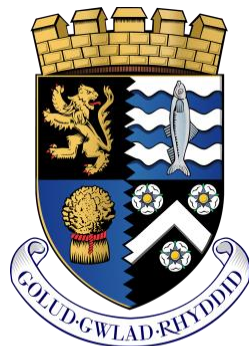


Statutory Consultation Document Ysgol Syr John Rhys October 2024



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council

Ysgol Syr John Rhys

The proposal

Ceredigion County Council is consulting on a proposal to close Ysgol Syr John Rhys. The proposal is as follows:

- To close Ysgol Syr John Rhys from the 31st August 2025, with pupils to transfer to Ysgol Mynach

Background

On the 2 May 2023, Cabinet approved the 'Principles for Ensuring Sustainable Education Infrastructure' document which now forms the basis for any proposed school re-organisation proposal where one or more of the following principles are not met:-

- P1 Continue to ensure excellent provision, leadership and standards in schools/settings for all groups of pupils, which reflects the requirements of Curriculum for Wales and the Additional Learning Needs Code
- P2 Continue to build capacity to ensure that School Leaders have the appropriate time to lead and manage their schools
- P3 Continue to develop Welsh language provision to ensure the bilingual competencies of our children and young people
- P4 Continue to develop education provision for 3 year olds in schools as is appropriate
- P5 Provide excellent learning environments for children, young people, staff and the wider community
- P6 Make effective and efficient use of resources to ensure a sustainable infrastructure
- P7 Ensure parity and equity of access to a broad range of learning opportunities post 14 and 16 courses to prepare highly skilled and well-qualified children and young people for their next steps in education, training or the workplace

A meeting of the Education Infrastructure workstream was held on the 1 February 2024 where the details of the schools that had not met one or more of the principles were shared. The information shared with Members included:

- pupil numbers
- school capacity
- pupil projections
- cost per pupil
- condition of school buildings
- backlog maintenance costs

Ysgol Syr John Rhys was identified as having challenges in meeting P1, P2 and P6 of the 'Principles for Ensuring Sustainable Education Infrastructure' and was therefore chosen for review.

A meeting was also held with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors on the 2 February 2024 and on the 20 February 2024.

The savings proposals approved by the Council on 29 February 2024 included a recommendation for the Schools Service to review the future viability of the school estate. In addition, the Corporate Strategy 2022 - 2027 also confirms the need to continually review school places in order to maintain financial resilience to maintain a sustainable infrastructure.

Presumption against closure of Rural Schools

The School Organisation Code includes additional procedural arrangements in regard to schools identified as rural schools, which require proposers to follow a more detailed set of procedures and requirements in formulating a rural school closure proposal.

As indicated in the Code:

'This does not mean that a rural school will never close but the case for closure must be strong and all viable alternatives to closure must have been conscientiously considered by the proposer, including federation'

The School Organisation Code includes a number of steps required to be undertaken when formulating a rural school proposal which relate to the following headings:

- Formulating the proposal
- Identifying reasonable alternatives
- Preparing a proposal paper for the decision maker

As the School Organisation Code identifies Ysgol Syr John Rhys as a rural school, the additional requirements for rural schools were addressed when developing the proposal paper, which was presented to Cabinet on 3 September 2024 with the following recommendation:

'To approve the proposal to commence the statutory consultation process to cease to maintain the provision at Ysgol Syr John Rhys with effect from 31 August 2025.'

School Organisation Code

In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code, before determining whether to proceed to consultation, Cabinet were presented with a proposal paper which included:

- The reason for the closure proposal
- A list of the reasonable alternatives to closure that were identified; and

- An assessment of the following for each of the reasonable alternatives that were identified:
 - The likely impact on Quality and Standards in Education.
 - The likely impact on the community
 - The likely effect of different travelling arrangements.

The Strategic context

Ceredigion County Council was last inspected by Estyn in June 2024. The report published by Estyn outlined the following:

- The authority has a good track record of maintaining and improving its provision and achieving good outcomes for the children and young people of Ceredigion.
- The Council prioritises investment in its education service and schools, in line with its objective in its corporate strategy.
- The local authority reviews its structures and plans for the long term to ensure value for money continuously.
- The authority's arrangements in terms of developing the Welsh language are a significant strength, where several aspects of excellence can be seen among its provision and practices.

1. DESCRIPTION AND BENEFITS

Status Quo – Ysgol Syr John Rhys is part of an informal federation / cluster with Ysgol Mynach and Ysgol Pontrhydfendigaid, with all 3 schools sharing a Head teacher. All 3 schools have their own budget and Governing Body.

The strengths and weaknesses of retaining status quo are detailed below.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Retention of school identity and presence in the community	Pupil projections show reduction in numbers to 17 by 2029
No disruption to pupils and staff	Cost per pupil would further increase if pupil numbers continue to decline
No additional transport costs	Existing and future liabilities with regards to property maintenance costs would remain
No re-organisation process required	Would not lead to the required financial savings
Current good quality of teaching and learning would be retained	Surplus places would remain
	Challenge of having only one class in the Foundation Learning Phase and the other class in Key Stage 2 in order to meet the requirements of delivering the Curriculum for Wales effectively

Key Challenges facing Ysgol Syr John Rhys and why change is considered necessary

(i) Pupil numbers: a) PLASC

According to PLASC figures, pupil numbers are low with a reduction from 25 pupils in 2020 to 22 pupils in 2024.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Pupil numbers - PLASC	25	23	23	22	22

b) Current (Teacher Centre data as at 3/10/24)

Pupil numbers have reduced further since PLASC 2024 to 18 pupils by October 2024 i.e. a reduction of 4 pupils.

