Proposal to discontinue Ysgol Gynradd Bancffosfelen

Consultation Document



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Contents

Glossary of Abbreviations and Acronyms **2**
1.Introduction **3**
2.Background **3**
3. School Subject to Proposal **6**
4. The Proposal – To discontinue Ysgol Bancffosfelen. **28**
5. Need for places and the impact on accessibility of schools **41**
6. Schools likely to be affected by the proposal **46**
7. Impact on quality and standards in education **50**
8. Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) **59**
9. Finance **60**
10. Land and Buildings **67**
11. Travel and Transport **68**
12. Admission Arrangements **73**
13. The Consultation Process **75**
Appendix A: Community Impact Assessment. **83**
Appendix B: Welsh Language Impact Assessment **94**
Appendix C: Integrated Impact Assessment **115**
Appendix D: Schools likely to be affected by the proposal **138**
Appendix E: Detailed SWOT analysis of each option considered **140**
Appendix F: Response Form **173**

Glossary of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ALN - Additional Learning Needs

ALNCo - Additional Learning Needs Coordinator

eFSM - Free School Meals

HR - Human Resources

ICT - Information and Communications Technology

IDP - Individual Development Plan

IIA - Integrated Impact Assessment

LDP - Local Development Plan

LA - Local Authority

LMS - Local Management of Schools

LSOAs - Lower Super Output Areas

MEP - Modernising Education Programme

ONS - Office for National Statistics

PLASC - Pupil Level Annual School Census

PPA - Panel Performance Assessment

PTFA - Parent, Teachers and Friends Association

RLDP - Revised Local Development Plan

SWOT - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

UNCRC - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UPFSM - Universal Primary Free School Meals

WIMD - Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation

WESP - Welsh in Education Strategic Plan

WG - Welsh Government

1.Introduction

This consultation document outlines the Local Authority's proposal to change primary education provision in the Pontyberem and Llangyndeyrn wards, including the proposal to discontinue Ysgol Gynradd Bancffosfelen (Ysgol Bancffosfelen) effective from the 31 December 2027. Should the proposal proceed pupils currently attending Ysgol Bancffosfelen would transfer to Ysgol Gynradd Pontyberem (Ysgol Pontyberem), Heol Y Felin, Pontyberem, Llanelli, SA15 5EB on the 1 January 2028.

This document sets out the challenges currently faced by the school, the options considered to address these issues, and the preferred option. It provides an opportunity for parents, carers, school staff, and other interested parties to submit comments, observations, or alternative proposals for consideration. Following the consultation period, the County Council will review all feedback before deciding whether to implement the proposals.

The consultation will be conducted in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2026) (the Code). The consultation period will run from the 10 November 2026 to 22 December 2026. Any responses to the consultation received after the closing date will not be considered as part of this consultation process.

2.Background

The Local Authority has a legal responsibility to review the number and type of schools it has and whether it is making the best use of resources and facilities to deliver on its educational aspirations for all children in Carmarthenshire.

Carmarthenshire County Council's Modernising Education Programme Strategy was approved by the Council's Cabinet on 18 November 2024 and is designed to deliver on the Local Authority's School Modernisation and reorganisation aspirations.

It is underpinned by a set of strategic objectives and primary education principles. The Strategic objectives include:

- Develop a schools' network that is educationally effective, resource efficient and sustainable for the long term;
- Develop infrastructure at all schools that is equipped for learning in the 21st century, facilitating the realisation of core objectives for raising educational standards and sustaining them at high levels of performance;
- Deliver a strategic approach to capital investment, integrated with a programme for the rationalisation of provision across the schools' network to effectively match supply with demand;
- Improve the efficiency and educational viability of the schools' sector by reducing the number of empty places to a reasonable level, whilst facilitating wherever practicable the expression of parental preference, responding effectively to demographic change.
- To develop a sustainable and integrated school network that aligns with local and national transport policies, ensuring efficient access for students while balancing statutory requirements with affordability considerations. This includes

optimising school locations, transport links, and active travel routes to support accessibility, environmental sustainability, and cost-effectiveness.
- Aspire to rebuild, remodel, refurbish or modernise all school settings that are to be retained for the long-term, so that they conform as closely as practicable to adopted design standards.
- To develop infrastructure at schools that is fully accessible to all persons and enables all learners to access a high-quality education, irrespective of individual needs.

The strategic objectives are aligned to a set of Primary Education Principles which serve as aspirational goals for the Authority's primary school network. The principles are:

- Aspire to have sustainable leadership, with leaders who are free to lead and manage, without a permanent full-time teaching commitment.
- Aspire to have no more than 2-year groups per teaching class.
- Strive to maintain sufficient pupil numbers to support the above structural arrangements.
- Be financially viable under the Local Management of Schools (LMS) funding framework and operate long-term without a budget deficit.
- To have access to suitable outdoor teaching facilities to enhance learning and support physical well-being across the school.
- Be fully inclusive and accessible for all.
- Be equipped with modern facilities to support digital learning.
- To create a high-quality learning environment that supports the well-being of all learners and enhances their progress and achievements across a wide range of skills and curriculum areas.

In line with these strategic objectives and principles, each school in Carmarthenshire can be evaluated against a set of evidence-based criteria, which allow an assessment of the school's operational viability to be made, and decisions taken on the relative investment need of all schools. This allows the Authority to objectively determine a programme for the strategic review of the schools' network and investment in the modernisation of the schools' estate in a manner that is transparent and demonstrably fair.

Each of the Authority's schools is assigned to a position within a viability continuum, to confirm a prognosis for that school. The summary of the viability assessment forms the basis for the identification of modernisation projects and rationalisation proposals within the overall programme.

The viability criteria are used to assess the viability of a school or group of schools within a given area and determine whether we might wish to undertake a review of the school's viability. All schools have different contexts, and an individual school might experience challenges from any one or a combination of the viability criteria.

The viability criteria are:

- Quality and standards of education
- Leadership
- Pupil numbers, trends and projections
- Surplus places
- Financial viability
- School building condition and suitability
- Collaborative regeneration/funding opportunities

Decisions made by the Council within the MEP Strategy must respond to the changing education landscape. Local authorities across Wales are facing increasing financial pressures alongside falling birth rates, declining pupil numbers, growing levels of surplus school places, recruitment challenges and rising building maintenance costs. A key trend facing most local authorities in Wales is that of falling pupil rolls and Welsh Government figures predict that there will be a reduction in pupil numbers of 15% by 2041.

This is particularly acute in the primary sector at the present time and in January 2026 there were more than 1000 fewer statutory aged primary learners in Carmarthenshire than in 2021. Every school is required to have a formally calculated pupil capacity and in January 2026, there were more than 3,500 surplus pupil spaces across the county's 94 primary schools. This represents over 20 per cent of the overall primary pupil capacity in Carmarthenshire schools.

This has implications for the financial sustainability of the schools' network because school budgets are directly related to pupil numbers, both in terms of the total funding provided to Carmarthenshire by Welsh Government and how this funding is then delegated by the Local Authority to individual schools through the funding formula.

Since 2024, there has been increasing financial pressure facing the County's schools' network. A growing number of schools are already in financial deficit as the number of surplus places across the school estate has increased. Fewer pupils in schools, with increased surplus capacity has reduced the financial viability of many more schools. Financial pressures in schools can have a significant impact on their ability to deliver high quality education for children. It follows that this has a greater impact in schools with lower pupil numbers or where pupil numbers are falling. In January 2024, there were 18 schools with 50 pupils or fewer in Carmarthenshire. In January 2026, this number had increased to 22 schools.

The £158.9m budget for schools is the largest of all the Council's services. At the end of the financial year 2025-26, this budget was in deficit by £9.5m. The increasing financial stress faced by schools places a significant risk to the Council's ability to deliver all its other services to the county's residents. Cabinet has therefore agreed that it is essential, if schools' budgets are to remain affordable, that progress is made toward the modernisation and rationalisation of the County's schools. This requires, among other savings, a reduction in the number of school sites. Cabinet approved the revenue budget strategy report at its meeting on 17 February 2025. It was subsequently approved by the full council on 26 February 2025.

In addition to this, the regulatory narrative over recent years has been increasingly clear. The consistent message from the Estyn inspection (2023), the Enhanced Estyn

Local Authority Lead Inspector visit (June 2025) and the Panel Performance Assessment (2025) is that Carmarthenshire has a credible school modernisation strategy, but implementation has been too slow given the scale of demographic and financial pressures facing the education system.

Estyn has twice concluded that delays have prevented the authority from delivering its reorganisation plans to the extent required and has specifically linked school reorganisation to surplus capacity, mounting school deficits and financial risks to the Council. The PPA reinforced the need for timely transformational change in response to demographic decline and financial pressures.

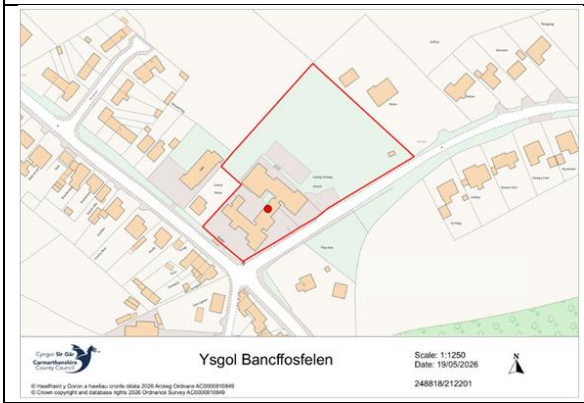
Collectively, regulators are signalling that the greatest risk is no longer the absence of a strategy, but insufficient pace in delivering it. It is important therefore, to consider the proposal presented in this Consultation Document within the wider context outlined above.

2.1 Shaping Discussions (Stage 0)

Meetings have been held with the Headteacher, Governing body and Local Member at Ysgol Bancffosfelen. In these meetings issues facing the school and possibilities for the future were discussed. Alternative options presented by the Governing Body have been considered as part of this Consultation Document.

3. School Subject to Proposal

Ysgol Bancffosfelen is a Welsh Medium 4-11 primary school situated alongside the B4306 in the village of Bancffosfelen. The school was established in 1877 and at that time was called Bancffosfelen Board School and has provided education to the local community for 149 years.

School Location	School Image
	

Ysgol Bancffosfelen was identified for review following a Viability Assessment of all Primary Schools. The school was assessed against the Viability Criteria set out in the updated Modernising Education Programme (MEP) Strategy, as approved by Cabinet on 18 November 2024.

The School Organisation Code 2026 defines a “rural school” by reference to the Welsh Government’s designated rural school list, which is based on specific criteria such as location, population density and settlement pattern. Only those schools formally identified on this list are subject to the presumption against closure and the additional procedural requirements, including enhanced impact assessments and consideration of alternatives.

Ysgol Bancffosfelen is not included on the Welsh Government’s list of designated rural schools and is therefore not classified as a rural school for the purposes of the Code. As a result, the local authority is not required to apply the additional provisions and procedural steps that relate specifically to rural schools when developing and consulting on proposals affecting the school.

3.1 School Information

		Ysgol Bancffosfelen
School Location		Bancffosfelen, Llanelli, SA15 5DR
Age Range		4-11
School Category (Community [C], Voluntary Aided [VA], Voluntary Controlled [VC])		Community
Language Category		3, Welsh Medium
Number of registered Pupils (PLASC 2026)	**Nursery Age**	2
	Reception – Y.6	46
	Total	48
Number of pupils previously on the register (including Nursery) (PLASC)	**January 2025**	54
	January 2024	56
	February 2023	53
	April 2022	55
Pupil Projections (excluding Nursery) (2025) (PLASC)	**January 2027**	46
	January 2028	49
	January 2029	51
	January 2030	44
	January 2031	46
Nursery Capacity 25/26		12
Reception-Y6 Capacity 25/26		86
Total Capacity 25/26		98
Nursery Capacity 26/27		12
Reception-Y6 Capacity 26/27		86
Total Capacity 26/27		98
% surplus places at PLASC 2026		51%
Cost per pupil (2025/26)		£5,186
School Budget (2025/26)		£280,062
Cost per pupil (2026/27)		£5,641
End of 2025/26 budget position		£62,924 deficit
Forecast end of 2026/27 budget position as at June 2026		£107,733 deficit
School Budget (2026/27)		£270,773

Estyn Inspection Result (June 2018)	Not in Follow up Inspection Report Template
Building Condition Category (2024)	C
Building Suitability (2025)	D

(PLASC) - Pupil Level Annual School Census

Building Condition Category Grades		**Suitability**	
Grade A	As new condition	Grade A	Good facilities suitable for teaching, learning and wellbeing in school.
Grade B	Sound, operationally safe, and exhibiting only minor deterioration	Grade B	Satisfactory, performing as intended, but does not effectively support the delivery of the curriculum in some areas.
Grade C	Operational but major repair or replacement needed in short to medium-term	Grade C	Poor, teaching methods inhibited/adverse impact on school organisation.
Grade D	Inoperable or serious risk of major failure or breakdown	Grade D	Bad, buildings seriously inhibit the staff's ability to deliver the curriculum.

3.2 Current Arrangements – Status Quo at Ysgol Gynradd Bancffosfelen

Ysgol Bancffosfelen is a Welsh Medium 4-11 primary school situated in the village of Bancffosfelen. At present, Ysgol Bancffosfelen operates within an informal federation arrangement with a neighbouring school, with the headteacher sharing leadership responsibilities across both settings.

The headteacher divides their time between Ysgol Bancffosfelen and Llanddarog V.C. Primary School. More recently, and at the request of the Local Authority he has been asked to temporarily assume the leadership of a third school, Ysgol Pontiets.

The school currently operates with two mixed-age classes, comprising a Nursery to Year 2 class and a Year 3 to Year 6 class.

The school was inspected by Estyn in June 2018 and in accordance with the Education Act 2005, the His Majesty's Chief Inspector was of the opinion that no follow up measures were required in relation to the school. Reference is made throughout this document to the school's 2018 Estyn inspection report, as this remains the most recent inspection report available in the public domain. Whilst the report identified a number of recommendations for improvement, the school was not placed in any Estyn follow-up category. Furthermore, following a monitoring visit in 2019, Estyn reported that it was satisfied with the progress made by the school in addressing the recommendations arising from the inspection.

Since that time, the school has undergone a further Estyn inspection in September 2026, the outcome of which has not yet been published. It would therefore be inappropriate to speculate on its findings. However, the school's current performance and provision may differ from that reflected in the 2018 inspection report, which is now several years old. The findings of the 2026 Estyn inspection report will be included in the consultation report along with the response that Estyn will submit as a stakeholder to the consultation.

The latest Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) (2026) data showed that there were 48 pupils on roll, 2 pupils below statutory school age (Nursery) and 46 of statutory school age (Reception and above).

Of the 48 pupils on roll at PLASC 2026, 23 pupils attended the school from within the catchment area whilst the remaining 25 pupils attended the school from outside the catchment area. In addition, 41 pupils from within the catchment area attended other schools. The school's capacity for the academic year 2025-2026 was 98 places. The school's capacity for the academic year 2026-2027 is 98 places.

The school is facing several challenges that need to be addressed, alongside wider demographic factors that must be taken into account, to ensure the Local Authority improves the effectiveness and efficiency of its primary school provision, including:

Low and declining pupil numbers

The school has been experiencing low pupil numbers for a significant amount of time. The table shows that pupil numbers have remained low but relatively stable across the years, generally fluctuating within the low- to mid-50s, with totals ranging from 55 (2022) to a peak of 56 (2024). The most recent figures indicate a slight decline, with total numbers dropping from 56 in 2024 to 54 in 2025 and further to 48 in 2026. Overall, the data suggests a recent downward trend following a period of relative stability and modest growth.

PLASC Year	Full Time Nursery	Reception	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2026	2	3	6	8	5	14	5	5	48
2025	3	8	8	4	14	5	5	7	54
2024	5	7	4	15	6	5	8	6	56
2023	1	5	16	7	7	5	6	6	53
2022	2	16	7	7	5	7	6	5	55

Birth rate data for the Bancffosfelen catchment area indicates a persistent pattern of low birth numbers. The number of children born within the catchment postcode area fluctuates between three and ten per year, with an average of around six births annually across the cohorts that will reach Reception age between 2024 and 2030. In 2026, three of the six children born in the catchment were enrolled in Reception at Ysgol Bancffosfelen.

Catchment Area Data

PLASC 2026 data shows there is a low number of pupils attending the school from within the catchment area. The majority of pupils from within the catchment area attend other schools in the locality.

Total Number of Pupils	Pupils living inside catchment area attending this school	Pupils living outside catchment area attending this school	Pupils living inside catchment area attending other schools
48	23	25	41*
* Cefneithin Primary School, Johnstown Primary School, Llanddarog VC Primary School, Llangunnor Primary School, Llannon Primary School, Pembrey School, Ysgol Pontyberem, Swiss Valley Primary School, Tumble Primary School, Ysgol Y Castell, Ysgol Y Dderwen			

High Surplus places

From 2022 to 2026 the level of surplus places at the school has been between 43.9% and 51%.

As noted in the School Organisation Code (2026) section 1.21 Resourcing of education and other financial implications "*Where there are more than 10% surplus places in an area overall, local authorities should review their provision and should consider whether to make proposals for their removal if this will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of provision. A significant level of surplus provision is defined as 25% or more of a school's capacity (as defined in circular 21/2011) and at least 30 unfilled places".*

Currently, the school has 50 surplus places, representing 51% surplus capacity, which meets the threshold for being considered significant under the Code.

	Historical PLASC				
	2022	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**
Total Capacity	98	98	98	98	98
Total Head Count	55	53	56	54	48
Surplus	43	45	42	44	50
% Surplus (rounded to nearest)	44%	46%	43%	45%	51%

Important note

The pupil numbers, capacity, surplus places and related statistics presented in this document are based on the Welsh Government's published PLASC data, as this provides the official and consistent source of information used across school organisation proposals.

However, it should be noted that part of the Ysgol Bancffosfelen building has been taken out of use and subsequently removed due to its condition. As a result, the school's current usable capacity is lower than the published PLASC capacity.

The published PLASC capacity for 2026 is 98 places (12 nursery places and 86 reception and statutory age places). The current usable capacity of the school is 86 places (10 nursery places and 76 reception and statutory age places), representing a

reduction of 12 places. This new capacity figure will be the published figure for the school in academic year 2027/28.

Consequently, some of the published figures relating to surplus places may not fully reflect the school's current operating capacity. For example, the published 2026 PLASC data shows a capacity of 98 places, 48 pupils on roll, 50 surplus places and a surplus capacity percentage of 51%. If these figures were recalculated using the current usable capacity of 86 places, the equivalent figures would be 48 pupils on roll, 38 surplus places and a surplus capacity percentage of approximately 44%.

Whilst this adjustment reduces the number of surplus places, the school would continue to have a significant level of surplus capacity. The use of published PLASC data throughout this document ensures consistency with nationally published school statistics, whilst this note provides additional context regarding the school's current physical capacity.

Pupil Projections and Projected Surplus Capacity

Pupil projections over the period 2027 to 2031 show some minor fluctuations rather than a consistent upward or downward trend, with numbers remaining broadly stable overall. However, projections indicate that pupil numbers will remain significantly below the school's total capacity throughout this period, resulting in a consistently high level of surplus places.

A review of housing development proposals within the Ysgol Bancffosfelen catchment area indicates that there is limited scope for significant additional housing growth in the foreseeable future. While previous development plan allocations identified opportunities for residential development, these have either been completed, are no longer allocated in the emerging development plan, or do not currently have planning permission in place.

The only remaining committed developments are a small number of individual dwellings for which planning permission has been granted but construction has not yet commenced. Given the scale and status of these developments, it is not anticipated that future housing growth within the catchment area will generate a sufficient increase in pupil numbers to materially alter the current or projected demand for school places.

Year	**January 2027**	**January 2028**	**January 2029**	**January 2030**	**January 2031**
Pupil Projections including nursery pupils	51	53	46	48	47
Total Capacity	97	97	97	97	97
Surplus	46	44	51	49	50
% Surplus (rounded to nearest)	47%	45%	53%	51%	52%

**The pupil projections methodology uses a rolling average of 5-, 6-, 7-, and 8-year-old pupils for primary schools. Therefore, any sudden changes in the pupil population take around four years before these anomalies are normalised and parental choice will*

determine how the actual numbers change year on year. Small numerical fluctuations, whether positive or negative will have a greater proportional impact in schools with low pupil numbers. See note above regarding capacity figure.

School Budget Issues

The school's Section 52 budget allocation for 2026/27 was initially set at £270,773, calculated on the basis of pupil-led funding and associated formula supplements.

The low pupil numbers at the school have contributed to significant budgetary pressures resulting in the school being in deficit since 2022-23. The school was in a financial surplus up to 2021-22 but has since accrued a gradually increasing deficit which was £34,444 in 2024-25. The in year overspend for 2025-26 was £28,480 which resulted in a deficit of £62,924 in March 2026. The June 2026 forecast deficit is expected to increase to £107,733 to year end in March 2027. Updated forecasts are expected throughout the year and will be reflected throughout the process.

All schools are funded in accordance with the County Council's funding formula. Under the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010, the Individual Schools Budget must be allocated amongst schools maintained by the authority in the form of budget shares, using a locally determined funding formula. The regulations require that at least 70% of the funding is to be distributed on the basis of pupil numbers.

The school is in deficit, with no licenced deficit in place. All indicators currently suggest that the deficit will continue to increase and that there is no possibility of reversing the deficit trend. The following tables demonstrate the historical, present and predicted financial position of the school.

Year end Balance	**(surplus / deficit)** **£**
2021/22	-43,245
2022/23	-24,017
2023/24	9,223
2024/25	34,444
2025/26	£62,924

2026/27	
School budget allocation	£270,773
Pupil numbers (funding based on 2026 January PLASC)	48
Funding per pupil	£5,641
Primary school average mainstream funding per pupil	£5,969
Confirmed deficit March 2026	£62,924
Forecast deficit March 2027 as at June 2026	£107,733

Challenges with educational provision due to multiple year groups in same class.

Due to the low number of pupils on roll, teaching staff at Ysgol Bancffosfelen face the ongoing challenge of planning and delivering learning for pupils across a wide range of ages, abilities and developmental stages. The school is currently organised into two

mixed-age classes: one for Nursery to Year 2 pupils and one for Year 3 to Year 6 pupils.

Whilst staff work effectively to meet learners' needs, teaching and assessing pupils across multiple year groups within the same classroom inevitably increases the complexity of curriculum delivery. Teachers are required to plan learning experiences that meet the needs of pupils at different stages of progression simultaneously, whilst ensuring that all learners are appropriately challenged and supported. This can present particular challenges in curriculum planning, differentiation and the effective delivery of age-appropriate learning experiences.

Carmarthenshire County Council's Primary Education Principles, contained within the Modernising Education Programme (MEP) Strategy approved by Cabinet on 18 November 2024, state the Local Authority's aspiration that pupils should generally be taught in classes containing no more than two year groups. The current organisation at Ysgol Bancffosfelen does not align with this aspiration, as pupils are taught within classes spanning up to four year groups.

Building Condition

The school is facing significant issues relating to the condition of the buildings. A 1960s extension containing three classrooms was previously decommissioned due to its poor condition with the school subsequently relying on the hall for key activities. In the past year, the hall has also been declared structurally unsafe and requires demolition, resulting in the permanent loss of this space.

All teaching now takes place within the original 1870's Victorian building, which is also experiencing significant maintenance issues, including persistent water ingress, damp and mould. Urgent repairs have been undertaken however, due to the age and condition of the building, problems of this nature will reoccur elsewhere in the building in the future. Approximately £48,000 has recently been spent on a new boiler system and £49,000 on roof repairs. These works were essential to ensure the school remained operational. Approximately £16,000 works to provide new windows for part of the building are planned to replace windows that require replacement.

Works to demolish the areas of the building that are out of commission and make good will require significant funding. Consideration would then need to be given to the works required to improve the suitability of the building following demolition. This would require significant investment.

The most recent condition survey estimated five-year capital maintenance forecast costs of £616,424, inclusive of demolition costs.

The condition of the building was a Grade C in the latest condition survey (2024) mainly due to the issues related to the hall and other classrooms that are out of use. Should these parts of the building be removed the overall condition grade for the building may improve subject to further survey.

Building Suitability

Building suitability is the appropriateness of the school's buildings and site to support the effective delivery of the new Curriculum for Wales. The current suitability rating is classed at Grade D which is defined as "Bad, buildings seriously inhibit the staff's ability to deliver the curriculum".

A suitability assessment is different and separate to a Condition survey and is an assessment of the suitability of school premises from the perspective of teaching and learning and wellbeing of pupils and staff.

The Grade D rating reflects a number of significant suitability challenges identified during the assessment.

Birth Rate Data

In addition to PLASC data and pupil projections, local birth data has been analysed to assess potential future demand for primary school places within the Ysgol Bancffosfelen catchment area.

Birth rate data for the Bancffosfelen catchment area indicates a persistent pattern of low birth numbers. In recent years the number of children born within the catchment postcode area fluctuates between three and ten per year, with an average of around six births annually across the cohorts that will reach Reception age between 2024 and 2030. In 2026, three of the six children born in the catchment were enrolled in Reception at Bancffosfelen. The overall pattern does not indicate sustained growth that would significantly increase demand for school places in the longer term.

The following table provides a comparison of postcode level birth data within the Ysgol Bancffosfelen catchment area against the number of pupils on roll in Reception, as recorded in PLASC, for the corresponding academic years.

Pupils Born in Catchment Postcode against Pupils on Roll at PLASC in Reception for Relevant Academic Year								
Bancffosfelen	**Birth Year**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**
	Reception year	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**
	BIRTHS	9	3	6	4	10	3	7
	PLASC	7	8	3				

Comparison of the available birth and PLASC data indicates that the number of pupils enrolled in Reception does not always correspond directly with the number of children born within the catchment area. In some years, fewer pupils enrol than were born locally, whilst in other years Reception enrolment exceeds the number of births recorded within the catchment. This may reflect factors such as parental preference, pupil mobility, attendance at alternative provision, or pupils attending the school from

outside the catchment area. Notwithstanding this, even the higher birth years would translate into relatively small cohort sizes.

Overall, the available birth data does not provide strong evidence for the potential of a sustained recovery in pupil numbers at Ysgol Bancffosfelen. While some short-term increases may occur, the general profile suggests that pupil numbers are likely to remain low, supporting the projections outlined in this document which anticipate continued pressures associated with surplus capacity over the coming years.

3.3 Strengths and weaknesses of maintaining the status quo

The following table includes an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of maintaining the status quo including any potential opportunities and threats of this option. It also includes an assessment of how this option may impact on quality and standards of education at the school, impact on the local community and impact on travel arrangements.

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Retains continuity and familiarity for pupils, staff and families, with no immediate disruption to learning, wellbeing, established relationships or community links.	The school building has a poor suitability rating and requires significant investment to provide an environment fully aligned with the expectations of the Curriculum for Wales and modern educational practice
Preserves the school's role as an established community asset and maintains local access to education within Bancffosfelen.	Opportunities for pupils to learn, collaborate and socialise with larger groups of peers of a similar age and stage of development would remain limited.
No changes to transportation arrangements and no additional costs.	High levels of surplus places will remain unresolved, continuing to impact the efficient use of accommodation, educational resources and impacting the long-term sustainability of the school.
Environmental impacts associated with current travel arrangements remain the same.	Budget pressures and current deficit will not be addressed as liabilities and issues impacting the budget will continue to pose problems. The currently unsustainable deficit budget will continue to increase due to low pupil numbers.
Maintains Welsh-medium educational provision within the community, supporting the ambitions of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and Cymraeg 2050.	Pupils continue to be taught in mixed age classes spanning multiple year groups creating ongoing challenges in relation to curriculum planning, progression, assessment and differentiation.

The existing soft federation and shared headship arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog V.C. Primary School provides opportunities for collaborative working, professional learning, curriculum development and the sharing of effective practice.	Pupil projections show a stable trend going forward to 2031 but numbers are projected to continue to be low with high levels of surplus places and resulting in the continued inefficient use of accommodation and educational resources.
The existing shared leadership arrangement provides a degree of organisational stability and attracts an annual federation supplement which contributes towards leadership costs. The existing soft federation arrangement attracts a financial supplement of £6,000 per annum.	Despite the existing soft federation and shared headship arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog VC Primary School, the school continues to face significant unresolved challenges relating to pupil numbers, surplus places, financial sustainability and the condition/ suitability of the building.
Maintaining the current arrangements would allow the school to continue building upon established relationships with Ysgol Llanddarog and the wider community	The breadth of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision, specialist interventions and wider support services may be more limited than those available within larger schools.
Pupils already benefit from wider experiences through collaborative working, including educational visits, sporting activities and opportunities for social interaction with a broader group of peers	Smaller staffing structures restrict opportunities for distributed leadership, curriculum specialisation, professional collaboration and organisational resilience
Opportunities	**Threats**
To implement a targeted improvement plan to address building related issues such as roof repairs and rectifying issues with the hall and improve facilities for the pupils.	Significant capital investment would be required to improve the condition and suitability of the school building, with no guarantee that such investment would improve long-term viability or sustainability.
Potential to involve the community in fundraising and volunteering to strengthen school operations and reduce deficit budgets.	Ongoing financial pressures may increasingly constrain curriculum development, staffing flexibility, school improvement activity and investment in educational provision.
Whilst improving the condition and suitability of the school building could enhance the quality of the learning environment, this would require	Continued low pupil numbers could further affect the school's viability, organisational resilience and attractiveness to prospective families.

substantial capital investment. Given the existing pattern of low enrolment and limited uptake from the catchment area, it is uncertain whether such investment alone would result in a sustained increase in pupil numbers or address the long-term sustainability of the school.	
The existing soft federation arrangement provides opportunities to further develop collaborative working, professional learning and shared activities with Ysgol Llanddarog VC Primary School. However, these arrangements alone are unlikely to address the fundamental sustainability challenges facing the school.	Increasing deficit may continue to grow, resulting in increased financial intervention requirements from the Local Authority
	Further deterioration of the school building could increase maintenance liabilities, operational risks and health and safety concerns.
	Concerns regarding building suitability and long-term sustainability may accelerate parental preference for alternative schools.
	High levels of surplus places are projected to persist, resulting in continued inefficiencies and pressure on public resources.
	Long-term uncertainty regarding the future sustainability of the school may impact staff recruitment, retention, parental confidence and future enrolment patterns.

Likely impact on quality and standards in education

Retaining the current arrangements would provide continuity and stability for pupils, staff and families in the short term. Learners would remain within a familiar environment, continue to be taught by known staff and experience no disruption associated with school reorganisation or transition. The school was inspected by Estyn in 2018 and is not currently in a follow-up category, indicating that it continues to provide an acceptable standard of education. Consequently, educational standards could reasonably be expected to be maintained in the immediate future under the status quo.

The existing soft federation and shared headship arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog V.C. Primary School and Ysgol Pontiets would continue to provide opportunities for collaboration, professional dialogue and the sharing of effective practice. Pupils would

continue to benefit from joint activities, educational visits, sporting opportunities and wider learning experiences, whilst staff would continue to engage in collaborative curriculum planning and professional learning. These arrangements have strengthened educational opportunities for learners and have provided an important degree of organisational stability and leadership continuity.

However, despite the benefits associated with the existing federation arrangements, the school continues to face significant challenges relating to pupil numbers, surplus places, financial sustainability and the condition and suitability of the school building. The current arrangements have helped mitigate some of these challenges but have not addressed the underlying issues that prompted the review. As a result, many of the factors affecting the school's long-term viability and sustainability would remain unchanged under this option.

A significant challenge under this option would be the continuation of very low pupil numbers and mixed-age teaching arrangements. Whilst staff work effectively to meet the needs of learners, the small scale of the school limits opportunities for pupils to learn, collaborate and socialise with larger groups of peers of a similar age and stage of development. Opportunities for collaborative learning, peer discussion, group work, healthy competition and wider social experiences are more restricted than in larger school settings.

The current class structure also requires teachers to plan, deliver and assess learning across multiple year groups and progression steps within the same classroom. Whilst this is managed effectively by staff, it inevitably increases the complexity of curriculum delivery, assessment and differentiation. Consequently, the challenges associated with delivering the full breadth and ambition of the Curriculum for Wales within a very small-school context would remain.

In addition, learners would continue to have more limited access to the breadth of curriculum opportunities, specialist expertise, extracurricular activities, wellbeing support and additional learning provision that are more readily available within larger schools.

Furthermore, retaining the current arrangements would not address concerns regarding the condition and suitability of the school building. Significant capital investment would be required to improve the learning environment and there is limited evidence that investment in accommodation alone would address the wider educational, organisational and sustainability challenges facing the school.

Pupil projections indicate that numbers are expected to remain low and surplus capacity will continue. Consequently, the educational, organisational and financial challenges associated with operating a very small school are likely to persist over the longer term. Whilst standards may continue to be maintained, the option provides limited opportunity to broaden educational experiences, strengthen leadership capacity, increase organisational resilience, improve curriculum flexibility or secure long-term sustainability.

Overall, retaining the current arrangements would preserve continuity and provide short-term stability for pupils and families. However, it would not address the

fundamental challenges facing the school or create the conditions necessary to secure long-term improvement and sustainability.

Whilst educational standards are likely to be maintained in the short term, the option offers limited scope to enhance learner experiences, broaden curriculum opportunities, strengthen leadership capacity, improve organisational resilience or improve the learning environment. Importantly, the option would maintain the current position rather than deliver the transformational change required to address the issues identified through the review.

Likely impact on the community

Retaining the status quo would maintain the current level of provision within the community in the short term. However, the ongoing challenges facing the school, including declining pupil numbers and financial pressures, may impact the longer-term sustainability of this provision.

Likely effect of different travel arrangements

No impact on travel arrangements are anticipated as the status quo would remain.

Reason for discounting this option

Overall, retaining the status quo would fail to address the fundamental challenges facing the school, including low pupil numbers, high levels of surplus capacity, an unsustainable financial position, and concerns regarding the suitability and condition of the building.

While it would provide short-term stability and the existing soft federation and shared headship arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog V.C. Primary School has provided valuable opportunities for collaboration, shared leadership, professional learning and wider educational experiences for pupils, these arrangements have been in place since September 2024 and have not addressed the fundamental challenges facing the school.

Retaining the status quo would not offer a viable long-term solution to improving educational provision, addressing budget pressures, or securing the school's sustainability for future learners. As such, this option does not represent an effective or strategic use of resources and is not considered a deliverable way forward. This is despite the benefits already being achieved through the existing soft federation and shared headship arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog VC Primary School.

The Local Authority consider this option would maintain existing provision rather than improving it.

3.4 Why change is considered necessary

Given the factors described above, change is necessary to ensure the provision of high-quality education for local children. Maintaining the school in its current form is considered unsustainable financially. Given the condition and suitability of the Ysgol

Bancffosfelen building, significant capital investment will be required to bring it to an acceptable standard.

The proposed changes would allow for the reallocation of resources to schools which are more suitable for the delivery of the Curriculum for Wales. It would also address the issues of surplus places and support a more efficient use of public funds. One of the key aims of this proposal is to provide a greater range of learning opportunities for pupils within the community which is equitable to those in other areas.

3.5 Alternative Options Considered

In accordance with the School Organisation Code 2026, the Local Authority considered a range of alternative options before identifying a preferred proposal. Each option was assessed against its potential to address the challenges facing Ysgol Bancffosfelen, including educational provision, financial sustainability, surplus places, building condition and suitability, community impact and the long-term viability of the school.

A separate SWOT analysis (looking at strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) was carried out for each option to help identify the most suitable way forward. This assessment is included in Appendix E.

In assessing alternative options involving federation, collaboration, clustering and multi-site arrangements, the Local Authority considered the experience of the existing informal federation arrangement between Ysgol Bancffosfelen and Llanddarog VC Primary School, which has been in place since September 2024. This provided practical evidence of both the benefits and limitations of closer collaborative working between schools.

A detailed SWOT analysis of all options considered is included at **Appendix E**

Option 1. Maintain the Status Quo

Under this option Ysgol Bancffosfelen would remain open with no significant changes to the current arrangements.

This option would retain education provision within the community and avoid disruption to pupils, staff and families in the short term. Current travel arrangements would remain unchanged and the school would continue to provide Welsh-medium education from its existing location.

However, this option would not address the challenges currently facing the school. Pupil numbers are projected to remain low, surplus places would continue to exceed 45% of capacity (PLASC), the school's budget deficit would continue to increase and significant investment would be required to address the condition and suitability of the buildings.

Whilst the existing shared headship and soft federation arrangements with Ysgol Llanddarog provide some benefits through collaborative working and shared leadership, these arrangements have not resolved the underlying challenges facing

the school. Educational challenges associated with mixed-age classes would also remain.

For these reasons, maintaining the status quo was not considered to provide a sustainable long-term solution.

Option 2. Change the age range of Bancffosfelen from 4-11 to 3-11

The Local Authority considered whether extending the age range of the school to provide education from age 3 rather than age 4 could improve the school's sustainability.

This option could create additional nursery provision and potentially increase opportunities for early years education within the community. However, analysis indicated that the likely increase in pupil numbers would be insufficient to significantly improve the school's overall viability. The issues relating to surplus places, financial sustainability, building condition and educational organisation would remain largely unchanged.

As a result, this option was not considered to represent a viable long-term solution.

Option 3. Federation with other schools

The Local Authority considered whether a formal federation with another school could provide a sustainable future for Ysgol Bancffosfelen.

Federation could potentially strengthen governance arrangements, provide opportunities for shared leadership and encourage greater collaboration between schools. It may also provide opportunities to share resources, professional expertise and curriculum experiences.

The Local Authority noted that many of the benefits typically associated with federation are already being realised through the school's existing arrangements. Ysgol Bancffosfelen currently shares a headteacher with Llanddarog VC Primary School, and the two schools already work closely together in a number of areas in a soft federation arrangement. This informal federation-style arrangement has supported leadership capacity, facilitated collaboration between staff and provided opportunities to share good practice.

Since September 2024, the arrangement has also provided tangible benefits for pupils, including opportunities to participate in shared sporting activities, educational visits and wider social interaction with peers from another school. The sharing of transport and resources has also enabled a greater number of enrichment activities to take place than may otherwise have been possible.

Despite these arrangements, the fundamental challenges facing Ysgol Bancffosfelen remain. Pupil numbers continue to be low, surplus places remain significantly above the level regarded as efficient under the School Organisation Code, the school's budget deficit continues to increase and substantial investment is required to address

the condition and suitability of the school buildings. In addition, the educational challenges associated with small cohort sizes and mixed-age classes would remain.

