

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET REPORT
26th February 2013

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Myfanwy Alexander
Portfolio Holder for Learning and Leisure

SUBJECT: John Beddoes primary catchment review

REPORT FOR: Decision

Summary

This report sets out the progress with the review of primary schools in the John Beddoes catchment area and provides a summary of responses to the formal consultation on proposals to close Beguildy Church in Wales School and on discussions to progress federation of four of the other schools in the catchment.

Introduction

On 2nd October 2012 Cabinet agreed to undertake formal consultation on proposals for schools' modernisation in the John Beddoes catchment. This involved formal consultation on the closure of Beguildy Church in Wales School and discussions with the governing bodies of four of the other schools – Gladestry C in W, Radnor Valley CP, Presteigne CP and Whitton (Aided) Schools – about the council's aspiration for them to be federated in two pairs of schools.

Three meetings – one with staff, one with governors and one with parents and the community - were held at Beguildy C in W School on 6th December and a further meeting for the proposed receiving school at Knighton C in W School on 4th December 2012. All meetings were minuted and responses to the consultation were invited by the closing date of 4th January; the minutes of the public meetings are attached at Appendices 1 and 2. A schedule summarising all the letters and emails received is attached at Appendix A along with a council response to each. These letters and emails, along with the previous letters/emails from the informal consultation, are available for members' inspection in the Schools Service if required.

A summary of the main themes that have arisen in this consultation is set out below along with a council response. The comprehensive response of the school governing body is attached at Appendix B for members' reference, as is the response from the pupils at the separate consultation meeting (presentation and report at Appendices C and D).

A joint meeting of the governors of Radnor Valley CP School and Gladestry C in W School was held on 12th December and separate meetings were held with the governors of Presteigne CP School and Whitton (A) School on 29th November and 10th December respectively. The latter two governing bodies wanted to have separate meetings so that they could express their views on federation without the other school being present; a joint meeting was subsequently held on 23rd January.

Responses to formal consultation on closure of Beguildy C in W School

There were 114 letters and emails received in connection with the consultation to close the school and 247 people (including council officers and members) attended the public meeting on 6th December. Nearly all of the correspondence received was opposed to the closure of the school. The community is clearly very deeply concerned about the potential closure of its school and the council has a very difficult decision to make in order to reconcile these strongly held views with its need to maintain the quality of local education, address surplus places and make financial savings.

Given the large number of responses, there are difficulties in doing justice to the comments received in any summary that is produced. Every effort has been made to draw out the key themes and arguments presented without over-simplifying or ignoring the many points that have been made.

A council response to these broad issues is also set out below. Again, with the greatest respect to the many people who have commented, these responses are not an attempt to dismiss their concerns. They are presented as a counter argument in the context of the council's need to maintain and enhance local educational standards, the very real pressure from the Welsh Government to reduce surplus places and also the need to provide value for money and equity of educational funding for all learners in Wales.

The main themes raised by the community and other consultees centred on the following:

Broad issue raised	Council response
<p><u>Transport and travel</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The time to be travelled by children to the receiving school is disputed. A trial run of the furthest distance that might be travelled to the receiving school in Knighton was carried out by the community and this took 55 minutes which is in excess of WG guidance. The council's figure of 23 minutes is strongly disputed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The time of 23 minutes in the Consultation Paper is for the section of journey from Felindre to Knighton as set out in the former secondary school transport contract from this area to John Beddoes High School including stops to pick up pupils in Dutlas and Lloyney. This bus contractor took a further ten minutes to travel to Cwmgwyn which is the furthest distance from Knighton for current Beguildy children making a total of 33 minutes to the furthest part of the journey. Although additional pick-ups would be required and younger children would be involved, this is still within the 45 minutes limit set out in the Guidance to the Learner Wales Travel Measure (LWTM). However, the Guidance specifically provides that the guide times may be extended in rural areas where the nearest suitable school may be further. <p>The secondary school transport has however changed to a new contractor since January 2013. This contractor is currently taking around 50 minutes to Knighton from the furthest pick up point for current Beguildy children. He has cited the recent bad weather and unfamiliarity with the route as the reasons for the difference from the previous contractor.</p> <p>As a further guide the service bus from</p>

- Concerns about young children travelling this route, their subsequent tiredness and inability to concentrate, the lack of supervision on buses and child protection issues.