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Pupil numbers – Syr John Rhys	2	2	3	1	1	7	2	18

(ii) Pupil projections

Projections are showing a further decrease over the next 5 years to 17 by 2029.

	Jan 2025	Jan 2026	Jan 2027	Jan 2028	Jan 2029
Pupil projections	21	20	15	16	17

In line with WG School Organisation Code, it is a requirement to include five-year forecasts of pupil numbers. Pupil projections are based on PLASC 2024 data and Ceredigion birth rates.

Actual applications received to attend Ysgol Syr John Rhys are summarised below. The closing date for applications for any academic year is 31 January the preceding year.

Number of applications received to Ysgol Syr John Rhys (as at 3/10/24):

Academic Year	September	January	April	Total for year
2024/25	N/A	0	0	0
2025/26	1	0	0	1
2026/27	0	0	0	0
2027/28	0	0	0	0
2028/29	0	0	0	0

Based on the number of applications received, there will be 18 pupils at Ysgol Syr John Rhys in January 2025 i.e. 3 less than the projection.

By September 2025:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Pupil numbers – Syr John Rhys	1	2	2	3	1	1	7	17

(iii) Curriculum delivery

Teaching staff at Ysgol Syr John Rhys face the challenge of preparing for and teaching one mixed age and mixed ability class across the whole of the foundation learning phase and one mixed age and mixed ability class across the whole of key stage 2.

In the Curriculum for Wales guidance, it states that “Learners must be given opportunities across the curriculum to:

- develop listening, reading, speaking and writing skills
- be able to use numbers and solve problems in real-life situations
- be confident users of a range of technologies to help them function and communicate effectively and make sense of the world.

Within a multi-age classroom, it is more challenging to differentiate, in order to meet the needs of a range of abilities and ages within the same class. This is particularly in the case of, when there are 3-4 year groups in the same mixed-age classroom.

(iv) Surplus places

The School Organisation Code states that:

*“Where there are more than 10% surplus places in an overall area, local authorities **should** review their provision and **should** consider whether to make proposals for their removal if this will improve the effectiveness and efficiency provision. A significant level of surplus provision is defined as 25% or more of a school’s capacity **and** at least 30 unfilled places”*

Currently there are 21 surplus places at Ysgol Syr John Rhys i.e. 54% (rounded to the nearest percentage point).

	Pupil Numbers October 2024	School Capacity	Surplus places	% surplus places
Syr John Rhys	18	39	21	54%

(v) Cost per pupil

Cost per pupil¹ at Ysgol Syr John Rhys is £8,146, which is £3,192 higher than the Ceredigion average of £4,954

School	Cost per pupil 2024/25
Syr John Rhys	£8,146
Ceredigion Primary Schools Average	£4,954

(v) School Building

Updated Backlog Maintenance costs are £77,500

Expected Benefits of the proposal compared with the status quo

- Would address the low pupil numbers
- Pupils would attend a school with a larger cohort of pupils where pupils would be taught in classes of similar age range, providing additional opportunities for peer support and learning
- Pupils would likely have access to a wider range of educational and extra-curricular activities
- Enhance the opportunities to meet the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales
- Revenue saving from closure would contribute to the ongoing financial viability of the overall school infrastructure
- Financial efficiencies through the reduction in cost per pupil
- Both the existing and future backlog maintenance costs of Ysgol Syr John Rhys would be eradicated

¹ The Cost per pupil is derived from the individual school budget for 24/25 divided by the number of pupils in the school based on PLASC 2024

Disadvantages of the proposal compared with the status quo

- A period of instability for the pupils during transition to Ysgol Mynach
- There would be a reduction in staff numbers
- Increased transport costs to the Local Authority
- Longer travel distances for some or all of the pupils

Risks

The risks associated with closure and the measures required to manage them

- Close engagement with pupils, parents and the community would be vitally important in reducing and managing any potential risks
- Support would be required for vulnerable pupils or those with additional learning needs to transition to Ysgol Mynach
- It would be necessary to support the process of moving to a different school in a sensitive and careful manner in order to ensure continuous progression in the teaching and learning process
- All school staff would need to be supported and kept informed during the process in conjunction with any relevant Trade Unions and the Local Authority's Human Resources department

Options considered for Ysgol Syr John Rhys

The following options were identified in the proposal paper and a SWOT analysis was undertaken for each option:

- **One school on two sites – Syr John Rhys site and Pontrhydfendigaid site**

This option has been discounted for the following reasons:

- Would not address the low number of pupils
- Need to retain 2 buildings
- Surplus places would remain
- Loss of autonomy
- Would not lead to the required financial savings
- Present and future liabilities with regards to maintaining the buildings would remain
- Challenge of having one class in the Foundation Learning Phase and the other class in Key Stage 2 in order to meet the requirements of delivering the Curriculum for Wales effectively