The Local Authority concluded that, whilst a formal federation may provide some additional governance and organisational benefits, the current shared leadership arrangement demonstrates that federation alone is unlikely to provide significant additional educational benefits beyond those already being realised. Furthermore, formal federation would not address the key issues relating to pupil numbers, surplus places, financial sustainability, building condition and suitability.

For these reasons, federation was not considered to provide a sufficient long-term solution and was not identified as the preferred option.

Option 4. Collaboration with other schools

The Local Authority considered whether increased collaboration with neighbouring schools could provide an alternative solution.

This approach could allow greater sharing of resources, staff expertise and curriculum opportunities whilst retaining education provision at the school. Pupils could benefit from increased opportunities to collaborate with learners from other schools and staff could have access to wider professional networks and professional learning opportunities.

The Local Authority noted that Ysgol Bancffosfelen already benefits from a degree of collaborative working through the existing shared headship arrangement with Llanddarog VC Primary School. This arrangement has enabled the schools to work together on a number of matters and has already delivered many of the benefits typically associated with increased collaboration, including shared sporting opportunities, educational visits, wider social interaction between pupils and enhanced curriculum enrichment opportunities.

Whilst increased collaboration may improve some aspects of educational provision, it would not address the school's low pupil numbers, high levels of surplus capacity, significant maintenance liabilities or budget deficit. The condition and suitability issues associated with the school buildings would also remain unresolved. The long-term viability of the school would therefore remain uncertain.

The Local Authority concluded that, whilst increased collaboration may provide some additional educational benefits, these would be limited beyond those already being achieved through existing arrangements and would not provide a sufficient long-term solution to the challenges facing the school.

Consequently, this option was not considered capable of addressing the principal challenges facing the school.

Option 5. Establishment of a Multi-Site School

The Local Authority considered whether establishing a multi-site school could provide a means of retaining educational provision within Bancffosfelen whilst addressing some of the operational challenges facing the school.

Under this approach, Ysgol Bancffosfelen would become part of a single school operating across more than one site, with leadership, governance, staffing and resources managed collectively. This arrangement could potentially enable the retention of educational provision within the community whilst creating opportunities for greater collaboration between staff and learners.

The Local Authority noted that Ysgol Bancffosfelen already benefits from a shared headship arrangement with Llanddarog VC Primary School. This arrangement has provided opportunities for shared leadership, joint working and collaboration between the two schools, delivering some of the benefits that might typically be associated with a multi-site model. The Local Authority also noted that many of the educational and enrichment benefits often associated with a multi-site arrangement, such as shared activities, wider pupil interaction and collaborative working between staff, are already being achieved through the existing informal federation arrangements.

A multi-site arrangement may provide some additional organisational efficiencies and could further support the sharing of leadership and teaching resources across multiple locations. It would also allow the existing school building to remain in educational use.

However, a multi-site arrangement would not address several of the key challenges facing the school. The significant issues relating to building condition and suitability would remain and substantial investment would still be required to maintain the site. High levels of surplus capacity would continue and the operational costs associated with maintaining and managing multiple sites would remain significant. In addition, many of the educational challenges associated with the school's small pupil population would continue, particularly where learners remain distributed across separate sites.

The following table illustrates that there are 220 surplus places available in the primary schools surrounding Ysgol Bancffosfelen which demonstrates that retaining the building as part of a multi school site would not be cost effective.

School	Ysgol Bancffosfelen	Ysgol Llanddarog	Ysgol Pontyberem	Ponthenri Primary School	Gwynfryn Primary School	Total
Capacity 2025/2026	98	94	242	94	95	669
Number on roll PLASC 2026	48	56	210	60	60	449
Number of surplus places	50	38	32	34	35	220
% of surplus places	51.0%	40.4%	13.2%	36.2%	36.8%	32.9%

A multi-site school arrangement would not be considered appropriate in this area as pupil numbers would not justify the additional complexity and cost, as such this approach would be inefficient and would not deliver educational or financial benefits.

Creating a multi-site school would not resolve the underlying issues the school is facing including an unsustainable budget deficit and issues relating to building condition, building suitability and low pupil numbers.

The Local Authority concluded that, whilst a multi-site arrangement may provide some additional organisational benefits, these would be limited beyond those already being achieved through the existing shared leadership arrangements. Furthermore, the option would not adequately address the issues relating to pupil numbers, surplus places, financial sustainability, building condition and suitability.

Consequently, whilst a multi-site arrangement could retain educational provision within the community, it was not considered capable of providing a sufficiently sustainable long-term solution to the challenges facing the school and was therefore not identified as the preferred option.

Option 6. Cluster Ysgol Bancffosfelen with other local schools

The Local Authority considered whether a formal clustering arrangement with neighbouring schools could provide a sustainable alternative to the closure of Ysgol Bancffosfelen.

School clustering involves schools working together to share resources, expertise and educational opportunities whilst remaining separate institutions. This could include collaborative curriculum planning, joint staff development, shared activities for learners and greater partnership working between schools.

A clustering arrangement could potentially provide some educational and professional benefits. Learners may benefit from opportunities to participate in joint activities with pupils from other schools and staff could benefit from increased access to professional learning and collaboration. The school would also remain open within the community and continue to provide Welsh-medium education locally.

The Local Authority noted that Ysgol Bancffosfelen already benefits from a degree of collaborative working through the existing shared headship arrangement and soft federation with Llanddarog VC Primary School. This arrangement has enabled the schools to work together on a number of matters and has already delivered many of the benefits typically associated with clustering and collaborative working, including shared sporting opportunities, educational visits, wider social interaction between pupils and enhanced curriculum enrichment opportunities

However, clustering would not address the principal issues facing the school. Pupil numbers would remain low, significant surplus capacity would continue, and the school's budget deficit would remain unresolved. The condition and suitability issues associated with the school buildings would also remain and substantial capital investment would still be required. Whilst clustering may improve opportunities for

collaboration, pupils would continue to be taught within small cohorts and mixed-age classes.

The Local Authority concluded that, whilst a clustering approach may provide some additional educational benefits, these would be limited beyond those already being achieved through existing arrangements and would not sufficiently address the underlying issues of sustainability, surplus places, financial viability, building condition and suitability. Consequently, this option was not identified as the preferred option.

Option 7. Greater Community Use of the School Site

In accordance with the School Organisation Code, the Local Authority considered whether it would be feasible and economical to co-locate local services within Ysgol Bancffosfelen to support the continued use of the site and offset the costs associated with maintaining the school and whether the existing buildings could be used as a community hub to accommodate and support provision of a range of community services.

The Local Authority recognises that schools can provide valuable community facilities and that co-location of services can, in some circumstances, support more efficient use of public assets. Consideration was therefore given to whether additional community, educational, childcare, health or other public services could be accommodated within the school building.

However, the school currently operates with a significant level of surplus capacity and occupies a building that has identified condition and suitability issues. Addressing these issues would require substantial capital investment irrespective of whether additional services were co-located on the site. Furthermore, it is unclear how the introduction of additional services would generate sufficient income or operational savings to address the school's underlying financial challenges, including the existing budget deficit, low pupil numbers and high proportion of surplus places.

The Local Authority also considered the practical implications of accommodating additional services at the site. The accommodation space is used for school purposes meaning there is no additional space within the building to accommodate additional services and community use, especially while the school is open. The Cylch Meithrin already operate from the school and the remaining rooms are used as classrooms or for dinner service.

The school currently has limited parking provision and there is insufficient capacity to accommodate the additional staff, service users and visitors that may be associated with the co-location of other services. This could create operational difficulties, place additional pressure on local parking arrangements and potentially affect the safe operation of the site.

Access issues in terms of steps to the entrance and throughout the building exist, pitches are on a sloping gradient and unlikely to be required by local sports teams for games, there is a lack of accessible facilities for the disabled and at present there is no space in the building to accommodate additional services without causing disruption to the school.

Consideration was also given to the likely demand for co-located services within the locality. The Cylch Meithrin already operates on the site and opportunities for additional co-location are limited by the size, layout and accessibility of the building.

The Local Authority concluded that the long-term occupation of additional services would not provide a sustainable solution nor deliver sufficient financial benefit to offset the ongoing costs of maintaining, operating and improving the site.

Whilst opportunities for community use of school facilities and collaborative working with local organisations have been recognised, it was concluded that the co-location of services would not address the fundamental educational, financial, building condition and building suitability challenges facing Ysgol Bancffosfelen. Consequently, co-location and greater community use was not considered to represent a feasible or economical alternative to the proposal being consulted upon.

For these reasons, this option was not considered a sustainable alternative.

Option 8. Closure of Ysgol Bancffosfelen and Transfer of Pupils to their nearest school

The Local Authority considered the option of closing Ysgol Bancffosfelen and allowing pupils to transfer to their nearest suitable school, subject to parental preference and the availability of places. Under this option, pupils could attend a number of neighbouring Welsh-medium primary schools within the local area rather than transferring to a single designated receiving school.

This option would address a number of the key challenges facing the school. Pupils would transfer to schools with generally better accommodation, condition and suitability than the existing building at Ysgol Bancffosfelen and would continue to have access to Welsh-medium education. The schools within the local area have sufficient capacity to accommodate all learners currently attending Ysgol Bancffosfelen, whilst the closure of the school would reduce surplus places, address the school's ongoing budget deficit and remove the need for significant future investment in the existing building.

The Local Authority noted that pupils may benefit from access to broader curriculum opportunities, larger peer groups, increased extracurricular provision and wider educational experiences. A number of nearby schools also benefit from larger staffing structures, stronger leadership capacity and greater organisational resilience. Increased pupil numbers may also contribute positively to the long-term sustainability of receiving schools.

However, the educational benefits available to pupils would vary depending on the school attended. Whilst most receiving schools are not in an Estyn follow-up category and provide education that is at least equivalent to that currently available, there are differences between schools in terms of accommodation, curriculum provision, leadership arrangements and educational outcomes.

The Local Authority also recognised that pupils may be dispersed across a number of different schools. This could result in friendship groups and established support networks being separated and may create additional challenges in relation to learner wellbeing, transition arrangements and continuity of educational provision. Travel arrangements would also vary depending on the school attended and may result in increased journey distances and transport costs.

Closure of the school would result in the loss of an important community asset and may have implications for local services, including Cylch Meithrin Bancffosfelen. In addition, closure would bring the existing soft federation arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog VC Primary School to an end, requiring alternative leadership and financial arrangements to be established.

Whilst this option would address issues relating to pupil numbers, surplus places, financial sustainability and the condition of the existing school building, it was considered to present a degree of uncertainty in relation to learner destinations, educational experiences, transition arrangements and continuity for pupils. Consequently, the Local Authority concluded that this option did not provide a sufficiently consistent and predictable outcome for learners and was therefore not identified as the preferred way forward.

Option 9. Closure of Ysgol Bancffosfelen and Transfer of Pupils to Ysgol Pontyberem

The final option considered was the closure of Ysgol Bancffosfelen with pupils transferring to Ysgol Pontyberem. This option would provide access to a larger Welsh-medium school with modern facilities, improved accommodation and a learning environment better suited to the delivery of the Curriculum for Wales. Pupils would benefit from age-appropriate classes, larger peer groups, a broader curriculum offer, wider extracurricular opportunities and access to a greater range of specialist staff expertise, wellbeing services and Additional Learning Needs (ALN) support. The proposal would also place pupils within a school that benefits from dedicated leadership capacity and a more sustainable organisational structure. The transfer of learners to a single receiving school would also help maintain existing friendship groups and support networks and provide greater continuity during transition.

The option would address a number of the key challenges facing Ysgol Bancffosfelen. It would reduce surplus places within the local school estate, address the school's increasing budget deficit and remove the need for significant future capital maintenance to resolve the condition and suitability issues associated with the existing school building. Welsh-medium education would continue to be provided locally and increased pupil numbers would support the ongoing sustainability of the receiving school.

The Local Authority recognised that the proposal would also result in a number of disadvantages. Closure of the school would represent the loss of a long-established and valued community asset and may have implications for local services, including Cylch Meithrin Bancffosfelen. Pupils, families and staff would experience a period of change and transition, and there could be staffing implications including redeployment or potential redundancies. Some pupils would experience increased travel distances

and the proposal would lead to additional home-to-school transport costs for the Local Authority.

The Local Authority also recognised that closure of Ysgol Bancffosfelen would bring the existing soft federation arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog VC Primary School to an end. This would result in the loss of the federation funding supplement associated with the arrangement and require Ysgol Llanddarog to review its future leadership structure and associated financial arrangements.

Whilst acknowledging the impact on the community and the disruption associated with transition, the Local Authority considered that this option provided the most effective means of addressing the educational, financial, organisational and property-related challenges facing Ysgol Bancffosfelen. It was therefore identified as the preferred option for consultation.

3.6 Alternative options conclusion

Having considered the reasonable alternatives available, the Local Authority concluded that none of the alternative options would adequately address the combination of challenges currently facing Ysgol Bancffosfelen.

Whilst a number of options presented potential benefits, either individually or collectively, none would resolve the issues relating to low pupil numbers, significant surplus places, the school's increasing budget deficit, or the poor condition and suitability of the buildings.

Furthermore, alternatives such as federation, collaboration, clustering and shared leadership arrangements have already been explored to varying degrees and have not addressed the underlying viability concerns.

The proposal to discontinue Ysgol Bancffosfelen and transfer pupils to Ysgol Pontyberem was assessed as the only viable option capable of addressing the educational, financial, organisational and property-related challenges facing the school whilst maintaining Welsh-medium education within the locality. It would provide pupils with access to improved facilities, a broader range of educational opportunities, age-appropriate peer groups and a more sustainable learning environment.

Having evaluated all realistic alternatives, the Council has concluded that there is a strong case for the closure of Ysgol Bancffosfelen and the transfer of pupils to Ysgol Pontyberem. The Local Authority has therefore identified closure and transfer to Ysgol Pontyberem as its preferred option for consultation.

4. The Proposal – To discontinue Ysgol Bancffosfelen.

The Local Authority is consulting on the proposal to discontinue Ysgol Bancffosfelen effective from 31 December 2027 with pupils to transfer to Ysgol Pontyberem.

Should the proposal to discontinue Ysgol Bancffosfelen proceed, the preferred option is for pupils to transfer to Ysgol Pontyberem from 1 January 2028.

The proposed implementation date is not a final decision and is itself a matter for consultation. During consideration of the proposal by Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet, members asked that consideration be given to whether, should the proposal proceed, be implemented at the end of the 2027/28 academic year as this may be more appropriate.

The Local Authority therefore welcomes views on whether implementation should take place on 31 December 2027, at the end of the 2027/28 academic year, or on another appropriate date. In reaching any final decision, all consultation responses and relevant considerations, including the interests of learners, educational continuity and the sustainability of educational provision, will be taken into account.

No final decision has been taken either on the proposal to discontinue the school or, should the proposal proceed, on the appropriate implementation date.

Ysgol Pontyberem is a Welsh Medium, 4-11 Community Primary School located at Heol y Felin, Pontyberem, Llanelli, SA15 5EB approximately 1.3 miles away from Ysgol Bancffosfelen. Therefore, it is proposed that pupils would transfer to a school of the same language medium (Welsh Medium) and category (Community Primary).

Some parents/carers of pupils of Ysgol Bancffosfelen may wish to express a preference for an alternative school to Ysgol Pontyberem. It is important to emphasise that parents retain the right to express a preference for any school they wish their child to attend, including, but not limited to, schools located in nearby catchment areas.

Expressing a preference does not guarantee a child a place at their preferred school. The inclusion of a preferred school in this document is intended to support planning in relation to capacity, transport and continuity of education, but it does not restrict parental choice.

Final decisions on school placements will be made in accordance with the local authority's admissions policy and parental preference, subject to the availability of places at the chosen school.

The local authority recognises and respects the right of parents to choose an alternative school.

In the event that the proposals are implemented, admission to any school will remain subject to the School's Admissions policy and parents will be required to submit an application accordingly.

4.1 Reasons for the Proposal

The Local Authority is proposing to discontinue Ysgol Bancffosfelen and transfer pupils to Ysgol Pontyberem. The proposal is being advanced to secure sustainable, high-quality educational provision and to improve opportunities and outcomes for current and future learners.

Educational Benefits for Pupils

- Pupils would benefit from learning within a larger school environment, providing increased opportunities to collaborate, discuss and learn alongside a wider group of peers of a similar age and stage of development. This is likely to support the development of communication, social and critical-thinking skills, whilst enhancing engagement in learning.
- Pupils would be taught in age-appropriate classes rather than within the current mixed-age arrangements, spanning more than two year groups. This would enable learning experiences to be planned more closely to pupils' developmental and curriculum needs and provide greater opportunities for peer interaction, collaborative learning and academic challenge.
- Ysgol Pontyberem benefits from a larger staffing structure, providing increased curriculum capacity, greater opportunities for professional collaboration and a broader range of expertise to support teaching, learning and curriculum development.
- Pupils would have access to a wider range of educational experiences, including extracurricular activities, sporting opportunities, performances, educational visits and pupil leadership activities. These experiences can contribute positively to learners' confidence, wellbeing and wider personal development.
- Ysgol Pontyberem provides a broad and balanced curriculum and has well-established arrangements to support learner wellbeing, inclusion and additional learning needs. The school's larger size and wider range of resources would enhance its capacity to meet the diverse needs of learners and provide targeted support where required.
- Pupils would attend a school with high-quality accommodation and facilities. Ysgol Pontyberem benefitted from a comprehensive refurbishment in 2019 and provides modern learning environments, well-resourced classrooms, extensive outdoor learning spaces, large playground areas and a range of sporting facilities, including playing fields and tennis/netball courts.
- The school has been assessed as having Grade A condition and suitability ratings, providing a high-quality learning environment that is well equipped to support the delivery of the Curriculum for Wales and meet the needs of learners now and in the future.
- The proposal would place pupils within a larger and more sustainable school community with dedicated leadership capacity and greater organisational resilience, helping to secure the long-term quality of education available to learners within the area.

Strategic and Operational Benefits

- The proposal would help address the continued challenge of low and declining pupil numbers at Ysgol Bancffosfelen, supporting the provision of education within a more sustainable school setting with greater organisational resilience.
- The proposal would contribute to reducing surplus capacity within the Local Authority's primary school estate, supporting the more efficient use of educational resources and aligning with the objectives of the Modernising Education Programme.

- The closure of Ysgol Bancffosfelen would remove the requirement for the Local Authority to undertake significant capital maintenance to address building condition issues and would eliminate ongoing maintenance and lifecycle costs associated with maintaining the school site.
- The proposal would enable resources currently directed towards maintaining a small school with low pupil numbers to be utilised more effectively, supporting investment in teaching, learning and pupil provision across the wider education system.
- Ysgol Pontyberem is operating below capacity and is well placed to accommodate any changes to the site that would be required to accept all pupils from Ysgol Bancffosfelen without compromising the quality of educational provision. This would maximise the use of existing accommodation, facilities and resources within the local school network.

Financial Benefits

- The increasing deficit budget issues at Ysgol Bancffosfelen would be addressed and prevented from getting worse.
- The proposal, if implemented, would result in ongoing revenue savings for the Local Authority.
- The proposal presents a potential opportunity to realise a capital receipt through the sale of the site.
- As the majority of funding for schools is calculated on pupil numbers, all pupil number funding transfers with each child to their alternative school, thus supporting the budgets of other schools.

Overall, the proposal would support the Local Authority's strategic aim of providing high quality, sustainable educational provision within schools that are appropriately resourced and fit for purpose, whilst ensuring that public resources are used effectively and efficiently as possible.

4.2 Benefits and Disadvantages of the proposal

Should the proposal proceed, the potential benefits and disadvantages of the proposal when compared to the status quo are:

Benefits	Disadvantages
Addresses the key challenges currently facing Ysgol Bancffosfelen, including low pupil numbers, significant surplus capacity, financial sustainability concerns and issues relating to the condition and suitability of the school building.	The proposal would represent a significant change for pupils, families and staff and may create uncertainty during the transition period.
Reduces surplus places within the local school estate and supports the more efficient use of educational accommodation and public resources.	There may be staffing implications, including changes to roles, redeployment processes and the potential for redundancies.

Provides a long-term and sustainable solution to issues that have persisted despite the existing shared headship and collaborative arrangements with Ysgol Llanddarog V.C. Primary School.	Closure of the school would result in the loss of a highly valued and long-established educational institution and community asset within Bancffosfelen.
It would potentially increase pupil numbers and associated funding at the receiving school which would strengthen the long-term viability of the receiving school through increased pupil numbers and the more efficient deployment of staffing and resources.	Increased travelling time for pupils who currently attend Ysgol Bancffosfelen as their nearest school.
Provides pupils with access to a school with stronger organisational capacity, broader staffing expertise and increased leadership resilience.	Transportation costs incurred by the Local Authority should pupils eligible for transport choose to transfer to the receiving school.
Enables pupils to access a broader curriculum, wider extracurricular opportunities, educational visits, sporting activities and enrichment experiences	Increased travel may generate additional traffic movements and vehicle journeys at key times.
Provides opportunities for pupils to learn and socialise within larger cohorts of peers of a similar age and stage of development, supporting collaboration, wellbeing, confidence and social development.	If the proposals were to proceed and the school was to close, there could be an impact on local services, particularly the Cylch Meithrin Bancffosfelen, which is housed in Ysgol Bancffosfelen and may need to relocate. If no suitable alternative location could be found it would have impacts on local families who access the provision.
Pupils transfer to Ysgol Pontyberem which has a better building suitability rating of Grade A which is defined as a building and site with “Good facilities, suitable for teaching, learning and wellbeing in school”.	The proposed changes would require a Statutory Process to be undertaken and completed. This would have the potential to create uncertainty for staff and pupils on the future of the school whilst the School Organisation process is undertaken over a period of time.
Provides access to a recently refurbished school with high-quality teaching spaces, strong wellbeing provision, established support services and dedicated facilities to support learning and inclusion.	Closure of Ysgol Bancffosfelen would bring the current soft federation arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog V.C. Primary School to an end and require alternative leadership arrangements to be established.
Supports learner wellbeing through access to wider specialist support, enhanced ALN provision, broader staffing expertise and established intervention services.	The proposal may result in the relocation of educational provision outside the immediate community.

The proposed changes are expected to generate annual revenue savings and mitigate further growth of the budget deficit at Ysgol Bancffosfelen.	
Supports the continued delivery and development of Welsh-medium education. Pupils would continue to access Welsh-medium provision and benefit from increased opportunities to use Welsh socially and academically with a larger cohort of peers, supporting the objectives of the WESP and Cymraeg 2050.	
Pupils transfer to Ysgol Pontyberem which has a better building condition rating of Grade A which is defined as a building in “As new Condition”.	
It would remove the financial and environmental costs associated with operating, heating and maintaining an ageing school building with significant condition and suitability challenges.	
Creates a more resilient and sustainable model of educational provision that is better placed to respond to future demographic, educational and financial challenges	

4.3 Risk Management

The anticipated risks associated with this proposal, and management factors are listed below:

Risk		Risk Management
1.	Uncertainty for staff, pupils, and families regarding the school’s future during the consultation and decision-making process.	Maintain regular, transparent communication with staff, pupils, parents, and stakeholders about key developments and decisions throughout the process. Provide opportunities for feedback and engagement.
2.	Failure to secure statutory approval to proceed with the proposal.	Strictly adhere to the requirements and procedures set out in the School Organisation Code (2026), including comprehensive consultation and thorough impact assessments.
3.	Disruption and emotional impact of changing school environments, especially for pupils with additional	Consider the need for transition plans for all affected pupils and implement if necessary. Ysgol Pontyberem has been identified as the receiving school.

	learning needs or those at critical transition points.	Ensure close collaboration between staff and families to facilitate a supportive transfer. Provide additional pastoral or specialist support where needed.
4.	Capacity constraints at Ysgol Pontyberem potentially affecting class sizes, resources, or quality of education.	Capacity and resource requirements at the receiving school have been assessed at an early stage. It is anticipated that adaptations will be required at Ysgol Pontyberem to accommodate the proposed changes without compromising standards.
5.	Increased travel distances for some pupils, potentially raising concerns about travel time, safety, and cost.	Ysgol Pontyberem is located approximately 1.3 miles away from Ysgol Bancffosfelen. Review and adjust transport arrangements to comply with local authority school transport policies. Provide free home-to-school transport for eligible pupils and ensure travel safety measures are in place.
6.	Staff uncertainty regarding future employment and risk of redundancy.	Support staff through formal consultation in line with HR policies.
7.	Potential negative impact on community cohesion and local identity due to proposed school closure.	Explore opportunities to retain community use of school facilities where possible.
8.	Risk of increased pupil dispersal leading to loss of peer networks and social support.	The proposal is to relocate pupils to Ysgol Pontyberem to attempt to prevent dispersal of pupils but parental choice will determine where pupils attend if proposals are implemented. Encourage peer support groups and maintain communication channels between former classmates where feasible.
9.	Significant Capital funding required to fund adaptations at the receiving school.	The local authority will explore a range of potential internal and external funding sources, including the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, to support any required capital works. Detailed feasibility and cost assessments would be undertaken to determine the scope of works and the availability of funding.
10.	Closure of Ysgol Bancffosfelen would bring the existing soft federation arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog VC Primary School to an end. This may create financial and leadership pressures for Ysgol Llanddarog as the current shared	The Local Authority would work closely with the governing body, diocesan authorities (if applicable), school improvement services and school leadership to plan for the transition. Adequate time would be available before implementation of the proposal to review

	headship arrangement would cease and the school would lose the federation supplement associated with the arrangement	leadership arrangements, workforce structures and budget planning to ensure continuity of leadership and minimise any adverse impact on educational provision at Ysgol Llanddarog.

4.4 Assessment of the proposal to discontinue Ysgol Bancffosfelen

The following table summarises the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with the proposal to close Ysgol Bancffosfelen and transfer of pupils to Ysgol Pontyberem if it was to proceed:

Discontinue Ysgol Bancffosfelen and transfer pupils to Ysgol Pontyberem	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Pupils would transfer to a larger school with modern, high-quality facilities that are better equipped to support the delivery of the Curriculum for Wales and provide an enhanced learning environment.	Pupils and families may experience disruption to established routines, relationships and familiarity, which may impact emotional wellbeing during the transition period.
Ysgol Pontyberem has a Grade A condition and suitability rating, compared to Grade D at Ysgol Bancffosfelen, providing a safe, secure and fit-for-purpose learning environment.	The closure would result in the loss of a school within the local community of Bancffosfelen.
The proposal would reduce high levels of surplus places and support more efficient use of resources across the local authority.	The proposal would have an impact on staff, including potential redundancies or redeployment, which may affect staff wellbeing and continuity.
The financial deficit budget issues at Ysgol Bancffosfelen would be addressed and prevented from getting worse.	The school currently serves as an important community asset, and its closure may reduce opportunities for community interaction and local activities.
Pupils would benefit from being taught in age-appropriate classes not spanning more than two year groups, within a larger cohort, improving opportunities for peer interaction, collaboration and appropriate academic challenge.	There may be an adverse impact on local early years provision, particularly Cylch Meithrin Bancffosfelen, which may need to relocate or could be at risk if suitable alternative accommodation is not available.
Pupils would have access to a broader curriculum offer, wider extracurricular opportunities and a greater range of educational experiences.	The local authority would incur increased transport costs associated with providing home-to-school transport for pupils who eligible. Costs are currently estimated at £57,000 per annum.
Revenue savings realised from the closure would assist overall budgetary	Some pupils would experience increased travel distances and journey times, which

pressures that the Local Authority faces while contributing to the sustainability of education provision. Pupil number funding would transfer to the new school with the pupil and thus improve the budget in that school.	may impact daily routines and family arrangements.
The existing cohort of pupils would transfer together, helping to maintain established friendships and minimise disruption during the transition process, whilst ensuring continued access to equitable provision within a school of the same language category.	Increased traffic at the receiving school during peak times may impact the local highway network and require management.
Pupils would transfer from a school with known building condition issues to a school with a building in “Grade A” condition, providing a safe, secure and well-maintained learning environment.	Some pupils may miss the experience of a small-school environment including smaller class sizes and close familiarity with all pupils and staff.
Pupils will continue to access Welsh Medium provision at the receiving school ensuring continuity of language provision and supporting Welsh Government aspirations for the Welsh language.	Closure of the school would bring the existing soft federation arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog VC Primary School to an end, resulting in the loss of shared leadership arrangements and established collaborative working between the schools.
The proposal would place pupils within a school with a sustainable leadership structure focused on a single school community.	The proposal would have financial implications for Ysgol Llanddarog VC Primary School, which would cease to receive the federation funding supplement associated with the current arrangement and would need to review its future leadership structure and associated funding arrangements.
Pupils would have access to a wider range of staff expertise, specialist support services and well-being provision, including support for learners with additional learning needs (ALN), due to the larger school structure.	
Opportunities	**Threats**
The proposal provides an opportunity to secure a more sustainable model of education provision within the area, aligned with the principles of the Modernising Education Programme	There may be opposition from parents, staff and the wider community which could affect engagement with the process and transitional arrangements.
The disposal of the site may generate a capital receipt which could be reinvested into improving educational	Strong community concern may arise due to the closure of a long-established

facilities across the authority, including through programmes such as the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.	village school and its perceived impact on community identity and cohesion.
Opportunity to reduce surplus places at a strategic level, improving efficiency and ensuring resources are targeted towards sustainable provision.	Risk that capital investment required at the receiving school may not be delivered within anticipated timescales or budget.
Resources currently required to maintain a small school with low pupil numbers could be redirected towards improving educational outcomes and supporting learners across the wider education system.	There is a risk of a short-term impact on some pupils' wellbeing and engagement during the transition period.
Strengthened educational provision through access to larger peer groups, broader curriculum opportunities and enhanced staffing capacity	Increased travel distances for some pupils could impact attendance, punctuality or participation if not managed effectively.
Opportunity to strengthen long-term educational outcomes through access to improved facilities, broader learning opportunities and enhanced support services.	Future fluctuations in pupil numbers could place additional pressure on accommodation and resources at the receiving school
	Some parents may express a preference for alternative schools, requiring careful management of admissions and expectations.
	The ending of the current shared headship arrangement may create short-term leadership and financial pressures for Ysgol Llanddarog VC Primary School whilst alternative arrangements are established.
	Risk that increased transport costs may offset other financial savings associated with the proposal.

Likely impact on quality and standards in education

Pupils would transfer to Ysgol Pontyberem, benefiting from larger peer groups, broader learning opportunities and access to a wider range of resources. Estyn reports that pupils make sound progress and that the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that supports effective delivery of the Curriculum for Wales.

Pupils would also benefit from strong wellbeing, care and additional learning needs provision, supported by effective transition arrangements. In addition, the school has strong and effective leadership and greater capacity to support continuous improvement.

On this basis, the proposal is not expected to have a negative impact on educational standards and is likely to enhance teaching, learning and wellbeing, provision for pupils. Further detail on the likely impacts on quality and standards is provided in **Section 7**.

Likely impact on the community

The closure of the school would represent the loss of an important community asset and may have wider impacts on community cohesion, identity and participation in local activities. The school currently provides a focal point for community use, events and engagement, and its closure could reduce opportunities for community activity within the village. There may also be implications for local services, particularly Cylch Meithrin Bancffosfelen, which may need to relocate and could be at risk should suitable alternative accommodation not be secured. This could affect access to local Welsh-medium early years provision and established progression pathways into Welsh-medium education.

The proposal may also have impacts beyond the immediate Bancffosfelen community. Closure of the school would bring the existing soft federation arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog VC Primary School to an end. This would result in the loss of the federation funding supplement associated with the arrangement and require Ysgol Llanddarog to review its future leadership structure and associated funding arrangements, as the current headteacher post is shared across both schools. The Local Authority will work with Ysgol Llanddarog to mitigate any risk and impacts of the proposals being implemented.

A more detailed Community Impact Assessment is included in Appendix A.

Likely effect of different travel arrangements (Transport)

Travel arrangements for pupils would change, with some pupils experiencing increased journey distances and times. Free home-to-school transport would be provided in accordance with the local authority's transport policy to those who are eligible. The proposal may also lead to increased traffic at the receiving school during peak times, which will need to be managed appropriately.

Reason for preferring this option

Overall, whilst this option would result in short-term disruption for pupils, staff and the community, it would address the key challenges identified at Ysgol Bancffosfelen, including low pupil numbers, high levels of surplus places, financial pressures and significant issues relating to the condition and suitability of the building.

It is therefore considered that this option provides a more sustainable long-term model for the provision of education as it reduces surplus places within the area and prevents further deterioration of the deficit budget. Investment in modern, fit-for-purpose facilities within a more sustainable school setting would represent a more effective and strategic use of resources than committing significant capital to an ageing building serving a school facing ongoing challenges in terms of enrolment, financial viability, and long-term sustainability.

Pupils transferring to the proposed receiving school will benefit from a fit for purpose building and access to larger peer groups. The proposed receiving school can offer facilities that complement the delivery of the Curriculum for Wales whilst offering a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

Whilst the Local Authority recognises that the proposal would have implications for the existing soft federation arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog VC Primary School, these impacts do not outweigh the strong case for closure and significant educational, financial and estate-related challenges facing Ysgol Bancffosfelen.

The following table summarises how the key challenges facing Ysgol Bancffosfelen will be addressed if the preferred option was to proceed:

Key Challenge	**How the preferred option would address the key challenge**
Low pupil numbers. PLASC 2026 figures show there are currently 48 pupils attending the school.	The proposal would address this issue by transferring the remaining pupils to the proposed receiving school (Ysgol Pontyberem) or other schools nearby subject to parental preference.
Catchment Area Data PLASC Data shows 41 pupils from within the catchment area attend other schools in the locality and that Bancffosfelen school is not preferred by the majority of parents and carers in the catchment.	If implemented, the proposal would address this challenge by aligning educational provision more closely with existing parental preference patterns. As many catchment pupils already travel to other schools, the proposal would formalise attendance at a sustainable neighbouring school with sufficient capacity to accommodate pupils and provide access to a broader range of educational and social opportunities. This would help ensure that learners continue to receive high-quality education within a viable and sustainable school setting while reflecting established patterns of parental choice.
High surplus places. PLASC 2026 data indicated there are 50 surplus spaces at the school equating to 51% surplus capacity which is above the Welsh Government's suggested threshold for review.	Projections show that high surplus places are likely to continue in the future. The proposal would address this issue by transferring pupils to the receiving school. This would reduce surplus places at Ysgol Pontyberem and potentially other local schools depending on where pupils transfer if proposals are implemented.
Low pupil projections going forward. Pupil projections over the period 2027 to 2031 show some minor fluctuations rather than a consistent upward or downward trend, with	The proposal would address this issue by transferring pupils to the receiving school and potentially improving pupil projections at that school should all or some choose to transfer.

numbers remaining broadly stable overall. However, projections indicate that pupil numbers will remain significantly below the school's total capacity throughout this period, resulting in a consistently high level of surplus places	
School budget issues. Ysgol Bancffosfelen had deficit budget at the close of financial year 2024/25 of £34,444 with a deficit to March 2026 of £62,924.	The proposal would address this issue. Closure of the school would prevent further worsening of the deficit budget. Pupils would transfer to the receiving school which is in a more sustainable financial position. Closing Ysgol Bancffosfelen will strengthen the financial position of the receiving school rather than continuing to support an unsustainable setting.
Challenges with educational provision due to low pupil numbers Due to the low pupil numbers at the school, teaching staff face the ongoing challenge of planning and delivering lessons to classes that include pupils of mixed ages and abilities.	The proposal addresses this issue. Pupils would transfer to the receiving school which has a larger cohort of pupils and a greater variety of year group classes. Planning and delivering the curriculum is a lot less challenging for teachers and pupils are able to mix, interact and be challenged within their own age group. This aligns with the Carmarthenshire's Modernising Education Programme aspires to have no more than two-year groups per class.
Building Condition The school is experiencing significant building condition issues, with an existing condition grade C. Areas have been decommissioned and require demolition. The most recent condition survey estimated five-year capital maintenance forecast costs of £616,424.	The proposal would address this issue as pupils would transfer to a more modern building with a better condition rating of Grade A. which is defined as "As new condition". This would still require significant capital investment to introduce measures to accommodate pupils transferring to the receiving school.
Building suitability The suitability is currently Grade D which is defined as "Bad, buildings seriously inhibit the staff's ability to deliver the curriculum".	The proposal would address this issue as pupils would transfer to a more modern building with a better suitability rating of Grade A. which is defined as "Good facilities, suitable for teaching, learning and wellbeing in school".

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

If the proposal to close Ysgol Bancffosfelen proceeds, the Local Authority will ensure arrangements are in place to support parents' and pupils' engagement with the alternative school to ensure a smooth transition. Clear, regular and bilingual

communication with families would be maintained throughout any school organisation changes, with appropriate support made available for families who are less confident in Welsh.

Parents and pupils would be informed of all events held at the proposed alternative school during and out of school hours via social media, ParentPay and the schools newsletter.

Individual needs will be managed through collaboration with the headteacher and Education Support Advisor at the receiving school ensuring the most appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure parents' and pupils' positive engagement with the alternative school.

If parents choose to send their children to an alternative school other than Ysgol Pontyberem they will need to follow the School Admissions policy and process which can be found on the Carmarthenshire Council website.

5. Need for places and the impact on accessibility of schools

The School Organisation Code (2026) requires the County Council to take into account the following points in relation to the need for places and impact on accessibility of schools:

5.1 Will the alternative school-based provision have sufficient capacity and provide accommodation of at least equivalent quality, for existing and projected pupil numbers?

The preferred option, if approved, is for pupils to transfer to Ysgol Pontyberem from the 1 January 2028.

The total capacity of Ysgol Pontyberem for the 26/27 academic year is 34 pre-reception places with 210 places for reception and the remaining year groups from year 1-6. The total capacity is 244 with an admission number of 30.

The following table illustrates the combined pupil numbers based on projections if the proposal were to be implemented and all current pupils transfer to the proposed receiving school.

		Projections				
	PLASC 2026*	**2027***	**2028***	**2029***	**2030***	**2031***
Ysgol Bancffosfelen	48	51	53	46	48	47
Ysgol Pontyberem	210	214	211	213	222	219
Total	**258**	**265**	**264**	**259**	**270**	**266**

*Including Nursery pupils

The previous table shows that Ysgol Pontyberem would not have sufficient capacity for existing and projected pupil numbers of both schools combined.