Newtown to Knighton takes 20 minutes for the journey from Felindre to Knighton with one stop at Beguildy and two stops at Knucklas. The conclusion to be drawn from this is that the time of the journey to the receiving school for some children may therefore be at or slightly above the guidance time for primary transport set out in the Guidance to the LWTM (see below) but is permissible in rural areas.

- The above journey could be travelled by 7 of the current children on roll at Beguildy if they attended the proposed receiving school at Knighton (one child is in Year 6). It should be emphasised however that the receiving school would not be their closest school. These children would have the following schools as their next nearest if Beguildy closed:

Number of children	Next nearest school	Distance from home address
3	Hafren/Ladywell Green, Newtown	7.6 miles (25 minutes)
3	St. Michael's, Kerry	7.4 miles (25 minutes)
1	Newcastle, Shropshire	6.7 miles (20 minutes)

If the matter proceeds to statutory notice, Welsh Government will give due regard to the likely travel times for children to the proposed receiving school (rather than just their nearest school) and will want to be satisfied that this journey time is reasonable.

The following is an extract from the Learner Wales Travel Measure 2008 :-

‘Although the Measure does not specify a time limit for all journeys, Welsh Ministers consider that normally journey times should be no more than 45 minutes for primary school travel and 60 minutes for secondary school travel. There may be some exceptional circumstances when those time limits cannot be adhered to such as delays due to heavier than normal traffic, roadworks, diversions and breakdowns.’

The following paragraph goes on to say:

'It is also necessary to consider circumstances, perhaps in rural areas and especially in the secondary sector, where the nearest suitable school may be further away than such travel time limit would allow.'

The council does not believe that there is evidence to support the view that journey times at or around the 45 minutes in the Learner Wales Travel Measure are detrimental to children's learning. (No research appears to have been undertaken elsewhere in Wales about the impact of school journeys on pupil performance.) The council's policy is normally not to provide escorts on mainstream home to school transport.

It should also be noted that 14 of the 32 children at Beguildy C in W School already have Knighton C in W School as their closest school.

- The fact that pupils would potentially attend 5 different schools if the next nearest school was chosen including the cost and disruption of this.

- The cost of transporting children to five different schools has been factored into the additional transport costs and there is still a projected minimum annual saving of £86,000. Appendix E covers this issue in more detail. Analysis by the council's GIS Team of the next nearest schools for Beguildy children (January 2013) suggests that five different schools will become their nearest school if Beguildy closes. Assuming that children went to their next nearest school they would be distributed as follows:

School	Number of children
Knights C in W School	20
Newcastle (Shropshire)	7
Ladywell Green/Hafren, Newtown	3
St. Michael's C in W School, Kerry	3
Whitton (Aided) School	1

The council acknowledges that there will be some disruption for children as a result of the possible closure of Beguildy but, due to the current distribution of pupils' home addresses,

