



REVIEW OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MID AND SOUTH POWYS

Business Case February 2016

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Introduction

This review has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2013.

The Code sets out the policy context, general principles and factors that should be taken into account by those bringing forward proposals to reconfigure school provision and by those responsible for determining proposals.

This review is presented in the form of a business case, with the following brief:

- To outline the case for change in secondary provision in both South and Mid Powys areas;
- To determine the advantages and disadvantages of different delivery models for both areas;
- To provide a detailed assessment of the financial viability of any new delivery models;
- To make recommendations about the future configuration of secondary education in both areas.

1. The Strategic Context

The One Powys Plan 2014 sets the strategic direction for service delivery in Powys. It is a key strategic transformational plan, which sets out the vision of Powys County Council and key partner organisations, that helps residents to understand what the Council intends to achieve and what results they can expect to see.¹

‘Transforming Learning and Skills’ is a key priority within the plan, and the Authority’s aim is to ensure that ‘all children and young people are supported to achieve their potential’. The plan states that the Authority needs to ‘re-organise schools (primary, secondary and post-16) to ensure affordability, sustainability and appropriate leadership capacity’.

Powys County Council is committed to ensuring that all children and young people have an equal opportunity to receive the best possible education. The Council aspires to have an educational infrastructure that²:

- Provides all learners with opportunities to achieve high standards of achievement and attainment;
- Provides for first class teaching and learning provision reflecting national, regional and local priorities;
- Has high quality resilient leadership and management;
- Provides robust linguistic continuity and progression;
- Improves cost-effectiveness and efficiency;
- Has the right number of schools in the right place for the current and future pupil population of Powys;
- Has school buildings and blocks that are assessed as condition A or B;
- Minimises dependency on temporary accommodation; and
- Reduces overall surplus places in schools.

The Council has a duty to ensure that school buildings, teaching resources and pupils’ learning experiences are shaped to develop competencies which allow children and young people to engage confidently with the challenges of their future lives. The challenge faced by the Council is to ensure that schools provide an appropriate, fit-for-purpose learning environment that will facilitate the delivery of a curriculum, as defined in the Welsh Government document Successful Futures³ to ensure that children and young people develop as:

- ambitious, capable learners ready to learn throughout their lives;
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work;
- ethical and informed citizens of Wales and the world; and

¹ The One Powys Plan can be accessed using the following web address:

http://static.powys.gov.uk/corporate_docs/oppeng2014/

² School Reorganisation Policy 2015

³ Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Requirements in Wales, Professor G. Donaldson, February 2015

- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

In January 2015, Powys County Council's Cabinet agreed to commence a Secondary School Reorganisation Programme, in order to develop a sustainable model of delivery for the future. The Programme has two key objectives:

- **Reconfiguration of secondary and post-16 education** to create a sustainable infrastructure of schools and Sixth Forms across Powys, enabling a broader range of subjects to be provided from each school site, whilst minimising the need for inter-school travel and transport.
- **Reconfiguration of Welsh-medium education** with the aim of establishing at least one Bilingual Category 2A Secondary School (sometimes known as a Welsh-medium school) in the county, and the consolidation of other Welsh-medium streams into larger units. This will enable schools to provide the appropriate curriculum offer and progression routes for Welsh-medium learners.

This Programme is the result of a review of the Financial Viability of Secondary Schools and Sixth Forms in Powys, carried out by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) in 2014. The first part of the review, carried out between April and June 2014, concluded that 'all the schools appear to be reaching a point where their options are extremely limited and there is a tangible risk that schools will become finance-led rather than curriculum-led', and that 'in light of the forecasted deteriorating financial position of the whole county provision, even a concerted, joint effort of cost management may not be enough to avoid the requirement to examine structural changes to the education provision across the county'.⁴

At the same time, a separate review into the sustainability of post-16 education in Powys was carried out by the Authority. At its meeting of 1st July 2014, Cabinet considered a report on the initial findings of the review which concluded that 'the delivery of post-16 education within the existing infrastructure of twelve Sixth Forms was increasingly challenging',⁵ particularly given the significant reduction in funding for 2014/15 provision and the forecasted decrease in pupil numbers over the next few years.

It is therefore essential that the Council reviews its Secondary School infrastructure to ensure that the sector is financially and educationally sustainable, and that it can meet the needs of future learners. This is aligned with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, which states clearly that, when developing proposals for school reorganisation, *'relevant bodies **should** place the interests of learners above all others. With reference to the key questions of the Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales (Estyn), they **should** give paramount importance to the likely impact of the proposals on the quality of:*

- *outcomes (standards and wellbeing);*
- *provision (learning experiences, teaching, care support and guidance, and learning environment); and*

⁴ PWC's report into the Financial Sustainability of Secondary Schools in Powys, 2014

⁵ Cabinet report July 1st 2014

- *leadership and management (leadership, improving quality, partnership working and resource management)*

*at the school or schools which are the subject of the proposals and at any other school or educational institution which is likely to be affected. Relevant bodies **should** pay particular attention to the impact of the proposals on vulnerable groups, including children with Special Educational Needs (SEN).*

*Relevant bodies **should** also consider the ability of the school or schools which are the subject of the proposals to deliver the full curriculum at the foundation phase and each key stage of education. This consideration **should** include the quality of curriculum delivery and the extent to which the structure or size of the school is impacting on this.'*

2. Pressures facing the secondary sector in Powys

2.1 Geography and demographics

Powys is a large rural county occupying approximately 25% of the landmass of Wales. However, with a population of approximately 133,000⁶, Powys contains less than 5% of the Welsh population, and has the lowest population density in Wales.

The sparsity of Powys is emphasised by the fact that there are only two towns with populations of more than 10,000. The rest of the county consists of smaller market towns and villages. Powys' low population density is a key factor when considering how to deliver public services, including education.

Powys shares a border with eleven other Welsh counties, and two English counties. This fact has a significant impact on secondary provision in Powys. Some Powys schools attract a significant number of learners from outside the county, whilst in other areas, Powys learners travel out of county for their education.

There has been a significant reduction in pupil numbers in Powys in recent years. Whilst pupil numbers in the primary sector are now increasing, this isn't expected to impact on the secondary sector for a number of years. In addition, the overall age demographic of the Powys population is expected to change significantly in the future, which is likely to lead to a change in priorities with regard to Council funding and spending.

2.2 Financial Pressures

Similarly to other Welsh authorities, the Council is facing a very difficult financial position, which is expected to continue for the remainder of the decade. In 2014/15 the Council received a funding settlement of £182 million. This was a reduction of 4.6% compared with the previous year, and was equivalent to a funding decrease of £8.712m.

The provisional settlement received in December 2015 showed a reduction of 4.1% or £7m in AEF for Powys compared with an average reduction of 1.4% across Wales. Powys received the greatest reduction of all Authorities. Final settlement will not be received until March 2016 so the Authority will be setting its budget before funding is confirmed and must therefore consider contingency plans for any possible changes.

The Welsh Government has once again reaffirmed its commitment to protect the education budget at 1% above the Welsh settlement received from Central Government. However the documentation received from Welsh Government does not express the requirement to passport this element to schools.

In developing its budget proposal, the Cabinet of the Council has identified areas where savings can be made, and Services within the Council will be expected to deliver a 20% efficiency this year. The Cabinet has agreed to protect the Schools

⁶ http://pstatic.powys.gov.uk/fileadmin/Docs/Statistics/2011_Census_KeyStatistics_Powys_en.pdf

Delegated Budget. However, cuts in other service areas may impact on schools, as future services may be withdrawn or be charged on a full cost recovery basis.

The Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) Study into the Financial Viability of Secondary Schools in Powys⁷ suggests that the sector as a whole appears to be reaching a financial breaking point.

In order to absorb the impact of these cuts schools will have to consider reducing areas of expenditure in order to protect curriculum delivery and raise standards of teaching and learning. This could lead to a situation where class sizes are increased, staff numbers are reduced, and schools reduce their spending on areas such as professional development or building maintenance.

2.3 Impact on Standards

Given this extremely challenging financial outlook, it will become more important than ever that education is delivered as efficiently as possible, to ensure that schools can continue to improve standards and provide the best possible outcomes for learners. It is very concerning that, in the recent National Categorisation of Schools, 58% of Powys Secondary Schools have been placed in the amber or red support categories.

Secondary Standards 2015-16		
Group 1	2 schools	17%
Group 2	3 schools	25%
Group 3	6 schools	50%
Group 4	1 school	8%

The Estyn inspection profile for Secondary Schools in Powys is also very unsatisfactory. Since the new Inspection Framework was introduced in 2010, eight of the ten schools were judged to have 'adequate' or 'unsatisfactory' levels of performance, and seven judged to have 'adequate' or 'unsatisfactory' prospects for improvement. Since 2010, four Secondary Schools have been placed in Special Measures. The table below shows the latest Estyn inspection outcomes for each school.

⁷ <http://www.powys.gov.uk/en/schools-students/plans-for-powys-schools/>

	Date	Current Performance	Prospects for Improvement	Category
Caereinion High School	Nov 13	Adequate	Adequate	Estyn Monitoring
Newtown High School	May-15	Adequate	Adequate	Estyn Monitoring
Welshpool High School	Nov-10	Good	Good	
John Beddoes (closed)	Oct-12	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Special Measures
Llandrindod High School	Oct-14	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Special Measures
Builth Wells High School	Oct-15	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Special Measures
Ysgol Maesydderwen	Nov-10	Adequate	Good	Local Authority Monitoring
Brecon High School	Apr-12	Adequate	Adequate	Significant Improvement, followed by Special Measures
Gwernyfed High School	Sep-13	Adequate	Adequate	Estyn Monitoring
Crickhowell High School	Sep-12	Good	Good	Local Authority Monitoring

Llanfyllin High School, Llanidloes High School and Ysgol Bro Hyddgen have not yet been inspected in the current Estyn inspection cycle.

However, an assessment of other performance indicators, such as the Core Subject Indicator performance indicators, show an improving situation in Powys:

- The Core Subject Indicator in Powys improved in 2014/15 by around 4 percentage points to 60%. This places Powys 5 percentage points above the Wales average.
- There was an increase of 4.3 percentage points in the attainment at L2+ in 2015 at 64%. This is 7 percentage points higher than the Wales average. This is the highest since the indicator was introduced and places Powys in third place out of 22 local authorities, behind the Vale of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire, which is an improvement of 3 places from 2014-2015.
- The gap between performance in Powys and Wales has increased by 3 percentage points.

2.4 Impact on the curriculum

Whilst the funding provided to schools is decreasing, the pressure on Secondary Schools to maintain and extend the curriculum offered to learners remains. In 2009, the Welsh Government introduced the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure,

focusing on provision for 14 – 19 year olds. The Measure requires schools to provide a basic minimum of choice for its learners. An offer of at least 25 Level 2 (GCSE) courses, including 3 vocational courses, should be made available to each 14 – 16 year old.

At post-16, the Measure places a duty on local authorities, schools and further education providers to provide a local curriculum for students aged 16 to 18 which contains a minimum of 30 courses of study at Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and National Qualification Framework (NQF) level 3.

All schools in Powys currently meet the requirement of the Measure for 14- 16 year olds, with NPTC Group of Colleges providing access to vocational options through the Futures Programme. However, sustaining a broad and flexible menu of options in Key Stage 4 is getting increasingly difficult for schools, particular for those with smaller cohorts of learners.

Post-16 provision is delivered through a collaborative arrangement between schools and NPTC Group of Colleges. Transport is provided and funded by the Authority, at a cost of approximately £200k a year, to enable learners to access subjects at other schools or at the College. Some schools are also involved in partnership arrangements with providers in neighbouring local authorities.

This situation reflects the constant challenges that schools in Powys face in light of this legislation. Although courses may be offered to pupils outside their own school location, it is questionable whether this provides real choice and flexibility for learners, compared to that provided in larger Sixth Forms, Sixth Form colleges or Further Education Colleges. In reality, pupils cannot attend too many off-site courses before organisational and transport issues become an added burden on curriculum planning.

The Authority receives a grant from the Welsh Government for post-16 education. However, in line with the financial pressures facing education as a whole, this has also reduced by approximately a million pounds since 2014. This has led to a reduction in the number of courses available as shown in the table below. Indicative allocations for 2016/17 show a further reduction of 8% in funding for 2016/17- the lowest percentage reduction across all Welsh authorities - equivalent to £448k. This could lead to a potential reduction of up to 35 classes across the two year groups from September 2016, adding to a situation where the number of classes has already reduced significantly, as shown in the table below:

	September 2012	September 2013	September 2014	September 2015
Total number of funded Year 12 classes in Powys	232	222	181	181

2.5 Ageing building stock

Powys County Council aspires to provide learning environments that meet the standards of the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme⁸. However, the majority of Powys' school buildings are of ageing stock, with a combination of old Victorian buildings, early and mid-20th Century buildings.

In 2009, the Welsh Government commissioned a condition survey of all schools in Wales, as part of their 21st Century Schools Programme. All schools were graded on their condition, suitability and sustainability - the grades are defined as follows:

Grade	Description
Grade A	Good. Performing as intended and operating efficiently
Grade B	Satisfactory. Performing as intended but exhibiting minor deterioration
Grade C	Poor. Exhibiting major defects and / or not operating as intended
Grade D	Bad. Life expired and / or serious risk of imminent failure

One of the Authority's key aims is that in the future, the condition of all school buildings or blocks is graded A or B.

Based on the schools' condition ratings as identified by the Welsh Government's surveys, the estimated cost of bringing all school buildings or blocks up to a fit-for-purpose (Grade A or B) standard is in excess of £230m.

2.6 The need to develop Welsh-medium education

In April 2010, the Welsh Government published its *Welsh-medium Education Strategy*⁹, which sets the national strategic direction for Welsh-medium education. The Strategy includes strategic aims, objectives and targets for the various phases in education and training in Wales, and emphasises the importance of improving effective planning for Welsh-medium education.

To contribute to the implementation of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy, Local Authorities have been preparing Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs), detailing how they will contribute to achieving the outcomes and targets set out in the Welsh-medium Education Strategy, since 2012.

Powys' current WESP for 2014 – 17¹⁰ was approved by Cabinet in May 2014 and by the Welsh Government in June 2014. One of the Strategic Aims stated in the WESP is 'to provide robust linguistic continuity of Welsh-medium provision across all key

⁸ <http://21stcenturyschools.org/?lang=en>

⁹ <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/welshmededstrat/?lang=en>

¹⁰ <http://www.powys.gov.uk/en/schools-students/plans-for-powys-schools/>

phases of education', to enable all children and young people across Powys to experience the cultural and cognitive benefits of bilingualism.

Welsh-medium secondary education in Powys is provided through 6 dual-stream schools across the county. However, the level of Welsh-medium provision and the number of Welsh-medium pupils in each of the 6 dual-stream Secondary Schools in Powys varies significantly. In addition, pupils from some parts of Powys access Welsh-medium secondary provision outside Powys, most notably pupils from the Ystradgynlais area, who access provision at Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera, located within Neath Port Talbot County Borough.

The current policy in Powys is to deliver via 6 dual-stream schools in Powys, with the aspiration that all schools develop to become Category 2B schools, providing at least 80% of their curriculum through Welsh as well as English, in order to ensure that pupils are able to access sufficient Welsh-medium provision to enable them to continue to develop their Welsh-medium skills during their time at Secondary School.