- **One School on three sites –Syr John Rhys site, Mynach Site and Pontrhydfendigaid Site**

This option has been discounted for the following reasons:

- Would not address the low number of pupils
- Need to retain 3 school buildings
- Surplus places would remain
- Loss of autonomy
- Would not lead to the required financial savings
- Present and future liabilities would remain with regards building maintenance
- Challenge of having one class in the Foundation Learning Phase and the other class in Key Stage 2 in order to meet the requirements of delivering the Curriculum for Wales effectively

- **Formal Federation between Ysgol Syr John Rhys and Ysgol Pontrhydfendigaid**

This option has been discounted for the following reasons:

- A separate consultation would need to be undertaken to comply with 'Federation Process of Maintained Schools in Wales (WG 011/2014 Guidance)'
- Would not address the low number of pupils
- Need to retain both school buildings
- Would not lead to the required financial savings
- Cost per pupil would remain 64% in excess of county average at Ysgol Syr John Rhys
- Present and future liabilities would remain with regards building maintenance
- Would not be likely to improve the future viability of the school estate
- Two separate budgets would remain which may create operational difficulties
- Challenge of having one class in the foundation learning phase and the other in Key Stage 2 in order to meet the requirements of delivering the Curriculum for Wales effectively
- Both schools would continue to be inspected as separate entities and be required to provide separate returns to Welsh Government

- **Formal Federation between Ysgol Syr John Rhys, Ysgol Mynach and Ysgol Pontrhydfendigaid**

This option has been discounted for the following reasons:

- A separate consultation would need to be undertaken to comply with 'Federation Process of Maintained Schools in Wales (WG 011/2014 Guidance)'
- Would not address the low number of pupils
- Need to retain three school buildings
- Would not lead to the required financial savings

- Cost per pupil would remain 64% in excess of county average at Ysgol Syr John Rhys
- Present and future liabilities would remain with regards building maintenance
- Would not be likely to improve the future viability of the school estate
- Three separate budgets would remain which may create operational difficulties
- Challenge of having one class in the foundation learning phase and the other in Key Stage 2 in order to meet the requirements of delivering the Curriculum for Wales effectively
- All three schools would continue to be inspected as separate entities and be required to provide separate returns to Welsh Government.

Changes to learner travel arrangements if proposal is implemented

Pupils currently on roll at Ysgol Syr John Rhys may have to travel further dependant on home address, however the distance between Ysgol Mynach and Ysgol Syr John Rhys is less than 4 miles and free transport would be provided in line with the transport policy: [home-to-school-college-transport-policy.pdf \(ceredigion.gov.uk\)](https://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/home-to-school-college-transport-policy.pdf).

If the proposal is approved and Ysgol Syr John Rhys closes at the end of August 2025:

- Pupils who currently receive free transport to attend Ysgol Syr John Rhys will be provided with free transport from their home address / current pick-up point to Ysgol Mynach.
- Pupils who don't currently receive free transport to attend Ysgol Syr John Rhys will be provided with free transport from a designated pick-up point(s) in Ponterwyd to Ysgol Mynach, if they have reached statutory school age.

Any pupils due to start school from September 2025 onwards will be provided with free transport from their home address to their nearest school if they satisfy the following:

- have reached statutory school age
- attend their nearest suitable school and live over 2 miles from the school

Siblings of children currently attending Ysgol Syr John Rhys will only be provided with free transport to Ysgol Mynach if they've reached statutory school age and that this is their nearest suitable school.

Impact of accessibility of provision if proposal is implemented

Free home to school transport would also be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the Local Authority's Home to School Transport policy.

2. DETAILS OF AFFECTED SCHOOLS

a. Names, location, category, language medium

School Name	Location	School category	Language medium	Age range
Syr John Rhys	Ponterwyd Aberystwyth SY23 3JX	Community	Welsh	4 - 11
Mynach	Pontarfynach Aberystwyth SY23 4QZ	Community	Welsh	4 - 11

b. Pupil numbers and projections

PLASC

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Syr John Rhys	25	23	23	22	22
Mynach	38	38	40	36	42

Current

Current pupil numbers 3 October 2024

School Name	R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
Syr John Rhys	2	2	3	1	1	7	2	18
Mynach	4	7	8	2	7	7	6	41

Projections

In line with the WG School Organisation Code, it is a requirement to include five-year forecasts of pupil numbers. Pupil projections are based on PLASC 2024 data and Ceredigion birth rates.

Syr John Rhys

Syr John Rhys	Jan 2025	Jan 2026	Jan 2027	Jan 2028	Jan 2029
Pupil projections	21	20	15	16	17

Actual applications received to attend Ysgol Syr John Rhys are summarised below. The closing date for applications for any academic year is 31 January the preceding year.

Number of applications received to Ysgol Syr John Rhys (as at 3/10/24):

Academic Year	September	January	April	Total for year
2024/25	N/A	0	0	0
2025/26	1	0	0	1
2026/27	0	0	0	0
2027/28	0	0	0	0
2028/29	0	0	0	0

Based on the number of applications received, there will be 18 pupils at Ysgol Syr John Rhys in January 2025 i.e. 3 less than the projection.