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety of the road to Knighton and to Newtown; recent accidents on the former were highlighted and the problems with the latter in winter. • The council's calculation of the additional transport costs have been underestimated thus reducing the savings. • The environmental impact of the additional travel required. 	<p>it believes that this can be minimised. According to the council's analysis, 19 children will be travelling further to school but 15 will be travelling a shorter distance mainly due to the number of Beguildy pupils living closer to Knighton already. This analysis also suggests that TOTAL miles travelled by all current Beguildy children will only increase by 14 miles per day if the school closes and the average distance travelled per pupil will increase from 4.5 miles to 4.9 miles per day. It should be emphasised that this analysis assumes that parents will choose their next nearest school which will not always be the case.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rural nature of the roads to Knighton and Newtown is acknowledged. However transport already takes place along the road to Knighton for many Beguildy children but in the opposite direction. The Highways authority considers all maintained roads in Powys as being safe, subject to the road user travelling at the relevant speed based on the nature and type of road. Whilst the safety of children is paramount, school transport will occur for a large number of children on this road whether or not the school closes. • The council has used the best possible estimates from its Passenger Transport Unit of the additional cost of transport for the additional routes that may be required (if the next closest school is chosen) and this still produces estimated savings of £86,000 if the school closes. • The environmental impact of the additional travel required is acknowledged but the total additional miles travelled is only 14 miles due the current home to school transport patterns where many children are not attending their closest school.
<p><u>Federation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many respondents including the governing body, community council and Church in Wales support a federation with Knighton. • Federation would reduce costs per pupil and would bring benefits to learners and staff as well as retain the school in the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The support for federation from the governing body, community council and Church in Wales is noted. • The current funding gap of £1,066 per pupil between Beguildy's cost per pupil and the Powys average is significant and any financial savings from federation are unlikely to reduce

<p>community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disappointment that this option was offered to the other two small schools in the catchment but not Beguildy. 	<p>this to any great extent. Under a federation arrangement the authority is required to continue to fund both schools under the fair funding arrangements and any savings from a federation would be a saving to the schools in a federation and not the authority. The governing body have produced some data to support the case for between £9,000 and £13,000 revenue savings from federation. The council's view is that the savings are likely to be below £10,000 when the additional required management time is considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The other two federation proposals in the catchment are based on the potentially significant funding available from the charitable trust in Whitton and the educational benefits of the federation between Gladestry and Radnor Valley.
<p><u>Community impacts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of essential community facility; the only formal meeting place in the village. Impact on rural life with possible future loss of the shop, the pub and the Young Farmers' Club. • Concern about viability and attractiveness of the village/community to attract people with children and of working age. • Loss of access to early years' provision and after school and breakfast clubs. • Proposal would leave a large rural area without a school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community Impact Assessment acknowledges that closure of the school will mean the loss of a community facility and an impact on village life. There are however other community facilities such as the church, the shop and the pub. Subject to the views of the Church in Wales, the school building could still be retained for community use if the school was to close. • Communities can remain vital and viable places even when their school closes. Less than half of the pupils come from the village itself so the immediate impact on Beguildy itself is reduced. • The loss of access to early years' provision and after school and breakfast clubs is a concern; however the breakfast club was only established at the start of the current school year. The parent and toddler club could continue in the building or locally if the school closed. There is no immediate solution to the reduced access to breakfast and after school clubs unless children use parental transport to access these facilities at the receiving school, or the transport is planned to allow time for the pupils to receive breakfasts at the receiving school. • Whilst a large rural area of Powys would be without a school, there is a rural school at Newcastle in Shropshire which is five miles