However, schools' progress towards achieving this aim has been limited, particularly in respect of Key Stage 4 provision, and this is compounded by the challenging financial situation faced by the authority, which will make it increasingly difficult to achieve this target by 2020. Consideration must be given in this review to whether there are other delivery models that may ensure that Welsh-medium pupils in Powys can access more robust Welsh-medium provision in the secondary sector.

2.7 Surplus Places

Coupled with the reduction in pupil numbers, the Authority is required to respond to targets set by the Welsh Government in 2012 to reduce surplus places in schools.

In May 2012, Estyn published a report entitled 'How do surplus places affect the resources available for expenditure on improving outcomes for pupils?'¹¹, which concluded that 'where there is a higher than necessary level of school places, resources are being deployed inefficiently that could be better used to improve the quality of education for all learners.'

Whilst progress has been made in reducing surplus places in Powys schools, significant levels of surplus places remain in some areas, particularly in the secondary sector.

¹¹ <http://www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-reports/how-do-surplus-places-affect-resources-available-expenditure-improving-outcomes>

3. The Case for Change

The previous section outlined the reasons why Secondary School reorganisation is being considered in Powys. This section outlines the current arrangements and business needs in the secondary sector in Mid and South Powys.

3.1 Investment Objectives

The Welsh Government's School Organisation Code sets out the key factors that should be taken into account when preparing school reorganisation proposals. In order to help assess the effectiveness of potential solutions, a number of specific **investment objectives** have been developed for this review of Secondary Provision in Mid and South Powys, to align with the key factors outlined in the School Organisation Code. These are as follows:

- To significantly improve the learning outcomes for learners across the ability range;
- To maximise the curriculum benefits at key stages 3 and 4 for learners who study through the medium of Welsh or English;
- To provide post-16 provision that improves access to, and participation in, both academic and vocational courses and which meets the requirements of the Learning & Skills Measure, whilst minimising the need for additional travel during the school day;
- To reduce surplus places in schools;
- To provide robust linguistic continuity of Welsh-medium provision across all key phases of education;
- To achieve efficiencies through economies of scale, reduced management, premises and running costs, whilst maximising the percentage of the budget spent on teaching and learning.

The current situation in Mid and South Powys is examined against each of these investment objectives.

3.2 Existing arrangements

The majority of the data in this section is based on the Welsh Government's Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC). Every January, all maintained schools are required to provide the Welsh Government with pupil and school level data to ensure more accurate targeting of funding and to help the Government to develop and monitor policy. The PLASC return is mandatory for all sectors including nursery, primary, middle, secondary and special. All pupils on roll on the census date must be included in the return.

Analysis of the data from PLASC, in conjunction with pupils' Key Stage and examination results, provides schools, local authorities and central agencies with a range of information and supports the drive to raise school standards.

January 2016 data is currently unavailable, therefore the data used in this section is based on January 2015 PLASC data, unless otherwise stated.

This review focuses on a large area of South and Mid Powys which includes the following four Secondary Schools:

i) Brecon High School

Brecon High School is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive English-medium school with a small Welsh-medium stream. It is situated on the Penlan campus within the town of Brecon, adjacent to NPTC Group of Colleges campus and Brecon Leisure Centre. Pupils come from the town of Brecon and the surrounding rural area. The school has seven primary feeder schools – five of these are English-medium, one is Welsh-medium and one is a dual-stream school.

ii) Builth Wells High School

Builth Wells High School is an 11-18 dual-stream (Category 2C¹²) school, situated in the town of Builth Wells. It has five feeder schools in its catchment, but pupils from the Welsh-medium streams at Rhayader C. in W. School and Trefonnen C. in W. School - which are in the catchment of Llandrindod High School – also transfer to Builth Wells High School for their secondary Welsh-medium provision. Some pupils from Ysgol y Bannau also choose to attend Builth Wells' Welsh-medium stream for their secondary provision.

iii) Gwernyfed High School

Gwernyfed High School is an English-medium 11-18 school located in the village of Three Cocks, situated between the towns of Hay on Wye and Talgarth. Most pupils and students come from these towns and the very surrounding rural area. Most pupils transfer to the school from the six local primary schools. The catchment is very close to the Wales-England border, and a large number of pupils currently attending Gwernyfed High School would live closer to Secondary Schools in England, should there be no secondary provision in Gwernyfed.

iv) Llandrindod High School

Llandrindod High School is an English-medium 11-18 school, situated in the town of Llandrindod Wells. It serves a very large catchment area, with about half the pupils coming from the towns of Llandrindod Wells and Rhayader. Pupils transfer to Llandrindod High School from eight feeder primary schools.

¹² Welsh Government – Defining Schools according to Welsh-medium provision 2007

The distance between these four high schools is as follows, as measured by distance along the main trunk roads:

	Brecon High School	Builth Wells High School	Gwernyfed High School	Llandrindod High School
Brecon High School		20.7m	10.4 m	27.5 m
Builth Wells High School	20.7 m		15 m	8.2 m
Gwernyfed High School	10.4 m	15 m		22 m
Llandrindod High School	27.5 m	8.2 m	22 m	

The following table provides information about the number of pupils in years 7 – 13 in each school in January 2015, the number of pupils at each school during the current school year (2015/16)¹³, and projected figures for the next three years:

Pupil numbers Years 7 - 13	Jan 2015	Nov 2015¹⁴	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Brecon High School	645	565	607	602	593
Builth Wells High School	546	592	515	526	523
Gwernyfed High School	459	448	467	465	489
Llandrindod Wells High School	595	562	546	543	535

The following table provides information about the number of primary aged pupils in each secondary catchment area – these figures include nursery aged pupils¹⁵

¹³ This provisional information has been verified by each school. Verified information from the PLASC data collection carried out in January 2016 is not yet available. Pupil projections are based on the provisional information and will be updated accordingly when verified PLASC data for January 2016 is available.

¹⁴ Data verified by schools November 2015

¹⁵ These do not take account of parental preference or any changes to primary schools as a result of reorganisation

Primary pupil numbers	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Brecon catchment	1105	1152	1170	1215	1250	1253
Builth Wells catchment	645	648	659	654	643	643
Gwernyfed catchment	646	695	720	740	770	765
Llandrindod Wells catchment	901	911	924	944	947	951

There may be an impact on pupil numbers from proposed housing developments within the Local Development Plan. The Authority estimates one child for every five houses within any new proposed developments – if implemented, these will need to be factored into any future projections.

	Number of proposed dwellings	Maximum additional number of primary aged children on a 1:5 basis (estimated)
Brecon	405	81
Builth Wells	209	42
Gwernyfed	518	104
Llandrindod Wells	594	119

Investment Objective 1: To significantly improve the learning outcomes for learners across the ability range

i) Estyn

It is of great concern to the Authority that Brecon High School, Builth Wells High School and Llandrindod High School have all been placed into the category of 'in need of special measures' by Estyn following their most recent inspections, as a result of concerns about their performance and their prospects for improvement. Gwernyfed High School's performance and prospects for improvement were judged to be 'adequate' in 2013, and is currently in a category of 'Estyn monitoring'.

However, all four schools have been working closely with ERW and the local authority to prepare and implement post inspection action plans in order to address the shortcoming identified by Estyn.

Details of the outcomes of the most recent Estyn inspection of each of the four schools is provided below:

School	Date of Inspection	School's Current Performance	Prospects for Improvement	Follow-up activity
Brecon High School	2012	Adequate	Adequate	The school was judged to be 'in need of significant improvement'. Following a monitoring visit by Estyn in 2013, the school was placed in the category of 'in need of special measures'.
Gwernyfed High School	2013	Adequate	Adequate	Estyn monitoring
Builth Wells High School	2015	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	In need of special measures
Llandrindod High School	2014	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	In need of special measures

ii) National School Categorisation System

The National School Categorisation system gives a clear and fair picture of how well a school is performing compared with other schools across Wales and helps to identify the schools that need the most help, support and guidance to improve.

The system has been developed collectively between regional education consortia and Welsh Government. Its primary function is to identify, across Wales, the schools

that need the most support. The colour category of support allocated to a school will trigger a bespoke, tailored support programme.

The system is based on three steps. It is not purely data-driven and takes into account the quality of leadership, teaching and learning in schools.

- **Step one – Standards group:** A range of information is used to make a judgement about the school's standards, resulting in a standards group
- **Step two – Improvement capacity:** An evaluation of the school's capacity to improve further, taking account of the evidence about the standards and the quality of leadership, teaching and learning, resulting in an improvement capacity
- **Step three – Support category:** Bringing the judgement on the standards group and improvement capacity together to decide on the school's support category, colour coded either green, yellow, amber or red.

The affected schools were categorised as follows during 2015/16:

School	Standards Group	Improvement Group	Support Category
Brecon High School	3	C	Amber
Builth Wells High School	3	D	Red
Gwernyfed High School	3	B	Yellow
Llandrindod High School	2	C	Amber

Further information about the current standards at the four schools is attached at **Appendix A**.

Investment Objective 2: To maximise the curriculum benefits at Key Stages 3 and 4 for learners who study through the medium of Welsh or English

The Council has recently approved a new Schools Reorganisation Policy, which includes an aspiration for the ideal size of school in the county. The aspiration for secondary phase provision is to have schools with at least 600 pupils in Years 7 to 11. This would allow average year group sizes of a minimum of 120 pupils.

As shown below, the number of pupils in most of the year groups across the four schools are below this threshold. This creates challenges for the schools to provide and deliver a broad ranging curriculum, particularly at Key Stage 4, when pupils are required to choose their GCSE options. Providing a real choice for pupils at this Key Stage is more difficult in schools with smaller cohorts, or in dual-stream schools. Further reductions in funding will exacerbate this situation.

The following tables show the number of teaching groups per cohort at each school¹⁶.

Brecon High School	Number of teaching groups / classes	Number of pupils
Year 7	5	105
Year 8	5	100
Year 9	5	103
Year 10	6	127
Year 11	5	121

Builth Wells High School	Number of teaching groups / classes	Number of pupils
Year 7	4	72
Year 8	5	88
Year 9	4	86
Year 10	8	91
Year 11	5	79

Gwernyfed High School	Number of teaching groups / classes	Number of pupils
Year 7	3	68
Year 8	3	70
Year 9	4	87
Year 10	3	70
Year 11	4	85

Llandrindod High School	Number of teaching groups / classes	Number of pupils
Year 7	4	91
Year 8	4	100
Year 9	4	101
Year 10	4	81
Year 11	4	109

Investment Objective 3: To provide post-16 provision that improves access to, and participation in, both academic and vocational courses and which meets the requirements of the Learning & Skills Measure, whilst minimising the need for additional travel during the school day;

Post-16 education is delivered via the South Powys Post-16 Partnership, which includes all six Secondary Schools and NPTC Group of Colleges – there is a single collaborative timetable, and learners are able to travel to other schools if they wish to study a subject that is unavailable to them at their home school/institution.

¹⁶ PLASC 2015

Due to the year-on-year reduction in funding, all schools have reduced their curriculum offer over the last few years. Some schools are now only able to offer a core curriculum. The following table shows the number of funded Year 12 subjects at the four schools:

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Brecon High School	14	12	12
Builth Wells High School	20	17.5	17.5
Gwernyfed High School	12	10.5	10.5
Llandrindod High School	14	13	12

The following table shows the number of pupils in the Sixth Forms at each school:

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17 ¹⁷
Brecon High School	96	89	88
Builth Wells High School	115	129	130
Gwernyfed High School	83	82	73
Llandrindod High School	63	94	85

The Authority's optimum model for post-16 education is for centres to be able to provide 25 subjects, with a minimum class size of 12 or above. This would enable the Authority and schools to meet the requirements of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 whilst minimising the need for inter-school travel. On this basis, the ideal size of a Sixth Form would be 180 pupils.

NPTC Group of Colleges

The main provider of vocational post-16 provision in Powys is NPTC Group of Colleges, (following the merger of Neath Port Talbot College and Coleg Powys) which has a campus in Brecon and Newtown, as well as in NPTC and other areas.

NPTC Group of Colleges is one of 14 further education (FE) colleges or institutions in Wales. Established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, Welsh Further Education Colleges (FECs) are designed to promote further education and improve opportunities for learners in Wales. Since January 27 2015, FE Corporations ceased to be a 'Central Government Body' and were re-designated as 'Non-Profit Institutions Serving Households'. They have flexibility over their governance arrangements.

The Welsh Government retains powers of intervention in colleges where there are mismanagement or wrongdoing, and they also have to comply with requirements associated with receipt of Government funding (around 80% of college funding is from Government).

NPTC Group of Colleges provides a diverse range of learning opportunities for students, adult learners and employers. It offers a combination of A level provision at

¹⁷ Data verified by schools October 2015

its Sixth Form Academy, vocational courses, apprenticeships, foundation studies, essential skills/wider skills, and the Welsh Baccalaureate. The College has strong links with employers and with higher education partners.

The College is also a partner within the South Powys Post-16 Partnership, and offers five vocational subjects within the collaborative timetable. Since September 2015, the College has also been offering a range of AS/A level provision from its Brecon campus since September 2015.

The Welsh Government's Learner Outcomes Report¹⁸ shows that the quality profile of NPTC Group of Colleges places it amongst the top three FE colleges in Wales.

In terms of performance at A levels, the College is performing at a comparable level with the Powys average, and above the Wales average, as shown below:

	2013			2014			2015		
A-level Measure	Powys	Wales	NPTC	Powys	Wales	NPTC	Powys	Wales	NPTC
% Grades A*-B	50.5%	49.3%	53.0%	52.4%	49.7%	51.4%	49.5%	49.0%	50.2%
% Grades A*-C	76.5%	75.2%	77.8%	77.8%	75.2%	76.8%	76.9%	74.3%	77.0%
% Grades A*-E	98.5%	97.6%	99.0%	98.1%	97.5%	99.0%	98.0%	97.3%	99.6%

It must be noted however, that percentage of pupils eligible for free schools meals is far higher in Neath Port Talbot than it is in Powys. Further information about the quality profile of NPTC Group of Colleges is attached at Appendix B.

Investment Objective 4: To reduce surplus places in schools

There is a high percentage of surplus places at all the four high schools, which are above the Welsh Government's requirements for Powys, of no more than 15% surplus places across schools. The following table shows the number and percentage of surplus places currently in each of the four schools¹⁹:

School	Total number of available places	Number of surplus places	Total surplus capacity
Brecon High School	872	227	26.03%
Builth Wells High School	659	141	21.40%
Gwernyfed High School	569	110	19.33%
Llandrindod High School	714	139	19.47%

¹⁸ <http://www.learningobservatory.com/fe/>

¹⁹ Powys Annual School Places Return to Welsh Government 2015.

Investment Objective 5: To provide robust linguistic continuity of Welsh-medium provision across all key phases of education

In the area covered by this review, Welsh-medium education is currently provided by two dual-stream Secondary Schools – Brecon High School and Builth Wells High School. In addition, there are a number of Welsh-medium Secondary Schools located in neighbouring local authorities which are accessed by Powys pupils. In particular, this includes Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera, located in Neath Port Talbot County Borough, which provides Welsh-medium secondary provision for an increasing proportion of Welsh-medium pupils from the Sennybridge area as well as some from the Brecon area, however this also includes Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw, located in Torfaen, and Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun, located in Rhondda Cynon Taff.