The following table shows the impact of the proposal on year groups at the receiving school should all current pupils on roll at Ysgol Bancffosfelen transfer to Ysgol Pontyberem based on PLASC 2026 figures.

	Nursery	**Reception**	**Yr 1**	**Yr 2**	**Yr 3**	**Yr 4**	**Yr 5**	**Yr 6**	**Total**
Ysgol Bancffosfelen	2	3	6	8	5	14	5	5	48
Ysgol Pontyberem	14	19	32	34	22	30	33	26	210
Total	**16**	**22**	**38**	**42**	**27**	**44**	**38**	**31**	**258**

The information in the table above shows that should the proposal proceed and all pupils choose to transfer from Ysgol Bancffosfelen to Ysgol Pontyberem, it would create issues at the receiving school where the admissions number of 30 would be exceeded in multiple year groups.

In considering the potential for future growth in demand, the Council has reviewed both local birth rate data and planned residential development within the catchment area. Birth data for the Bancffosfelen catchment indicates a continued trend of relatively low birth numbers in recent years. Whilst future demographic trends cannot be predicted with certainty, this pattern suggests that pupil numbers are likely to remain broadly consistent with existing forecasts and that significant increases in demand are unlikely.

The Council has also considered the potential impact of future housing development. Information provided by the Planning Division has been reviewed to assess current and proposed housing allocations within the catchment areas, including sites allocated within existing or emerging development plans and sites that benefit from planning permission but remain undeveloped.

Whilst a number of housing sites have been identified across the catchment areas, there remains uncertainty regarding the delivery of some developments. Planning advice indicates that several sites identified in previous development plans have either been completed, are no longer allocated within the emerging Local Development Plan, or do not currently benefit from planning permission. In contrast, the remaining committed developments largely comprise a limited number of small-scale housing schemes and individual dwellings with planning permission that have yet to be constructed. Within the Ysgol Pontyberem catchment area, the principal committed development is a reduced allocation anticipated to deliver approximately 15 dwellings between 2028 and 2031.

Having considered the scale, status and likely deliverability of the identified developments, the Council does not consider that future housing growth within the catchment areas is likely to generate a sufficient increase in pupil numbers to materially alter projected demand for school places. The Council therefore considers that future demographic and housing trends are unlikely to create significant additional pressure on school capacity.

The following table illustrates the combined pupil numbers at both Ysgol Bancffosfelen and Ysgol Pontyberem in January 2027, 2028 and 2029 based on PLASC 2026 projections which highlights where the admissions number of 30 would potentially be exceeded in multiple year groups subject to all pupils from Bancffosfelen choosing to transfer to the receiving school.

PLASC 2026 Projections*	**Nursery**	**Reception**	**Yr 1**	**Yr 2**	**Yr 3**	**Yr 4**	**Yr 5**	**Yr 6**	**Total**
Bancffosfelen 2027	2	3	8	6	8	5	14	4	**51**
Pontyberem 2027	14	19	30	32	34	22	30	33	**214**
Total	**16**	**22**	**38**	**38**	**42**	**27**	**44**	**37**	**255**
Bancffosfelen 2028	2	3	7	8	6	8	5	14	**53**
Pontyberem 2028	14	19	30	30	32	34	22	30	**211**
Total	**16**	**22**	**37**	**38**	**38**	**42**	**27**	**44**	**254**
Bancffosfelen 2029	2	3	7	7	8	6	8	5	**46**
Pontyberem 2029	14	19	32	30	30	32	34	22	**213**
Total	**16**	**22**	**39**	**37**	**38**	**38**	**42**	**27**	**259**

If the proposal to close the school is approved, the Local Authority will work closely with the receiving school and its Governing Body to support a smooth transition for all pupils who wish to transfer. It is recognised that if all, or most, pupils choose to move to the proposed receiving school, the number of pupils will temporarily exceed the school's current admission number.

The Local Authority is committed to ensuring that sufficient provision is available for all pupils and will invest in additional accommodation and resources to provide increased capacity.

The additional classrooms would not have a detrimental effect on the majority of the existing facilities. The current and any new facilities provided would exceed the quality of the current school's environment at Bancffosfelen.

Ysgol Pontyberem benefitted from investment in improved facilities in 2019 and benefits from having large playing fields and large, level and surfaced playing areas which are compliant with standards for school premises. Any new accommodation provided would be designed in accordance with Welsh Government Area Guidelines for schools and other relevant standards.

The Local Authority will process any applications in accordance with its School Admissions Policy and the Welsh Government's School Admissions Code.

Although a specific alternative school is proposed as part of this consultation, families retain the right to express a preference for any school. Parents may choose a different

school for their child, and this could affect the projected pupil numbers included in this document. As a result, the overall availability of places across schools may differ from what is currently anticipated.

It is also important to note that the method used to project pupil numbers is based on a rolling average of pupils aged 5 to 8 in primary schools. This means that any sudden changes in pupil numbers may take several years to be fully reflected in the data. In schools with smaller numbers of pupils, even minor changes can have a proportionally larger impact on projections. Therefore, the pupil forecasts presented here should be viewed as estimates rather than exact figures.

5.2 Will the proposals improve access for disabled pupils in accordance with requirements under the Equality Act 2010

The current school site at Bancffosfelen presents a number of limitations in relation to access for disabled pupils and staff. Whilst reasonable adjustments can be made where required, the design and layout of the building restrict opportunities to further improve accessibility without significant capital investment.

In respect of physical access, the school does not currently provide full step-free access across the site. There are changes in level within the building, with steps required to access classrooms and circulation areas and there are no ramps or lifts installed. Whilst pupils who are ambulant are able to move around the school, this configuration would present barriers for wheelchair users or those with significant mobility impairments. There are also no designated disabled parking spaces or formalised drop-off arrangements for pupils or staff with additional mobility needs.

Toilet provision is available on the ground floor but the layout and facilities are not designed as fully accessible, adapted disabled toilets. While adjustments have been made for younger pupils (e.g. reduced height facilities), the provision does not meet the standard of fully compliant accessible facilities.

Outdoor areas, including playgrounds, are generally accessible, with largely level surfaces, although there are some inclines and the playing field is on a more significant slope, which may limit accessibility for some pupils.

In terms of access to the curriculum, the school demonstrates strengths. Information provided by the school explains that it currently supports pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) through trained staff with expertise in areas such as trauma-informed practice, emotional literacy (ELSA) and targeted interventions. While there are no dedicated specialist facilities (e.g. sensory rooms), the school provides flexible spaces for intervention and emotional regulation, which support inclusive practice.

In relation to participation in school life, pupils are included in a range of extracurricular activities, trips and community-based opportunities. These are planned with consideration of learner needs, supporting inclusive participation.
However, overall, the school's physical accessibility constraints mean that, without significant adaptation, it may not fully meet the needs of all pupils with physical disabilities in the future.

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on local authorities to improve accessibility to school premises and ensure that disabled pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage. Therefore, while the school currently makes appropriate provision within its existing context particularly in terms of pastoral and curriculum support, the limitations of the building restrict the extent to which access for disabled pupils can be improved without substantial capital investment.

The proposed receiving school, Ysgol Pontyberem, provides a higher level of physical accessibility than the current Bancffosfelen site. Access to the school is available through a step-free main entrance and the building includes lift access between floors, enabling movement throughout the school for pupils, staff and visitors with mobility impairments. Accessible toilet facilities are available on all floors and the site benefits from designated disabled parking spaces and suitable drop-off arrangements. Outdoor learning and play areas are generally accessible, with the majority of external spaces located on level ground.

In relation to access to the curriculum, Ysgol Pontyberem has extensive experience of supporting pupils with additional learning needs and currently supports a significant number of pupils with Individual Development Plans and additional intervention needs. The school operates established processes for identifying learner needs, implementing and reviewing support, and working with external agencies where appropriate. The curriculum is described as broad, balanced and adaptable, enabling staff to respond effectively to a wide range of learner needs through inclusive and differentiated practice.

The school also provides a range of specialist facilities and support environments, including nurture provision, wellbeing spaces and dedicated sensory rooms which support pupils who require assistance with emotional regulation, mental health, sensory processing or transition arrangements. These facilities represent a level of specialist provision that is not currently available at Ysgol Bancffosfelen.

Ysgol Pontyberem has established staffing structures to support inclusion, including a dedicated ALNCo, trained wellbeing staff and personnel with expertise in trauma-informed practice, emotional literacy support and targeted interventions. The school has also demonstrated a strong commitment to enabling disabled pupils and pupils with ALN to participate fully in educational visits, extracurricular activities and wider school life through the use of reasonable adjustments, targeted support and adapted risk assessments.

The Local Authority recognises that accessibility needs vary between individuals and that reasonable adjustments must continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Should the proposal proceed, detailed transition planning would be undertaken and any necessary adaptations identified in advance to ensure that individual pupils' needs continue to be met.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal is likely to improve access for disabled pupils in accordance with the aims and requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Whilst Ysgol Bancffosfelen currently provides appropriate pastoral and learning support, the age, layout and accessibility limitations of the existing building restrict opportunities to further improve access without significant capital investment. In contrast, Ysgol

Pontyberem provides step-free access, lifts, accessible toilet facilities, designated disabled parking with step free access from the car park to reception area, specialist wellbeing and sensory provision, and extensive experience of supporting pupils with a wide range of additional learning needs. Consequently, the proposal is considered likely to improve both physical accessibility and access to the curriculum and wider school life for disabled pupils.

5.3 Whether the alternative school-based provision is sufficient to meet existing and projected demand for schools of the same language and (if relevant) designated religious character.

Additional capacity will be provided at Ysgol Pontyberem to accommodate pupils arising from the proposed arrangement. The Local Authority will deliver the necessary accommodation to increase the school's capacity.

In addition, there is available capacity within other Welsh-medium primary schools serving the wider catchment area of Ysgol Bancffosfelen, ensuring that alternative provision of the same language category is available should parents express a preference for a different setting.

Accordingly, the Local Authority considers that sufficient school-based provision is, or will be, available to meet existing and projected demand for Welsh-medium education in the area.

5.4 Other school organisation proposals

The Council has recently undertaken a separate statutory process in relation to a proposal to discontinue Ysgol Y Fro. This was approved on 14 October 2026 and will be implemented from 31 December 2026. The Council has considered whether the Ysgol Y Fro proposal and the proposal relating to Ysgol Bancffosfelen constitute related proposals under the School Organisation Code 2026.

The Council's view is that the implementation of the Ysgol Y Fro proposal would not prevent or undermine the effective implementation of the proposal relating to Ysgol Bancffosfelen. Accordingly, the proposals are not considered to be related proposals for the purposes of the Code.

6. Schools likely to be affected by the proposal

In line with the requirements of the School Organisation Code (2026) details are provided in Appendix D of the surrounding schools to which it might reasonably be considered that pupils may wish to transfer along with details of the proposed receiving school.

6.1 Impact of the proposal on schools likely to be affected by the proposal

The Local Authority has considered the potential impact of the proposal on schools likely to be affected, in particular Ysgol Pontyberem as the proposed receiving school and other Welsh-medium primary schools within the surrounding area.

Ysgol Pontyberem will experience an increase in pupil numbers as a result of the proposal. This is expected to have a positive impact on the school's long-term

sustainability, supporting stable class organisation, efficient use of resources and maintaining a broad and balanced curriculum. The Local Authority will provide additional accommodation to increase the school's capacity to ensure that the school is able to accommodate the increased pupil numbers without adversely impacting on teaching and learning. Some small scale disruption to school life may be experienced as construction works continue however this would be managed accordingly over the construction period.

The Local Authority also recognises that the proposal would have implications for Ysgol Llanddarog VC Primary School. The closure of Ysgol Bancffosfelen would bring the existing soft federation arrangement and shared headship model to an end. This would result in the loss of the federation supplement associated with the arrangement and require the school and Local Authority to review its future leadership structure and associated funding arrangements. The Local Authority would work with the governing body and other stakeholders to support transition planning and ensure continuity of leadership arrangements.

The proposal is not expected to have a detrimental impact on other nearby Welsh-medium primary schools. There may be a small redistribution of pupils depending on parental preference, however, no individual school is expected to experience a significant reduction or increase in pupil numbers that would affect its viability, staffing structure or ability to deliver the curriculum.

Overall, the Local Authority considers that the proposal will have a neutral to positive impact on surrounding schools and will not adversely affect the provision or quality of education within the area.

6.2 Impact of the proposal on Staff

The decision to propose the closure of a school is never taken lightly, and the Local Authority fully recognise the significant impact such proposals can have on the full and part time members of staff who work at Ysgol Bancffosfelen and also on the staff at the proposed receiving school.

A key priority for the Local Authority is to minimise disruption and to support school staff through any period of change should the proposals be implemented. The Local Authority is committed to doing everything it can to avoid compulsory redundancies in line with the Model Redundancy / Surplus Staffing Policy for Schools. This includes exploring all possible redeployment opportunities within the wider schools' network and the local authority, offering voluntary redundancy or early retirement where appropriate, and working closely with trade unions throughout the process.

However, while every effort will be made to redeploy affected staff, the possibility of redundancies cannot be ruled out. Where redeployment is not feasible, a fair and transparent process will be followed and support will be given to those affected.

The Local Authority understand this may create uncertainty for staff and their families, and are committed to providing clear communication, timely updates, and access to support services throughout the process. The Local Authority's HR team will work

closely with Headteachers and Governing Bodies to ensure that all staff are treated with dignity and respect throughout the process.

Any changes at the receiving school would be managed through its governing body, in line with school staffing regulations and HR policies, and would also be subject to appropriate consultation with affected staff and unions.

6.3 Impact of the proposal on the local Community of Bancffosfelen

The main impacts on Bancffosfelen are expected to relate to the loss of the school's role as a community hub. The school currently provides a venue for community meetings, fundraising activities, coffee mornings, fairs and other local events, as well as access to outdoor facilities that are not readily available elsewhere in the village. Its closure could therefore reduce opportunities for community engagement and weaken some of the social networks that have developed around the school.

The proposal could also affect other services that currently operate from the school, particularly Cylch Meithrin Bancffosfelen. If suitable alternative accommodation cannot be secured, there may be disruption to local childcare and Welsh-medium early years provision and impacts on Welsh language use within the local community . The loss or relocation of the Cylch Meithrin could create additional travel and childcare challenges for families and may affect the established progression route into Welsh-medium education within the community.

If a decision is made to close the school, the Local Authority's Education Department will work collaboratively with the Children's Services Department, the relevant Cylch Meithrin and Mudiad Meithrin to explore and identify potential alternative accommodation options for the affected Cylch Meithrin provision. Whilst the Local Authority will support this process, the ultimate decision regarding any future location and the financial viability of operating from an alternative site will rest with the individual Cylch Meithrin and Mudiad Meithrin. In reaching a decision, the Cylch Meithrin will need to carefully consider the implications of relocation, including ongoing revenue commitments such as utility charges, maintenance and repair costs, insurance, and any other operational expenses associated with the new premises, to ensure that the provision remains sustainable in the longer term.

There may also be wider economic and demographic impacts. The closure of the school could reduce local activity within the village, affect locally based employment opportunities and result in some additional travel costs and logistical challenges for families. Whilst the absence of a village school may make the community less attractive to some families with young children, the close proximity of Ysgol Pontyberem and the continued presence of other community assets are expected to help mitigate these effects.

Of the 64 pupils living within the Ysgol Bancffosfelen catchment area, 23 attend Ysgol Bancffosfelen and 41 attend other schools (PLASC 2026). The Authority notes that analysis of pupil movement data shows that Ysgol Pontyberem currently educates more pupils from the Ysgol Bancffosfelen catchment area than any other school. This demonstrates not only that a significant number of families already choose Ysgol

Pontyberem, but also that the school already has established links with families residing within the Ysgol Bancffosfelen community and catchment area.

The Local Authority has also considered the socio-economic profile of the community through the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2025. The evidence suggests that the catchment area generally experiences low to moderate levels of deprivation overall and is not characterised by concentrated income deprivation. However, WIMD 2025 identifies relative deprivation in relation to access to services across parts of the catchment area, reflecting the rural nature of the community and the importance of locally accessible facilities and services. In this context, the loss of a local school may have a greater impact on accessibility and community infrastructure than might typically arise in more urban locations.

It is also recognised that the proposed receiving school, Ysgol Pontyberem, is located approximately 1.3 miles from Ysgol Bancffosfelen. As a result, access to Welsh-medium primary education would remain available within close proximity to the Bancffosfelen community and many families would continue to access education, activities and services within the wider local area. This may help to mitigate some of the practical impacts arising from the loss of a school within the village, although it would not remove the loss of the school's role as a community focal point.

The assessment acknowledges that closure could lead to a temporary period during which the school building is vacant, potentially creating concerns relating to vandalism, anti-social behaviour or site maintenance. However, the Local Authority would implement appropriate security measures and seek to identify a future use for the site as quickly as possible, including exploring opportunities for ongoing community use where appropriate.

The Community Impact Assessment indicates that the principal community risk associated with the proposal relates to the loss of a local service and community asset within an area where access to services is comparatively more limited than in many other parts of Wales. The evidence does not suggest that the proposal would disproportionately affect a community experiencing severe socio-economic deprivation, but it does indicate that careful consideration should be given to accessibility, community cohesion and the future provision of community facilities.

Overall, the assessment recognises that the closure of Ysgol Bancffosfelen would have social, cultural and emotional impacts on the community and could reduce access to some local services and facilities. However, these impacts are considered alongside the school’s long-term educational viability and financial sustainability. The Authority has concluded that, while the community impacts are significant and acknowledged, they are outweighed by the need to secure sustainable, high-quality educational provision for learners in the future.

The Community Impact Assessment is included in Appendix A and will be updated throughout the statutory process to reflect any feedback received.

7. Impact on quality and standards in education

The School Organisation Code (2026) requires an analysis of the likely impact of the proposals on the quality and standards of education in the school, taking into account the relevant Estyn inspection areas, which are outlined in the following section.

At the time of its 2018 inspection, Estyn identified a number of areas for improvement at Ysgol Bancffosfelen relating to leadership, the level of challenge in teaching, the implementation of the Foundation Phase and the development of pupils' Welsh, numeracy and ICT skills.

Following a review in 2019, Estyn concluded that Ysgol Bancffosfelen had made sufficient progress in addressing the recommendations and removed the school from follow-up activity.

Estyn evidence indicates that Ysgol Pontyberem provides effective teaching and learning experiences and a broad and balanced curriculum that supports pupils to make sound progress from their starting points. Inspectors report that learning experiences are engaging and purposeful and help pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills effectively.

The proposal would place pupils within a larger school with greater curriculum capacity, a larger staff team and access to a broader range of educational experiences and learning opportunities. Pupils would be taught in age-appropriate classes alongside a larger cohort of peers, increasing opportunities for collaborative learning and discussion.

Overall, the proposed alternative school is expected to deliver outcomes and offer provision at least equivalent to that which is currently available to those learners (including learners with ALN). The quality of provision identified by Estyn at Ysgol Pontyberem, together with the school's broader curriculum offer and greater staffing capacity, indicates that pupils would continue to have access to effective teaching and a broad and balanced curriculum.

Ysgol Bancffosfelen was inspected by Estyn in June 2018. His Majesty's Chief Inspector was of the opinion that no follow up measures were required in relation to this school. The recommendations were as follows:

R1. Ensure a stable leader for the school
R2. Increase the level of challenge in teaching
R3. Implement the principles of the foundation phase in full
R4. Improve pupils' oral and written Welsh skills
R5. Improve pupils' numeracy and ICT skills

Ysgol Bancffosfelen was recently inspected by Estyn on 21 September 2026 and information regarding the outcomes of the Estyn inspection will be noted throughout the statutory process.

Ysgol Pontyberem was last inspected by Estyn in March 2023 and was not placed in any follow up category. Estyn identified the following recommendations for further improvement:

R1. Ensure that all teachers and support staff have consistently high expectations and effective classroom organisation.
R2. Ensure that procedures to promote pupils' skills and enjoyment while reading are widespread and consistently effective across the school.

The inspection also reported that leadership at the school is strong and effective, that a broad and balanced curriculum is provided, and that most pupils make sound progress from their starting points.

7.1 Likely impact on teaching and learning

Should the County Council proceed with implementation of the preferred option, Ysgol Bancffosfelen would close, and pupils would transfer to Ysgol Pontyberem.

The proposal is likely to have a positive impact on teaching and learning. Pupils transferring to Ysgol Pontyberem would benefit from learning within a larger school environment, with increased opportunities to collaborate, discuss and learn alongside a wider group of peers of a similar age and stage of development. This is likely to support the development of communication, thinking and social skills whilst enhancing engagement in learning.

Should the proposal be implemented and all pupils transfer to Ysgol Pontyberem, it is likely that to accommodate the full cohort of Ysgol Bancffosfelen that some year groups would be split and taught in mixed age classes spanning no more than two year groups which is in accordance with the primary education principles included in the Authority's Modernising Education Programme Strategy. This arrangement would enable teachers to plan and deliver learning experiences that are more closely aligned to pupils' age and developmental needs, whilst reducing the complexity associated with teaching more than two year groups within the same classroom. The larger cohort sizes are also expected to provide richer opportunities for collaborative learning, peer support, group work and healthy competition, contributing positively to pupils' confidence, wellbeing and aspiration.

In addition, pupils would have access to a broader range of educational experiences, resources and extracurricular opportunities available within a larger school setting. The proposal is therefore considered likely to enhance the overall quality of the learning environment and support improved educational outcomes for pupils. As a result, the proposal is not anticipated to have a detrimental impact on educational standards and may provide opportunities for further improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement.

Estyn reports that, as pupils progress through Ysgol Pontyberem, most make sound progress, including learners with additional learning needs. Pupils build effectively on prior learning and apply newly acquired knowledge and skills successfully in new contexts and experiences. Estyn also notes that almost all older pupils take responsibility for their own learning maturely and apply their skills confidently for

specific purposes. These findings indicate that pupils transferring from Ysgol Bancffosfelen would move to a school with secure outcomes and effective teaching and learning practices.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which develops pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills effectively. Estyn notes that learning experiences help pupils develop an understanding of their local area, Wales and the wider world while promoting their development as informed and responsible citizens.

The larger staff team at Ysgol Pontyberem provides increased capacity for curriculum design, professional learning and the sharing of effective practice. This enables greater collaboration between practitioners, supports innovation in teaching approaches and strengthens the school's capacity to deliver the Curriculum for Wales effectively while sustaining continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

Overall, the proposal is not expected to have an adverse impact on educational standards and that Ysgol Pontyberem would be able to deliver outcomes and offer provision at least equivalent to that which is currently available to learners in Ysgol Bancffosfelen. Taking account of the quality of teaching, the positive outcomes achieved by pupils, the breadth of curriculum provision and the additional opportunities available within a larger school environment, the proposal is likely to have a positive impact on teaching and learning and support pupils' continued progress and attainment.

7.2 Likely impact on care, support and guidance

Whilst the proposal would require pupils to transfer from Ysgol Bancffosfelen to Ysgol Pontyberem, comprehensive transition arrangements would be implemented to support pupils and families throughout the process. These arrangements would include planned visits, opportunities to meet staff and peers, and bespoke support for individual learners where required, helping to ensure a positive and successful transition.

Detailed transition planning would ensure that information relating to pupils' learning, wellbeing, attendance and additional learning needs is shared effectively between schools. This would support continuity of provision and enable appropriate interventions and support strategies to be in place from the outset.

The proposal would provide pupils with opportunities to learn and socialise within a larger peer group, supporting the development of friendships, communication skills, confidence, resilience and a sense of belonging. Pupils would also benefit from access to a wider range of extracurricular, cultural and sporting opportunities that can enhance wellbeing and personal development.

Estyn reports that nearly all pupils at Ysgol Pontyberem are happy and feel safe within the school's caring and inclusive community. Nearly all pupils feel that staff listen to their views and respond appropriately to any concerns. Most pupils develop positive attitudes towards learning and demonstrate increasing confidence and resilience as they progress through the school. These findings indicate that the school is well placed to support pupils transferring from Ysgol Bancffosfelen.

There are currently four learners at Ysgol Bancffosfelen with Individual Development Plans (IDPs). Should the proposal proceed, all learners with IDPs would continue to receive support in accordance with their identified needs. Transition arrangements would be undertaken in partnership with parents, carers, school staff and relevant agencies to ensure continuity of provision and minimise disruption to support.

Ysgol Bancffosfelen currently has a strong focus and strength in supporting pupils wellbeing and appropriate measures and interventions to support those identified with additional learning needs.

Estyn identifies provision for pupils with additional learning needs as a significant strength of Ysgol Pontyberem. The school provides a comprehensive range of interventions and wellbeing support, including sensory provision, wellbeing spaces, mindfulness activities and Y Nyth, a dedicated nurture facility that has been established to support vulnerable learners. The school's inclusive ethos, experienced staff and strong focus on the wellbeing of the whole child contribute to positive outcomes for pupils across a wide range of needs.

The school maintains strong partnerships with parents, carers and external agencies, enabling a coordinated approach to supporting learners' wellbeing, attendance and additional learning needs. These established networks would help ensure that pupils transferring from Ysgol Bancffosfelen continue to access appropriate support and services.

Overall, whilst some pupils may require additional support during the transition period, the proposal is not expected to have a negative impact on care, support and guidance. The combination of effective transition planning, strong pastoral systems, an inclusive school culture and highly effective wellbeing and additional learning needs provision at Ysgol Pontyberem is expected to support positive outcomes for all learners and would deliver outcomes and offer provision at least equivalent to that which is currently available to those learners in Ysgol Bancffosfelen. In the longer term, pupils are likely to benefit from enhanced social opportunities, broader friendship groups and access to a wider range of support services within a larger school community.

7.3 Likely impact on leading and improving

At present, Ysgol Bancffosfelen operates within an informal federation arrangement with another local school. Whilst this arrangement has supported leadership continuity, the proposal would place pupils within a larger school with sustainable leadership capacity focused on a single school community.

Estyn reports that leadership at Ysgol Pontyberem is strong and effective and respects the contributions of all members of the school community. Leaders have established a clear vision based on maintaining a close-knit and welcoming school with a caring and supportive ethos where all pupils achieve well and develop as valuable members of society. These findings provide confidence in the school's ability to successfully manage and support the proposed transition.

Ysgol Pontyberem benefits from a larger leadership structure, providing greater capacity for distributed leadership across key areas of school life. This enables leadership responsibilities to be shared effectively amongst a wider team, strengthens succession planning and supports robust arrangements for self-evaluation, school improvement and accountability.

The larger staffing and leadership structure also provides enhanced opportunities for professional collaboration, curriculum development, coaching and mentoring, and the sharing of effective practice. This increased capacity supports continuous improvement and strengthens the school's ability to respond effectively to local and national educational priorities, including the ongoing implementation of Curriculum for Wales.

The proposal would consolidate leadership expertise, resources and support services within a single school setting, contributing to the long-term sustainability of educational provision. A larger school is generally less vulnerable to changes in staffing and is better positioned to maintain leadership continuity and improvement capacity over time.

Overall, the proposal is likely to have a positive impact on leadership and school improvement and would deliver outcomes and offer provision at least equivalent to that which is currently available to those learners in Ysgol Bancffosfelen. The strong and effective leadership identified by Estyn, combined with the benefits of a larger and more distributed leadership structure, provides a secure foundation for sustaining high-quality provision, driving continuous improvement and securing positive outcomes for all learners.

7.4 Impact of the proposals on vulnerable groups, including children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

Whilst any change of school can present a period of adjustment for some learners, appropriate transition arrangements would be implemented to support vulnerable pupils and ensure that their wellbeing needs are identified and addressed throughout the process. Opportunities for visits, familiarisation activities, transition meetings and enhanced pastoral support would help to minimise disruption and support a positive transition to Ysgol Pontyberem.

There are currently four learners with Individual Development Plans (IDPs) at Ysgol Bancffosfelen. Should the proposal proceed, all learners with IDPs would continue to receive provision in accordance with their identified needs. Transition planning would be undertaken in collaboration with parents and carers, school staff and relevant partner agencies to ensure continuity of support and effective transfer of information.

The proposal is not expected to have a negative impact on vulnerable groups of learners, including those with additional learning needs, those experiencing social or emotional difficulties, or those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The larger staffing structure and wider range of resources available at Ysgol Pontyberem are likely to enhance the school's capacity to identify and respond to individual learner needs and provide targeted support where required.

Ysgol Pontyberem has well-established arrangements to support pupils' wellbeing and inclusion. Estyn identifies provision for learners with additional learning needs as a highly effective feature of the school's work. This includes a comprehensive programme of interventions, a sensory room, wellbeing spaces, mindfulness provision and the nurture provision, 'Y Nyth', which has been established successfully to support vulnerable learners.

Estyn also notes that the expertise and commitment of staff help to create a fully inclusive learning environment in which nearly all pupils make sound progress from their starting points. Strong partnerships with parents and carers, alongside productive links with a wide range of external agencies, further strengthen the support available to vulnerable learners and their families.

The proposal would provide vulnerable learners with access to a broader range of specialist expertise, interventions and support services than may be available within a smaller school setting. This increased capacity is likely to strengthen early identification, targeted support and multi-agency working, ensuring that pupils receive timely and appropriate provision.

Overall, the proposal is not expected to have a significant adverse impact on vulnerable learners. Comprehensive transition arrangements, continuity of ALN provision and the highly effective inclusion and wellbeing support available at Ysgol Pontyberem provide a strong basis for ensuring that pupils continue to be supported effectively. In the longer term, learners are likely to benefit from enhanced access to specialist support, wider social opportunities and the resources associated with a larger school community.

7.5 The impact of proposals on the educational attainment of learners from economically disadvantaged backgrounds

The Local Authority has considered the likely impact of the proposal on learners from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, including those eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) and those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

PLASC 2026 data indicates that approximately 8% of pupils currently attending Ysgol Bancffosfelen are eligible for Free School Meals. The Local Authority recognises that learners from disadvantaged backgrounds may be more vulnerable to disruption arising from changes in school organisation and therefore requires particular consideration when assessing potential impacts.

In addition to pupil-level data, the Local Authority has considered area-based measures of deprivation through the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2025. The principal Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) within the catchment area are Llangyndeyrn 2, Pontyberem 2 and Pontyberem 1, which are ranked within deprivation deciles 5, 4 and 7 respectively. Supporting areas within the catchment, including Glyn and Llanddarog, fall within deciles 6 and 6 respectively. This indicates that the catchment is not characterised by high levels of deprivation and generally experiences low to moderate levels of deprivation overall when compared with the rest of Wales.

Whilst the catchment is not characterised by high levels of deprivation overall, WIMD 2025 income indicators identify notable levels of child income deprivation within some of the principal catchment LSOAs. The proportion of children living in income-deprived households ranges from approximately 25.8% to 40.5% across the principal catchment areas. The Local Authority therefore recognises that a proportion of learners may experience socio-economic disadvantage and that any changes arising from the proposal should be considered in that context.

The WIMD 2025 evidence suggests that the most significant deprivation factor affecting parts of the catchment relates to access to services rather than concentrated income deprivation. Several catchment areas rank amongst the more deprived areas in Wales for access to services, reflecting the rural nature of the community and the need to travel to access education and other services.

In addition, WIMD 2025 educational indicators identify comparatively high levels of persistent absenteeism amongst primary-aged learners in some parts of the catchment area. The Council recognises the importance of ensuring that any transition arrangements support continued engagement with education, particularly for learners who may be vulnerable to educational disadvantage.

The Integrated Impact Assessment also considered the interaction between protected characteristics and socio-economic disadvantage, particularly where changes to accessibility and transport arrangements may affect certain groups disproportionately.

Should the proposal proceed, pupils would transfer to Ysgol Pontyberem or another school selected by parents through the admissions process. Ysgol Pontyberem benefits from a larger staffing structure, broader curricular opportunities and a wider range of learner support services. Learners would also have access to age-appropriate classes, larger peer groups, extracurricular activities and targeted intervention programmes that may support attainment, wellbeing and engagement.

The Local Authority acknowledges that changes to travel arrangements may have a greater impact on some lower-income households, particularly where access to private transport is limited. To mitigate these impacts, free home-to-school transport will be provided in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy for eligible learners and appropriate transition support will be provided.

Having considered both FSM data and WIMD 2025 evidence, the Local Authority does not consider that the proposal would have a disproportionate adverse impact on learners from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Whilst some short-term disruption may occur during the transition period, the available evidence suggests that the principal socio-economic issues affecting the catchment relate to income disadvantage affecting some families and accessibility of services within a rural area. The proposal is therefore expected to maintain, and in some respects enhance, educational opportunities and support available to disadvantaged learners.

The potential impact of the proposal on learners experiencing socio-economic disadvantage has also been considered through the Integrated Impact Assessment contained in Appendix C.

7.6 Equality issues arising from the proposals, including those identified through equality impact assessments

An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken to consider the potential effects of the proposal on individuals who share protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. The assessment is included in Appendix C.

The assessment concluded that the proposal is not expected to result in unlawful discrimination or create disproportionate adverse impacts on any protected group. However, the proposal would directly affect pupils, parents, carers and staff associated with Ysgol Bancffosfelen and therefore appropriate support and mitigation measures would be put in place should the proposal proceed.

Particular consideration has been given to pupils with disabilities and Additional Learning Needs (ALN). While no adverse impact has been identified in relation to accessibility, it is recognised that some learners may experience anxiety or require additional support when transitioning to a different school environment. Ysgol Pontyberem benefits from accessible facilities, established ALN support arrangements and access to specialist services. Individual transition plans, reasonable adjustments and ongoing engagement with families would be implemented where required to support learners throughout the transition process.

The Integrated Impact Assessment also considered the interaction between protected characteristics and socio-economic disadvantage. Evidence gathered through the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2025 indicates that the catchment area generally experiences low to moderate levels of deprivation overall.

However, the assessment also identified that parts of the catchment experience relatively high levels of child income deprivation and that some families may therefore be more vulnerable to changes in accessibility, travel arrangements and engagement with school activities. The assessment identified that some individuals who share protected characteristics, particularly disabled learners, learners with additional learning needs and families experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, may be more sensitive to these changes. Accordingly, these matters have been considered in the development of mitigation measures and transition arrangements.

The assessment also identified that changes to travel arrangements could have implications for some families, including parents who are pregnant, on maternity leave, or who may otherwise find it more difficult to engage with the process. To mitigate this, the Council would provide clear communication, flexible consultation and engagement opportunities, and support in relation to transport arrangements where appropriate. Any staffing implications arising from the proposal would be managed in accordance with the Council's employment policies to ensure fair and equitable treatment for all employees.

Overall, whilst potential impacts associated with transition have been identified for certain groups, the assessment concludes that these impacts can be effectively mitigated through appropriate planning and support.

No evidence has been identified to suggest that the proposal would result in unlawful discrimination or a disproportionate adverse impact on learners with protected characteristics or learners experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, as the mitigation measures identified within the proposal, Community Impact Assessment and Integrated Impact Assessment would implemented if proposals are implemented.

These mitigation measures include:

- A structured transition programme, including familiarisation visits and opportunities for learners to become accustomed to the receiving school environment.
- Individual transition planning and reasonable adjustments for learners with disabilities and Additional Learning Needs (ALN).
- Individual assessments of transport requirements and the provision of specialist transport arrangements where required.
- Free home-to-school transport for eligible learners in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy.
- Ongoing pastoral, wellbeing and learner support following transfer.
- Monitoring of attendance, punctuality, engagement and wellbeing during and following implementation.
- Continued engagement with parents, carers and families throughout the transition process.
- Flexible consultation and engagement arrangements to ensure all affected individuals are able to participate in the decision-making process.
- Measures to support equitable access to school activities and opportunities for learners who may be experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

Subject to the implementation of these mitigation measures, the proposal would continue to provide access to Welsh-medium education, inclusive educational provision, wellbeing support and specialist services within the proposed receiving school, helping to promote equality of opportunity and improved outcomes for all learners.

7.7 The ability of the Headteacher / Governing Body of school to meet their legal requirements under the 2021 Act for the Curriculum for Wales for learners across the 3-16 continuum of education.

The Local Authority has no concerns regarding the quality of education provided at Ysgol Pontyberem. Consequently, it is not anticipated that implementation of the proposal would have a negative impact on the quality of teaching, learning or curriculum provision experienced by pupils currently attending Ysgol Bancffosfelen.

Ysgol Pontyberem is well placed to meet its statutory responsibilities under the Curriculum for Wales. The school's larger staffing structure provides increased capacity for curriculum design, planning, delivery and evaluation, whilst enabling staff to work collaboratively on progression planning, assessment, moderation and the

development of effective teaching practices. This collaborative approach supports the ongoing refinement and successful implementation of the Curriculum for Wales.

The larger staff team also provides greater opportunities for professional learning and the sharing of expertise across Areas of Learning and Experience. This enhances the school's ability to respond to curriculum reform, embed effective pedagogy and ensure consistency in curriculum delivery and learner progression.

Estyn reports that Ysgol Pontyberem provides a broad and balanced curriculum that builds effectively on pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Learning experiences are engaging and purposeful, providing opportunities for pupils to learn about their local community, Wales and the wider world. As a result, pupils develop a strong understanding of their role within society and the importance of being responsible and ethical citizens.

The school's established leadership structure and wider staffing capacity support effective curriculum leadership and quality assurance processes. This provides a strong foundation for monitoring learner progress, evaluating curriculum impact and ensuring ongoing compliance with the expectations of the Curriculum for Wales.

Overall, the proposal is not expected to adversely affect the school's ability to fulfil its statutory duties under the Curriculum for Wales. On balance, the greater staffing capacity, wider curriculum expertise and strong educational provision available at Ysgol Pontyberem are likely to enhance the school's ability to design, deliver and continuously improve a high-quality curriculum that meets the needs of all learners.

The Local Authority considers that Ysgol Pontyberem provides educational provision that is at least equivalent to that which is currently available at Ysgol Bancffosfelen.

8. Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)

The School Organisation Code (2026) requires an analysis of the likely impact of the proposals on the WESP. As the schools involved or affected in this proposal provides teaching through the medium of Welsh a Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been caried out and is contained within Appendix B. This assessment will be updated throughout the process to reflect any specific feedback received.