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on Welsh language and culture if parents chose a school in England for their children. 	<p>from the village of Beguildy. Many pupils at Beguildy C in W School live closer to Knighton in any case.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst the council would be concerned about the potential impact on Welsh language and culture if parents chose a school in England for their children, only 7 current Beguildy children have a school in England as their next closest school. It is possible that not all of these would choose an English education. It is possible that some parents from the area to the north west of Beguildy, when faced with a choice between the journey to Knighton and the journey to Newtown, may choose to send their children to Newcastle School in England. They would however not receive free home to school transport (if it was not their closest school) so may be deterred as a result. Parents wishing to have a Welsh medium education for their children can, as currently, send them to Ysgol Dafydd Llwyd in Newtown and free home to school transport will be provided.
<p><u>Pupil numbers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many respondents emphasised the impact on pupil numbers of the conviction in 2008 of a former local vicar (who was also chair of governors, a parent and whose wife worked at the school) for possession of child pornography. Numbers are recovering and are projected to rise. The governing body has produced evidence to support growing numbers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact on the community of the criminal conviction of a former vicar and chair of governors is acknowledged. The attached graph (Appendix F) shows however that the decline in pupils began in 2006 and the steepest decline occurred in the year to the January that he was arrested. The attached table of year groups since 2008 (Appendix G) shows that there was a net reduction of 3 pupils that may be directly attributable to the incident. That said, there has been a continuing decline since that time and it may have had an impact on pupil numbers and the perception of the school. The governing body has produced some evidence to support growing numbers (17 admission forms) but when pupils leaving for secondary school are taken into account, the increase in pupils to September 2016 would be reduced to a maximum of four children, if all of these 17 children did subsequently commence at the school. Two children have started at the school since the consultation paperwork was prepared taking the number currently at the school to 34. This is still below the threshold where the school would have been considered for closure under the Small Schools Policy.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an active parent/toddler group with rising numbers. • Above will impact on the surplus places and cost per pupil figures. • Beguildy is now not the smallest school in the catchment. • Some concern that the figure of 12 Powys children living closest to the school is misleading and doesn't take into account Shropshire children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council acknowledges that there is an active parent/toddler group with rising numbers but this number will presumably be factored in to the governing body's evidence of potential pupils outlined above. This is not a council-funded setting. • The percentage of surplus places at the school is 37% based on a pupil number of 34. The council has a target to reduce surplus places across the county to 15% overall by 2015. The cost per pupil at Beguildy is £4,669 or £1,066 per pupil (29.5%) above the county primary average. The two additional pupils will have a small impact on the cost per pupil figure although, in order to be consistent, it is usually only the above annual Section 52 return to WG figure that is quoted in schools' modernisation consultations. As an illustration, Beguildy was actually funded in 2012/13 on the basis of 37 pupils (three more than now) due to an increase in pupils between the Section 52 submission date in April 2012 and the start of the academic year in September. This produced a cost per pupil figure of £4,450. This is still £847 or 23.5% above the county primary average. As a comparison Gladestry's 2012/13 figure is £3,837 and Whitton's is £3,823. • The council is separately addressing the falling pupil numbers in Whitton (A) School through discussions with the governing body. • The quoted figure of 12 Powys children living closest to Beguildy C in W School was the correct figure at October 2012 and represents those children for whom Powys County Council has responsibility. The corresponding figure for January 2013 is 14 children. This is the lowest primary school 'catchment' figure in the county. Respondents claim that this figure ignores the fact that there are many children living in Shropshire who have Beguildy as their closest school. There are currently (January 2013) 6 Beguildy pupils living in Shropshire who have it as their closest school (4 other Beguildy pupils live in England but they are closer to Knighton.) Information from Shropshire County Council suggests that there are a maximum of a further 6 children who have Beguildy as their closest school but who go to schools in
---	---

	<p>England. This would put the <u>potential</u> catchment population of the school from either side of the border at around 26. Even with non-Powys children taken in to account, this would still not be a viable number to support a primary school. The council doesn't have a threshold for a viable school catchment but the 35 pupil threshold that the council uses for review of small schools is probably the best guide.</p>
<p><u>School standards and facilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good quality of education is emphasised by most respondents. • The excellent indoor and outdoor facilities and resources are of great benefit to the pupils. • The young and enthusiastic teaching staff. • Condition data from WG survey is disputed and doesn't take in to account recent improvements. • The school caters for a high proportion of children with SEN/ALN and with entitlement to free school meals. • The governing body believe that the school space could be further 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good quality of education is not disputed by the council but schools of the same Estyn grades have been closed by the council and the Minister in recent years due to falling rolls, surplus places and other relevant issues. (Beguildy C in W School is due to be inspected by Estyn in the second half of the current term.) • The excellent indoor and outdoor facilities and resources are also not in dispute. • Similarly the young and enthusiastic teaching staff. • Condition data from the WG survey is a consistent basis on which to judge school buildings. Unless a further all-Wales survey on the same methodology is carried out (and this is unlikely in the near future) it will not be possible to ascertain whether recent improvements have resulted in a change in the school's condition grading. The authority is however, undertaking an internal review of major works undertaken over the last 4 years, to assess the impact this work has on the previous assessments. • It is acknowledged that the school caters for a high proportion of children with SEN/ALN and with entitlement to free school meals. There is nothing to suggest that these children cannot be catered for as efficiently, professionally and sensitively at the receiving school. The named receiving school is the location of the Area Learning Support Class which provides an enhanced SEN/ALN facility. • The council has already reduced the surplus place figure for the school by 22 places