Pupils transferring to Welsh-medium secondary provision in Brecon High School and Builth Wells High School have usually attended Welsh-medium primary provision in one of the following schools:

- Builth Wells CP School – dual-stream
- Llandrindod C in W School, Trefonnen – dual-stream
- Rhayader C in W School – dual-stream
- Sennybridge CP School – dual-stream
- Ysgol Dolafon, Llanwrtyd – dual-stream
- Ysgol y Bannau, Brecon – Welsh-medium

Subject Provision

During the 2014/15 academic year, the Welsh-medium provision at Brecon High School and Builth Wells High School in years 7 to 11 was as follows:

Brecon High School	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Number of Welsh-medium subjects	9	9	9	3	3
Number of English-medium subjects	14	14	14	16	19
% Welsh-medium subjects	64%	64%	64%	19%	16%
Language category	2C	2C	2C	4	4

Builth Wells High School	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Number of Welsh-medium subjects	12	12	12	10	10

Number of English-medium subjects	15	15	15	20	23
Number of bilingual subjects	0	0	0	2	2
Total number of subjects	15	15	15	22	25
% Welsh-medium subjects	80%	80%	80%	46%	40%
Language category	2B	2B	2B	3	3

Based on this information, the current language category of each school was as follows during 2014/15:

	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4	Overall
Brecon High School	2C	4	3
Builth Wells High School	2B	3	2C

As the current position at both schools does not fully meet the aspirations of the Authority's WESP for linguistic continuity, the Authority has identified the need to centralise provision in south Powys, in order to ensure that a greater level of provision can be offered to pupils. In particular, the Authority is concerned that the Welsh-medium provision available at Brecon High School is limited, and does not provide sound linguistic progression from one phase of education to the next.

The Authority is also concerned about the limited post-16 opportunities currently available to Welsh-medium learners in South Powys. Currently, there is no Welsh-medium post-16 provision at Brecon High School, and only a limited number of subjects are offered at Builth Wells High School. During 2014/15, the following Welsh-medium post-16 subjects were provided at Builth Wells High School:

Welsh-medium	Bilingual
Biology	Art
Cymraeg	
DT	
Geography	
History	
Music	
PSE	
Welsh Baccalaureate	

The Authority carried out a survey to identify parental preference with regard to Welsh-medium secondary education in the autumn term 2013.

The survey was sent to the parents of all pupils currently attending a Welsh-medium primary school or a Welsh stream in a dual-stream primary school, including parents

of pupils in the Ystradgynlais area who currently transfer to Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera for their secondary education. 36% of surveys sent out were returned.

In the survey, parents were asked which type of secondary provision they would prefer for their children to attend.

The results were broken down by primary school, and by high school catchment. The results for the area currently under review were as follows:

Catchment	Number of surveys issued/response rate	Designated Welsh-medium Secondary School	Welsh stream in dual-stream Secondary School	English stream in dual-stream Secondary School	English medium Secondary School
Brecon	182/44%	71%	29%	0%	0%
Builth Wells	130/35%	43%	46%	8%	4%

Investment Objective 6: To achieve efficiencies through economies of scale, reduced management, premises and running costs, whilst maximising the percentage of the budget spent on teaching and learning;

As stated previously, the financial situation facing schools in Powys is of serious concern to the Authority, and the situation is no different in Mid and South Powys. The budget plans overleaf have been received directly from the four schools over the course of the last year. They indicate that two of the four schools are already forecasting a significant deficit over the next three years. The Authority is currently compiling the final budget allocations for 2016/17 whilst also providing updated indicative funding for the next three year. Once this information has been provided, schools will update their budget plans accordingly.

In order to manage this challenging financial situation, schools will have to consider ways of protecting curriculum delivery, which could include reducing the number of staff or increasing class sizes. Ultimately, this will impact on the schools' ability to deliver the curriculum.

	<u>2015/16</u> <u>Budget</u> <u>Year 1</u>	<u>2016/17</u> <u>Budget</u> <u>Year 2</u>	<u>2017/18</u> <u>Budget</u> <u>Year 3</u>	<u>2018/19</u> <u>Budget</u> <u>Year 4</u>
Brecon High School				
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	(194,949)	(443,156)	(514,568)	(493,625)
BALANCE B/F AS AT 1ST				
APRIL	209,846	14,897	(428,259)	(942,827)
CUMULATIVE				
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) AS AT				
31ST MARCH	14,897	(428,259)	(942,827)	(1,436,452)
Gwernyfed High School				
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	(23,284)	(70,868)	(57,155)	(5,513)
BALANCE B/F AS AT 1ST				
APRIL	157,928	134,644	63,776	6,621
CUMULATIVE				
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) AS AT				
31ST MARCH	134,644	63,776	6,621	1,108
Builth Wells High School				
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	1,022	24,878	48,621	11,159
B/FWD	(58,495)	(57,473)	(32,596)	16,026
CUMULATIVE				
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) AS AT				
31ST MARCH	(57,473)	(32,596)	16,026	27,185
Llandrindod High School				
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	(156,668)	(130,414)	(136,065)	(160,551)
BALANCE B/F AS AT 1ST				
APRIL	271,437	114,769	(15,645)	(151,709)
CUMULATIVE				
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) AS AT				
31ST MARCH	114,769	(15,645)	(151,709)	(312,260)

The following table shows the schools' share of the overall education budget²⁰ and funding per pupil:

School	Schools Budget Share 2015-16	Funding per pupil 2015-16	Powys average funding per pupil 2015-16
Brecon High School	£2.749M	£4,140	£4,155
Builth Wells High School	£2.346M	£4,565	£4,155
Gwernyfed High School	£1.929M	£4,248	£4,155
Llandrindod High School	£2.328M	£4,135	£4,155

Backlog maintenance costs within the current school stock is also a concern. The condition of the school buildings in three of the schools have been graded as C or D, according to the Welsh Government-commissioned School Condition Survey 2009. The schools were recently re-surveyed by the Council's Property Service, which confirmed that the grades remained the same. The re-survey also confirmed that there has been significant deterioration in the condition of certain blocks.

The following table shows the grades given to the condition, suitability, sustainability and compliance with disability legislation of each school building:

School	Condition	Suitability	Sustainability	DDA
Brecon High School	D	B/C	D	C
Builth Wells High School	B	B	B	A
Gwernyfed High School	C	B/C	C	C
Llandrindod High School	C	B	C	C

Builth Wells High School scores the best of the four schools with the relatively recent addition of new facilities. Gwernyfed and Llandrindod are both C's for condition and sustainability.

The condition of Brecon High School is very poor, scoring a D which means 'life expired'. The school has deteriorated further since the original survey in 2009, with one block having to be taken out of service.

Maintaining the current school building stock adds further financial pressures for the

²⁰ Section 52 Statement June 2015

Council. The following table provides an estimate of current backlog maintenance costs, supplied by the Council's Property Service:

School	Estimated backlog maintenance costs
Brecon High School	£15,581,541
Builth Wells High School	£1,743,600
Gwernyfed High School	£3,721,200
Llandrindod High School	£3,607,800

3.3 Summary of business needs

Investment Objective	Current Position	Business Need
To improve the learning outcomes for pupils and learners across the ability range	• 3 schools in Special Measures • 1 school in Estyn monitoring	• Schools to be graded at least 'good' by Estyn • Excellent learning outcomes across all key stages
To maximise the curriculum benefits at Key Stage 3 and 4 for learners who study through the medium of Welsh or English	• Most year groups at all four schools are below the Authority's threshold of 120 pupils; • Limited Key Stage 4 curriculum choice for WM pupils;	• Pupils to have an appropriate choice of subjects at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, through their chosen language medium • Schools with year groups that meet the Authority's threshold.
To provide post-16 provision that improves access to, and participation in, both academic and vocational courses and which meets the requirements of the Learning & Skills Measure, whilst minimising the need for additional travel during the school day	• Learning & Skills Measure currently met through collaboration • Significant risk of not being able to meet the Measure in future due to budget reductions • Additional requirement for learners to travel within a school day to access provision a barrier to real choice • Additional travel cost to the Authority – may be unsustainable in face of growing budget reductions	• To provide real choice for learners • To meet the Learning Skills Measure within the available funding • To provide an appropriate range of choice for Welsh-medium learners • Increased availability of academic and vocational curriculum • To minimise travel implications for learners within the school day • To provide a vocational curriculum to meet the needs of learners and employers
To provide robust linguistic continuity of Welsh-medium provision across all key phases of education;	• Narrow choice of WM subjects in Brecon HS • Narrow range of post-16 WM subjects in Builth Wells HS	• To increase the WM curriculum opportunities for those learners that live in South Powys (ensuring equitable progression opportunities) • To provide an appropriate

Investment Objective	Current Position	Business Need
		range of choice for WM or bilingual learners
To reduce surplus places in schools;	• Significant level of surplus places at all four schools	• To ensure that the level of surplus places is within agreed WG targets
To achieve efficiencies through economies of scale, reduced management, premises and running costs, whilst maximising the percentage of the budget spent on teaching and learning	• Challenging financial situation with deficit budgets forecasted for 2 of the 4 schools • Potential impact on some schools' ability to deliver the curriculum • Significant backlog maintenance cost • Three of the four schools are Condition C or D buildings, with on-going maintenance costs	• School budgets to be in balance • Backlog maintenance costs reduced • School buildings that are more efficient to maintain

4. Options Appraisal

This section of the business case documents the wide range of options that have been considered in response to the business needs identified within the Strategic Case.

4.1 Scope

The delivery models within scope, in addition to the status quo, are outlined below. The method by which these delivery models could be implemented can include amalgamation, closure or federation, however these are not considered on their own merit within this report, as they are the means of achieving the solution rather than the solution itself.

- **Secondary schools on multi-sites**

A Secondary School could operate on more than one site. An example of this in Powys is Newtown High School, which has a campus in Newtown and in Presteigne, following the closure of John Beddoes High School. The school has one governing body, headteacher and senior leadership team. Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 curriculum is provided at both sites. Post-16 is provided at one site.

The school is funded as if it was a single school in terms of staffing, and the square meterage and grounds area are included as a total figure.

- **‘All Through Schools’**

‘All Through Schools’ are defined as ‘a school that comprises multiple phases of Education provision (usually primary and secondary) in a single institution’. They can operate from a single site or from multi-sites. They have been in existence in the independent sector for a number of years, and there is an increasing interest in the model. In Wales, a number of local authorities have established or are in the process of establishing ‘All Through Schools’.

Pupils enrol at an All Through School at the age of 4 and remain in the same school until they leave at the age of 16 or 18. The model is designed to address the traditional dip in pupil performance between primary and secondary level when large numbers of children struggle to adapt to a new environment.

The ATS is currently funded in accordance with primary and secondary formula.

Within this business case, ‘All Through Schools’ will only be considered if there are specific local conditions related to primary schools in a particular area e.g. poor building condition, capacity issues, leadership issues or stakeholder support.

- **Post-16 education delivered via a school Sixth Form model**

This is the traditional model that is already established in Powys, where the Sixth Form is part of the school, and delivers mainly academic (AS/A level) provision. Schools collaborate with each other to extend choice and also with other providers, particularly for vocational or Welsh-medium provision. Schools receive funding for the delivery of post-16 subjects based on an agreed funding formula.

- **Post-16 education delivered via a Further Education College model – ‘tertiary’**

A tertiary model offers further education through a full range of courses, both vocational and academic, primarily to the 16-19 age group.

There are 14 further education (FE) colleges or institutions in Wales. Most may be described as general FE colleges. Many are part-tertiary; one is a Catholic Sixth Form college; one – WEA YMCA Community College Cymru - is an FE institutions. In addition, three are merged with universities: one with the University of South Wales (USW) and two with University of Wales Trinity St David's (UWTSD). The largest colleges offer over 1,000 different qualifications across a wide range of levels of difficulty.

Colleges are classified as 'not for profit institutions serving households' (NPISH). The Welsh Government retains powers of intervention in colleges where there are mismanagement or wrongdoing, and they also have to comply with requirements associated with receipt of Government funding (around 80% of college funding is from Government).

- **Welsh-medium delivery models**

Whilst Welsh-medium secondary provision in Powys has traditionally been delivered via a dual-stream model, a range of different models are used across Wales. The term ‘bilingual education’ is used to refer to a wide range of provision, which includes varying amounts of Welsh language in the delivery. Bilingual schools can include those where a large proportion of the curriculum is delivered through the medium of Welsh, dual-stream schools where Welsh-medium and English-medium courses are taught separately, schools where only a few elements of the curriculum or only a small number of pupils are taught through the medium of Welsh or schools where Welsh-medium and English-medium pupils are taught in the same class using both languages.

In 2007, the Welsh Government published the document *Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision* (2007), which outlines definitions and categories of schools according to the amount of Welsh used in teaching and learning and in the daily life of the school.

The two delivery models that are considered in this section are:

- **Bilingual Secondary School – Category 2A (Often referred to as a Welsh-medium Secondary School)**

There are currently no Category 2A schools in Powys, although it is a well-established model in other authorities, and some pupils from Powys already attend

these schools e.g. Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera; Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw; Ysgol Gyfun Penweddig.

- **Curriculum** – At least 80% of subjects apart from English and Welsh are taught only through the medium of Welsh to all pupils. One or two subjects are taught to some pupils in English or in both languages.
- **Language of the School** – The day to day language or languages of the school will be determined by its linguistic context. Both languages are used to communicate with pupils and for the school's administration. A high priority is given to creating a Welsh ethos. The school communicates with parents in both languages.
- **Outcomes** – For pupils following the maximum number of courses through the medium of Welsh, the normal expectation is that assessment at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 would be through the medium of Welsh in those subjects and that they would be able to progress easily to post-16 provision through the medium of Welsh in chosen subjects.

- **dual-stream Secondary School – Category 2B / 2C**

This is the current model of delivery in Powys. Funding is based on a full curriculum being delivered in both languages and schools receive a 0.5 uplift per year group based on the average teacher cost for the sector. The additionality is based on the percentage of the curriculum time/subjects delivered through both languages.

- **Curriculum** – At least 80% of subjects (Category 2B) or 50 – 79% of subjects (Category 2C) are taught through the medium of Welsh but are also taught through the medium of English.
- **Language of the School** – The day to day language or languages of the school will be determined by its linguistic context. Both languages are used to communicate with pupils and for the school's administration. A high priority is given to creating a Welsh ethos. The school communicates with parents in both languages.
- **Outcomes** – For pupils following the maximum number of courses through the medium of Welsh, the normal expectation is that assessment at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 would be through the medium of Welsh in those subjects and that they would be able to progress easily to post-16 provision through the medium of Welsh in chosen subjects.

4.2 Appraisal Methodology

All options identified are reviewed against specific investment objectives and critical success factors which are set out below. The following method for assessing each option has been used:

- Any option considered to meet any individual investment objective or critical success factor is provided with a tick against this individual assessment factor;
- Any option considered to exceed any individual investment objective or critical success factor is provided with a double tick against this individual assessment factor;
- Any option considered to fail any individual investment objective or critical success factor is provided with a cross against this individual assessment factor;
- Any ambiguity in the assessment is identified with a question mark.

