one for Cradoc. However, it has been

made clear that financial implications should not be taken into account when considering our children's education. I therefore repeat my request for a new proposal to build a new school in Cradoc, together with a separate impact assessment.

17. **Transport;** If Cradoc CP School was to close, resulting in children having to go to new schools in either Brecon or Sennybridge, this would result in far more daily vehicle movements along the single carriageway roads within the Yscir community. This increases the chance of road traffic accidents, increases congestion and puts more wear and tear on our already pot hole ridden roads. Increased congestion, air pollution and waiting times would also occur on the streets of Brecon during school drop off and collection times.
18. **Environment;** The increase to traffic, as pointed out above at 17., would result in higher rates of pollution. This does not meet with Powys County Council's target to reach carbon net zero by 2030 and also fails to meet with the other requirements of the motion I put forward to the council last September, whereby we should be working with all stakeholders and the public to encourage them to adopt environmentally friendly activities.
19. **Impact on Climate Change and the Environment within the Impact Assessment;** In September 2020, this authority declared a climate emergency and set out to achieve carbon net zero by 2030. Acting on climate change therefore became a key guiding principle for this authority. Climate change, as a key guiding principle, has not been measured within the current impact assessment. Impact on climate change and the environment, by having more traffic movements along our country roads, and increased congestion and air pollution in Brecon, has not been measured. The only mention of climate change within the impact assessment is on page 13, where it says (*including acting on climate change*) and (*for example climate change*) – both inserted under 'A Prosperous Wales' and 'A Resilient Wales', in brackets, as what appears to be an afterthought. On 29th November, I presented this authority's Climate Change Strategy, to indicate how we aim to achieve carbon net zero and act on climate change to protect the environment. I do not believe the Brecon cluster proposal meets our climate change strategy and carbon net zero objectives and targets.
20. **Pupil entitlement;** All pupils deserve to be taught in the environment and community they live in. I do not believe this has been taken into account within the current proposals.
21. **School size and attendance;** Cradoc CP School currently has 95 pupils in attendance, it should therefore not be classed as a small primary school. The authority's education department claim the

school is under subscribed, with a suggested capacity of 150 pupils. This figure is inaccurate as the current capacity statistic is based upon square meterage within the building that is being used for non-educational needs, such as storage etc. Maximum capacity statistics need re-evaluation, based on the requirements of the new Donaldson's curriculum.

22. **Out of catchment;** Parents from within Brecon, where there are schools with better facilities far closer to their homes, prefer to send their children to Cradoc CP School, despite its poor building standard. This is due to the excellent staff, high pupil attainment, good governance, management and, the fantastic rural setting. If a new school was built in Cradoc, with higher pupil capacity, there is a high probability that demand would be high enough to justify the cost. No consideration or evaluation has been given to this possibility, this should be undertaken straight away to
23. **Petition;** The attached petition shows that within the Yscir community, there is considerable opposition to the proposals to close our primary school. Powys County Council and all decision making cabinet members should fully take this into account when deciding whether or not to proceed with this proposal.
24. **Proposal Change;** The proposal has changed post consultation. Originally, phase 1 of the proposal stated 'to amalgamate Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc C.P. School to create a new primary school that would operate from the current three sites, commencing in 2022'. This has recently been changed to **2023**.

Also, phase 2 of the proposal originally stated 'To make a regulated alteration to transfer the school to a new school building on a new site in Brecon' with a target date of 2024/5. This has recently changed to **2025/6**.

This is a fundamental alteration, it has not been consulted upon. If this goes ahead, children within the Yscir ward, who are currently attending Cradoc Primary school, will receive a prolonged period of 5 years before an improved educational learning experience is delivered. If a new school build were to commence in Cradoc now, a new school could be delivered in less than half that time, ensuring the children within this community obtain the quality of education and learning experience they deserve, within the community they live in, in a timely manner.