<p>reconfigured to reduce the amount of surplus places.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school already meets many of the council's objectives for primary education as set out in its policy document. 	<p>following representations by the governing body during the informal consultation period. It is unlikely that further reductions in this figure are possible; this review has not reduced the overall area of the school or related costs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council acknowledges that the school already meets many of the council's objectives for primary education but it can only meet some of the following in the current year through the use of its reserves, which is not sustainable in the long term: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A headteacher with no class responsibility ○ A full time administrative officer ○ Good use of staff enabling development of expertise in curriculum areas ○ Sufficient time for proper management of the school.
<p><u>Receiving school (Knighton C in W School)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment plans by the council are unclear and not costed. • Concern that the school is too big and is urban in nature. • Although larger, the receiving school has no more space per child. • Lack of safe access arrangements for buses and dropping off and no risk assessment has been carried out. • No estimate of the costs of additional staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council is committed through its capital programme and 21st Century Schools bid to fund any necessary improvements and modifications to the receiving school. • The council believes that, with the appropriate support, children will easily make the transition to a larger school with its opportunities for wider peer interaction and larger staff team. • The council is not suggesting that there is more space per pupil at the receiving school, the comment in the Consultation Paper relates to the larger facilities and opportunities for economies of scale to improve learning outcomes. • Officers have carried out a risk assessment of school access at Knighton and the dropping off facilities. This has shown that risk can be reduced to acceptable levels by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Creating a bus stop on the eastbound side of Ludlow Road ○ Providing supervision of pupils across the zebra crossing • The costs and funding of additional staff have already been factored into the figures, with the assumption that pupil led funding is transferred to the receiving school.

<u>Savings</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern that the proposals will not make the savings predicted with the loss of WG funding by losing pupils to England and the additional cost of transport and the capital and revenue costs at Knighton. An offer has been made by a local company aiming to gain planning permission for a wind farm, to make contributions to the future costs of the school. There is also a proposal for a new community enterprise in Felindre the profits of which would make contributions to the Friends of Beguildy School. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council is confident that its savings figures are robust and a significant financial saving can be made even when additional transport costs and other factors are taken into account. The impact on funding by losing pupils to England is considered to be minimal. The offers of financial support to the school, whilst welcome, are reliant, in the case of the wind farm development, on planning permission being granted and suitable developer contributions being agreed legally, neither of which are certain at this stage. The legality of such support would also have to be validated.

Additional issues raised at consultation meetings or by Learning in the Community Programme Board

• **Trends in cost per pupil**

Cost per pupil information (requested at the consultation meeting) compared with the Powys primary average over the last ten years is shown on the attached graph (Appendix K). This shows that Beguildy's cost per pupil was almost identical to the county average in 2005/6 and came close to it again in 2010/11. The former occurrence is largely due to pupil numbers at that time being twice what they are currently. The latter can be explained by the change at that time from two teachers on the top of the scale to two newly qualified teachers.

• **Houses built locally and with planning permission**

Information from colleagues in the council's Regeneration and Development Service (Planning) suggests that very few houses are likely to be developed in the next five years in the area. Colleagues believe that the allocated housing sites in Beguildy and Lloyney (5 dwellings each) are unlikely to be developed in the next five years. They also believe that 17 units may be developed in Knucklas in the next five years. However according to the data in the council's policy used to calculate educational contributions from developers (based on the 2001 Census), a development of this size would only produce around 4 primary age children. It should also be noted that the village of Knucklas is closer to Knighton than it is to Beguildy.