4.2 Investment Objectives

- To significantly improve the learning outcomes for learners across the ability range;
- To maximise the curriculum benefits at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 for learners who study through the medium of Welsh or English;
- To provide post-16 provision that improves access to, and participation in, both academic and vocational courses and which meets the requirements of the Learning & Skills Measure, whilst minimising the need for additional travel during the school day;
- To reduce surplus places in schools;
- To provide robust linguistic continuity of Welsh-medium provision across all key phases of education;
- To achieve efficiencies through economies of scale, reduced management, premises and running costs.

4.3 Critical Success Factors

In addition to the above stated investment objectives five critical success factors have also been agreed to assess forthcoming solutions, aligned with the School Organisation Code's key factors. The agreed critical success factors (CSFs) are as follows:

CSF1: Strategic Fit	• Does the option fit with local / national strategies?
CSF2: Potential Value for Money (VFM)	• Does the option provide good value for money?
CSF 3: Benefits Optimisation	• Does the option provide better outcomes for learners?
CSF 4– Potential Achievability	• The option must be: • Politically acceptable at local, county and national level;

	• Achievable within current legislation; • Operationally achievable /physically achievable
CSF 5 – Supply Side Capacity and Capability	• Is the option deliverable?
CSF 6 – Potential Affordability	• Is the option affordable?

5. Options appraisal for Welsh-medium secondary education across South and Mid Powys

5.1 Long-list

The options that have been considered are as follows:

- **Option 1** – Status Quo. Maintain dual-stream Category 2B/C Secondary Schools in South Powys and Mid Powys
- **Option 2** – Maintain a dual-stream Category 2B/C Secondary school in South Powys and transfer Welsh-medium learners from Mid Powys to South Powys;
- **Option 3** – Maintain a dual-stream Category 2B/C Secondary school in Mid Powys and transfer Welsh-medium learners from South Powys to Mid Powys;
- **Option 4** – Create two Bilingual Category 2A Secondary schools, in South Powys and in Mid Powys, and transfer all Welsh-medium learners to these new schools
- **Option 5** – Create a Bilingual Category 2A Secondary school in South Powys and transfer all Welsh-medium learners to this new school;
- **Option 6** – Create a Bilingual Category 2A Secondary school in Mid Powys and transfer all Welsh-medium learners to this new school;
- **Option 7** – Create a dual sited Category 2A Welsh-medium Secondary school in Mid and South Powys and transfer all Welsh-medium learners to this new school.

5.2 Options Appraisal Framework – Welsh-medium Options

Each of the options listed above have been appraised against the investment objectives and the overall critical success factors for this review.

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7
To significantly improve the learning outcomes for learners across the ability range;	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
To maximise the curriculum benefits at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 for learners who study through the medium of Welsh or English	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓✓	✓✓	✓
To provide post-16 provision that improves access to, and participation in, both academic and vocational courses and which meets the requirements of the Learning & Skills Measure, whilst minimising the need for additional travel during the school day;	✗	?	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓
To reduce surplus places in schools;	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
To provide robust linguistic continuity of Welsh-medium provision across all key phases of education	✗	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓
To achieve efficiencies through economies of scale, reduced management, premises and running costs, whilst maximising the percentage of the budget available for teaching and learning.	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓✓	✓✓	✓
Strategic Fit	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓
Potential VFM	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	?
Benefits optimisation	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓✓	✓
Potential achievability	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗
Potential supply side capacity and capability	✗	✓	✓✓	✗	✓	✓✓	?
Affordability	✗	✓	✓✓	✗	✗	?	?
Score	1	9	13	5	11	16	8

The maximum score any option can achieve is 24 ticks. All options that score more than 12 ticks are automatically taken forward. The options carried forward for further analysis are:

- Option 6 - Establish a Bilingual Category 2A Secondary School in Mid Powys and transfer all Welsh-medium learners to this new school
- Option 3 - Maintain a dual-stream (Category 2B/C) Secondary School in Mid Powys and transfer Welsh-medium learners from South Powys to Mid Powys
- Option 5 has also been carried forward for further assessment, although not meeting the threshold.
- Option 1 – Status Quo – is automatically taken forward for comparative purposes.

5.3 Short-listed Options - SWOT

Option 1: Maintain dual-stream Category 2B/C Secondary Schools in both Mid and South Powys	
Strengths	Weaknesses
• Provides access to Welsh-medium secondary provision in Brecon and Builth Wells • No additional transport costs • Likely to be more acceptable to local stakeholders	• Does not create a larger mass of Welsh-medium pupils • Does not provide more robust linguistic progression • Does not provide opportunities to offer enhanced Welsh-medium opportunities at post-16 level • Does not ensure more cost effective delivery of Welsh-medium secondary provision • Unlikely that both schools will be able to achieve Category 2B categorisation based on current pupil numbers
Opportunities	Threats
• None identified	• Pupils may continue drift of pupils away from Powys secondary Welsh-medium providers due to continued inequality compared with pupils across Wales and English-medium pupils

Option 3: Maintain a dual-stream Category 2B/C Secondary School in Mid Powys, and transfer Welsh-medium learners from South Powys to Mid Powys	
Strengths	Weaknesses
• Creation of a greater mass of Welsh-medium secondary learners • More cost effective delivery of Welsh-medium provision • More appropriate location for Welsh-medium pupils in Mid and South Powys, taking into account the location of other Welsh-medium secondary providers within Powys and outside Powys	• Loss of Welsh-medium secondary provision in south Powys, which may impact on Welsh-medium primary pupil numbers in the area • Possible reduction in transfer rates from Welsh-medium primary provision to Welsh-medium secondary provision in the short term • Increased travel time for Welsh-medium learners from the Brecon catchments
Opportunities	Threats
• Would enable the current staff at Builth Wells High School to offer additional Welsh-medium subjects • Would enable Builth Wells High School to build on the Welsh-medium provision currently offered at post-16 level	• Pupils from the Brecon area continue to drift to out-of-county Welsh-medium Secondary Schools due to lack of access to designated Welsh-medium secondary provision within Powys

Option 5: Create a Bilingual Category 2A Secondary School in South Powys, and transfer Welsh-medium learners from Mid Powys to this school	
Strengths	Weaknesses
• Creation of a greater mass of Welsh-medium secondary learners • More cost effective delivery of Welsh-medium provision • Would create more robust linguistic progression for Welsh-medium learners as part of a designated Welsh-medium school	• Loss of Welsh-medium secondary provision in mid Powys, which may impact on Welsh-medium primary pupil numbers in the area • Possible reduction in transfer rates from Welsh-medium primary provision to Welsh-medium secondary provision in the short term • Increased travel time for Welsh-medium learners from the Llandrindod Wells and Builth Wells catchments • Not the best location for a new Welsh-medium school, given the location of alternative provision located outside

	Powys
Opportunities	Threats
• Opportunity to stimulate growth in Welsh-medium pupil numbers in Mid and South Powys • Brecon is a larger centre of population, therefore transferring provision to Brecon could provide additional opportunities for growth in Welsh-medium pupil numbers in the future • Opportunity to develop Welsh-medium post-16 provision in South Powys, and to work with NPTC College to offer vocational options • Opportunity to include primary provision in Brecon as part of an all-through school arrangement	• Brecon High School do not currently have sufficient Welsh speaking staff to offer additional subjects through the medium of Welsh • Brecon High School has not offered any Welsh-medium provision at post-16 level for a number of years, therefore the school's current staff do not have any recent experience of delivering post-16 subjects through the medium of Welsh

Option 6: Create a Bilingual Category 2A Secondary School in Mid Powys, and transfer Welsh-medium learners from South Powys to this school

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Creation of a greater mass of Welsh-medium secondary learners • More cost effective delivery of Welsh-medium provision • More appropriate location for Welsh-medium pupils in Mid and South Powys, taking into account the location of other Welsh-medium secondary providers within Powys and outside Powys • Would provide more robust linguistic continuity as part of a designated Welsh-medium provision • Would enable the development of Welsh-medium provision at post-16 level	• Loss of Welsh-medium secondary provision in south Powys, which may impact on Welsh-medium primary pupil numbers in the area • Possible reduction in transfer rates from Welsh-medium primary provision to Welsh-medium secondary provision in the short term • Increased travel time for Welsh-medium learners from the Brecon catchments
Opportunities	Threats
• Would enable the current staff at Builth Wells High School to offer additional Welsh-medium subjects	• Pupils from the Brecon area continue to drift to out-of-county Welsh-medium Secondary Schools

• Would enable Builth Wells High School to build on the Welsh-medium provision currently offered at post-16 level • Opportunity to include primary provision in Builth Wells to create an all-through school, which would address the lack of designated Welsh-medium primary provision in mid Powys • Opportunity to stimulate growth in Welsh-medium pupil numbers in Mid and South Powys	• Welsh-medium pupil numbers do not grow as expected, and the new school does not grow
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5.4 Overall Conclusion of Option Appraisal

Based on this analysis, there are two possible options:

- **Option 6** - Establish a Bilingual Category 2A Secondary School in Mid Powys and transfer all Welsh-medium learners to this new school
- **Option 3** - Maintain a dual-stream (Category 2B/C) Secondary School in Mid Powys and transfer Welsh-medium learners from South Powys to Mid Powys

As both of these options involve centralising Welsh-medium provision in the Mid Powys area, further evaluation will be taken forward in section 6 - option appraisal for Mid Powys. The options will be costed as part of that exercise.

6. Option Appraisal Mid Powys Schools

6.1 Scope

The delivery models under consideration in this section include the following:

- Secondary schools model
- Bilingual Secondary School – Category 2A (Often referred to as a Welsh-medium Secondary School)
- dual-stream Secondary school – Category 2B/C
- Post-16 Delivered via a School Sixth Form model
- Post-16 Delivered via a Further Education College Model – ‘tertiary’

6.2 Long-list

- **Option 1: Status Quo: Maintain Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools as separate schools**

Both schools would continue to operate as separate entities from the current sites.

- **Option 2: Establish a dual-stream Category 2B/C Secondary School operating across two sites**

Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools would close, and a new school would be established which would operate across two sites, governed and managed by a single governing body, headteacher and senior leadership team. It would be expected that Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 provision would be delivered from both sites and there would be no expectation of additional travel for pupils in these key stages.

- **Option 3: Establish a dual-stream Category 2B/C Secondary School in the Builth Wells area**

Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools would close, and a new school established which would operate from Builth Wells, governed and managed by a single governing body, headteacher and senior leadership team. The current capacity of Builth Wells High School is 659 places, therefore the school would need to be remodelled or built on a new site, in order to incorporate the additional number of learners.

- **Option 4: Establish a dual-stream Category 2B/C Secondary School in Llandrindod Wells area**

Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools would close, and a new school established which would operate from a single site in Llandrindod, governed and managed by a single governing body, headteacher and senior leadership team. There is sufficient capacity on the current Llandrindod High School site.

- **Option 5: Establish a new Bilingual Category 2A school in the Builth Wells. Llandrindod High School would continue to provide English-medium education.**

The schools would be two separate entities, with their own governing bodies and headteachers. There is sufficient capacity on the current site of Llandrindod Wells High School and Builth Wells High School to meet the proposed capacities.

- **Option A: Post-16 provision delivered via a school Sixth Form model**
Schools are 11 - 18
- **Option B: Post-16 provision delivered via a Further Education Based model**
Schools are 11 – 16

6.3 Option Appraisal Framework

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option A	Option B
To significantly improve the learning outcomes for learners across the ability range;	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
To maximise the curriculum benefits at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 for learners who study through the medium of Welsh or English	✓	✓	✓✓	x	✓	✓	x
To provide post-16 provision that improves access to, and participation in, both academic and vocational courses and which meets the requirements of the Learning & Skills Measure, whilst minimising the need for additional travel during the school day;	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓
To reduce surplus places in schools;	x	x	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	x
To provide robust linguistic continuity of Welsh-medium provision across all key phases of education	✓	✓	✓	x	✓✓	✓✓	x
To achieve efficiencies through economies of scale, reduced management, premises and running costs, whilst maximising the percentage of the budget available for teaching and learning.	x	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓
Strategic Fit	x	x	✓	x	✓✓	✓	✓

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option A	Option B
Potential VFM	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Benefits optimisation	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓
Potential achievability	✓	✓	?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Potential supply side capacity and capability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Affordability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scores	6	7	14	11	14	13	9

The maximum amount of ticks that could be achieved is 24. All options that score 12 or more ticks will be automatically taken forward to the short-list for further evaluation.

On this basis, the options carried forward to the short-list are:

- **Option 5: Establish a new Bilingual Category 2A school in the Builth Wells. Llandrindod High School would be continue to provide English-medium education**
- **Option 3: Establish a dual-stream Category 2B/C Secondary School in the Builth Wells area**
- **Option 4: Establish a dual-stream Category 2B/C Secondary School in Llandrindod Wells area**

In addition to the above short listed options, the Options 1 and 2 are also taken forward for comparative purposes, although they have been discounted as not meeting enough of the investment objectives and CSFs.

Post-16 Option A is carried forward and will be assessed as part of Options 1-5.

6.4 Short-listed options SWOT

Option 1: Status Quo: Maintain Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools as separate schools	
Strengths	Weaknesses
• Provides access to separate Secondary Schools within two communities • No additional transport costs • More acceptable to local stakeholders • No instability due to reorganisation • Schools can build on their current plans towards improving standards • No negative impact on local communities due to removal of secondary provision • Schools able to build on current good practices • Builth Wells continues to deliver Welsh-medium provision	• Will still require some capital investment in Llandrindod HS • Does not generate any financial efficiencies • Does not reduce surplus places in both schools • Small Sixth Forms in both schools - Model does not optimise the Learning Skills Measure • Llandrindod HS continues to be condition C, with significant backlog maintenance costs • Does not create a critical mass of pupils at post-16, enabling more subjects to be delivered from one location and minimising the requirement for additional inter-school travel and transport. • Does not meet the requirements of the Learning and Skills Measure in a single location • Does not create a sustainable, resilient infrastructure for secondary education in the current and forecasted financial climate; • Does not enable a broad ranging curriculum to be provided • Vocational provision is mainly accessed through a collaborative arrangement with NPTC Group of Colleges, and is limited in range due to timetabling restrictions. • Learners will still need to travel between schools/college to access subjects if they choose an offer that is not available at a specific school. • Small number of Welsh-medium post-16 subjects available

Opportunities	Threats
• Opportunities to enable all learners to achieve high standards of achievement and attainment; • Opportunities to provide excellent teaching and learning provision reflecting national, regional and local priorities; • Opportunities to develop an inclusive education model, meeting the needs of vulnerable learners. • opportunities to collaborate between both schools	• Challenging financial climate • Brecon High School forecasting a significant deficit budget situation

Option 2: Establish a dual-stream Category 2B/C Secondary School operating across two sites

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Provides access to separate Secondary Schools within two communities • No additional transport costs • More acceptable to local stakeholders • No instability due to reorganisation • Schools can build on their current plans towards improving standards • No negative impact on local communities due to removal of secondary provision	• Will still require capital investment in both schools • Does not reduce surplus places in both schools • Marginal economies of scale and financial efficiencies (still significant duplicated overheads) • May still require post-16 learners to travel between school/college sites to access subjects • Continued costs of inter-school transport at post-16
Opportunities	Threats
• Opportunities to provide a single management/governance team which can focus on streamlining policies, procedures and schemes of work • Opportunities to generate some efficiencies in terms of economies of scale • Opportunities to enable all learners to achieve high standards of achievement and attainment; • Opportunities to provide excellent teaching and learning provision reflecting national, regional and local priorities; • Opportunities to develop an inclusive education model, meeting the needs of vulnerable learners.	• Transition process for pupils, staff and parents may cause uncertainty