8.1 How the proposal forms part of the WESP and the extent to which the proposal would support the targets in the approved Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)

Ysgol Bancffosfelen and Ysgol Pontyberem are both Welsh medium schools. The proposal is not directly linked to the targets in the Local Authority's WESP although it does align with Carmarthenshire County Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), which sets out a ten-year vision (2022-2032) to increase and improve Welsh medium education provision and contribute to the Welsh Government's target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050 – Cymraeg 2050. The proposal would maintain the availability of Welsh language provision.

The proposal involves the transfer of learners from one Welsh medium school to another which would preserve Welsh-medium educational opportunities and, if managed effectively, could strengthen the sustainability of Welsh-medium provision. By consolidating pupils within a larger Welsh medium school, it supports the long-term sustainability of Welsh medium schools by increasing pupil numbers and resilience.

8.2 How the proposal would expand or reduce Welsh language provision and in the case of the latter, set out why provision will be reduced.

The proposal would maintain the availability of Welsh language provision. Ysgol Bancffosfelen and Ysgol Pontyberem are both Category 3 Welsh-medium community primary schools. This would ensure that access to Welsh-medium education would be retained. An initial Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached to this document in Appendix B. This assessment will be reviewed and updated at key points should the proposal proceed.

Pupils currently attending Ysgol Bancffosfelen will continue to have the opportunity to access Welsh medium provision through transfer to Ysgol Pontyberem, which is also a Category 3 Welsh medium school. This ensures that continuity of Welsh-medium education can be maintained, and that learners can continue to develop their Welsh language skills in line with the expectations of the Curriculum for Wales and the Local Authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

The proposal will consolidate Welsh medium provision within schools that have greater capacity, staffing and resources. This is likely to strengthen the quality and sustainability of Welsh medium education, providing pupils with increased opportunities to use the Welsh language across a wider range of contexts, both within the classroom and through extracurricular activities.

Whilst the proposal maintains Welsh-medium education and is expected to support pupils' continued linguistic development, the Local Authority recognises that closure of Ysgol Bancffosfelen may affect Welsh language use within the local community and could have implications for local Welsh-medium early years provision should alternative accommodation for Cylch Meithrin Bancffosfelen not be secured. These matters are considered in detail within the Welsh Language Impact Assessment and appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented where possible.

In summary, while Welsh medium provision at Ysgol Bancffosfelen would cease, the proposal maintains and supports Welsh medium education within the wider area. It ensures continued access, promotes progression in Welsh language learning, and contributes to the long term sustainability and growth of Welsh-medium provision in line with the aims of the WESP.

9. Finance

The School Organisation Code (2026) requires an analysis of the likely financial impact of the proposals if implemented.

9.1 The recurrent/revenue costs of proposals over a period of at least 3 years and whether the necessary recurrent/revenue funding is available (inclusive of staffing, building maintenance and additional transport costs)

The recurrent revenue costs that should normally be considered over a minimum three-year period are the ongoing annual costs that continue after implementation of the proposal, rather than one-off consultation, legal or capital costs.

For a proposal to discontinue a primary school and transfer pupils to a nearby receiving school, the principal recurrent revenue costs would typically include:

1. Home-to-School Transport

This would usually be the most significant ongoing cost.

- Daily contracted transport services.
- Escort costs where required.
- Additional transport for ALN learners where eligible.
- Fuel, vehicle replacement and contract inflation assumptions.

Should the proposal proceed, the transport costs associated with the implementation of the proposal would be based on current prices and pupils' current location and assuming the pupils transfer to Ysgol Pontyberem.

2. Additional Staffing Costs at the Receiving School

Where pupil numbers increase sufficiently to require:

- Additional teaching staff.
- Teaching assistants.

These costs would only be included where pupil growth directly triggers additional staffing requirements. However, these costs would be balanced by additional per-pupil funding received by the school for the transferring pupils.

3. Additional ALN Support

Where transferred pupils require:

- Specialist learning support.
- Behaviour support.
- Specialist transport or therapies funded by the authority.

These costs could only be calculated once it is known which school(s) individual pupils are likely to transfer to. These may also result in savings, if additional support is already available in the receiving school and does not need to be increased.

4. Increased Premises Running Costs at the Receiving School

These as additional costs are difficult to quantify and tend to be relatively modest compared with the savings from closing a school because the receiving school already incurs these fixed costs, such as:

- Utilities (electricity, gas, water).
- Cleaning costs.
- Catering costs.
- ICT licences and support.

5. Ongoing Building Maintenance of the Closed Site (if retained)

If the former school building is not immediately disposed of, ongoing revenue costs may include:

- Security.
- Insurance.
- Basic maintenance.
- Utilities required to maintain the building.
- Grounds maintenance.

These costs continue until disposal, transfer to the community, or alternative use.

6. Community Asset or Shared Facility Support

If the Council retains part of the site for community use:

- Building management.
- Utility contributions.
- Service level agreements.
- Community lease support arrangements.

Inflationary Uplifts

The School Organisation Code expects proposals to consider future costs rather than simply present-year values. Therefore, forecasts should normally allow for:

- Transport inflation.
- Pay awards.
- Energy inflation.
- Contract uplifts.

For this proposal, ongoing recurrent and revenue costs can be estimated as follows:

Recurrent Revenue Cost	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Home to School Transport	£57,000	£58,710	£60,471	£176,181
***Additional Staffing -two additional teachers estimated@ £67567 each**	£135,134	£139,188	£143,363	£417,685
Closed site holding costs	£4,000	£4,120	£4,244	£12,364
Total recurrent costs	£196,134	£202,018	£208,078	£606,230

** Dependent on individual school context and potential pupil movements / parental preference.*

For a small primary school closure, transport is often the only significant new recurring cost, with the overall proposal still generating a net annual revenue saving.

9.2 Do the proposals form part of the local authority's 21st Century Schools Investment Programme and contribute to the delivery of sustainable schools for the 21st Century and to the better strategic management of the school estate

The proposal to discontinue Ysgol Bancffosfelen and transfer pupils to Ysgol Pontyberem does not form part of the Local Authority's 21st Century strategic investment programme.

The proposal, if implemented, will lead to a reduction in the school estate and improve its strategic management. Reviewing the size and viability of the school estate has been identified as a corporate priority for the Local Authority as part of the MEP Strategy as approved by Cabinet in November 2024.

9.3 The capital costs of proposals and whether the necessary capital funding is available

An investment of between £900,000 to £1,200,000 is planned for Ysgol Pontyberem to provide additional accommodation. Funding for this would be applied for from the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Welsh Language Grant subject to business case approval.

If Welsh Government funding is not secured, funding will be made available from existing capital budgets available within the current capital programme. The Local Authority currently plan to progress with this expansion in accommodation whether the proposal to close Ysgol Bancffosfelen is implemented or not.

9.4 The scale of any projected net savings if the proposals were implemented (taking into account school revenue, transport and capital costs) and will any savings in recurrent costs be retained in the local authority's local schools' budget?

It should be noted that when a school is closed, it is highly unlikely that there will be no additional transport costs. This is because, by definition, the closure of a school is likely to mean that children will reside further away from their catchment school and thus qualify for transport under the Council's School Transport Policy.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the Council's budget for school transport is separate and distinct from the budget delegated to schools. Revenue savings which accrue from the school closure will normally be redistributed back into the overall schools' budget and are thus not direct savings to the overall Council budget.

School budgets are significantly predicated on pupil numbers. In schools where pupil numbers are low, the per-pupil funding is generally insufficient for the school to remain operationally viable. Where pupil numbers are low, fixed costs, and costs (such as staffing) which do not scale perfectly with the number of pupils, form a much higher proportion of the costs of running the school.

The funding formula therefore includes supplements such as small school supplements and surplus places supplements. The formula therefore recognises what a small school requires to function with the minimum appropriate staffing and to meet operational costs. The supplements inflate the average cost per pupil of running a smaller school disproportionally to the larger schools.

The revenue savings derived from the closure of the school relate only to the supplements included in the school's budget. This is because the per-pupil funding is transferred with pupils to their new school. This helps the receiving school to become more financially stable and sustainable.

However, the revenue savings are normally returned to the overall schools' budget and redistributed across the network in funding to all schools. The schools' delegated budget is made up from per pupil funding and supplements to support where per pupil funding would not be sufficient to meet the basic needs of the school. Supplements therefore reduce the per-pupil funding available to all other schools which means that all schools in the Authority are impacted by the additional funding required for smaller schools.

Based on the original funding allocations for the financial year 2026-27, the revenue savings from the closure of Ysgol Bancffosfelen is as follows:

Supplement	**Amount**
Small School Supplement	£0.00
Surplus Places Supplement	£13,309
Federation Supplement	£6,000
Non-Domestic Rates	£3,815
Total	£23,124

Funding based on pupil numbers will transfer with pupils to their receiving school.

Where a school does not close on 31st March, the first year allocation will be on a pro rata basis.

An example based on the full year funding for Ysgol Bancffosfelen based on pupil numbers for 26/27 financial year is as follows:

Funding	
Per Pupil Funding for 48 pupils	£237,634
Additional Learning Needs Funding (Deprivation, Children Looked After and Individual Development Plans)	£10,015
Total	£247,649

If this proposal progresses, updated financial information will be provided when available.

This funding ensures that any extra revenue costs accrued by the receiving school, such as for additional staffing, which might relate to pupil numbers can be met. It also supports the stability and sustainability of the receiving school's budget should additional costs not be incurred.

If Ysgol Bancffosfelen is closed, the closing balance whether surplus or deficit transfers back to the Education Department.

There are other savings which accrue from the closure of a school which are separate from the schools' budget and include corporate savings from a reduction in central support services to schools which relate to a smaller school footprint. Whilst some of these, such as HR Support, Education and ALN Support Services, Music Service, Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance are difficult to quantify, others can be calculated.

The most recent condition survey identified five-year maintenance forecast costs of approximately £616,424. Implementation of the proposals may result in a saving to the Local Authority, as some of these works would no longer be necessary.

The Catering Service provides pupils with a breakfast club (£7,388) and lunch service (£38,313) at a total annual cost to the Local Authority of £45,701. Whilst this is offset by the grant from Welsh Government of £21,802 to provide meals, there is a net saving to the service, and thus the Council of £23,899. The Welsh Government grant of £21,802 for meals will move with the pupils to their new school. It is unlikely that there will be additional costs to providing the meals in those schools, therefore the net cost of providing the service will reduce in the receiving school. Again, this budget is separate from the overall schools' delegated budget.

9.5 Whether, without the proposals, the schools affected would face budget deficits

All schools are funded in accordance with the County Council's funding formula. Under the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010, the Individual Schools Budget must be allocated amongst schools maintained by the authority in the form of budget shares, using a locally determined funding formula. The regulations require that 70% of the funding is to be distributed on the basis of pupil numbers.

The following tables demonstrate the historical, present and predicted financial position of the school.

Year end Balance	(surplus / deficit) £
2021/22	-43,245
2022/23	-24,017
2023/24	9,223
2024/25	34,444
2025/26	£62,924

2026/27	
School budget allocation	£270,773
Pupil numbers (funding based on 2026 January PLASC)	48
Funding per pupil	£5,641
Primary school average mainstream funding per pupil	£5,969
Confirmed deficit March 2026	£62,924
Forecast deficit March 2027 (June 2026)	£107,733

The information above demonstrates that the low pupil numbers at the school have contributed to significant budgetary pressures resulting in the school being in deficit since 2022-23. The school was in a financial surplus up to 2021-22 but has since accrued a gradually increasing deficit which was £34,444 in 2024-25. The in year overspend for 2025-26 was £28,480 which resulted in a deficit of £62,924. The June 2026 forecast deficit is expected to increase to £107,733 to year end in March 2027. Updated forecasts are expected throughout the year and will be reflected throughout the process. This would suggest that the deficit is unsustainable and given current and projected pupil numbers, the school is unlikely to be in a position to recover the deficit within a reasonable timeframe.

Ysgol Pontyberem had a surplus of £29,154 at year end in March 2024 which increased to £38,060 at year end in March 2025. The surplus had continued to increase to a position of £106,071 in March 2026 however is forecasted to reduce to £4,642 surplus at year end in March 2027. This would potentially be enhanced with additional pupil number funding from pupils transferring from Ysgol Bancffosfelen.

It should be recognised that supplements reduce the per pupil funding which has a detrimental impact on all larger schools, therefore impacting more pupils. Increased supplements to small schools enables them to set a balanced budget which would have a positive impact on their balances. There is an obvious trade off between the school's balance i.e. surplus/deficit and the level of supplement given.

9.6 Whether the proceeds of sales (capital receipts) of redundant sites are to be made available to meet the costs of the proposal or contribute to the costs of future proposals which will promote effective management of school places

As a general rule where, as a result of the Council's Modernising Education Programme and following a Welsh Government required statutory process (including all appropriate impact assessments, Community, transport, Welsh language etc.), school premises identified as being no longer required for education purposes will generally be sold on the open market unless the redundant building / site is required and retained for internal corporate use or alternatively transferred to the community.

If a decision is made to close Ysgol Bancffosfelen, an assessment will be made to identify any potential corporate need for the premises. If such a need is identified, the school will be transferred to the relevant department through an appropriation process. If it is not required to be retained corporately, it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances to consider ongoing community use to include voluntary, charitable groups and social enterprises.

Such a use could be approved if there is a clear, identified need for the proposed use in the area and where an appropriate business plan is prepared which demonstrates the viability of the alternative use and which could support the rural economic recovery of the locality.

Any capital receipts from the sale of a redundant site will normally be ringfenced for future use within the Modernising Education Programme in order to improve educational provision within the county.

10. Land and Buildings

10.1 Details of any potential transfer or disposal of land or buildings that may need to occur as a result of the proposals.

Ysgol Bancffosfelen and Ysgol Pontyberem are owned by Carmarthenshire County Council. Should the proposals proceed Ysgol Bancffosfelen would become redundant. Schools identified as no longer being required for educational purposes will generally be sold on the open market unless the redundant building / site is required and retained for internal corporate use or alternatively transferred to the community if appropriate.

10.2 Are the school or schools involved are subject to any trust or charitable interests which might be affected by the proposals

The Local Authority's Legal Department has reviewed the Land Registry documents and official deeds and, from the documents that have been reviewed at present, do not believe that any trusts or charitable interests will be impacted by the proposal to close Ysgol Bancffosfelen.

10.3 Quality of accommodation at the school from which pupils would be transferred

The quality of accommodation and facilities at Ysgol Pontyberem are of a higher standard compared to those at Ysgol Bancffosfelen in terms of conditon, suitability and the facilities available.

Ysgol Pontyberem is a larger school with a more modern building which has been subject to significant improvement works in 2019. It has good facilities for the delivery of the curriculum, outdoor learning, play and physical activity.

Ysgol Pontyberem has good accessibility both inside and outside the building following it's recent refurbishment in 2019 and includes largely level play areas, sports pitches

and courts. Details of the condition and suitability ratings of both buildings are shown in the following table.

	Ysgol Bancffosfelen	**Ysgol Pontyberem**
Building Condition	Grade C. Operational but major repair or replacement needed in short to medium-term	Grade A. As new condition.
Building Suitability	Grade D. Bad, buildings seriously inhibit the staff's ability to deliver the curriculum.	Grade A. Good facilities for teaching, learning and wellbeing in the school.

The condition of the building was changed to a Grade C from a Grade B in the latest condition survey (2024) mainly due to the issues related to the hall and other classrooms that are out of use. Should these parts of the building be removed the overall condition grade for the building may improve subject to further survey.

10.4 Information on any building works necessary to ensure that transferred children can be accommodated at the alternative provision;

Should the proposal proceed, the Local Authority would work closely with the receiving school and its Governing Body to ensure that it is able to accommodate all pupils who wish to transfer.

It is acknowledged that, should all current pupils choose to transfer, the receiving school would be over its current capacity and admission number in some year groups.

An additional two classrooms will be required to accommodate those transferring from Ysgol Bancffosfelen. It is estimated at this stage that capital costs for these works would be in the region of £900,000 to £1,200,000.

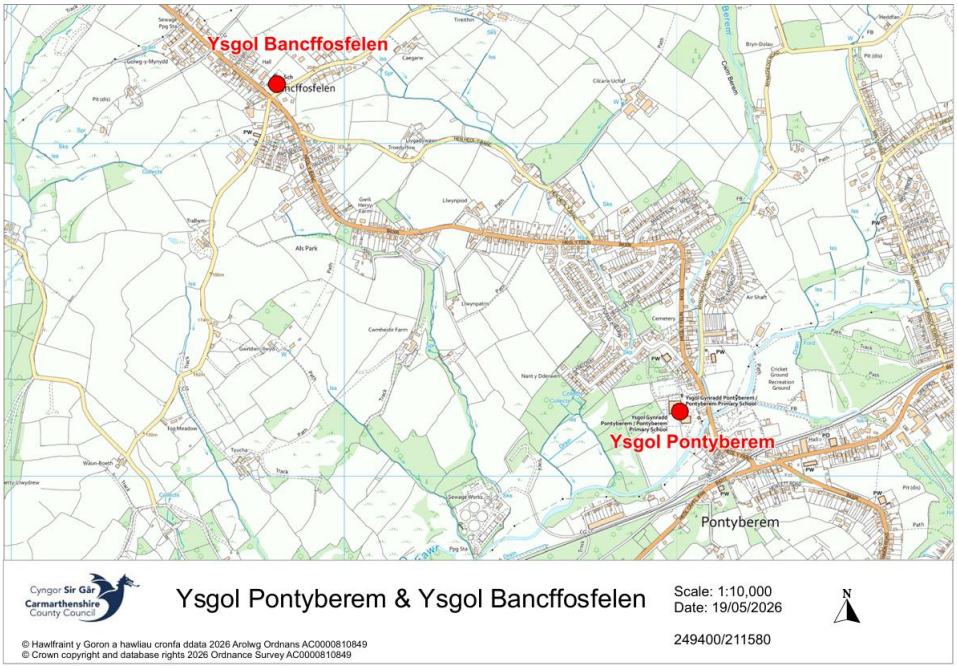
Initial feasibility exercises undertaken have highlighted that the additional accommodation could be placed on site with minimal impact to the school and its external facilities.

11. Travel and Transport

PLASC 2026 data shows that Ysgol Bancffosfelen has 48 pupils on roll. Information provided by the school indicates that approximately 44% of learners currently walk to school, with approximately 46% travelling by private car. No pupils are currently receiving free home-to-school transport.

The proposal is to close Ysgol Bancffosfelen and transfer pupils to Ysgol Pontyberem, located approximately 1.3 miles from the existing school. The two schools are connected by the B4306 and local residential roads. Typical journey times between the schools are approximately 3 minutes by car, 6 minutes by bicycle and approximately 28 minutes on foot. Owing to the topography of the area, journey times are longer when travelling in the opposite direction, increasing to approximately 4 minutes by car, 21 minutes by bicycle and 38 minutes on foot.

The following plan shows the location of both schools.



11.1 Changes to Learner Travel Arrangements and Accessibility of Provision

If the proposal is implemented, access to Welsh-medium primary education would continue to be available within close proximity to the community through Ysgol Pontyberem. However, travel arrangements for some learners would change and there may be a reduction in current levels of walking together with an increased reliance on private car use and home-to-school transport.

In accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, free transport is provided for learners living more than the statutory walking distance (currently two miles) from their designated catchment primary school. Consequently, free transport would be made available to any eligible learners transferring to their new catchment school meeting the criteria for free transport. Pupils with ALN would also be eligible for free home to school transport if it is noted in their Individual Development Plan (IDP). Parents of pupils not eligible for free home to school transport would be responsible for transport to and from school.

Initial modelling indicates that:

- A small number of learners may become newly eligible for free transport if they transfer to Ysgol Pontyberem.
- Approximately 16 pupils currently attending Ysgol Bancffosfelen who already reside within the Pontyberem catchment area may experience comparable or reduced travel distances.

- A small number of pupils attending Ysgol Bancffosfelen from outside the catchment area may experience changes in transport eligibility depending on parental preference and the school selected.

The Authority recognises that final travel arrangements will be influenced by parental preference and future admission decisions and, therefore, a degree of uncertainty remains regarding the precise transport demand arising from the proposal.

11.2 Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Routes

An assessment of active travel connections between Bancffosfelen and Ysgol Pontyberem has been undertaken. This considered both the direct route via the B4306 and an alternative route through residential streets, including Ffordd Aneirin.

Whilst both routes provide a relatively direct connection and operate predominantly within a 20mph environment, a number of significant constraints were identified. The routes are characterised by steep and sustained gradients, resulting in increased journey times and physical effort, particularly in the uphill direction. These gradients are likely to present challenges for younger learners, less able users and those with mobility impairments.

The assessment also identified:

- Sections of narrow or obstructed footway.
- Discontinuities in pedestrian provision.
- Limited crossing opportunities.
- Constraints for cyclists where carriageway space must be shared with motor traffic.
- Infrastructure limitations that reduce accessibility for some users.

Taken together, these factors mean that whilst walking and cycling routes do exist between the two schools, they do not provide a continuous, safe, comfortable and fully inclusive active travel connection for the wider pupil catchment. In this context, active travel may not represent a practical or reasonable option for all learners. Nevertheless, opportunities for walking and cycling would remain for some families, particularly those living closer to Ysgol Pontyberem or on more favourable sections of the local highway network.

Ysgol Pontyberem has storage shelters for bikes and scooters and two shelters for parents to use at pick up times.

Notwithstanding these constraints, opportunities for sustainable travel will continue to be promoted where this is safe, practical and appropriate.

11.3 Impact on Journeys and Journey Times

For most learners, journey times are expected to remain relatively short given the proximity of Ysgol Pontyberem to Ysgol Bancffosfelen. However, the proposal will result in changes to travel arrangements for some pupils and may lead to longer daily journeys, increased reliance on transport and fewer opportunities for independent

travel to school. Although the majority of learners are not expected to experience significant difficulties, some pupils may require additional travel time and more complex travel arrangements than at present.

The Authority recognises that changes to daily travel routines can have implications for attendance, punctuality and participation in school life. Whilst any impacts are expected to be limited for most learners, a small number may experience reduced opportunities to take part in extracurricular activities or may require time to adapt to new travel arrangements.

To address this, the Authority and Ysgol Pontyberem will work closely with families during the transition period, monitor attendance and punctuality, and ensure that transport arrangements support timely arrival and departure from school. Where travel-related issues are identified, appropriate support and intervention will be provided.

11.4 Changes in travel arrangements for learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN).

Changes in travel arrangements and transition to a new school environment may have a greater impact on some learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN). Ysgol Bancffosfelen currently has approximately 8% of pupils identified as having ALN. For some learners, changes to established routines, unfamiliar travel arrangements and adjustment to a larger school environment may result in increased anxiety or require additional support during the transition period.

The Authority will ensure that the needs of learners with ALN are carefully considered throughout the implementation process. Individual assessments of transport requirements will be undertaken where necessary and specialist transport provision will be made available where identified as appropriate. A structured transition programme will also be implemented to support learners before transfer. This will include opportunities to visit Ysgol Pontyberem, become familiar with travel arrangements and develop confidence within the new school environment.

The receiving school will provide appropriate pastoral and wellbeing support and will monitor attendance, engagement and wellbeing following transfer. Whilst some learners with ALN may experience additional challenges during the transition period, the Authority considers that these can be effectively managed through careful planning, individual support arrangements and ongoing engagement with families and relevant professionals.

11.5 Equality and Accessibility Considerations

The proposal has been considered in line with the Equality Act 2010, the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 and the Council's equality duties.

The Active Travel Assessment has identified that current walking and cycling routes are not fully inclusive and may present barriers for:

- Younger learners.
- Learners with disabilities or mobility impairments.
- Learners who may be unable to safely navigate discontinuous pedestrian infrastructure.

There is also potential for a disproportionate impact on lower-income households and families without access to private transport. To mitigate these impacts, free transport will be provided where eligibility criteria are met and families will be provided with clear information regarding transport entitlement and support arrangements. The existence of regular public transport services between the communities may also help support access for parents, carers and visitors attending school events and meetings.

11.6 Transport Costs and Wider Travel Implications

Implementation of the proposal is expected to increase home-to-school transport costs. There are currently no learners receiving school transport to Bancffosfelen. Current estimates indicate that the cost of providing transport for eligible learners from the current Bancffosfelen catchment area to Pontyberem School would be approximately £57,000 per annum, although actual costs will depend on parental preference, final pupil numbers and transport procurement arrangements. Additional transport costs may be incurred where learners currently attending Bancffosfelen school from outside the catchment area transfer to schools to which they would be entitled to transport.

Public transport services operate between Bancffosfelen and Pontyberem throughout the day, including services that stop in close proximity to both communities and the schools. At present, a number of scheduled bus services provide direct connections between Bancffosfelen and Pontyberem, with journey times typically taking less than 10 minutes. This provides an existing public transport link between the communities. However, given the age of the learners affected, school opening and closing times, and the availability of home-to-school transport for eligible learners, public transport is not anticipated to represent the primary means of travel for the majority of pupils transferring to Ysgol Pontyberem. The existence of regular public transport services between the communities may also help support access for parents, carers and visitors attending school events and meetings.

The proposal may also affect travel arrangements for staff, parents, carers and visitors. Staff may experience changes to commuting patterns depending on future employment arrangements and parents, carers and visitors may be required to travel to Ysgol Pontyberem for meetings, school events and other activities. Given the relatively short distance between the two schools, these impacts are not anticipated to be significant for the majority of users.

Ysgol Bancffosfelen currently has no dedicated pick-up and drop-off facilities and parents make use of the public highway. Ysgol Pontyberem benefits from dedicated parental drop-off and pick-up facilities for approximately 60 cars together with designated disabled parking spaces. The site incorporates an element of segregation between pedestrian and vehicle movements, including dedicated footways and crossing points. The school also provides cycle and scooter storage and waiting facilities for pupils, staff and visitors.

The Authority recognises that implementation of the proposal would result in changes to travel arrangements for some learners. Whilst Ysgol Pontyberem is located only approximately 1.3 miles from Ysgol Bancffosfelen, route constraints mean that active travel may not be a realistic option for all learners despite the relatively short distance involved. Increased reliance on private car use and home-to-school transport is therefore anticipated.

Impacts on attendance, wellbeing and engagement are expected to be manageable through appropriate transition arrangements, transport provision and ongoing monitoring. Particular consideration will be provided for younger learners, learners with ALN and those whose circumstances indicate they may require additional support during the transition period.

12. Admission Arrangements

Should the proposal be approved, admission to Ysgol Pontyberem or any alternative Carmarthenshire maintained school would be administered by Carmarthenshire County Council in accordance with the Local Authority's School Admissions Policy and the Welsh Government School Admissions Code.

The School Admissions Unit,
Carmarthenshire County Council,
Department for Education and Leisure,
Building 3,
Spillman Street,
Carmarthen,
SA31 1LE

Email: admissions@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Should the proposal be implemented, parents, carers and guardians would be required to submit an application for a school place at Ysgol Pontyberem, or another maintained school of their choice within Carmarthenshire, in accordance with the Council's existing school admissions arrangements. The implementation of the proposal would not remove the requirement to apply through the normal admissions process.

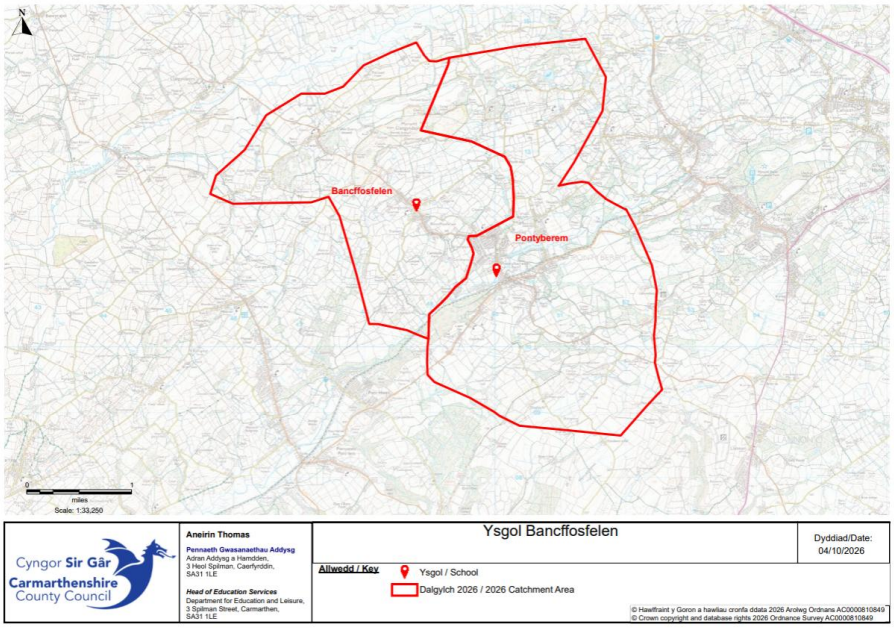
12.1 Secondary School Transfers

At the age of 11, children transition to secondary school. An application must be submitted for the preferred secondary school, as there is no automatic transfer from primary to secondary school. During the autumn term of the final year of primary school, families will receive notification containing information on all secondary schools in the county and details on how to apply.

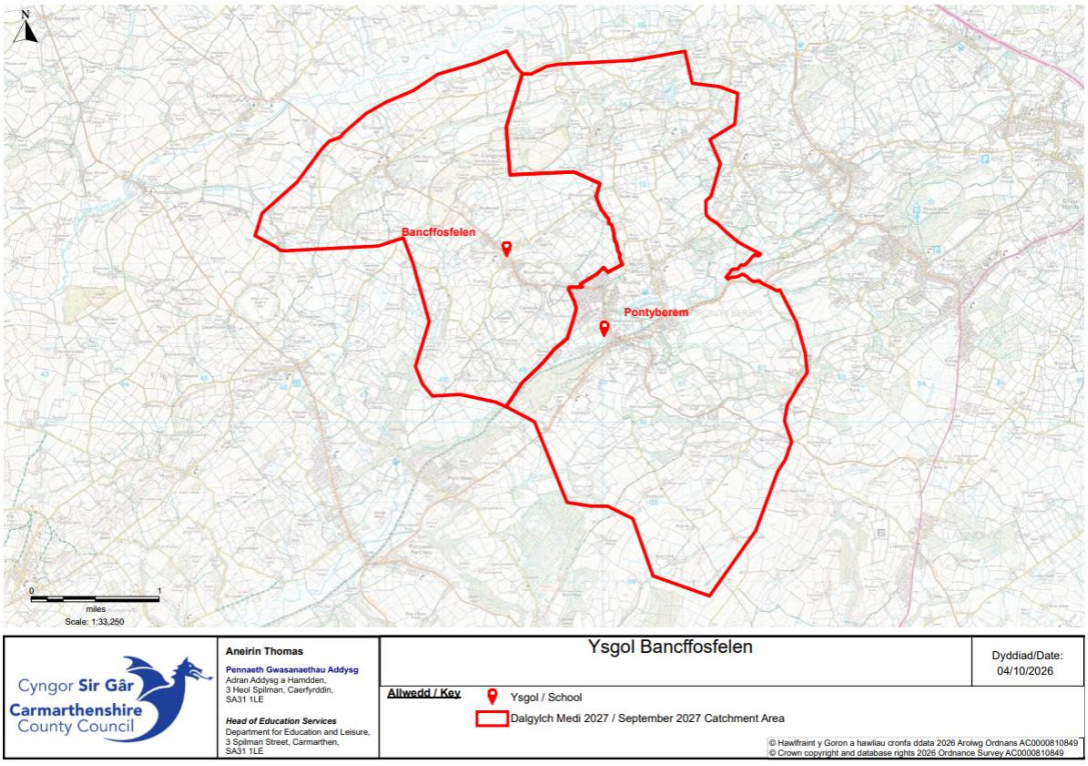
There is no link between primary and secondary schools. Applications may be submitted for any secondary school within the county. The application is based on the child's home and not the primary school attended.

12.2 Catchment Area

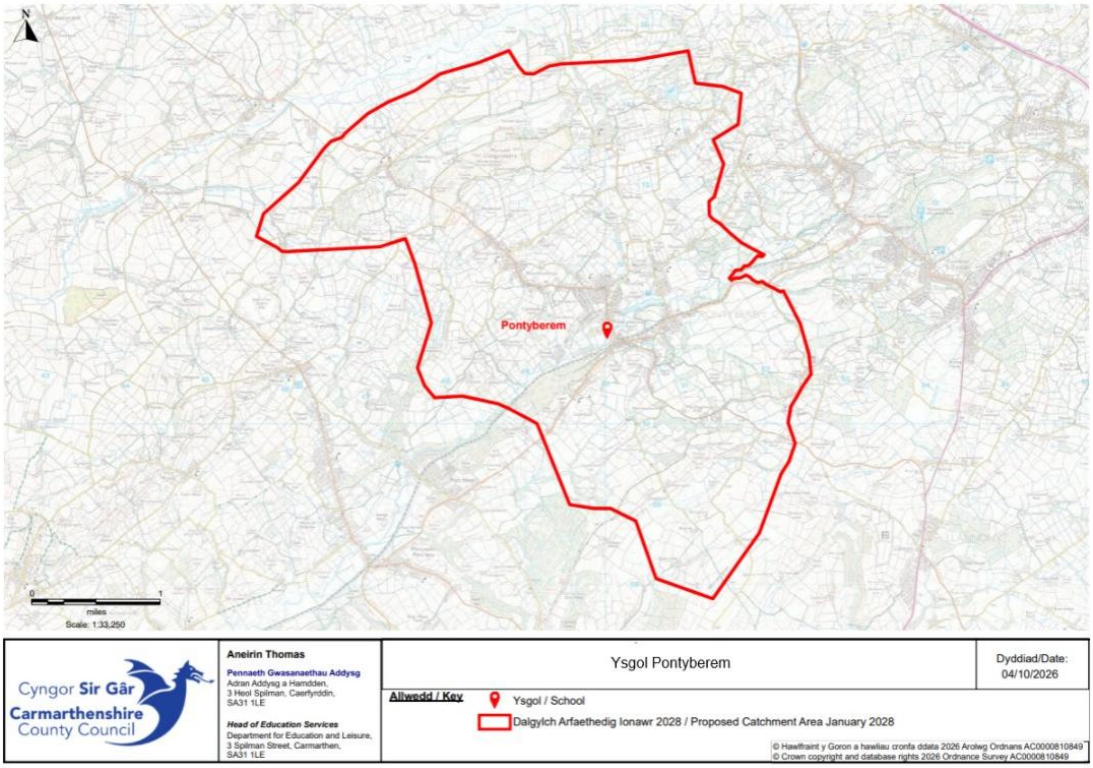
The plan below shows the current catchment area of Ysgol Bancffosfelen.



The following plan shows how the catchment area will be amended in September 2027 based on the recent Local Authority wide catchment area review.



If the proposal is approved, the catchment area of Ysgol Bancffosfelen will be incorporated within the catchment area of Ysgol Pontyberem.



12.3 Transition Arrangements

Should the proposal be implemented, the Local Authority will work closely with Ysgol Bancffosfelen and Ysgol Pontyberem to ensure a smooth and supportive transition for all pupils. A comprehensive transition programme will be developed, including school visits, familiarisation sessions and opportunities for pupils to meet staff and their new peer groups prior to transfer.

Parents and carers will be invited to attend information and engagement sessions to discuss arrangements and raise any questions or concerns. Particular attention will be given to supporting pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and other vulnerable learners through the development of individual transition plans and the continuation of existing support arrangements.

Appropriate wellbeing and pastoral support will be provided throughout the transition period to help pupils adapt to their new learning environment. The schools will also work collaboratively to ensure the effective sharing of educational, wellbeing and support information to maintain continuity of learning and ensure that all pupils' needs continue to be met from the point of transfer.

13. The Consultation Process

The consultation on this proposal will follow guidelines established by the Welsh Government as stated in the School Organisation Code (2026).

Who will be consulted?

A link to the Consultation Document will be provided to the following stakeholders (as determined by the School Organisation Code (2026):

Parents, carers, and guardians of:

- Pupils attending the schools affected by the proposals
- Prospective pupils, where possible
- Pupils attending other schools likely to be affected by the proposals
- In the case of proposals affecting secondary provision, parents, carers and guardians of learners attending primary schools from which learners normally transfer to the affected secondary school.

School staff and leadership:

- Staff members of schools directly involved in the proposals
- Staff members of any other school likely to be affected by the proposals
- Governing bodies of schools directly involved in the proposals
- Governing bodies of any other school likely to be affected by the proposals

Local Authorities and Government:

- The maintaining authority for affected schools, including relevant transport and highways teams
- Neighbouring local authorities and any other local authority likely to be affected by the proposals
- In the case of proposals affecting specialist ALP provision, any local authority placing or likely to place learners with ALN in the provision
- Welsh Ministers
- Constituency and Regional Members of the Senedd (MSs) and Members of Parliament (MPs) for the area served by the schools
- Estyn
- Relevant school improvement services
- The Police and Crime Commissioner for the area
- The local authority Family Information Service
- Medr (for proposals affecting school sixth forms)

Community and representative groups:

- Teaching and staff trade unions representing staff at affected schools
- Community or town councils for the area served by the schools
- The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authority for the area in which any affected school is located
- Any other appropriate religious body for any school likely to be affected by the proposals
- Further education institutions serving the area (for proposals affecting secondary provision)

Early years and ALN provision:

- Independent or voluntary nursery providers potentially affected, including Mudiad Meithrin
- National umbrella organisations supporting childcare and early years provision, including:
    - NDNA Cymru
    - Clybiau Plant Cymru
    - Early Years Wales
    - PACEY Cymru
    - Play Wales
    - The Children and Young People's Partnership and/or Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships
    - Relevant health bodies or third sector organisations (for proposals affecting ALP/ALN provision)

Welsh language provision:

- The Welsh Language Commissioner (for proposals affecting Welsh language provision)
- Relevant Mentrau Iaith

Consultation with Pupils

Pupils will be provided with a copy of a Children and Young People Consultation Document.

Additionally, there will be an opportunity for the pupils (School Council as a minimum) of the schools subject to the proposals to participate in the consultation process during a session which will be undertaken by a Local Authority Officer or via a dedicated online survey.

The information gathered from the consultation with pupils will form part of the Consultation Report which will be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration following the consultation period.

What happens next?

<u>Stage 1. Consultation Period</u>

The consultation period for the proposals commences on the 10 November 2026 and concludes on the 22 December 2026.

You can submit your views in favour of or against a proposal or to provide alternative suggestions. You can also:

- make representations regarding the alternatives to closure that have been identified as well as the main proposal and

- suggest other alternatives to closure which would address the reasons for closure (i.e. the key challenges the school faces).