• **Census data**

It was suggested at the consultation meeting and in some representations received that there are more young children, school age children and "women of child-bearing age" in Beguildy than the Powys average. The table below is an analysis of age data from the 2011 Census for the output areas covering Beguildy, Knucklas and Lloyney, for these areas plus the two adjacent areas in Shropshire including Llanfair Waterdine and the data for Powys. No gender data is available from the 2011 Census at output area level yet so the total for the 16 to 49 age group is shown in the table.

Age group	Beguildy/Knucklas	Beguildy/Knucklas/	Powys
-----------	-------------------	--------------------	-------

		Llanfair Waterdine	
0-3 years	2.7%	3.1%	3.9%
4-11 years	8.16%	8.17%	8.18%
16-49 years	34.4%	33.7%	37.8%

This analysis suggests that there are fewer children of pre-school age and people in the 16 to 49 age group in the community than in Powys as a whole. The proportion of school age children in the area appears to be around the county average.

Federations at Presteigne/Whitton and Radnor Valley/Gladestry

The attached papers (Appendices H and J) setting out the council's view of federations generally and some specific information about the catchment (potential split of governors, finances etc.) were circulated to the four governing bodies prior to the meetings in December.

- Presteigne/Whitton – The meetings in December were held with the two governing bodies individually rather than jointly. Whitton governors were happy to explore the federation option further. They are concerned that they need to make some early decisions given that their headteacher is leaving at the end of the academic year. Presteigne governors, on the other hand, were less enthusiastic about the potential federation. A joint meeting was arranged on 23rd January which explored the options for progressing the federation. Following that meeting and a meeting of the Schools Service Management Team, a meeting was held with representatives of the Whitton School Trust and Chair of Governors on 6th February to discuss the feasibility of the Trust providing financial support to the school and to confirm projected pupil numbers. Discussions between council officers and the Trust are continuing particularly in relation to the legalities of the proposition from the charitable trust.
- Radnor Valley/Gladestry – A joint meeting was held in December between the two governing bodies. Both sets of governors could see the benefits of federation but did not see that it was applicable to their two schools. They thought that federation normally worked better where one school was 'failing' and the other wasn't; they emphasised that both schools have very good educational standards. They were concerned about the individual schools losing their identity in a federation. Since the meeting the acting headteacher at Radnor Valley has indicated her intention to retire at the end of this school year.

Conclusion

Beguildy

Despite the large contrary response to the consultation, the conclusion of this report is that there is still a case to be made for closure of Beguildy C in W School. The location of current pupils, i.e. the fact that 41% of the current Beguildy pupils already have the receiving school as their closest school (for many of whom the council pays home to school transport), is still a major consideration in this decision. Related to this is the fact that there are only 14 Powys children who have Beguildy as their closest school; this is the lowest primary school 'catchment' figure in the county. It is therefore recommended that a statutory notice of closure is posted at Beguildy Church in Wales School as soon as possible with a target closure date of 31st August 2013 with the receiving school named as Knighton Church in Wales School.

Federations

- Presteigne/Whitton - Discussions should continue but a report should be brought to Cabinet shortly to make recommendations on the way forward.
- Gladestry/Radnor Valley - Discussions are continuing but if agreement cannot be reached about a voluntary federation, the council will need to pursue its objective of federation through legislation.

Corporate Improvement Plan

A priority of the Corporate Improvement Plan is to provide high quality educational opportunities for all and this priority has been encompassed within the Learning in the Community improve priority of the Powys Change Programme. The proposals within this paper will also help to meet the efficiency priority targets within the Plan.

Options Considered/Available

The council could decide not close Beguildy C in W School or federate it with Knighton C in W School. There is still a case for closure due to the high level of surplus places and the location of current pupils many of whom have the receiving school as their closest school already. This would also mean that no schools would be closed as a result of the catchment review and its surplus places percentage is one of the highest in the county. Federation is unlikely to produce the necessary level of savings or reduce surplus places.

Preferred Choice and Reasons

The preferred choice is set out in the conclusion above for the reasons given and as outlined in the report.

Sustainability and Environmental Issues/Equalities/Crime and Disorder,/Welsh Language/Other Policies etc

Closing smaller rural schools may increase the need for private travel and additional home to school transport.

