Proposal to discontinue Ysgol Blaenau

Consultation Document



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Glossary of 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 Penygroes and Llandybie wards. The proposal includes the discontinuation of Ysgol Blaenau with effect from 31 December 2027, with pupils expected to transfer to Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes or Ysgol Llandybie from 1 January 2028.

In accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2026), this document provides stakeholders including parents, carers, staff, governors and members of the local community with clear and comprehensive information to enable an informed consideration of the proposal. It outlines the current position of Ysgol Blaenau, the reasons why change is considered necessary, the options that have been explored (including alternatives to closure) and the anticipated educational, financial and community impacts of the preferred option.

The proposal has been developed following a detailed and evidence-based review of Ysgol Blaenau's long term sustainability. This has identified a number of significant challenges, including persistently low and declining pupil numbers, a high level of surplus places, and a substantial and increasing budget deficit. In line with the requirements of the Code, the Authority has considered these factors alongside the need to ensure the efficient use of resources, the availability of sufficient and suitable school places, and the potential to maintain or improve educational standards and learner outcomes.

This consultation represents an opportunity for all stakeholders to engage meaningfully in the decision making process. Consultees are invited to share their views, raise questions, and propose alternative options. The consultation has been designed to ensure that sufficient information is provided, that adequate time is allowed for responses, and that all views received will be conscientiously considered before any final decision is taken, in line with the guidance set out in the School Organisation Code (2026). All feedback received during the consultation period will be considered by the Authority before determining whether to proceed with the proposal.

The consultation period will run from the 10 November 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**. Four of the objectives are to:

- 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.

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)

Following a shaping discussion held on 16 September 2025 with the Headteacher, Governing Body and Local Member of Ysgol Blaenau regarding the current position of the school, a detailed response with school proposed proposals were subsequently submitted by the school for consideration. These proposals aimed to support the long term sustainability of Ysgol Blaenau and have been incorporated as options 2 to 8 within the table of alternative options.

A further shaping discussion meeting was held on 14 May 2026 with the Headteacher, Chair of Governors and Deputy Chair to explain the statutory consultation process and its implication prior to any formal decision being made on the proposal to discontinue Ysgol Blaenau.

The school's feedback submission included the following information regarding the school:

- Governors appreciate transparency and early dialogue.
- Concerns: low pupil numbers, impact of Cylch closure, school requested to extend age range to 3-11.

- School proposals: extend age range, develop ALN provision, establish Nurture Provision.
- Community engagement: baby/toddler group launched; strong interest from families.
- Projected pupil numbers: 29 expected in September 2026; positive reputation beyond catchment.
- Finance: deficit acknowledged; funding model does not reflect small school value.
- Leadership: preference for teaching headteacher; positive Estyn report in 2024.
- Building condition: satisfactory overall; roof repair needed; outdoor learning improvements ongoing.
- Leasing opportunities: interested party for childcare; aim to develop community hub.
- Early years provision school would like to explore partnerships and bilingual childcare options.
- Governors committed to collaboration with LA; revisit 2019 Business Plan proposals.

3. School Subject to Proposal

Ysgol Blaenau is a Welsh medium community primary school for pupils aged 4-11, situated in the village of Blaenau near Ammanford. Established in 1911, the school serves the communities of Blaenau and Caerbryn. The latest Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) 2026 data showed that there are currently 28 pupils on roll.

School Image – Ysgol Blaenau	Location Map – Ysgol Blaenau
	

Ysgol Blaenau 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 18th November 2024.

The School Organisation Code (2026) defines a rural school using the Office for National Statistics (ONS) rural urban classification. Under this definition, a school is only considered rural if it is located in a settlement classified as a village or in a hamlet or dispersed area, either in a sparse or less sparse context. In addition, the Code states that only those schools identified through this classification and included on the official list of rural schools set out in Annex F (of the Code) are treated as rural for the purposes of the Code.

Ysgol Blaenau does not meet these criteria, as it is not classified within these defined rural settlement categories and is not included on the official list of designated rural schools. Therefore, in line with the School Organisation Code (2026), it is not regarded as a rural school, and the specific provisions that apply to rural schools, such as the presumption against closure, do not apply.

3.1 School Information – Ysgol Blaenau

		Ysgol Blaenau
School Location		Blaenau, Ammanford, SA18 3BQ
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**	3
	Reception – Y.6	25
	Total	**28**
Number of pupils previously on the register (including Nursery) (PLASC)	**January 2025**	39
	January 2024	38
	January 2023	43
	February 2022	41
Pupil Projections (excluding Nursery) (2026)	**January 2027**	26
	January 2028	20
	January 2029	20
	January 2030	17
	January 2031	18
Nursery Capacity 25/26		11
Reception-Y6 Capacity 25/26		87
Total Capacity 25/26		98

% surplus places at PLASC 2026	71%
Nursery Capacity 26/27	12
Reception-Y6 Capacity 26/27	87
Total Capacity 26/27	99
Budget share per pupil (2025/26)	£5,843
School Budget (2025/2026)	£227,868
End of 2025/26 budget position	£287,857 deficit
Budget share per pupil (2026/27)	£6,503
School Budget (2026/27)	£182,070
Forecasted end of 2026/27 budget position	£362,566 deficit
Estyn Inspection Result	Not in follow-up Ysgol Gynradd Blaenau - Estyn
Building Condition Category (2024)	B
Building Suitability (2024)	B

(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 Blaenau

Ysgol Blaenau is a Welsh Medium community primary school located in the village of Blaenau. The school provides education to pupils between the ages of 4-11.

The latest Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) (2026) data showed that there were 28 pupils on roll, 3 pupils below statutory school age (Nursery) and 25 of statutory school age (reception and above).

Of the 28 pupils on roll at PLASC 2026, 4 pupils attended the school from within the Ysgol Blaenau catchment area whilst the remaining 24 pupils attended the school from outside the Ysgol Blaenau catchment area. In addition, 41 pupils from within the Ysgol Blaenau 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 99 places.

The school is led by a headteacher who has a 0.8 teaching responsibility.

The school operates two classes. One class of pupils from Nursery to Year 2 and a second class from Years 3-6 (Academic year 2025-26).

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

Ysgol Blaenau's PLASC data shows a clear decline in pupil numbers over the past five years, falling from 41 pupils in 2022 to 28 in 2026 (a reduction of around 32%). While there are small fluctuations, the overall trend is downward, with a notable drop in the most recent year and consistently low numbers across several year groups, indicating sustained low and declining pupil numbers. This position is likely to be further impacted by the current relatively large Year 5 cohort of 9 pupils, potentially leading to an additional significant reduction in overall school population in the near future as shown in the following table.

PLASC Year	Full Time Nursery	Reception	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2026	3	1	2	2	6	3	9	2	28
2025	1	2	4	7	5	9	4	7	39
2024	1	4	6	4	9	4	7	3	38
2023	3	6	3	10	4	6	3	8	43
2022	5	3	10	2	5	2	8	6	41

Catchment Area Data

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

Total Number of Pupils (PLASC 2026)	**Pupils living inside catchment area attending this school**	**Pupils living outside catchment area attending this school**	**Pupils living inside catchment area attending other schools**
28	4	24	41*
*Betws, Bro Banw, Cae'r Felin, Cross Hands, Gorslas, Llandeilo, Llandybie, Llanedi, Myrddin, Penygroes, Gymraeg Rhydaman, Saron, Tycroes, Y Bedol			

The Local Authority recognises that parents are able to express a preference for schools outside their catchment area and that many families have chosen to do so. However, the Authority must also consider the sustainability of school provision and the efficient use of resources across the whole school estate when reviewing education provision.

High Surplus Places

Having low pupil numbers also impacts on the school's surplus capacity.

Ysgol Blaenau has experienced a significant level of surplus capacity in the last five years as demonstrated in the table below:

	Historical PLASC				**PLASC 2026**
	2022	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	
Total Capacity	99	99	99	99	98
Total Head Count	41	43	38	39	28
Surplus	58	56	61	60	70
% Surplus (rounded to nearest 1%)	59%	57%	62%	61%	71%

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.*

The data shows consistently high levels of surplus places, increasing from between 56 and 61 places (57% to 62%) in earlier years to 70 places (71%) in 2026. This sharp rise highlights a worsening position in the most recent year. The level of surplus

provision is significantly above the threshold set out in section 1.21 of the School Organisation Code (2026), which defines this as 25% or more and at least 30 unused places. This indicates that a substantial proportion of the school's capacity is unused, meaning resources are not being used efficiently and are tied up in maintaining excess places.

Pupil Projections and Projected Surplus Capacity

Pupil projections based on PLASC 2026 data show that pupil numbers at Ysgol Blaenau are expected to remain low and fall further over time. The total number of pupils is projected to decrease from 28 in 2026 to around 20-21 by 2030-2031.

This indicates that surplus places will remain very high and are projected to rise further. Surplus capacity is projected to rise from 70 places (71%) in 2026 to up to 78 places (80%) in later years. Overall, this means that the majority of the school's places are likely to remain unfilled, highlighting ongoing concerns about sustainability and the efficient use of resources as illustrated in the table below:

Year	January 2026	January 2027	January 2028	January 2029	January 2030	January 2031
Pupil Projections (including Nursery age pupils)	28	29	23	23	20	21
Total Capacity	98	99	99	99	99	99
Surplus	70	70	76	76	79	78
% Surplus (rounded to nearest 1%)	71%	71%	77%	77%	80%	79%

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.

Birth 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 Blaenau catchment area.

Recent birth data for the catchment indicates consistently low numbers of live births. This trend suggests limited scope for growth in the number of children entering statutory education in the local area.

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

Birth Data Table

Pupils born in catchment postcode against pupils on roll at PLASC in reception for relevant academic year								
Blaenau	**Birth Year**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**
	Reception Year	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**
	Births	3	3	2	3	9	9	6
	PLASC	4	2	1	-	-	-	-

As a result, there is no evidence within the available birth data to suggest a recovery in pupil numbers at Ysgol Blaenau. This demographic context supports the pupil projections set out in this document, which anticipate continued low pupil numbers and increasing levels of surplus capacity over the next five years.

School Budget Issues

The school's low and declining pupil numbers have had a significant impact on its financial position, resulting in a growing budget deficit year on year. The deficit has increased steadily from £126,662 in 2021/22 to £287,857 in 2025/26 and a projected deficit of £362,566 by the end of year 2026/27.This reflects the challenge of maintaining staffing levels and operating costs where income is largely driven by pupil numbers, which have continued to fall. Overall, the data demonstrates that low pupil numbers are contributing directly to an unsustainable financial position, with the deficit continuing to rise.

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

Year end Balance	**£**
2021/22	£126,662 deficit
2022/23	£152,696 deficit
2023/24	£190,479 deficit
2024/25	£241,335 deficit
2025/26	£287,857 deficit

2026/27

School funding amount	£182,070
Pupil numbers (funding based on **2026** January PLASC)	28
Funding per pupil	£6,503
Primary school average mainstream funding per pupil	£5,969
Forecast deficit budget to the end of 2026/2027	£362,566 deficit

The school is currently projecting a deficit budget of £362,566 at the end of the 2026/2027 financial year.

Budget share per pupil

Based on the Council's Section 52 Education Budget Statement for 2026-27, the school's budget share per pupil during 2026-27 is £6,503.

Due to low pupil numbers, during 2026-27 the school will receive a £10k Small School Supplement and a £20k Surplus Places Supplement.

The pupil number supplement is based on a formula identifying various school sizes where their pupil numbers put them at a disadvantage in comparison to other schools. The supplement provides an equitable percentage of funding across identified key costs.

Quality & Standards in Education

Ysgol Blaenau was last inspected by Estyn in January 2024 and in accordance with the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector was of the opinion that despite the strengths in leadership, there is a significant deficit in the school's financial budget over a number of years and that Governors had not addressed the deficit effectively enough. The recommendations noted were as follows:

R1 Agree and implement a recovery plan to respond purposefully to the deficit in the school's financial budget
R2 Expand opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum
R3 Strengthen pupils' oracy skills
R4 Improve provision to support pupils to develop their independent learning skills

Whilst the Local Authority recognises the positive features identified during the school's most recent Estyn inspection and acknowledges that the school was not placed in an Estyn follow-up category, the proposal has been developed in response to concerns regarding the long term sustainability of provision rather than any immediate failure in educational standards.

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

Low pupil numbers at the school impacts on class organisation. Currently pupils are taught in two mixed age classes, Nursery to Year 2 are taught in one class and Years 3 - 6 are taught in another class.

Delivering the curriculum and ensuring that all pupils are appropriately challenged becomes considerably more complex in classrooms with multiple year groups. Meeting the diverse learning needs of pupils across a wide age range requires extensive differentiation, careful planning, and presents ongoing challenges for teachers.

Lesson planning for mixed age classes is typically more demanding due to the need to meet a wider range of learning needs. In addition, limited staffing can reduce opportunities for shared planning and Planning Preparation and Assessment collaboration, placing greater demands on teaching staff. There can also be social and emotional implications, with younger pupils potentially feeling less prominent within the group and older pupils feeling restricted or burdened by increased responsibility. Ongoing monitoring and the promotion of an inclusive classroom culture are therefore essential.

Carmarthenshire's Primary Educational Principles contained within the Modernising Education Programme (MEP) Strategy approved by Cabinet on 18th November 2024 notes that the Local Authority aspires to have no more than 2-year groups per teaching class.

The Local Authority has also considered the implications of these factors on the quality and sustainability of educational provision. These matters are explored in greater detail in Section 7.

Leadership

The Local Authority's aspiration for school leadership is to have sustainable leadership with suitably qualified leaders who are free to lead and manage the school with no headteacher having a full-time teaching commitment.

Ysgol Blaenau is led by a headteacher who has a 0.8 teaching responsibility. Within the context of a small school with limited staffing capacity, this places significant constraints on leadership capacity, reducing the time available for strategic planning, self-evaluation and school improvement. This model is not considered sustainable in the longer term and limits the school's ability to effectively address ongoing challenges and maintain high standards.

Building Suitability and Condition

The current suitability rating of Ysgol Blaenau is classed as B which is defined as "Satisfactory, performing as intended, but does not effectively support the delivery of the curriculum in some areas".

The current condition rating of Ysgol Blaenau indicates that the school is in overall satisfactory condition (Grade B), but with a clear need for ongoing maintenance and investment. Most building elements are serviceable, although some are deteriorating. A number of essential works are required within the next 1-3 years, including repairs to roofs, windows, doors, internal finishes, drainage, and external areas, as well as works to address water ingress and structural defects.

3.3 Strengths and weaknesses to 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**
Would retain education provision in the Blaenau area.	Low pupil numbers continue.
No change for pupils and staff, continuity with no disruption to current arrangements.	Projections do not anticipate a significant change in pupil numbers over the next five years and indicate pupil numbers will remain low.
No Statutory Process required.	Significant surplus places are projected to remain over the next five years.
The local community would remain unaffected, and the school would continue to preserve its distinctive identity and role within the area.	Budget pressures will not be addressed as liabilities and issues impacting the budget will continue to pose problems.
No change to Welsh medium provision.	The school is operating with a significant and unsustainable budget deficit, which continues to increase year on year.
	No evidence within the available birth data to suggest a recovery in pupil numbers at Ysgol Blaenau.

Opportunities	Threats
Opportunity to engage the local community in fundraising initiatives and volunteer support, helping to enhance school operations and alleviate financial pressures.	The school will continue to face challenges impacting its future sustainability.
	The current provision does not align with the aspirations of Carmarthenshire's Primary Educational Principles.

Likely impact on quality and standards in education

If current arrangements at Ysgol Blaenau are maintained, the Local Authority considers that there is a risk of continued and increasing pressure on the quality and sustainability of educational provision over time.

Ysgol Blaenau currently operates with very low pupil numbers, requiring pupils to be taught in two mixed age classes spanning up to four year groups. While staff work hard to meet learners' needs, delivering the Curriculum for Wales effectively within this structure presents ongoing challenges. Meeting the learning needs of pupils across a wide age and ability range requires extensive planning and can restrict opportunities to ensure consistent, age-appropriate challenge for all.

Low pupil numbers also restrict opportunities for pupils to learn, collaborate and socialise with peers of the same age. This can limit group learning, team activities, school wide events, and leadership opportunities, which are important for developing confidence, resilience and wellbeing.

In addition, the school's significant and increasing budget deficit creates uncertainty and limits future investment in staffing, resources and curriculum development. This financial pressure risks affecting the school's capacity to maintain improvement, respond to Estyn recommendations, and provide a broad range of learning experiences over the longer term.

The Local Authority also notes that the current leadership model, with a headteacher having a substantial teaching commitment, places additional strain on school leadership capacity. This can restrict the time available for strategic leadership, self-evaluation, and school improvement planning, all of which are critical to sustaining high standards.

While current standards have been judged acceptable and the school is not in an Estyn follow-up category, the Local Authority considers that maintaining the status quo is unlikely to lead to improvement and may result in gradual erosion of educational quality and standards if pupil numbers remain low and financial pressures continue.

Likely impact on the community No impact on the community is anticipated as the status quo would remain, and education provision is retained.

Likely effect of different travel arrangements No impact on travel arrangements are anticipated as the status quo would remain.

3.4 Why change is considered necessary

In accordance with the School Organisation Code (2026), a range of alternative options have been considered and assessed. Details of these options and the reasons why they are not considered capable of addressing the key challenges facing the school are provided in Section 4.6.

In light of the factors outlined above, the Local Authority considers that change is required to secure the continued delivery of high quality education for local children. Maintaining Ysgol Blaenau in its current form is not considered sustainable and presents ongoing challenges to delivering education at the required standard. This is particularly evident in the context of declining pupil numbers, high levels of surplus capacity, increasing financial pressures, and the identified need for ongoing building maintenance and investment.

The Local Authority has also considered the impact of any change on educational standards, learner wellbeing, community sustainability, Welsh medium education and the objectives of Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. These assessments are set out elsewhere in this document, including Sections 7 and 8 and appendices A and B.

The proposed changes would enable resources to be directed towards schools that are better placed to provide strong educational outcomes, a broader curriculum offer, more resilient leadership arrangements and a sustainable learning environment for current and future learners. The proposal would also address the significant level of surplus capacity within the school and support a more efficient and effective use of public resources.

Having considered pupil numbers, surplus capacity, financial sustainability, educational standards, community impacts, Welsh medium provision, the availability of suitable alternative school places and the assessment of reasonable alternatives, the Local Authority considers that maintaining the current arrangements is unlikely to provide a sustainable long term solution. The Authority therefore considers that stakeholders should now be consulted on the proposal so that all views can be fully considered before any final decision is made.

3.5 Assessment of Alternative Options

In accordance with the School Organisation Code 2026, each reasonable alternative was considered against the key challenges facing the school and assessed for its likely impact on:

- Educational standards and learner outcomes;
- Financial sustainability;
- Community impact;
- Learner travel arrangements;
- School capacity and surplus places;
- Building suitability and condition.

The assessment sought to determine whether any of the alternatives could provide a sustainable long term solution to the challenges identified. Whilst a number of options offered some potential benefits, either individually or collectively, none were considered capable of adequately addressing the combination of educational, financial, organisational and estate-related issues facing the school.

A range of alternative options was therefore examined in detail. The reasons for discounting or preferring each option are summarised in the table below.

To support the appraisal process, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis was also undertaken for each option. This enabled the Local Authority to consider the relative merits, risks and potential outcomes associated with each alternative and to identify the option most likely to secure sustainable, high-quality educational provision for current and future learners.

Alternative Option 1 - Status Quo - no change to Ysgol Blaenau	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Would retain education provision in the Blaenau area.	Low pupil numbers continue.
No change for pupils and staff, continuity with no disruption to current arrangements.	Projections do not anticipate a significant change in pupil numbers over the next five years and indicate pupil numbers will remain low.
No Statutory Process required.	Significant surplus places are projected to remain over the next five years.
The local community would remain unaffected, and the school would continue to preserve its distinctive identity and role within the area.	Budget pressures will not be addressed as liabilities and issues impacting the budget will continue to pose problems.
No change to Welsh medium provision.	No revenue savings.

	The school is operating with a significant and unsustainable budget deficit, which continues to increase year on year.
Opportunities	**Threats**
Opportunity to engage the local community in fundraising initiatives and volunteer support, helping to enhance school operations and alleviate financial pressures.	The school will continue to face challenges impacting its future sustainability.
	The current provision does not align with the aspirations of Carmarthenshire's Primary Educational Principles.

Likely impact on quality and standards in education

If current arrangements at Ysgol Blaenau are maintained, the Local Authority considers that challenges relating to the quality, breadth and long term sustainability of educational provision are likely to remain. Whilst the school currently provides an acceptable standard of education and was not placed in an Estyn follow-up category following its most recent inspection, it continues to operate within a context of very low pupil numbers, high surplus places and increasing financial pressures.

Ysgol Blaenau currently operates with two mixed age classes spanning up to four year groups. Whilst staff work hard to meet the needs of learners across a wide age and ability range, delivering the Curriculum for Wales within this structure requires extensive differentiation and complex planning. This can make it more challenging to provide learning experiences that are consistently matched to pupils' age, stage of development and progression needs when compared with schools where pupils are taught predominantly in single year groups.

Low pupil numbers also restrict opportunities for pupils to learn, collaborate and socialise with peers of a similar age. Opportunities for group learning, pupil leadership, team activities, performances and some extracurricular experiences can be more limited in very small schools than in larger settings. Larger schools are often able to provide a broader range of curriculum enrichment opportunities and wider social experiences, which can support pupils' confidence, wellbeing and personal development.

The Local Authority also notes that leadership responsibilities are undertaken within a very small staffing structure. The headteacher has a substantial teaching commitment alongside responsibility for strategic leadership and other statutory duties. Whilst the school continues to fulfil its responsibilities, this structure provides less capacity for distributed leadership, curriculum development, self-

evaluation, professional learning and school improvement activity than is typically available in larger schools with broader staffing and leadership teams.

In addition, the school is operating with a significant and increasing budget deficit. Continued financial pressures may limit the school's ability to invest in staffing, resources, curriculum development and wider learning opportunities in the future.

The Local Authority recognises the positive features identified during Estyn's most recent inspection and the commitment of leaders and staff in supporting pupils' learning and wellbeing. However, maintaining the current arrangements would not address the underlying challenges associated with low pupil numbers, mixed age class organisation, limited leadership capacity, high surplus places and financial sustainability. Nor would it provide pupils with the broader curriculum opportunities, larger peer groups, wider staff expertise and enhanced leadership capacity that are typically available in larger school settings.

Consequently, the Local Authority considers that maintaining the status quo is unlikely to deliver significant improvement in educational provision or strengthen the long term sustainability of the school.

Likely impact on the community

No impact on the community is anticipated as the status quo would remain, and education provision is retained.

Likely effect of different travel arrangements

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

Reasons for discounting this option

- Persistent low pupil numbers - The school has consistently low and declining pupil numbers, which impacts sustainability.
- High surplus places - Surplus capacity remains extremely high and projected to rise far exceeding Welsh Government thresholds for review.
- Significant and growing deficit budget - £287,857 by the end of 2025/26 and a projected deficit of £362,566 by the end of year 2026/27, which is unsustainable.
- Does not align with strategic objectives - the current provision fails to meet Carmarthenshire's Primary Educational Principles and Modernising Education Programme goals, which aim to reduce mixed age classes and ensure sustainable leadership.

Alternative Option 2 – Federate Ysgol Blaenau with a neighbouring school	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Federation enables schools to share resources including staff and facilities creating opportunities to reduce costs and improve operational efficiency.	Federation would not resolve the fundamental issue of persistently low and declining pupil numbers at Ysgol Blaenau. Projections show no significant increase over the next five years, meaning the school would continue to operate with very small mixed age classes.
The school remains in the locality with no impact on the community.	Federation does not help the school's significant and growing budget deficit of £287,857 by the end of 2025/26 and a projected deficit of £362,566 by the year end 2026/27.
	Even under federation, Ysgol Blaenau would still have an extremely high level of surplus capacity 71% at PLASC 2026. This exceeds Welsh Government thresholds for review and makes the arrangement inefficient.
Opportunities	**Threats**
Federation could create opportunities for collaborative curriculum planning, shared professional development, and exchange of best practices between schools, improving teaching quality and learner outcomes	Federation does not resolve the school's significant and growing budget deficit. This ongoing financial pressure could threaten the sustainability of both schools involved.
Shared governance structures could strengthen leadership capacity, reduce workload for individual headteachers, and provide a platform for mentoring and succession planning.	Even under federation, Ysgol Blaenau would continue to experience very low pupil numbers and high surplus places which could undermine the effectiveness of the arrangement.
Pooling resources such as specialist staff, facilities, and materials could allow for more efficient use of funding and enable access to services that might otherwise be unaffordable for a small school.	Managing a federation across two sites could increase administrative burden, complicate leadership responsibilities, and create challenges in aligning policies and practices.
Federation could facilitate joint extracurricular activities, sports events, and cultural initiatives, offering pupils a	Federation may fail to deliver significant improvements in educational outcomes, as mixed age classes and restricted

wider range of experiences and social interaction.	access to a broad curriculum would remain.
	If pupil numbers continue to decline despite federation, the school could still face closure in the future, causing further disruption for pupils, staff, and the community.

Likely impact on quality and standards in education

If Ysgol Blaenau were to federate with a neighbouring school, the Local Authority considers that the impact on quality and standards in education would be limited and unlikely to deliver sustained improvement. Whilst federation may provide some organisational and leadership benefits, it would not address the key factors currently affecting the school's educational provision and long term sustainability.