Responses received during the consultation period will not be treated as statutory objections. If you wish to object, you will need to do so in writing during the statutory objection period. Any responses received after the closing date will not be considered as part of the consultation process.

Considering your views

During the consultation period you can ask questions, express your views or provide alternative options for consideration by no later than the 22 December 2026 through one of the following methods:

- Completing an online survey using the following link: SNAP Survey
- Sending an email to: MEPConsultations@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
- Writing a letter to the following address: Mr Owain Lloyd, Director of Education and Leisure, County Hall, SA31 1JP
- Or completing a paper copy response form (appendix F) and returning to Mr Owain Lloyd, Director of Education and Leisure, County Hall, SA31 1JP or sending a scanned copy via e-mail to MEPConsultations@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Please note that you only need to submit your response through one communication method.

Comments submitted during the consultation period will be recorded and summarised in a Consultation Report.

Following the consultation period, a Consultation Report will be published on Carmarthenshire County Council's website at least 2 weeks prior to the publication of a Statutory Notice. Consultees can register their wish to be notified of publication of the consultation report by filling out and submitting the response form in Appendix F.

The Cabinet of Carmarthenshire County Council will consider the Consultation Report and decide whether or not to proceed with the proposal.

Stage 2. Statutory Notice Objection Period

If the County Council's Cabinet decides to continue with the proposal a "Statutory Notice" must be published.

The Statutory Notice will be published on Carmarthenshire County Council's website and posted at the schools subject to proposals. Copies of the notice will also be made available to the schools to distribute to pupils, parents, guardians, and staff members (the schools may also distribute the notice by email).

The Statutory Notice will set out the details of the proposal and invite anyone who wishes to object or support to do so in writing within a period of 28 days.

If objections are received an Objection Report will be published on Carmarthenshire County Council's website. Hard copies of the report will also be available on request. The report will summarise the issues or supportive comments raised and provide Carmarthenshire County Council's response. Consultees can register their wish to be notified of publication of the consultation report by sending an email to MEPConsultations@carmarthenshire.gov.uk .

If no objections are received, the proposal moves straight to determination.

Stage 3. Determination

Carmarthenshire County Council will determine the proposal. This means that it will make a final decision on whether the change proposed goes ahead. The County Council may decide to approve, reject or approve the proposal with modifications. In doing so, the County Council will take into account any statutory objections that it received.

Following determination of proposals all interested parties will be informed and advised of the availability of the decision which will be published electronically on Carmarthenshire County Council's website.

All stakeholders will be notified of the County Council decision and publication of the Objection Report within 7 days of the determination.

13.1 Projected Timetable for Statutory Procedures

Should Carmarthenshire County Council's Cabinet decide to proceed with the proposal to close Ysgol Bancffosfelen and transfer pupils to Ysgol Pontyberem, the projected timetable is as follows:

Description	Duration
Consultation Issue of this consultation document to identified and other interested parties.	10 November 2026 to 22 December 2026
Consultation Report A Consultation Report will be taken to the Cabinet for a decision on whether or not to proceed to publish a statutory notice. OR alternatively proposal ends.	June 2027 The Consultation Report will be published on Carmarthenshire County Council's website at least 2 weeks prior to the publication of a statutory notice
Should the Cabinet decide to proceed:	

Statutory Notice If the decision is made to proceed then a statutory notice will be published.	June – July 2027 Minimum 28 days (including at least 15 school days & not including the day of publication)
Objection Report If objections are received an Objection Report will be published on the Carmarthenshire County Council's website.	October 2027 Before the end of 7 days beginning with the day of its determination
Determination County Council will determine the proposal.	October 2027 Decision made within 16 weeks of the end of the objection period
If County Council approves the proposal Ysgol Bancffosfelen closes.	**31 December 2027**

Proposal to discontinue Ysgol Gynradd Bancffosfelen

Appendices



sirgar.llyw.cymru
carmarthenshire.gov.wales

Cyngor Sir Gâr
Carmarthenshire
County Council

Impact Assessments

A Community Impact Assessment has been undertaken to assess the impacts of the proposals on the community of Bancffosfelen. This assessment can be found in Appendix A. This assessment will be updated to reflect any relevant feedback received during the consultation process.

A Welsh Language Impact assessment has been undertaken to assess the impacts of the proposals on the Welsh language. This assessment can be found in Appendix B. This assessment will be updated to reflect any relevant feedback received during the consultation process.

An initial integrated impact assessment (IIA) has been undertaken to help us to ensure we have considered how different groups and services could be affected by our proposals, enabling us to strengthen positive aspects and mitigate any potentially negative impacts. This assessment can be found in Appendix C. Should the proposal proceed, this assessment will be reviewed and updated at key points as necessary.

Appendix A: Community Impact Assessment.
Subject: The proposed closure of Ysgol Bancffosfelen and transfer of pupils to Ysgol Pontyberem.

The School Organisation Code (2026) requires proposers to undertake a Community Impact Assessment for any proposal to close a school.

Information that should be included in a community impact assessment, includes the Following. The Community Impact Assessment will be updated throughout the statutory process to reflect any feedback received:

1. **Information on the proportion of pupils from the catchment area that attend the school and pupils that attend other schools outside the catchment area:**

The table below highlights the proportion of pupils from the catchment area attending the school, the proportion of pupils from outside of the catchment area attending the school, the proportion of pupils from the catchment area attending other schools and what schools they attend.

Year	Pupil numbers	In Catchment	Out of Catchment	In Catchment at Other schools*
PLASC 2026	48	23	25	41
***Other Schools** Cefneithin Primary School, Johnstown Primary School, Llanddarog VC Primary School, Llangunnor Primary School, Llannon Primary School, Pembrey School, Ysgol Pontyberem, Swiss Valley Primary School, Tumble Primary School, Ysgol Y Castell, Ysgol Y Dderwen				

2. **Information on the proportion of learners currently within thresholds for school transport provision (2 miles for primary school and 3 miles for secondary school) that attend the school and how they will be impacted by the proposal;**

No pupils are currently receiving free home-to-school transport.

3. **Information about the distance and travelling time (for all modes of transport) involved in attending an alternative school of the same language category;**

The proposal is to close Ysgol Bancffosfelen and transfer pupils to Ysgol Pontyberem, located approximately 1.3 miles away via the B4306. Estimated journey times are around 3 minutes by car, 6 minutes by bicycle, and approximately 28 minutes on foot between both schools. Owing to the topography and steep gradients between the two locations, journey times are longer when travelling from Pontyberem to Bancffosfelen, increasing to approximately 4 minutes by car, 21 minutes by bicycle and 38 minutes on foot.

4. Impact on health and wellbeing e.g., if learners would be less able to walk or cycle to school;

Closure of the school would potentially affect some pupils' ability to walk or cycle due to increased distance and road safety concerns relating to gradients, footways and safe crossing points. For some pupils this might reduce opportunities for daily physical activity, however it may open up an opportunity for those pupils living closer to Ysgol Pontyberem and within the current catchment area of the proposed receiving school to walk and cycle to school. Eligible pupils would require school transport.

Potential wellbeing impacts of the proposal include:

- Increased fatigue associated with longer or more demanding journeys
- Reduced independence due to reliance on transport
- Reduced opportunities for informal daily physical activity through walking
- Anxiety associated with changes to routine
- Emotional and social impacts on pupils arising from the closure of a familiar school environment
- Potential positive impact for some pupils living closer to Ysgol Pontyberem or within its catchment area, who may have improved opportunities to walk or cycle to school.

To mitigate these impacts a structured transition programme will be implemented, including visits to the receiving school to provide opportunities to become familiar with new travel arrangements. The receiving school will provide pastoral support to help learners adjust and will monitor pupil wellbeing, behaviour and engagement. In addition, learners will benefit from the opportunities available at Ysgol Pontyberem, including wider peer groups, enhanced learning experiences and access to broader support services.

WIMD 2025 identifies access to services as one of the more significant deprivation factors affecting parts of the catchment area. Consequently, the Local Authority recognises that maintaining opportunities for pupils and families to access educational, community and support services following implementation of the proposal will be important in mitigating potential wellbeing impacts.

5. Information about any wider implications the changes would have on public transport provisions;

No impacts on public transport services are anticipated if the proposals are implemented.

6. Information on wider community safety issues;

Closure could result in the school site becoming vacant for a period. Empty public buildings can attract vandalism, trespass, anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping, potentially creating community safety concerns and additional costs associated with site security and maintenance.

Closure may reduce levels of daily activity and informal supervision in the vicinity of the school. Reduced occupation may create opportunities for anti-social behaviour and unauthorised use of school grounds, particularly during evenings and weekends.

Vacant buildings can experience an elevated risk of deliberate fire setting. Any such incident could have implications beyond the site itself, including risks to neighbouring residents, environmental impacts and demands upon emergency services.

Any potential community safety issues associated with the potential closure of the school are expected to be temporary and largely dependent upon the future use of the site.

To mitigate these risks, the Authority will ensure that appropriate security measures are implemented to secure the property and minimise the risk of unauthorised access, vandalism, anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping or arson. In addition, the Authority will endeavour to determine the future use of the site at the earliest opportunity in order to minimise any period during which the building may remain vacant and to reduce the likelihood of longer-term community safety concerns.

The potential closure of the school building may have wider implications for the local community, particularly if the premises have previously been used informally or on an ad hoc basis as a place of refuge, meeting point, or community support venue during emergencies. However, as the school is not included on the Local Authority's designated rest centre list, no direct effect on established emergency shelter arrangements is anticipated. Therefore, if approved, the closure is not anticipated to have a significant impact on local emergency response arrangements or wider community safety in this respect.

Should the proposal proceed and Ysgol Bancffosfelen was to close the village of Bancffosfelen may experience reduced traffic movements and improvements to road safety within the immediate vicinity of the school, especially at pick up and drop off times. There may be increased travel requirements to alternative schools, resulting in additional vehicle movements on the wider road network. Ysgol Pontyberem has a dedicated parental drop off parking facility which mitigates the potential road safety impacts of additional travel by private car.

7. Information about any other facilities or services the school accommodates or provides;

The school currently offers a range of extracurricular and childcare provision, including a Breakfast Club and activities delivered in partnership with Menter Cwm Gwendraeth and the Urdd. These opportunities support pupils' wellbeing, social development, participation in Welsh language and cultural activities, and provide additional support for working families.

The school also accommodates Cylch Meithrin Bancffosfelen, an important service which is valued by the community. The Cylch Meithrin is an approved Flying Start Childcare setting and operates daily from 9:00am to 3:00pm and provides an important Welsh-medium early years education service for local families. The setting currently has eight children attending in a single session, with capacity to support additional

learners as demand grows. Should proposals proceed and the school close, pupils would no longer be able to access these services at the school, which may result in some loss of locally available provision and could present childcare and transport challenges for certain families.

Should the school close and an alternative venue could not be found for the Cylch Meithrin there may be disruption to local children's early educational experiences and weakening an established pathway into Welsh-medium education.

8. Information about the facilities and services provided at any alternative school learners may attend;

The proposed receiving school, Ysgol Pontyberem, currently provides a range of services, facilities and enrichment opportunities that support pupils' educational, social and wellbeing needs.

The school operates a daily Breakfast Club, providing supervised childcare before the start of the school day, and an after-school club each Thursday. The school also hosts weekly counselling support through Area 43, helping to promote pupil wellbeing and emotional resilience. Community-based provision is also available at the school, including the "Cân a Chlonc" parent and baby group delivered by the Early Years Team, and accommodation for the local Cylch Meithrin through a long-term leasing arrangement with the Local Authority.

In addition, pupils have opportunities to participate in a range of extracurricular activities throughout the year, including Urdd and football clubs, as well as sporting events and competitions such as the Urdd Football Competition, the Bancffosfelen Football Festival, Mynydd Mawr Sports Day and the Mynydd Mawr Cross Country Competition. These activities support physical health, social development, community engagement and participation in Welsh language and cultural experiences.

In addition to the services and activities available to pupils, Ysgol Pontyberem is actively used by a range of community organisations and hosts a number of community events throughout the year. These include use of the school grounds by local sports clubs and community groups, demonstrating the school's role as an established community asset and providing further opportunities for pupils and families to participate in local activities and events.

The school also maintains strong links with a variety of local organisations and community groups, including Pontyberem Library, Pantri'r Pentre, local churches and chapels, Coalbrook House, Menter Iaith Cwm Gwendraeth ac Elli and the Young at Heart group. These partnerships provide opportunities for community engagement, volunteering, wellbeing activities and intergenerational learning, helping to strengthen the relationship between the school and the wider community.

Ysgol Pontyberem also hosts a range of activities that support the use of Welsh beyond the classroom, including Urdd activities, parent coffee mornings delivered in partnership with Menter Iaith, Cân a Chlonc sessions, and Welsh language support opportunities for parents and families. These activities provide opportunities for

learners and community members to participate in Welsh-medium activities and support the continued promotion of the Welsh language within the wider community.

Should the proposal proceed and pupils transfer to Ysgol Pontyberem, they would continue to have access to a range of facilities, support services and extracurricular opportunities similar in nature to those currently available at Ysgol Bancffosfelen. These provisions would support pupils' wellbeing, learning, social development and participation in sporting, cultural and community activities, helping to mitigate potential impacts arising from the loss of services currently delivered at Ysgol Bancffosfelen.

9. How parents' and learners' engagement with the alternative schools or other education institutions and any facilities they may offer could be supported:

If the proposal to close Ysgol Bancffosfelen proceeds, the Local Authority will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to support pupils' and parents' engagement with the receiving school and facilitate a smooth transition. This may include transition visits, opportunities to attend school events and extracurricular activities, the provision of information to parents and carers, and ongoing communication to ensure that pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are able to participate fully in school life.

Individual needs will be considered through collaboration between the Local Authority, the headteacher and relevant staff at the receiving school to ensure appropriate transition and support arrangements are in place and to promote positive engagement with the school community.

If parents choose for their child to attend a school other than Ysgol Pontyberem, applications would be considered in accordance with the Council's School Admissions Policy and associated admission arrangements.

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

Ysgol Bancffosfelen plays an important role in supporting community activities and providing a venue for a range of local events and meetings. The school is used by community organisations, including the Community Council and Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and provides a readily accessible meeting space for residents and local groups.

The PTA organises a variety of activities throughout the year, including social and fundraising events that bring together pupils, families and members of the wider community. The school also hosts community-focused events such as coffee mornings, open evenings and seasonal fairs, which provide opportunities for community engagement and interaction.

The school site includes facilities that are not otherwise available within the village, most notably a substantial outdoor field which is used for events, recreational activities and larger community gatherings. Whilst alternative indoor facilities are available

within the community, equivalent outdoor space is more limited. As a result, closure of the school could reduce the availability of suitable venues for certain activities and events, potentially requiring them to relocate, operate at a reduced scale or cease altogether.

In addition to the use of the school buildings and grounds, school staff make a valuable contribution to community life through their involvement in organising and supporting activities that extend beyond the classroom. The relationships established between staff, pupils, families and residents contribute positively to community cohesion and help foster a sense of belonging within the village. Consequently, closure of the school could have an impact not only on the availability of community facilities, but also on the social networks and informal connections that have developed around the school over time.

The extent of any impact would be influenced by the availability of alternative venues within the community and the ability of local organisations to continue their activities elsewhere. However, it is recognised that the school currently acts as an important focal point for community engagement and participation within the village.

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

The potential closure could have broader implications for the economic resilience of the Bancffosfelen community. Schools often act as social and economic focal points, and their closure may contribute to a reduction in local activity and have indirect effects on community facilities, services and local businesses.

The school contributes to the local economy through the employment opportunities it provides, including support and operational roles associated with the day-to-day running of the school. Closure of the school may have implications for staff currently employed at the site and could result in a reduction in locally based employment opportunities.

The school also contributes to professional learning and workforce development through partnerships that provide training and placement opportunities within the education sector.

The proposal may also have financial implications for some families. Pupils would be required to attend an alternative school, which could result in changes to travel arrangements and, for some households, increased travel times and associated costs. These impacts may be felt more acutely by families experiencing economic disadvantage.

It is recognised that a proportion of pupils currently living within walking distance of Ysgol Bancffosfelen may no longer be able to walk to their nearest school if the proposal were to proceed. This could create additional logistical considerations for families and may affect participation in extracurricular activities and wider school life where travel arrangements are required.

However, Ysgol Pontyberem, the proposed receiving school, is situated approximately 1.3 miles from Ysgol Bancffosfelen, with some parts of the Ysgol Bancffosfelen catchment area being significantly closer. While Bancffosfelen and Pontyberem remain distinct communities, given the close proximity of the two communities, it is anticipated that many families would continue to access services and participate in activities within the surrounding area, which may help mitigate potential adverse impacts on the local economy.

12. The overall effect of closure on the local community:

If the proposals were to proceed and the school was to close, there could be an impact on local services, particularly the Cylch Meithrin, which may need to relocate or close if appropriate facilities cannot be found. The potential impact on the Cylch Meithrin would be felt by local families who rely on the service by reducing access to local childcare and early years services for families, with potential for wider implications for the promotion and growth of the Welsh language within the community. The Cylch Meithrin is an approved Flying Start Childcare only setting and if it was to close as a result of the proposals being implemented it would impact children in accessing their funded childcare hours and parents who may be in education or work.

The school also maintains links with a range of community members and organisations, including the local chapel, volunteers and community groups who support activities and learning experiences within the school. Closure could reduce opportunities for these established partnerships and interactions.

The closure of the school may also result in the loss of connections with several community organisations and groups referred to above. While the village does have access to a village hall that serves as a venue for community events, meetings and activities, and the village chapel, which plays an important role in community life and local gatherings it is not clear at this stage whether it could host the services provided by the school in the event of closure.

The Authority also recognises that significant investment has been made in community facilities within the village, including improvements to the local playground. Should children increasingly access services and activities in neighbouring communities, the level of use and community benefit derived from these investments could be affected.

The proposal may also have wider effects beyond the immediate school community. Ysgol Bancffosfelen currently participates in a soft federation arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog VC Primary School through a shared headteacher arrangement. Closure of Ysgol Bancffosfelen would bring this arrangement to an end and would require future leadership and funding arrangements at Ysgol Llanddarog VC Primary School to be reviewed. Whilst these impacts would be experienced outside Bancffosfelen itself, they form part of the wider consequences associated with the proposal.

The Local Authority has considered the socio-economic profile of the catchment using Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2025 data. The evidence indicates that the catchment is not amongst the most deprived areas in Wales and generally experiences low to moderate levels of deprivation overall. However, WIMD 2025 identifies relative deprivation in relation to access to services across a number of

catchment areas. This reflects the rural nature of the community and highlights the importance of local facilities in supporting day-to-day access to services. The presence of a local school therefore has a significance that extends beyond education alone and contributes to the accessibility of community infrastructure within the area.

Whilst the proposal maintains Welsh-medium education and is expected to support pupils' continued linguistic development, the Local Authority recognises that closure of Ysgol Bancffosfelen may affect Welsh language use within the local community and could have implications for local Welsh-medium early years provision should alternative accommodation for Cylch Meithrin Bancffosfelen not be secured. These matters are considered in detail within the Welsh Language Impact Assessment and appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented where possible.

The Local Authority recognises that the loss of a school can have social, cultural and emotional impacts that extend beyond education alone. These potential impacts have been weighed carefully against the school's long-term educational viability, financial sustainability and ability to deliver the full expectations of the Curriculum for Wales. While the impacts on the community are acknowledged as significant, the Authority has concluded that they are outweighed by the challenges facing the school's sustainability and the need to secure resilient, high-quality provision for learners over the longer term.

13. What impact closure might have on other services provided locally:

If the proposals were to proceed and Ysgol Bancffosfelen was to close it might have an impact on local services especially the Cylch Meithrin. The village does benefit from a village hall and a village chapel which could potentially be used for community events and functions however information received from the school does not specifically confirm this. Should the Cylch Meithrin become unviable as a result of any closure it would impact the local families who rely on the service.

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

Should the proposal proceed, Bancffosfelen would no longer have a school within the village and, as a result, some may perceive the community to be less attractive to families with school-aged children. In some circumstances, the loss of a local school can contribute to demographic change, with fewer young families moving into the area and an increasingly ageing population profile over time. Reduced demand from families seeking housing within walking distance of a school could also have implications for the local housing market.

However, Ysgol Pontyberem, the proposed receiving school, is located approximately 1.3 miles from Ysgol Bancffosfelen, with some parts of the Ysgol Bancffosfelen catchment area situated significantly closer. Whilst Bancffosfelen and Pontyberem are distinct communities, their close geographical proximity means access to educational provision would remain available within a short distance of the village. Furthermore, catchment area information demonstrates that a number of pupils residing within the

Ysgol Bancffosfelen catchment area already attend Ysgol Pontyberem, indicating that parents currently view the school as a viable educational option.

In addition, Bancffosfelen would retain a number of community assets that contribute positively to community life and may continue to make the village attractive to families. These include a community playground that provides a safe recreational space for children, a village hall that hosts a range of community events and activities, and the village chapel, which continues to play an important role in community life. Together, these facilities support community cohesion, provide opportunities for social interaction and contribute to the overall attractiveness of the village as a place to live.

Taking these factors into account, it is considered unlikely that the proposal would result in significant numbers of families leaving the community. Similarly, whilst the absence of a local school may be a factor for some prospective residents, the close proximity of alternative educational provision and the continued availability of other community facilities suggest that the proposal is unlikely to significantly discourage young families from moving into the area.

Whilst the catchment area does not experience high levels of socio-economic deprivation overall, WIMD 2025 evidence demonstrates that some parts of the area experience relative deprivation in relation to access to services. As a result, the continued availability of community facilities and local services may be an important factor influencing perceptions of the area's attractiveness as a place for families to live.

There are also existing links between the two school communities through participation in joint sporting and community events, including the Bancffosfelen Football Festival and wider Mynydd Mawr cluster activities. These established relationships may assist pupils and families in maintaining community connections and adapting to any transition resulting from the proposal.

15. If accommodation, facilities, or services are provided by a school, where they would be provided in the event of closure:

In the event of the school's closure, the future location and sustainability of some services currently operating from the site would be uncertain. This is particularly the case for the Cylch Meithrin, which occupies accommodation within the school. Should the school close, alternative accommodation would need to be identified. Relocating the provision may result in additional accommodation and operational costs, which could place financial pressure on the setting.

The Cylch Meithrin also benefits from its close relationship with Ysgol Bancffosfelen, providing a well-established Welsh-medium progression pathway into primary education. A significant proportion of children attending the Cylch subsequently transfer to Ysgol Bancffosfelen. Closure of the school could therefore affect future enrolment at the Cylch Meithrin if parents choose alternative early years providers that offer a more direct progression route to their preferred primary school.

Whilst alternative early years provision is available within the wider area, Cylch Meithrin Pontyberem is currently operating at capacity and has a waiting list. As a result, it cannot be assumed that all children attending the existing Cylch Meithrin

would be able to transfer there immediately. Consequently, the closure of Ysgol Bancffosfelen could create uncertainty regarding the future provision of Welsh-medium early years education within the community and may affect the long-term viability of the existing Cylch Meithrin unless suitable alternative accommodation and arrangements can be secured.

Other community activities, meetings and events currently hosted at the school would need to be relocated to alternative community venues, where available, such as the village hall. However, whilst alternative indoor accommodation exists within the community, equivalent facilities, particularly access to outdoor space such as the school field, may be more limited. Consequently, some activities may need to operate from alternative venues, be modified in scale, or cease altogether should suitable replacement facilities not be available.

In relation to the future of the school building, should the proposals be implemented and Ysgol Bancffosfelen become surplus to the Local Authority's educational requirements, it is the Council's general approach to first consider whether the site is required for any other internal corporate purpose. Where no such requirement is identified, it may, in certain circumstances, be appropriate to explore the potential for ongoing community use of the building. This could include use by voluntary or charitable organisations or social enterprises, such as the Cylch Meithrin, subject to there being a clear and evidenced local need.

Where appropriate and subject to future decisions regarding the site, the Local Authority would explore opportunities to retain community use of parts of the building or site. Community activities and events currently hosted by the school may also be capable of transfer to alternative venues within the community, such as the village hall, where suitable accommodation is available.

16. Whether other facilities available in the immediate local or wider community will or could be enhanced in the event of a school closure:

Consideration could be given to enhancing existing community facilities in the event of a school closure. The Local Authority would actively engage with the Cylch provider, Mudiad Meithrin and Early Years services at an early stage to explore viable options for continuity of provision within or close to Bancffosfelen, should the proposal be implemented. The Local Authority would also engage with the provider of the Cylch Meithrin in Ysgol Pontyberem to explore whether there was scope to increase capacity to accommodate any early years users displaced as a result of impacts to the existing Cylch Meithrin Bancffosfelen.

The Local Authority is aware that significant investment has been made in local infrastructure to support children, families and the wider community. In particular, approximately £100,000 has been invested in the village playground, providing a valuable recreational resource for local residents.

Whilst improvements to community facilities such as the village hall or playground could potentially be explored, there is no certainty that such enhancements would fully offset the impacts associated with the closure of the school as such there are no plans

to improve or enhance other facilities within the immediate local or wider community as part of the current proposals.

Appendix B: Welsh Language Impact Assessment

Welsh Language Impact Assessment

Prepared by: Carmarthenshire County Council

1. Introduction and Purpose

This Welsh Language Impact Assessment considers the likely impacts of Carmarthenshire County Council's proposal to close Ysgol Bancffosfelen on 31 December 2027 and transfer pupils to Pontyberem Primary School from 1 January 2028. The proposal also involves changing the location of primary education provision for the Bancffosfelen catchment area.

The Assessment is being prepared to look at opportunities to use the Welsh language and on the principle of treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English. The assessment has been prepared in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation (Wales) Code 2026 (001/2026), the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, Carmarthenshire County Council's Welsh Language Standards Compliance Framework, and guidance published by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

The assessment considers:

- opportunities for learners, parents, staff and the community to use the Welsh language;
- the principle of not treating Welsh less favourably than English;
- continuation of Welsh-medium education;
- social and informal use of the Welsh language;
- the relationship between school, family and community;
- the potential impact of the closure of the Ysgol Bancffosfelen site on local Welsh language activities;
- the measures needed to increase positive impacts and mitigate negative impacts.

2. Methodology and Evidence Base

The assessment is informed by the statutory consultation document; Estyn Inspection Report; Welsh Census 2021 data for Carmarthenshire and the specific area; Carmarthenshire Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022–2032; and relevant

Welsh Government policy including Cymraeg 2050 and the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025.
The assessment has been strengthened by triangulating evidence from the consultation document, the responses of both schools, and the Estyn inspection reports. It distinguishes between educational impact, community impact, early years impact and impact on practical access.

- Pontyberem Primary School Estyn Report, March 2023.
- Bancffosfelen Community School Estyn Report, June 2018.
- Impact Assessment: Ysgol Pontyberem's response.
- Headteacher's 2026 Impact Assessment Questionnaire: Ysgol Bancffosfelen's response.
- Carmarthenshire Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032, Cymraeg 2050, Welsh Language Standards and the relevant School Organisation Code.

3. Context:

Ysgol Bancffosfelen is a Category 3 Welsh-medium community primary school serving the village and the surrounding rural area. The consultation document states that there are 48 pupils on roll in PLASC 2026, 46 of statutory school age and two nursery pupils. 23 of the pupils lived in the catchment area and 25 outside it, while 41 children from the catchment area attended other schools.
The proposal maintains a Welsh-medium pathway by transferring pupils to Ysgol Pontyberem. In the Estyn 2023 inspection report, it was recorded that Welsh was the language of Ysgol Pontyberem and that 50.2% of its statutory age pupils spoke Welsh at home at the time of the inspection.
Estyn found that Ysgol Pontyberem's curriculum reflected the linguistic and cultural nature of the area, fostered a strong sense of belonging to the village, and provided regular opportunities for learners to take part in eisteddfodau, concerts and cultural activities.
However, the continuation of Welsh-medium education in itself does not eliminate the risk to community use of Welsh in Bancffosfelen. Ysgol Bancffosfelen runs or supports activities such as the Urdd club, sessions with Menter Iaith, Welsh language activities for parents, eisteddfodau, Cân a Chlonc and Mudiad Meithrin sessions. The site is also used by sports groups and community events.

4. Welsh Language Impact Assessment (Table 1)

This section assesses the proposal against the Welsh Language Standards Regulations (No.1 2015), in particular the Policy Making Standards (Standards 88–93), Service Delivery Standards (Standards 1–83), and Operational Standards (Standards 127–135).
It should be noted that the Welsh Language Impact Assessment will be updated regularly to ensure conscientious consideration. This assessment will be reviewed at key stages of the statutory process, including after

consultation and prior to decision-making, to ensure that any issues or feedback that emerge are fully considered.
We will include data, evidence, insight and feedback from internal research and consultations and the public consultation following that process.

Impact Criteria	Description	Impact status	Measures to increase the positive impact	Measures to mitigate potential negative impact	Final effect (after mitigation)
Informal use of Welsh at school (greeting, signs, customs, general communication)	Moving to a larger Welsh-medium school can provide a wider network of peers and a greater range of opportunities to use Welsh socially. Estyn has noted that most pupils in Pontyberem are making solid progress in their oral skills in both languages and that the curriculum reflects the linguistic character of the area. However, transition can temporarily disrupt language habits, friendship groups, confidence and the sense of belonging. There is a risk that some children will use more English when forming new relationships or if there is no intentional support to maintain their existing Welsh habits.	Mixed	• Establish a transition programme through the medium of Welsh prior to the transfer. • Organise joint days, play activities and clubs with Pontyberem pupils. • Use a Welsh "buddy" scheme for all children who transfer. • Carry out specific activities that celebrate the identity of Bancffosfelen. • Setting targets for informal use of the Welsh language in the transition plan.	• Measuring the confidence and social use of the Welsh language before and after transfer, in both communities not just in school. (See also the Community Opportunities section below) • To hold friendship groups where possible for the benefit of the children. • To provide pastoral support through the medium of Welsh. • Involve pupils' voice in shaping transition arrangements.	Neutral to positive, subject to effective implementation and monitoring.

Impact Criteria	Description	Impact status	Measures to increase the positive impact	Measures to mitigate potential negative impact	Final effect (after mitigation)
Current Welsh Language Standards and Provision	As both schools provide Welsh-medium education, the Welsh-medium educational pathway is not expected to be lost. Estyn's evidence indicates that Ysgol Pontyberem provides a broad and balanced curriculum, with provision that develops Welsh and English skills and reflects the local area. In the 2018 Bancffosfelen report, Estyn noted that many pupils are achieving a good standard of bilingualism by the end of Key Stage 2, but that voluntary use of Welsh in informal situations needs to be improved.	Positive	• Complete an individual baseline assessment of each pupil's Welsh language skills. • Share progress records, language needs and support strategies. • Ensure that Pontyberem provision builds on prior learning. • Monitor progress in oral, reading and writing Welsh per term.	• To provide Welsh language interventions for children who need additional support. • Avoid any expectation that children will "resume" language programs. • Include Welsh language targets in individual transition plans where necessary.	Positive – linguistic progression monitoring required
Opportunities after school and enrichment	Ysgol Bancffosfelen offers an Urdd club, Menter Iaith sessions and opportunities to take part in the Urdd Eisteddfod and the	Mixed	• To guarantee equal access to Urdd clubs, music, sports	• Conduct a transport assessment for	Neutral, if practical and

Impact Criteria	Description	Impact status	Measures to increase the positive impact	Measures to mitigate potential negative impact	Final effect (after mitigation)
(Welsh medium/ bilingual)	Bancffosfelen Eisteddfod. It also runs sports activities and events that contribute to the social use of the Welsh language. Ysgol Pontyberem can offer a wider range of activities in a larger school, but transport, travel times or collection arrangements can reduce the participation of Bancffosfelen children, particularly children from families without private transport.		and eisteddfodau. • Co-planning activities with the Urdd, Menter Iaith and Mudiad Meithrin. • Carry out some activities in Bancffosfelen if a suitable venue is available. • Proactively promote activities for Bancffosfelen families.	after school activities. • Consider late transportation or cost support where needed. • Monitoring of Bancffosfelen children's participation by activity and group and parental support for those who have moved. • Take corrective action if their participation rate decreases.	affordable access is ensured.
Community opportunities (support for parents/guardians and the wider community)	The current school supports Menter Iaith, Cân a Chlonc coffee mornings, Mudiad Meithrin Welsh sessions and materials to help parents support their children's language development. It has also fostered links with chapels,	Negative	• To create a joint school, family and community programme between Pontyberem and Bancffosfelen. • Continue Welsh sessions for	• Identify an alternative community setting for Welsh language activities in Bancffosfelen so that the school shares events as much as possible	Small negative to neutral.

Impact Criteria	Description	Impact status	Measures to increase the positive impact	Measures to mitigate potential negative impact	Final effect (after mitigation)
	churches, local groups and community services. The closure of the site may reduce the institutional presence of the Welsh language in Bancffosfelen and make some families feel less connected to a larger school in another community.		parents, including face-to-face and digital options. • Appoint a dedicated contact person for Bancffosfelen families. • To ensure proper representation for the Bancffosfelen community in the school's activities.	between the two communities. • Agree an annual programme of local activities before the school closes. • Monitor parental involvement and conduct an annual survey of families' experience.	
Support for Wales' cultural participation (Urdd, Mentrau Iaith, eisteddfodau, heritage)	The consultation document recognises that the Cylch Meithrin may have to relocate or close unless another suitable facility is identified. This would reduce local access to childcare and early years services and could have a wider impact on the promotion and growth of the	Negative	• Use the change as an opportunity to strengthen the path from the Cylch to Welsh education. • Promote the early years offer to new families.	• Carry out a location, transport, rent, capacity and accessibility assessment. • Working with Mudiad Meithrin to ensure uninterrupted continuity.	Neutral if a local sustainable site is secured.

Impact Criteria	Description	Impact status	Measures to increase the positive impact	Measures to mitigate potential negative impact	Final effect (after mitigation)
	Welsh language in the community. This is one of the most significant linguistic risks because the Cylch supports early language acquisition and can feed the Welsh language education pathway. Ysgol Bancffosfelen supports Urdd activities, local eisteddfodau, sporting events and community relations. Ysgol Pontyberem also offers regular opportunities at performances, eisteddfodau, concerts and activities that promote Welsh identity and heritage.		• To undertake bridging activities between the Cylch and Ysgol Pontyberem.	• Monitoring the number of children attending and the proportion progressing to Welsh education. • To explore the wider possible use of the Welsh language with partners to mitigate the loss of the Cylch Meithrin.	
Alignment with CSCA and the Welsh	The proposal supports the continuation of Welsh-medium education and is in line with the objectives of CSCA Carmarthenshire and Cymraeg	Positive	Develop and implement a structured Welsh immersion framework for	Review the assessment regularly as new evidence becomes available.	Positive

Impact Criteria	Description	Impact status	Measures to increase the positive impact	Measures to mitigate potential negative impact	Final effect (after mitigation)
Government's School Organisation Code	2050 by maintaining Welsh language provision and promoting social use of Welsh.		Foundation Learning, including speaking practices, language patterns and consistent vocabulary progression. Ensure that bilingual immersion and provision is delivered through inclusive, accessible means, including visual aid, modelling and repetition. To provide targeted support and monitoring to learners with ALN to ensure that the development of the Welsh language is appropriately supported.		
Not treating the Welsh language less	All consultancy, communication and service delivery activities will continue to be offered in	Positive	Ensure that the child-friendly version is available in Welsh	Use simple language, images and familiar contexts to	Positive

Impact Criteria	Description	Impact status	Measures to increase the positive impact	Measures to mitigate potential negative impact	Final effect (after mitigation)
favourably than English This requirement aligns directly with the Service Delivery Standards (Standards 1–83), which require that all services and services public-facing communications are available in Welsh and English to an equal standard.	Welsh and English in accordance with Welsh Language Standards. The consultation, transition process, admissions arrangements, transport, events and communication with parents must be available in Welsh and English to an equal standard. Choosing to use Welsh should not lead to delays, reduced knowledge or inferior service experience.		and English, treating both languages equally and supporting pupils' language choices. Incorporating feedback gathered from children and young people into the consultation process, ensuring that their views are appropriately considered.	encourage engagement and enable learners to express their views confidently. To facilitate opportunities for pupils to discuss the proposal in Welsh, supporting the use of Welsh in participatory and democratic processes.	

5. Welsh Language Standards (Table 2)

This assessment considers the impact of the proposal against the Welsh Language Standards Regulations (No.1 2015), including the Policy Making Standards (88–93), the Service Delivery Standards (1–83), and the Operational Standards (127–135).

Requirement	Does the proposal affect these Standards?	What evidence has been used to support this view?	Positive/negative effects
Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language	**Yes – a positive impact.**	**Carmarthenshire Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (CSCA) 2022–2032**, The evidence used to support this view includes relevant national and local strategic policy documents, in particular the Carmarthenshire Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (CSCA) 2022–2032, particularly outcomes relating to early immersion, progression, and increased use of the Welsh language in different contexts.	**Positives:** The proposal increases opportunities for learners to acquire and use Welsh through early immersion and clear progression pathways, supporting more consistent use of Welsh across learning, social and community contexts. **Negative:** No significant adverse effects were identified, subject to mitigation. Any potential short-term challenges associated with transfer are mitigated through step-by-step action, clear communication with families and ongoing support for learners and staff.
Not treating the Welsh language less	**Yes – a positive impact.** The proposal engages directly with the Service Delivery	the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015;	**Positives:** The proposal reinforces the principle of linguistic equality by ensuring that Welsh and English are

Requirement	Does the proposal affect these Standards?	What evidence has been used to support this view?	Positive/negative effects
favourably than English	Standards by ensuring that Welsh and English are treated equally in all services, communication and engagement facing the public involved in the proposal, thereby reinforcing linguistic equality and compliance with statutory requirements.	bilingual consultation documentation; and the establishment of local authority Welsh Standards compliance arrangements. *(Policy Making Standards 88–93)*	treated equally in all services, communication and public engagement, in accordance with Welsh Language Standards. **Negative:** No significant adverse effects were identified, subject to mitigation. The proposal maintains and strengthens the existing arrangements for the provision of bilingual services, mitigating any risk of unequal treatment between Welsh and English.
Policy Making Standards – conscientious consideration of the Welsh language	**Yes – a positive impact.** The proposal has a direct impact on the Policy Making Standards by specifically considering the impact on the Welsh language, assessing opportunities to increase the use of Welsh, and identifying mitigation measures to improve positive outcomes. This Welsh Language Impact Assessment shows that has been **conscientious consideration** has been given to the Welsh language in accordance with **Policy**	The Impact Assessment on this Welsh language, which has been completed in the development of the proposal in order to identify impacts, mitigation measures and opportunities to improve the use of Welsh. The impact assessment will be updated as additional evidence is submitted as part of the consultation process.	**Positives:** The proposal has been developed with specific attention to the Welsh language, with the support of a Welsh Language Impact Assessment which identifies impacts, mitigation measures and opportunities to improve the use of Welsh, in accordance with statutory requirements. **Negative:** No significant adverse effects were identified, subject to mitigation. Considering the effects of the Welsh language at an early stage mitigates the risk of unintended adverse effects.