Option 3: Establish a dual-stream Category 2B/C Secondary School in the Builth Wells area

Strengths	Weaknesses
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• Creates a critical mass of pupils that meets the Authority's agreed minimum threshold of 600 pupils at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 • Creates a critical mass of pupils at post-16, enabling more subjects to be delivered from one location and minimising the requirement for additional inter-school travel and transport. • Meets the requirements of the Learning and Skills Measure in a single location. • Delivers a broad Welsh-medium curriculum in a central location for both Mid and South Powys • Builth Wells is the most central single location for the majority of Welsh-medium primary providers in Mid/South Powys. • Enhanced Secondary School in Builth may provide additional community, social and economic benefits to Builth Wells and the wider area • The Council may benefit from a capital receipt from the Llandrindod HS site; • Improves cost-effectiveness and efficiency; • Eliminates current maintenance costs on Llandrindod HS; • Reduces overall surplus places.	• Potential constraints on the site of the current Builth Wells High School Site if it requires re-development or remodelling to incorporate additional learners, which may require additional land/property and therefore greater capital costs • Loss of secondary education within the current Llandrindod Wells catchment • Negative social and economic impact on communities within the Llandrindod catchment • Significant capital investment required • Increased transport mileage • Additional travel requirements for Llandrindod pupils • Pupils living in the Llandrindod catchment may find it more difficult to access after-school activities due to living further away from the school, and the reliance on home-to-school transport; • Welsh-medium stream becomes a smaller percentage of the overall school numbers, making it more difficult to promote a Welsh-medium ethos than currently happens at Builth HS.
Opportunities	Threats
• Opportunities to enable all learners to achieve high standards of achievement and attainment; • Opportunity to develop a single culture and ethos across the school, where previously they had been two schools • Opportunities to provide excellent teaching and learning provision reflecting national, regional and local priorities; • Opportunities to develop resilient leadership and management	• Transition process for pupils, staff and parents may cause uncertainty

arrangements; • Opportunities to develop a school that has buildings and blocks that are assessed as condition A or B; • Opportunities to develop an inclusive education model, meeting the needs of vulnerable learners.	
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Option 4: Establish a dual-stream Category 2B/C Secondary School in Llandrindod Wells area	
Strengths	Weaknesses
• There is sufficient capacity at the current Llandrindod Wells High School site to accommodate the additional pupils • Creates a critical mass of pupils that meets the Authority's agreed minimum threshold of 600 pupils at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 • Creates a critical mass of pupils at post-16, enabling more subjects to be delivered from one location and minimising the requirement for additional inter-school travel and transport. • Meets the requirements of the Learning and Skills Measure in a single location. • Keeps secondary education within the current Llandrindod catchment • Enhanced Secondary School in Llandrindod may provide additional community, social and economic benefits to Llandrindod and the wider area • The Council may benefit from a capital receipt from the Builth HS site • Improves cost-effectiveness and efficiency; • Eliminates current maintenance costs on Builth HS; • Reduces overall surplus places	• Loss of secondary education within the current Llandrindod Wells catchment • Negative social and economic impact on communities within the Llandrindod catchment • Significant capital investment required • Increased transport mileage • Additional travel requirements for Llandrindod pupils • Pupils living in the Llandrindod catchment may find it more difficult to access after-school activities due to living further away from the school, and the reliance on home-to-school transport; • Welsh-medium stream becomes a smaller percentage of the overall school numbers, making it more difficult to promote a Welsh-medium ethos than currently happens at Builth HS; • Welsh-medium stream is not located in a central location for South and Mid Powys – learners from the Brecon area will have additional travel to Llandrindod. Out-of-county Welsh-medium schools are closer to Brecon, and pupils may choose to travel to these schools for secondary Welsh-medium education, making the provision in Mid Powys unviable.

Opportunities	Threats
• Opportunities to enable all learners to achieve high standards of achievement and attainment; • Opportunity to develop a single culture and ethos across the school, where previously they had been two schools • Opportunities to provide excellent teaching and learning provision reflecting national, regional and local priorities; • Opportunities to develop resilient leadership and management arrangements; • Opportunities to develop a school that has buildings and blocks that are assessed as condition A or B; • Opportunities to develop an inclusive education model, meeting the needs of vulnerable learners.	• Potential for Welsh-medium secondary education to become unviable due to the location not being appropriate for learners from the Brecon area, who may choose to go out-of-county for their provision. • Transition process for pupils and parents may cause uncertainty

Option 5: Establish a new Bilingual Category 2A school in the Builth Wells. Llandrindod High School would continue to provide English-medium education.

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Provides access to separate Secondary Schools within two communities • Creates a critical mass of pupils that meets the Authority's agreed minimum threshold of 600 pupils at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 in the English-medium school • Creates a critical mass of pupils at post-16, enabling more subjects to be delivered from one location in the English-medium school • Creation of a larger mass of Welsh-medium secondary learners in Mid/South Powys • More cost-effective • Increased linguistic continuity • Provision of a full range of Welsh-medium subjects; • Increased opportunities for participation in extracurricular activities through the	• Increase learner travel time for English Medium learners from the Builth catchment • Will still require capital investment in Llandrindod HS • Does not generate significant financial savings for the Council • Welsh-medium school will be below the Authority's threshold for size of school in the short-term; • Welsh-medium school will be below the Authority's threshold for size of Sixth Form in the first instance, and may need to collaborate with the English medium school to meet the Learning and Skills Measure • Increased level of surplus placed in the Category A School

medium of Welsh • More staff able to teach through the medium of Welsh • Builth Wells is the most central single location for the majority of Welsh-medium primary providers in Mid/South Powys. • Welsh-medium school acts as a catalyst for growth in the demand for Welsh-medium education, as evidenced in other areas of Wales • Significant strategic investment by PCC in Welsh-medium education • Meets parental demand for a Welsh-medium Secondary School	
Opportunities	Threats
• Opportunity to increase the numbers of pupils entering WM primary education significantly, because they will see clear progression opportunities • Opportunity to expand governance arrangements to include primary Welsh-medium provision • Greater opportunities for specialisation for Welsh-medium school staff • Opportunities to enable all learners to achieve high standards of achievement and attainment; • Opportunities to provide excellent teaching and learning provision reflecting national, regional and local priorities; • Opportunities to develop resilient leadership and management arrangements; • Opportunities to develop a school that has buildings and blocks that are assessed as condition A or B; • Opportunities to develop an inclusive education model, meeting the needs of vulnerable learners.	• More complicated transport arrangements and potentially higher transport costs • Transition process for pupils and parents may cause uncertainty

6.5 Financial appraisals

The figures shown below have been based on the current fair funding formula with the addition of a change to the formula that will be required for 2017/18 to reflect the funding of a split-site school, which is based on an additional .25 FTE teachers for each year group in Years 7 – 11, and an additional assistant head on leadership scale point 12. These changes are subject to full consultation as required under the Fair Funding Formula and Scheme for Financing Schools.

Premises costs have been calculated using the anticipated gross internal floor area and the condition factor for a new school.

We are unable to establish the rateable values of these new schools at this time, so have therefore assumed that the rates currently being paid for both schools will be sufficient to cover the new charge for the new school.

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Component of Cost	Option1 Status Quo: Maintain Builth Wells and Llandrindod High Schools as separate schools	Option 2: Establish a Category 2B/C dual-stream Secondary School operating across two sites	Option 3: Establish a Category 2B/C dual-stream Secondary School in the Builth Wells area	Option 4: Establish a Category 2B/C dual-stream Secondary School in Llandrindod Wells area	Option 5: Establish a new Bilingual Category 2A school in the Builth Wells. Llandrindod High School would continue to provide English-medium education.
Builth HS	£2,346,315	£2,346,315	£2,346,315	£2,346,315	£2,346,315
Llandrindod HS	£2,327,878	£2,327,878	£2,327,878	£2,327,878	£2,327,878
Dual site Secondary Merger saving	£0	(£133,181)	£0	£0	£0
Single site Secondary Merger saving	£0	£0	(£404,926)	(£404,926)	
2 x Single Language School additional costs	£0	£0	£0	£0	£17,845
Existing travel costs	£552,207	£552,207	£552,207	£552,207	£552,207
New travel costs	£0	£0	£238,366	£306,318	£267,318
Net Cost to Council	£5,226,400	£5,093,219	£5,059,840	£5,127,792	£5,511,563
Net Reduction from Current	£0	£133,181	£166,560	£98,608	(£285,163)
Rank	4	2	1	3	5

6.6 Overall Conclusion of Option Appraisal – Mid Powys

Following this assessment, it is clear that the option that scores highest against the both the option and financial appraisal is

- **Option 3: Establish a dual-stream Category 2B/C Secondary School in the Builth Wells area**

However, the following option also scored highly against the option appraisal, and therefore merits further consideration, scored the lowest on the financial appraisal:

- **Option 5: Establish a new Bilingual Category 2A school in the Builth Wells. Llandrindod High School would continue to provide English-medium education**

Option 5 would enable the Authority to make a firm commitment to the development of Welsh-medium education in South and Mid Powys and this would see the establishment of the first Bilingual Category 2A school in the county.

The option would deliver the following benefits:

- Provides access to separate Secondary Schools within two communities
- Creates a critical mass of pupils that meets the Authority's agreed minimum threshold of 600 pupils at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 in the English-medium school
- Creates a critical mass of pupils at post-16, enabling more subjects to be delivered from one location in the English-medium school
- More efficient delivery as schools would be funded for single-streams rather than dual-stream
- Creates a critical mass of pupils that meets the Authority's agreed minimum threshold of 600 pupils at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4
- Creates a critical mass of pupils at post-16, enabling more subjects to be delivered from one location and minimising the requirement for additional inter-school travel and transport.
- Meets the requirements of the Learning and Skills Measure in a single location- collaboration will need to take place with NPTC Group of Colleges to broaden the vocational offer for learners
- Reduces overall surplus places.
- Improved learning environment.
- More cost-effective delivery of learning
- Removes/reduces backlog maintenance costs
- Provides an opportunity to develop an infrastructure that is resilient to future demographic or financial challenges
- Provides a net saving to the Authority which can be reinvested in the education sector
- Provides a capital receipt to the Authority which can be reinvested in the education sector

- Enables Welsh-medium education to be delivered in a more cost – effective way, providing improved linguistic progression and more subject choice for learners
- Creation of a greater mass of Welsh-medium secondary learners in a single school which will enable the Authority to build on the linguistic continuity already present
- Social and educational benefits to Welsh-medium pupils from being part of a larger group of Welsh-medium pupils
- Additional Welsh-medium opportunities would be provided to Welsh-medium pupils from Brecon through access to the wider range of Welsh-medium subjects than the offer currently provided
- More opportunity for pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities through the medium of Welsh
- An increased number of Welsh-medium pupils would enable the school to further develop its Welsh ethos
- Given the location of Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera, Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw and Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun, Builth Wells is in a more central location for the majority of Welsh-medium primary providers in mid / south Powys
- Significant strategic investment by PCC in Welsh-medium education.

Whilst a Category 2A school in Builth Wells has a strong strategic fit and clear educational benefits, it is questionable whether the size of the school is feasible at this point in time.

According to PLASC 2014/15, there were 164 pupils in Welsh-medium secondary education in Builth Wells HS and Brecon HS. In the primary sector, there were 411 pupils in Welsh-medium education (Reception to Year 6) in both catchment areas.

Based on the numbers of pupils in the primary sector, with the assumption that all pupils in Welsh streams/ schools in both catchments would transfer to the Category 2A school in Builth Wells, it is estimated that, with an average cohort of 45 pupils, a Category 2A school would have around 250 pupils in Years 7 – 11. This is comparable with the Authority's smallest secondary phase Welsh-medium setting – Ysgol Bro Hyddgen, Machynlleth, (an All Through School). There are currently 259 pupils at Ysgol Bro Hyddgen, and the school is forecasted to have an average Year 7 intake of 47 pupils over the next five years.

It could be argued that a Bilingual Category 2A School in Builth Wells would act as a catalyst for growth in the primary Welsh-medium sector, leading to a growth in the numbers in the Secondary School over time. Evidence from other parts of Wales indicates significant growth in the size of Category 2A schools from their initial establishment.

In contrast, a clear benefit of **Option 3** is that it delivers a significant saving to the Authority whilst providing a centralised Welsh-medium model. The option would deliver the following benefits.

- Creates a critical mass of pupils that meets the Authority's agreed minimum threshold of 600 pupils at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4
- Creates a critical mass of pupils at post-16, enabling more subjects to be delivered from one location and minimising the requirement for additional inter-school travel and transport.
- Meets the requirements of the Learning and Skills Measure in a single location- collaboration will need to take place with NPTC Group of Colleges or other vocational providers to broaden the vocational offer for learners
- Reduces overall surplus places.
- Improved learning environment.
- More cost-effective delivery of learning
- Removes backlog maintenance costs
- Provides an opportunity to develop an infrastructure that is resilient to future demographic or financial challenges
- Provides a net saving to the Authority which can be reinvested in the education sector
- Provides a capital receipt to the Authority which can be reinvested in the education sector
- Creates a critical mass of pupils that meets the Authority's agreed minimum threshold of 600 pupils at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4
- Creates a critical mass of pupils at post-16, enabling more subjects to be delivered from one location and minimising the requirement for additional inter-school travel and transport.
- Meets the requirements of the Learning and Skills Measure in a single location- collaboration will need to take place with NPTC Group of Colleges to broaden the vocational offer for learners
- Reduces overall surplus places.
- Improved learning environment.
- More cost-effective delivery of learning
- Removes/reduces backlog maintenance costs
- Provides an opportunity to develop an infrastructure that is resilient to future demographic or financial challenges
- Provides a net saving to the Authority which can be reinvested in the education sector
- Provides a capital receipt to the Authority which can be reinvested in the education sector
- Enables Welsh-medium education to be delivered in a more cost – effective way, providing improved linguistic progression and more subject choice for learners

- Creation of a greater mass of Welsh-medium secondary learners in a single school which will enable the Authority to build on the linguistic continuity already present
- Social and educational benefits to Welsh-medium pupils from being part of a larger group of Welsh-medium pupils
- Additional Welsh-medium opportunities would be provided to Welsh-medium pupils from Brecon through access to the wider range of Welsh-medium subjects than the offer currently provided
- More opportunity for pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities through the medium of Welsh
- An increased number of Welsh-medium pupils would enable the school to further develop its Welsh ethos
- Given the location of Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera, Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw and Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun, Builth Wells is in a more central location for the majority of Welsh-medium primary providers in mid / south Powys

The disadvantages of Option 3 would be the fact that there would be no secondary provision in Llandrindod Wells, with additional travel and transport implications.

Whilst Option 3 provides a significant revenue saving, there would be a capital cost to this option if the current site of Builth Wells High School were to be remodelled to incorporate the additional pupils. There are other constraints on the current Builth Wells High School site, including access, which would suggest that a new-build school would be a more attractive option. Again, further feasibility work is required to identify the capital cost.