Federation may create opportunities for shared leadership, collaborative working, joint curriculum planning and professional learning across schools. These arrangements could provide staff with greater access to professional expertise, opportunities to share effective practice and additional support through a wider leadership structure

However, federation would not resolve the fundamental challenge of persistently low pupil numbers at Ysgol Blaenau. Pupils would continue to be taught in mixed age classes spanning multiple year groups, and teaching staff would still be required to plan for a wide range of ages, abilities and progression stages within a limited staffing structure. As a result, the complexities associated with curriculum planning, delivery and progression would remain largely unchanged.

Whilst shared leadership may increase strategic capacity across a federation, the day-to-day learning experiences of pupils at Ysgol Blaenau would be largely unaffected. Opportunities for pupils to learn, collaborate and socialise with larger groups of peers of a similar age would remain limited. Similarly, pupils would continue to have access to a narrower range of curricular, extracurricular and social opportunities than are typically available in larger schools.

Federation would also be unlikely to address the school's significant and increasing budget deficit. Although some efficiencies may be achievable through shared leadership arrangements, the underlying financial pressures associated with maintaining a school with low pupil numbers and high surplus places would remain. This may continue to limit the school's capacity to invest in staffing, resources, curriculum development and wider learning opportunities.

The Local Authority also notes that federation would not materially alter the school's staffing structure. As a result, the limitations associated with operating a very small school would remain, including limited capacity for distributed leadership, curriculum

development, specialist responsibilities and school improvement activity. Whilst support may be available through a federated arrangement, the operational challenges associated with a small pupil population and limited staffing would continue.

The Local Authority recognises the positive features identified during Estyn's most recent inspection and the commitment of leaders and staff in supporting pupils' learning and wellbeing. However, federation alone would not address the underlying challenges associated with pupil numbers, class organisation, financial sustainability and the broader educational opportunities available to learners. Consequently, whilst federation may offer some benefits at a leadership and organisational level, the Local Authority considers that it is unlikely to deliver the significant educational benefits or long term sustainability required to secure sustained improvements in quality and standards.

Likely impact on the community

Federation would allow Ysgol Blaenau to remain open within the village, meaning the immediate loss of a local school facility would be avoided. This would help to preserve the school's role as a focal point for the community and maintain a local education presence.

Maintaining a school building within Blaenau would support community identity and continuity. Parents, carers and pupils would continue to have access to a school within the village, limiting disruption to daily routines and retaining local links between families.

School-based services such as breakfast clubs, after-school provision and informal community use could potentially continue under a federation model. This would help sustain some of the social and practical benefits currently provided by the school to the local community.

While the school would remain open, federation is unlikely to significantly increase pupil numbers or levels of activity at the school. As a result, the broader community benefits of a larger, more vibrant school environment may remain limited, and concerns about long term viability may continue.

Federation may create a degree of uncertainty within the community regarding the long term future of the school. If underlying challenges such as low pupil numbers and financial pressures are not resolved, there may be concerns that closure could still occur at a later date, resulting in prolonged uncertainty for families and residents.

Under a federation model, strategic leadership and governance would likely be shared across schools. This could result in reduced local autonomy, which may be perceived by some community members as a weakening of the school's independent identity or local decision making role.

Likely effect of different travel arrangements Under a federation option, Ysgol Blaenau would remain on its current site, as a result there would be no change to pupils' primary travel arrangements and pupils would continue to attend school within the village. Pupils who currently walk to Ysgol Blaenau would be able to continue walking to school, maintaining existing active travel patterns and supporting pupils' health, wellbeing and independence
Reasons for discounting this option
• Does not address the challenges of low pupil numbers, high surplus places and a significant budget deficit. • There are no local schools in close proximity that are suitable for federation with Ysgol Blaenau. • Financial pressures continue with a significant deficit budget • This option would offer limited education benefit, mixed age classes would remain, failing to align with Carmarthenshire's aspirations.

Alternative Option 3 – Extend the age range of Ysgol Blaenau to 3-11	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Potential to attract more pupils to the school.	Implementing this option would require substantial investment in staffing, facilities, and training to accommodate younger learners, as well as compliance with regulatory standards for early years provision.
Continuity of education offering education from 3-11 would offer seamless learning for pupils.	Extending the age range would involve a formal statutory process, adding complexity and time to implementation.
Early years provision could strengthen ties with local families and the wider community, creating opportunities for partnerships and collaborative initiatives.	Birth and PLASC data do not indicate sufficient demand for early years provision within the Ysgol Blaenau catchment area to make this option viable.
Children starting at age 3 would benefit from a smoother transition into statutory education, reducing disruption and supporting early learning outcomes	Several nearby schools already offer provision for three year olds, reducing the likelihood that this change would attract enough additional pupils to address the school's viability issues.
	Even with an extended age range, the school would still face persistently low

	pupil numbers, high surplus places, and a significant projected budget deficit, meaning long term sustainability would remain uncertain.
Opportunities	**Threats**
Introducing early years provision could foster stronger relationships with local families and encourage greater community involvement in school activities.	Significant investment in staffing, facilities, and compliance with early years regulations could place additional financial strain on the Local Authority and the school.
The school could explore partnerships with childcare providers and bilingual early years services, creating a more integrated approach to early education.	Birth and PLASC data do not indicate enough demand for early years provision within the catchment area, meaning the additional investment may not result in a meaningful increase in pupil numbers.
Early years provision may attract families who value continuity of education from age 3 to 11, potentially improving enrolment over time.	Several nearby schools already offer provision for three year olds, which could limit the effectiveness of this option in attracting new pupils.
	Even with an extended age range, the school would still face persistently low pupil numbers, high surplus places, and a significant projected budget deficit, leaving long term sustainability uncertain.

Likely impact on quality and standards in education

If the age range of Ysgol Blaenau were extended to include pupils aged 3-11, the Local Authority considers that the impact on quality and standards in education would be limited and uncertain and would be unlikely to address the underlying challenges facing the school.

Extending the age range could provide some educational benefits for younger children. Children may benefit from greater continuity in their educational experience, developing relationships with staff and peers from an earlier age and experiencing a smoother transition into statutory education. Early engagement in a Welsh medium environment may also support language development, social skills and school readiness.

However, available birth data, pupil projections and existing patterns of parental preference do not indicate that extending the age range would result in a significant increase in pupil numbers. Consequently, the school would be likely to continue operating with very small cohorts and mixed age classes spanning multiple year groups. As a result, the current challenges associated with curriculum planning,

progression and the delivery of age-appropriate learning experiences would remain largely unchanged.

Whilst the introduction of nursery-age provision would enhance the offer available to younger children, it would not materially alter the educational experiences of most pupils within the school. Opportunities for pupils to learn and socialise with larger groups of peers of a similar age would remain limited, and the school would continue to operate within the constraints associated with a very small pupil population.

Extending the age range would also require additional staffing. Given the school's current staffing structure, where leadership responsibilities are already undertaken within a very small team, this would place additional demands on leadership and operational capacity.

Furthermore, extending the age range would not address the school's significant and increasing budget deficit. Without a substantial increase in pupil numbers, the financial pressures associated with maintaining the provision would remain. This may continue to limit the school's capacity to invest in staffing, resources, professional learning and wider educational opportunities

The Local Authority recognises the positive features identified during Estyn's most recent inspection and the commitment of leaders and staff in supporting pupils' learning and wellbeing. However, extending the age range alone would not address the underlying challenges associated with low pupil numbers, mixed age class organisation, limited leadership capacity, high surplus places and long term financial sustainability. Consequently, whilst the proposal may provide some benefits for younger learners, the Local Authority considers that it is unlikely to deliver significant improvements in educational provision or secure the long term sustainability of the school.

Likely impact on the community

Extending the age range would allow Ysgol Blaenau to remain open within the village, maintaining a local education presence. This would help preserve the school’s role as a focal point within the community and avoid the immediate loss of a school facility.

Providing education from age 3 could offer greater convenience for some local families, reducing the need to travel to alternative early years settings. This may strengthen early engagement with education and support families who value continuity of provision from early years through to primary education.

While early years provision may introduce some additional activity within the school, available birth data suggests that demand is unlikely to be sufficient to significantly increase pupil numbers. As a result, the level of daily activity and wider community engagement is unlikely to change substantially compared to current arrangements.

School based services, such as breakfast clubs, after-school provision and informal community use, could continue under this option, preserving some of the social and practical benefits currently available to families within the village.

As extending the age range is unlikely to address the underlying challenges of low pupil numbers and financial sustainability, the community may continue to experience uncertainty about the school's long term future. Concerns about the possibility of future closure may remain, which could impact community confidence over time.

Pupils would continue to attend school within the village, meaning no significant changes to travel arrangements for existing families. Younger children accessing provision on site may also benefit from reduced travel compared with attending alternative early years settings.

Likely effect of different travel arrangements

Under this option, Ysgol Blaenau would remain open on its current site. As a result, there would be no change to travel arrangements for pupils of statutory school age, who would continue to attend school within the village.

Reasons for discounting this option

- Requires a statutory process to implement.
- It is unlikely to have a significant impact on low pupil numbers at the school.
- Insufficient demand - Birth and PLASC data do not indicate sufficient demand for early years provision within the Ysgol Blaenau catchment area to make this option viable.
- Competition from other local schools - Several nearby schools already offer provision for three year olds, reducing the likelihood that this change would attract enough additional pupils to address the school's viability issues.
- This option does not resolve the challenges faced by the school - Even with an extended age range, the school would still face persistently low pupil numbers, high surplus places, and a significant projected budget deficit, meaning long term sustainability would remain uncertain.

Alternative Option 4 – Develop ALN provision and Nurture Unit	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
This option could provide targeted support for pupils with specific needs, improving inclusion and wellbeing.	This option would require substantial funding for specialist staff, targeted training, and additional resources to implement effectively.
This option would allow families to access specialist services locally,	Recruiting and retaining staff with the necessary skills and qualifications for

reducing travel and maintaining community links.	ALN and nurture provision could be challenging and costly.
Offering specialist provision could draw pupils from a wider area, potentially increasing enrolment and reducing surplus places.	Even with ALN and nurture provision, the school would still face persistently low pupil numbers, high surplus places, and a significant projected budget deficit, meaning long term sustainability would remain uncertain.
Introducing specialist provision could create professional development opportunities for staff, enhancing expertise and capacity within the school.	Implementing specialist provision involves meeting strict regulatory standards and safeguarding requirements, adding complexity and administrative burden.
Opportunities	**Threats**
Introducing ALN and nurture provision could position the school as a specialist hub, attracting pupils from a wider area and potentially increasing enrolment.	Implementing specialist ALN and nurture provision requires substantial investment in staffing, training, and resources. If pupil numbers do not increase as anticipated, this could lead to wasted expenditure and further financial strain on the Local Authority.
Developing specialist provision could create opportunities for staff to gain expertise in ALN and nurture strategies, improving overall teaching capacity.	Difficulty in attracting and retaining suitably qualified specialist staff could undermine the effectiveness of the provision and lead to operational instability.
Enhanced provision for pupils with additional learning needs would support inclusive education and improve wellbeing outcomes, aligning with national priorities.	Meeting strict compliance standards for specialist provision adds administrative burden and risk of non-compliance, which could result in reputational damage or enforcement action.
Specialist services could foster stronger links with families and external agencies, creating a collaborative approach to supporting vulnerable learners.	Nearby schools already offer specialist ALN provision, so this option may not attract enough additional pupils to justify the investment, creating inefficiency and competition for resources.
Likely impact on quality and standards in education If Ysgol Blaenau were to develop specialist Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision and establish a Nurture Unit, the Local Authority considers that this option could provide benefits for a specific group of learners but would be unlikely to deliver	

significant or sustained improvements in the overall quality and standards of education across the school.

The introduction of specialist ALN and nurture provision could enhance support for pupils with identified additional learning needs and wellbeing needs. Access to targeted interventions, specialist approaches and enhanced pastoral support may improve engagement, wellbeing and outcomes for those learners accessing the provision. This option could also provide opportunities for staff to develop specialist skills and expertise in supporting vulnerable learners

However, whilst specialist provision may benefit a relatively small number of pupils, it would not address the wider educational challenges facing the school. Ysgol Blaenau would continue to operate with very low pupil numbers, and mixed age classes spanning multiple year groups would remain necessary. As a result, the challenges associated with curriculum planning, progression and providing age-appropriate learning experiences across a wide range of learners would continue.

The school's small pupil population would also continue to limit opportunities for pupils to learn, collaborate and socialise with larger groups of peers of a similar age. Opportunities for group learning, pupil leadership, team activities and a wider range of extracurricular experiences would remain more limited than those typically available in larger schools.

Developing specialist ALN and nurture provision would require additional staffing, specialist training, resources and leadership capacity. Given the school's current staffing structure and financial position, this would place further demands on leaders and staff. Whilst specialist provision could strengthen support for individual learners, there is a risk that additional operational and management responsibilities could reduce capacity available for wider school improvement, curriculum development and strategic leadership.

Furthermore, the introduction of specialist provision would not address the school's significant and increasing budget deficit, nor would it substantially reduce surplus places. Without a significant increase in pupil numbers, the underlying financial challenges affecting the school's long term sustainability would remain. Continued financial pressures may therefore continue to limit investment in staffing, resources, professional learning and broader educational opportunities.

The Local Authority recognises the positive features identified during Estyn's most recent inspection and the commitment of leaders and staff in supporting pupils' learning and wellbeing. However, developing specialist ALN and nurture provision alone would not address the underlying challenges associated with low pupil numbers, mixed age class organisation, limited leadership capacity, high surplus places and financial sustainability. Consequently, whilst this option may provide targeted benefits for a small group of learners, the Local Authority considers that it

is unlikely to secure significant improvements in overall educational provision or the long term sustainability of the school.

Likely impact on the community

Developing ALN provision and a Nurture Unit would allow Ysgol Blaenau to remain open within the village, maintaining a local education presence and avoiding the immediate loss of a valued community facility. This would support the school's continued role as a focal point for the community.

The introduction of specialist ALN and nurture provision could benefit families within the local and wider area who require access to enhanced support close to home. This may reduce travel distances for some families and strengthen perceptions of the school as a specialist resource.

While specialist provision may introduce some additional activity, it is unlikely to result in a substantial increase in overall pupil numbers. As a result, the wider impact on daily community activity, footfall and engagement is likely to be limited and comparable to current levels.

School based services such as breakfast clubs, after school provision and informal community use could continue under this option. This would help preserve some of the social and practical benefits the school currently provides to families in the village.

As this option does not address low pupil numbers or the school's financial position, uncertainty about the long term future of the school may persist within the community. This could affect community confidence and willingness to engage in long term planning or investment linked to the school.

Likely effect of different travel arrangements

Under this option, Ysgol Blaenau would remain open on its current site. As a result, there would be no change to travel arrangements for pupils currently attending the school, who would continue to access education within the village.

Reasons for discounting this option

- It would require significant investment in specialist staff, targeted training, and additional resources, which is not financially viable given the school's current and projected budget deficit.
- Recruiting and retaining suitably qualified staff for ALN and nurture provision would be challenging and costly, adding operational risk.
- Even with ALN and nurture provision, the school would still face persistently low pupil numbers, high surplus places, and a significant projected budget deficit, meaning long term sustainability remains uncertain.

- Implementing specialist provision involves meeting strict regulatory standards and safeguarding requirements, creating complexity and administrative burden.
- Nearby schools already offer established specialist ALN provision, so this option is unlikely to attract enough additional pupils to justify the investment, leading to inefficiency and duplication of services.

Alternative Option 5 – Further Staff Reductions	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Potential cost savings: Reducing staff could lower salary and associated employment costs, providing some short-term financial relief.	Impracticality due to minimal staffing: The school already operates with a very small team (two teachers, one teaching assistant, and a caretaker), so further reductions are not feasible without compromising basic operations.
Alignment with deficit reduction: This option directly targets the school's significant and growing budget deficit, aiming to reduce expenditure.	Negative impact on educational provision: Reducing staff further would likely lead to larger mixed age classes and reduced individual support, negatively affecting teaching quality and pupil outcomes.
	Increased workload and stress: Remaining staff would face unsustainable workloads, which could affect morale, retention, and the ability to deliver the curriculum effectively.
	Even with staff reductions, the school would still face persistently low pupil numbers, high surplus places, and a significant projected budget deficit, meaning long term sustainability remains unresolved.
Opportunities	**Threats**
Short-term financial relief: Reducing staff could temporarily ease the school's budget pressures by lowering salary and employment costs.	Severe impact on educational quality: Further staff reductions would likely lead to larger mixed age classes and reduced individual support, negatively affecting teaching quality and pupil outcomes.
Savings from staff reductions could be redirected to essential areas such as	This could result in low morale, and higher turnover, making it difficult to maintain stability and standards.

learning materials or building maintenance. However, as noted in the document, the school already operates with a minimal staffing structure, making further reductions impractical and likely to harm educational provision.	
	With fewer staff, the school may struggle to meet statutory requirements and deliver the full breadth of the Curriculum for Wales effectively.
	Even with staff reductions, the school would still face persistently low pupil numbers, high surplus places, and a significant projected budget deficit, meaning closure could still be inevitable later.
	Negative community perception: Reducing staff could harm the school's reputation and relationships with parents, potentially accelerating pupil decline.

Likely impact on quality and standards in education

If further staff reductions were implemented at Ysgol Blaenau, the Local Authority considers that this option would be likely to have a negative impact on the quality and standards of education.

Ysgol Blaenau already operates with a very small staffing structure consisting of two teachers, and limited support staff. As a result, there is very limited scope to reduce staffing further without affecting the school's capacity to meet its operational, educational and statutory responsibilities.

Any further reduction in staffing would place additional pressure on teaching and support arrangements. Staff would be required to meet the needs of learners across an increasingly broad range of ages, abilities and learning needs with reduced capacity available for teaching, intervention and support. This would make it more challenging to provide appropriate levels of challenge, support and differentiation for all learners.

The school would also have reduced capacity to deliver the full breadth of learning experiences expected within the Curriculum for Wales. Opportunities for curriculum

enrichment, targeted intervention, professional collaboration and wider learning experiences may become more limited as staffing capacity reduces.

Further staff reductions would be likely to increase workload pressures on the remaining staff. Given the school's small staffing structure, leadership, teaching, assessment, ALN responsibilities and school improvement activities are already shared amongst a limited number of individuals. Any further reductions would reduce organisational resilience and place additional demands on staff, potentially affecting the capacity available for strategic leadership, curriculum development, professional learning and self-evaluation activities.

The Local Authority also notes that reducing staffing further could affect the school's ability to provide individualised support for learners, particularly those requiring additional learning provision, wellbeing support or targeted intervention. With only limited staffing currently in place, further reductions could make it more difficult to maintain existing levels of support whilst continuing to meet statutory duties and expectations.

Whilst staff reductions may generate some short-term financial savings, they would not address the underlying factors affecting the school's long term sustainability, including low pupil numbers, high surplus places and the school's significant and increasing budget deficit. The Local Authority therefore considers that any financial benefit would be limited and would be unlikely to outweigh the potential impact on educational provision.

The Local Authority recognises the positive features identified during Estyn's most recent inspection and the commitment of leaders and staff in supporting pupils' learning and wellbeing. However, given the school's existing staffing structure, there is very limited scope for further reductions without affecting the school's capacity to deliver educational provision and fulfil its statutory responsibilities.

Consequently, the Local Authority considers that this option would be unlikely to support improvements in quality and standards and would not provide a sustainable solution to the challenges facing the school.

Likely impact on the community

Further reductions in staffing would be likely to limit the school’s capacity to support community-based activities and services, such as breakfast clubs, after-school provision and informal community use of the school. These activities often rely on staff availability, and reduced staffing may lead to their curtailment or withdrawal.

Staff reductions may be perceived by the community as a sign of declining viability and stability at the school. This could reduce confidence among parents and residents in the long term future of Ysgol Blaenau and may discourage families from choosing the school, potentially accelerating pupil number decline.

With staff capacity stretched further, opportunities for engagement with parents, carers and the wider community may become more limited. This could affect communication, parental involvement in school life and the school's role as a central point of connection within the village.

Further staff reductions could affect community morale, particularly where staff members have long-standing connections within the village. The loss of familiar staff may weaken relationships between families and the school and reduce continuity for the community.

While staff reductions may be viewed as an attempt to address financial pressures, they would offer little tangible benefit to the community. The school would remain open, but with reduced capacity to contribute positively to community life or act as a hub for local activity.

As this option does not resolve underlying issues such as low pupil numbers and long term financial sustainability, the community may continue to experience uncertainty regarding the school's future. Ongoing reductions could reinforce concerns about the potential for future closure, leading to prolonged anxiety for families and residents.

Likely effect of different travel arrangements

Under this option, Ysgol Blaenau would remain open on its current site. As a result, there would be no change to travel arrangements for pupils currently attending the school, who would continue to access education within the village.

Reasons for discounting this option

- The school already operates with a minimal staffing structure, further reductions are impractical without compromising basic operations.
- Reducing staff would have a negative impact on educational provision, leading to larger mixed age classes and reduced individual support, which would harm teaching quality and pupil outcomes.
- Even with staff reductions, the school would still face persistently low pupil numbers, high surplus places, and a significant projected budget deficit, meaning long term sustainability remains unresolved.
- Increased workload and stress for remaining staff could affect morale, retention, and the ability to deliver the full breadth of the Curriculum for Wales effectively.
- This option does not align with Carmarthenshire's Primary Educational Principles, which aim to reduce mixed age classes and maintain quality provision.

Alternative Option 6 – Consider qualitative benefits of Ysgol Blaenau	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Ysgol Blaenau has a positive reputation and strong ties with the local community, which fosters a supportive environment for pupils and families.	While qualitative benefits like community ethos and positive reputation are acknowledged, these factors do not resolve the fundamental challenges of persistently low pupil numbers, high surplus places, and a significant projected budget deficit.
The school received a positive inspection in 2024, highlighting strengths in leadership and teaching quality despite financial challenges.	Even if qualitative benefits are considered, the school's growing deficit cannot be mitigated by community engagement or reputation alone.
	This option does not align with Carmarthenshire's Primary Educational Principles, which aim to reduce mixed age classes and ensure sustainable leadership structures.
	Qualitative benefits do not guarantee an increase in enrolment, meaning surplus places and inefficiencies would persist.
Opportunities	**Threats**
The school's strong ties with the local community could be leveraged to develop partnerships, fundraising initiatives, and volunteer support to enhance resources and activities.	Even if qualitative benefits are considered, the school would still face low pupil numbers, high surplus places, and a significant projected budget deficit, meaning closure could still be inevitable later.
	The deficit budget is projected to be £362,566 by the end of 2026/27, which cannot be mitigated by community engagement or reputation alone.
	This option fails to meet Carmarthenshire's Primary Educational Principles, which aim to reduce mixed age classes and ensure sustainable leadership structures.
	If pupil numbers do not increase significantly, the school may still face closure later, causing further disruption for pupils, staff, and the community.

Likely impact on quality and standards in education

If the Local Authority were to place greater weight on the qualitative benefits of Ysgol Blaenau such as its community ethos, positive reputation and recent Estyn judgements the overall impact on quality and standards in education is likely to be limited and insufficient to secure long term improvement.

Ysgol Blaenau has identified strengths, including strong relationships within the school community, a caring ethos, and positives noted in the most recent Estyn inspection. These factors contribute to a supportive learning environment and can enhance pupils' wellbeing and engagement.

However, while qualitative factors are acknowledged, they do not address the fundamental structural challenges facing the school. Persistently low pupil numbers require the continued use of mixed age classes spanning multiple year groups, which presents ongoing challenges in delivering consistently high-quality, age-appropriate teaching and learning across the curriculum.

The small size of the school limits opportunities to provide the full breadth and depth of the Curriculum for Wales, including wider enrichment activities and subject specialism. These constraints restrict pupils' learning experiences and limit opportunities for collaborative learning and progression alongside peers of the same age.

The school's significant and growing budget deficit continues to place pressure on staffing, resources and leadership capacity. Without addressing financial sustainability, there is a risk that the school's ability to maintain or improve standards over time will be compromised, regardless of existing qualitative strengths.

While strong relationships and ethos are beneficial, they rely heavily on a small number of individuals. This creates vulnerability and limits the school's capacity to sustain improvement, undertake strategic planning or respond effectively to future challenges.

Likely impact on the community

Placing greater emphasis on the qualitative benefits of Ysgol Blaenau would allow the school to remain open within the village, preserving a local education presence and maintaining the school's role as a focal point for community life.

Ysgol Blaenau has strong links with its local community and is valued for its caring ethos and close relationships with families. Continuing to operate the school would help sustain these relationships and support community cohesion, particularly for families with long-standing connections to the school.

School-based services such as breakfast clubs, after-school provision and informal community use could continue, preserving some of the social and practical benefits that the school currently provides to the local community.

While retaining the school offers short-term reassurance, this option does not address underlying challenges such as low pupil numbers and financial sustainability. As a result, the wider community benefits are likely to remain limited, and activity levels within the school and village may not increase significantly.

Relying primarily on qualitative benefits may prolong uncertainty for the community. If underlying issues remain unresolved, families and residents may continue to have concerns about the long term viability of the school and the possibility of future closure, creating prolonged uncertainty.

Continued uncertainty about the school's future may affect community confidence and decision-making, for example influencing whether families choose to remain in the area or select the school for their children. This could limit the longer-term positive impact on the community.

Likely effect of different travel arrangements

Under this option, Ysgol Blaenau would remain open on its current site. As a result, there would be no change to travel arrangements for pupils currently attending the school, who would continue to access education within the village.