25. **Cross Party Support;** Welsh Education Transformation Proposals are being delivered across the whole of Wales, supported by ESTYN and the Welsh Government, who helped deliver this plan during the previous term in coalition with the Liberal Democrat education minister, Kirsty Williams. Some transformation proposals

involving the closure of small schools are welcomed by their communities. Many proposals receive cross party support. The proposal to close Cradoc Primary School has not been welcomed by the community and it has not received cross party support. Current Conservative Party policy is not to support the closure of any school that is able to deliver the national curriculum, without the agreement from parents, teachers and governors. During the 2017 local elections, the Conservative Party policy was to 'Safeguard good schools from closure.'

The Conservative member of Parliament, Fay Jones MP, and Welsh Parliament member, James Evans MS, and I, together with The Brecon & Radnorshire Conservative Association and The Welsh Conservative Party, do not support the closure of Cradoc Primary school. I therefore do not understand why the Conservative group leader and Conservative cabinet member for education within this authority support the closure of Cradoc Primary School.

On closing my objection, I must thank all local children, parents, residents, teachers, governors and the three community councils within the Yscir ward, who have written to me and Powys County Council to express their concerns. It is very clear to me that any decision to close Cradoc CP School would be the wrong decision, as the unmeasured impact on local children, parents, our community and climate change would be significant. My decision to object to these proposals is not based on nimbyism, it is based on the strength of public feeling and the recognition that, within the current school transformation proposals, imposed by the previous Labour and Liberal Democrat Welsh Government administration, and ESTYN throughout Wales, this is simply **NOT** the right thing to do to **Cradoc CP School**.

6.2 Cllr Liz Rijnenberg:

PCC officers and portfolio holders will be familiar with the information collated in this and supporting documents having worked on it for many months. It is understandable that given the hundreds of pages of comments and questions from stakeholders that this has taken so long to compile. However, I feel it is totally unacceptable to expect Scrutiny Committees, elected members and the public to undertake adequate analysis of all the detail in a matter of days, particularly those on leave/ in employment who find they have only a few hours. This undermines the democratic process and ability to influence decisions which means that PCC does not benefit from effective scrutiny and challenge.

I would like to see more evidence to support the 9 reasons which have been given for moving forward with the consultation proposal. I have read through the documentation and still cannot see any tangible, transformative examples of what benefits are to be achieved in respect of outcomes for children's education and well-being.

In a recent communication to the Transformation team I asked whether this document was available in Nepali to enable participation from those using that language and I have not had a response.

7. Integrated Impact Assessment

- 7.1 An initial impact assessment was considered by Cabinet on the 26th January 2021.
- 7.2 In addition, a range of draft impact assessments were produced as part of the consultation documentation. These included an Integrated Impact Assessment, an Equalities Impact Assessment, and a Community Impact Assessment.
- 7.3 These draft impact assessments have been updated to reflect issues raised during the consultation period, and are attached in Appendix D.
- 7.4 In addition, during the consultation an 'Impact Assessment' was received which was prepared by the Cradoc community. This is attached as Appendix E.
- 7.5 An 'Impact Assessment' was also received on an alternative option to rebuild Cradoc C.P. School, which had been prepared by the School Council of Cradoc C.P. School. This is attached as Appendix F.

8. Recommendation

- To receive the Consultation Report in respect of the proposals affecting Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc C.P. School.
- To approve the publication of a statutory notice to:

Phase 1

- To amalgamate Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc C.P. School to create a new primary school that would operate from the current three sites
- The target date for establishing the new primary school is September 2023.

Phase 2

- To make a regulated alteration to transfer the school to a new school building on a new site in Brecon
- The target date for this phase is 2025/6.

Contact Officer:	Marianne Evans
Tel:	01597 826155
Email:	Marianne.evans@powys.gov.uk
Head of Service:	Emma Palmer – Head of Transformation & Communications Debbie Lewis – Interim Chief Education Officer
Corporate Director:	Lynette Lovell – Director of Education