In conclusion, there is strong case that Option 5 should be the preferred option, based on a stronger strategic fit with associated educational and linguistic benefits. However, given the current and future financial challenges faced by the Authority, **Option 3 is the preferred option** based on economic reasons. Further work is required to ascertain the capital costs linked to this option.

It must be noted that Option 3 would still be able to provide the appropriate conditions for the growth of Welsh-medium education in the area, where the possibility of a viable Category 2A school could be considered in future.

6.7 Impact Assessment and Risks

In order to fully understand how the option meets the key factors in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, further assessment of the benefits and risks has been undertaken below.

Key Factors from School Organisation code	
Quality and Standards in Education What is the likely impact on quality of - Outcomes (standards and wellbeing) - provision (learning experiences, teaching, care support and guidance, and learning environment) - leadership and management (leadership, improving quality, partnership working, resource management) - What is the Impact on the school's ability to deliver the full curriculum in each Key Stage?	The option will provide opportunities to enable all learners, of all abilities, to achieve high standards of achievement and attainment. The new school will replace two schools that have been judged by Estyn to have poor performance and prospects for improvement, with both in Special Measures. It would be expected that learning experiences, teaching, care support and guidance would be as good as that which is currently provided. The learning environment will be significantly improved for learners currently attending Llandrindod Wells High School, as it will be necessary to either develop the existing school at Builth Wells or to build on a new site, in order to incorporate all learners. The current school at Builth Wells is a condition B, and any new developments will ensure blocks are rated as condition A or B. The option provides an opportunity to develop resilient leadership and management arrangements in a larger school - which may have more resilience to manage with future demographic or financial challenges. With larger cohorts of pupils, the new school will be able to deliver a greater range of curriculum options, particularly at Key Stage 4 and

	Post-16.
Need for places and the impact on accessibility of schools Will the preferred option have sufficient capacity and provide accommodation of at least equivalent quality, for existing and projected pupil numbers? Will the preferred option improve access for disabled pupils in accordance with the requirement under the Equality Act 2010?	The preferred option is based on establishing an 1100 place school, based on the current numbers in both schools. This figure doesn't take into account parental preference or whether pupils would live closer to other Secondary Schools, should reorganisation take place. It is recognised that a number of learners living in the Llandrindod Wells catchment are closer to other Secondary Schools in Powys. As the preferred option will require capital development, further analysis of future projections will be required. Accommodation at the new school will be better than the current accommodation at Llandrindod High School currently C and D for condition Builth Wells High School is already DDA compliant. Any new development will need to be fully compliant with Equality legislation.
Resourcing of education and other financial implications Will the preferred option ensure a fairer and more equitable distribution of funding between mainstream schools in Powys? What effect will the preferred option have on surplus provision in the area? Will the preferred option form part of the local authority's 21st C Schools Programme? Financial information required: - recurrent costs - additional transport costs - Capital costs and whether capital funding is available - Net savings, and whether these will be retained in the schools'	The preferred option will ensure a fairer and more equitable distribution of funding. Due to the current use of lump-sum funding in the fair funding formula, the reduction in the overall percentage that these lump sums represent will provide a more equitable distribution The preferred option will reduce the current level of surplus places, although it is recognised that pupil numbers in the primary sector are increasing, which would reduce the level of surplus places in the future if the preferred option was not implemented. The preferred option will form part of the local authority's 21st C

budget - Budgetary situation of existing schools - Capital receipts from sales of redundant sites	Schools Programme. There will be a requirement for capital development to incorporate all learners – either through remodelling the current Builth Wells site or building a new school on a new site. Capital funding has been identified in the Council's Capital Programme. This will ensure better strategic management of the schools estate through the removal of maintenance backlogs and schools buildings which are inefficient or in poor condition The preferred option has an additional cost of travel of £238,366 but an overall net saving of £166,560. There will be an opportunity for the Council to gain from a capital receipt of the Llandrindod High School site, estimated to be in the region of £1.6m - £1.8m²¹. This will be reinvested in the further improvement of the overall schools' estate in Powys. If the preferred option is not implemented, both schools would continue with projected deficit budgets.
Other general factors What impact will the preferred option have on - Educational attainment among children from economically deprived backgrounds - Equality issues	A separate Equality Impact Assessment has been produced.
Specific factors in the consideration of school closures The case prepared by those bringing forward proposals should show that the impact of	There will potentially be a negative impact on the communities that are currently in the Llandrindod Wells catchment area.

²¹ Estimate provided by PCC's Property Service, based on a number of assumptions

closure on the community has been assessed through the production of a Community Impact Assessment, and how any community facilities currently provided by the school could be maintained.	There will be no detrimental impact on the communities that are currently in the Builth Wells catchment area. Further analysis is included in a separate community impact assessment.
Specific factors to be taken into account for proposals to reorganise Secondary Schools or to add or remove Sixth Forms • improvement in the educational or training achievements of persons who are above compulsory school age but below the age of 19; • whether there is an appropriate range of relevant courses and qualifications and high quality, employer informed, vocational learning routes targeted at pupils of all abilities, whilst maintaining GCSE AS/A level and other established courses, as required under the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 for 14-19 year old learners; • increasing participation in learning by pupils beyond compulsory school age, taking into account transport issues and costs to the learner and others, the affordability of such costs, and the likelihood of learners being willing to travel; • the effect on 11-16 provision in schools; • the viability of institutions already providing good-quality post-16 provision, including school Sixth Forms, Further Education Institutions and private training organisations; • the sustainability or enhancement of Welsh-medium provision in the local 14-19 network and wider area and promote access to availability of Welsh-medium courses in post-16 education;	The preferred option will create a critical mass of post-16 learners, enabling a broader range of subjects to be provided. There will be no need for learners to travel within the school day, as currently required. The preferred option provides an opportunity to increase participation in post-16 learning within Powys as good quality provision will be available locally. The school will need to collaborate with other providers, particularly NPTC Group of Colleges, to provide access to vocational provision. Welsh-medium subjects 14 – 19 will be delivered in Mid Powys, where there will be a critical mass of learners to sustain and broaden provision. Collaboration will also need to take place with other providers of Welsh-medium vocational provision.
Specific factors in the consideration of proposals for the change of language medium - the extent to which existing provision by the local authority of education in the medium of	As the current position at Brecon High School does not fully meet the aspirations of the Authority's WESP for linguistic continuity, the Authority has identified the need to

English and/or Welsh exceeds or falls short of demand or projected demand from parents for that type of provision, and the contribution the proposal would make to remedying that situation.	centralise provision in south Powys, in order to ensure that a greater level of provision can be offered to pupils. In particular, the Authority is concerned that the Welsh-medium provision available at Brecon High School is limited, and does not provide sound linguistic progression from one phase of education to the next.
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Key Risks

Parents from the Llandrindod area choose for their children to attend schools other than a new school situated in the locality of Builth Wells
Pupils from Brecon choose to attend English-medium provision at Brecon High School instead of travelling to Builth Wells High School for Welsh-medium provision
Pupils from Brecon choose to attend alternative Welsh-medium secondary provision outside Powys instead of Builth Wells High School
Unavailability of capital funding
Negative community and economic impact on Llandrindod Wells
Significant opposition to the preferred option
Additional travel has a negative economic and environmental impact
Additional travel has a negative impact on pupil well-being and attainment

7. Options appraisal for South Powys schools

7.1 Scope

Within scope for consideration within this section are the following delivery models:

- Secondary schools model
 - ‘All Through Schools’ model
 - Post-16 Delivered via a School Sixth Form model
 - Post-16 Delivered via a Further Education College model – “tertiary”
 - Following the assessment of Welsh-medium options, it is assumed that all options evaluated in this section are for English-medium provision.

7.2 Long-list

- **Option 1 - Status Quo - Retain separate Brecon and Gwernyfed High Schools**

Both schools would continue to operate as separate entities from the current sites

- **Option 2 - Establish a new English-medium Secondary School on two sites**

A new school would be established which would operate across two sites, governed and managed by a single governing body, headteacher and senior leadership team, replacing Brecon and Gwernyfed High Schools. It would be expected that Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 provision would be delivered from both sites and there would be no expectation of additional travel for pupils in these key stages. Welsh-medium provision would be delivered in Mid Powys.

- **Option 3 – Establish a new English-medium Secondary School in Brecon**

A new school is established which would operate from a single site in Brecon, governed and managed by a single governing body, headteacher and senior leadership team, replacing Brecon and Gwernyfed High Schools. Welsh-medium provision would be delivered in Mid Powys.

- **Option 4 - Establish a new English-medium Secondary School in Gwernyfed**

A new school is established which would operate from a single site in Brecon, governed and managed by a single governing body, headteacher and

senior leadership team. Both Brecon and Gwernyfed High Schools would close. Welsh-medium provision would be delivered in Mid Powys.

- **Option 5 – Establish a new English-medium ‘All Through School’ in Gwernyfed and maintain Brecon High School as a separate English-medium Secondary School**

The new ‘All Through School’ would operate across multi-sites in the Gwernyfed catchment – due to the fact that there is already a planned capital investment to replace all the primary schools with five new-builds. Gwernyfed High School, along with any primary schools that may be included, would be closed and a new school established. The All Through School would be governed and managed by a single governing body, headteacher and senior leadership team. Brecon High School would remain as a separate Secondary School. Welsh-medium provision would be delivered in Mid Powys

- **Option 6 - Establish a new English-medium ‘All Through School’ in Brecon and maintain Gwernyfed High School as a separate English-medium Secondary School**

For the purposes of this exercise, the only two schools that have been considered are Mount Street Infant and Mount Street Junior Schools – all other schools in the catchment have been discounted from consideration at this stage. It is also assumed that an All Through School in Brecon would be a single-sited All Through School, given there is already a planned capital investment to replace the current building of Brecon HS. Brecon High School and any primary schools that may be included would be closed and a new school would be established. There would be a single governing body, headteacher and senior leadership team. Gwernyfed High School would remain as a separate Secondary School. Welsh-medium provision would be delivered in Mid Powys

- **Option 7 - Establish a new English-medium ‘All Through School’ in Brecon, and a new English-medium All Through School in Gwernyfed**

See Option 5 and 6 for description

- **Option 8 - Establish a new English-medium ‘All Through School’ in Brecon**

As Option 6 but Brecon High School, Gwernyfed High School, and any primary schools from the Brecon catchment that may be included, would close and a new school established

- **Option 9 - Establish a new ‘All Through School’ in Gwernyfed**

As Option 5, but Brecon High School, Gwernyfed High School, and any primary schools from the Gwernyfed catchment that may be included, would close and a new school established

- **Option A** – Post-16 education delivered via a school Sixth Form model

Schools are either 4 – 18 or 11 - 18

- **Option B** - Post-16 education delivered via a Further Education college-led tertiary model

Schools are either 4 – 16 or 11 – 16

7.3 Options Appraisal Framework – South Powys options

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Option 9	Option A – Post-16	Option B – Post-16
To significantly improve the learning outcomes for learners across the ability range;	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
To maximise the curriculum benefits at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 for learners who study through the medium of Welsh or English;	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	?	?
To provide post-16 provision that improves access to, and participation in, both academic and vocational courses and which meets the requirements of the Learning & Skills Measure, whilst minimising the need for additional travel during the school day;	x	?	✓✓	?	?	?	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓
To reduce surplus places in schools;	x	x	✓✓	✓✓	✓	x	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	X
To achieve efficiencies through economies of scale, reduced management, premises and running costs, to maximise the percentage of the budget available for teaching and learning.	x	✓	✓✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓
Strategic Fit	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	✓
Potential VFM	x	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓	x	✓	✓
Benefits optimisation	x	x	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	✓
Potential achievability	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Potential supply side capacity and capability	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Affordability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Option 9	Option A – Post-16	Option B – Post-16
Scores	5	6	16	8	6	5	9	15	9	10	10

The maximum amount of ticks that could be achieved is 22. All options that score 11 or more ticks will be automatically taken forward to the short-list for further evaluation.

On this basis, the options carried forward to the short-list are:

- **Option 3 – Establish a new English-medium Secondary School in Brecon**
- **Option 8 - Establish a new English-medium 'All Through School' in Brecon**

In addition to the above short listed options, Options 1, 2 and 7 have been carried forward for comparative purposes, although they did not meet the required scoring threshold.

Both options for post-16 education met the relevant investment objectives, therefore they will go forward to be modelled as part of the short-listed options.

7.4 Short-listed options - SWOT

Option 1 - Status Quo - Retain separate Brecon and Gwernyfed High Schools	
Strengths	Weaknesses
• Provides access to separate Secondary Schools within two communities • No additional transport costs • More acceptable to local stakeholders • No instability due to reorganisation • Schools can build on their current plans towards improving standards • No negative impact on local communities due to removal of secondary provision • Schools able to build on current good practices within both schools	• Will still require capital investment in both schools • Does not generate any financial efficiencies • Does not reduce surplus places in both schools • Small Sixth Forms in both schools - Model does not optimise the Learning Skills Measure • Schools continue to be condition C and D, with significant backlog maintenance costs • Does not create a critical mass of pupils at post-16, enabling more subjects to be delivered from one location and minimising the requirement for additional inter-school travel and transport. • Does not meet the requirements of the Learning and Skills Measure in a single location • Does not create a sustainable, resilient infrastructure for secondary education in the current and forecasted financial climate; • Does not enable a broad ranging curriculum to be provided • Vocational provision is mainly accessed through a collaborative arrangement with NPTC Group of Colleges, and is limited in range due to timetabling restrictions. • Learners will still need to travel between schools/college to access subjects if they choose an offer that is not available at a specific school.
Opportunities	Threats

• Opportunities to enable all learners to achieve high standards of achievement and attainment; • Opportunities to provide excellent teaching and learning provision reflecting national, regional and local priorities; • Opportunities to develop an inclusive education model, meeting the needs of vulnerable learners. • Opportunities to collaborate between both schools	• Challenging financial climate • Brecon High School forecasting a significant deficit budget situation
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Option 2 - Establish a new English-medium Secondary School on two sites	
Strengths	Weaknesses
• Provides access to separate Secondary Schools within two communities • No additional transport costs • More acceptable to local stakeholders • No instability due to reorganisation • Schools can build on their current plans towards improving standards • No negative impact on local communities due to removal of secondary provision	• Will still require capital investment in both schools • Does not reduce surplus places in both schools • Marginal economies of scale and financial efficiencies (still significant duplicated overheads) • May still require post-16 learners to travel between school/college sites to access subjects • Continued costs of inter-school transport at post-16
Opportunities	Threats
• Opportunities to provide a single management/governance team which can focus on streamlining policies, procedures and schemes of work • Opportunities to generate some efficiencies in terms of economies of scale • Opportunities to enable all learners to achieve high standards of achievement and attainment; • Opportunities to provide excellent teaching and learning provision	• Transition process for pupils, staff and parents may cause uncertainty

reflecting national, regional and local priorities; • Opportunities to develop an inclusive education model, meeting the needs of vulnerable learners.	
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Option 3 – Establish a new English-medium Secondary School in Brecon