Reasons for discounting this option

- While qualitative benefits like community ethos and positive reputation are acknowledged, these factors do not address the fundamental issues of persistently low pupil numbers, high surplus places, and a significant projected budget deficit
- The school's growing deficit cannot be mitigated by community engagement or reputation alone.
- Qualitative benefits do not guarantee an increase in pupil numbers, meaning surplus places and inefficiencies would persist.
- This option does not meet Carmarthenshire's Primary Educational Principles, which aim to reduce mixed age classes and ensure sustainable leadership structures.
- Even if implemented, the school may still face closure later, causing further disruption for pupils, staff, and the community.

Alternative Option 7 – Introduction of a Cylch Meithrin	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Introducing a Cylch Meithrin could strengthen Welsh language immersion and align with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) objectives.	A Cylch Meithrin previously operated at the school without any measurable improvement in pupil numbers, suggesting this option is unlikely to deliver significant change.

Offering early years provision could encourage parents to choose Ysgol Blaenau for continuity from nursery through primary education.	Several local schools already offer early years provision, reducing the likelihood that introducing a Cylch Meithrin would attract enough additional pupils to address viability issues.
A Cylch Meithrin could foster stronger links with local families and community groups, enhancing the school's role as a hub for Welsh language and culture.	Even with a Cylch Meithrin, the school would still face persistently low pupil numbers, high surplus places, and a significant projected budget deficit.
	Implementing and maintaining a Cylch Meithrin would require staffing, compliance with early years regulations, and ongoing operational costs, adding complexity and financial pressure.
Opportunities	**Threats**
Establishing a Cylch Meithrin could foster stronger links with local families and community groups, enhancing the school's role as a hub for Welsh language and culture.	Implementing and maintaining a Cylch Meithrin would require additional staffing, compliance with early years regulations, and ongoing operational costs, adding complexity and financial pressure.
	Even with a Cylch Meithrin, the school would still face persistently low pupil numbers, high surplus places, and a significant projected budget deficit, meaning long term sustainability remains unresolved.
	Several local schools already offer early years provision, reducing the likelihood that introducing a Cylch Meithrin would attract enough additional pupils to make a meaningful difference.
	If the initiative fails to increase pupil numbers significantly, it could be perceived as an ineffective use of resources, undermining confidence in the school and the Local Authority's strategy.

Likely impact on quality and standards in education

The introduction of a Cylch Meithrin at Ysgol Blaenau could offer some targeted educational benefits, particularly in relation to early language development, Welsh medium immersion and school readiness for younger children. Access to Welsh medium early years provision can support children's communication skills, social development and transition into statutory education. It may also promote continuity for those children who subsequently progress into Reception at the school

However, the Local Authority considers that the overall impact on quality and standards in education would be limited and unlikely to address the school's underlying challenges. It is important to note that a Cylch Meithrin previously operated from the school site until relatively recently. Despite this provision being available, it did not lead to a measurable or sustained increase in pupil numbers sufficient to improve the school's long term viability. Consequently, there is limited evidence to suggest that reintroducing a Cylch Meithrin would significantly increase enrolment or alter existing patterns of parental preference.

Available birth data and pupil projections also indicate limited potential for significant growth in pupil numbers within the catchment area. As a result, the school would be likely to continue operating with very small cohorts and mixed age classes spanning multiple year groups. Whilst staff work effectively to support learners within this structure, the challenges associated with curriculum planning, progression and providing age-appropriate learning experiences across a broad age range would remain

The introduction of a Cylch Meithrin would not materially alter the educational experiences of most pupils already attending the school. Opportunities for pupils to learn, collaborate and socialise with larger groups of peers of a similar age would remain limited, as would opportunities associated with a larger pupil population, such as wider group learning experiences, team activities and some extracurricular opportunities.

Establishing and maintaining a Cylch Meithrin would also require ongoing leadership oversight, compliance with regulatory requirements and operational management. Given the school's small staffing structure and the headteacher's substantial teaching commitment, this could place additional demands on leadership capacity and resources.

Furthermore, this option would not address the school's significant and increasing budget deficit, high level of surplus places or broader sustainability challenges. Without a substantial increase in pupil numbers, financial pressures would remain and may continue to limit the school's capacity to invest in staffing, resources, curriculum development and professional learning.

The Local Authority recognises the educational value that Welsh medium early years provision can provide and acknowledges the potential benefits for a small

number of younger learners. However, given that a Cylch Meithrin previously operated on the site without generating sufficient growth in pupil numbers, the Local Authority considers that reintroducing this provision would be unlikely to deliver significant improvements in overall educational provision or secure the long term sustainability of the school. The underlying challenges associated with low pupil numbers, mixed age class organisation, high surplus places, limited leadership capacity and financial sustainability would remain largely unchanged.

Likely impact on the community

The introduction of a Cylch Meithrin at Ysgol Blaenau could provide some short-term community benefits, particularly for families with young children. Local early years provision may be viewed positively by parents and carers, offering greater convenience, reducing travel to alternative settings, and supporting early engagement with Welsh medium education within the village. This could help maintain the school's role as a community focal point and reinforce links between the school and local families during the early years.

A Cylch Meithrin could also offer opportunities to strengthen community cohesion, particularly if it encouraged increased use of the school site by local families and supported informal networks between parents of pre-school children. In principle, this may help maintain some level of daily activity within the school building and sustain the school's visibility within village life.

However, the Local Authority considers that the overall impact on the community would be limited. Evidence within the consultation document indicates that a Cylch Meithrin previously operated at Ysgol Blaenau without leading to a sustained increase in pupil numbers or long term improvement in the school's viability. As a result, there is no clear evidence that reintroducing this provision would bring significant or lasting change to the level of community engagement with the school or reverse trends in pupil choice away from the catchment school.

Likely effect of different travel arrangements

Under this option, Ysgol Blaenau would remain open on its current site. As a result, there would be no change to travel arrangements for pupils currently attending the school, who would continue to access education within the village.

Reasons for discounting this option

- A Cylch Meithrin previously operated at Ysgol Blaenau without any measurable impact on increasing pupil numbers, indicating this option is unlikely to deliver significant improvement.
- Birth and PLASC data do not indicate enough demand for early years provision within the Ysgol Blaenau catchment area to make this option viable.

- Several local schools already offer early years provision, reducing the likelihood that introducing a Cylch Meithrin would attract enough additional pupils to address viability issues.
- Even with a Cylch Meithrin, the school would still face persistently low pupil numbers, high surplus places, and a significant projected budget deficit.
- Implementing and maintaining a Cylch Meithrin would require staffing, compliance with early years regulations, and ongoing operational costs, adding complexity and financial pressure.

Alternative Option 8 – Leasing space for community use / childcare	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Leasing space could provide an additional revenue stream to help offset some operational costs.	Leasing space would not resolve the school's fundamental challenges of low pupil numbers, high surplus places, and a significant projected budget deficit.
This option could strengthen ties with the local community by creating a multi-purpose hub for childcare and other activities.	Implementing this option would require rigorous safeguarding measures, compliance with regulatory standards, and ongoing monitoring to ensure the safety and well-being of children and staff.
Even if pupil numbers remain low, the school building could continue to serve as a valuable resource for families and local groups.	Managing leases and ensuring compliance would involve considerable time, cost, and administrative effort for the school and Local Authority.
	While income generation is possible, it would not be sufficient to address the school's long term viability or eliminate the substantial budget deficit
Opportunities	**Threats**
Leasing space could create a revenue stream to help offset some operational costs and reduce financial pressure on the school.	Leasing space for childcare or community use requires strict safeguarding measures and compliance with regulatory standards. Failure to meet these could result in reputational damage or enforcement action.
This option could transform the school into a multi-purpose hub, fostering stronger relationships with local families and community groups.	Managing leases, monitoring compliance, and ensuring safety would involve considerable time, cost, and administrative effort, adding pressure to an already unsustainable situation.

Leasing space for bilingual childcare or partnerships with early years providers could align with Welsh language and education strategies.	Income from leasing is unlikely to be sufficient to address the school's long term viability or eliminate the substantial budget deficit.
Could open opportunities for partnerships with local organisations, charities, or businesses to deliver services and activities that benefit the wider community.	Community or childcare services may already exist locally, meaning this option could duplicate provision and fail to attract enough users to justify the investment.

Likely impact on quality and standards in education

Leasing space within the Ysgol Blaenau building for community use or childcare provision is unlikely to result in a direct positive impact on the quality and standards of education for pupils attending the school. While additional community or commercial use of the site could provide some limited financial income, this option does not address the core educational challenges currently facing the school, including persistently low pupil numbers, high surplus places, mixed age teaching arrangements and long term financial instability.

From an educational perspective, leasing space does not increase pupil numbers, nor does it improve class organisation or staffing capacity. As pupil numbers would remain very low, the school would continue to operate with mixed age classes spanning multiple year groups. This continues to present challenges in delivering the Curriculum for Wales effectively, requiring extensive differentiation and complex planning, and limiting opportunities for consistent, age-appropriate challenge and progression for all learners.

There is no clear evidence that leasing space for childcare or community services would lead to increased enrolment in the school. While proximity of early years provision can support transition in some circumstances, experience at Ysgol Blaenau and comparable settings does not demonstrate that shared or co-located provision alone results in a sustained increase in statutory school age pupil numbers. As a result, the structural factors affecting educational quality would remain unchanged.

The introduction of leased provision would also place additional operational and safeguarding responsibilities on school leadership. Managing external users of the site requires robust safeguarding arrangements, monitoring, and compliance with regulatory standards. In the context of a very small school with limited staffing and a headteacher who has a substantial teaching commitment, these additional responsibilities could further reduce leadership capacity available for core priorities such as teaching and learning, self-evaluation, professional learning and school improvement planning.

There is also a risk that shared use of limited space could place pressure on teaching environments, particularly in a small school where accommodation is already closely matched to need. Any reduction in available teaching or breakout

space, or increased timetable constraints caused by shared use, could negatively affect learning experiences, particularly for pupils requiring additional support or flexible learning arrangements.

While any modest income generated through leasing space could potentially support minor resource purchases, it is unlikely to be sufficient to offset the school's significant and growing budget deficit or to enable meaningful investment in staffing, curriculum enrichment or professional learning. Consequently, this option would not support sustained improvement in teaching quality or learner outcomes over time.

Likely impact on the community

Leasing space within the Ysgol Blaenau building for community use or childcare provision could deliver some limited, short-term benefits for the local community. Additional use of the site may help maintain activity within the building, provide convenient access to childcare or community services, and support some local families who value services based within the village. In this sense, the option could contribute modestly to sustaining the school site as a community asset in the short term.

Introducing community or childcare provision could also create opportunities to strengthen links between the school and local groups or organisations, potentially encouraging greater use of the building outside the school day. This may help preserve the visibility of the site within village life and offer practical benefits such as reduced travel for families accessing local childcare or activities.

However, the Local Authority considers that the overall impact on the community would be limited. While leasing space may increase use of the building, it would not address the fundamental reasons for lower levels of community confidence in the school, including persistently low pupil numbers, high surplus places and long term uncertainty about the school's future. As a result, this option is unlikely to alter wider trends in parental choice or significantly increase community engagement with the school itself.

Leasing arrangements would also require ongoing management, oversight and safeguarding compliance, which could place additional demands on school leadership and the Local Authority. In a very small school with limited staffing capacity, there is a risk that the administrative and operational responsibilities associated with managing leased provision could outweigh the community benefits gained, particularly if resources are stretched.

Likely effect of different travel arrangements

Under this option, Ysgol Blaenau would remain open on its current site. As a result, there would be no change to travel arrangements for pupils currently attending the school, who would continue to access education within the village.

Reasons for discounting this option
• Leasing space would not address the school's fundamental challenges of low pupil numbers, high surplus places, and a significant projected budget deficit. • Implementing this option would require rigorous safeguarding measures, compliance with regulatory standards, and ongoing monitoring, adding complexity and cost. • Managing leases and ensuring compliance would involve considerable time, cost, and administrative effort for both the school and the Local Authority • While income generation is possible, it would not be sufficient to address the school's long term viability or eliminate the substantial budget deficit. • Community or childcare services may already exist locally, meaning this option could duplicate provision and fail to attract enough users to justify the investment.

Alternatives to closure such as the establishment of multi-site schools

A range of options regarding the future of Ysgol Blaenau have been carefully considered and are outlined within this consultation document. Each option has been assessed, with a summary of the SWOT analysis and reasons for preferring or not preferring the options included.

Pupil numbers at Ysgol Blaenau are currently low and are projected to decline further over the coming years. The school also has a significant level of surplus places, with 71% surplus capacity recorded in PLASC 2026, rising to around 79%, 80% by 2031 based on projections.

In addition, there is already surplus capacity within surrounding schools in the wider area. This indicates that there is sufficient provision locally to accommodate current and future demand without the need to retain the Ysgol Blaenau site as part of a multi-site arrangement.

The establishment of a multi-site school, whereby Ysgol Blaenau would operate alongside another school on separate sites, has been considered. However, this approach would introduce additional complexity in terms of leadership, staffing, curriculum delivery, and day-to-day management. Given the very low number of pupils at Ysgol Blaenau, such an arrangement would not be operationally efficient or financially sustainable.

A multi-site model would also fail to address the fundamental challenges facing the school, including:

- persistently low and declining pupil numbers;
- very high levels of surplus capacity;
- a significant and increasing budget deficit; and
- limitations associated with small cohort sizes and mixed age teaching.

Furthermore, creating a multi-site school would not provide the educational benefits associated with larger, more sustainable schools, such as access to single year group teaching, a broader curriculum, enhanced extracurricular opportunities, and greater staffing capacity.

For these reasons, the Local Authority does not consider the establishment of a multi-site school to be a suitable or viable alternative to the proposal. This option would be unlikely to deliver educational, operational, or financial improvements and would not represent an effective use of public resources.

School	Ysgol Blaenau	Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes	Ysgol Llandybie	Total
Capacity 25/26	98	226	250	574
Number on roll PLASC 2026	28	158	209	395
Number of surplus places	70	68	41	179
% of surplus places	71.4%	30.1%	16.4%	31.2%

Alternatives to closure such as the possibility of making fuller use of the existing buildings as a community or educational resource

The Local Authority recognises the potential value of school buildings as community or educational assets and supports the principle of maximising the use of such facilities where appropriate. In line with the Local Authority's Surplus School Disposal Policy, all reasonable options for the future use of a school site are considered following a statutory process and once a decision has been made regarding closure.

However, making fuller use of the Ysgol Blaenau building as a community or educational resource has been carefully explored and is not considered a viable alternative to closure. While there may be some potential to increase community use, this would not address the fundamental challenges facing the school, including persistently low and declining pupil numbers, high levels of surplus capacity, and a significant and increasing budget deficit. Increased community use alone would not generate sufficient demand or income to offset these structural issues or secure the long term sustainability of the school as an educational provision.

In accordance with the Authority's Disposal Policy, any proposals for community use would require a clearly identified need, alongside a robust and sustainable business plan demonstrating both capital and ongoing revenue viability. At present, there is no evidence of a viable proposal that would meet these requirements or justify the continued operational and maintenance costs associated with retaining the building. Furthermore, the local area is already served by existing community facilities, including Caerbryn Village Hall, which reduces the likelihood of unmet demand for additional provision.

The Local Authority has also considered whether the site could be repurposed as part of a wider community hub or for co-located services. However, no realistic or sustainable model has been identified that would adequately address the core educational and financial challenges or provide sufficient benefit to outweigh the cost of maintaining the site.

Should the proposal proceed, the future use of the Ysgol Blaenau site will be considered fully in line with the Authority's Surplus School Disposal Policy. This will include:

- first assessing any internal corporate need for the building;
- inviting expressions of interest from community groups and organisations within defined timescales;
- requiring submission of a detailed business case where community use is proposed; and
- considering disposal on the open market if no viable alternative use is identified.

Overall, while the potential for community use has been considered in accordance with established policy, it does not provide a sustainable or effective alternative to closure and would not meet the long term educational or financial objectives of the Local Authority.

Should the proposal be approved, the Authority will consider future uses for the school site in accordance with its Asset Management and Surplus Property procedures. The Authority will actively explore opportunities for community, educational, voluntary sector or commercial use where appropriate. Community organisations and local stakeholders will be afforded an opportunity to express an interest in the future use of the site.

Conclusion of the Alternative Options Appraisal

Having considered all reasonable alternatives in accordance with the School Organisation Code (2026), including retaining the status quo, federation, extending the age range, specialist ALN provision, staff restructuring, community-led initiatives and other organisational models, the Local Authority has concluded that none adequately addresses the combined challenges facing Ysgol Blaenau. These challenges include declining pupil numbers, high levels of surplus capacity, financial sustainability, leadership capacity and the long term viability of educational provision.

Whilst some alternatives offered limited benefits, none would provide a sustainable solution to these issues. The Local Authority therefore considers the closure of Ysgol Blaenau and the transfer of pupils to alternative schools to be the most appropriate and sustainable option capable of addressing the identified educational, organisational, financial and sustainability challenges by providing access to larger peer groups, broader educational opportunities, enhanced support services and more resilient long term provision for learners.

4. The Proposal – Closure of Ysgol Blaenau

The Local Authority is consulting on a proposal to discontinue Ysgol Blaenau from 31 December 2027, with pupils transferring to Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes or Ysgol Llandybie 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.

The Local Authority recognises the important role Ysgol Blaenau plays within the community and has undertaken a Community Impact Assessment to inform the proposal. The findings are summarised within this document and set out in full at Appendix A.

Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes is a community primary school for pupils aged 4-11 and is categorised as language category 3 (Welsh medium). It is located in the village of Penygroes, near Llanelli, in Carmarthenshire, SA14 7NT, serving the local community and surrounding area. Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes offers the same language category as Ysgol Blaenau.

Ysgol Llandybie is a 3-11 transitional (T3) community primary school located in Parc y Llan, Llandybie, Ammanford, SA18 3JB. Although the proposal notes transferring pupils to a transitional language category school, parental choice will allow the pupils to attend the Welsh stream at an alternative school. Furthermore, the Council is currently undertaking a separate statutory process in relation to a proposal to amend the Welsh language provision at Ysgol Llandybie. If the proposal is implemented, the school would transition year by year to become a Primarily Welsh (Category 3) school throughout, reaching full implementation by September 2034.

While Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie have been identified as the preferred receiving school within this proposal, as noted earlier, 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 such as Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman, Ysgol Saron, Ysgol Parcyrhun

and Ysgol Bro Banw. 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.

4.1 Reasons for the proposal

The Local Authority is proposing to discontinue Ysgol Blaenau and accommodate pupils in Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes or Ysgol Llandybie. The reasons for the proposal are noted below:

Educational Benefits for Pupils

- Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie have a larger pupil population which allows classes to be organised in single year groups enabling teachers to be more closely matched to pupils' developmental stages which supports consistent progress and appropriate levels of challenge for learners.
- Improved curriculum delivery - With a broader staff team and greater capacity, Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie are better placed to deliver the full breadth and depth of the Curriculum for Wales. Pupils would benefit from a wider range of learning experiences and teaching approaches that are more difficult to sustain in very small schools with limited staffing
- Enhanced social and collaborative learning opportunities - Larger peer groups provide increased opportunities for pupils to learn, collaborate and socialise with others of a similar age, supporting the development of confidence, communication skills and positive relationships.
- Wider range of extra-curricular opportunities - The alternative schools are able to offer a broader range of extra-curricular activities, such as team sports, clubs, performances and enrichment activities. These opportunities contribute positively to pupils' wellbeing, engagement and personal development.
- Greater access to specialist support and resources - A larger school environment enables access to a wider range of staff expertise, resources and support services, including support for pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), helping to ensure pupils' needs are identified and supported effectively.
- Sustainable leadership and staff capacity - Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie benefit from a permanent leadership structure with greater leadership capacity, allowing more time to be focused on school improvement, teaching quality, staff development and learner outcomes.

Strategic and Operational Benefits

- More sustainable use of educational provision - The proposal supports the development of a more sustainable school network by consolidating provision

within a school that has sufficient pupil numbers, staffing capacity and long term viability.

- Reduction in surplus places - Closing Ysgol Blaenau would remove a significant number of surplus places within the area, helping the Local Authority to reduce excess capacity and align provision more closely with demand, in accordance with the School Organisation Code.
- Improved efficiency of resource allocation - Resources currently required to support a very small school with high fixed costs can be redirected more effectively, improving value for money and supporting schools that are better placed to deliver consistent educational outcomes.
- Financial sustainability - The proposal would address the ongoing and increasing budget deficit at Ysgol Blaenau, reducing financial risk to the Local Authority and supporting a more stable and sustainable financial position across the school system.
- Alignment with strategic planning objectives - The proposal aligns with the Modernising Education Programme and the Local Authority's strategic objectives to create an efficient, resilient and well planned network of schools that can adapt to changing demographics.

Financial Benefits

- Ysgol Blaenau's deficit budget issues would be addressed - Ysgol Blaenau is currently projecting a significant and increasing deficit budget which is not sustainable in the medium to long term. Closing the school would prevent this deficit from continuing to grow and reduce the associated financial risk to the Local Authority.
- 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.

4.2 Benefits and Disadvantages of the proposal

The expected benefits of the proposal and disadvantages when compared to the status quo should the proposal proceed are:

Benefits	Disadvantages
It would address the current challenges facing Ysgol Blaenau e.g. low pupil numbers, high surplus places and increasing deficit budget.	The proposal may have a short-term impact on the wellbeing of pupils and staff, due to uncertainty and the need to adjust to new environments, although longer-term benefits may arise from increased opportunities in a larger school setting.
It would reduce surplus places within the area.	The impact on the Blaenau community, would result in the loss of a community

	asset, reducing opportunities for local engagement and social interaction, and may affect the overall sustainability and attractiveness of the village for families. There may also be potential economic effects, including reduced demand for local services and businesses, and a possible impact on house prices and the desirability of the area as a place to live.
It would potentially increase pupil numbers at Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie if pupils choose to attend these schools.	Loss of education provision in the village of Blaenau, resulting in the removal of a local school facility and reduced access to education within the area.
More resilient staffing structures in larger schools, reducing reliance on mixed age classes.	Staffing implications for current staff at Ysgol Blaenau and potential for redundancies.
The Local Authority would no longer need to maintain Ysgol Blaenau.	Increased travelling time for pupils who currently attend Ysgol Blaenau as their nearest school.
Potential capital receipt which would be reinvested into the Modernising Education Programme.	Potential anxiety or disruption for pupils during transition to new schools.
Increased access to learning and social opportunities for pupils if they choose to attend the alternative schools with a larger cohort of pupils.	Risk of reduced parental engagement due to increased distance from school.
Pupils will continue to access Welsh medium provision at the alternative school, with increased opportunities to use and develop the language within a larger peer group, supporting the WESP and Cymraeg 2050.	Uncertainty regarding the future use of Ysgol Blaenau.
Greater opportunities for peer interaction and social development with larger pupil cohorts.	Possible increase in traffic and environmental impact due to additional travel.
Improved access to specialist facilities, resources and wider curriculum at alternative schools.	
Supports long term sustainability of education provision within the area.	
Enables more efficient deployment of funding and staff across the wider school system	
Reduces future maintenance liabilities associated with an ageing building.	
Annual revenue savings.	

4.3 Risk Management

The anticipated risks associated with this proposal and management factors are listed in the table below:

Risk		Risk Management
1.	Uncertainty for staff and pupils on the future of Ysgol Blaenau whilst the School Organisation process is in progress.	Ensure staff and parents are kept informed of key decisions during the process. Maintain clear, regular and transparent communication throughout all stages of the process.
2.	Failure to obtain statutory approval to implement the proposal.	Ensure full compliance with the School Organisation Code (2026) including robust evidence, clear rationale and thorough consultation and impact assessments.
3.	Increased travel distances for some pupils, potentially raising concerns about travel time, safety, and cost.	Review transport arrangements in line with the Local Authority's school transport policy. Provide free transport for eligible pupils, assess journey times and routes, and implement appropriate safety measures. Communicate arrangements clearly to parents and monitor any issues following implementation.
4.	Staff uncertainty regarding future employment and risk of redundancy.	Engage with staff and trade unions at an early stage. Follow HR policies and procedures, including formal consultation processes. Provide access to redeployment opportunities, career guidance and wellbeing support to minimise the impact on staff.
5.	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.
6.	Impact on pupil wellbeing during transition period.	Develop a comprehensive transition plan, including visits to alternative schools, opportunities to meet staff and peers, and joint activities. Provide targeted support for vulnerable pupils and those with ALN, and ensure ongoing pastoral monitoring before, during and after the transition.
7.	Capacity pressures at the receiving schools.	Carry out detailed pupil projection modelling and capacity assessments. Work closely with receiving schools to

		plan staffing, resources and accommodation. Where necessary, use temporary accommodation or adjust provision to ensure sufficient capacity is maintained.
8.	Long term impact on the Blaenau community.	Consider future use of the school site in line with the Local Authority's surplus asset policy. Engage with community groups and partners to explore sustainable alternatives and continue to review and update the Community Impact Assessment as proposals progress.

4.4 Assessment of the proposed closure of Ysgol Blaenau

The Local Authority has considered the availability and suitability of places at alternative schools and is satisfied that sufficient capacity exists to accommodate learners. Further information is provided in Sections 5 and 6.