By September 2025:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Pupil numbers Syr John Rhys	1	2	2	3	1	1	7	17

Mynach

Mynach	Jan 2025	Jan 2026	Jan 2027	Jan 2028	Jan 2029
Pupil projections	44	44	43	41	44

Number of applications received to Ysgol Mynach (as at 3/10/24):

Academic Year	September	January	April	Total for year
2024/25	N/A	3	0	3
2025/26	1	0	0	1
2026/27	1	0	0	1
2027/28	0	0	0	0
2028/29	0	0	0	0

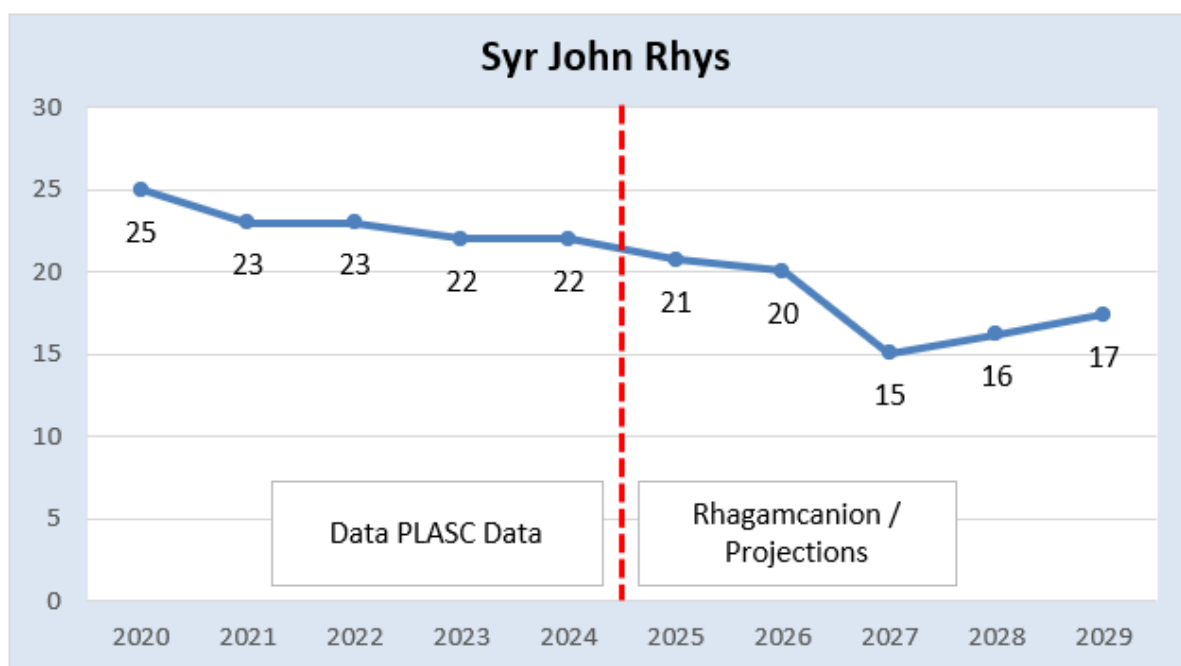
Based on the number of applications received, there will be 44 pupils at Ysgol Mynach in January 2025 i.e. prediction was correct.

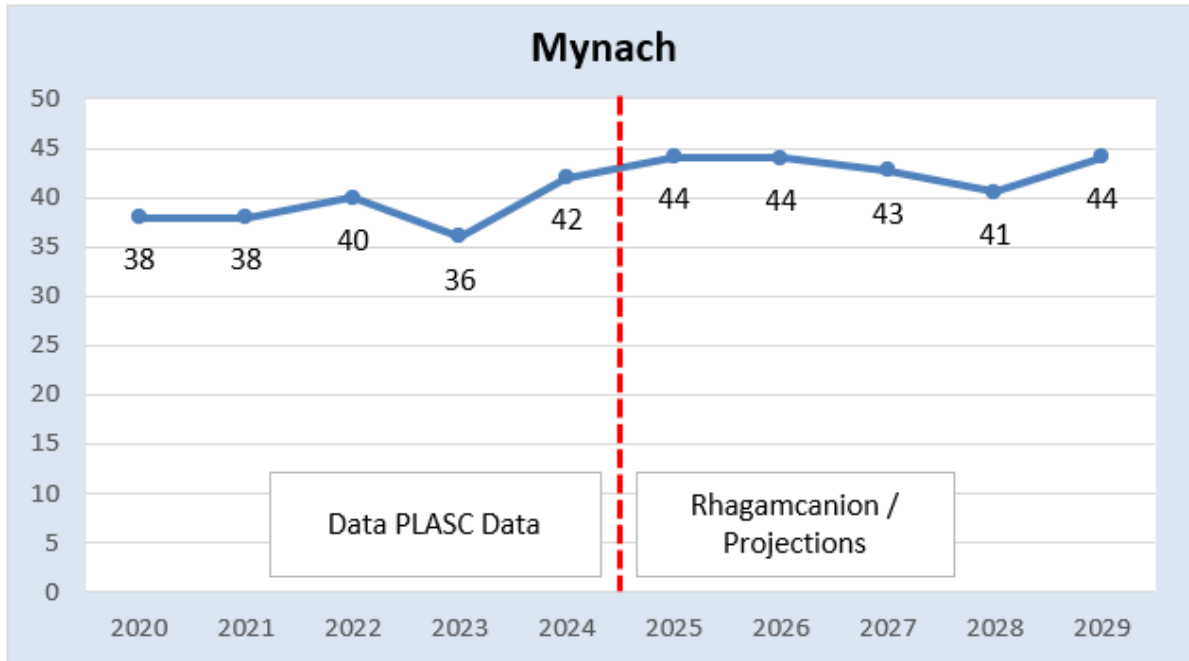
By September 2025:

	R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
Pupil numbers Mynach	4	4	7	8	2	7	7	39

Pupil numbers as at **September 2025** if the proposal is implemented:

	R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
Pupil numbers Syr John Rhys	1	2	2	3	1	1	7	17
Pupil numbers Mynach	4	4	7	8	2	7	7	39
Total	5	6	9	11	3	8	14	56





c. Capacity

The School Organisation Code states that:

“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: [measuring-the-capacity-of-schools-in-wales-circular.pdf \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/circular.pdf)) and at least 30 unfilled places”

School Name	Pupil Numbers October 2024	School Capacity	Surplus places	% surplus places
Syr John Rhys	18	39	21	54%
Mynach	41	65 ²	24	37%

September 2025

² 65 is the capacity to include the use of the hall as teaching space.

If the proposal to close Ysgol Syr John Rhys and move the pupils to Ysgol Mynach is approved, the number of surplus places in Ysgol Mynach will reduce to 9 i.e. 14% spare places.

The table below together with the pupil projections for both schools confirms that there is sufficient capacity at Ysgol Mynach to accommodate the pupils from Ysgol Syr John Rhys

	Combined pupil numbers September 2025	School capacity	Surplus places	% surplus places
Syr John Rhys and Mynach Combined	56	65	9	14%

d. Nursery

There is no nursery provision at Ysgol Syr John Rhys or Ysgol Mynach.

e. Quality of accommodation

In 2019, Faithful + Gould were appointed by Ceredigion County Council in line with Welsh Government requirements to undertake a survey of all schools utilising the '21st Century Schools' methodology to determine an overall condition grade.

The 21st Century Schools Methodology has been designed to provide a consistent and comparable view of condition across all schools and is utilised on a block-by-block basis, with each building broken down into the 12 major elements – roofs, floors and stairs, ceilings, external walls, windows and doors, sanitary services, redecorations, fixed furniture and fittings, external areas, playing field, mechanical services and electrical services. An overall condition grade was allocated and also an estimate of the backlog maintenance costs.

In addition, a suitability assessment was also undertaken which focussed on the environment, layout/plan, location, flexibility, servicing requirements, general external environment and size of key rooms.

	Condition Grade	Backlog Maintenance Costs	Suitability Grading
Ysgol Syr John Rhys	C+	£66,361	B
Ysgol Mynach	C+	£6,958	B

Condition Grading Definitions

Grade	Definition
A	Good and operating efficiently
B	Satisfactory but with minor deterioration
C	Poor with major defects
D	Bad, life has expired or risk of imminent failure

Suitability Grading Definitions

Grading	Definition
A	Good, Facilities suitable for teaching, learning and wellbeing in school
B	Satisfactory. Performing as intended, but does not effectively support the delivery of the curriculum in some areas
C	Poor. Teaching methods inhibited/adverse impact on school organisation
D	Bad. Buildings seriously inhibit the staff's ability to deliver the curriculum

An updated survey was carried out on 18 April 2024 and 1 October 2024 by the Corporate Manager Property Services and Operations Manager of the Local Authority whose qualifications are RIBA and MRICS. The survey was based on the previous Faithful + Gould survey information. The updated works identified and estimated costs are listed below:

Ysgol Syr John Rhys

Element	Element Description	Element Cost
<u>Main School Block</u>		
Roofs	Slipped roof slate, flat roofs are required to be repaired / replaced, rainwater guttering requires to be cleaned out, generally the rainwater guttering and downpipes need to be replaced, existing fascia and barge board require to be redecorated or replaced	£ 30,000.00
External windows	Replace 1 nr double glazed window unit	£ 500.00
Ceilings	Localised repairs to ceilings throughout and redecorate	£ 1,000.00
Internal walls & doors	Redecoration required in localised areas	£ 2,000.00
Chimney	Re-render existing	£ 5,000.00

External walls	Redecoration required	£ 5,000.00
Mechanical	Replace existing fan heating convectors	£ 10,000.00
Electrical	Replace existing distribution board	£ 8,000.00
	Replace existing internal lighting	£ 8,000.00
	New CCTV System	£ 4,000.00
	New intruder alarm	£ 4,000.00
		£ 77,500.00

**Ysgol
Mynach**

Element	Element Description	Element Cost
<u>Main School Block</u>		
External windows	Replace existing timber windows to staff room & 2 new windows to kitchen	£ 4,000.00
External walls, windows & doors	Patching repair to existing rendered walls (side gable wall)	£ 1,000.00
External areas	Repair concrete capping to external stone walls in yard / playground	£ 1,000.00
Cabin		
Electrical	Replace internal lighting systems	£ 4,000.00
Total cost		£ 10,000.00

3. QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN EDUCATION

(i) Comparison of the quality and standard of education provided at Ysgol Syr John Rhys in comparison to Ysgol Mynach

Likely impact of the proposal on Quality and Standards in Education

Pupils would be transferred to a school with a larger cohort of pupils where they would be likely to have improved access to resources to meet the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales more effectively. Pupils will be taught in closer age-range classes due to more classes being available with the additional pupils to the proposed school.