Requirement	Does the proposal affect these Standards?	What evidence has been used to support this view?	Positive/negative effects
	Making Standards 88–93, including specific consideration of how the proposal affects opportunities to use the Welsh language and the principle of treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.	The **statutory consultation document** which considers the impact of the proposal on the Welsh language and includes bilingual engagement arrangements. Alignment with **the School Organisation (Wales) Code 2026**, which requires specific consideration of the Welsh language in the development of education proposals. **Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (CSCA) 2022–2032**, which provides the strategic framework that informs the proposal. **Welsh Government policy**, including	

Requirement	Does the proposal affect these Standards?	What evidence has been used to support this view?	Positive/negative effects
		Cymraeg 2050 and the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025, underpins the expectations for increasing the use of Welsh.	
Service Delivery Standards – public facing services in Welsh	**Yes – a positive impact.** The proposal relates directly to the Service Delivery Standards by ensuring that all public-facing services, communications and engagement associated with the proposal are provided in English and Welsh to an equal standard, reinforcing compliance and maintaining linguistic equality. All consultation and communication arrangements will continue to comply with the **Service Delivery Standards (Standards 1–83),** ensuring that Welsh language services are provided to an equal standard and are not reduced as a result of the proposal.	The **Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015**, in particular the **Service Delivery Standards (Standards 1–83),** which set statutory requirements for the provision of public-facing services in English and Welsh to an equal standard. **A statutory consultation document** confirming that all consultation materials, communication and engagement activities	**Positives:** The proposal maintains and reinforces compliance with the Service Delivery Standards by ensuring that all services, communication and engagement activities facing the public are provided in Welsh and English to an equal standard, supporting equality and linguistic accessibility. **Negative:** No significant adverse effects were identified, subject to mitigation. Arrangements for the provision of bilingual services are being improved, and no reduction in Welsh provision is foreseen.

Requirement	Does the proposal affect these Standards?	What evidence has been used to support this view?	Positive/negative effects
		are provided bilingually. **Carmarthenshire County Council's established Welsh Language Standards compliance arrangements**, including bilingual correspondence, publications and public engagement practices.	
Operational Standards – internal use of Welsh by staff	**Yes – a positive impact.** The proposal supports the Operational Standards by strengthening opportunities for staff to use the Welsh language in their professional roles, particularly through increased Welsh-medium provision, targeted professional learning and the gradual development of workforce capacity.	Carmarthenshire County Council's workforce development arrangements, including access to Welsh language training and professional learning in accordance with the Executive Standards (Standards 127–135). Alignment with Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (CSCA)	**Positives:** The proposal supports increased internal use of the Welsh language by staff by expanding Welsh and bilingual provision, with step-by-step implementation and targeted professional learning support, thereby strengthening compliance with the Operational Standards. **Negative:** No significant adverse effects were identified, subject to mitigation. Any potential pressures associated with increased use of the Welsh language are alleviated through gradual action, workforce planning and access to professional development.

Requirement	Does the proposal affect these Standards?	What evidence has been used to support this view?	Positive/negative effects
		2022–2032, particularly outcomes relating to strengthening the Welsh-medium workforce and internal use of Welsh.	

6. Community Linguistic Context

Census 2021 data shows a decline in the use of Welsh across Carmarthenshire, with notable pressures in urban and post-industrial towns. While Carmarthenshire retains a relatively high proportion of Welsh speakers overall, the proportion among younger age groups has decreased, highlighting the importance of early immersion and strengthening Welsh language pathways in schools serving these communities.

Language Profile of the area

Bancffosfelen and Pontyberem lie in the Gwendraeth Valley area of Carmarthenshire, one of the historic heartlands of the Welsh language. The area benefits from a strong Welsh-medium educational infrastructure, including Ysgol Bancffosfelen and Ysgol Pontyberem, Cylchoedd Meithrin, Urdd activities, community organisations and cultural events that support the daily use of the Welsh language.

While Welsh remains a significant community language, Census 2021 data shows that ongoing pressures stem from demographic change, migration patterns and changing patterns of language use among younger generations.
The 2021 Census shows that **the Pontyberem Ward has the highest proportion of Welsh speakers in Carmarthenshire**, with:

1. **1,685 Welsh speakers**
2. **60.7% of residents aged 3+ are able to speak Welsh**

This places Pontyberem among the strongest Welsh speaking communities in the county.
Importantly, the Council's Census analysis stated:

1. **Pontyberem 1** and **Pontyberem 2** LSOAs are among only five LSOAs in Carmarthenshire where **over 60% of children and young people aged 3-18 are able to speak Welsh**.

This is particularly significant because it shows that Welsh is not only a language spoken by older generations in the area but continues to be a language used and acquired by a large number of children and young people.
Bancffosfelen belongs to the wider linguistic area of Pontyberem and Gwendraeth and shares many of the same social and educational characteristics.

The community is served by:

1. Welsh-medium education.
2. Cylch Meithrin.
3. Urdd Activities.
4. Community events and cultural activities held through Welsh.
5. Strong local links between families, schools and community organisations.

One of the most important findings of the 2021 Census is that the ability of Welsh among younger age groups has declined across Wales and in all local authority areas.

Within Carmarthenshire:

1. The number of 3-15 year olds speaking Welsh fell between 2011 and 2021.
2. The county experienced a decrease of approximately 510 Welsh speakers within the 3-15 age group.
3. The proportion of Welsh-speaking children and young people fell by 2.6 percentage points.

Despite this wider trend, Pontyberem remains one of the strongest areas for Welsh language acquisition among young people in Carmarthenshire, with both Pontyberem LSOAs recording over 60% of Welsh speaking children and young people.

7. Risks and Mitigation

Risks	**Mitigation steps**
Engaging with the community and family in Welsh language activities can be varied.	• To develop an annual programme of Welsh-language family and community activities involving the school, the Urdd, Menter Iaith and local organisations.

	• Provide a dedicated community liaison for Bancffosfelen families. Promote activities through bilingual communication and social media. Monitor participation levels and identify groups that may be under-represented. • Continue learning opportunities for Welsh families, including informal sessions and online resources.
Accessibility for learners with additional learning needs within Welsh-medium provision.	• Ensure that all ALN support plans, assessments and arrangements transfer seamlessly between schools. • Maintain access to Welsh-medium ALN support, interventions and specialist services. • Hold one-on-one transition meetings with parents/carers and relevant professionals. • Monitoring learners' progress and wellbeing during and after transition. • To provide additional pastoral and emotional support in Welsh where necessary.
Reduced use of Welsh beyond the school environment due to limited exposure to the community.	• To support ongoing participation in Urdd activities, sports clubs, cultural events and community activities through the medium of Welsh. • Work with local organisations to carry out Welsh language activities in Bancffosfelen where possible. • Promote Welsh language opportunities outside of school through regular communication with families. • Monitor participation rates and take corrective action if engagement decreases. • To encourage pupils' participation in local heritage, cultural and community projects through Welsh.

Misunderstanding of language categories and progression pathways among parents/guardians.	• To provide clear information explaining Category 3 Welsh-medium provision and progression pathways. • Develop a frequently asked questions guide (FAQ) and bilingual information pack. • Hold information sessions for parents and carers before and during transition. • Provide opportunities for parents to discuss concerns directly with school leaders and officials. • Ensure that all communications clearly explain the educational and linguistic benefits of Welsh-medium education.
Limited use of Welsh support by families who do not have confidence in Welsh.	• Provide practical "Cymraeg yn y Cartref" resources and simple bilingual materials. Consider opportunities through the Cymraeg i Bawb project. • Promote family learning programmes and informal Welsh language support sessions. • Offering digital resources, apps and online learning opportunities suitable for parents who do not speak Welsh. • Encourage participation in Welsh language family events in a supportive and inclusive environment. • Establish peer support opportunities where experienced Welsh-medium parents can support other families.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

Mitigation actions set out in this assessment will be monitored through Local Authority and foundation school improvement processes and consultation feedback, with adjustments being made where necessary to maximise the positive impact on the Welsh language. Ongoing monitoring will ensure continued compliance with the Welsh Language Standards, including the Policy Making Standards (88–93), the Service Delivery Standards (1–83) and the Operational Delivery Standards (127–135), with corrective action taken where necessary.

9. Continuous improvement mechanisms:

This proposal shows clear conscientious consideration to the Welsh Government's Code of School Organisation and Welsh Language Standards, and the local authority will monitor the outcomes of the Welsh language throughout design, construction and implementation, reviewing evidence annually and refining actions.

10. Conclusion and Summary

Therefore, the proposal is deemed to comply with the Welsh Language Standards, including the requirements **of Policy Making Standards 88–93** and **Service Delivery Standards 1–83**, subject to the mitigation measures and monitoring arrangements outlined above.

This assessment will be reviewed at key stages of the statutory process, including after consultation and prior to decision-making, to ensure that any issues or feedback that emerge are fully considered.

Appendix C: Integrated Impact Assessment

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">PROPOSAL DETAILS: Proposed closure of Ysgol Bancffosfelen.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Service & Department:</td><td>Completed by (lead officer):</td><td>Date of initial assessment:</td><td>October 2026</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Education & Children Services</td><td rowspan="2">MEP team</td><td>Version number:</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td>Revision Date:</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>What is the proposal to be assessed?</td><td colspan="3">Proposal to discontinue Ysgol Bancffosfelen from the 31 December 2027 and transfer pupils to Ysgol Pontyberem on 1 January 2028.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Who will be directly affected by this proposal?</td><td colspan="3">Pupils currently attending Ysgol Bancffosfelen
Parents and carers of these pupils
School staff at Ysgol Bancffosfelen
Governors of Ysgol Bancffosfelen
Receiving school Governing Body, staff and pupils
Local community of Bancffosfelen
Local community of Pontyberem.
Other local schools.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4"></td></tr>
</table>

WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT FIVE WAYS OF WORKING ***(also known as the sustainable development principle. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires the Council to consider how any proposal improves the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales using the five ways of working as a baseline)***	
The sustainable development principle is: '... the public body must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'	
Ways of Working	**How does the proposal demonstrate that it has taken this into account?**
Long-term **Balancing short term need with the long term and planning for the future**	The proposal addresses the unsustainable status quo at Ysgol Bancffosfelen, which has low and declining pupil numbers (48 pupils, 51% surplus places) and a significant, growing budget deficit. Maintaining the school would not be viable in the long term. By transferring pupils to Ysgol Pontyberem which is only 1.3 miles away, the proposal improves educational outcomes by ensuring access to a broader curriculum, age-appropriate classes, and better facilities, supporting long-term educational success. Birth rate data for the Bancffosfelen catchment area indicates a persistent pattern of low birth numbers. The number of children born within the catchment postcode area fluctuates between three and ten per year, with an average of around six births annually across the cohorts that will reach Reception age between 2024 and 2030. In 2026, three of the six children born in the catchment were enrolled in Reception at Bancffosfelen. While future pupil numbers will also be influenced by migration into and out of the area and parental school preferences, the consistently low number of births suggests that the catchment is likely to generate relatively small cohorts of Reception-age pupils in the coming years, which may present challenges in sustaining pupil numbers over the longer term. It also supports financial sustainability by reducing ongoing costs and preventing further deficit growth, enabling resources to be used more effectively across the county. Furthermore, the proposal future-proofs provision by aligning with the Modernising Education Programme (MEP) Strategy, which aims to create a sustainable school network equipped for 21st-century learning.
	What evidence has been used to support this view?
	PLASC data Budget reports MEP Strategy Birth rate data: School Organisation Code (2026)
Prevention	The proposal, if implemented, would prevent the situation from worsening by addressing the ongoing challenges facing Ysgol Bancffosfelen before they become irreversible.

Preventing problems occurring or getting worse	The school currently faces low and declining pupil numbers, with only 48 pupils on roll at PLASC 2026 and 51% surplus places, alongside a significant and growing budget deficit of £62,924 in March 2026. These challenges are further compounded by evidence of persistently low birth rates within the catchment area, limiting the pipeline of future pupils, as well as concerns regarding the long-term sustainability of leadership arrangements, the ability to efficiently deliver a broad and balanced curriculum within a very small school setting, and the condition and suitability of the existing school building. Maintaining the status quo would be likely to result in continued financial instability and ongoing pressures on the school's ability to provide sustainable educational provision. By transferring pupils to Ysgol Pontyberem, the proposal would mitigate these risks and provide access to a larger, more financially resilient school, offering a broader range of educational and extracurricular opportunities, larger age-appropriate peer groups and modern learning facilities. Pupils would also benefit from being educated in a building that is better suited to contemporary teaching and learning requirements. This proactive approach aligns with the Modernising Education Programme (MEP) Strategy, which aims to create a sustainable school network, maximise educational opportunities for learners and avoid further deterioration in educational standards, building condition and financial viability.
	What evidence has been used to support this view?
	PLASC Data (2026) Budget Reports Modernising Education Programme (MEP) Strategy School Organisation Code (2026) Birth rate data Building Condition report
Integration **Recognising relationships and interdependencies with other well-being goals and objectives of other service areas and partners.**	The proposal demonstrates integration by recognising the relationships and interdependencies between educational provision, financial sustainability, community well-being, and cultural objectives. Closing Ysgol Bancffosfelen and transferring pupils to Ysgol Pontyberem aligns with Carmarthenshire's Modernising Education Programme (MEP) Strategy, which seeks to create a sustainable school network that supports the Curriculum for Wales and Welsh Government priorities, including Cymraeg 2050. It also contributes to wider corporate objectives such CCC's Wellbeing Strategy Objective 1, as reducing surplus places, improving resource

	efficiency, and supporting socio-economic equality by ensuring pupils have access to high-quality education regardless of location. The proposal integrates with transport policy by providing free school transport for eligible pupils, and with community planning by considering the impact on local services such as Cylch Meithrin Bancffosfelen. This holistic approach ensures that decisions about education provision are not made in isolation but take account of economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being goals.
	What evidence has been used to support this view?
	Modernising Education Programme (MEP) Strategy School Organisation Code (2026) Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) Financial Data Transport Policy Community Impact Assessment WIMD 2025 Information provided by Ysgol Bancffosfelen Carmarthenshire County Council Well- being Objectives – Objective 1: Enabling our Children and Young people to have the best possible start in life
Collaboration **Delivered by working with other internal and external partners (public, private or voluntary sector) to find shared sustainable solutions**	The proposal has been developed and delivered through collaboration with internal and external partners to identify shared sustainable solutions. Internally, the Local Authority worked with Education Services, Finance, HR, and Transport teams to ensure the proposal addresses educational standards, financial sustainability, and accessibility. Externally, engagement took place with the school's governing body, headteacher, and local elected member during initial discussions. The consultation process will be conducted in line with the School Organisation Code (2026), which ensures that stakeholders, including parents, staff, trade unions, Estyn, and the Welsh Language Commission can contribute their views. This collaborative approach supports transparency, shared responsibility, and the development of a solution that balances educational, financial, and community needs.
	What evidence has been used to support this view?
	Shaping Discussions School Organisation Code (2026) Consultation Document Modernising Education Programme (MEP) Strategy Community Impact Assessment Welsh Language Impact Assessment
Involvement	The proposal will be developed by actively involving those with an interest and seeking their views in decisions that affect them. In line with the School Organisation Code (2026), Carmarthenshire County Council will complete a comprehensive stakeholder consultation process.

Involving those with an interest and seeking their views in decisions that affect them	This will include engagement with parents, carers, pupils, school staff, governing bodies, trade unions, Estyn, the Welsh Language Commissioner, local elected members, and community representatives. Pupils will be consulted through age-appropriate materials and school council sessions, ensuring their voices will be heard. A formal Consultation Report will be published summarising all responses and the Council's considerations before any final decision is made to move to Statutory Notice period. Should proposals progress that far an Objection period will commence which will provide a further opportunity for the public and stakeholders to submit objections.
	What evidence has been used to support this view?
	School Organisation Code (2026) Consultation Document Planned Consultation Activities Commitment to publish Consultation Report Community Impact Assessment

What action can be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or support any positive impacts?

1. Long Term	To support long-term sustainability, the proposal will include a phased transition plan to ensure pupils move smoothly to Ysgol Pontyberem, maintaining continuity in education and wellbeing. Investment will be made in sustainable infrastructure at the receiving school to accommodate additional pupils without compromising the quality of education. The Council will also monitor the long-term impact on community cohesion and explore options for repurposing the Ysgol Bancffosfelen site for community benefit in line with the Local Authority's policy for redundant school buildings. Should there be no corporate use for the site and it is not required for community benefit the Local Authority will seek to dispose of the building at the earliest opportunity.
2. Prevention	Preventative measures focus on reducing uncertainty and avoiding further deterioration of the situation. This includes early engagement and clear communication with parents, carers and staff, targeted support for vulnerable learners during transition
3. Integration	The proposal integrates with wider strategies and objectives by aligning with the Modernising Education Programme (MEP) Strategy and Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). It aligns with CCC's Wellbeing Strategy Objective 1, CCC's School Transport policy, Welsh Government' Curriculum for Wales and Cymraeg 2050. It ensures consistency with educational and cultural goals while coordinating

	with transport services to provide safe and efficient travel arrangements.
4. Collaboration	Collaboration is central to the proposal, with continued engagement between internal teams, Education, Finance, HR, and Transport, the impacted schools and external partners such as Estyn, the Welsh Language Commissioner, and trade unions. The Council will also work closely with all stakeholders including the receiving school to ensure that all parties have full collaboration in the transition should it go ahead.
5. Involvement	To ensure meaningful involvement, the Council will undertake a transparent consultation process, giving parents, pupils, staff, and community stakeholders opportunities to provide feedback. Pupil-friendly consultation materials and school council sessions will be used to involve children in decisions affecting them. A formal Consultation Report will be published summarising feedback and how it influenced the final decision. If the proposal proceeds to Statutory Notice there will be a further opportunity for the public and stakeholders to submit objections.

EQUALITIES ***(the Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have "due regard" to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and foster good relations between different groups)***

Protected Characteristics	**Does the proposal impact on any of the protected characteristics?**	**What evidence has been used to support this view?**
Age	No disproportionate adverse impact identified. The proposal directly impacts primary-aged pupils of primary school age currently attending Ysgol Bancffosfelen, as they will need to transfer to another school. It also impacts pupils of non statutory school age who are not entitled to free home to school transport. It also affects parents and carers who may need to adjust to new travel arrangements. The proposal directly impacts all staff employed at Ysgol Bancffosfelen and those at the proposed receiving school. Consideration will need to be given to mitigate any impact on staff, including those aged over 55.	PLASC data (2026) showing 48 pupils on roll; Staffing profile

Disability	No disproportionate adverse impact identified. The proposed receiving school is better equipped to accept pupils with disabilities as it benefits from accessible environments internally and externally. There may be potential impacts on pupils with additional learning needs, including anxiety linked to change, sensory sensitivity and adjustment to a larger school environment. The Local Authority recognises that some learners benefit from familiar routines and smaller settings. The receiving school has established ALN systems and access to specialist services. Should the proposal be implemented, individualised transition planning, reasonable adjustments and continued engagement with families would be essential to mitigate any potential adverse impacts and support pupil wellbeing. Under the ALN Code, the Local Authority will continue to identify and assess learners with Additional Learning Needs, ensure timely and appropriate Additional Learning Provision, and maintain statutory processes such as Individual Development Plans. Ysgol Pontyberem would continue to implement person-centred practices, collaborate with the LA, health board, and families, and comply with legal duties under the ALNET Act.	ALN Code Information provided by Ysgol Bancffosfelen and proposed receiving school
Gender reassignment	No disproportionate adverse impact identified. The proposal does not relate to gender identity or involve changes that would affect individuals undergoing or having undergone gender reassignment. However, there may be some negative impacts associated with the proposal on this protected characteristic in relation to potential stress relating to adapting to new social environments where inclusion practices may be different.	Nature of the proposal (school closure and transfer) is unrelated to this characteristic.

Marriage and Civil Partnership	No disproportionate adverse impact identified. The proposal may result in changes to employment arrangements for staff, including the potential for redeployment or redundancy processes. However, these impacts would apply irrespective of an individual's marital or civil partnership status and no evidence has been identified to suggest that married persons or persons in a civil partnership would be disproportionately affected by the proposal. Any staffing implications arising from the proposal would be managed in accordance with the Council's employment policies and procedures.	Proposal scope limited to school provision.
Race	No disproportionate adverse impact identified. The proposal does not alter access to Welsh-medium education, educational opportunities or support services on the grounds of race, ethnicity or nationality. Ethnicity data indicates that 100% of pupils attending Ysgol Bancffosfelen are recorded as White British. The proposed receiving school, Ysgol Pontyberem, has a similarly homogeneous pupil population, with 99.0% of pupils recorded as White British and 1.0% recorded within other ethnic groups. The receiving school already supports pupils from a small range of ethnic backgrounds and is expected to continue to promote equality, inclusion and good relations between different groups. Pupils transferring from Ysgol Bancffosfelen would continue to receive education within an inclusive learning environment and retain access to the same curriculum and statutory support arrangements. No evidence has been identified to suggest that learners, parents, carers or staff would be disproportionately affected by the proposal on the basis of race, ethnicity or nationality.	PLASC 2026 data Welsh Language Impact Assessment Estyn reports
Religion/Belief	No disproportionate adverse impact identified. The proposal does not alter access to education, support services or educational	Both schools are community schools without a designated religious character.

	opportunities on the basis of religion or belief. Both Ysgol Bancffosfelen and Ysgol Pontyberem are community schools and the proposal would not affect access to Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) within the Curriculum for Wales. No evidence has been identified to suggest that learners, parents, carers or staff of any faith, belief or non-belief group would be disproportionately affected by the proposal.	
Pregnancy and maternity	No disproportionate adverse impact identified. Potential impact on parents who are pregnant or on maternity leave due to changes in travel arrangements. Mitigation includes clear communication and transport support. Pregnant staff, those on maternity leave, or those returning to work will have access to ongoing HR advice and guidance throughout the implementation process. A named HR contact will be identified for pregnancy and maternity related queries.	CCC School transport policy and support measures.
Sexual Orientation	No disproportionate adverse impact identified. The proposal does not alter access to education, school places, support services or educational opportunities on the basis of sexual orientation. Pupils transferring from Ysgol Bancffosfelen would continue to receive education within an inclusive learning environment and retain access to the same curriculum, wellbeing support and statutory services. The proposal may result in changes to employment arrangements for staff; however, no evidence has been identified to suggest that staff, pupils, parents or carers of any sexual orientation would be disproportionately affected by the proposal. The receiving school would continue to operate in accordance with equality legislation and policies that promote inclusion, wellbeing and respect for diversity.	Proposal relates solely to school organisation and pupil transfer.

Sex	No disproportionate adverse impact identified. The proposal does not alter access to education, school places, support services or educational opportunities on the basis of sex. All pupils transferring from Ysgol Bancffosfelen would continue to have access to the same curriculum, wellbeing support and educational provision regardless of sex. Potential impact identified on staff. The proposal may result in changes to employment arrangements, including the potential for redeployment or redundancy. The current staffing profile for Ysgol Bancffosfelen indicates that most affected staff are female. Consequently, any employment impacts arising from the proposal would fall upon a workforce consisting mostly of women. However, the proposal has not been developed because of the sex of affected employees, and any staffing implications would be managed in accordance with the Council's employment policies, equality duties and redeployment procedures. No evidence has been identified to suggest that the proposal would result in unlawful discrimination.	Proposal relates solely to school organisation and pupil transfer.

What action can be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or support any positive impacts?

1. Age	Provide clear communication and transition support for pupils and parents, including familiarisation visits to the receiving school. Offer additional pastoral care for younger pupils to ease anxiety during the change.
2. Disability	The proposed receiving school is already well equipped to welcome pupils with disabilities however the Local Authority will ensure the receiving school makes reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities if required. This may include accessibility adaptations and transport arrangements. Provide individual transition plans for pupils with additional learning needs.
3. Gender reassignment	Maintain confidentiality and ensure inclusive policies are upheld. Provide staff training (if required) on equality and diversity to prevent discrimination and foster an inclusive environment.
4. Marriage and Civil Partnership	Maintain flexible communication channels for parents, carers and staff to accommodate family circumstances.
5. Race	Continue to promote equality and inclusion at the receiving school. Monitor for any potential issues and provide cultural awareness activities to maintain positive relations.

6. Religion/Belief	Ensure that any religious observances or dietary requirements continue to be respected at the receiving school. Communicate with parents to confirm arrangements.
7. Pregnancy and maternity	Offer flexible engagement options for parents who are pregnant or on maternity leave, such as virtual meetings and extended deadlines for consultation responses.
8. Sexual Orientation	Provide equality and diversity training for staff to maintain an inclusive environment and prevent discrimination if required. Ensure anti-bullying policies are enforced.
9. Sex	Provide equality and diversity training for staff to maintain an inclusive environment and prevent discrimination if required. Ensure anti-bullying policies are enforced. Any staffing impacts arising from the proposal would be managed in line with the Council's employment policies, ensuring fair and equitable treatment regardless of sex.

WELSH LANGUAGE ***(the Welsh Language Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards require the Council to have "due regard" for the positive or negative impact a proposal may have on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and ensuring the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language)***

Requirement	Does the proposal impact on the following Standards?	What evidence has been used to support this view?	Does the proposal have any positive or negative impacts?
Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language	An individual Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is located in Appendix B. Pupils will continue to receive education through the medium of Welsh at Ysgol Pontyberem, which is also a Category 3 Welsh-medium school.	Both schools are Welsh-medium. Welsh Language Impact Assessment.	Pupils will have opportunities to use Welsh in a larger peer group and access extracurricular activities (e.g., Urdd clubs) that promote Welsh language and culture. The Welsh Language Impact Assessment also identifies potential adverse impacts on community use of Welsh and local Welsh-medium early years provision should appropriate mitigation measures not be implemented.
Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably than the English language	An individual Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is located in Appendix B Welsh language provision will continue to be treated equally and promoted in line	Both schools operate under Welsh Language Standards. Receiving school has strong Welsh ethos and extracurricular opportunities in Welsh.	Maintains Welsh-medium provision, ensuring pupils continue to learn and communicate primarily in Welsh.

	with statutory requirements.		

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY ***(The Socio-Economic Duty requires us, when making strategic decisions, to consider how our decisions might help reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage. Inequality of outcome relates to any measurable differences in outcome between those who have experienced socio-economic disadvantage and the rest of the population. It also requires us to understand the views and needs of those impacted by the decision, particularly those who face economic disadvantage)***	
Requirement	
What evidence do you have about socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in relation to this decision?	PLASC data (2026) shows that approximately 8% of pupils at Ysgol Bancffosfelen are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). The Local Authority has also considered the socio-economic profile of the catchment area using the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2025, the Welsh Government's official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in Wales. The majority of the catchment falls within the Llangyndeyrn 2, Pontyberem 2 and Pontyberem 1 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). Whilst small parts of the catchment area fall within the Glyn and Llanddarog Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), these areas comprise predominantly agricultural land and contain few, if any, residential properties. Consequently, they are not considered to have a significant influence on the overall socio-economic profile of the catchment area. WIMD 2025 data indicates that these principal catchment areas fall within Deciles 4, 5 and 7 respectively, meaning they are not amongst the most deprived communities in Wales. The evidence suggests that the catchment experiences low to moderate levels of deprivation overall rather than concentrated socio-economic deprivation. WIMD 2025 education indicators also identify relatively high levels of persistent absenteeism amongst primary-aged learners in some of the principal catchment LSOAs. The Local Authority recognises that pupils experiencing socio-economic disadvantage may be at greater risk of disengagement from education and therefore considers effective transition arrangements, pastoral support and ongoing monitoring of attendance and wellbeing to be important mitigation measures should the proposal proceed. Income and employment deprivation indicators are similarly moderate, while education indicators compare favourably with many areas of Wales. Whilst the catchment is not characterised by high levels of deprivation overall, WIMD 2025 income indicators identify notable levels of child income deprivation within some of the principal catchment LSOAs. The proportion of children living in income-deprived households ranges from approximately 25.8% to 40.5% across the principal catchment areas. The Local Authority therefore recognises that a proportion of learners may experience socio-economic disadvantage and that any changes arising from the proposal should be considered in that context. The most significant deprivation factor identified relates to access to services. Llangyndeyrn 2 falls within Decile 1 and Pontyberem 1 and

	Pontyberem 2 fall within Decile 3 for access to services, reflecting the rural nature of the catchment and the distances involved in accessing key services. The Local Authority recognises that learners and families experiencing socio-economic disadvantage may be more sensitive to changes in travel arrangements and accessibility and has considered these matters as part of the assessment of the proposal. Existing deprivation indicators, including FSM eligibility, attendance information and wellbeing information, will be considered when planning transition arrangements. Appropriate support will be provided to learners and families where particular vulnerabilities are identified. Having considered both FSM data and WIMD 2025 evidence, the Local Authority does not consider that the proposal would have a disproportionate adverse impact on learners from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Whilst some short-term disruption may occur during the transition period, the available evidence suggests that the principal socio-economic issues affecting the catchment relate to income disadvantage affecting some families and accessibility of services within a rural area. The proposal is therefore expected to maintain, and in some respects enhance, educational opportunities and support available to disadvantaged learners. The catchment area is not amongst the most deprived communities in Wales and the principal socio-economic issue identified relates to access to services and travel. The availability of free home-to-school transport for eligible learners, together with transition and wellbeing support, is expected to mitigate potential adverse impacts. If the proposal was implemented Ysgol Pontyberem would offer access to a broader team of staff and potentially greater support structures, particularly benefiting those from economically deprived backgrounds. The proposal aligns with the authority's broader vision to give all children and young people the best possible start in life, reduce the effects of poverty on educational outcomes, and ensure safe, prosperous communities.
Have you engaged with those effected by the decision?	Shaping discussions have been held with the headteacher and governing body. A statutory consultation process in line with the School Organisation Code (2026) will be undertaken. This will involve engagement with parents, carers, pupils, staff, and community stakeholders through online surveys, email responses and meetings. Pupil voice will be included via school council sessions, online sessions and age-appropriate materials. If the proposal proceeds a statutory notice will be published and stakeholders will have a further opportunity to comment on the proposals during the objection period.
Have you considered communities and places of interest?	The Community Impact Assessment (Appendix A) has been produced using information provided by Ysgol Bancffosfelen and Ysgol Pontyberem.

	Initial feedback from the schools reveals the significance of Ysgol Bancffosfelen within the community, including its role in supporting social cohesion, local identity and intergenerational interaction. Initial feedback raised concerns regarding potential impacts on local families, community activity, Welsh language use, and the displacement of services currently operating from the school site, including the Cylch Meithrin. Consideration has also been given to the socio-economic profile of the catchment area. WIMD 2025 data indicates that the most significant deprivation factor within the catchment relates to access to services rather than income deprivation. Consequently, the Local Authority has given particular consideration to the impacts of travel and accessibility arising from the proposal. Initial feedback from the school highlighted significant concern regarding the potential impact of the proposal on the Cylch Meithrin currently operating from Ysgol Bancffosfelen, including risks of disruption to early years provision, impacts on staff and implications for families. The Local Authority recognises the importance of early years Welsh-medium provision in supporting language acquisition and socio-economic participation. While responsibility for the operation of the Cylch Meithrin rests with the provider, the Authority would work with relevant partners, including Early Years Services and Mudiad Meithrin, to explore alternative accommodation options where required. These impacts have been carefully weighed alongside the school's educational and financial sustainability. Of the 64 pupils living within the catchment area, 41 attend other schools. The Authority also notes that analysis of pupil movement data shows that Ysgol Pontyberem currently educates more pupils from the Ysgol Bancffosfelen catchment area than any other school. This demonstrates not only that a significant number of families already choose Ysgol Pontyberem, but also that the school already has established links with families residing within the Ysgol Bancffosfelen catchment area. These impacts are acknowledged and have been weighed alongside the Local Authority's statutory responsibilities to secure sustainable education provision. Should the proposal be implemented and the school building become surplus to educational requirements, established corporate processes will consider potential future use of the site, including community or voluntary use, subject to viability and governance considerations.
What are the main impacts of the proposal?	The main impacts include the closure of a local school, which may affect community cohesion and accessibility for families in Bancffosfelen. The proposals would impact the local Cylch Meithrin which would in turn impact local families if it was to become unviable. Some pupils will need to travel further to attend the proposed receiving school or alternative schools subject to parental preference. The

	proposed changes could increase reliance on school transport and impact families from increased travel costs and changes to routines. However, the proposal ensures continued Welsh-medium education and improved educational standards by transferring pupils to a larger school with better facilities approximately 1.3 miles away from Ysgol Bancffosfelen. Whilst the catchment area is not characterised by high levels of deprivation, the proposal may have a greater impact on some households experiencing socio-economic disadvantage where families have limited access to private transport or face barriers to attending school activities and events. These considerations are particularly relevant given the catchment's WIMD profile for access to services. Financially, the proposal reduces inefficiencies and prevents further deficit growth.
How could the proposal be improved so it reduces inequalities of outcome as a result of socio-economic disadvantage?	The proposal could be improved by providing additional support for families facing economic hardship, such as: • Ensuring free school transport for all eligible pupils. • Offering flexible engagement options for parents (e.g., virtual meetings). • Monitoring the impact on FSM pupils and offering targeted wellbeing support during transition if required. School funding takes into account levels of deprivation by using Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility as an indicator of disadvantage. Additional funding is provided for each eligible pupil, meaning schools with more pupils on FSM receive more support. This helps ensure resources are targeted to the areas where they are needed most. In addition, the Local Authority will work with the receiving school to identify learners who may be vulnerable due to socio-economic disadvantage and provide targeted support where appropriate. The progress and wellbeing of disadvantaged learners will continue to be monitored through existing school systems following implementation.
What is the likely impact on those sharing protected characteristics and further impacts regarding intersectionality?	The proposal is unlikely to negatively impact most protected characteristics, as Welsh-medium provision and inclusive practices will continue. However, intersectional impacts may occur for pupils from low-income families who also have additional learning needs or parents who are pregnant/maternity. There may also be impacts on female staff if the proposals are implemented as the majority of staff at Ysgol Bancffosfelen are female. Whilst no disproportionate adverse impact has been identified, the Local Authority recognises that socio-economic disadvantage may interact with other characteristics and circumstances including disability, additional learning needs, health conditions and family circumstances. Individual transition arrangements will therefore be developed where required to minimise any risk of adverse impact.

THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD ***(In this section, we need to consider whether the proposal has any direct or indirect impact on children and young people).***			
Requirement		**What evidence has been used to support this view?**	**What action can be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or support any positive impacts?**
Will the proposal have any impact (direct or indirect) on children and young people?	Yes, the proposal will have a direct impact on children currently attending Ysgol Bancffosfelen, as they will need to transfer to another school. This change may affect their sense of security, friendships, and daily routines. Indirect impacts include changes to travel arrangements and potential effects on family life. There is potential that it will impact children attending the Cylch Meithrin should it become unviable if the school was to close.	PLASC data (2026) showing 48 pupils on roll. Evidence provided by the school. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC): Article 28 (Right to Education) has been considered as the proposal directly affects where children will receive their education. The Local Authority has assessed whether access to education will be maintained and notes that learners would continue to have access to Welsh-medium primary education at Ysgol Pontyberem or another school chosen by parents through the admissions process. Article 29 (Goals of Education) has been considered as the proposal seeks to provide learners with access to a broader range of educational opportunities, larger peer groups, enhanced facilities and wider curricular and extracurricular experiences, supporting the development of each child's abilities and potential.	Develop a transition plan, including familiarisation visits to Ysgol Pontyberem if required. Provide additional pastoral support for pupils during the transition period. Ensure clear communication with parents and pupils about timelines and arrangements. Offer opportunities for pupils to maintain peer relationships through joint activities before the move. Develop individual transition plans for pupils identified as vulnerable or anxious, including those with ALN. Engage pupils in the consultation process using age-appropriate materials

		Article 12 (Respect for the Views of the Child) is engaged because pupils affected by the proposal will be given opportunities to express their views during the consultation process. Article 30 (Children from Minority Groups) has been considered because the proposal relates to Welsh-medium education. The proposal would maintain access to Welsh-medium education and opportunities to use the Welsh language through provision at Ysgol Pontyberem.	
Is the initiative designed / planned in the best interests of children and young people?	Yes, the initiative is designed to improve educational outcomes by transferring pupils to a school with better facilities, stable leadership, and the ability to deliver the full Curriculum for Wales. Should proposals proceed pupils would (subject to parental preference) transfer to a school with more pupils, where pupils can interact with more pupils within their year groups and share experiences. It will also provide a wider offer of extra curricular activity. It also ensures continued Welsh-medium provision. The proposed receiving school has better condition and suitability scores and is currently	Modernising Education Programme (MEP) Strategy prioritising sustainable, high-quality education. Welsh Language Impact Assessment confirming continuity of Welsh-medium provision. ESTYN Reports Article 3 (Best Interests of the Child) has been considered throughout the development of the proposal. The Local Authority has assessed the educational, wellbeing, accessibility and community implications of the proposal and considers that, on balance, the proposal is intended to support the long-term best interests of learners by providing	Engage pupils in the consultation process using age-appropriate materials. Provide emotional and wellbeing support during and after the transition. Monitor progress and wellbeing of transferred pupils to ensure positive outcomes. Maintain communication with parents to address concerns promptly.

	better equipped in terms of accessibility to accept pupils and staff with disabilities.	access to sustainable Welsh-medium education, broader educational opportunities, improved facilities and enhanced support services. Article 23 (Children with Disabilities) has been considered because the proposal may affect learners with disabilities and additional learning needs. The Local Authority has considered the accessibility of the receiving school, the continuation of additional learning provision, access to specialist services and the need for individual transition arrangements. Where the proposal is implemented, appropriate support and reasonable adjustments will be provided to ensure that learners with disabilities continue to access education and participate fully in school life. Article 31 (Leisure, Play and Participation in Cultural Life) has been considered as the proposal may affect pupils' participation in recreational, sporting and cultural activities. The Local Authority considers that pupils transferring to Ysgol Pontyberem would have access to a broader range of extracurricular, sporting and cultural opportunities, including opportunities to participate in Welsh-	

		language activities and events, supporting their rights under Article 31.	