The following table summarises the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with the proposal to discontinue Ysgol Blaenau and transfer pupils to Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes or Ysgol Llandybie:

Discontinue Ysgol Blaenau and transfer pupils to Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes or Ysgol Llandybie	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
This option directly tackles the issues of low pupil numbers, high surplus places, and the significant projected budget deficit at Ysgol Blaenau.	Closing the school removes an educational facility from the village, which may negatively affect the local community.
Closing Ysgol Blaenau and consolidating provision at Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie reduces surplus places and eliminates financial pressures associated with maintaining a small school.	The school plays a role in community life, and its closure could reduce opportunities for local engagement and activities. Current staff may face redeployment challenges or potential redundancies despite efforts to minimise them.
Pupils would benefit from larger peer groups, single-age classes, and access to a broader curriculum and extracurricular activities.	Pupils who currently walk to Ysgol Blaenau may/will need transport to Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie, increasing travel time and reducing opportunities for active travel.
Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie have a permanent leadership	

structure and greater staff capacity, improving standards and wellbeing.	
This option meets Carmarthenshire's aspirations for sustainable leadership, efficient resource use, and improved educational provision.	
Annual revenue savings and possible capital receipts from the sale of the Blaenau site could be reinvested into the Modernising Education Programme.	
Pupils choosing to move to Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes will have access to a language category 3 (Welsh medium) school.	
Opportunities	**Threats**
Pupils will have access to larger peer groups, single-age classes, and a broader curriculum, which can enhance learning experiences and outcomes	Closure of the school may lead to strong opposition from the Blaenau community, as the school plays a central role in local life.
Moving to a larger school offers pupils more chances to participate in sports, music, and social activities, improving wellbeing and engagement.	Pupils and staff may experience stress and uncertainty, which could affect morale and learning outcomes in the short term.
Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie have a permanent leadership structure and greater staff capacity, which supports better standards and sustainable management.	Increased travel distances for pupils who currently walk to school could reduce opportunities for active travel and increase reliance on transport
This option supports Carmarthenshire's Modernising Education Programme goals for efficiency, sustainability, and high quality provision.	
Larger schools have more staff and resources to meet ALN and wellbeing needs effectively, ensuring inclusive education	
Likely impact on quality and standards in education Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie's larger pupil population enables classes to be organised in single year groups, allowing teaching and learning to be more closely matched to pupils' developmental stages. This supports more consistent progress, clearer progression pathways and appropriate levels of	

challenge, which are more difficult to achieve in very small schools with mixed age classes.

As a larger school, Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie has greater staffing capacity and expertise, placing it in a stronger position to deliver the full breadth and depth of the Curriculum for Wales. Pupils would benefit from access to a wider range of subjects, learning approaches and enrichment opportunities, ensuring a balanced and engaging curriculum across all areas of learning and experience.

Larger peer groups provide increased opportunities for pupils to learn, collaborate and socialise with others of a similar age. This supports the development of communication skills, confidence and emotional wellbeing, and enables more effective group work, team activities and pupil leadership opportunities.

Both alternative schools have access to a wider range of resources, specialist support and staffing expertise, allowing for more robust identification and support for pupils with additional learning needs. This is likely to enhance inclusion and ensure that pupils' needs are met effectively and consistently.

Both alternative schools have a permanent leadership structure with greater management capacity, enabling leaders to focus on strategic planning, self-evaluation and continuous improvement. This supports the ongoing development of teaching quality, staff professional learning and learner outcomes, contributing positively to standards over time.

While it is recognised that pupils may experience some short term disruption during the transition period, appropriate transition arrangements, pastoral support and joint working between schools would be implemented to minimise this impact. In the longer term, the proposal is expected to support improved educational experiences, learner wellbeing and sustained standards, with pupils benefiting from a stable and well-resourced learning environment.

Likely impact on the community

The closure of Ysgol Blaenau would result in the loss of an important facility within the village. Schools often act as a focal point for community life, providing a venue for events, activities and informal interaction. Its closure may therefore reduce opportunities for community engagement and cohesion.

Ysgol Blaenau plays a role in the identity of the Blaenau community. The proposed closure may be perceived as a loss of local heritage and could affect community morale, particularly among long-standing residents and families with strong ties to the school.

The school currently supports activities such as a breakfast club, after-school provision and informal community use. Should the school close, these services

would no longer be available in the village, potentially requiring families to travel to neighbouring communities to access equivalent provision.

Parents and carers may find it harder to remain engaged in school based activities and events when education is provided outside the village. This may reduce opportunities for informal social contact between families who currently meet through the school.

Some families may experience changes to travel routines, with pupils no longer able to walk to a local school. While transport arrangements would be put in place where eligible, there may be a perceived reduction in accessibility to education within the immediate community.

The closure of Ysgol Blaenau may present opportunities to consider alternative uses for the school building, such as community facilities or other local services, subject to the Authority's surplus asset policy. Any future use could help mitigate some of the longer-term community impacts, depending on outcomes of engagement and feasibility.

Likely effect on travel arrangements

Pupils transferring from Ysgol Blaenau to Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie would be required to travel a greater distance to school. Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes is approximately 1.8 miles from Ysgol Blaenau and Ysgol Llandybie is approximately 1.7 miles from Ysgol Blaenau, meaning that pupils who currently live within walking distance of Ysgol Blaenau would no longer be able to walk to school.

Families may experience changes to daily travel routines, including earlier start times and longer journey durations. While journey times to Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie are expected to be relatively short, around five minutes by vehicle, these changes may still represent an adjustment for pupils and parents.

Free transport will be provided in line with Carmarthenshire County Council's transport policy.

Reasons for this being the preferred option

- Ysgol Blaenau has persistently low and declining pupil numbers, resulting in very high surplus places (71% by January 2026) and a significant projected budget deficit of £362,566 by the end of 2026/27. These issues cannot be resolved through minor adjustments or alternative options.
- Pupil projections show no significant increase in numbers over the next five years, meaning the school's viability cannot be secured.
- Consolidating provision at Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes or Ysgol Llandybie reduces surplus places and eliminates financial pressures associated with maintaining a small school with high per-pupil costs.

- Pupils will benefit from larger peer groups, single-age classes, and access to a broader curriculum and extracurricular activities, improving standards and wellbeing.
- Both alternative schools have permanent leadership structure and greater staff capacity, aligning with Carmarthenshire's aspiration for sustainable leadership and improved provision
- This option meets the goals of the Modernising Education Programme (MEP) to create an efficient, sustainable school network and improve educational standards.

The table below summarises how the key challenges facing Ysgol Blaenau will be addressed if the preferred option was taken forward.

Key Challenge	**Preferred Option – How it addressed the key challenge**
Low and declining pupil numbers PLASC 2026 figures show there are currently 28 pupils attending the school	Ysgol Blaenau has consistently low pupil numbers, with only 28 pupils at PLASC 2026 and projections showing no significant increase over the next five years. This impacts sustainability and educational provision. Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie helps address the challenge of low and declining pupil numbers at Ysgol Blaenau by offering a larger, more sustainable school environment with capacity for growth. Pupils transferring to Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes or Ysgol Llandybie will join a larger peer group, which supports better collaboration, social interaction, and access to extracurricular activities such as sports and clubs. This helps mitigate the isolation often experienced in very small schools.
High surplus places Currently there are 70 surplus places at the school equating to 71% surplus capacity.	Ysgol Blaenau currently has a 71% surplus which is far above Welsh Government thresholds for review. By transferring pupils to Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes or Ysgol Llandybie, these surplus places are removed, and resources are used more effectively. By transferring pupils from Ysgol Blaenau to Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes or Ysgol Llandybie it will help reduce overall surplus places in the Blaenau catchment area, aligning with the School

	Organisation Code requirement to review and remove excessive surplus capacity where possible.
Significant projected budget deficit at Ysgol Blaenau The school's low and declining pupil numbers have had a significant impact on its financial position, resulting in a growing budget deficit year on year. The deficit has increased steadily from £126,662 in 2021/22 to £287,857 in 2025/26 and a projected deficit of £362,566 in 2026/27.	Ysgol Blaenau currently receives a £10k Small School Supplement and a £20k Surplus Places Supplement. Closing the school removes this additional cost to the Local Authority. Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie are larger schools and have capacity for growth. This allows fixed costs (leadership, premises, resources) to be spread across more pupils, reducing the cost per pupil and improving efficiency compared to maintaining a very small school. Closing Ysgol Blaenau will strengthen the financial position of the receiving schools rather than continuing to support an unsustainable setting.
Mixed age classes Ysgol Blaenau currently operates with two mixed age classes (Nursery-Year 2 and Years 3-6).	Unlike Ysgol Blaenau, which currently operates with two mixed age classes (Nursery-Year 2 and Years 3-6), Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie have a much larger pupil population and sufficient staffing to organise pupils into single-year groups. This ensures lessons are tailored to specific developmental stages and curriculum requirements. Carmarthenshire's Modernising Education Programme aspires to have no more than two-year groups per class. Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie's size and resources make this achievable, reducing the complexity and workload associated with teaching multiple age groups in one class.
Unsustainable leadership model Ysgol Blaenau is led by a headteacher who has a 0.8 teaching responsibility. Due to the small size of the school and its limited staffing structure, leadership capacity is restricted.	Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie have dedicated headteacher who do not carry a heavy teaching commitment, unlike Ysgol Blaenau where the headteacher teaches 0.8 of the timetable. This ensures strong strategic direction and effective school management. With a larger pupil population and more staff, Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and

	Ysgol Llandybie can implement distributed leadership roles (e.g., deputy head, curriculum leads), reducing reliance on one individual and supporting sustainable governance. Larger schools like Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie offer more opportunities for staff collaboration, mentoring, and succession planning, which strengthens leadership capacity and ensures continuity.
Limited access to curriculum and extracurricular opportunities Ysgol Blaenau faces challenges associated with its very small size, including limited curriculum breadth, fewer opportunities for specialist teaching and support, restricted extracurricular provision, and smaller peer groups.	With a larger pupil population and more staff, both alternative schools can offer a wider range of subjects and learning experiences. This includes better alignment with the Curriculum for Wales, ensuring pupils have access to a full breadth of learning opportunities that are difficult to deliver in a very small school with only two teachers. Both alternative schools' benefits from a greater pool of teachers and support staff, which allows for subject specialism and more effective differentiation. This improves teaching quality and supports pupils with varying needs, including those requiring additional learning support. Pupils will have access to a wider range of extracurricular opportunities such as team sports, choir, and competitive activities, which are often limited in very small schools. These activities promote wellbeing, social development, and engagement beyond the classroom. Moving to a larger school environment means pupils will join bigger peer groups, enabling more collaborative learning and social opportunities. This helps mitigate the isolation often experienced in small mixed age classes.

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

If the proposal to discontinue Ysgol Blaenau proceeds, the Local Authority will ensure that appropriate and well planned arrangements are in place to support parents and

pupils in engaging effectively with the alternative schools and the wider range of facilities they offer. This will be achieved through close collaboration between the Local Authority, receiving schools, and families to identify and respond to individual needs, ensuring a smooth and successful transition.

A structured transition programme will be implemented, which will include opportunities for pupils and their families to visit the receiving schools, meet teaching and support staff, and become familiar with the school environment, routines and facilities. Joint activities and transition events can be arranged to help pupils build relationships with their new peers and develop confidence ahead of transfer. Receiving schools will also provide clear information on the curriculum, support services, extracurricular opportunities and wider facilities available.

Ongoing communication with parents and carers will be a key priority throughout the process. Where required, targeted support will be provided to families who may need additional assistance to engage with the new school setting.

Particular attention will be given to supporting vulnerable learners, including those with Additional Learning Needs, through tailored transition arrangements and enhanced pastoral support. Schools will continue to work closely with parents, carers and relevant professionals to ensure continuity of support and to facilitate full participation in school life.

Parents who wish for their children to attend an alternative school other than those identified within the proposal will be able to express their preference in accordance with the Local Authority's admissions policy. The Local Authority will support parents through this process, ensuring they are aware of their options and any implications.

Overall, these arrangements are designed not only to support a smooth transition, but also to ensure that pupils and their families are able to fully engage with, and benefit from, the broader educational opportunities, facilities and support available within the receiving schools

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

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

5.1 Whether alternative school-based provision will 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 Gymraeg Penygroes or Ysgol Llandybie from 1 January 2028.

The total capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes for the 26/27 academic year is 226 with an admission number of 28.

The total capacity of Ysgol Llandybie for the 26/27 academic year is 250 with an admission number of 29.

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 Ysgol Llandybie accommodates a Cylch Meithrin in one of their classrooms. As a result, the school's current usable capacity is lower than the published PLASC capacity.

Should all current pupils on roll at Ysgol Blaenau transfer to Ysgol Llandybie or Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes, pupil numbers at the school would be as follows, based on PLASC 2026 pupil numbers at the two alternative schools.

PLASC 2026	Nursery P/T	Nursery F/T	Reception	Year1	Year2	Year3	Year4	Year5	Year6	Total
Ysgol Llandybie	27	6	26	29	20	26	22	25	28	209
Ysgol Blaenau	-	3	1	2	2	6	3	9	2	28
Total	27	9	27	31	22	32	25	34	30	237

PLASC 2026	Nursery P/T	Nursery F/T	Reception	Year1	Year2	Year3	Year4	Year5	Year6	Total
Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes	-	3	22	20	24	19	23	20	27	158
Ysgol Blaenau	-	3	1	2	2	6	3	9	2	28
Total	-	6	23	22	26	25	26	29	29	186

The information shows that should the proposal proceed, and all current pupils choose to transfer from Ysgol Blaenau to Ysgol Llandybie or from Ysgol Blaenau to Ysgol Penygroes the admission number would be exceeded in some year groups at the receiving schools. Should the proposal proceed, the alternative named schools may need to review their class structures to accommodate some or all of the pupils of Ysgol Blaenau.

The table below illustrates the combined pupil numbers at Ysgol Blaenau and Ysgol Llandybie and Ysgol Blaenau and Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes in January 2026 and up until 2031 based on PLASC 2026 projections.

PLASC 2026 Projections	PLASC 2026	Projection 2027*	Projection 2028*	Projection 2029*	Projection 2030*	Projection 2031*
Ysgol Llandybie	209	205	205	208	208	213
Ysgol Blaenau	28	29	23	23	20	21
Total	237	234	228	231	228	234

*Including Nursery pupils

PLASC 2026 Projections	PLASC 2026	Projection 2027*	Projection 2028*	Projection 2029*	Projection 2030*	Projection 2031*
Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes	158	153	154	153	155	153
Ysgol Blaenau	28	29	23	23	20	21
Total	186	182	177	176	175	174

*Including Nursery pupils

This is further broken down by year group:

PLASC 2026 Projections		Nursery	Reception	Year1	Year2	Year3	Year4	Year5	Year6	Total
Llandybie	**2027**	33	26	24	29	20	26	22	25	**205**
Blaenau	**2027**	3	1	3	2	2	6	3	9	**29**
Total		**36**	**27**	**27**	**31**	**22**	**32**	**25**	**34**	**234**
Llandybie	**2028**	33	26	25	24	29	20	26	22	**205**
Blaenau	**2028**	3	1	3	3	2	2	6	3	**23**
Total		**36**	**27**	**28**	**27**	**31**	**22**	**32**	**25**	**228**

PLASC 2026 Projections		Nursery	Reception	Year1	Year2	Year3	Year4	Year5	Year6	Total
Penygroes	**2027**	3	22	22	20	24	19	23	20	**153**
Blaenau	**2027**	3	1	3	2	2	6	3	9	**29**
Total		**6**	**23**	**25**	**22**	**26**	**25**	**26**	**29**	**182**
Penygroes	**2028**	3	22	21	22	20	24	19	23	**154**
Blaenau	**2028**	3	1	3	3	2	2	6	3	**23**
Total		**6**	**23**	**24**	**25**	**22**	**26**	**25**	**26**	**177**

When considering the projected combined pupil numbers broken down by year group it is recognised that if all, or most, pupils choose to move to the proposed receiving schools, the number of pupils may temporarily exceed the schools' current admission number / capacity. Should this occur, the Local Authority will process any applications in accordance with its School Admissions Policy and the Welsh Government's School Admissions Code.

In addition, given the fact that Ysgol Llandybie's published capacity does not take into account the reduced classroom space used for the Cylch Meithrin, it is recognised that if all, or most, pupils choose to transfer to Ysgol Llandybie the school could face capacity challenges. The Local Authority would work closely with the receiving school and governing body to ensure that it is able to accommodate all pupils who wish to transfer.

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, including, but not limited to, schools located in nearby catchment areas.

Social Housing – Pupil Yield

Catchment Area	**Number of proposed social units**	**2+ occupancy**
Blaenau	0	0
Penygroes	90	58
Llandybie	45	37
Total	135	95

It should be noted that these figures do not necessarily indicate that an equivalent number of new families or school aged children will move into the area as a result of the proposed housing developments. As the properties will primarily be provided as affordable housing for local people, a significant proportion of future occupants are likely to already reside within the wider catchment area.

Allocation of the homes will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Local Lettings Policy, which prioritises applicants with a local connection. This may include individuals who currently live in the area, have close family ties within the community, or are employed locally. For the purposes of pupil yield modelling, the Local Authority has based its assessment on the 95 proposed 2+ occupancy units rather than the total 135 proposed social housing units. This approach reflects the fact that larger dwellings are more likely to accommodate households with dependent children, whereas 1 bedroom properties are generally less likely to generate additional demand for school places.

Consequently, while the developments comprise a total of 135 proposed social housing units, the use of the 95 2+ occupancy properties is considered to provide a more realistic basis for estimating the potential impact on future pupil numbers.

Nevertheless, the profile and origin of future residents will not be known until the allocation process is undertaken, which would typically occur only a few months prior to completion of the developments.

Social Housing Pupil Yield

Number of developments	Early Years Yield	Pupil Age Yield
95 (2+ occupancy)	4	38

Based on the available housing data, there are currently no proposed housing developments within the Ysgol Blaenau catchment area. Whilst a total of 135 social housing units are proposed within the neighbouring Penygroes and Llandybie catchment areas, only 95 of these comprise two-or-more-bedroom properties and have therefore been used for pupil yield calculations, as they are the dwelling types most likely to accommodate families with children. Using this methodology, the estimated yield is approximately 4 early years children and 38 school aged pupils.

Furthermore, due to the affordable nature of the developments and the application of the Council's Local Lettings Policy, a proportion of future occupants are likely to already reside within the wider local area. As a result, the developments are not expected to generate a significant increase in demand for school places within the Ysgol Blaenau catchment area. The available evidence does not indicate that planned housing development will be sufficient to materially alter the projected pupil population trends identified elsewhere in this document.

Housing Development
Local Development Plan / Revised Local Development Plan (April 2026)

The Local Authority has reviewed information provided by the Council's Planning Department relating to residential developments within the wider Blaenau, Penygroes and Llandybie area. The data includes sites allocated within the adopted Local Development Plan (LDP), sites proposed within the Revised Local Development Plan (RLDP), and sites that currently benefit from planning permission. The information reflects sites that remained undeveloped as of April 2026.

There are currently no identified housing developments within the Ysgol Blaenau catchment area. However, a number of housing developments are proposed within neighbouring catchment areas, particularly within Penygroes. The largest site is located at the former Emlyn Brickworks, Penygroes, where approximately 250 dwellings remain to be built, with development anticipated to continue over a number of years. Additional larger sites include land adjacent to Pant y Blodau, Penygroes (79 dwellings remaining), Chapel, Norton Road, Penygroes (7 dwellings), Land Rear of 108-114 Waterloo Road, Penygroes (6 dwellings), Temple Bar Inn, Carmel (5

dwellings) and Land adjacent to Ty Newydd, Carmel (5 dwellings). A number of smaller residential developments are also proposed within Penygroes and Llandybie. The majority of anticipated development is projected to take place between 2028 and 2032.

Whilst these developments have the potential to contribute to future population growth within the wider area, there is currently no evidence to indicate that they will result in a significant increase in the number of pupils residing within the Ysgol Blaenau catchment area. Furthermore, the pace of development, occupancy rates and household composition of future residents remain uncertain and will be influenced by market conditions and future housing demand.

Consequently, although planned housing growth has been considered as part of the assessment of future demand for school places, the available evidence does not indicate that proposed residential development is likely to materially alter the projected pupil population trends identified elsewhere in this document. The Local Authority therefore considers that planned housing growth does not provide sufficient evidence to suggest a significant increase in future pupil numbers at Ysgol Blaenau.

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

The Local Authority has given careful consideration to its duties under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that disabled pupils are not disadvantaged and that reasonable adjustments are made to enable equitable access to education.

Should the proposal proceed, pupils will transfer to Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes or Ysgol Llandybie, both of which have established Accessibility Plans and are better resourced to support a wide range of learner needs. These schools' benefit from more modern facilities, greater physical space and enhanced staffing capacity, which together provide a more adaptable environment to meet the needs of disabled pupils and support inclusive practice.

Where individual needs are identified, the Local Authority will ensure that all necessary reasonable adjustments are made in a timely manner. This may include adaptations to the physical environment, provision of specialist equipment, or adjustments to teaching approaches and support arrangements. These measures will be implemented in line with Carmarthenshire County Council's established processes for school organisation and inclusion.

In addition, larger school environments provide improved opportunities to deliver inclusive education through access to specialist support services, targeted interventions and differentiated provision. This is expected to enhance accessibility and participation for disabled pupils, both within the classroom and in wider school activities.

Overall, the Local Authority considers that the proposal will maintain and has the potential to improve access for disabled pupils, ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and supporting inclusive, accessible learning environments for all.

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.

The Local Authority has carefully assessed the capacity of alternative provision to ensure that it is sufficient to meet both existing and projected demand, including the need to maintain access to provision of the same language category.

Overall, the Local Authority is satisfied that there will be sufficient school places available between both proposed receiving schools to meet existing and future demand, while maintaining access to Welsh medium and Welsh-language pathways

Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes, which is a Category 3 Welsh medium school, has sufficient capacity to accommodate pupils from Ysgol Blaenau, both in terms of current numbers and projected future demand. This ensures that learners are able to continue their education through the medium of Welsh, supporting continuity of provision and aligning with the Local Authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

Ysgol Llandybie, a T3 transitional school working towards Welsh medium provision, will also be able to accommodate pupils from Ysgol Blaenau. However, it is recognised that, based on current and projected numbers given the fact that Ysgol Llandybie's published capacity does not take into account the reduced classroom space used for the Cylch Meithrin, it is recognised that if all, or most, pupils choose to transfer to Ysgol Llandybie the school could face capacity challenges. The Local Authority would work closely with the receiving school and governing body to ensure that it is able to accommodate all pupils who wish to transfer.

5.4 Other School Re-organisation Proposals

The Council is currently undertaking a separate statutory process in relation to a proposal to amend the Welsh language provision at Ysgol Llandybie. If the proposal is implemented, the school would transition year by year to become a Primarily Welsh (Category 3) school throughout, reaching full implementation by September 2034. The Council has considered whether the Ysgol Llandybie proposal and the proposal relating to Ysgol Blaenau constitute related proposals under the School Organisation Code 2026.

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

6. School(s) likely to be affected by the proposal

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

School Name	**Ysgol Llandybie**	**Ysgol Bro Banw**	**Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman**	**Ysgol Parcyrhun**	**Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes**	**Ysgol Saron**	**Ysgol Gorslas**
School Location	Parc y Llan, Llandybie, Ammanford SA18 3JB	Infants Walters Road Ammanford SA18 2NF Juniors High Street Ammanford SA18 2NS	Lon yr Ysgol Ammanford, SA18 2NS	Villers Road, Ammanford, SA18 3HB	Waterloo Road, Penygroes, SA14 7NT	Saron, Ammanford, SA18 3LH	Church Road, Gorslas, Llanelli, SA14 7NF
Age Range	3-11	4-11	4-11	3-11	4-11	4-11	4-11
School Category (Community [C], Voluntary Aided [VA], Voluntary Controlled [VC])	Community	Community	Community	Community	Community	Community	Community
Language Category	TR (T3) – Transitional (working towards Welsh medium)	3.1 3= Welsh medium 1=English Medium (14 classes)	3 – Welsh Medium	3,2 – Welsh Medium, Dual Language	3 – Welsh Medium	3 – Welsh Medium	3 – Welsh Medium

School Name		Ysgol Llandybie	Ysgol Bro Banw	Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman	Ysgol Parcyrhun	Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes	Ysgol Saron	Ysgol Gorslas
Number of registered Pupils (PLASC 2026)	**Nursery**	33	17	11	8	3	10	10
	Reception – Y.6	176	358	266	177	155	202	197
	Total	**209**	**375*** (ex ALN Unit pupils)	**277**	**185**	**158**	**212**	**207**
Number of pupils previously on the register (including Nursery) (PLASC)	**January 2025**	201	384	288	196	166	220	205
	January 2024	193	389	288	200	167	234	200
	January 2023	209	428	287	201	167	236	178
	February 2022	222	428	292	194	178	243	154
Pupil Projections (excluding Nursery) **(2026)**	**January 2027**	172	402	267	175	150	201	198
	January 2028	172	385	265	174	151	198	206
	January 2029	175	371	271	163	150	203	218

School Name		Ysgol Llandybie	Ysgol Bro Banw	Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman	Ysgol Parcyrhun	Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes	Ysgol Saron	Ysgol Gorslas
	January 2030	175	371	269	161	152	204	219
	January 2031	180	371	268	158	150	204	217
Nursery Capacity 25/26		41	25	16	24	30	33	25
Reception-Y6 Capacity 25/26		209	450	258	195	196	210	210
Total Capacity 25/26		250	475	274	219	226	243	235
Nursery Capacity 26/27		41	25	33	24	30	33	25
Reception-Y6 Capacity 26/27		209	421	258	195	196	210	210
Total Capacity 26/27		250	446	291	219	226	243	235
Budget share per pupil (2025/26)		£5,281	£8,110	£4,566	£6,039	£4,862	£4,783	£5,109
School Budget (2025/26)		£1,029,826	£3,584,546	£1,315,129	£1,207,741	£807,146	£1,052,214	£1,047,311
Budget share per pupil (2026/27)		£5,741	£8,773	£5,139	£6,654	£5,248	£5,239	£5,412
School Budget (2026/27)		£1,128,172	£3,755,019	£1,423,545	£1,237,558	£829,246	£1,110,697	£1,120,374
Estyn Inspection Result		Not in follow up Llandybie C.P School - Estyn	Not in follow up Ysgol Bro Banw - Estyn	Not in follow up Ysgol Gymraeg	Not in follow up Ysgol Gynradd Parcyrhun - Estyn	Not in follow up Penygroes C.P School - Estyn	Not in follow up	Not in follow up Ysgol Gorslas - Estyn

School Name	Ysgol Llandybie	Ysgol Bro Banw	Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman	Ysgol Parcyrhun	Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes	Ysgol Saron	Ysgol Gorslas
			Rhydaman - Estyn			Ysgol Gynradd Saron - Estyn	
Building Condition Category (2024)	C	B	B	B	B	B	A
Building Suitability (2024)	A	A	B	B	B	B	A

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

Should the proposal proceed, the anticipated greatest impact would be upon Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie as the named alternative schools to Ysgol Blaenau. This impact would involve a greater number of pupils attending the school.