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Creates a critical mass of pupils that meets the Authority's agreed minimum threshold of 600 pupils at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 • Creates a critical mass of pupils at post-16, enabling more subjects to be delivered from one location and minimising the requirement for additional inter-school travel and transport. • Meets the requirements of the Learning and Skills Measure in a single location, with the added bonus of the proximity of NPTC Group of Colleges – opportunities to collaborate and broaden the offer for pupils, both academically and vocationally. • Adequate space for development on current Brecon HS site • The Council may benefit from a capital receipt from the Gwernyfed HS site • Improves cost-effectiveness and efficiency; • Eliminates current maintenance costs on both schools; • Reduces overall surplus places.	• Loss of secondary education within the current Gwernyfed catchment • Negative social and economic impact on communities within the Gwernyfed catchment • Significant capital investment required • Increased transport mileage • Additional travel requirements for Gwernyfed pupils • Pupils living in the Gwernyfed catchment may find it more difficult to access after-school activities due to living further away from the school, and the reliance on home-to-school transport;
Opportunities	Threats
• Increased opportunities to extend access to vocational provision due the proximity of NPTC Group of Colleges. • Opportunities to enable all learners to achieve high standards of achievement	Transition process for pupils, staff and parents may cause uncertainty

and attainment; • Opportunity to develop a single culture and ethos across the school, where previously they had been two schools • Opportunities to provide excellent teaching and learning provision reflecting national, regional and local priorities; • Opportunities to develop resilient leadership and management arrangements; • Opportunities to develop a school that has buildings and blocks that are assessed as condition A or B; • Opportunities to develop an inclusive education model, meeting the needs of vulnerable learners.	
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Option 7 - Establish a new English-medium 'All Through School' in Brecon, and a new English-medium All Through School in Gwernyfed

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Keeps secondary education within the both current catchment areas; • Does not impact adversely on community, social and economic issues in the either catchment area; • Potential mitigation for recruitment of head-teachers, particularly in the primary sector; • Increased economies of scale (admin, cleaning and catering) • Improves linkages between primary and secondary sectors, avoiding the traditional dip in performance during Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 • Enables Brecon HS to be remodelled to meet pupil projections in the Brecon catchment in both secondary and primary sectors; • Does not need additional travel or transport for pupils. • Brecon HS can be remodelled specifically to include separate areas for primary and secondary pupils; • Addresses issues related to the condition and site issues related to specific primary	• Does not create a critical mass of pupils that meets the Authority's agreed minimum threshold of 600 pupils at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 • Does not creates a critical mass of pupils at post-16, enabling more subjects to be delivered from one location and minimising the requirement for additional inter-school travel and transport. • Does not meet the requirements of the Learning and Skills Measure in a single location • The Council will not benefit from a capital receipt • Does not eliminate current maintenance costs associated with Gwernyfed HS; • Does not reduce overall surplus places in Gwernyfed HS. • Doesn't address need to seek efficiencies in the secondary sector; • Creating an All Through School that includes a mixture of primary schools and a Secondary School will require all

schools that may be included in the development; • Reduces backlog maintenance costs in the secondary and primary sector in Brecon.	schools to close and reopen as either a Community School or a Church –in Wales school. This could mean a loss of either community or church provision in the area, dependent on the category of the new All Through School. • The inclusion of only some specific primary schools in an All Through School development in Brecon may lead to a perception of a two-tier approach within the catchment •
Opportunities	Threats
• Opportunities to enable all learners – primary and secondary - to achieve high standards of achievement and attainment in the Brecon and Gwernyfed catchments by developing a new All Through School model of education; • Opportunities to provide excellent teaching and learning provision reflecting national, regional and local priorities; • Opportunities to develop resilient leadership and management arrangements in the Brecon and Gwernyfed catchments; • Opportunities to develop an inclusive education model, meeting the needs of vulnerable learners in the primary and secondary sector in Brecon and Gwernyfed; • Opportunity to streamline policies, procedures and schemes of work' • Potential to share best practice between staff from Primary and Secondary sectors • Opportunity to develop a single culture and ethos	• Transition process for pupils, staff and parents may cause uncertainty

Option 8 - Establish a new English-medium 'All Through School' in Brecon	
Strengths	Weaknesses
• Creates a critical mass of pupils that meets the Authority's agreed minimum threshold of 600 pupils at Key Stage 3	• Loss of secondary education within the current Gwernyfed catchment • Negative social and economic impact on

and Key Stage 4 • Creates a critical mass of pupils at post-16, enabling more subjects to be delivered from one location and minimising the requirement for additional inter-school travel and transport. • Meets the requirements of the Learning and Skills Measure in a single location, with the added bonus of the proximity of NPTC Group of Colleges – opportunities to collaborate and broaden the offer for pupils, both academically and vocationally. • Adequate space for development in Brecon • The Council may benefit from a capital receipt from the Gwernyfed HS site • Improves cost-effectiveness and efficiency; • Eliminates current maintenance costs on both Secondary Schools and primary schools that may be included; • Reduces overall surplus places. • Potential mitigation for recruitment of head-teachers, particularly in the primary sector; • Increased economies of scale (admin, cleaning and catering) • improving linkages between primary and secondary sectors; • Reduces backlog maintenance costs	communities within the Gwernyfed catchment • Significant capital investment required • Marginally increased transport mileage • Additional travel requirements for Gwernyfed pupils • Increased traffic leads to additional infrastructure as planning condition • Pupils living in the Gwernyfed catchment may find it more difficult to access after-school activities due to living further away from the school, and the reliance on home-to-school transport; • The inclusion of only some specific primary schools in an All Through School development in Brecon may lead to a perception of a two-tier approach within the catchment.
Opportunities	Threats
• Opportunities to enable all learners to achieve high standards of achievement and attainment; • Opportunities to provide excellent teaching and learning provision reflecting national, regional and local priorities; • Opportunities to develop resilient leadership and management arrangements; • Opportunities to develop a school that has buildings and blocks that are assessed as condition A or B; • Opportunities to develop an inclusive	• Transition process for pupils, staff and parents may cause uncertainty

education model, meeting the needs of vulnerable learners. • Opportunity to streamline policies, procedures and schemes of work' • Potential to share best practice between staff from Primary and Secondary sectors • Opportunity to develop a single culture and ethos	
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Option A: Post-16 delivered via a school Sixth Form model	
Strengths	Weaknesses
• Provides a clear learning pathway within a school environment • Builds on the expertise of schools in delivering academic provision • Reduces the need for learners to travel further for post-16 education if it is available locally • Provides professional satisfaction for teachers who are able to develop subject expertise. • Schools can benefit from the funding received for post-16 education. • Ability to deliver high-quality A level provision in core subjects	• Generally, the subjects delivered are mainly traditional core subjects • Does not enable a broad and balanced curriculum to be provided with parity of esteem between both academic and vocational provision; • Vocational provision is mainly accessed through a collaborative arrangement with NPTC Group of Colleges, and is limited in range due to timetabling restrictions. • Learners will still need to travel between schools/college to access subjects if they choose an offer that is not available at a specific school. • Inter-school/college transport costs. • Narrow range of provision and need for inter-school travel may not be attractive to some learners who may choose to follow post-16 courses outside of Wales, or in another county.
Opportunities	Threats
• Opportunity to develop the curriculum further by delivering vocational courses in schools • Dependent on the size of the Sixth Form, it may be possible to meet the Measure	• Current financial climate • Loss of learners out of county leads to further decrease in funding

Option B: Post-16 delivered via a Further Education College model 'tertiary'	
Strengths	Weaknesses
• Creates a critical mass of pupils at post-16, enabling more subjects to be delivered from one location and minimising the requirement for additional inter-school travel and transport. • Meets the requirements of the Learning and Skills Measure in a single location, • Reduces the need for some learners to travel further for post-16 education if it is available locally • Vocational and academic provision can be delivered by a single provider, therefore increasing the range of options available to the learner	• Increased learner transport costs • Increased learner transport time • Does not provides a clear learning pathway within a school environment • Does not utilise the expertise of schools in delivering academic provision • The Council loses its post-16 funding allocation for these pupils, but is still required to fund transport.
Opportunities	Threats
• Increased diversity of learning opportunities	• Learners may choose other Sixth Forms if they wish to have a school-based post-16 education, which may mean pupils drift out-of-county • FE colleges also facing a reduction in funding from Welsh Government – may impact on ability to deliver curriculum

7.5 Financial Appraisal

The figures shown below have been based on the current fair funding formula with the addition of a change to the formula that will be required for 2017/18 to reflect the funding of a split-site school, which is based on an additional .25 FTE teachers for each year group in Years 7 – 11, and an additional assistant head on leadership scale point 12. These changes are subject to full consultation as required under the Fair Funding Formula and Scheme for Financing Schools.

Premises costs have been calculated using the anticipated gross internal floor area and the condition factor for a new school.

We are unable to establish the rateable values of these new schools at this time, so have therefore assumed that the rates currently being paid for both schools will be sufficient to cover the new charge for the new school.

	Option 1 - Status Quo - Retain separate Brecon and Gwernyfed High Schools	Option 2 - Establish a new English-medium Secondary School on two sites		Option 3 – Establish a new English-medium Secondary School in Brecon		Option 7 - Establish a new English-medium ‘All Through School’ in Brecon, and a new English-medium ‘All Through School’ in Gwernyfed		Option 8 - Establish a new English-medium ‘All Through School’ in Brecon	
Component of Cost	Option1	Option 2a 11 - 18	Option 2b 11 - 16	Option 3a 11- 18	Option 3b 11- 16	Option 7a 4 - 18	Option 7b 4 - 16	Option 8a 4 - 18	Option 8b 4 - 16
Gwernyfed High School	£1,694,971	£1,694,971	£1,694,971	£1,694,971	£1,694,971	£1,694,971	£1,694,971	£1,694,971	£1,694,971
Brecon High School	£2,444,660	£2,444,660	£2,444,660	£2,444,660	£2,444,660	£2,444,660	£2,444,660	£2,444,660	£2,444,660
Gwernyfed 6 th	£252,198	£252,198	£0	£0	£0	£252,198	£0	£0	£0
Brecon 6 th	£305,221	£305,221	£0	£0	£0	£305,221	£0	£0	£0
Single 6 th Form	£0	£0	£0	£583,419	£0	£0	£0	£583,419	£0
Brecon Catchment Infant									
Brecon Catchment Junior									
Gwernyfed Primaries (H/T/B)									
Secondary	£0	(£241,278)	(£258,278)	(£551,502)	(£577,502)	£0	£0	(£551,502)	(£577,502)

merger saving Brecon and Gwernyfed Primary merger saving Current travel costs New travel costs	£0	£0	£0			(£103,351)	(£103,351)	(£68,702)	(£68,702)
	£369,275	£369,275	£369,275	£369,275	£369,275	£369,275	£369,275	£369,275	£369,275
	£0	£0	£37,553	£225,320	£225,320	£225,320	£37,553	£225,320	£225,320
Welsh Government Post-16 Funding	(£592,024)	(£592,024)	£0	(£592,024)	£0	(£592,024)	£0	(£592,024)	£0
Net Cost to Council	£6,417,909	£6,176,631	£6,231,790	£6,117,727	£6,100,332	£6,539,878	£6,386,716	£6,049,025	£6,031,630
Net Reduction from Current	£0	£241,278	£186,119	£300,182	£317,577	N/A	N/A	£368,884	£386,279
Rank	8	5	6	4	3	9	7	2	1

net
reduction
excluding
Transport

£6,048,634 £241,278 £223,672 £525,502 £542,897 n/a n/a £594,204 £611,599

7.6 Overall Conclusion of Option Appraisal – South Powys options

Following this assessment, the options that scored the highest across the option appraisal and financial appraisal exercises are

- **Option 3b – Establish a new English-medium Secondary School in Brecon with post-16 education delivered via a Further Education College model; and**
- **Option 8b - Establish a new English-medium 'All Through School' in Brecon, with post-16 education delivered via a Further Education College model.**

Both options deliver the following benefits:

- Creates a critical mass of pupils that meets the Authority's agreed minimum threshold of 600 pupils at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4
- Creates a critical mass of pupils at post-16, enabling more subjects to be delivered from one location and minimising the requirement for additional inter-school travel and transport.
- Meets the requirements of the Learning and Skills Measure in a single location, with the added bonus of the proximity of NPTC Group of Colleges – opportunities to broaden the offer for pupils, both academically and vocationally.
- Reduces overall surplus places.
- Improved learning environment.
- More cost-effective delivery of learning
- Removes backlog maintenance costs
- Provides an opportunity to develop an infrastructure that is resilient to future demographic or financial challenges
- Provides a net saving to the Authority which can be reinvested in the education sector
- Provides a capital receipt to the Authority which can be reinvested

Option 3b delivers significant revenue savings for the Authority, although there are added transport and travel implications.

A clear disadvantage of **Option 3b** is that there would be no secondary provision in the Gwernyfed area, with additional travel for pupils. There would also be a requirement for significant capital investment to build a new school to incorporate additional pupils.

Option 8b has the added benefits of improving transition between primary and secondary phases, and provides a greater level of savings to the Authority. However, consideration must be given to whether this is an appropriate educational model for an enhanced catchment area which may have 13 primary feeder schools that will join the secondary phase at Year 7 – this could be challenging operationally

and educationally, although not insurmountable if appropriate partnerships are made with all the feeder schools.

On this basis, Option 8b is **discounted** and the **preferred option** is

- **Option 3b – Establish a new English-medium Secondary School in Brecon with post-16 education delivered via a Further Education College model.**

7.6 Impact and Risks

Key Factors from the School Organisation Code	Impact
Quality and Standards in Education What is the likely impact on quality of - Outcomes (standards and wellbeing) - provision (learning experiences, teaching, care support and guidance, and learning environment) - leadership and management (leadership, improving quality, partnership working, resource management) - What is the Impact on the school's ability to deliver the full curriculum in each Key Stage?	The option will provide opportunities to enable all learners, of all abilities, to achieve high standards of achievement and attainment. The new school will replace two schools that have been judged by Estyn to have adequate performance and prospects for improvement. It would be expected that learning experiences, teaching, care support and guidance would be as good as that which is currently provided. The learning environment will be significantly improved as it will be necessary to build a new school to incorporate all learners. The new school will be a condition A school, as opposed to the current schools' condition C and D. The option provides an opportunity to develop resilient leadership and management arrangements in a larger school - which may have more resilience to manage with future demographic or financial challenges.
Need for places and the impact on accessibility of schools Will the preferred option have sufficient capacity and provide accommodation of at least equivalent quality, for existing and projected pupil numbers?	The preferred option is based on establishing an 1100 place school, based on the current numbers in both schools. This figure doesn't take into account parental preference or whether pupils would live closer to other Secondary Schools, should

Will the preferred option improve access for disabled pupils in accordance with the requirement under the Equality Act 2010?	reorganisation take place. It is recognised that a number of learners living in the Gwernyfed catchment are closer to other Secondary Schools. As the preferred option will require a new school to be built, further analysis of future projections will be required post- reorganisation. Accommodation at the new school will be better than the current accommodation at both schools – currently C and D for condition. The new school will be fully compliant with Equality legislation.
Resourcing of education and other financial implications Will the preferred option ensure a fairer and more equitable distribution of funding between mainstream schools in Powys? What effect will the preferred option have on surplus provision in the area? Will the preferred option form part of the local authority's 21st C Schools Programme? Financial information required: - recurrent costs - additional transport costs - Capital costs and whether capital funding is available - Net savings, and whether these will be retained in the schools' budget - Budgetary situation of existing schools - Capital receipts from sales of redundant sites	The preferred option will ensure a fairer and more equitable distribution of funding. Due to the current use of lump-sum funding in the fair funding formula, the reduction in the overall percentage that these lump sums represent will provide a more equitable distribution. The preferred option will reduce the current level of surplus places, although it is recognised that pupil numbers in the primary sector are increasing, which would reduce the level of surplus places in the future if the preferred option was not implemented. The preferred option will form part of the local authority's 21st C Schools Programme. There will be a requirement to build a new school to incorporate all learners. There is sufficient space on the current site of Brecon High School. The estimated cost of the development is £45m. Capital funding has been identified within the County Council's Capital Programme, and the Welsh Government has given 'in

	principle' agreement for 50% of the capital required, subject to successful approval of business cases and statutory consultations. The preferred option will ensure better strategic management of the schools estate through the removal of maintenance backlogs and schools buildings which are inefficient or in poor condition The preferred option has an additional cost of travel of £225,320, but an overall net saving of £523,437. There will be an opportunity for the Council to gain from a capital receipt of the Gwernyfed High School site, estimated to be in the region of £700 - £800k²². This will be reinvested in the further improvement of the overall Council estate in Powys, which includes schools. If the preferred option is not implemented, Brecon High School would continue with the current projected deficit of £1.4m by 2018/19. Gwernyfed High School is projected to have a small surplus of just over a £1000 in the same period.
Other general factors What impact will the preferred option have on - Educational attainment among children from economically deprived backgrounds? - Equality issues	A separate Equality Impact Assessment has been produced.
Specific factors in the consideration of school closures The case prepared by those bringing forward proposals should show that the impact of closure on the community has been assessed through the production of a Community Impact Assessment, and how any community facilities currently Provided by the school could be maintained.	There may be a negative impact on the communities that are currently in the Gwernyfed catchment area. The school manages the Sports Centre which is on the school site, with significant use by community groups. There will be no detrimental impact on the communities that are currently in the Brecon catchment area.