An Equality Impact Assessment was produced as part of the consultation process but no adverse impacts have been identified at this stage.

None of the schools are designated Welsh medium schools so no adverse Welsh language issues are anticipated.

Children and Young People's Impact Statement - Safeguarding and Wellbeing

The best interests of young people in these schools will be safeguarded at all times particularly during this uncertain period of review. In the case of small schools that are proposed for closure, every effort will be made to ensure a smooth transition to new schools and safe and efficient transport to their new locations.

Local Member(s)

Councillor John Brunt has commented as follows:

Notwithstanding the detailed case for closure, it does not take into account the evidence of strong parental choice. It is understood that the Council does not have to provide parental choice but it is part of providing the best services for the community. The strong parental choice is demonstrated by the fact that whilst 14 pupils have Beguildy as their closest school, 20 further children attend Beguildy as a result of parental choice. This shows the school is well regarded and valued by the community. This excellent school could continue to provide this service if it were federated with Knighton, which is the wish of the community. No comment has been made on the independent building condition survey provided by the governors. It deserves consideration and comment.

Councillor Hywel Lewis has commented as follows:

Regrettably I cannot put forward any argument other than an emotional one for keeping Beguildy C in W School open, your report is very thorough and counters any argument one could put forward. The federation of Whitton and Presteigne - discussions are ongoing between representatives of the two governing bodies but this cannot be allowed to drag on indefinitely as with Gladestry and New Radnor the process will need to be imposed.

Councillor Michael Jones has commented as follows:

Having been subjected to a period of uncertainty due to the School Modernisation process, I feel the two schools (Radnor Valley and Gladestry) need time to settle down and continue to provide the high standard of education which is recognised by all stake holders. To subject the two schools to a federation process at this time would I feel detract from education provision at the two schools. At a recent meeting of the two governing bodies there was no support for federation between Radnor Valley and Gladestry Schools.

Other Front Line Services

None identified.

Support Services (Legal, Finance, HR, ICT, BPU)

HR - Human Resources officers are closely involved with the proposals in this catchment and will continue to work with the Schools Service to provide advice and support on implementing the agreed proposals.

Finance - The Principal Accountant for Community Skills and Learning comments that the breakdown of estimated revenue savings provided in report are correct based on the 2012/13 delegated funding. The savings do not at this stage include the costs of any redundancy or early retirement costs. The transport costs are based on the Transport Manager's best estimates.

Legal - Provided the statutory process is complied with, legal service support the recommendation.

Local Service Board/Partnerships/Stakeholders etc

None identified.

Communications

The Corporate Communications team will be working closely with staff in the Schools Service to plan and manage consultation with the schools concerned.

Statutory Officers

The Strategic Director, Law & Governance (Monitoring Officer) has commented: - "I support the recommendations."

Members' Interests

The Monitoring Officer is not aware of any specific interests that may arise in relation to this report. If Members have an interest they should declare it at the start of the meeting and complete the relevant notification form.

Recommendation:	Reason for Recommendation:
That a statutory notice of closure is posted at Beguildy Church in Wales School as soon as possible with a target closure date of 31st August 2013 with the receiving school named	To reduce costs, provide better management of pupil numbers and to improve educational standards.

as Knighton Church in Wales School.	
That discussions continue with the relevant governing bodies to progress the federations previously agreed by Cabinet.	To provide a more effective and efficient model for local education.

Relevant Policy (ies):	Primary School Organisation Policy		
Within Policy:	Y	Within Budget:	Y

Relevant Local Member(s):	Councillor John Brunt Councillor Peter Medicott Councillor Hywel Lewis Councillor Garry Banks Councillor Michael Jones
----------------------------------	--

Person(s) To Implement Decision:	Stephen Rogers – Head of Schools
Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:	March 2013

Contact Officer Name:	Tel:	Fax:	Email:
Owen James	01597 826709		Owen.james@poowys.gov.uk

Background Papers used to prepare Report:
Public responses to formal consultation
Learner Wales Travel Measure 2008
2011 Census data