However, parental preference means that parents have a right to express a preference to which school they would like their child to attend. Expressing a preference does not guarantee a child a place at their preferred school. Some parents of pupils of Ysgol Blaenau may wish to express a preference for an alternative school to Ysgol Llandybie. Therefore, it is possible that schools within proximity of Ysgol Blaenau may also be affected e.g. Ysgol Bro Banw, Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman, Ysgol Parcyrhun, or Ysgol Saron and even further afield dependent upon parents/pupils' unique circumstances. Though, the anticipated impact of increased pupil numbers at the schools most likely to be affected is not considered negative as all the surrounding schools to which it might reasonably be considered that pupils may wish to transfer have surplus places.

While Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie have been identified as the preferred receiving school within this proposal, 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 such as Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman, Ysgol Saron, Ysgol Parcyrhun and Ysgol Bro Banw. 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.

6.2 Impact of the proposal on Staff

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.

The Local Authority understands 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.

Any changes at the alternative school would be managed though the 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 Blaenau

The principal impact on the community of Blaenau is expected to relate to the loss of the school's role as a local community asset. Although Ysgol Blaenau is primarily an educational establishment, it contributes to the identity and social fabric of the community and is valued by many residents as an important local facility. Its closure would result in the loss of a school presence within the village and may reduce opportunities for community interaction and engagement.

The Local Authority acknowledges that schools often play an important role in supporting community cohesion, local identity and the sustainability of rural and semi-rural communities. The loss of a local school may therefore be viewed by some residents as a reduction in the social infrastructure of the area and could impact upon the attractiveness of the community for some families. The Community Impact Assessment also recognises that the loss of a school presence within the village may have a limited adverse effect on perceptions of the vitality and long term sustainability of the local community.

The school currently serves a relatively small number of pupils from within its catchment area. PLASC 2026 data shows that of the 45 pupils residing within the Ysgol Blaenau catchment area, only 4 currently attend Ysgol Blaenau, whilst 41 attend other schools. This demonstrates that most families living within the catchment area already choose to access education outside the village. The Local Authority considers that this is an important factor when assessing the likely impact of the proposal on the wider community.

The proposal would result in pupils transferring to alternative schools within the local area, most notably Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie, both of which are located in relatively close proximity to Blaenau. Access to Welsh medium education would continue to be available through Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and through alternative Welsh medium schools in the wider area. As a result, educational provision would remain accessible to local families and opportunities to participate in educational, sporting and community activities would continue within neighbouring communities.

The Local Authority has also considered the wider demographic context of the area. Analysis of pupil projections, birth data and housing development information indicates limited evidence of significant future growth within the Ysgol Blaenau catchment area. While social housing developments are proposed within neighbouring catchment areas, there are currently no identified housing developments within the Ysgol Blaenau catchment itself. Furthermore, the estimated pupil yield arising from neighbouring developments is relatively modest and is not expected to significantly

alter future demand for school places. Whilst it is recognised that the closure of the school could influence the attractiveness of the area for some families with young children, the available evidence does not suggest that the proposal would result in a significant reduction in population levels or the loss of substantial numbers of families from the community.

It is recognised that closure of the school may result in a temporary period during which the building becomes vacant. This may give rise to concerns regarding the future use of the site and the potential impact on the local environment. Should the proposal proceed, the Local Authority would consider the future of the site in accordance with its Surplus School Disposal Policy, including exploring opportunities for community, educational, voluntary sector or commercial use where appropriate. Community organisations and local stakeholders would be provided with an opportunity to express an interest in the future use of the building. The Community Impact Assessment also concludes that there is no evidence to indicate that the proposal would have a significant detrimental impact on the wider local economy, although some indirect localised effects associated with the loss of the school cannot be entirely discounted.

The Community Impact Assessment identifies the loss of a local educational facility and community asset as the most significant community impact arising from the proposal. While these impacts are acknowledged, they must be considered alongside the long term challenges facing the school, including declining pupil numbers, high levels of surplus capacity, financial sustainability pressures and the need to ensure access to high-quality educational provision for current and future learners.

Overall, the Local Authority recognises that the proposal would have social, cultural and emotional impacts on the Blaenau community and that the loss of the school would be significant for some residents. The Authority further recognises that the proposal may have a limited impact on the perceived attractiveness and vitality of the community. However, having considered the findings of the Community Impact Assessment, including the availability of suitable alternative Welsh medium provision, the continued availability of community opportunities in neighbouring communities, and the absence of evidence of a significant adverse impact on the wider local economy or local population levels, the Authority considers that the proposal represents the most sustainable long term option for securing high-quality educational provision for learners.

The Community Impact Assessment is included within Appendix A and will be reviewed and updated throughout the consultation and statutory process to reflect feedback received from stakeholders.

7. Impact on Quality and standards in education

The following considers the impact on quality and standards in education should pupils transfer to Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes or Ysgol Llandybie, however it is acknowledged that some pupils could choose to transfer to alternative schools.

The Local Authority's view is that, were this proposal to proceed, Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes or Ysgol Llandybie would provide education for pupils which is of at least equivalent quality or better as that provided at Ysgol Blaenau, so it is not anticipated that implementation of this proposal would have any negative impact on standards and progress overall.

Current school priorities / Estyn recommendations:

Ysgol Blaenau was last inspected by Estyn in January 2024 and is not in a follow up category.
Estyn Recommendations:

R1 Agree and implement a recovery plan to respond purposefully to the deficit in the school's financial budget
R2 Expand opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum
R3 Strengthen pupils' oracy skills
R4 Improve provision to support pupils to develop their independent learning skills

Estyn Findings for Receiving Schools

Estyn describes Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes as an "extremely friendly and caring community" with an "inclusive nature and highly caring ethos". Estyn also notes that staff establish excellent working relationships with pupils and respond well to individual needs.

Estyn describes Ysgol Llandybie as an "inclusive and welcoming community" and notes that the school ensures equal opportunities for all pupils. The report highlights caring relationships between staff and pupils and effective support for wellbeing.

7.1 Likely impact on teaching and learning

Pupils would be transferred from Ysgol Blaenau to Ysgol Llandybie or Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes, both of which have significantly larger cohorts of pupils. Within these settings, nearly all pupils would be taught in year-group classes, which would be likely to provide improved access to a wider range of resources, facilities, and teaching expertise. This would support more effective delivery of the Curriculum for Wales.

There is likely to be a positive impact on pupils' standards and skills development. Teaching pupils in single year-group classes or smaller range of year groups is

expected to strengthen collaborative learning opportunities, support clearer progression, and further drive improvements in progress and attainment.

Pupils would also be likely to benefit from increased access to a wider range of extra-curricular opportunities. Larger pupil numbers would enable greater participation in activities such as team sports, choir, and competitive events, contributing positively to pupils' wellbeing, confidence, and personal development.

It is noted in the Ysgol Llandybie inspection report that, as pupils progress through the school, most make sound progress, including those with additional learning needs. Pupils build effectively on prior learning and apply newly acquired knowledge successfully to new experiences and contexts.

At Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes, nearly all pupils make very sound progress and develop independence and maturity in their learning. Pupils show strong levels of engagement and sustain concentration over extended periods. Nearly all pupils from non-Welsh-speaking homes develop good Welsh communication skills, and pupils with additional learning needs make good progress against their targets.

Ysgol Llandybie provides bilingual education, with Welsh as the principal language of learning, teaching and the school's day-to-day life and work. Pupils would continue to benefit from an immersive Welsh-language environment that promotes the development of Welsh language skills, bilingualism and confidence in using Welsh across a range of educational and social contexts.

Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes is a Welsh-medium school, where Welsh is the official language of learning and teaching. This linguistic provision aligns closely with that of Ysgol Blaenau. Welsh is the sole language of learning and teaching in the Foundation Learning. In Key Stage 2 (ages 7-11), English is introduced alongside Welsh, with pupils educated bilingually. Welsh remains the principal language of the school's life and work, ensuring continuity of linguistic immersion, with English introduced progressively to support pupils' developing bilingualism.

The Local Authority's view, supported by recent Estyn inspection findings for both receiving schools, is that Ysgol Llandybie and Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes would provide education of at least an equivalent, and in many respects enhanced, quality compared with that currently available at Ysgol Blaenau. Therefore, it is not anticipated that implementation of this proposal, if approved, would have a negative impact on pupils' standards or progress overall.

Impact on delivery of the Curriculum for Wales

The Local Authority considers that Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie are better placed to deliver the full Curriculum for Wales through broader staffing structures, increased curriculum leadership capacity, wider specialist expertise and greater opportunities for progression across the Areas of Learning and Experience. Larger pupil cohorts also provide increased opportunities for collaborative learning and enrichment activities that support delivery of the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales.

7.2 Likely impact on care, support and guidance

Ysgol Blaenau currently benefits from a close-knit school community and strong relationships between pupils and staff. Whilst some pupils may initially miss aspects of this environment, the transition arrangements will seek to support pupils throughout the process.

The proposal may have a short-term impact on few pupils' wellbeing as they adjust to a new school environment. However, with appropriate transition arrangements and pastoral support, any effects are expected to be temporary.

In the longer term, pupils are likely to benefit from being part of a larger school community. A larger pupil population would provide increased opportunities to develop friendships, participate in group activities and interact with a wider range of peers of a similar age and stage of development.

Pupils transferring to either Ysgol Llandybie or Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes would also benefit from access to larger staff teams and a greater number of adults available to support their learning, wellbeing and personal development. The larger staffing structures within both schools provide greater capacity to support pupils' academic progress, wellbeing and additional learning needs, as well as access to a broader range of expertise and specialist support where required.

Inspection evidence indicates that both schools provide safe, supportive and inclusive learning environments. At Ysgol Llandybie, pupils report that they feel safe in school, behave exceptionally well and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They work collaboratively, show resilience when faced with challenges and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.

Similarly, at Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes, pupils demonstrate excellent standards of wellbeing and highly positive attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic learners who work effectively with their peers, show respect for others and display strong independent learning skills. A culture of care, courtesy and mutual respect contributes significantly to the calm and supportive ethos of the school.

Overall, whilst the proposal would require pupils to adapt to a new setting, both Ysgol Llandybie and Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes provide safe, supportive and inclusive learning environments. Pupils would benefit from access to larger peer groups, wider social opportunities and larger staff teams with greater capacity to support learning and wellbeing. Consequently, it is reasonable to conclude that the proposal is likely to have a positive impact on pupils' wellbeing and learner experience in the medium to long term.

7.3 Likely impact on leading and improving

The proposal is likely to have a positive impact on leadership capacity and school improvement. Ysgol Blaenau currently operates within a very small staffing structure comprising two teachers, one of whom fulfils the roles of headteacher and Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator, supported by one teaching assistant. The headteacher also has a significant teaching commitment, teaching for four days each week. Whilst the school continues to meet its responsibilities appropriately, this structure limits the capacity available for strategic leadership, self-evaluation, curriculum development, improvement planning and professional learning.

If approved, pupils would transfer to schools with established and permanent leadership structures, providing greater capacity to lead and sustain improvement. Both Ysgol Llandybie and Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes are led by experienced headteachers, supported by leadership teams and governing bodies that provide effective strategic direction and oversight.

Estyn reports that leadership at both schools promotes high expectations, clear strategic direction and a strong culture of continuous improvement. Robust self-evaluation and monitoring arrangements are used to identify priorities and inform improvement planning, whilst effective professional learning and collaborative working support ongoing improvements in teaching, learning and pupil outcomes.

The larger staffing structures within both schools provide greater organisational resilience and leadership capacity than is available within a very small school. Leadership responsibilities can be distributed more effectively, reducing reliance on a small number of individuals and providing greater capacity to support Curriculum for Wales implementation, ALN reform, professional learning and other national priorities.

The proposal is not expected to have a negative impact on the delivery of national or local improvement priorities. Instead, it is likely to strengthen capacity for school improvement through enhanced leadership, broader professional expertise and increased opportunities for staff collaboration and development.

In addition, the proposal would contribute to increased pupil numbers at Ysgol Llandybie and Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes, supporting the efficient use of resources and helping to maintain the long term sustainability of both schools.

Overall, the proposal is likely to have a positive impact on leadership and improvement by increasing leadership capacity, strengthening self-evaluation and improvement planning processes, and enhancing the schools' ability to deliver sustainable school improvement and improved outcomes for learners.

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

The proposal is not expected to have a negative impact on vulnerable groups of learners, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN). Whilst Ysgol Blaenau currently supports a number of learners with identified additional needs, both Ysgol Llandybie and Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes have well-established systems for identifying, supporting and monitoring pupils across a broad range of learning, wellbeing and developmental needs.

Both receiving schools benefit from larger staffing structures, including wider teaching, support and wellbeing teams. This increased capacity provides greater flexibility to deliver targeted interventions, personalised support programmes and responsive wellbeing provision, helping to ensure that learners' individual needs are identified and supported effectively.

The broader leadership capacity and range of professional expertise available within the receiving schools are likely to strengthen arrangements for supporting vulnerable learners. This includes coordinating and reviewing Individual Development Plans (IDPs), monitoring pupil progress and wellbeing, and working collaboratively with families and external agencies. Learners would continue to have access to local authority support services and specialist professionals where required.

Should the proposal proceed, all relevant information relating to pupils' learning, wellbeing and additional learning needs would transfer to the receiving schools. Existing support arrangements, IDPs and specialist recommendations would be maintained to ensure continuity of provision and minimise disruption to individual learners.

Comprehensive transition planning would be undertaken to support vulnerable pupils and their families. This would include detailed information-sharing between schools, engagement with parents and carers, involvement of relevant professionals and tailored transition arrangements where appropriate. Particular consideration would be given to pupils with ALN and those requiring enhanced wellbeing support to ensure a smooth and successful transition.

The proposal would provide learners with access to educational, wellbeing and support services that are at least equivalent to those currently available and, in several respects, enhanced through increased staffing capacity, broader expertise and access to a wider range of resources, intervention programmes and learning opportunities.

Inspection evidence indicates that both Ysgol Llandybie and Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes provide inclusive learning environments where pupils' wellbeing is promoted effectively and where appropriate support is available to meet a diverse range of needs. The schools have established arrangements to ensure that learners are supported to participate fully in school life and make appropriate progress from their starting points.

Overall, the proposal is unlikely to have an adverse impact on vulnerable learners. Through effective transition arrangements, inclusive practice and enhanced capacity within the receiving schools, vulnerable pupils are expected to continue receiving appropriate support and guidance. The proposal may also provide opportunities for improved access to specialist expertise, wider peer networks and a broader range of educational and wellbeing support services.

According to PLASC 2026, 28.6% (8) of pupils attending Ysgol Blaenau were eligible for Free School Meals (eFSM). In addition, 3.6% (1) of pupils on roll had an Additional Learning Need (ALN). The Local Authority recognises that some learners may require additional support during the transition period, and enhanced pastoral and targeted support will be provided to ensure pupils' wellbeing and successful integration into their new school environment.

There were 18 (11.4%) pupils attending Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes eligible for Free School Meals (eFSM). In addition, 3 (1.9%) pupils on roll at PLASC 2026 had Additional Learning Needs (ALN).

There were 38 (18.2%) pupils attending Ysgol Llandybie eligible for Free School Meals (eFSM). In addition, 4 (1.9%) pupils on roll at PLASC 2026 had Additional Learning Needs (ALN).

(The introduction of Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM) has reduced the perceived need for some eligible families to apply for benefit-related Free School Meals (eFSM). As all primary-aged pupils are now entitled to receive a free school meal regardless of household income, some parents and carers may not recognise the additional benefits associated with eFSM registration, such as eligibility for the School Essentials Grant and the allocation of deprivation-related funding to schools. Consequently, eFSM registration figures may not fully reflect the number of pupils who meet the underlying eligibility criteria.)

Individual transition plans will be developed for pupils with Additional Learning Needs and other vulnerable learners. Existing support arrangements and Individual Development Plans (IDPs) will transfer with pupils and receiving schools will work closely with families to ensure continuity of support. Additional visits and tailored transition arrangements will be provided where required.

7.5 Impact of the proposal on educational attainment among children from economically deprived backgrounds

The Local Authority has considered the potential impact of the proposal on learners from economically deprived backgrounds. PLASC 2026 data shows that 28.6% (8 of 28) pupils attending Ysgol Blaenau are eligible for Free School Meals (eFSM), indicating that a proportion of learners may experience socio-economic disadvantage. Evidence from the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2025 demonstrates that the socio-economic profiles of the catchment areas served by Ysgol Blaenau, Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie are broadly comparable, with low to moderate levels of deprivation overall.

The proposal is not expected to have a negative impact on educational attainment for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. Pupils transferring to either receiving school would benefit from larger peer groups, broader curriculum opportunities, enhanced extracurricular provision, greater staffing capacity and access to a wider range of support services. These factors have the potential to support improved educational outcomes and learner wellbeing.

While the Authority recognises that school transition can present challenges for some learners, particularly those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented. These will include tailored transition arrangements, wellbeing support and continued access to free home-to-school transport for eligible learners in accordance with the Council's transport policy.

Having considered pupil-level and area-based deprivation indicators, the Local Authority does not consider that the proposal would result in a disproportionate adverse impact on the educational attainment of pupils from economically deprived backgrounds. The receiving schools are considered well placed to continue supporting vulnerable learners and to provide access to a broad range of educational opportunities.

7.6 Equality issues, 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, whilst the proposal would affect all pupils, staff and families associated with Ysgol Blaenau, no unlawful discrimination or disproportionate adverse impact has been identified in relation to any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

The proposal would directly affect primary-aged pupils through a change of school and may affect staff through potential changes to employment arrangements. However, mitigation measures including comprehensive transition planning, pastoral support, stakeholder engagement and adherence to the Council's employment policies would be implemented.

Particular consideration has been given to pupils with disabilities and Additional Learning Needs (ALN). Both Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie have accessibility plans in place and are considered capable of meeting learners' needs through appropriate support, reasonable adjustments and access to specialist services. The assessment concludes that the impact for many learners with ALN could be positive due to access to larger staffing teams and wider support networks.

The assessment also considered impacts relating to race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, and marriage and civil

partnership. No disproportionate adverse impacts were identified for these protected characteristics. The receiving schools are recognised as inclusive environments and would continue to deliver education and support services in accordance with equality legislation and existing school policies.

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 proposal is likely to have a positive impact on the ability of the receiving schools to meet their statutory responsibilities under the Curriculum for Wales Framework. Both Ysgol Llandybie and Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes benefit from established and experienced headteachers who are supported by wider leadership teams. In contrast, leadership responsibilities at Ysgol Blaenau are undertaken within a much smaller staffing structure, comprising two teachers, one of whom fulfils the roles of both headteacher and Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo). Whilst the school has continued to meet its responsibilities effectively, the limited staffing structure provides less capacity for distributed leadership, curriculum development, professional collaboration and succession planning than is available within larger schools.

The larger size and staffing structures of both Ysgol Llandybie and Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes provide greater capacity for curriculum leadership, planning, professional learning and quality assurance. This enables staff to work collaboratively in designing, implementing and evaluating the curriculum, ensuring that learning experiences meet the needs of pupils and reflect the principles and expectations of the Curriculum for Wales.

Estyn inspection findings indicate that Ysgol Llandybie is making sound progress in implementing a curriculum that increasingly reflects the vision and aspirations of the Curriculum for Wales. Pupils contribute to their learning through enquiry-based approaches and benefit from a broad range of enriching experiences, including educational visits, visitors and opportunities to engage with external experts. Teaching and learning are planned effectively to support progression and the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills across the curriculum.

Similarly, Estyn reports that Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes provides a balanced, rich and engaging curriculum that reflects its local context and meets the needs of most pupils effectively. Staff work collaboratively to plan worthwhile learning experiences and ensure consistency in curriculum delivery. Teaching is carefully planned to build progressively on pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills, supporting strong progress and the development of confident, independent learners.

The larger staff teams within both schools also provide access to a broader range of expertise and experience, supporting effective curriculum design and delivery across the Areas of Learning and Experience. This increased capacity strengthens curriculum development, supports professional collaboration and contributes to leadership resilience, helping to ensure continuity and sustainability in meeting statutory requirements.

Both schools have established arrangements to support learner progression and transition between stages of education, reflecting the principles of the 3-16 continuum that underpin the Curriculum for Wales.

Overall, the evidence suggests that both Ysgol Llandybie and Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes are well placed to fulfil their legal responsibilities under the Curriculum for Wales Framework. Their established leadership structures, larger staff teams and effective approaches to curriculum design and delivery support high-quality learning experiences and learner progression. Consequently, the proposal is likely to have a positive impact on the capacity of the headteacher and governing body to meet their statutory duties and to continue providing a broad, balanced and progressive curriculum in line with the expectations of the Curriculum for Wales.

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 carried 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 Llandybie and Ysgol Penygroes both offer Welsh medium provision. 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 a Category 3 Welsh medium school, or Welsh medium pathways within a T3* transitional school working towards Welsh medium provision, 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 Llandybie and Ysgol Penygroes both offer Welsh medium provision. 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 Blaenau will continue to have the opportunity to access Welsh medium provision through transfer to Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes, which is a Category 3 Welsh medium school. In addition, pupils may transfer to a T3* transitional school working towards Welsh medium provision. 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.

In summary, while Welsh medium provision at Ysgol Blaenau 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.

* Furthermore, the Council is currently undertaking a separate statutory process in relation to a proposal to amend the Welsh language provision at Ysgol Llandybie. If the proposal is implemented, the school would transition year by year to become a Primarily Welsh (Category 3) school throughout, reaching full implementation by September 2034.

9. Finance

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

9.1 The recurrent costs of proposals over a period of at least 3 years and whether the necessary recurrent 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 Gymraeg Penygroes or Ysgol Llandybie.

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.

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.

7. 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	Implementation of the proposal is not expected to increase home-to-school transport costs (see further information in 11.6)			

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	£139,134	£143,308	£147,607	£430,049

* 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 Blaenau and transfer pupils to Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes or Ysgol Llandybie 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

Should the proposal proceed, it is not envisaged that there will be capital costs at this stage. 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.

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?

Revenue savings which accrue from the school closure will normally be redistributed back into the overall schools' budget but can also be 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, 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 full year revenue savings from the closure of Ysgol Blaenau is as follows:

Supplement	**Amount**
Small School Supplement	£10,000
Surplus Places Supplement	£20,000
Federation Supplement	£0
Non-Domestic Rates	£2,184
Total	**£32,184**

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 Blaenau based on pupil numbers for 26/27 financial year is as follows:

Funding	
Per Pupil Funding for 28 pupils	£138,620
Additional Learning Needs Funding (Deprivation, Children Looked After and Individual Development Plans)	£11,266
Total	**£149,886**

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 Blaenau is discontinued, 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 2023 Building Condition Survey for Ysgol Blaenau forecasted a required capitalised maintenance expenditure of £310,802 over a five year period. This would lead to a saving to the Council if the school closes.

The Catering Service provides pupils with a breakfast club £6,718 and lunch service £27,950 at a total annual cost to the LA of £34,668. Whilst this is offset by the grant from Welsh Government of £9,885 to provide meals, there is a net saving to the service, and thus the Council of £24,783 The Welsh Government grant of £9,885 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 the school, 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 tables below demonstrate the historical, present and predicted financial position of the school.

Year end Balance	**£**
2021/22	£126,662 deficit
2022/23	£152,696 deficit
2023/24	£190,479 deficit
2024/25	£241,335 deficit
2025/26	£287,857 deficit

2026/27

School funding amount	£182,070
Pupil numbers (funding based on 2026 January PLASC)	28
Funding per pupil	£6,503
Primary school average mainstream funding per pupil	£5,969
Forecast deficit budget March 2027 as at June 2026	£362,566 deficit

The information above demonstrates that the school has been in a deficit budget since 2021/22. The deficit has increased year on year where the final deficit balance at year end for 2025/26 was £287,857. The current budget projections forecast a deficit of £362,566 for the year end 2026/27. 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 Gymraeg Penygroes currently has a deficit budget of £53,260 for year end 2025/26 and has a projected deficit budget of £19,029 for the year end 2026/27. This would be enhanced with additional pupil number funding from pupils transferring.

Ysgol Llandybie currently has a surplus budget of £135,103 for year end 2025/26 and has a projected surplus budget of £107,495 for the year end 2026/27. This would be enhanced with additional pupil number funding from pupils transferring.