²² Estimate provided by PCC's Property Service, based on a number of assumptions

	Further analysis is included in a separate community impact assessment.
Specific factors to be taken into account for proposals to reorganise Secondary Schools or to add or remove Sixth Forms • improvement in the educational or training achievements of persons who are above compulsory school age but below the age of 19; • whether there is an appropriate range of relevant courses and qualifications and high quality, employer informed, vocational learning routes targeted at pupils of all abilities, whilst maintaining GCSE AS/A level and other established courses, as required under the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 for 14-19 year old learners; • increasing participation in learning by pupils beyond compulsory school age, taking into account transport issues and costs to the learner and others, the affordability of such costs, and the likelihood of learners being willing to travel; • the effect on 11-16 provision in schools; • the viability of institutions already providing good-quality post-16 provision, including school Sixth Forms, Further Education Institutions and private training organisations; • the sustainability or enhancement of Welsh-medium provision in the local 14-19 network and wider area and promote access to availability of Welsh-medium courses in post-16 education;	The preferred option will create a critical mass of post-16 learners, enabling a broader range of subjects to be provided. A tertiary model will allow learners to choose from a broader range of both vocational and academic routes. There will be no need for learners to travel within the school day, as currently required. The preferred option provides an opportunity to increase participation in post-16 learning within Powys as good quality provision will be available locally. The quality profile of NPTC Group of Colleges shows that they are amongst the top FE colleges in Wales²³. A level results at NPTC Group of Colleges is of equal standard to that of Gwernyfed and Brecon High School over the last three years. The preferred option will allow the school to focus solely on Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, providing an opportunity to improve outcomes. Welsh-medium subjects will be delivered in Mid Powys, where there will be a critical mass of learners to sustain and broaden provision.
Specific factors in the consideration of proposals for the change of language medium	As the current position at Brecon High School does not fully meet the aspirations of the Authority's WESP for linguistic continuity, the Authority

²³ Welsh Government Learner Outcomes Survey 2012/13, 2013/14

- the extent to which existing provision by the local authority of education in the medium of English and/or Welsh exceeds or falls short of demand or projected demand from parents for that type of provision, and the contribution the proposal would make to remedying that situation.	has identified the need to centralise provision in south Powys, in order to ensure that a greater level of provision can be offered to pupils. In particular, the Authority is concerned that the Welsh-medium provision available at Brecon High School is limited, and does not provide sound linguistic progression from one phase of education to the next.
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Key Risks

Parents from the Gwernyfed area choose for their children to attend schools other than a new school situated in the Brecon area

Unavailability of capital funding

Negative community and economic impact on the current Gwernyfed catchment area

Significant opposition to the preferred option

Additional travel has a negative economic and environmental impact

Additional travel has a negative impact on pupil well-being and attainment

8. Recommendations and Implementation

8.1 The recommendation for Mid Powys Schools is:

- **To establish a new-build single-sited dual-stream Category 2B/C 11-18 Secondary School in the locality of Builth Wells, replacing Builth Wells High School and Llandrindod High School;**

It is also recommended that, given the current constraints on the current Builth Wells High School site, the new school is established on a new site in the Builth Wells area. However, further feasibility work is required to understand the overall capital cost of this option. It is also not possible to identify a timescale for this recommendation until further feasibility is carried out.

Therefore, as an interim recommendation until the full extent of the feasibility work is known, it is proposed:

- **To establish a new dual-stream Category 2B/C 11 – 18 Secondary School on two sites, operating from the current sites of Builth Wells High School and Llandrindod High School, from September 2017. This would require formal statutory procedures, including consultation, to close both schools.**

8.2 The recommendation for South Powys Schools is:

- **To establish a new-build 11-16 English -medium Secondary School in Brecon, replacing Gwernyfed High School and Brecon High School;**
- **Post-16 education delivered by NPTC Group of Colleges.**

There will need to be a significant capital investment by the Council to implement this recommendation, therefore **an interim recommendation** is proposed, which is:

- **To establish a new English-medium 11 – 16 secondary school that will operate from the current sites of Gwernyfed High School and Brecon High School from September 2017. This would involve the closure of both schools.**

Appendix 1 – Schools Standards Profile

Brecon High School Standards

Strengths

- Recent performance in Level 2 English: In 2015, 85.2% of pupils achieved Level 2 English, 11.8 percentage points higher than performance in 2014. This is in the top 25% of similar schools (6.6 percentage points above the median). There has been an improving trend in Level 2 English performance over the past three years.
- GCSE outcomes in religious studies and art and design: In 2015, pupils in these subjects achieved significantly higher than their average performance in other subjects.
- Level 3 threshold performance: In 2015, 100% of pupils achieved Level 3 threshold. Performance has exceeded the local authority average for the past five years.
- Recent attendance: In 2015, attendance rose by 0.5 percentage points to 95%. This was in line with modelled expectations and in the higher 50% of similar schools for the first time in four years.

Areas to improve

- Level 2+: In 2015, 63.9% of pupils achieved Level 2+, 7.1 percentage points higher than performance in 2014 and 4.5 percentage points below the median. However, this remains in the bottom 25% of similar schools for the third successive year. Level 2+ performance has been in the lower 50% of similar schools for the past five years.
- Level 2 threshold: In 2015, 78.7% of pupils achieved Level 2 threshold, 5.7 percentage points lower than performance in 2014 and 11.5 percentage points below the median. The school has been in the bottom 25% of similar schools for four out of the past five years.
- Level 1 threshold: In 2015, 96.7% of pupils achieved Level 1 threshold, 2.6 percentage points lower than performance in 2014 and 2.4 percentage points below the median. The school has been in the bottom 25% of similar schools for four out of the past five years.
- Core subject indicator (CSI): In 2015, 59.8% of pupils achieved the CSI, 6.6 percentage points higher than performance in 2014 and 6.7 percentage points below the median. This remains in the bottom 25% of similar schools for the third successive year. CSI performance has been in the lower 50% of similar schools for the past five years.

- Average capped points score: In 2015, pupils achieved an average capped points score of 341.7, 6.1 points lower than performance in 2014. This is in the bottom 25% of similar schools (27.5 points below the median). Average capped points performance has been in the bottom 25% of similar schools for five successive years.
- Welsh First Language Level 2: In 2015, 75% of pupils achieved Level 2 English, 2.8 percentage points lower than performance in 2014. This is in the lower 50% of similar schools (0.5 percentage points below the median). Level 2 performance has been in the lower 50% of similar schools for four out of the past five years.
- Level 2 maths: In 2015, 68.9% of pupils achieved Level 2 maths, 5.6 percentage points higher than performance in 2014. This is in the bottom 25% of similar schools (4.5 percentage points below the median). Level 2 performance has been in the bottom 25% of similar schools for the past four years.
- Level 2 science: In 2015, 66.4% of pupils achieved Level 2 science, 17.8 percentage points lower than performance in 2014. This is in the bottom 25% of similar schools (25.5 percentage points below the median). Level 2 performance has been in the lower 50% of similar schools for the past five years.
- Provision for more able pupils: In 2015, 11.5% of pupils achieved 5 A*-A. This was significantly lower than the family, local authority and Wales averages. Level 7+ performance is in the lower 50% of similar schools in many subjects.
- GCSE outcomes in information technology, French and German: In 2015, pupils in these subjects achieved significantly lower than their average performance in other subjects.
- Performance in the national numeracy procedural test was in the lower 50% of similar schools for a majority of indicators.

Gwernyfed High School Standards

Strengths

- Science Level 2 outcomes: In 2015, 93% of pupils achieved Level 2 in science which placed performance in the higher 50% of similar schools for the fifth successive year.
- Maths Level 2 outcomes: In 2015, 73.3% of pupils achieved Level 2 in maths which placed performance in the lower 50% of similar schools, 0.1 percentage points below the median.
- Level 2 threshold outcomes: In 2015, 91.9% of pupils achieved Level 2 threshold which placed performance in the higher 50% of similar schools for the fourth successive year.

- Level 2 outcomes in art and design and media studies: In 2015, pupils in these subjects achieved significantly higher than their average performance in other subjects.
- In 2015, the school was placed in the upper quartile for nearly all performance indicators in national reading and numeracy tests.
- In 2015, a majority of subjects achieved Level 7+ performance that placed them in the higher 50% of similar schools.

Areas to improve

- Level 2+ and core subject indicator (CSI) performance: In 2015, 67.4% of pupils achieved Level 2+ and 66.3% achieved CSI. This places performance in the lower 50% of similar schools for the fourth time in five years for both performance indicators.
- English Level 2 outcomes: In 2015, the department achieved 76.7% Level 2, an increase of 1.5 percentage points since 2014. This places performance in the lower 50% of similar schools, 2.4 percentage points below the median.
- Level 2 outcomes in physical education and Welsh second language: Pupils achieved significantly lower in these subjects than their average performance in other subjects.
- Attendance: Attendance in 2014-15 remained 0.6% below modelled expectations, however, the negative differential was significantly lower than in 2012 and 2013. Raw attendance improved by 0.1 percentage points from last year, however, the school has dropped into the bottom 25% of similar schools (0.3 percentage points below the median).
- Modern foreign languages in key stage 3: In 2015, 88.6% of pupils achieved Level 5+ in modern foreign languages at the end of key stage three, a significant improvement since 2014 and broadly in line with the family average (91.8%). However, performance in Level 5+, 6+ and 7+ remains in the lower 50% of similar schools.

Builth Wells High School Standards

Strengths

- Recent Level 2 performance in maths: In 2015, 74.7% of pupils achieved Level 2 maths, an improvement of 11 percentage points compared with performance in 2014. This is in the higher 50% of similar schools (1.3 percentage points above the median).
- GCSE outcomes in catering, design and technology (materials), music, physical education and Welsh Second Language: In 2015, pupils in these subjects achieved significantly higher than their average performance in other subjects.

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Areas to improve

- English Level 2: In 2015, 63.3% of pupils achieved Level 2 English, 6.3 percentage points lower than performance in 2014. This is in the bottom 25% of similar schools (15.8 percentage points below the median). Level 2 performance has been in the lower 50% of similar schools for three successive years.
- Science Level 2: Science performance has been in the bottom 25% of similar schools for the past three years.
- Level 2 threshold outcomes: In 2015, 88.6% of pupils achieved Level 2 threshold, an improvement of 4.3 percentage points compared with performance in 2014. This is in the lower 50% of similar schools (1.6 percentage points below the median). Level 2 threshold performance has been in the lower 50% of similar schools for three successive years.
- Average capped points score: In 2015, pupils achieved an average capped points score of 358.1, 2.4 percentage points higher than performance in 2014. This is in the bottom 25% of similar schools (11.1 points below the median). Average capped points performance has been in the bottom 25% of similar schools for three successive years.
- Boys' performance in a range of indicators: In 2015, boys' performance was below the family average in Level 2+, 5 A*-A, Level 2 English, Level 2 Welsh First Language and core subject indicator (CSI).
- GCSE outcomes in Welsh First Language/literature, geography, history, French and art and design: In 2015, pupils in these subjects achieved significantly lower than their average performance in other subjects.
- Attendance: In 2014-15, school attendance increased by 0.3 percentage points to 94.9%. However, this was marginally lower than modelled expectations and in the lower 50% of similar schools (0.1 percentage point below the median).
- Level 5+ performance in key stage 3: In 2015, many departments achieved Level 5+ in the bottom 25% of similar schools.
- In 2015, the average wider points score at key stage 5 fell significantly below the family average.

Llandrindod High School Standards

Strengths

- English Level 2: In 2015, 83.5% of pupils achieved Level 2 placing performance in the top 25% of similar schools. This is the third successive year Level 2 English has been in the higher 50% of similar schools.
- Recent Level 2+ performance: In 2015, 67.9% of pupils achieved Level 2+ which is in the top 25% of similar schools.
- Recent core subject indicator (CSI) performance: In 2015, 64.2% of pupils achieved the CSI placing performance in the higher 50% of similar schools.

- Performance in the national tests: The school was in the higher 50% of similar schools for many indicators.
- GCSE outcomes in religious studies, design and technology textiles, physical education and Welsh Second Language: In 2015, pupils in these subjects achieved significantly higher than their average performance in other subjects.

Areas to improve

- Level 2 outcomes: In 2015, Level 2 threshold performance increased by just under 10 percentage points, but performance remains in the lower 50% of similar schools for the fifth successive year.
- Science Level 2: Science performance has been in the lower 50% of similar schools for the past five years.
- Boys' performance in maths: The school needs to improve boys' performance in maths at key stage 4 to reduce the significant gender gap.
- Provision for pupils eligible to receive free school meals: Improve provision for pupils eligible to receive free school meals so that their performance in the Level 2+ indicator is at least comparable to the family average.
- GCSE outcomes in geography, French and drama: In 2015, pupils in these subjects achieved significantly lower than their average performance in other subjects.
- Numeracy across the curriculum: The school needs to improve provision for developing pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum.
- Attendance: In 2014-15, attendance dropped into the bottom 25% of similar schools and was considerably below modelled expectations.
- Fixed term exclusions: In 2014-15, the school had the highest fixed term exclusion rate in the local authority.
- Level 5+ performance in key stage 3: In 2015, many departments achieved Level 5+ in the lower 50% of similar schools with a majority in the bottom 25% of similar schools.