ENVIRONMENT (WALES) ACT & NET ZERO CARBON **Section 6 of the duty requires that public authorities "*must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity so far as consistent with the proper exercise of their functions and in doing promote the resilience of ecosystems". To comply with the S6 duty public authorities should embed the consideration of biodiversity and ecosystems into their early thinking and business planning, including policies, plans, programmes, and projects, as well as their day to day activities."***

Carmarthenshire County Council is committed to tackling climate change and acknowledge that we have a significant role to play in both further reducing our own greenhouse gas emissions and providing the leadership to encourage residents, businesses and other organisations to take action to cut their own carbon footprint.

Requirement	
Does the proposal impact on the county's Biodiversity and ecosystem resilience?	The proposal is unlikely to have a significant direct impact on biodiversity or ecosystem resilience. The closure of Ysgol Bancffosfelen involves repurposing or selling an existing building rather than new development, so no major habitat disruption is anticipated. However, the future use of the site is as yet unknown and any future use of the site should comply with biodiversity duties. Increased traffic from school or private transport may disrupt nearby habitats however the impact is likely to be minimal as there will be no infrastructure expansion or loss of significant green spaces required to facilitate the proposal. The proposal could also promote environmental awareness through outdoor learning spaces, eco-educational programs at Ysgol Pontyberem. An increase in pupil numbers could generate additional waste at Ysgol Pontyberem however, the overall impact is expected to be minimal. The pupils transferring are not new entrants to the education system and therefore the proposal would primarily result in waste production being transferred from Ysgol Bancffosfelen to Ysgol Pontyberem rather than creating significant additional waste. Any residual impacts would be mitigated through the school's existing waste management and recycling arrangements.
Does the proposal have a positive or negative impact on the CCC commitment to be a net zero carbon local authority by 2030?	Ysgol Bancffosfelen was established in 1877 and is heated using an oil-fired system, recorded a carbon footprint of 21 tonnes CO_2e in 2024/25. By comparison, Ysgol Pontyberem comprising multiple relatively modern blocks, dating from 1950's and now heated via gas and potentially soon to be supplemented by solar PV panels, recorded a carbon footprint of 33 tonnes CO_2e in 2024/25 However, Ysgol Pontyberem covers a far larger footprint that Ysgol Bancffosfelen. Considering energy use a per m2 basis, Ysgol Bancffosfelen is responsible for 93 kWh/m2 during 2024/25 compared with Ysgol Pontyberem's 78 kWh/m2. These figures highlight the disproportionately high emissions associated with maintaining older, energy-inefficient school buildings at low occupancy levels. Transport emissions associated with relocating pupils are expected to remain comparatively low. For illustrative purposes, a shared 53-seat bus

	travelling between the proposed receiving school and the furthest point within the catchment area of Ysgol Bancffosfelen via the B4306, a return journey of approximately 6 miles (3 miles each way), on each school day for 190 teaching days would generate approximately 2.44 tonnes CO_2e per annum based on DEFRA-derived factors(~18.6 kg CO_2e per trip). This estimate does not include emissions associated with the vehicle's positioning journey but remains significantly lower than the annual emissions associated with the operation of an aged school building. The figures presented are indicative only and will be dependent upon parental preference, pupil enrolment patterns should the proposal be implemented and the final transport route arrangements determined by the local authority. Ysgol Bancffosfelen currently accommodates a relatively small number of pupils within an older, thermally inefficient building. Operating a building of this size at low occupancy results in disproportionately high energy use per pupil, particularly for heating and lighting. Evidence from Welsh Government and UK public-sector guidance consistently identifies building energy consumption as a major source of carbon emissions within the education estate. Closure of an under-occupied school would remove the need to heat and maintain a building that is inefficiently used, resulting in a significant reduction in building-related emissions. While shared school transport would generate additional emissions, these are expected to be relatively modest. A shared vehicle serving a short route, over the course of a school year, produces substantially lower emissions than those associated with operating an under-utilised school building. The receiving school, Ysgol Pontyberem, operates at a more sustainable scale, serving a larger pupil population within a building better designed for efficient energy use. The environmental impact of any construction works associated with new accommodation at Ysgol Pontyberem will be calculated at the appropriate time when detailed information is available. Consolidating provision within such a setting improves overall energy efficiency and aligns with national expectations for the sustainable management of the school estate.
Does the proposal have a positive or negative impact on the County's resilience to the existing and future impacts of climate change?	The proposal has positive impact on resilience. Consolidating education provision into a modern, energy-efficient building would supports climate adaptation goals. However, increased reliance on transport could offset some benefits.

DATA PROTECTION ***(Data Protection legislation includes a legal requirement to undertake Data Protection Impact Assessments in order to identify and reduce the privacy risks of a project at an early stage. In this section, we need to establish whether the proposal requires this assessment needs to be completed. There are also specific requirements around using third parties to process personal data on the Council's behalf, which must be covered by a legally binding Data Processing Agreement).***		
Does the proposal involve the collection/use of personal data (information relating to an identified or identifiable person)?	Yes	**If yes, please provide information on the type of data** Email or postal addresses are requested should consultees wish to be informed of the publication of the consultation report. Consultation responses will remain anonymous.
Does the proposal require the use of new technologies and be likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of the individuals?	No.	**If yes, please provide information on the type of new technologies** Consultation documents will be available online and in paper form at the school. Response forms will be available online and in paper form at the school.
Does the proposal involve a third party collecting, being provided with, or otherwise having access to personal data controlled by the Council?	No	**If yes, please provide information on what this will entail**

IMPLICATIONS ***(Please consider any additional implications and ensure that any arising implications have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below)***
Are there any direct implications that need to be considered as part of this proposal?
1.Legal and Risk Management
If approved, consultation will need to be initiated in accordance with the relevant statutory procedures included within the School Organisation Code 2026. If the proposal proceeds to Statutory Notice stage an objection period will need to be initiated in accordance with the relevant statutory procedures. The School Organisation Code 2026 notes that "the prime purpose of schools is the provision of education and any case for closure should be robust and in the best interests of educational provision in the area."
2. Finance, Procurement, ICT and Physical Assets
If the proposal is approved, it will be funded in line with Local Authority maintained schools. The school's current financial position as well as forecasted budgets have been considered as part of the proposal papers. Should the proposals proceed, and implementation agreed, there would be anticipated annual revenue savings. In addition, there are other savings to the Council from the reduction in central support services provided to schools such as Human Resources,

Education and ALN Support, IT, Music Service, cleaning, property maintenance, grounds maintenance and catering.

If approved, the receiving school would benefit from additional pupil funding. Should the proposal proceed, and implementation agreed, the Local Authority would gain a redundant school building within its estate. If there is no corporate or community interest in retaining the building as per the 'Future Use/Disposal of Redundant Land and Buildings policy, then the building would be placed on the open market and could generate a capital receipt.

Should the proposal proceed and implementation agreed, the Local Authority would gain one redundant school building within its estate with an estimated value of £125,000. This figure represents an initial high-level estimate and further detailed assessment would be required to fully understand the site's potential value. The property would be transferred to the Corporate Property Division for the procedures outlined in the 'Future Use/Disposal of Redundant Land and Buildings arising from the Modernising Education Programme policy to be actioned. This policy has been developed to allow the community to be offered the asset in the first instance before placing the site on the open market.

Should the proposal proceed additional facilities would be required at Ysgol Pontyberem to accommodate pupils wishing to transfer. It is currently estimated that £900,000 and £1,200,000 will be required to provide additional accommodation, related storage and WC facilities. Funding would be required be from existing capital budgets available within the current capital programme as the proposal would not form part of the local authority's 21st Century Schools Investment Programme.

3. Staffing

If the proposal is approved, there is potential that Ysgol Pontyberem may require up to an additional two teachers which would add to its current staffing complement. Further discussions would be required with the proposed receiving school to determine the exact requirement if any.

The decision to propose the closure of a school is never taken lightly, and we fully recognise the significant impact such proposals can have on the staff who work there. Our priority is always to minimise disruption and to support our staff through any period of change.

In line with our Model Redundancy / Surplus Staffing Policy for Schools, we are committed to doing everything we can to avoid compulsory redundancies. This includes exploring all possible redeployment opportunities within the wider schools network and the local authority, offering voluntary redundancy or early retirement where appropriate, and working closely with trade unions throughout the process.

However, while we will make every effort to redeploy affected staff, we cannot completely rule out the possibility of redundancies. Where redeployment is not feasible, we will follow a fair and transparent process and will support those affected.

We understand the uncertainty this creates for staff and their families, and we are committed to providing clear communication, timely updates, and access to support services throughout the process. Our HR team will work closely with Headteachers and Governing Bodies to ensure that all staff are treated with dignity and respect throughout the process.

4. Marketing & Media
If the proposal proceeds to consultation stage it will need to be marketed through the county council website and social media accounts. All required stakeholders will be notified accordingly. If the proposal proceeds past Consultation stage to Statutory Notice stage an objection period will need be marketed through the county council website and social media accounts. All required stakeholders will be notified accordingly.
5. Crime and Disorder
No implications are anticipated. Closure could result in the school site becoming vacant for a period. Empty public buildings can attract vandalism, trespass, anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping, potentially creating community safety concerns and additional costs associated with site security and maintenance. Closure may reduce levels of daily activity and informal supervision in the vicinity of the school. Reduced occupation may create opportunities for anti-social behaviour and unauthorised use of school grounds, particularly during evenings and weekends. Vacant buildings can experience an elevated risk of deliberate fire setting. Any such incident could have implications beyond the site itself, including risks to neighbouring residents, environmental impacts and demands upon emergency services. Any potential community safety issues associated with the potential closure of the school are expected to be temporary and largely dependent upon the future use of the site. To mitigate these risks, the Authority will ensure that appropriate security measures are implemented to secure the property and minimise the risk of unauthorised access, vandalism, anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping or arson. In addition, the Authority will endeavour to determine the future use of the site at the earliest opportunity in order to minimise any period during which the building may remain vacant and to reduce the likelihood of longer-term community safety concerns.

Appendix D: Schools likely to be affected by the proposal					
School Name		**Ponthenri Primary School**	**Llanddarog VC Primary School**	**Pontyberem Primary School**	**Ysgol Gynradd Gwynfryn**
School Location		Heol Y Pentre, Ponthenri, Llanelli, SA15 5NS	Llanddarog, SA32 8BJ	Heol Y Felin, Pontyberem, Llanelli, SA15 5EB	Heol y Meinciau, Pontiets, Llanelli, SA15 5SN
Age Range		4-11	4-11	4-11	4-11
School Category		Community	Voluntary Controlled	Community	Community
Language Category		3 - Welsh Medium	3 - Welsh Medium	3 - Welsh Medium	3 - Welsh Medium
Number of registered Pupils (PLASC 2026)	**Nursery**	0	1	14	4
	Reception – Y.6	60	55	196	56
	Total	60	56	210	60
Number of pupils previously on the register (including Nursery) (PLASC)	**January 2025**	64	69	227	56
	January 2024	67	70	227	59
	January 2023	68	74	230	62
	February 2022	70	80	235	57
Pupil Projections (excluding Nursery) (2026)	**January 2027**	57	52	200	53
	January 2028	54	52	197	57
	January 2029	56	51	199	58
	January 2030	54	50	208	54
	January 2031	55	47	205	54

School Name	Ponthenri Primary School	Llanddarog VC Primary School	Pontyberem Primary School	Ysgol Gynradd Gwynfryn
Nursery Capacity 25/26	11	11	32	10
Reception-Y6 Capacity 25/26	83	83	210	85
Total Capacity 25/26	94	94	242	95
Nursery Capacity 26/27	10	11	34	10
Reception-Y6 Capacity 26/27	75	83	210	85
Total Capacity 26/27	85	94	244	95
School Budget (2025/26) (S52 Budget)	£349,676	£340,197	£1,157,600	£295,005
Budget share per pupil (2025/26) (S52 Budget)	£5,464	£4,930	£5,100	£5,268
School Budget (2026/27)(S52 Budget)	£334,409	£313,000	£1,177,055	£331,105
Budget share per pupil (2026/27)(S52 Budget)	£5,573	£5,589	£5,605	£5,518
Estyn Inspection Result	Not in follow up (2024)	Not in follow up (2019)	Not in follow up (2023)	Not in follow up (2025)
Building Condition Category	B (2023)	B (2024)	A (2023)	C (2024)
Building Suitability Category	B	B	A	B

Appendix E: Detailed SWOT analysis of each option considered

Alternative Option 1 - Retain the current arrangements (Status Quo) at the school.	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Retains continuity and familiarity for pupils, staff and families, with no immediate disruption to learning, wellbeing, established relationships or community links.	The school building has a poor suitability rating and requires significant investment to provide an environment fully aligned with the expectations of the Curriculum for Wales and modern educational practice
Preserves the school's role as an established community asset and maintains local access to education within Bancffosfelen.	Opportunities for pupils to learn, collaborate and socialise with larger groups of peers of a similar age and stage of development would remain limited.
No changes to transportation arrangements and no additional costs.	High levels of surplus places will remain unresolved, continuing to impact the efficient use of accommodation, educational resources and impacting the long-term sustainability of the school.
Environmental impacts associated with current travel arrangements remain the same.	Budget pressures and current deficit will not be addressed as liabilities and issues impacting the budget will continue to pose problems. The currently unsustainable deficit budget will continue to increase due to low pupil numbers.
Maintains Welsh-medium educational provision within the community, supporting the ambitions of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and Cymraeg 2050.	Pupils continue to be taught in mixed age classes spanning multiple year groups creating ongoing challenges in relation to curriculum planning, progression, assessment and differentiation.
The existing soft federation and shared headship arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog V.C. Primary School provides opportunities for collaborative working, professional learning, curriculum development and the sharing of effective practice.	Pupil projections show a stable trend going forward to 2031 but numbers are projected to continue to be low with high levels of surplus places and resulting in the continued inefficient use of accommodation and educational resources.
The existing shared leadership arrangement provides a degree of organisational stability and attracts an annual federation supplement which contributes towards leadership costs. The existing soft federation arrangement	Despite the existing soft federation and shared headship arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog VC Primary School, the school continues to face significant unresolved challenges relating to pupil numbers,

attracts a financial supplement of £6,000 per annum.	surplus places, financial sustainability and the condition/ suitability of the building.
Maintaining the current arrangements would allow the school to continue building upon established relationships with Ysgol Llanddarog and the wider community	The breadth of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision, specialist interventions and wider support services may be more limited than those available within larger schools.
Pupils already benefit from wider experiences through collaborative working, including educational visits, sporting activities and opportunities for social interaction with a broader group of peers	Smaller staffing structures restrict opportunities for distributed leadership, curriculum specialisation, professional collaboration and organisational resilience.
Opportunities	**Threats**
To implement a targeted improvement plan to address building related issues such as roof repairs and rectifying issues with the hall and improve facilities for the pupils.	Significant capital investment would be required to improve the condition and suitability of the school building, with no guarantee that such investment would improve long-term viability or sustainability.
Potential to involve the community in fundraising and volunteering to strengthen school operations and reduce deficit budgets.	Ongoing financial pressures may increasingly constrain curriculum development, staffing flexibility, school improvement activity and investment in educational provision.
Whilst improving the condition and suitability of the school building could enhance the quality of the learning environment, this would require substantial capital investment. Given the existing pattern of low enrolment and limited uptake from the catchment area, it is uncertain whether such investment alone would result in a sustained increase in pupil numbers or address the long-term sustainability of the school.	Continued low pupil numbers could further affect the school's viability, organisational resilience and attractiveness to prospective families.
The existing soft federation arrangement provides opportunities to further develop collaborative working, professional learning and shared activities with Ysgol Llanddarog VC Primary School. However, these arrangements alone are unlikely to	Increasing deficit may continue to grow, resulting in increased financial intervention requirements from the Local Authority

address the fundamental sustainability challenges facing the school.	
	Further deterioration of the school building could increase maintenance liabilities, operational risks and health and safety concerns.
	Concerns regarding building suitability and long-term sustainability may accelerate parental preference for alternative schools.
	High levels of surplus places are projected to persist, resulting in continued inefficiencies and pressure on public resources.
	Long-term uncertainty regarding the future sustainability of the school may impact staff recruitment, retention, parental confidence and future enrolment patterns.

Likely impact on quality and standards in education

Retaining the current arrangements would provide continuity and stability for pupils, staff and families in the short term. Learners would remain within a familiar environment, continue to be taught by known staff and experience no disruption associated with school reorganisation or transition. The school was inspected by Estyn in 2018 and is not currently in a follow-up category, indicating that it continues to provide an acceptable standard of education. Consequently, educational standards could reasonably be expected to be maintained in the immediate future under the status quo.

The existing soft federation and shared headship arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog V.C. Primary School and Ysgol Pontiets would continue to provide opportunities for collaboration, professional dialogue and the sharing of effective practice. Pupils would continue to benefit from joint activities, educational visits, sporting opportunities and wider learning experiences, whilst staff would continue to engage in collaborative curriculum planning and professional learning. These arrangements have strengthened educational opportunities for learners and have provided an important degree of organisational stability and leadership continuity.

However, despite the benefits associated with the existing federation arrangements, the school continues to face significant challenges relating to pupil numbers, surplus places, financial sustainability and the condition and suitability of the school building. The current arrangements have helped mitigate some of these challenges but have not addressed the underlying issues that prompted the review. As a result, many of the factors affecting the school's long-term viability and sustainability would remain unchanged under this option.

A significant challenge under this option would be the continuation of very low pupil numbers and mixed-age teaching arrangements. Whilst staff work effectively to meet the needs of learners, the small scale of the school limits opportunities for pupils to learn, collaborate and socialise with larger groups of peers of a similar age and stage of development. Opportunities for collaborative learning, peer discussion, group work, healthy competition and wider social experiences are more restricted than in larger school settings.

The current class structure also requires teachers to plan, deliver and assess learning across multiple year groups and progression steps within the same classroom. Whilst this is managed effectively by staff, it inevitably increases the complexity of curriculum delivery, assessment and differentiation. Consequently, the challenges associated with delivering the full breadth and ambition of the Curriculum for Wales within a very small-school context would remain.

In addition, learners would continue to have more limited access to the breadth of curriculum opportunities, specialist expertise, extracurricular activities, wellbeing support and additional learning provision that are more readily available within larger schools.

Furthermore, retaining the current arrangements would not address concerns regarding the condition and suitability of the school building. Significant capital investment would be required to improve the learning environment and there is limited evidence that investment in accommodation alone would address the wider educational, organisational and sustainability challenges facing the school.

Pupil projections indicate that numbers are expected to remain low and surplus capacity will continue. Consequently, the educational, organisational and financial challenges associated with operating a very small school are likely to persist over the longer term. Whilst standards may continue to be maintained, the option provides limited opportunity to broaden educational experiences, strengthen leadership capacity, increase organisational resilience, improve curriculum flexibility or secure long-term sustainability.

Overall, retaining the current arrangements would preserve continuity and provide short-term stability for pupils and families. However, it would not address the fundamental challenges facing the school or create the conditions necessary to secure long-term improvement and sustainability.

Whilst educational standards are likely to be maintained in the short term, the option offers limited scope to enhance learner experiences, broaden curriculum opportunities, strengthen leadership capacity, improve organisational resilience or improve the learning environment. Importantly, the option would maintain the current position rather than deliver the transformational change required to address the issues identified through the review.

Likely impact on the community

Retaining the status quo would maintain the current level of provision within the community in the short term. However, the ongoing challenges facing the school,

including declining pupil numbers and financial pressures, may impact the longer-term sustainability of this provision.
Likely effect of different travel arrangements No impact on travel arrangements are anticipated as the status quo would remain.
Reason for discounting this option Overall, retaining the status quo would fail to address the fundamental challenges facing the school, including low pupil numbers, high levels of surplus capacity, an unsustainable financial position, and concerns regarding the suitability and condition of the building. While it would provide short-term stability and the existing soft federation and shared headship arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog V.C. Primary School has provided valuable opportunities for collaboration, shared leadership, professional learning and wider educational experiences for pupils, these arrangements have been in place since September 2024 and have not addressed the fundamental challenges facing the school. Retaining the status quo would not offer a viable long-term solution to improving educational provision, addressing budget pressures, or securing the school's sustainability for future learners. As such, this option does not represent an effective or strategic use of resources and is not considered a deliverable way forward. This is despite the benefits already being achieved through the existing soft federation and shared headship arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog VC Primary School. The Local Authority consider this option would maintain existing provision rather than improving it.

Alternative Option 2 - Change the age range of Ysgol Bancffosfelen from 4-11 to 3-11	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
The introduction of early years provision may increase the attractiveness of the school to prospective families, although the extent of this is uncertain.	The school building has a poor suitability rating and requires significant investment to provide an environment fully aligned with the expectations of the Curriculum for Wales and modern educational practice
Retains continuity and familiarity for pupils, staff and families, with no immediate disruption to learning, wellbeing, established relationships or community links.	If local demand for early years places is already met elsewhere uptake may be slow.
Offering Early years provision on site may make the school more attractive to parents.	Depending on uptake, teaching staff would potentially face the ongoing challenge of planning and delivering lessons to classes of pupils of mixed ages and abilities as it does currently

Pupils would continue to access Welsh-medium education, and the introduction of early years provision could support the authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and Cymraeg 2050 ambitions.	May impact local businesses providing early years education and nursery education is available at the Cylch Meithrin based at Ysgol Pontyberem , just over one mile away.
Preserves the school's role as an established community asset and maintains local access to education within Bancffosfelen.	Significant costs associated in elevating the condition of the school building to an acceptable and safe standard.
No changes to transportation arrangements and no additional costs.	Mixed age classes across multiple year groups may limit the school's ability to consistently deliver the full breadth of the Curriculum for Wales and appropriately challenge all learners.
Environmental impacts associated with current travel arrangements remain the same.	The option would not address the existing budget deficit and may place further pressure on finances if additional provision is introduced without sufficient uptake.
Maintains Welsh-medium educational provision within the community, supporting the ambitions of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and Cymraeg 2050.	Establishing early years provision may require adaptation of existing spaces, which could place additional pressure on already constrained accommodation.
The existing soft federation and shared headship arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog V.C. Primary School provides opportunities for collaborative working, professional learning, curriculum development and the sharing of effective practice.	Opportunities for pupils to learn, collaborate and socialise with larger groups of peers of a similar age and stage of development would remain limited.
The existing shared leadership arrangement provides a degree of organisational stability and attracts an annual federation supplement which contributes towards leadership costs. The existing soft federation arrangement attracts a financial supplement of £6,000 per annum.	High levels of surplus places will remain unresolved, continuing to impact the efficient use of accommodation, educational resources and impacting the long-term sustainability of the school.
Maintaining the current arrangements would allow the school to continue building upon established relationships with Ysgol Llanddarog and the wider community	Budget pressures and current deficit will not be addressed as liabilities and issues impacting the budget will continue to pose problems. The currently unsustainable deficit budget will continue to increase due to low pupil numbers.
Pupils already benefit from wider experiences through collaborative working, including educational visits, sporting activities and opportunities for	Pupils continue to be taught in mixed age classes spanning multiple year groups creating ongoing challenges in relation to

social interaction with a broader group of peers.	curriculum planning, progression, assessment and differentiation.
	Pupil projections show a stable trend going forward to 2031 but numbers are projected to continue to be low with high levels of surplus places and resulting in the continued inefficient use of accommodation and educational resources.
	Despite the existing soft federation and shared headship arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog VC Primary School, the school continues to face significant unresolved challenges relating to pupil numbers, surplus places, financial sustainability and the condition/ suitability of the building.
	The breadth of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision, specialist interventions and wider support services may be more limited than those available within larger schools.
	Smaller staffing structures restrict opportunities for distributed leadership, curriculum specialisation, professional collaboration and organisational resilience.
Opportunities	**Threats**
This option could meet community needs and give parents more options for Early Years education although provision is already available nearby.	Risk that introducing early years provision impacts negatively on existing local providers.
Short-term continuity of provision may support health and wellbeing of pupils and staff but risks emerge if building and staffing issues persist.	Risk that the option diverts resources without addressing core sustainability issues
Opportunity to strengthen transition between early years and statutory education through a single-site model.	Risk that demand assumptions are not realised, resulting in underutilised provision
	Risk that financial pressures increase due to staffing and accommodation requirements
	Risk that implementation of early years provision may require additional staffing and resources which may not be sustainable if uptake is limited.
Likely impact on quality and standards in education Changing the age range of Ysgol Bancffosfelen from 4-11 to 3-11 could provide some educational benefits. The introduction of nursery provision may strengthen transition arrangements between early years and statutory education and provide a continuous	

learning pathway for children and families within the local community. The option could also enhance parental choice and support the Authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and the ambitions of Cymraeg 2050 through the provision of additional Welsh-medium early years education.

However, there is limited evidence to suggest that changing the age range alone would result in a significant or sustained increase in pupil numbers. Nursery provision is already available locally and it is therefore uncertain whether the introduction of a nursery class at the school would generate sufficient additional demand to address the school's underlying sustainability challenges. As a result, the school would be likely to continue operating with low pupil numbers, significant surplus capacity and a high cost per pupil.

Whilst the option may increase the number of pupils attending the school in the early years, it would not address many of the challenges currently affecting educational provision. Pupils would continue to be taught within a small school environment, with mixed-age classes spanning multiple year groups. Staff would continue to face the complexities associated with planning, delivering and assessing learning across a broad range of ages, abilities and progression steps. The introduction of an additional age group may further increase organisational complexity without addressing the underlying issues affecting the school's viability.

The current soft federation and shared headship arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog V.C. Primary School would remain. Whilst these arrangements provide valuable opportunities for collaboration and leadership support, they have not addressed the school's underlying challenges relating to pupil numbers, surplus places, financial sustainability or accommodation.

The option would also not address concerns regarding the suitability and condition of the school building. Significant capital investment would still be required to improve accommodation and ensure that facilities are appropriate for both existing pupils and any additional nursery provision. Furthermore, establishing nursery provision may require adaptations to existing spaces, placing additional pressure on accommodation that is already constrained.

The school's 2018 Estyn inspection did not place the school in a follow-up category, indicating that standards can be maintained under the current arrangements. Nevertheless, this option provides limited opportunity to strengthen leadership capacity, broaden educational opportunities, improve organisational resilience or enhance the learning environment. It would therefore do little to address the factors that have led to the review.

Overall, whilst this option may provide some benefits in terms of parental choice, early years continuity and Welsh-medium nursery provision, it would not address the fundamental challenges facing the school. Educational standards may continue to be maintained, but the option would offer limited scope to improve leadership capacity, curriculum breadth, organisational resilience, financial sustainability or the suitability of the learning environment.

Likely impact on the community

Introducing Early Years provision would provide local families with more accessible early education options. The addition of Early Years classes may attract more families to the area, potentially leading to increased competition for primary school places.
Early integration of children into the school environment can foster stronger relationships between families and educational institutions. This could enhance community cohesion and support local initiatives.

Expanding Welsh-medium early years provision could support the Welsh Government's goal of reaching one million Welsh speakers by 2050. Introducing nursery provision could provide a seamless educational pathway for children, enhancing continuity and community integration.

An increase in school-age children may place additional demands on local infrastructure. More families attending school could lead to increased traffic during peak times however this is likely to be a negligible impact in this instance due to the demographics of the area and small size of the school.

However, the extent of these benefits would depend on local demand and the viability of sustaining early years provision at the school.

Likely effect of different travel arrangements

No impact on travel arrangements are anticipated. As the provision of early years education is for pupils under compulsory school age, free transport would not be available for pupils. An increase in school-age children may place additional demands on local infrastructure. More families attending school could lead to increased traffic during peak times however this is likely to be a negligible impact in this instance due to the demographics of the area and small size of the school.

Reason for discounting this option

The option to change the age range of the school from 4–11 to 3–11 has been considered as a means of increasing demand and improving the school's viability. While the introduction of early years provision may make the school more attractive to some families, there is limited evidence to suggest that this would lead to a significant or sustained increase in pupil numbers. As such, this option is unlikely to have a meaningful impact on the current levels of surplus places or address the ongoing decline in enrolment.

This option would not address the significant issues relating to the condition and suitability of the school building. The existing accommodation is already constrained and requires substantial investment, and the introduction of early years provision would place additional pressure on facilities. Consequently, this option would not provide a suitable or sustainable environment for delivering the Curriculum for Wales.

From a financial perspective, the option would not resolve the existing budget deficit and may place further pressure on school finances if demand for early years provision

is not realised. In addition, the current challenges associated with mixed-age teaching would remain and could increase with the introduction of an additional age group.

Overall, whilst this option may offer some limited benefits in terms of local provision and parental choice, it does not address the key issues identified, including low pupil numbers, high surplus places, financial pressures and significant building constraints. For these reasons, this option is not considered to provide a sustainable long-term solution and has therefore been discounted.

Alternative Option 3 – Formally Federate Ysgol Bancffosfelen School with another local school e.g. Ysgol Pontyberem	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Federation allows the schools to share resources, such as staff, facilities, and materials, which could reduce costs and improve efficiency. Evidence from the existing informal federation with Ysgol Llanddarog shows that collaborative working can enhance pupil experiences and provide access to a wider range of activities and educational visits.	Pupils continue to attend a school building that has a poor suitability rating limiting its ability to support effective delivery of the Curriculum for Wales in the long term.
The school remains open and retains continuity of provision within the community in the short-term maintaining local access for families.	If the federation doesn't succeed in addressing the key challenges it could result in continued issues at the school and risk of further decline.
No changes to transportation arrangements and no additional costs.	Would not address issues of low pupil numbers which are projected to continue to be low, high surplus places and cost per pupil
The federation may allow for stronger governance and leadership with a more experienced leadership team across both schools which may support improvements in provision and standards through shared leadership and expertise.	Would not address budget issues at the school as existing and future liabilities would remain.
Pupils would continue to access Welsh-medium education supporting the authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and Cymraeg 2050 ambitions.	Significant costs associated in elevating the condition of the school building to an acceptable and safe standard.
Since September 2024, an informal federation arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog has demonstrated tangible benefits for pupils through increased opportunities for sporting activities, joint working, educational visits and wider social interaction, indicating the potential benefits of collaborative arrangements between schools.	Mixed age classes across multiple year groups may limit the school's ability to consistently deliver the full breadth of the Curriculum for Wales and appropriately challenge all learners.

The existing informal federation arrangement supports a shared headship model with Ysgol Llanddarog. Federation with another school would enable leadership costs to continue to be shared across schools and maintain the organisational and financial benefits currently derived from the arrangement.	The option would not address the existing budget deficit and may place further pressure on finances should it continue to deteriorate.
	Despite the benefits achieved through the existing informal federation arrangement since September 2024, the school continues to face significant challenges relating to low pupil numbers, surplus places, budget pressures and the condition and suitability of the school building, suggesting that federation alone may not address these issues.
Opportunities	**Threats**
Opportunities for enhanced collaboration between schools, including sharing staff expertise, resources and best practice, which may support improvements in teaching and learning.	May not improve pupil numbers at the school or surplus capacity
Federation could further expand opportunities for pupils through shared extracurricular activities, competitive sports, educational visits and joint learning experiences. The benefits already achieved through the existing informal federation suggest that there may be scope to build on these arrangements through a more formal structure.	The proposal to change may be opposed by parents, staff and governing body
Schools involved in formal or informal federations receive a federation supplement of £12,000 or £6,000 respectively. This may assist in alleviating some of the financial pressures, although this would not fully address the underlying deficit or the wider sustainability issues facing the school.	Federating a school requires a consultation to be undertaken in accordance with the Federation Process of Maintained Schools in Wales.
Greater collaboration could further strengthen peer interaction and wellbeing by providing pupils with opportunities to learn and socialise with a wider group of children.	Risk that federation does not deliver measurable improvement in standards or sustainability
Formal federation could provide greater long-term stability for the existing shared leadership arrangements and enable participating schools to continue benefiting	Risk that financial pressures persist despite shared arrangements

from federation funding supplements and shared management structures.	
	Risk that continued low pupil numbers undermine the long-term viability of the school

Likely impact on quality and standards in education

A formal federation with a larger school such as Ysgol Pontyberem could provide a number of educational benefits. The school would benefit from increased leadership capacity, stronger governance arrangements and access to a wider range of professional expertise. A larger leadership structure could strengthen self-evaluation, school improvement planning, curriculum development, quality assurance and workforce development. Staff may also benefit from enhanced professional learning opportunities, greater collaboration and increased sharing of effective practice across schools.

Federation with Ysgol Pontyberem could strengthen organisational resilience. Unlike the current arrangements, where leadership capacity is shared through an informal federation with another small school, federation with a larger school would provide access to a permanent, non-teaching headteacher, a broader senior leadership team and increased capacity to support curriculum leadership, wellbeing, Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision and school improvement activity. Estyn identified leadership at Ysgol Pontyberem as strong and effective, with a clear strategic vision, robust self-evaluation arrangements and a strong commitment to continuous improvement. These established leadership structures could provide greater capacity to support the long-term development of Ysgol Bancffosfelen than is currently available through existing arrangements.

Learners may also benefit from increased opportunities for collaboration with a wider group of peers through shared activities, sporting events, educational visits, enrichment opportunities and curriculum projects. Evidence from the existing informal federation with Ysgol Llanddarog has already demonstrated the positive impact that collaborative working can have on widening pupils' experiences, increasing social interaction and enhancing access to a broader range of opportunities. A formal federation with a larger school may provide opportunities to build further on these benefits and strengthen transition, wellbeing and curriculum experiences for learners.

Federation could also enhance the school's capacity to deliver the Curriculum for Wales through increased opportunities for collaborative planning, professional dialogue, moderation and curriculum leadership. Staff would have greater access to specialist expertise and wider professional networks, supporting the ongoing development and refinement of curriculum provision.

However, whilst federation could strengthen leadership capacity, professional collaboration and school improvement arrangements, it would not address the fundamental challenges facing the school. Pupil numbers are projected to remain low and significant surplus places would continue. Consequently, concerns regarding long-term sustainability, organisational efficiency and financial viability would remain largely unchanged.

Importantly, federation would not alter the basic structure of educational provision at the school. Pupils would continue to be taught in mixed-age classes spanning multiple year groups and the complexity associated with curriculum planning, assessment, progression and differentiation across a broad age range would remain. Opportunities for pupils to learn alongside larger cohorts of peers of a similar age and stage of development would continue to be more limited than under the preferred option.

The option would also not address concerns regarding the suitability and condition of the school building. Significant capital investment would still be required and there is limited evidence that federation alone would improve the quality, suitability or long-term sustainability of the learning environment.

Furthermore, evidence from the current informal federation arrangement is particularly significant. Since September 2024, pupils have already benefited from collaborative activities, wider social opportunities, shared educational experiences and leadership support through federation-style working. Whilst these arrangements have delivered clear educational benefits, they have not resolved the school's low pupil numbers, significant surplus places, budget pressures or accommodation challenges. This suggests that formal federation, is unlikely in itself to provide a comprehensive or sustainable solution to the factors that prompted the review.

Overall, federation with a larger school such as Ysgol Pontyberem could strengthen, professional collaboration, organisational resilience and school improvement activity. Educational standards could be maintained and aspects of provision enhanced, particularly through stronger distributed leadership and access to a wider range of expertise.

However, federation would not address the underlying demographic, financial, organisational and accommodation challenges facing the school. Whilst it may improve the school's capacity to manage these challenges, it would not resolve them.

Likely impact on the community

This option would maintain the current level of provision within the community in the short term. However, the ongoing challenges facing the school, including declining pupil numbers and financial pressures, may impact the longer-term sustainability of this provision.

The experience of the existing informal federation has demonstrated the potential for schools to work collaboratively while maintaining their individual identities and community presence. This has enabled pupils and families to benefit from shared activities and opportunities. However, the long-term sustainability of provision within the community would remain uncertain due to the continuing challenges facing the school.

Likely effect of different travel arrangements

Some ad-hoc additional travel may be required if there is good collaboration between the schools in the federation otherwise it is anticipated that the travel arrangements would continue as they do currently.

Reason for discounting this option

Whilst federation may offer benefits in terms of shared leadership, resources, curriculum collaboration and enhanced opportunities for pupils, evidence from the existing informal federation arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog demonstrates that many of these benefits can already be achieved through collaborative working. Since September 2024, pupils have benefited from increased sporting opportunities, educational visits and wider social interaction.

The existing arrangement has also enabled leadership responsibilities and associated costs to be shared between schools, supported by the federation funding supplement available through the current arrangements. However, despite these positive outcomes, the fundamental challenges facing Ysgol Bancffosfelen remain.

Whilst federation with a larger school such as Ysgol Pontyberem could provide access to stronger leadership structures and a broader senior leadership team, it would not fundamentally change the educational model operating at Ysgol Bancffosfelen or address the factors affecting its long-term sustainability.

The option may improve the school's capacity to manage existing challenges, but it would not provide a direct solution to those challenges. As a result, concerns regarding viability, organisational resilience and sustainability would remain.

It is concluded that federation would not address low pupil numbers, significant surplus capacity, financial pressures, the existing budget deficit, or the condition and suitability of the school building. Consequently, whilst federation may provide some educational and operational benefits, it is not considered to provide a sustainable long-term solution to the key issues identified at the school and has therefore been discounted.

Alternative Option 4 – Collaboration with other schools	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Collaboration would enable schools to share expertise, resources and good practice, which may support improvements in teaching and learning.	Collaboration would not address the low and declining pupil numbers at the school or high levels of surplus places.
Opportunities for joint working between staff may enhance curriculum planning and delivery.	The option would not resolve the existing budget deficit and may not generate sufficient savings to improve financial sustainability.
The school would remain open, maintaining local access to education within the community in the short term.	The significant issues relating to the condition and suitability of the school building would remain.
Pupils would continue to access Welsh-medium education in line with the authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and Cymraeg 2050 ambitions.	Mixed-age teaching arrangements would continue, which may limit the ability to deliver the full breadth of the Curriculum for Wales.