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 discontinue Ysgol Blaenau, 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 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 Blaenau, Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie are owned by Carmarthenshire County Council. Should proposals proceed Ysgol Blaenau 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 discontinue Ysgol Blaenau.

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

The quality of accommodation and facilities at Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes is at least comparable to that at Ysgol Blaenau, with both schools assessed as having sound buildings (Grade B) and satisfactory suitability (Grade B).

Ysgol Llandybie, while currently assessed as requiring improvement in building condition (Grade C), benefits from a higher suitability rating (Grade A), providing strong facilities for teaching, learning, and pupil wellbeing.

Both Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie are larger schools with well-developed facilities to support curriculum delivery, as well as outdoor learning and play opportunities. Together, they offer provision that is at least comparable to, and in some respects enhances, that available at Ysgol Blaenau. Details of the condition and suitability ratings for all three schools are set out in the table below.

	Ysgol Blaenau	Ysgol Llandybie	Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes
Building Condition	Grade B. Sound, operationally safe and exhibiting minor deterioration.	Grade C. Operational but major repair or replacement needed in short to medium term.	Grade B. Sound,operationally safe and exhibiting minor deterioration.
Building Suitability	Grade B. Satisfactory, performing as intended, but does not effectively support the delivery of the curriculum in some areas.	Grade A. Good facilities for teaching, learning and wellbeing in the school.	Grade B. Satisfactory, performing as intended, but does not effectively support the delivery of the curriculum in some areas.

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

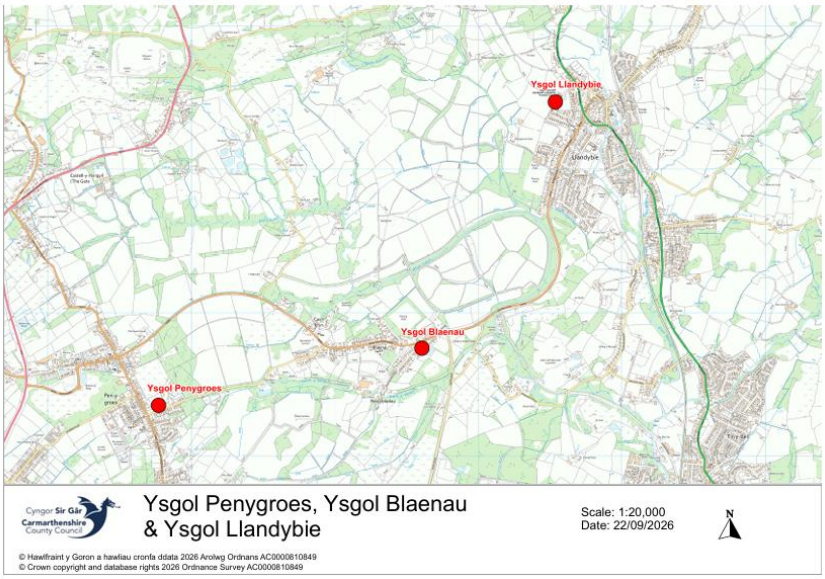
Should the proposal proceed, the Local Authority would work closely with the receiving school and its governing body to ensure that it is able to accommodate all pupils who wish to transfer.

11. Travel and Transport

PLASC 2026 data shows that Ysgol Blaenau has 28 pupils on roll. Information provided by the school indicates that approximately 10% of learners currently walk to school, approximately 7% travel by a combination of car and walking, and approximately 83% travel to school by private car.

The proposal is to discontinue Ysgol Blaenau and transfer pupils to Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes or Ysgol Llandybie. Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes is located approximately 1.8 miles from Ysgol Blaenau, whilst Ysgol Llandybie is located approximately 1.7 miles away. Typical journey times by vehicle are between 5 and 10 minutes, depending on traffic conditions.

The following plan shows the location of all schools.



11.1 Changes to Learner Travel Arrangements and Accessibility of Provision

If the proposal is implemented, access to Welsh medium education would continue through Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and through Welsh language pathways available within Ysgol Llandybie. However, travel arrangements for some learners would change and there may be a reduction in walking and 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 assessment indicates that:

- Learners transferring to Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes or Ysgol Llandybie may experience increased travel distances compared to current arrangements.
- A small number of pupils who currently walk to Ysgol Blaenau may no longer be able to walk to school.
- Eligible pupils will receive free home to school transport in accordance with the Council's transport policy.
- Transport arrangements for some pupils may vary depending on parental preference and the school ultimately selected.

The Authority recognises that final travel arrangements will be influenced by parental preference and admissions 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 initial assessment of active travel routes between Blaenau and the proposed receiving schools has been undertaken.

Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes is connected to Blaenau primarily via the B4556 and Caerbryn Road. Whilst a walking route exists, sections of the route do not benefit from continuous footway provision, which may limit suitability for younger pupils and families.

Ysgol Llandybie is connected to Blaenau via the B4556, Blaenau Road and Heol Gwilym/A483. Public footways are available along sections of the route. However, the overall suitability of the route is influenced by traffic volumes, road crossings, visibility and the continuity of pedestrian infrastructure.

The assessment identified a number of constraints including:

- Sections where footway provision is limited or discontinuous.
- Road crossing requirements.
- Constraints affecting younger pupils and less confident cyclists.
- Infrastructure limitations that may reduce accessibility for some users.

Whilst active travel opportunities exist for some families, these routes do not currently provide a continuous, fully inclusive active travel connection for the wider pupil population. In this context, walking, wheeling and cycling may not be practical or reasonable options for all learners.

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

11.3 Impact on Journeys and Journey Times

For many learners, journey times are expected to remain relatively short given the close proximity of both alternative schools to Ysgol Blaenau.

Nevertheless, implementation of the proposal would result in changes to travel arrangements for some pupils and may lead to:

- Increased reliance on private car travel or school transport.
- Reduced opportunities for independent travel to school.
- Changes to established daily routines.

Although most pupils are not expected to experience significant difficulties, some may require additional travel time and adjustment to new travel arrangements.

The Authority recognises that changes to daily travel routines can influence attendance, punctuality and participation in school life. Any impacts are expected to be limited due to the relatively short distances involved. Appropriate transition arrangements and transport provision will be put in place to minimise disruption.

The Authority and receiving schools will work closely with families throughout the transition period and will monitor attendance and punctuality following implementation. Where transport related issues arise, appropriate support and intervention will be provided.

11.4 Changes in Travel Arrangements for Learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

According to PLASC 2026 data, approximately 3.6% of pupils attending Ysgol Blaenau have an identified Additional Learning Need (ALN).

The Authority recognises that changes in travel arrangements and transition to a new school environment may have a greater impact on some learners with ALN. Changes to established routines, unfamiliar transport arrangements and adjustment to a larger school environment may lead to increased anxiety or require additional support during the transition period.

The needs of learners with ALN will be carefully considered throughout implementation. Individual assessments of transport requirements will be undertaken where necessary and specialist transport provision will be provided where appropriate. A structured transition programme will be implemented to support learners prior to transfer. This will include opportunities to visit receiving schools, become familiar with transport arrangements and develop confidence within the new school environment.

The receiving schools 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 transition, 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 accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 and the Council's equality duties.

The assessment of travel arrangements indicates that walking and cycling routes may not be fully accessible for all learners and may present challenges 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 proposal is not expected to adversely affect access to education, and reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary to ensure that all learners can continue to access suitable educational provision.

11.6 Transport Costs and Wider Travel Implications

Implementation of the proposal is not expected to increase home-to-school transport costs. There are currently no learners receiving school transport to Blaenau and there would appear to be no future transport cost implications, as the pupils from within the school's catchment area currently attending the school live within 2 miles of their new designated catchment school.

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, whilst parents and carers may be required to travel to alternative schools for meetings, school events and other activities.

Given the relatively short distance between Ysgol Blaenau and the proposed receiving schools, these impacts are not anticipated to be significant for the majority of users. The Authority recognises that implementation of the proposal would result in changes to travel arrangements for some learners. Whilst Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie are located relatively close to Ysgol Blaenau, route constraints mean that active travel is unlikely to be a realistic option for all learners. Increased reliance on private car use and home-to-school transport is therefore anticipated.

Overall, the Authority considers that any impacts on attendance, wellbeing and engagement can be appropriately managed through transition planning, transport provision and ongoing monitoring. Particular consideration will be given to younger learners, learners with ALN and those whose individual circumstances indicate that additional support may be required during the transition period.

12. Admission Arrangements

Should the proposal proceed and be approved, admission to Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes/Ysgol Llandybie or any other alternative Carmarthenshire maintained school would be administered by Carmarthenshire County Council in accordance with the Council's admissions Policy.

The School Admissions Unit,
Carmarthenshire Local Authority,
Department for Education and Children,
Building 3,
Spilman Street,

Carmarthen,
SA31 1LE
Tel No: 01267 246449

E-mail: 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 Gymraeg Penygroes/Ysgol Llandybie, 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

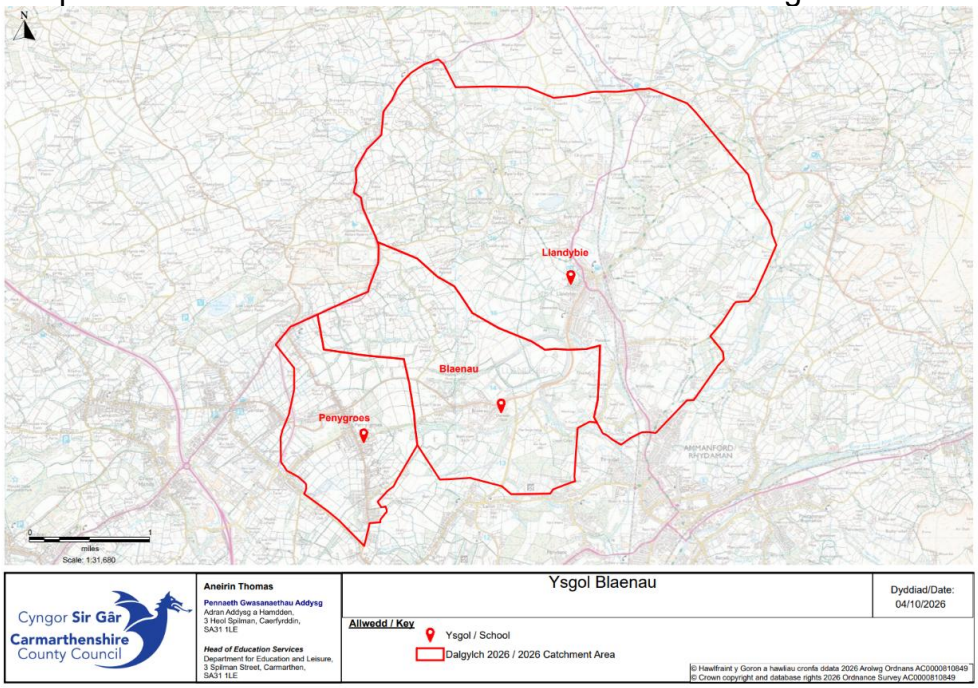
At the age of 11, children transition to secondary school. An application must be submitted for the preferred secondary school, as there is no automatic transfer from primary to secondary school. During the autumn term of the final year of primary school, families will receive notification containing 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

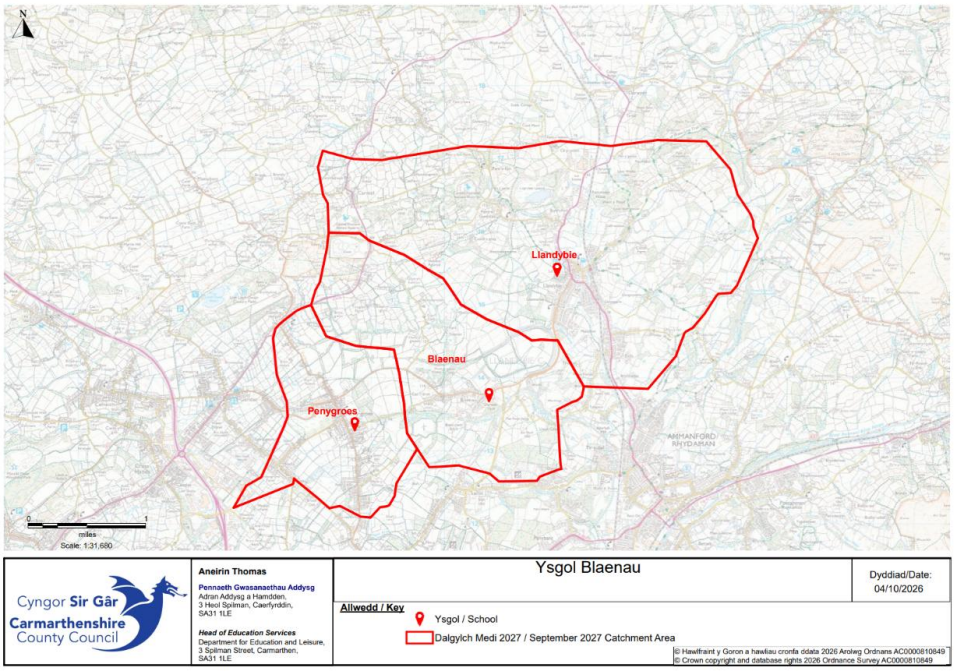
Current Catchment Area

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



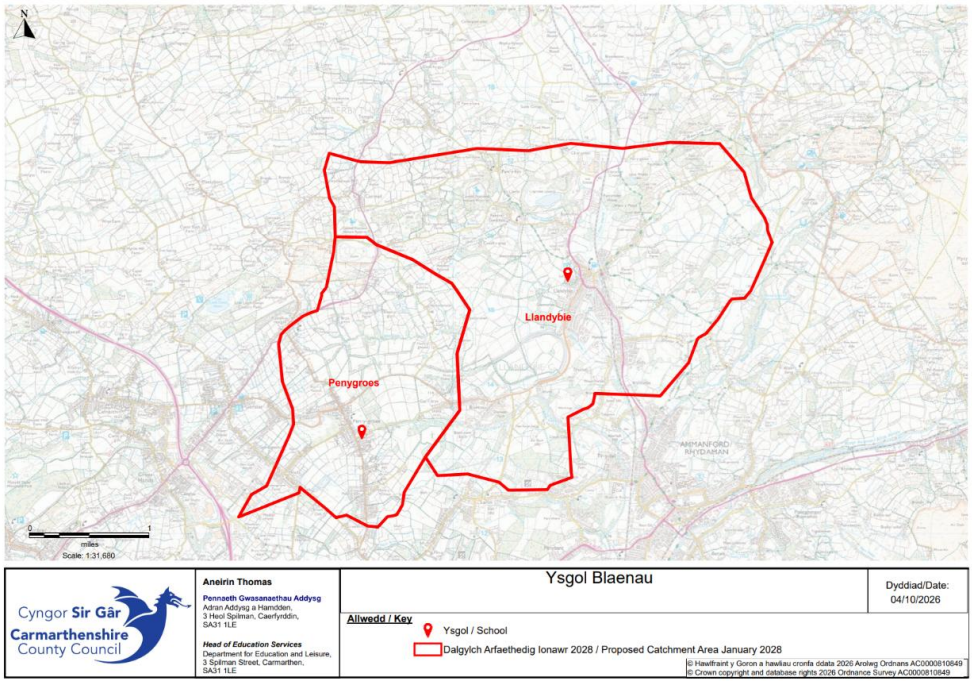
Catchment Area (following 2027 Changes)

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



Proposed Catchment Area

If the proposal is approved, the Ysgol Blaenau catchment area will be re-designated between the catchment areas of Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie as illustrated below.



12.3 Transition Arrangements

Should the proposal be implemented, the Local Authority will work closely with Ysgol Blaenau, Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie 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 (and where possible prospective parents), carers and guardians of learners currently attending schools which are the subject of the proposals and any other school the proposer considers is 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 that secondary school;
- staff members of schools which are the subject of the proposals and any other school the proposer considers is likely to be affected by the proposals;
- the maintaining or proposed maintaining authority for schools which are the subject of the proposals and any other school the proposer considers is likely to be affected by the proposals (including relevant transport and highways teams);
- any other local authority (including those in England, where appropriate) the proposer considers is likely to be affected by the proposals, including in the case of dedicated ALP any authority placing or likely to place learners with ALN in the school which is subject to the proposals;

- the Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authority for the area in which any school which is the subject of the proposals and any other schools the proposer considers are likely to be affected by the proposals are located;
- any other appropriate religious body for any school which is the subject of the proposals and any other school the proposer considers is likely to be affected by the proposals;
- the governing body of any school which is the subject of the proposals and any other school the proposer considers is likely to be affected by the proposals;
- the Welsh Ministers;
- Members of the Senedd (MS) and Members of Parliament (MPs) representing the area served by/intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- Estyn;
- teaching and staff trade unions representing teachers and other staff at any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- the relevant school improvement services;
- the Police and Crime Commissioner for the area served by/intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- any community or town council for the area served by or intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- in the case of proposals affecting nursery provision, the Children and Young People's Partnership and/or the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships where present;
- the local authority family information service, any independent or voluntary providers who are likely to be affected and the national umbrella organisations supporting them, Mudiad Meithrin, NDNA Cymru, Clybiau Plant Cymru, Early Years Wales, PACEY Cymru and Play Wales;
- in the case of proposals affecting ALP, any relevant health or third sector bodies that the proposer considers have an interest;
- in the case of proposals affecting secondary provision, any further education institutions serving the area of the school which is the subject of the proposals;
- in the case or proposals affecting school sixth forms, Medr; and
- in the case of proposals affecting Welsh language provision, the Welsh Language Commissioner and 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?

Stage 1. Consultation Period

The consultation period for the proposals starts on 10th November 2026 and concludes on 22nd December 2026.

You can submit your views in favour of or against a proposal or to provide alternative suggestions. 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 22nd 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, Castle Hill, SA31 1JP
- Or completing a paper copy response form (Appendix D) and returning to Mr Owain Lloyd, Director of Education and Leisure, County Hall, Castle Hill, SA31 1JP or MEPConsultations@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

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

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 D.

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.

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.

Projected Timetable for Statutory Procedures

Should Carmarthenshire County Council's Cabinet decide to proceed to discontinue Ysgol Blaenau and accommodate pupils in Ysgol Llandybie an indicative statutory process timeline is shown below:

Description	Duration
Consultation Issue of this consultation document to identified and other interested parties.	At least 42 days (including at least 20 school days) **10th November 2026 to 22nd 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 Blaenau is discontinued.	**31st December 2027**

Proposal to discontinue Ysgol Blaenau

Appendices

Must be read in conjunction with the consultation document



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 Blaenau. 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 can be found in Appendix C.

All impact assessments included within the appendices must be read in conjunction with the consultation document.

Should the proposal proceed, all assessments will be reviewed and updated at key points as necessary.

Appendix A - Community Impact Assessment

An initial community impact assessment has been undertaken. This assessment will be reviewed and updated at key points should the proposal proceed.

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

Of the 28 pupils on roll at PLASC 2026, 4 pupils attended the school from within the Ysgol Blaenau catchment area whilst the remaining 24 pupils attended the school from outside the Ysgol Blaenau catchment area. In addition, 41 pupils from within the Ysgol Blaenau catchment area attended other schools.

• Information on the proportion of pupils from outside the catchment area that attend the school

Of the 28 pupils on roll at PLASC 2026, 24 pupils attend the school from outside the Ysgol Blaenau catchment area.

• Information about any other facilities the school accommodates e.g. youth club/play group and information about any other services the school provides e.g. after school clubs, community library

Facility / Service	**Ysgol Blaenau**
Breakfast Club	Yes (daily)
After School Club	Yes - an after school club usually operates on Wednesday and Thursdays, depending on pupil numbers.
Cylch Meithrin	No
Other Facilities Provided	'Bwyd a Hwyl' 12 days of holiday provision were delivered in Summer 2025, with further provision planned for Summer 2026. Three members of staff will be employed to deliver a holiday club for all pupils at Ysgol Blaenau.
	'Sesiwn Babi a Fi' every Friday morning (up to 12 families attending).
	Various PTFA events e.g. pottery workshops (approximately 25 attendees 6/8 times a year), Autumn and Christmas fayre, wellbeing evening, entertainment, discos, refreshments during school events.
	'Paned gyda Ffrindiau' - held in school monthly, open to parents, friends and community. Cerdded gyda ffrindiau - local walk monthly, school available for use as base when needed, open to parents, friends and community. **Both activities have been set up to promote well-being and improved mental health opportunities.**
	Preliminary discussions have taken place in relation to a private non-maintained business letting a room in the school in order to provide 10 hours education for three-year-olds as well as wrap-around childcare. Discussions are ongoing.
Links with the community	Opportunities to attend school events such as open day, Autumn and Christmas fayres, assemblies (harvest, Remembrance Day, leavers, school

	concerts) for not only parent but extended families and community. The school is at the heart of the community.
	Supported Cwmcoch Church by attending numerous services and held their closure service within the community.
	Support Llandybie church in a range of different ways following the closure of Cwmcoch Church - Remembrance Day Service, Saint David's day, Harvest, decorate windows during various key events, take part in Light up the Star celebration, Christmas activities and services.
	Opportunities for the community to share success and celebrate success e.g the school 115-year celebrations were attended by approximately 150 people including past, present and future pupils, staff and people from the local community and beyond.
	PTFA half- termly meetings as well as numerous planned fundraising events.
	Links with Aelwyd Penrhyd (Jennifer Maloney) - these school links have resulted in pupils having opportunities to dance at high levels as well as travel to Patagonia. Without the initial school links, this would not have been a possibility.
	PTFA events attended by the wider community which promote many important links for both pupils and the community.
	Llandybie Community Council links which include supporting and taking part in numerous initiatives e.g. designing posters for dog fouling, attending the chamber for a debate, designing and building a bug hotel as well as supporting a local park and grow initiative.
	Various religious groups e.g. Miss Michelle Messy Church and Anthony Stevenson providing various assemblies and stories with the children.

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

Should the proposal proceed and Ysgol Blaenau is discontinued the alternative schools Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie operate an after school club and a breakfast club.

• Whether other facilities available in the immediate local or wider community will or could be enhanced in the event of a school closure (e.g. improvements to village halls, playgrounds, provision of holiday play schemes)

- Facilities available at Caerbryn community hall for the local community
- Children's playground at Blaenau
- Café at The Badgers

Both Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie have strong community links and offer a wider range of family, community, and wellbeing activities, including adult learning opportunities, parenting support, and regular community events. These existing provisions, alongside the larger scale and broader resources available at the receiving schools, provide opportunities to sustain and, where appropriate, further enhance services such as childcare, holiday provision, and community use of facilities in the event of the closure of Ysgol Blaenau.

• Information about the facilities and services provided at any alternative school

Facility / Service	**Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes**	**Ysgol Llandybie**
Breakfast Club	Yes (daily from 8am)	Yes (daily from 8:10am)
After School Club	Yes - a school run after school club is available for pupils in years 3-6 on Mondays and Thursdays, (3-10pm - 4pm). Additional provision is delivered by Menter Cwm Gwendraeth on Tuesdays and Wednesdays after school until 5pm.	Yes, daily from 3:15pm - 5pm, during term time
Cylch Meithrin	Cylch Meithrin Penygroes is linked to the school, however, it is not school run and is based at the community hall in Penygroes.	Cylch Meithrin Llandybie a Chlwb ar ôl Ysgol operate from the school site.
Other Facilities Provided	Adult learning - opportunities are available	The school regularly provides sessions to

	through the school's link with 'Tîm Dysgu Teulu Sir Gâr', offering a range of training sessions for parents. These support learning at home, including reading, spelling, times tables, Numicon, 'Tric a Chlic', and positive behaviour management.	support families with parenting, as well as opportunities for parents to learn Welsh. Outside of school hours, the premises are used by a guitar teacher who delivers music lessons to some pupils.
Links with the community	• The school works closely with Menter Cwm Gwendraeth. • Local churches and chapels - hold regular assemblies / concerts. • Community Hall - provide opportunities for key stage 2 pupils to take part in mat bowling sessions. • The school engages with local charities including 'Young at Heart' • Work closely with Ysgol Maes y Gwendraeth as a link cluster school • The Local councillor, Cllr. Dai Thomas actively supports the school's vision and ethos.	• The school is frequently visited by the member of the St. Tybie Church. • Pupils take part in church initiatives and have developed close friendships with members of the church. • The school engages with Betws and Ammanford church group.

• Information about the distance and travelling time involved in attending an alternative school of the same language category

There are several Welsh Medium primary schools in the immediate area of Ysgol Blaenau including:

Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes is approximately 1.8 miles or 5 minutes travelling time* (by car) and 1.4 miles or 34 minutes travelling time walking.

Ysgol Saron which is approximately 1.8 miles or 4 minutes travelling time* (by car) from Ysgol Blaenau and 1.8 miles or 39 minutes travelling time walking.

Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman which is approximately 3 miles or 9 minutes travelling time* (by car) from Ysgol Blaenau and 2.7 miles or 59 minutes travelling time walking.

Where possible, the Local Authority will continue to promote sustainable travel options, including walking, cycling and shared transport.

**Distance and travelling times according to google maps*

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

Currently, there is a continuing trend in falling numbers of primary aged children within Carmarthenshire.

The available demographic evidence does not indicate that closure of Ysgol Blaenau would result in significant numbers of families with school-age children leaving the community. Decisions regarding relocation are influenced by a wide range of factors, including employment opportunities, housing availability, transport connections and access to services. Nevertheless, the school forms an important part of the community infrastructure and contributes to the attractiveness of the village for some families. Its closure could therefore have a limited adverse effect on the willingness of some prospective families with young children to move to the area. Given the availability of alternative educational provision within the surrounding area, any impact on future population retention and growth is expected to be limited.