Pupils would be likely to have access to a wider range of educational and extra-curricular activities as more opportunities will be available due to a greater number of pupils.

Likely impact on standards and progress overall, of specific groups and in skills

Increasing the number of pupils of a similar age / stage within each class will likely encourage improved collaborative working to further drive progress and standards. Pupils will be able to work with a greater number of peers of a similar age / stage of learning and this can encourage more collaborative learning. Further extra-curricular opportunities could also be made available such as team sports / choirs / competitive activities with a greater number of pupils.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

There will be a greater number of pupils at a similar age / stage, which will likely have a positive impact on wellbeing and attitudes to learning. It will also provide greater friendship / social opportunities as there will be more pupils to collaborate with within each class / across the school.

Teaching and learning experiences

Quality of teaching

No potential impact as the quality of teaching is good across both schools at present.

The breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum

No potential impact as the breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum is good across both schools at present. However, there will be improved opportunities for collaboration which may lead to enhanced learning.

The provision of skills

No potential impact as the provision of skills is good across both schools at present. However, with a greater number of pupils of the same age/ stage, the development of skills may be improved.

Care, support and guidance

Tracking, monitoring and the provision of learning support, personal development and safeguarding

No potential impact as the provision of learning support, personal development and safeguarding is good across both schools at present.

Leadership and Management

Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers, self evaluation processes and improvement planning

The proposal will result in the headteacher having responsibility for two schools. This will enable the headteacher to have more capacity to focus on all required leadership and management responsibilities.

Professional learning

It is not anticipated that the implementation of the proposal would impact on professional learning opportunities at the alternative school.

Use of resources

The proposal will lead to rationalisation of school buildings. An increase in pupil numbers will have a positive effect on the efficient use of resources to contribute to a sustainable future.

(ii) Estyn

Ysgol Syr John Rhys

Ysgol Syr John Rhys was last inspected by Estyn in March 2024

Recommendations

R1 Develop pupils' Welsh reading and writing skills.

Ysgol Mynach

Ysgol Mynach was last inspected by Estyn in May 2019.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Excellent
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Excellent
Teaching and learning experiences	Excellent
Care, support and guidance	Excellent
Leadership and management	Excellent

Recommendations

R1 Disseminate the strongest features of teaching across the school.

(iii) Impact of the proposal on the ability of the school to deliver the full curriculum at the Foundation Learning and Key Stage 2

At present there is only one Foundation Learning Phase class and one KS2 class at Ysgol Syr John Rhys. Within the Foundation Learning Phase, class pupils from Reception to year 2 (4 – 7 year-olds) are taught within the same classroom and from January to July of each academic year, pre reception pupils are also part of this class arrangement. Within KS2, pupils from Years 3 to 6 are taught within the same classroom.

By moving to a school with a larger cohort of pupils, there will be sufficient pupil numbers to create more age/stage appropriate classes across the school allowing for more purposeful, focused learning to occur, allowing for all pupils to make continued progress across the continuum.

4. WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN (WESP)

Ysgol Syr John Rhys and Ysgol Mynach are both Welsh medium schools. The proposal is not directly linked to the targets in the Local Authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

The proposal would maintain the availability of Welsh language provision.

5. FINANCE

The financial evaluation below details the current situation and costs for the school

Full year budget 2023-24³	£188,994
Actual expenditure 2023-24	£194,795
Surplus/ (deficit) as at 31/3/24	£44,145
Full year budget 2024-25⁴	£179,204

³ 2023-24 budget is calculated based on the number of children at the school as at PLASC 23

⁴ 2024-25 budget is calculated based on the number of children at the school as at PLASC 24

Estimate surplus/(deficit) as at 31/3/25	£32,590
Cost per pupil 2024-25	£8,146
Ceredigion Average cost per pupil 2024-25	£4,954

By 31/3/25, Ysgol Syr John Rhys is projected to have a surplus of £32,590. However, the estimated reduction in their budget surplus accounts for a 26% reduction in reserves.

The table below provides a summary of the potential savings/ costs of the proposal

Detail	Potential savings/ (costs)
Potential savings delegated funding	£105,094 ⁵
Less:-	
Estimated transport costs	- £47,500 (£250 ⁶ per day X 190 days)
Net savings	£57,594

It is estimated that the annual revenue savings to the Council will be approximately £57,594. The overall figure comprises potential savings of schools delegated funding of £105,094 and an estimated additional transport cost of £47,500.

Recurrent revenue costs will be retained within the Delegated Schools Budget alongside making appropriate budgetary provision for any changes in statutory home to school transport that are required.

The savings proposals approved by the Council on 29 February 2024 included a recommendation for the Schools Service to review the future viability of the school estate.

It is not anticipated that any building works will be necessary to ensure that the pupils attending Ysgol Syr John Rhys at present can be accommodated at Ysgol Mynach.