Existing collaborative arrangements have already provided access to a broader range of learning experiences, extracurricular opportunities, sporting activities and educational visits than might otherwise be possible for a school of this size.	The effectiveness of collaboration arrangements can vary and may not lead to sustained improvement in standards.
The school already benefits from collaborative working through an informal federation arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog, which has enabled pupils to participate in shared sporting activities, educational visits and wider learning experiences. These arrangements have increased opportunities for social interaction and enrichment.	Despite the benefits already achieved through collaborative working arrangements, the school continues to face significant challenges relating to pupil numbers, surplus places, financial sustainability and the condition and suitability of the school building.
Opportunities	**Threats**
Opportunity to build upon the collaborative arrangements already established with Ysgol Llanddarog by further developing shared planning, professional learning and curriculum delivery. However, many collaborative benefits are already being realised through existing arrangements.	Collaboration may not lead to a significant or measurable improvement in pupil outcomes or school sustainability.
Potential to improve outcomes through shared expertise and access to a wider professional network.	Risk that the underlying challenges of low pupil numbers and financial pressures persist.
Opportunity to maximise use of existing resources across schools and improve efficiency.	Risk that collaboration places additional demands on staff and leadership capacity.
Potential for joint extracurricular and enrichment activities across schools.	Potential variability in the effectiveness and consistency of collaborative arrangements.
Opportunity to strengthen professional networks and peer support between staff.	Risk that resources are invested without addressing the fundamental structural issues facing the school

Likely impact on quality and standards in education

Collaboration with other schools could provide opportunities to strengthen professional learning, share expertise and increase access to a wider range of educational experiences for learners. Staff may benefit from opportunities to work collaboratively on curriculum planning, assessment, moderation and the sharing of effective practice, whilst learners may benefit from participation in joint activities, educational visits, sporting events, enrichment opportunities and wider social experiences.

However, it is important to recognise that many of these benefits are already being realised through the school's existing collaborative arrangements and informal federation with Ysgol Llanddarog. Since September 2024, pupils have benefited from increased opportunities for sporting activities, educational visits, shared learning experiences and wider social interaction. Staff have also benefited from opportunities

for collaboration, professional dialogue and the sharing of expertise. Consequently, many of the educational advantages typically associated with collaboration are already embedded within the school's current operating model.

Whilst further collaboration may provide some additional opportunities for partnership working and professional learning, it would not fundamentally change the structure of educational provision at the school. Pupils would continue to be taught in mixed-age classes spanning multiple year groups and staff would continue to face the complexities associated with planning, delivering and assessing learning across a broad range of ages, abilities and progression steps. Opportunities for pupils to learn alongside larger cohorts of peers of a similar age and stage of development would remain limited when compared with larger and more sustainable school settings.

Importantly, collaboration would not address the fundamental challenges that prompted the review. Pupil numbers are projected to remain low, significant surplus places would continue and the existing budget deficit would remain. Concerns regarding the suitability and condition of the school building would also remain unresolved and significant capital investment would still be required.

Evidence from the current collaborative arrangements is particularly significant. Despite the positive benefits already achieved through collaboration and federation-style working, the school continues to face challenges relating to low pupil numbers, surplus capacity, financial sustainability, leadership capacity and accommodation. This suggests that increased collaboration alone is unlikely to deliver the level of change required to secure the school's long-term viability.

Estyn did not place the school in a follow-up category at its 2018 inspection, indicating that standards can be maintained under the current arrangements. However, this option provides limited opportunity to improve organisational resilience, broaden curriculum opportunities or address the demographic and financial challenges facing the school. Whilst standards may continue to be maintained, there is limited evidence that further collaboration alone would result in a significant improvement in educational outcomes or long-term sustainability.

Likely impact on the community

This option would retain education provision within the community in the short term. However, as it does not address the key challenges facing the school, including declining pupil numbers and financial pressures, the long-term sustainability of the provision would remain uncertain.

Likely effect of different travel arrangements

No significant changes to travel arrangements are anticipated under this option. Some ad-hoc travel may occur to support collaborative activities between schools, but this is expected to be limited.

Reason for discounting this option
Whilst collaboration may offer benefits in terms of shared expertise, joint working and enhanced opportunities for pupils, evidence from the school's existing collaborative arrangements demonstrates that many of these benefits are already being achieved. Through the informal federation arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog, pupils have accessed a wider range of sporting activities, educational visits and enrichment opportunities. However, despite these positive outcomes, collaboration has not addressed the key challenges facing the school, including low pupil numbers, high levels of surplus places, the existing budget deficit and the significant issues relating to the condition and suitability of the school building. Pupils would continue to be taught in mixed-age classes spanning multiple year groups and the educational challenges associated with curriculum planning, progression and differentiation would remain. The option would largely represent an extension of arrangements already in place and there is limited evidence that further collaboration alone would deliver sufficient improvement to address the issues that prompted the review. As such, collaboration is not considered to provide a sustainable long-term solution for the delivery of education at the school and has therefore been discounted.

Alternative Option 5 – Establishment of Multi- Site Schools as a means of retaining buildings	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
A multi-site arrangement would allow the school at Bancffosfelen to remain open, maintaining education provision within the local community and local access for families in the short term.	This option would not address the low and declining pupil numbers at the Bancffosfelen site or the high levels of surplus places, which are projected to persist.
The model may enable greater flexibility in the deployment of staff across sites, potentially improving access to a wider range of expertise and supporting curriculum delivery.	The existing budget deficit at Bancffosfelen would remain, and operating across multiple sites may introduce additional operational and staffing costs.
Opportunities may arise for collaboration between sites, including shared planning, teaching and extracurricular activities, which could enhance pupil experiences. The existing informal federation arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog has already demonstrated benefits through shared sporting activities, educational visits and wider opportunities for pupil interaction	The significant issues relating to the condition and suitability of the Bancffosfelen building would remain unresolved, requiring substantial capital investment.
Pupils would continue to access Welsh-medium education, maintaining continuity of provision in line with the authority's	Managing provision across two sites may increase logistical complexity and place

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and Cymraeg 2050 ambitions.	additional demands on leadership and staff capacity.
A multi-site model may strengthen leadership arrangements through a single leadership structure across both sites.	Pupils at the Bancffosfelen site may continue to experience mixed-age classes, which may limit the ability to deliver the full breadth of the Curriculum for Wales.
	Operating across multiple sites may represent poor value for money where there are high levels of surplus capacity.
	Many of the educational and enrichment benefits associated with a multi-site model are already being realised through existing collaborative arrangements, limiting the extent to which a multi-site structure would deliver additional benefits.
Opportunities	**Threats**
Opportunity to provide a consistent educational pathway across sites under a single organisational structure, potentially strengthening continuity and progression for learners.	The multi-site arrangement may not lead to a significant improvement in pupil numbers or reduce surplus capacity at the Bancffosfelen site.
Potential to share resources and staff across sites to improve efficiency and enhance curriculum delivery.	Financial pressures may persist or increase due to the costs associated with maintaining provision across multiple sites.
Opportunity to build upon existing collaborative work by further broadening pupil experiences through joint activities and shared provision between sites. However, many of these benefits are already being achieved through current partnership arrangements.	Risk that leadership and staff capacity are stretched across sites, potentially impacting the effectiveness of school improvement.
Potential to maximise the use of existing assets while maintaining provision in the local community.	Risk that continued investment in a building with significant condition and suitability issues does not represent value for money.
Opportunity to rationalise provision across sites over time, subject to demand and sustainability considerations.	The underlying sustainability challenges may remain unresolved, potentially leading to the need for further intervention in the future.
Likely impact on quality and standards in education A multi-site model could provide some educational benefits through shared leadership, increased staff collaboration and access to a broader range of expertise, resources and learning opportunities. Learners may benefit from increased opportunities to participate in joint learning activities, educational visits, sporting events, enrichment programmes and wider social experiences, whilst staff may benefit from enhanced professional collaboration, curriculum planning and the sharing of effective practice.	

The model could strengthen organisational links between schools and provide access to a wider pool of staff expertise than may be available within a single small-school setting. Opportunities for collaborative curriculum planning, moderation and professional learning could support curriculum delivery and provide greater opportunities to share successful approaches to teaching and learning.

However, it is important to recognise that many of these benefits are already being realised through the existing informal federation and collaborative arrangements with Ysgol Llanddarog. Since September 2024, pupils have benefited from increased opportunities for sporting activities, educational visits, enrichment activities and wider social interaction. Staff have also benefited from collaboration, professional dialogue and shared working arrangements. Consequently, many of the educational advantages associated with a multi-site model are already embedded within the school's current operating arrangements.

Whilst a multi-site structure may formalise and extend existing arrangements, it would not address the fundamental challenges facing the school. Pupil numbers are projected to remain low and significant surplus capacity would continue. As a result, concerns regarding long-term sustainability, organisational efficiency and financial viability would remain largely unchanged. The school would continue to face the challenges associated with maintaining provision for a relatively small number of learners despite significant capacity within the school estate.

Importantly, the option would not alter the underlying structure of educational provision at the Bancffosfelen site. Pupils would continue to be taught in mixed-age classes spanning multiple year groups and staff would continue to face the complexities associated with planning, delivering and assessing learning across a broad range of ages, attainment levels and progression steps. Opportunities for pupils to learn alongside larger cohorts of peers of a similar age and stage of development would remain limited compared with larger and more sustainable school settings.

Whilst a multi-site model could operate under a single leadership structure, it could also introduce additional organisational and operational complexity. Leadership time, staffing resources and support services would need to be distributed across multiple sites, potentially reducing efficiency and creating additional demands on leaders and staff. Maintaining consistency in teaching, learning, curriculum delivery, wellbeing provision, communication and quality assurance arrangements across sites may present additional challenges.

The option would also fail to address concerns regarding the suitability and condition of the Bancffosfelen school building. Significant capital investment would still be required to improve and maintain the accommodation. Retaining and operating multiple sites would reduce opportunities to maximise resources and may represent poor value for money given the continuing levels of surplus capacity across the provision.

Furthermore, the option would provide limited scope to improve financial sustainability. The existing budget deficit, high cost per pupil and ongoing costs associated with operating multiple sites would remain. Additional costs associated with staffing deployment, leadership oversight, maintenance, utilities and operational management

across multiple locations could further reduce the financial efficiencies typically associated with school reorganisation.

The school's 2018 Estyn inspection did not place it in a follow-up category, indicating that standards can be maintained under the current arrangements. However, there is limited evidence that a multi-site structure would secure significant improvements in educational outcomes, organisational resilience or long-term sustainability beyond the benefits already achieved through existing collaborative arrangements.

Overall, whilst a multi-site model could strengthen collaboration and provide some additional opportunities for learners and staff, many of these benefits are already being realised through existing arrangements. The option would not address the underlying challenges relating to low pupil numbers, significant surplus capacity, financial sustainability, leadership capacity, building suitability or long-term viability.

Furthermore, operating across multiple sites could introduce additional organisational, staffing and leadership complexities whilst reducing opportunities to realise the full benefits of a more sustainable educational model.

Likely impact on the community

This option would retain education provision within the community by maintaining the use of the Bancffosfelen site. However, as it does not address the key challenges facing the school, including declining pupil numbers and financial pressures, the long-term sustainability of this provision would remain uncertain.

Likely effect of different travel arrangements

No significant changes to travel arrangements are anticipated under this option. Some additional travel between sites may be required for staff or for joint activities, but this is expected to be limited.

Reason for discounting this option

Whilst a multi-site model may offer some benefits in terms of shared leadership, resources and collaboration, evidence from the existing informal federation arrangement demonstrates that many of the educational benefits associated with closer working between schools are already being realised.

Since September 2024, pupils have benefited from shared sporting activities, educational visits and wider opportunities for social interaction and enrichment. However, despite these benefits, the key challenges facing Ysgol Bancffosfelen remain. A multi-site model would not address low pupil numbers, high levels of surplus places, the existing budget deficit, or the significant issues relating to the condition and suitability of the school building. Mixed-age teaching arrangements and challenges associated with curriculum delivery would also remain.

Operating across multiple sites could increase complexity in relation to leadership, staffing deployment, curriculum delivery, quality assurance, safeguarding and school improvement. Leadership and staff capacity would need to be distributed across

multiple locations, potentially reducing efficiency and limiting opportunities to strengthen organisational resilience.

Retaining multiple sites would reduce opportunities to achieve value for money and may result in continued investment in accommodation that does not address the school's underlying sustainability challenges. The option would largely formalise arrangements and benefits already in place, with limited evidence that a multi-site structure would deliver sufficient additional educational benefit to justify the associated costs and complexity.

Consequently, this option is not considered to provide a sustainable long-term solution and has therefore been discounted.

Alternative Option 6- Cluster Ysgol Bancffosfelen School with other local schools	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Clustering could further enhance the sharing of leadership, staff and resources across schools, building upon existing collaborative arrangements and supporting improved efficiency without the need for immediate school closure.	Clustering does not address the underlying issues of low pupil numbers and high levels of surplus capacity at Ysgol Bancffosfelen.
The school already benefits from a shared headship arrangement with Llanddarog VC Primary School, demonstrating that some of the benefits associated with clustering, including shared leadership and collaborative working, can be realised in practice. Further clustering arrangements could build upon these existing relationships.	The viability of the school may remain at risk in the longer term if pupil numbers continue to decline.
Potential to broaden curriculum provision and extracurricular opportunities through collaboration between schools.	Does not resolve concerns regarding the condition and suitability of the existing school building.
Could allow pupils to remain within their local community while benefiting from increased collaboration and shared provision.	Benefits of clustering can be variable and dependent on the effectiveness of leadership and governance arrangements.
Clustering may provide increased opportunities for joint working and shared learning experiences for pupils.	Increased demands on leadership capacity may impact on the quality of provision if not effectively managed.
Welsh-medium provision would be maintained, supporting the authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.	Financial pressures may remain, including existing or projected budget deficits.
Could provide a transitional approach, allowing time to explore longer-term sustainable solutions.	Despite existing shared leadership and collaborative arrangements, the fundamental challenges facing the school, including low pupil numbers, significant surplus places, financial pressures and

	building condition issues, remain unresolved
Opportunities	**Threats**
Opportunity to develop innovative models of collaboration, including shared staffing, joint curriculum planning and resource sharing.	Risk that clustering does not provide a sustainable long-term solution, particularly where pupil numbers remain low.
Potential to strengthen professional learning opportunities for staff through collaboration across schools.	Risk that leadership capacity becomes overstretched, particularly as the school already operates under a shared headship arrangement with Llanddarog VC Primary School. Further clustering arrangements may increase demands on leadership without addressing the underlying viability issues facing the school.
Opportunity to maintain education provision within the community whilst exploring longer-term solutions.	Potential for inconsistencies in provision and standards across clustered schools.
Potential to formalise and expand existing collaborative relationships with neighbouring schools, building on arrangements already established through the current shared headship model.	Risk that financial pressures continue or increase, limiting the effectiveness of the arrangement.
Opportunity to align with wider school improvement strategies and promote collaborative working practices.	Continued challenges in delivering the full Curriculum for Wales in a very small school setting.
	Risk that delaying more sustainable solutions may lead to prolonged uncertainty for pupils, staff and the community.

Likely impact on quality and standards in education

Clustering Ysgol Bancffosfelen with other local schools could provide opportunities to strengthen collaboration, professional learning and the sharing of expertise. Staff may benefit from increased opportunities for joint curriculum planning, moderation, professional dialogue and the sharing of effective practice. Learners may benefit from access to a broader range of educational experiences, including joint learning activities, educational visits, sporting events, enrichment opportunities and wider social experiences.

Clustering may also provide opportunities to strengthen collaboration in relation to the Curriculum for Wales through shared planning, curriculum development and professional learning activities.

The option could provide access to a wider network of educational expertise and potentially strengthen aspects of leadership, teaching and learning through greater collaboration between schools. Staff may have increased opportunities to work alongside colleagues from other schools, supporting curriculum development, assessment practices and school improvement activity. Learners may also benefit from

wider opportunities for collaborative learning, social interaction and participation in activities beyond those typically available within a very small school.

However, it is important to recognise that many of these benefits are already being realised through the school's existing informal federation and shared headship arrangements with Ysgol Llanddarog. Since September 2024, pupils have benefited from shared sporting activities, educational visits, collaborative learning opportunities and increased social interaction.

Staff already engage in collaborative working and professional dialogue, whilst leadership capacity is shared across schools. Consequently, many of the educational advantages typically associated with clustering are already embedded within the school's current arrangements.

Whilst additional clustering arrangements may extend these opportunities, they would not fundamentally alter the structure of educational provision at Ysgol Bancffosfelen. Pupil numbers are projected to remain low and significant surplus places would continue. As a result, the school would continue to face many of the educational, organisational and financial challenges associated with operating a very small school. Concerns regarding long-term viability and sustainability would therefore remain largely unchanged.

Importantly, clustering would not alter the school's existing class structure. Pupils would continue to be taught in mixed-age classes spanning multiple year groups and staff would continue to face the complexities associated with planning, delivering and assessing learning across a broad range of ages, attainment levels and progression steps.

Opportunities for pupils to learn alongside larger cohorts of peers of a similar age and stage of development would remain limited when compared with larger and more sustainable school settings. This would continue to present challenges in relation to curriculum delivery, progression, peer learning and social development.

The option would also have limited impact on leadership capacity and organisational resilience. Whilst clustering may provide access to wider professional networks and shared expertise, leadership responsibilities would continue to be distributed across multiple schools. There is a risk that further clustering arrangements could increase demands on leadership and staff capacity without addressing the underlying issues affecting school sustainability. The educational benefits achieved would therefore be highly dependent upon the effectiveness of leadership arrangements, governance structures and the ongoing commitment of partner schools.

Furthermore, clustering would not address concerns regarding the suitability and condition of the school building. Significant capital investment would still be required to improve and maintain the accommodation and ensure that it remains suitable for educational use. The option would also have little impact on the school's financial position, with the existing budget deficit, high cost per pupil and wider sustainability challenges likely to remain.

Evidence from the school's current arrangements is particularly relevant. Despite the positive benefits already realised through collaborative working, shared leadership and federation-style arrangements, the school continues to face significant challenges relating to pupil numbers, surplus capacity, financial sustainability, leadership capacity and accommodation. This indicates that further clustering alone is unlikely to deliver the scale of change required to secure the school's long-term future.

The school's 2018 Estyn inspection did not place it in a follow-up category, indicating that standards can be maintained under current arrangements. However, there is limited evidence that clustering alone would deliver significant improvements in educational outcomes, organisational resilience or long-term sustainability beyond the benefits already being achieved through existing collaborative arrangements.

Overall, clustering could strengthen professional collaboration, provide additional opportunities for learners and support the sharing of expertise between schools. However, many of these benefits are already being achieved through existing arrangements. Whilst educational standards could continue to be maintained and aspects of provision enhanced, the option would not address the underlying challenges relating to low pupil numbers, significant surplus capacity, financial sustainability, leadership capacity, building suitability or long-term viability.

Likely impact on the community

Clustering would allow the school to remain open, maintaining it as a focal point for the local community and preserving its role in supporting community cohesion and local identity.

It would also allow continued use of the building for community purposes and local services, including early years provision where applicable. However, if clustering does not provide a sustainable long-term solution, there may be ongoing uncertainty regarding the future of the school, which could impact on community confidence and engagement.

Likely effect of different travel arrangements (Transport)

Clustering would not significantly alter travel arrangements for most pupils, as they would continue to attend their local school. However, some additional travel may be required for shared activities, joint teaching arrangements or staff movement between schools. Overall, the impact on pupil travel would be limited compared to closure options. Any travel associated with collaboration activities would need to be managed to minimise disruption.

Reason for discounting this option

Whilst clustering offers opportunities for increased collaboration, shared leadership and resource optimisation, it does not address the fundamental challenges facing Ysgol Bancffosfelen.

The Local Authority also noted that many of the potential benefits associated with clustering are already being achieved through the existing shared headship arrangement with Llanddarog VC Primary School. Whilst this arrangement has

supported leadership capacity and collaborative working, it has not addressed the issues of low pupil numbers, surplus places, financial sustainability or the condition and suitability of the school buildings.

In particular, clustering would not resolve the issues of low pupil numbers, high levels of surplus capacity or concerns relating to the condition and suitability of the school building without significant investment. These factors would continue to impact on the long-term sustainability of the school and its ability to deliver high-quality education. Pupils would continue to be taught in mixed-age classes spanning multiple year groups, meaning the educational and organisational challenges associated with curriculum delivery, progression and differentiation would remain.

In addition, the success of clustering arrangements is highly dependent on leadership capacity and effective governance and may place additional pressures on staff and leadership teams. There is also limited evidence that clustering alone provides a sustainable long-term solution for very small schools. The option would largely extend arrangements that are already in place and there is limited evidence that further collaboration alone would deliver sufficient improvement to address the issues that prompted the review.

Whilst this option would retain provision within the community, it is considered that it would not deliver a significant level of improvement in educational outcomes, an improvement in the learning environment or improve long-term sustainability of the school. For these reasons, this option has been discounted.

Alternative Option 7- Greater Community Use of the Site / Co- location of services	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Retains the school building as a community asset within Bancffosfelen.	Does not address the low and declining pupil numbers at the school.
Could provide additional opportunities for community activities, meetings and local events.	Does not address the high level of surplus places within the school.
May strengthen community cohesion and maintain a visible public facility within the village.	Does not resolve the school's budget deficit or improve long-term financial sustainability.
Could provide opportunities for partnership working with local community groups and organisations.	Significant building condition and suitability issues would remain and require substantial capital investment.
May support the continuation or expansion of services such as childcare, community learning or recreational activities.	Increased community use would generate additional operational, maintenance and management responsibilities.
Retains a facility that may be valued by local residents.	The school building has a Condition Grade C and Suitability Grade D and would require significant investment regardless of the level of community use.
Potential to enhance community access to facilities outside school hours.	Increased community use would not address educational challenges associated with small cohort sizes and mixed-age teaching arrangements.

Retains provision of the Cylch Meithrin which already operates from the site.	The provision of additional community facilities at the school may duplicate facilities already available within the local area, including community halls and other established venues.
	Demand for community use may be insufficient where alternative facilities already exist and are available to local groups.
	Increased community use of the school could reduce usage of existing community venues, potentially impacting their long-term viability.
	Any investment required to facilitate community use would need to be considered against the availability of alternative community facilities nearby.
	The building layout and use of the building means there is no additional space to accommodate additional services on site. The existing sport pitch is on a considerable slope and the netball courts are not serviceable requiring investment to bring up to an acceptable level.
Opportunities	**Threats**
To develop the site as a wider community hub providing services and activities for local residents.	Significant capital investment would still be required to make the building suitable for long-term use.
To create stronger links between the school, community groups and local organisations.	Ongoing maintenance liabilities could continue to increase.
To support community wellbeing through the provision of additional activities and services.	Additional community usage may not generate sufficient income to offset operating and maintenance costs.
To explore external funding opportunities for community projects and activities.	Deterioration of the building could limit future use and increase health and safety risks.
To provide a venue for local events, adult learning and recreational activities.	Demand for additional community facilities may be insufficient to justify ongoing investment.
To support the objectives of Community Focused Schools where appropriate.	Existing community facilities within the wider area may reduce the need for additional provision at the site.
	Existing community halls and facilities may experience a reduction in bookings if activities were transferred to the school site.
	Reduced use of established community facilities could adversely affect the financial sustainability of those facilities

	and the groups responsible for their management.
	Community resources may become fragmented across multiple venues rather than concentrated within existing facilities.
	Public investment in adapting the school building may represent poor value for money where suitable community facilities are already available within the locality.

Likely impact on quality and standards in education

Greater community use of the school site could provide some indirect benefits through increased engagement between the school, parents, community groups and local organisations. Additional partnerships may create opportunities for enrichment activities, community learning initiatives and wider extracurricular experiences that could contribute positively to pupils' wellbeing, community engagement and sense of belonging. The approach could also support the principles of Community Focused Schools and strengthen the school's role as a community asset.

However, whilst increased community use may provide community and social benefits, it would have very limited direct impact on the quality of education provided to pupils. The option would not address the fundamental educational challenges facing the school, including low pupil numbers, significant surplus capacity, limited staffing capacity, mixed-age teaching arrangements and concerns regarding the long-term sustainability of provision. As a result, the educational experience available to learners would remain largely unchanged.

Pupils would continue to be educated within a very small school environment and opportunities to learn, collaborate and socialise with larger groups of peers of a similar age and stage of development would remain limited. Staff would continue to face the challenges associated with planning, delivering and assessing learning across multiple year groups and progression steps within the same classroom. Consequently, many of the educational challenges associated with operating a very small school would remain. The option would also have little impact on, school improvement and organisational resilience. Whilst community partnerships may provide additional opportunities and support, they would not improve the school's ability to respond to long-term educational challenges.

Importantly, increased community use would not address concerns regarding the condition and suitability of the school building. The school currently operates from accommodation with a Condition Grade C and Suitability Grade D. Significant capital investment would still be required to maintain and improve the building regardless of the level of community use achieved. Additional community use may also increase operational, management, safeguarding and maintenance requirements, potentially creating further pressures on an already constrained site.

The school's 2018 Estyn inspection did not place it in a follow-up category, indicating that standards can be maintained under current arrangements. However, there is limited evidence that increased community use would lead to significant improvements

in educational standards, learner outcomes, leadership capacity, organisational resilience or long-term sustainability. The option would therefore have little impact on the key educational factors that prompted the review.

Overall, whilst greater community use of the site may provide community, social and wellbeing benefits and help retain the school building as a local asset, it is primarily a community-use solution rather than an educational solution. The option would not address the underlying challenges relating to low pupil numbers, significant surplus capacity, financial sustainability, building suitability or long-term viability.

Consequently, whilst educational standards may continue to be maintained, there is limited evidence that the option would improve educational outcomes or secure the school's long-term future.

Likely impact on the community

This option could have positive impacts by retaining the school building as a community asset and providing opportunities for additional activities and services within Bancffosfelen. Increased community use could provide additional opportunities for community activities, services and engagement, however it would not address the fundamental educational challenges facing the school.

Consideration must also be given to the availability of other community facilities within the area such as Bancffosfelen and Crwbin Public Hall and Pontyberem Memorial Hall.

The provision of additional community facilities at the school may duplicate existing provision and could reduce usage of established community venues. Any benefits arising from increased community use of the school would therefore need to be balanced against the potential impact on the sustainability and viability of these existing community facilities.

Likely effect of different travel arrangements (Transport)

No significant changes to travel arrangements would be anticipated as educational provision would remain at the existing site. Any additional community activities may result in a modest increase in visitor traffic outside normal school hours, and with only limited parking available on site there could be impacts on the local highway network which may affect local transport arrangements.

Reason for discounting this option

Whilst increased community use of the school building could potentially provide additional opportunities for community activities and services, the Local Authority concluded that this option would not address the fundamental challenges facing Ysgol Bancffosfelen.

Low pupil numbers, significant surplus places, the school's budget deficit and the poor condition and suitability of the school buildings would remain. Significant capital investment would still be required to maintain and improve the site irrespective of the level of community use achieved.

The Local Authority also considered the practical implications of accommodating additional services at the site. The accommodation space is used for school purposes meaning there is no additional space within the building to accommodate additional services and community use, especially while the school is open. The Cylch Meithrin already operate from the school and the remaining rooms are used as classrooms or for dinner service.

The school currently has limited parking provision and there is insufficient capacity to accommodate the additional staff, service users and visitors that may be associated with the co-location of other services. This could create operational difficulties, place additional pressure on local parking arrangements and potentially affect the safe operation of the site.

Access issues in terms of steps to the entrance and throughout the building exist, pitches are on a sloping gradient and unlikely to be required by local sports teams for games, there is a lack of accessible facilities for the disabled and at present there is no space in the building to accommodate additional services without causing disruption to the school.

Consideration was also given to the likely demand for co-located services within the locality. The Cylch Meithrin already operates on the site and opportunities for additional co-location are limited by the size, layout and accessibility of the building.

Furthermore, existing community facilities are already available within the locality, including Bancffosfelen Hall, Crwbin Hall and Pontyberem Memorial Hall, meaning that the development of additional community facilities at the school could result in duplication of provision and potentially impact upon the viability of these established venues.

Consequently, whilst increased community use and co-location of services may offer some community benefits, it would not provide a sustainable or cost-effective solution to the educational, financial and property-related challenges facing the school and is therefore discounted as a preferred option.

Alternative Option 8- Close Ysgol Bancffosfelen and transfer pupils to their nearest school	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Pupils would benefit from improved accommodation compared to the existing school building, with receiving schools generally providing better condition and suitability of facilities.	Loss of a community asset which is valued highly by local people. If the proposals were to proceed and the school was to close it might have an impact on local services especially the Cylch Meithrin.
The majority of receiving schools are not in Estyn follow-up categories, indicating that pupils would be transferred to provision that is at least equivalent in quality, with opportunities for improved access to a broader curriculum,	There is variation in standards between receiving schools, with one school currently in special measures, which may present a risk depending on parental preference.

extracurricular activities and larger peer groups.	
Pupils would be able to access Welsh-medium education at all receiving schools, ensuring continuity of language provision in line with the authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.	Disruptions to staff and potential redundancies.
Pupils would potentially benefit from attending a larger school with a cohort of pupils of a similar age depending on which school they attend.	Disruption and a period of instability for pupils and their families.
Pupils would transfer to schools which collectively have significant surplus capacity, with over 200 surplus places available across the five nearest schools compared to 48 pupils currently on roll at Ysgol Bancffosfelen. This demonstrates that there is sufficient capacity within the local area to accommodate pupils.	Travel distances may increase having a potentially negative impact on the local highway network with journeys ranging from approximately 1.3 to 4.7 miles depending on the receiving school and pupils' home locations.
Deficit budget issues at Ysgol Bancffosfelen would be addressed.	Local Authority will need to provide transport for the affected students which will increase transportation costs.
Revenue savings realised from the closure would assist overall budgetary pressures that the Local Authority faces. Pupil number funding would transfer to the new school with the pupil and thus improve the budget in that school.	Closure of the school and loss of education provision in the community.
	The cohort of pupils leaving the school would potentially be split up if attending other schools.
	Closure of Ysgol Bancffosfelen would bring the existing soft federation arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog VC Primary School to an end, resulting in the loss of established shared leadership arrangements and collaborative working between the schools.
	The proposal would have financial implications for Ysgol Llanddarog VC Primary School, which would cease to receive the federation funding supplement associated with the current arrangement and would need to review its future leadership structure and associated funding arrangements.

Opportunities	Threats
Opportunity to improve the overall efficiency and sustainability of education provision within the local authority by reducing surplus capacity across the area and better utilising existing school places.	Risk of strong opposition from parents and stakeholders to the proposal.
Potential to release capital resources through the disposal of the existing school site, which could be reinvested to support improvements to the wider school estate.	Risk of strong opposition from the community to the proposals.
Potential to strengthen the viability of receiving schools through increased pupil numbers, supporting long-term financial sustainability and more effective use of staffing and resources.	Parental preference means that pupil distribution across receiving schools is uncertain, which may result in uneven impacts on school capacities.
Opportunity to provide pupils with access to schools that offer a broader curriculum, larger peer groups and a wider range of extracurricular activities, enhancing educational and social experiences.	Increased travel distances may impact pupil wellbeing, attendance and engagement if not effectively managed.
Opportunity to improve the quality of the learning environment for pupils through access to school buildings with generally better condition and suitability.	Risk that transition arrangements are not effectively implemented, particularly for vulnerable learners.
Opportunity to support the authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan by consolidating Welsh-medium provision within sustainable school settings.	The ending of the current shared headship arrangement may create short-term leadership and financial pressures for Ysgol Llanddarog VC Primary School whilst alternative arrangements are established.

Likely impact on quality and standards in education

This option could provide a number of significant educational benefits. Pupils currently attending Ysgol Bancffosfelen would be expected to transfer to other local schools, depending on parental preference and the availability of places. Whilst some neighbouring schools are themselves relatively small schools, a number benefit from formal federation arrangements or larger organisational structures that provide enhanced leadership capacity, increased opportunities for professional collaboration and greater organisational resilience. Pupils may therefore benefit from access to broader educational experiences, enhanced curriculum opportunities, increased extracurricular provision and opportunities to learn alongside a wider group of peers than are currently available at Ysgol Bancffosfelen.

Assessment of local school capacity indicates that there are sufficient places available within neighbouring schools to accommodate all pupils currently attending Ysgol Bancffosfelen. All of these schools generally provide education that is at least equivalent to that currently available. Whilst the characteristics of individual receiving schools differ, a number benefit from stronger leadership structures, formal federation arrangements, broader staffing capacity and greater organisational resilience than is

currently available at Ysgol Bancffosfelen. However, as final school destinations would be determined by parental preference, the precise educational benefits experienced by individual learners cannot be predicted with certainty and may vary depending on the school attended. Consequently, educational standards would be expected to be maintained overall and may be enhanced for some learners through access to wider opportunities, stronger leadership arrangements and broader educational experiences.

Many pupils may also benefit from attending schools with larger cohorts of learners of a similar age and stage of development. This could provide greater opportunities for collaborative learning, peer interaction, teamwork, social development and participation in extracurricular activities. Larger staffing structures and federation arrangements may also provide increased opportunities for curriculum leadership, specialist expertise, wellbeing support and Additional Learning Needs provision.

However, unlike the preferred option, this proposal does not identify a designated receiving school. The distribution of pupils would be determined by parental preference and school capacity. As a result, the existing cohort of learners may become dispersed across several schools. This could lead to the separation of friendship groups, established support networks and peer relationships and may reduce the continuity and stability that can support successful transition and learner wellbeing.

The educational experiences available to pupils may also vary depending on the receiving school attended. Whilst most nearby schools provide education that is at least equivalent to that currently available, there are differences in leadership arrangements, accommodation quality, curriculum provision, school improvement priorities and pupil outcomes.

Educational standards are likely to be maintained and many pupils may benefit from broader curriculum opportunities, improved accommodation and wider peer groups. However, because pupils could transfer to a number of different schools, the option offers an element of reduced certainty, continuity and consistency of educational outcomes. It may result in the dispersal of friendship groups, variation in educational experiences and potentially less coordinated transition arrangements.

Likely impact on the community

The closure of the school would represent the loss of an important community asset and may have a wider impact on community cohesion and identity. The school currently provides a focal point for local activity, and its closure could reduce opportunities for community use. There may also be implications for local services, including Cylch Meithrin Bancffosfelen, which may need to relocate or could be at risk if suitable alternative provision is not identified . The proposal may also have impacts beyond the immediate Bancffosfelen community. Closure of the school would bring the existing soft federation arrangement with Ysgol Llanddarog VC Primary School to an end. This would result in the loss of the federation funding supplement associated with the arrangement and require Ysgol Llanddarog to review its future leadership structure and associated funding arrangements, as the current headteacher post is shared across both schools.

Likely effect of different travel arrangements (Transport)

Travel arrangements for pupils would be affected under this option. Distances between Ysgol Bancffosfelen and the nearest schools range from approximately 1.3 to 4.7 miles. Whilst some schools are located within the immediate locality, others would require longer journeys. Actual travel distances will vary depending on pupils' home locations and parental preference. Free transport would be provided in accordance with the Local Authority's transport policy for eligible pupils. The potential impact on journey times, wellbeing and attendance would need be carefully managed if the proposals were implemented.

Reason for discounting this option

Whilst this option would address a number of the key challenges identified, including low pupil numbers, surplus places, financial issues and the condition of the existing building, it does present some uncertainties regarding final learner destinations, educational experiences, support arrangements and transition outcomes.

Under this option, parental preference would determine the schools that pupils attend, which may result in the cohort being dispersed across a number of different schools. This could lead to disruption to established peer groups and reduced continuity for learners.

Educational experiences, curriculum opportunities, accommodation quality, wellbeing provision and leadership capacity may vary depending on the receiving school selected by parents. Therefore, this option would not guarantee access to strong leadership, broader curriculum opportunities, or established wellbeing and ALN support services, as the availability and quality of these provisions vary between local schools.

In addition, this option does not ensure that pupils would transfer to the school with the best available accommodation, as pupils may attend a range of schools with varying building condition and suitability.

In addition, it is considered that this option would provide an element of uncertainty regarding transition planning, pastoral support, learner wellbeing and continuity of educational provision.

For these reasons, the transfer to nearest school option has therefore been discounted as it does not provide a consistent level of educational, wellbeing and organisational benefit.

Appendix F: Response Form

Carmarthenshire County Council is consulting on the proposal to

- to discontinue Ysgol Bancffosfelen effective from 31 December 2027 with pupils to transfer to Ysgol Pontyberem from 1 January 2028.

The following response form allows you to comment on the proposal, the alternative options and to suggest other alternative options. Consultees are welcome to make representations regarding the alternatives to closure that have been identified by the proposer as well as the main proposal and suggest other alternatives to closure which would address the reasons for closure (i.e. the key challenges the school faces which the proposer is seeking to address).

Consultees can submit their views in favour of or against a proposal.

Responses received during the consultation period will not be treated as statutory objections. If consultees wish to object, they will need to do so in writing during the statutory objection period.

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1. Are you responding as a:

☐ Parent, carer or guardian ☐ Prospective parent, carer or guardian

☐ Governor ☐ Staff

☐ Member of the community ☐ Community Council

☐ Other: Please specify _____

2. Do you support the proposal?

☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Please feel free to share any comments or reasons for your answer including any impacts that you think the proposal may have (optional).

4. Are there any other options that you think the Local Authority should be considering for Ysgol Bancffosfelen?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please outline the alternative option(s):

5. We are required by the Welsh Language Standards to consider the effects of any policy decisions on the Welsh Language.

a. In your opinion, what positive or adverse effects would this proposal have on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

b. How do you think the proposal could be formulated or revised so that it would have positive or more positive effects on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

c. How do you think the proposal could be formulated or revised so that it would not have adverse effects or have less adverse effects on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

6. At the end of the consultation period, a Consultation Report will be published summarising the issues raised by consultees and the Local Authority's response to those issues.

Would you like to be informed of the publication of the Consultation Report:

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please provide an e-mail address or postal address and language preference (English/Welsh):

Thank you for completing the response form.

Completed response forms should be sent to:

Mr Owain Lloyd,
Director of Education and Leisure,
County Hall,
Castle Hill
Carmarthen
SA31 1JP

or by sending a scanned copy via e-mail to MEPConsultations@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Alternatively, you can complete this form online: SNAP Survey

Please return your response by the 22 December 2026. Responses received after this date will not be considered.