Whilst, it is clear that only a small number of the population attend the village school, it is accepted that the potential closure of the school may make the area less attractive for families looking to move to the area

• Whether or not the loss of the school, and potential families, will have a detrimental effect on the wider economy of the community:

The closure of Ysgol Blaenau may have a limited adverse effect on the local economy through the loss of a community facility that supports local families and contributes to the social infrastructure of the village. As a small rural settlement, the school plays an important role in community cohesion and may influence the attractiveness of the area to some prospective families with young children. However, there is no demographic evidence to suggest that closure would result in significant numbers of families leaving

the community or lead to substantial economic decline. Consequently, whilst the closure could have an impact on community vitality and the perception of the village as a sustainable community, it is not anticipated that the proposal would have a significant detrimental effect on the wider economy of the community.

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

If the Council proceeds with the statutory process and ultimately implements the preferred option to discontinue Ysgol Blaenau, support will be provided to pupils and their families throughout the transition**.**

Should parents wish to apply for a place at a school other than Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie, they will need to follow the School Admissions policy and process, available on the Carmarthenshire Council website.

• Impact on health and wellbeing e.g. if pupils would be less able to walk or cycle to school

As a result of the proposed school closure, pupils may face increased difficulty walking or cycling to the receiving school due to the greater distance and associated road safety concerns. This could lead to fewer opportunities for daily physical activity, potentially affecting the health and wellbeing of some pupils. However, the alternative school provides a broad range of sports activities. This would help to offset some of the potential negative impacts by offering regular opportunities for physical activity both during and beyond the school day.

• Any wider implications e.g impact public transport provisions, wider community safety issues

No significant impacts on public transportation services are anticipated**.** In line with the Council's school transport policy, free transport will be provided for eligible pupils. 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 shelter 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.

Mitigation measures

The Local Authority recognises the importance of Ysgol Blaenau within the local community and, should the proposal proceed, will explore opportunities for the future use of the site. Engagement will take place with community groups and relevant stakeholders to consider whether community activities or services currently associated with the school could continue from the site or be relocated elsewhere within the community, subject to the Council's asset management procedures.

• Conclusion – Overall effect on the community

The Community Impact Assessment has identified that the closure of Ysgol Blaenau would have some localised impacts on the community, given the school's role as a focal point for community activities, wellbeing initiatives, family engagement and local events. The assessment also recognises the strong community links established by the school and the value placed on these by pupils, families and the wider community.

However, the assessment has also found that the majority of pupils currently attending Ysgol Blaenau reside outside the school's catchment area and that a significant number of children living within the catchment already attend alternative schools. Suitable Welsh medium alternative provision is available locally, with Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie offering a range of educational, childcare, extracurricular and community-based services, alongside established links with their respective communities.

The assessment acknowledges that the loss of a school within the village could have a limited adverse effect on the attractiveness of the area for some families with young children and may have some impact on community vitality and perceptions of the sustainability of the local community. However, the available evidence does not indicate that the proposal would result in significant numbers of families leaving the area or have a significant detrimental effect on the wider local economy.

Whilst some pupils may experience increased travel distances and reduced opportunities to walk or cycle to school, these impacts are considered manageable through the provision of school transport where eligible and access to a broad range of activities and support services at the receiving schools. The Local Authority has also committed to supporting pupils and families through any transition process and to exploring opportunities for the future use of the Ysgol Blaenau site to help maintain community benefit where possible.

Overall, having considered the available evidence, the assessment concludes that, although the proposal would result in the loss of a valued community asset and may have some limited impact on the attractiveness and vitality of the local community, the availability of suitable alternative Welsh medium provision, together with appropriate mitigation measures, means that any adverse community impacts can be appropriately managed and are not considered to outweigh the educational and strategic benefits of the proposal.

Appendix B - Welsh Language Impact Assessment

Cyngor Sir Gâr
Carmarthenshire
County Council

Welsh Language Impact Assessment

Prepared by: Carmarthenshire County Council

1. Introduction and Purpose

This Welsh Language Impact Assessment considers the likely impacts of the following proposal:

To close Ysgol Blaenau, a Category 3 Welsh-medium primary school, and enable pupils to transfer to Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes, a Category 3 school, or to Ysgol Llandybie, a T3 transitional school working towards Welsh-medium provision.

It should be noted that a consultation is underway to change the Welsh language provision at Ysgol Llandybie (closing on 20 October 2026).

The Council proposes to make a controlled change to the Welsh language provision at Ysgol Llandybie. The proposal is as follows:

To reform the language provision of the whole school so that all pupils follow the Primary Welsh Language (Category 3) route.

- The implementation would be implemented gradually year-on-year, starting with the Nursery age in September 2027.
- Pupils currently on the register would continue their education without disruption, as changes would only apply to new year groups as they enter school.

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 main purpose of the assessment is to identify, test and manage the impacts on:

- opportunities for learners, families, staff and the community to use Welsh;
- the continuity, quality and accessibility of Welsh-medium education;
- social and informal use of the Welsh language;
- the sustainability of local Welsh-language community and cultural networks;

- the principle that Welsh should not be treated less favourably than English;
- the targets of Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022–2032.

The assessment distinguishes between maintaining a place in a school that offers Welsh-medium education and maintaining the full language ecosystem. That ecosystem includes patterns of use between peers, the school's relationship with parents, Urdd activities, community relations, family opportunities, and learners' confidence to use Welsh outside of lessons.

2. Methodology and Evidence Base

The assessment is informed by the Estyn Inspection Report; Welsh Census 2021 data for Carmarthenshire and the specific area; Carmarthenshire Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (CSCA) 2022–2032; and relevant Welsh Government policy including Cymraeg 2050 and the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025.

3. Context:

Ysgol Blaenau is a Welsh-medium primary school. According to the January 2024 Estyn report, there were 38 pupils on roll, 34 of statutory school age, and 23.3% of pupils of statutory school age spoke Welsh at home. Estyn noted that the majority become confident speakers of both languages by the end of their time at school, but that a minority turn to English in classroom or break time activities. Estyn recommended strengthening pupils' oral skills.

This means that the school acts not only as a provider of Welsh education, but also as an immersive environment for a significant number of children who do not speak Welsh at home. Language continuity, the quality of language modelling and the informal use of Welsh are therefore key issues in transfer.

The school also runs a daily breakfast club, a Welsh-medium after school club on Wednesdays and Thursdays, Food and Fun, Sesiwn Babi a Fi, Paned gyda Ffrindiau, Cerdded gyda Ffrindiau, PTA events and links with churches, Aelwyd Penrhyd, the Community Council and Welsh language agencies. This evidence demonstrates a community and linguistic function that extends beyond the school day.

Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes offers a Category 3 route. The school marks the Urdd's expressive arts club and choir club, annual competition at the Urdd Eisteddfod, Menter Cwm Gwendraeth workshops, links with the Gwendraeth Bees netball team, school eisteddfod, and support or transport to reduce barriers to participation. It also provides family workshops with Menter Cwm Gwendraeth and the Carmarthenshire Family Learning Team.

Ysgol Llandybie is a T3 transitional school in the proposal. The school identifies Cylch Meithrin and after-school care that promotes the Welsh language, participation in Urdd

activities, promotion of Welsh sessions for parents, and extended care provision. The linguistic impact of this choice depends in particular on the speed and certainty of the change to Category 3, the school year each child will join, and the actual Welsh provision available to that cohort at the time of transfer.

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)	Ysgol Blaenau immerses pupils and encourages the use of Welsh in and around the classroom. However, Estyn noted that a minority are turning to English in activities or break time. Transferring to a larger school can increase the Welsh peer network, but can change patterns of friendship and temporarily weaken natural usage.	Positive to neutral	A linguistic transition plan. Friendship groups. Peer mentoring. Oral use targets. Monitor the language of yards and clubs.	Ensure that all children have strong language models and daily informal opportunities; intervention if there is a movement towards more English.	Positive to neutral if fully implemented
Current Welsh Language Standards and Provision	Estyn identifies skilled immersion, an appropriate increase in literacy and a majority speaking confidently in both languages by the end of their term. Strengthening orality is a priority. Criw Cymraeg works tirelessly to promote the Welsh language by rewarding pupils and visitors for speaking Welsh around the	Negative	Transfer of assessment information and language plans; a continuity of oracy programme; sharing effective methods such as the language carousel.	Guarantee a Category 3 route or equivalent provision; baseline review on access and after two terms.	Mixed / small negatives locally

Impact Criteria	Description	Impact status	Measures to increase the positive impact	Measures to mitigate potential negative impact	Final effect (after mitigation)
	school and playing with their peers during playtimes.				
Opportunities after school and enrichment (Welsh medium/ bilingual)	Blaenau offers Welsh-medium Clwb Hwyl a Sbri, Urdd, folk dancing and partner collaboration. Penygroes and Llandybie also offer Welsh language activities, but distance, cost or transport may reduce access.	Negative	Mapping all activities; booking places for pupils in Blaenau; financial support; late transport arrangements; liaising with the Urdd and Mentrau Iaith.	Ensure that a clear continuation plan is in place, while considering the proposal further and considering opportunities for further activity with current and new partners.	Neutral to small positive
Community opportunities (support for parents/guardians and the wider community)	The loss of Sesiwn Babi a Fi, Paned gyda Ffrindiau, Cerdded gyda Ffrindiau and Tric a Chlic workshops can reduce community use of the Welsh language and parents' contact with the school.	Negative	Agreeing where and by whom each activity will be held; establishing a Cymraeg yn y Cartref programme; induction sessions in the alternative schools.	Include a budget, accessible location, promotional arrangements and a lead organisation for each activity.	Minor negative if provision is maintained
Support for Wales' cultural participation	Links with the Urdd, Aelwyd Penrhyd, eisteddfodau, folk dancing and churches strengthen identity, heritage and language	Medium negative	A continuation agreement with the Urdd, Aelwyd Penrhyd and partners;	Monitor participation rates and remove cost and transport barriers.	Neutral

Impact Criteria	Description	Impact status	Measures to increase the positive impact	Measures to mitigate potential negative impact	Final effect (after mitigation)
(Urdd, Mentrau Iaith, eisteddfodau, heritage)	use. These networks can be disrupted.		maintaining opportunities for former pupils to take part with their new group.		
Alignment with WESP and the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code	The proposal maintains a Category 3 option through Penygroes and links to Llandybie's ambition to transition to Category 3. However, it closes one Welsh language site and requires demonstration that practical access and quality are not reduced.	Neutral	Guaranteeing places and routes; publishing capacity, staffing and progression data; monitoring the cohort annually.	A contingency plan if Llandybie's timetable, capacity or access changes.	Neutral
The principle of not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English This requirement	Longer journeys, less transport to clubs or a gap in T3 provision could create a practical disadvantage for the Welsh choice.	Medium negative risk	Compare cost, travel time, transport, extended care, ALN and activities for Welsh and English routes.	Ensure equal provision in terms of quality, timeliness, accessibility and cost.	Neutral if practical equality is tested

Impact Criteria	Description	Impact status	Measures to increase the positive impact	Measures to mitigate potential negative impact	Final effect (after mitigation)
aligns directly with the Service Delivery Standards (Standards 1–83), which require that all services and communications facing the the public is available in Welsh and English to an equal standard.					

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 (WESP) 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 (WESP) 2022–2032, particularly outcomes relating to early immersion, progression, and increased use of the	**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.

Requirement	Does the proposal affect these Standards?	What evidence has been used to support this view?	Positive/negative effects
		Welsh language in different contexts.	
The principle of not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English	**Yes – a positive impact.** The proposal engages directly with the Service Delivery 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.	the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015; bilingual consultation documentation; and the establishment of local authority Welsh Standards compliance arrangements. *(Policy Making Standards 88–93)*	**Positives:** The proposal reinforces the principle of linguistic equality by ensuring that Welsh and English are 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 – conscientous consideration	**Yes – a positive impact.** The proposal has a direct impact on the Policy Making	The Impact Assessment on this Welsh language, which has been completed in	**Positives:** The proposal has been developed with specific attention to the Welsh language, with the support of a

Requirement	Does the proposal affect these Standards?	What evidence has been used to support this view?	Positive/negative effects
for the Welsh language	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 conscientious consideration has been given to the Welsh language in accordance with **Policy 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 development of the proposal in order to identify impacts, measure mitigation and opportunities to improve the use of the Welsh language. The impact assessment will be updated as additional evidence is submitted as part of the consultation process. 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**	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
		(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 *Cymraeg 2050* and the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025, underpins the expectations for increasing the use of Welsh.	

Requirement	Does the proposal affect these Standards?	What evidence has been used to support this view?	Positive/negative effects
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 are provided bilingually. **Carmarthenshire County Council's**	**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
		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	**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.

Requirement	Does the proposal affect these Standards?	What evidence has been used to support this view?	Positive/negative effects
		Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022–2032, particularly outcomes relating to strengthening the Welsh-medium workforce and internal use of Welsh.	Any potential pressures associated with increased use of the Welsh language are alleviated through gradual action, workforce planning and access to professional development.

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

Blaenau, Penygroes and Llandybie are part of the historic Gwendraeth and Amman Valley area, where the Welsh language has been a central element of community identity for generations. Although Welsh remains a living language in many parts of the area, the pattern of use of the language has changed over recent decades, reflecting demographic changes, population movements and the growing influence of English in some social contexts.

Welsh-medium schools play a vital role in the area in maintaining intergenerational transmission of the language and providing daily opportunities for children to use Welsh in formal and informal contexts.

According to the 2011 Census, Carmarthenshire was among the local authorities with the highest proportions of Welsh speakers in Wales, although a decrease was noted between 2001 and 2011. Nationally, the percentage of people able to speak Welsh fell from 20.8% in 2001 to 19.0% in 2011.

Within the Blaenau, Penygroes and Llandybie area, there were obvious local differences:

- Communities such as **Penygroes** generally show higher proportions of Welsh speakers and maintain relatively strong Welsh speaking social networks.
- Blaenau benefits from the presence of a Welsh school and community activities which contribute to the daily use of the Welsh language.
- **Llandybie** features a more mixed linguistic pattern, with higher levels of bilingualism and varying use of Welsh between households and age groups.

Census 2011 data shows the importance of those local organisations that enable people to use the Welsh language on a regular basis, including schools, cylchoedd meithrin, the Urdd, Mentrau Iaith and community events.

7. Risks and Mitigation

Risk	Mitigation required	Proposed owner	Timeline
Loss of local Welsh community hub	Agree a community legacy plan before closing: alternative location, leader, funding and dates for existing activities.	Head of Service / schools / partners	Pending decision
Weakening verbal and informal use among pupils	Language baseline; transition plan; peer groups; yard language observation; orality targets.	Reception schools / Teachers Improving Welsh and Bilingualism	Term before and for two years after
Gap between the right to Welsh-medium education and practical access	Confirm places, transportation, travel times, extended care and costs; publish route comparison.	Local Authority	Before a final decision
Consultation on the T3 Llandybie route	Identify the Welsh language provision per cohort; a written guarantee of continuity; a Category 3 contingency plan.	Local Authority / Ysgol Llandybie	Pending decision
Reduced participation in Urdd, clubs and activities	Relief fund, late transportation, reservation and monitoring of participation by group.	Reception schools	Termly monitoring
Non-Welsh speaking families lose confidence or support	Bilingual welcome pack; Welsh at Home; Tric a Chlic; Specific family contact.	Reception Schools / Family Learning	Before and after the transfer
Impact on learners with ALN	Transfer of person-centred plans; ensuring Welsh language ALN provision; individual meetings with families.	ALN Coordinators	Before transferring
Loss of capacity of Welsh-medium staff	Skills check; retention and use of expertise; professional learning; recruitment scheme.	Local Authority / schools	Before Operation

Economic and linguistic impact on local services	Assessing current use; considering carrying out community activities locally; working with the community hall and businesses.	Local Authority / Community Council	During the planning
Misunderstandings about school categories	A clear explanation of Category 3 and L3, the Llandybie timetable and what is offered to each cohort.	Local Authority	Throughout the consultation

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 the 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

The proposal proposes routes that can support Welsh-medium education: a Category 3 route at Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and a route through Ysgol Llandybie (a language category consultation is underway). The alternative schools identify Welsh language opportunities, Urdd activities, community partnerships and support for parents. Larger schools can also offer a wider network of peers, staff and activities.
However, the closure of Ysgol Blaenau may have a direct negative impact on Welsh language provision at that site and on a community hub that has strong links with families, cultural organisations and the community. It needs to be proven that the Welsh language pathway is accessible in practice, that social use of the Welsh language is maintained, that community and cultural activities continue, and that the needs of all cohorts, including learners with ALN and non-Welsh speaking families, are met.

On the basis of the available evidence, the overall impact before mitigation is assessed as mixed, with a negative risk locally. The risk can be reduced and some positive impacts created, if the mitigation measures are guaranteed, funded, implemented before the transfer and monitored for at least two years. The assessment should be updated after the consultation and before any final decision.
The proposal is considered 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

Integrated Impact Assessment Report

Carmarthenshire County Council Integrated Impact Assessment

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">PROPOSAL DETAILS</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>Following the consultation period</td></tr>
<tr><td>What is the proposal to be assessed?</td><td colspan="3">Proposal to discontinue Ysgol Blaenau from 31 December 2027 and transfer pupils to either Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes or Ysgol Llandybie from 1 January 2028.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Who will be directly affected by this proposal?</td><td colspan="3">Pupils currently attending Ysgol Blaenau
Parents and carers of Ysgol Blaenau pupils
School staff of Ysgol Blaenau
Governors of Ysgol Blaenau
Receiving schools’ staff and pupils
Local community of Blaenau
Other local schools.</td></tr>
</table>

As you complete the assessment, you will be required to identify all sources of evidence. This includes referencing to other documents, data etc and be completed through hyperlinks		
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?**	**What evidence has been used to support this view?**
Long term **Balancing short term need with the long term and planning for the future**	The proposal addresses long term sustainability issues at Ysgol Blaenau. PLASC 2026 shows only 28 pupils on roll resulting in 71% surplus places. Projections indicate pupil numbers may fall to approximately 20-21 pupils by 2030/31 resulting in a 80% surplus capacity. The school's budget deficit has increased from £126,662 in 2021/22 to £287,857 in 2025/26 with forecasts projecting a deficit of £362,566 by the end of year 2026/27 which is considered unsustainable. Maintaining the school would not be considered viable in the longer term. Transferring pupils to either Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes or Ysgol Llandybie (Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes is approximately 1.8 miles from Ysgol Blaenau and Ysgol Llandybie is approximately 1.7 miles from Ysgol Blaenau) would provide pupils with access to larger peer groups, broader curriculum opportunities, greater extracurricular provision, enhanced staffing capacity and more sustainable leadership arrangements at receiving schools. It also supports the objectives of the Modernising Education Programme by reducing surplus places and improving long term efficiency and sustainability.	**PLASC Data (2026)** Shows persistent low pupil numbers and high surplus places (71% in 2026, projected 80% by 2030) **Projections** Pupil projections based on PLASC 2026 data show that pupil numbers at Ysgol Blaenau are expected to remain low and fall further over time. The total number of pupils is projected to decrease from 28 in 2026 to around 20-21 by 2030-2031. Surplus places will remain very high and are projected to rise further. Surplus capacity is projected to rise from 70 places (71%) in 2026 to up to 78 places (80%) in 2030. **Birth Data**

		Recent birth data for the catchment indicates consistently low numbers of live births. This trend suggests limited scope for growth in the number of children entering statutory education in the local area. **Budget reports** Budget forecasts project a deficit of £362,566 by the end of year 2026/27. **MEP Strategy** Sets out objectives for long term sustainability and improved educational standards. **School Organisation Code (2026)** Requires action where surplus places exceed 25% and 30 unfilled places.
Prevention **Preventing problems occurring or getting worse**	The proposal, if implemented would address the school's current challenges from getting worse. Should the preferred option proceed, it would • address low pupil numbers at Ysgol Blaenau (28 pupils at PLASC 2026 with 71% surplus places) as the school would close and pupils would transfer to alternative schools supporting maintaining sustainable pupil numbers in other schools. • address the challenge of teaching mixed age classes as pupils would transfer to a school where pupils are	**PLASC Data (2026)** Shows only 28 pupils on roll and 71% surplus places, with projections indicating continued low numbers and high surplus capacity. **Projections** Pupil projections based on PLASC 2026 data show that pupil numbers at Ysgol Blaenau are expected to remain low and fall further over time.

	taught in closer age-range classes. Pupils will therefore be able to work with a greater number of peers of a similar age / stage of learning, which can encourage more collaborative learning. • address the challenge of high surplus places at Ysgol Blaenau as the school would close resulting in the removal of all surplus places within the Ysgol Blaenau catchment area. • address the anticipated decline in pupil numbers as the school would close preventing the problem from getting worse • address maintaining a school where local demand for provision is low. • address a high deficit budget which is growing year on year (£287,857 in 2025/26 and projected deficit of £362,566 for the year end 2026/27). • Pupils would transfer to a school with a permanent leadership structure in line with the aspiration of the Local Authority This proactive approach aligns with the Modernising Education Programme (MEP) Strategy, which aims to create a sustainable school network and avoid deterioration in educational standards and financial viability.	The total number of pupils is projected to decrease from 28 in 2026 to around 20-21 by 2030-2031. Surplus places will remain very high and are projected to rise further. Surplus capacity is projected to rise from 70 places (71%) in 2026 to up to 78 places (80%) in 2030. **Budget Reports** Budget forecasts project a deficit of £362,566 by the end of year 2026/27. **Pupil Projection Data** Pupil projections based on PLASC 2026 data show that pupil numbers at Ysgol Blaenau are expected to remain low and fall further over time. **MEP Strategy** Sets out objectives for creating a sustainable school network and improving educational standards. **School Organisation Code (2026)** Requires action where surplus places exceed 25% and 30 unfilled places, which applies to Ysgol Blaenau.

Integration **Recognising relationships and interdependencies with other well-being goals and objectives of other service areas and partners.**	The proposal fully aligns with Carmarthenshire County Council's wellbeing objectives: **Well-being Objective 1:** Enabling our children and young people to have the best possible start in life (Start Well). The proposal seeks to ensure that current and future learners have access to a sustainable, high-quality educational environment that supports their academic achievement, wellbeing and personal development. By transferring pupils from Ysgol Blaenau to larger schools, learners will benefit from access to broader curriculum opportunities, larger peer groups, enhanced extracurricular activities and increased specialist support, including support for learners with Additional Learning Needs. The proposal also seeks to address the long term risks associated with declining pupil numbers, high surplus places, increasing financial pressures and limited leadership capacity, ensuring that children are educated within settings that are better equipped to deliver the aspirations of the Curriculum for Wales. The receiving schools offer greater opportunities for collaborative learning, social interaction and participation in a wider range of educational and cultural experiences, helping pupils develop the skills, confidence and resilience needed to thrive. In addition, the proposal maintains access to Welsh medium education and supports learners' wellbeing through planned transition arrangements, pastoral support and targeted assistance for vulnerable learners. Collectively, these measures are intended to provide children and young people with the strongest possible foundations for learning, health, wellbeing and future success. The proposal demonstrates integration by recognising the	**Modernising Education Programme (MEP) Strategy** Sets out objectives for sustainable school networks and improved educational standards. **School Organisation Code (2026)** Requires consideration of surplus places and community impact. **Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)** Ensures continued Welsh medium provision and supports Cymraeg 2050. **Financial Data** Demonstrates a growing deficit. **Transport Policy** Free school transport for eligible pupils to maintain accessibility. **Community Impact Assessment** Highlights links with local organisations and services. **Carmarthenshire's Wellbeing Objectives** Integration is evidenced through the proposal's contribution to Carmarthenshire County Council's

	interdependencies between educational provision, financial sustainability, community wellbeing, transport, Welsh language development and wider corporate objectives. The proposed closure of Ysgol Blaenau and transfer of pupils to Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes or Ysgol Llandybie aligns with Carmarthenshire County Council's Modernising Education Programme (MEP) Strategy, which seeks to create a sustainable, efficient and educationally effective school network. The proposal supports the delivery of the Curriculum for Wales by enabling pupils to access larger peer groups, broader learning experiences, enhanced extracurricular opportunities and greater access to specialist support services. It also contributes to the Council's objective of reducing surplus school places and ensuring the efficient use of public resources, whilst addressing the school's significant and increasing budget deficit. The proposal supports the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and Cymraeg 2050 by maintaining access to Welsh medium education through Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Welsh language pathways at Ysgol Llandybie. In addition, the proposal has been developed alongside considerations relating to home-to-school transport, learner wellbeing, community impacts, equality duties and socio-economic disadvantage, ensuring that educational decisions are not made in isolation but contribute to the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing objectives of Carmarthenshire and Wales.	Well-being Objectives, ensuring that educational, social, cultural, financial and community considerations have been considered collectively to support improved outcomes for current and future generations. **WIMD 2025** Evidence has informed the assessment of socio-economic impacts associated with the proposal, particularly in relation to accessibility, transport and access to services.