The proposal will lead to a reduction in the school estate and improve its strategic management. The proposal does not form part of the 21st Century strategic investment programme.

6. LAND AND BUILDINGS

If the Cabinet recommendation and subsequent approval by Council following a statutory consultation is to close, in the first instance, the building will be offered as a resource to the local community. However, if there is no community interest, the school will be placed on the open market to sell and the capital receipt will be utilised for future

⁵ This sum is calculated by deducting the Average Weighted Pupil Value (AWPV), SEN + FSM costs for the pupils from the full school budget. The AWPV, SEN+FSM cost will go with the child to the alternative school

⁶ Based on an estimate received by travel contractor on 2/10/24

investment to develop the Sustainable Schools for Learning Programme i.e. all capital receipts arising from redundant sites will be ring-fenced and used as match funding and contribute to the delivery of future projects to deliver the strategic Sustainable Communities for Learning investment programme.

Impact of proposal on the community

A separate Community Impact Assessment is available as part of the consultation.

Impact of proposal on staff

Should the proposal be implemented, Ysgol Syr John Rhys would close. A staff redundancy process would be necessary for staff currently employed at Ysgol Syr John Rhys. This would be undertaken in line with the 'Managing Organisational Change in Schools Policy' for teaching and support staff. All cleaning and catering staff who are currently employed centrally by the Local Authority would be supported by the 'Managing Change Policy' for Local Authority employees.

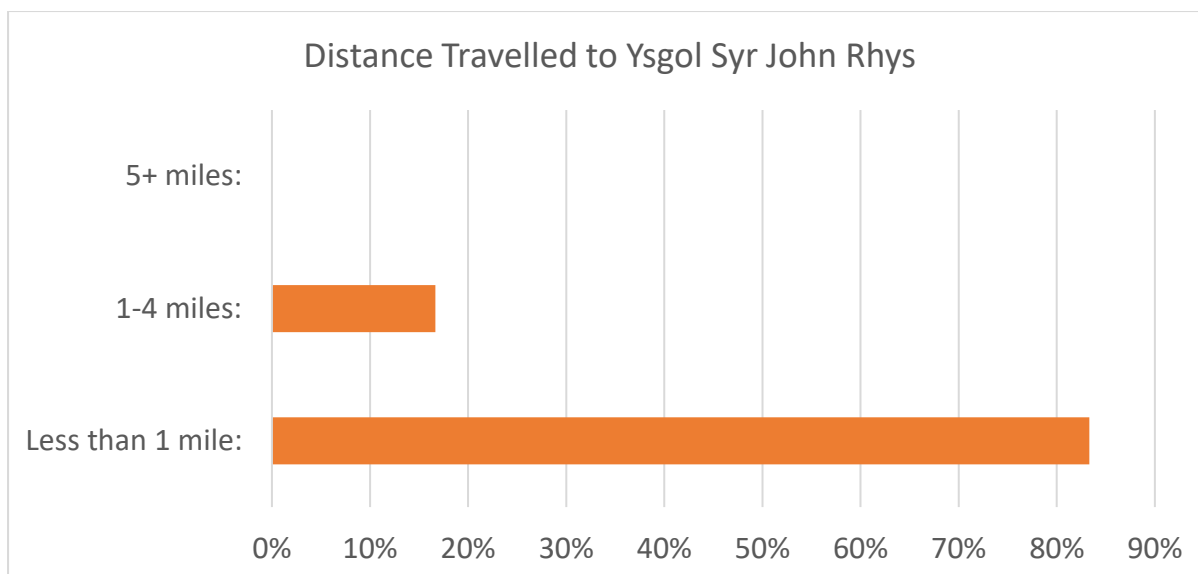
Admission arrangements

Should the proposal be implemented, the Local Authority's School Admissions Team will send a letter to the parents/guardians of all children currently attending the school. Upon receipt of the letter:

- Parents to contact school of choice
- Parents to complete online application:
<https://eforms.ceredigion.gov.uk/admissions/?countyId=667>
- Local Authority to inform parents as to whether admission has been granted

Pupils' journeys to school

The distance travelled to school by the existing cohort of children is noted below. Ysgol Mynach is located less than 4 miles from Ysgol Syr John Rhys and free transport would be provided in line with the transport policy: [home-to-school-college-transport-policy.pdf \(ceredigion.gov.uk\)](#). It is considered that the travel time to the alternative provision will be well within the maximum 45 minutes travel time for primary pupils according to the WG School Organisation Code.



School transport costs

Additional transport costs have been estimated at £250 per day. The cost has been included in the financial analysis of the proposal.

There is no transport provided at present to attend Ysgol Syr John Rhys and the estimated additional cost is therefore £250 per day.

Walking routes to the alternative provision

Should the proposal be implemented, pupils who do not currently receive transport would continue to walk to an agreed pick-up point in Ponterwyd to receive free transport to attend Ysgol Mynach.

For those children where Ysgol Syr John Rhys is their nearest school, additional travel would be required to access the alternative provision. For those pupils, it is unlikely that walking or cycling to the alternative school would be possible.