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 shaping discussions. The consultation process, will be conducted in line with the School Organisation Code (2026), ensures that stakeholders, including parents, staff, trade unions, Estyn, and the Welsh Language Commissioner can contribute their views. This collaborative approach supports transparency, shared responsibility, and the development of a solution that balances educational, financial, and community needs.	**Shaping discussions** Initial shaping discussions with Ysgol Blaenau's governing body and local member (16/09/25). Meeting with Headteacher, Chair of Governors and Deputy Chair (14/05/26) **School Organisation Code (2026)** Sets statutory requirements for consultation and stakeholder engagement. **Consultation Document** Will outline how stakeholders can respond to the proposal and submit objections. **Modernising Education Programme (MEP) Strategy** Developed collaboratively across service areas to ensure sustainable school networks. **Welsh Language Impact Assessment** Assesses the impact of the proposal on opportunities to use the Welsh language and confirms that learners will continue to have access to Welsh medium education through Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and

		Welsh language pathways at Ysgol Llandybie. **Community Impact Assessment** Incorporates feedback from the school.
Involvement **Involving those with an interest and seeking their views in decisions that affect them**	The proposal has been developed through a commitment to involving those with an interest in, or who may be affected by, the decision-making process. In accordance with the School Organisation Code (2026), Carmarthenshire County Council will undertake a formal consultation process lasting a minimum of 42 days, including at least 20 school days, currently anticipated to take place between November and December 2026. The consultation will provide stakeholders with detailed information about the proposal, the reasons for change, the alternative options considered, and the potential educational, community and financial impacts. Consultees will include pupils, parents and carers, school staff, governors, trade unions, Estyn, the Welsh Language Commissioner, local elected members, neighbouring schools, community organisations and other interested parties. Pupils will be engaged through age-appropriate consultation materials and activities designed to ensure that their views are heard and considered in line with their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Stakeholders will be able to provide feedback through a range of channels, including online response forms, email submissions and written correspondence. Following the consultation period, all responses will be carefully considered and summarised within a Consultation Report, which will be	**School Organisation Code (2026**) Sets statutory requirements for stakeholder involvement. **Consultation Document** Will outline how stakeholders can respond to the proposal and submit objections. **Pupil Consultation Document** Developed to explain the proposal in an age-appropriate and accessible way, enabling children and young people to understand the potential changes, express their views, and participate meaningfully in the consultation process. **Engagement** Online survey, email responses, paper forms, and pupil engagement sessions.

	presented to Cabinet to inform its decision on whether to proceed with the proposal and publish a statutory notice. This approach promotes openness, transparency and meaningful stakeholder involvement throughout the school organisation process This ensures that we seek the views of those with an interest in decisions that may affect them.	**Commitment to publish Consultation Report** Ensures feedback is considered before determination. **Community Impact Assessment** Incorporates feedback from the school.

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

1. Long Term	To support long term sustainability, the Local Authority will work with the school on a transition plan to ensure pupils move smoothly to Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes or Ysgol Llandybie, maintaining continuity in education and wellbeing. This will include opportunities for familiarisation visits, transition activities, information-sharing between schools, engagement with parents and carers, and tailored transition arrangements for vulnerable learners and those with Additional Learning Needs. The Council will also monitor the long term impact on community cohesion and explore options for repurposing the Ysgol Blaenau site for community benefit, in line with the Local Authority's policy for redundant school buildings. If the site is not required for community purposes and there is no corporate use for the building, the Local Authority will seek to dispose of the building as soon as possible to minimise costs and liability.
2. Prevention	Preventative measures focus on reducing uncertainty and avoiding further deterioration of the situation. This includes early engagement and clear communication with parents and staff, targeted support for vulnerable learners during transition, and potentially implementing financial controls to prevent further deficit growth at Ysgol Blaenau, by addressing the underlying issue of low pupil numbers and high surplus places, which place increasing pressure on the school's financial sustainability. Prior to implementation, appropriate financial management arrangements will be maintained to minimise further deficit growth where possible. In the longer term, the proposal would help prevent additional financial liabilities from accumulating and reduce the risk of further public resources being directed towards maintaining an increasingly unsustainable school provision.

3. Integration	The proposal integrates with wider strategies and objectives by aligning with the Modernising Education Programme (MEP) Strategy, Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), Cymraeg 2025, the Curriculum for Wales and the Transport Plan, and the Council's Wellbeing Objectives. 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 such as Education, Finance, HR, and Transport 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.
5. Involvement	To ensure meaningful involvement, the Council will maintain transparent consultation processes, 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 will influence the final decision.

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	Should the proposal proceed, it will impact on primary aged pupils between the ages of 4-11 attending Ysgol Blaenau as they will need to transfer to another school. The proposal directly impacts all staff employed at Ysgol Blaenau. Consideration will need to be given to mitigate any impact on staff, including those aged over 55.	**PLASC Data (2026)** 28 pupils on roll as at January PLASC data. **Pupil Projection Data** Pupil projections based on PLASC 2026 data show that pupil numbers at Ysgol Blaenau are expected to remain low and fall further over time.

	It also affects parents and carers who may need to adjust to new travel arrangements. It also affects pupils of non statutory school age who are not entitled to free Home to School Transport. Pupils may experience disruption to their learning, however transition to alternative provision will be managed carefully to avoid this as far as possible. Should the proposal proceed, and pupils choose to transfer to Ysgol Llandybie or Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes, pupils would have access to improved educational resources benefitting them in the long term. In addition, pupils would attend a school with a larger cohort of pupils providing increased opportunities for social interaction and peer collaboration/learning.	
Disability	No negative impact is anticipated for pupils with disabilities. The intention is to transfer pupils from Ysgol Blaenau to either Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes or Ysgol Llandybie which have an accessibility plan. However, should a pupil require any adaptations to the school, reasonable adjustments will be made under the Equality Act 2010 for the pupil in line with established Carmarthenshire County Council School Organisation processes. Impact is not anticipated to be negative as there would be a greater team of staff and resources to support learners within the larger alternative schools. Should the proposal proceed, transition meetings and strong communication will take place prior to any transfer. Any vulnerable learners	Both Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie have accessibility plans.

	needing additional support have access to external agencies and Local Authority officer advice. It is considered that the impact of the proposal for ALN learners would be positive as the learning environment at Ysgol Llandybie and Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes is appropriate and conducive for the delivery of support for all learners with needs. The school have an environment to deliver the appropriate differentiated curriculum and have an outdoors area that can support accessibility, differentiated curriculum and physical space for learners with needs.	
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 related to adapting to new social environments where inclusion practices may be different. There may be some negative impacts associated with the proposal on this protected characteristic in relation to potential stress related to adapting to new social environments where inclusion practices may be different. These potential negative impacts can be mitigated in some way by ensuring receiving schools have established	Nature of the proposal (school closure and transfer) is unrelated to this characteristic.

	policies and support networks to foster inclusion and protection against discrimination. The proposal seeks to enhance educational opportunities and outcomes for all pupils impacted.	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	This protected characteristic is not directly relevant to pupils. No specific impact identified for staff. 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. While not directly relevant to pupils, maintain equality in employment practices.	Proposal scope limited to school provision.
Race	The proposal could affect pupils and families from minority ethnic backgrounds as their cultural or language needs may be less familiar to the alternative school. This impact will be mitigated by ensuring that the receiving school is fully prepared to support all pupils and their individual needs.	The Estyn reports for both alternative schools confirm that they are inclusive community and that teachers and staff treat pupils equally.

	The ethnicity profile of Ysgol Gynradd Blaenau is broadly similar to that of both Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie, with all three schools having predominantly White British pupil populations. At Ysgol Gynradd Blaenau, 26 of the school's 28 pupils (92.9%) are recorded as White British, with the remaining pupils comprising one pupil of Traveller of Irish Heritage ethnicity and one pupil where ethnicity information was refused. In comparison, Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes has 152 of 158 pupils (96.2%) recorded as White British, with the remaining pupils representing a small number of other ethnic backgrounds, including Ukrainian, White and Any Other Ethnic Group, White and Black African, White and Black Caribbean, and White European Other ethnicities. Similarly, Ysgol Llandybie has 197 of 209 pupils (94.3%) recorded as White British, with the remaining pupils drawn from a range of ethnic backgrounds including African, Hong Kong Chinese, Kurdish, Polish, Other Black African, Other Mixed Background, White and Black African, and White and Black Caribbean ethnicities. While both receiving schools display a slightly greater degree of ethnic diversity than Ysgol Blaenau, all three schools are characterised by predominantly White British pupil populations, suggesting that pupils transferring from Ysgol Blaenau would continue to learn within communities with broadly comparable ethnic profiles. The most recent Estyn inspection reports for Ysgol	

	Llandybie and Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes indicates that both schools promote inclusive, caring and respectful learning environments. Estyn notes that Ysgol Llandybie is an “inclusive and welcoming community” that ensures equal opportunities for all pupils, while Ysgol Penygroes is described as having an “inclusive nature and highly caring ethos”. Both reports highlight the strong emphasis placed on fairness, respect for others, pupil wellbeing and positive relationships between staff and pupils. These findings suggest that both schools foster environments where pupils are valued, supported and encouraged to respect diversity and difference, which is likely to have a positive impact on pupils from all racial and ethnic backgrounds	
Religion/Belief	No disproportionate adverse impact identified. The proposal does not alter access to education on the basis of religion or belief and does not affect the delivery of Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) within the Curriculum for Wales. Pupils transferring to the receiving school would continue to have access to the same statutory curriculum and educational opportunities. The proposal does not restrict the ability of pupils, parents, carers or staff to practice or express their religion or beliefs. No evidence has been identified to suggest that individuals from any particular faith group, belief group or those with no religion or belief would be disproportionately affected by the proposal. The proposal could affect pupils and families who have	

	particular religious beliefs as their religious belief and practices may be less familiar to the alternative school. This impact will be mitigated by ensuring that the receiving school is fully prepared to support all pupils and their individual needs.	
Pregnancy and maternity	Potential minor 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.	Consultation Document outlines transport policy and support measures. Staffing Policy.
Sexual Orientation	No disproportionate adverse impact identified. The proposal does not affect access to education, support services or opportunities on the basis of sexual orientation. Pupils transferring from Ysgol Blaenau would continue to receive education within an inclusive learning environment and would retain access to the same curriculum and statutory support arrangements. The receiving school is expected to continue to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in accordance with relevant legislation and school policies. No evidence has been identified to suggest that pupils, parents, carers or staff of any sexual orientation would be disproportionately	Proposal relates solely to school organisation and pupil transfer.

	affected by the proposal.	
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 Blaenau would continue to have access to the same curriculum, wellbeing support and educational provision regardless of sex. The proposal may result in changes to employment arrangements for staff at Ysgol Blaenau, including the potential for redeployment, reduction in working hours or redundancy. The current staffing profile indicates that all staff employed at the school are female except the cleaner/caretaker. Consequently, any employment impacts arising from the proposal would fall disproportionately on women. However, no evidence has been identified to suggest that staff of one sex would be disproportionately affected by the proposal. The proposal has not been developed because of the sex of affected employees and the Local Authority does not consider that the proposal would result in unlawful discrimination. Any staffing implications would be managed in accordance with the Council's employment policies and procedures, including consideration of redeployment opportunities, support measures and consultation requirements.	Proposal relates solely to school organisation and pupil transfer. Staffing profile.

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	Ensure that the receiving school can meet the needs of pupils with disabilities and additional learning needs through appropriate reasonable adjustments, accessibility arrangements and transport provision where required. Individual transition plans should be developed for pupils with identified needs to support continuity of learning, wellbeing and access to support services. The suitability of the receiving school's facilities, resources and specialist provision should be considered to ensure pupils can continue to access education on an equitable basis.
3. Gender reassignment	Maintain confidentiality and ensure inclusive policies are upheld. Provide staff training on equality and diversity to prevent discrimination and foster an inclusive environment.
4. Marriage and Civil Partnership	Maintain flexible communication channels for parents and staff to accommodate family circumstances.
5. Race	Continue to promote equality and diversity 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/staff who are pregnant or on maternity leave, such as virtual meetings and extended deadlines for consultation responses. Ensure staff policies support maternity leave and return to work flexibility.
8. Sexual Orientation	Provide equality and diversity training for staff to maintain an inclusive environment and prevent discrimination. Ensure anti-bullying policies are enforced.

9. Sex	Provide equality and diversity training for staff to maintain an inclusive environment and prevent discrimination. Ensure anti-bullying policies are enforced. Provide HR support to all staff impacted by the proposal. All efforts will be made to seek alternative employment. Ensure equal access to all facilities regardless of sex. Monitor for gender based disparities in attainment and participation.

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 can be read fully in Appendix B. Should the proposal proceed, pupils will be transferred to either a category 3 Welsh medium school or a T3 transitional school working towards Welsh medium dependant on parental choice. Should the proposal proceed, the consultation will be bilingual meaning that the public will have the		Should the proposal proceed, there is a potentially positive impact on opportunities for pupils to use the Welsh language. Pupils will be transferred to either a category 3 Welsh medium school or a T3 working towards Welsh medium school*, both schools operate with a larger cohort of pupils providing greater social opportunities to use the Welsh language and develop their Welsh language skills. Should the proposal proceed, there is a potentially negative impact on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language in the community of Ysgol Blaenau as the community would lose the presence of a Welsh medium school.

	opportunity to read documentation relating to the proposal in Welsh and provide a response in Welsh.		* The Council is currently undertaking a separate statutory process in relation to a proposal to amend the Welsh language provision at Ysgol Llandybie. If the proposal is implemented, the school would transition year by year to become a Primarily Welsh (Category 3) school throughout, reaching full implementation by September 2034.
Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably than the English language	An individual Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been undertaken and can be read fully in Appendix B. This proposal does not treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language. Should the proposal proceed, the consultation documentation will be bilingual meaning that the public will have the opportunity to read documentation relating to the proposal in Welsh and English and provide a response in their preferred language medium.		

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?	At PLASC 2026, Ysgol Blaenau had a Free School Meal (eFSM) eligibility percentage of 28.6%, indicating a significant proportion of pupils come from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The proposal could impact these families due to changes in travel arrangements and school location. However, free home to school transport will be provided for eligible pupils, reducing financial burden. PLASC 2026 data shows that 28.6% (8 of 28) pupils attending Ysgol Blaenau are eligible for Free School Meals (eFSM), indicating that a proportion of learners may experience socio-economic disadvantage. The Local Authority has considered the socio-economic profile of the Ysgol Blaenau catchment area using the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2025, alongside the profiles of the identified receiving schools, Ysgol Llandybie and Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes. WIMD 2025 data indicates that the Ysgol Blaenau catchment area is predominantly served by the Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) of Llandybie 2, Llanfihangel Aberbythych, Saron 2, Penygroes 2 and Llandybie 1. These areas fall within a range of deprivation groups from the 20-30% most deprived communities in Wales to the 50% least deprived communities. Whilst Llandybie 2 is within the 20-30% most deprived category nationally, the majority of the catchment falls within the 30-50% most deprived or 50% least deprived categories, suggesting a mixed socio-economic profile with low to moderate levels of deprivation overall rather than concentrated deprivation. A similar pattern is evident within the catchment areas of the proposed receiving schools. The Ysgol

	Llandybie catchment comprises Llandybie 2, Llanfihangel Aberbythych and Llandybie 1, which range from the 20-30% most deprived communities to the 50% least deprived communities in Wales. Likewise, the Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes catchment includes Saron 1, Llanfihangel Aberbythych, Penygroes 1 and Penygroes 2, with areas falling within the 30-50% most deprived communities and the 50% least deprived communities nationally. This indicates that learners transferring from Ysgol Blaenau would continue to attend schools serving communities with broadly comparable socio-economic characteristics. Income and employment indicators across the Blaenau, Llandybie and Penygroes catchments are generally consistent, with pockets of moderate deprivation but no evidence of severe or concentrated disadvantage. The most significant deprivation factor across all three catchment areas relates to access to services, reflecting the semi-rural and rural nature of the communities served. Several LSOAs associated with Ysgol Blaenau, Ysgol Llandybie and Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes rank highly for service accessibility challenges, demonstrating that travel and access to key services remain common considerations regardless of which receiving school pupils attend. The Local Authority recognises that learners from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds may be more sensitive to changes in travel arrangements, school transitions and accessibility. These factors have therefore been considered as part of the proposal. Existing deprivation indicators, including eFSM eligibility, attendance patterns, wellbeing information and any identified vulnerabilities, will be considered when planning transition arrangements. Appropriate support, including pastoral support and transition planning, will be provided where required. Eligible pupils will continue to receive free home-to-school transport in accordance with the Council's transport policy. Having considered both pupil-level and area-based indicators of deprivation, including eFSM eligibility data and WIMD 2025 evidence for the Blaenau, Llandybie and Penygroes catchment areas, the Local Authority does not consider that the proposal would result in a disproportionate adverse impact on learners from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The socio-economic characteristics of

	the receiving school catchments are broadly comparable to those of Ysgol Blaenau, whilst the receiving schools offer access to larger staff teams, wider support services, enhanced educational opportunities and broader peer networks. The availability of free home-to-school transport for eligible learners, together with transition and wellbeing support, is expected to mitigate any potential adverse impacts associated with the proposal. Ysgol Llandybie and Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes 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?	Yes. Shaping discussions have been held with the Headteacher, Governing Body however, the proposal will include a statutory consultation in line with the School Organisation Code (2026). This involves engagement with parents, carers, pupils, staff, and community stakeholders where observations can be submitted through online surveys, email responses and via letter.
Have you considered communities and places of interest?	Yes, the potential impact on the local community has been carefully considered through the Community Impact Assessment included at Appendix A. It is recognised that Ysgol Blaenau plays an important role within the village of Blaenau and the surrounding community, extending beyond its educational function. Information provided by the school demonstrates that it works in partnership with a range of community organisations, groups and individuals to enhance educational opportunities for pupils and support wider community engagement. Consequently, should the proposal to discontinue Ysgol Blaenau proceed, there may be an impact on these established partnerships and on the school's role as a valued community asset and focal point for local activity. The Community Impact Assessment considers these potential

	impacts and will continue to be reviewed and updated throughout the consultation process to reflect stakeholder feedback and any additional evidence received. The Local Authority has also considered local patterns in relation to the number of pupils attending the school form inside and outside the catchment area. PLASC 2026 data shows that only 4 of the 28 pupils attending Ysgol Blaenau reside within the school's catchment area, whilst 24 pupils attend from outside the catchment. Furthermore, 41 pupils living within the Ysgol Blaenau catchment area currently attend other schools. This indicates that the majority of pupils residing within the catchment area currently access their education at alternative schools and that most families living within the catchment area have exercised parental preference for alternative education provision. In addition, the Local Authority has considered the socio-economic profile of the area using Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2025 data. The catchment area is principally served by the Llandybie 2, Llanfihangel Aberbythych, Saron 2, Penygroes 2 and Llandybie 1 Lower Super Output Areas. These areas range from the 20-30% most deprived communities in Wales to the 50% least deprived communities, indicating a mixed socio-economic profile with low to moderate levels of deprivation overall. The most significant deprivation factor identified relates to access to services, reflecting the semi-rural nature of the area and the distances involved in accessing key facilities and services. These factors have been considered as part of the assessment of potential community, accessibility and travel impacts arising from the proposal. The Community Impact Assessment will continue to be reviewed and updated throughout the consultation process to reflect stakeholder feedback and any additional evidence received in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code (2026).
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 Blaenau. Pupils may need to travel further to attend the alternative schools which could increase reliance on school transport. However, the proposal ensures continued Welsh medium education. 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: Providing financial assistance for extracurricular activities at the receiving schools. Monitoring the impact on eFSM pupils and offering targeted wellbeing support during transition. The funding formula for schools includes a deprivation factor, which typically uses: Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility as a proxy for socio-economic disadvantage. Weighting applied per eligible pupil, so schools with higher FSM percentages receive more funding. This ensures resources are targeted to support pupils in areas of greatest need. To reduce inequalities linked to socio-economic disadvantage, if the proposal proceeds it will be carefully managed and any negative impacts mitigated at the earliest opportunity. Pupils and families will be provided with tailored support during the transition period to minimise potential challenges. Clear communication with stakeholders will be crucial in ensuring that all families understand what the proposal means to them. Good communication builds trust, reduces confusion and anxiety, and helps ensure that no one is left behind during the transition.
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. These impacts can be mitigated through individual transition plans, transport support, and targeted pastoral care.

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, should the proposal proceed, it will have a direct impact on children currently attending Ysgol Blaenau 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. **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 Gymraeg Penygroes 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,	PLASC data (2026) showing 28 pupils on roll. Article 12 (respect for the views of the child) Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life. Article 28 (right to education) Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this. Article 29 (goals of education) Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must	Develop a comprehensive transition plan, including familiarisation visits to both Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie. 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. All pupils will be provided with the Children and Young People's consultation document, where there will be an opportunity for pupils (school council as a minimum) to participate in the process. Develop individual transition plans for pupils identified as vulnerable or anxious in particular those with ALN.

	enhanced facilities and wider curricular and extracurricular experiences, supporting the development of each child's abilities and potential. **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 Gymraeg Penygroes.	encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment. Article 30 (children from minority or indigenous groups) Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.	
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 more pupils, where pupils can interact with more pupils within their year groups and	Modernising Education Programme (MEP) Strategy prioritising sustainable, high-quality education. Welsh Language Impact Assessment confirming	Engage pupils in the consultation process using age-appropriate materials. Provide emotional and wellbeing support during and after the transition.

	share experiences. It also ensures continued Welsh medium provision. Tailor to the key challenges of individual schools. **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 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	continuity of Welsh medium provision. Article 3 (best interests of the child) The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children. Article 23 (children with a disability) A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to support disabled children and their families. Article 31 (leisure, play and culture) Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.	Monitor progress and wellbeing of transferred pupils to ensure positive outcomes. Maintain communication with parents to address concerns promptly.

	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 Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie 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 Blaenau would involve repurposing or selling an existing building rather than new development, so no major habitat disruption is anticipated. However, any future use of the site should comply with biodiversity duties. **Ysgol Blaenau**, constructed in **1907** and heated using an **oil-fired system**, produced **10.96 tonnes CO_2e** in **2024/25**. The school occupies **673m²** of floorspace and currently has **28 pupils** on roll. While the building's overall carbon footprint is lower than some larger schools, operating an older building with a relatively small pupil population can still result in inefficient energy use and higher emissions per pupil. Under the proposals, pupils would transfer to either **Ysgol Penygroes**, a larger school built in **1982** and heated by oil, or **Ysgol Llandybie**, built in **1935** and heated by gas. Potential transport impacts associated with the transfer are expected to remain modest, with a dedicated coach travelling a typical **1.8-mile** one-way journey to Penygroes emitting approximately **0.86 tonnes CO_2e** per annum, or a **1.7-mile** journey to Llandybie emitting approximately **0.81 tonnes CO_2e** per annum, based on UK Government conversion factors and 190 school days per year. Even when transport emissions are taken into account, the overall effect is estimated to reduce annual emissions by approximately **10.10 tonnes CO_2e** and **10.15 tonnes CO_2e**

		respectively, with further reductions potentially achievable through future decarbonisation measures, including heat pump technology and building fabric improvements at the receiving schools. Increased traffic from school transport may disrupt nearby habitats however the impact is likely to be minimal as it is not expected that any infrastructure expansion or loss of green space is required to facilitate the proposal. An increase in pupil numbers could produce more waste at Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes and Ysgol Llandybie however the effective waste management in place at the school would mitigate negative impacts. However overall, the likely impact would be neutral due to the same number of pupils moving from one school to another. To minimise environmental impact, the local authority will provide sustainable transport options to those who are eligible.
Does the proposal have a positive or negative impact on the CCC commitment to be a net zero carbon local authority by 2030?		The proposal may have a minor negative impact due to increased travel distances for pupils, leading to higher transport emissions. However, it also removes the need to maintain and heat an additional school building, which could reduce overall carbon footprint.
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 is likely to have a neutral impact on resilience. Consolidating education provision into two buildings instead of three depending on parental preference could reduce overall carbon footprint. 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** E-mail or postal address 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, if required. Response forms will be available online and in paper form at the school, if required.
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**
If you have answered yes to any of these considerations, please consult the Data Protection Officer to initiate a Data Protection Impact Assessment and/or discuss whether a Data Processing Agreement is required.		

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 be initiated in accordance with the relevant statutory procedures in line with the School Organisation Code (2026). 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	**<u>Finance Revenue</u>** 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, the anticipated annual revenue savings for Ysgol Blaenau would be **£32,184**. 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. The 2023 Building Condition Survey for Ysgol Blaenau forecasted a required capitalised maintenance expenditure of £310,802 over a five year period. This would lead to a saving to the Council if the school closes. The Catering Service provides pupils with a breakfast club £6,718 and lunch service £27,950 at a total annual cost to the LA of £34,668. Whilst this is offset by the grant from Welsh Government of £9,885 to provide meals, there is a net saving to the service, and thus the Council of £24,783 The Welsh Government grant of £9,885 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 school, 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. If approved, as a result, a total of **£149,886** would be transferred to the receiving school as per pupil funding.

	Finance Capital 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 of approximately £175,000. **Physical Assets** Should the proposal proceed and implementation agreed, the Local Authority would gain one redundant school building within its estate. 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. Any capital receipt as a result of a sale of a school is reinvested into the Modernising Education Programme.
3. Staffing	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 approved, the consultation will need to 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.

Appendix D - Response Form

Carmarthenshire County Council is consulting on the proposal to:

- Discontinue Ysgol Blaenau from 31st December 2027 with pupils to transfer to Ysgol Gymraeg Penygroes or Ysgol Llandybie.

This response form gives you the opportunity to comment on the proposal, the alternative options presented, and to suggest additional alternatives. Consultees are invited to submit views on the proposal and the identified alternatives to closure, as well as propose other options that could address the reasons for closure (namely, the key challenges the school is facing that the proposer is seeking to resolve).

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 you wish to object, you 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 Blaenau?

☐ 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?

d. What impact, if any, do you think the proposal would have on opportunities to use and develop the Welsh 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 be emailed to MEPConsultations@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Alternatively, you can complete this form online Snap Survey

Please return your response by 22nd December 2026. Responses received after this date will not be considered.