SUMMARY OF KEY CHALLENGES AND HOW PROPOSAL WILL ADDRESS THESE

	Key Challenges	How they will be addressed
Pupil numbers	According to PLASC figures, pupil numbers are low with a reduction from 25 pupils in 2020 to 22 pupils in 2024	Pupils will be taught in closer age-range classes

Pupil projections	Projections are showing a further decrease over the next 5 years to 17 by 2029	Pupils would be transferred to a school with a larger cohort of pupils and taught in closer age-range classes
Curriculum delivery	One class in the foundation learning phase and one class in key stage 2	Pupils would be transferred to a school with a larger cohort of pupils where they would be likely to have improved access to resources to meet the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales more effectively
Surplus places	Currently there are 21 surplus places at Ysgol Syr John Rhys i.e. 54%	Sufficient capacity within Ysgol Mynach to accommodate all pupils
Cost per pupil	Cost per pupil at Ysgol Syr John Rhys is £8,146, which is £3,192 higher than the Ceredigion average of £4,954 (2024/25 data)	Reduction in cost per pupil
School Building	Updated Backlog maintenance costs are £77,500	Removes existing and future liability for maintenance costs

7. ALTERNATIVES TO CLOSURE

One School on two sites – Syr John Rhys site and Pontrhydfendigaid site – this school would have one Governing Body and one budget

Strengths	Weaknesses
Retain the provision on both sites	Would not address the low number of pupils
No additional transport costs for the Local Authority	Need to retain 2 buildings
One school identity	Surplus places would remain
The two sites are inspected as one school	Loss of autonomy
	Would not lead to the required financial savings
	Present and future liabilities with regards to maintaining the buildings would remain
	Challenge of having one class in the Foundation Learning Phase and the other class in Key Stage 2 in order to

	meet the requirements of delivering the Curriculum for Wales effectively
Opportunities	Threats
Possible opportunities for further collaboration between the two sites	Pupil numbers at the Syr John Rhys site may continue to decline

Likely impact on quality and standards in education

Pupils would continue to access the existing provision on two sites therefore there would likely be no impact on the quality and standards in education however there may be more opportunity for further collaboration and sharing of staff resources.

Likely impact on the community

It is anticipated that there would likely to be minimal impact on the community as this is a continuation of the existing provision on two sites. The new Governing Body would need to ensure a balance of members from both communities.

Likely effect of different travelling times

It is anticipated that there will be no impact on travelling arrangements as this is a continuation of the existing provision on two sites.

One School on three sites – Syr John Rhys site, Mynach Site and Pontrhydfendigaid Site

Strengths	Weaknesses
Retain the provision on the three sites	Would not address the low number of pupils
No additional transport costs for the Local Authority	Need to retain 3 buildings
One school identity	Surplus places would remain
The three sites are inspected as one school	Loss of autonomy
	Would not lead to the required financial savings
	Present and future liabilities with regards maintaining the buildings would remain
	Challenge of having one class in the Foundation Learning Phase and the other in Key Stage 2 in order to meet the requirements of delivering the Curriculum for Wales effectively
Opportunities	Threats
Possible opportunities for further collaboration between the three sites	Pupil numbers at Syr John Rhys site may continue to decline

Likely impact on quality and standards in education

Pupils would continue to access the existing provision on three sites therefore there would likely be no impact on the quality and standards in education however there may be more opportunity for further collaboration and sharing of staff resources.

Likely impact on the community

It is anticipated that there would likely be minimal impact on the community as this is a continuation of the existing provision on three sites. The new Governing Body would also need to ensure a balance of members from all three communities.

Likely effect of different travelling times

It is anticipated that there will be no impact on travelling arrangements as this is a continuation of the existing provision on three sites.

Formal Federation between Ysgol Syr John Rhys and Ysgol Pontrhydfendigaid

Strengths	Weaknesses
Retention of school identity	A separate consultation would need to be undertaken to comply with 'Federation Process of Maintained Schools in Wales (WG 011/2014 Guidance)'
No disruption to staff or pupils	Would not address the low number of pupils
Retain presence in the local community	Need to retain both school buildings
One Governing Body	Would not lead to the required financial savings
No additional transport costs to the Local Authority	Cost per pupil would remain 64% in excess of county average at Ysgol Syr John Rhys
	Present and future liabilities would remain with regards building maintenance
	Would not be likely to improve the future viability of the school estate
	Two separate budgets would remain which may create operational difficulties
	Challenge of having one class in the foundation learning phase and the other in Key Stage 2 in order to meet the requirements of delivering the Curriculum for Wales effectively
	Both schools would continue to be inspected as separate entities and be required to provide separate returns to Welsh Government
Opportunities	Threats

Opportunity to share staff expertise across two sites	Pupil numbers at Ysgol Syr John Rhys may continue to decline
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Likely impact on quality and standards in education

Pupils would continue to access the existing provision therefore there would likely be no impact on the quality and standards in education

Likely impact on the community

It is anticipated that there would be no impact on the community as this is a continuation of the existing provision. The new Governing Body would also need to ensure a balance of members from both communities.

Likely effect of different travelling times

It is anticipated that there will be no impact on travelling arrangements for pupils as this is a continuation of the existing provision however, if there was further collaboration to ensure pupils access joint activities or events, some additional travel may be required.

Formal Federation between Ysgol Syr John Rhys, Ysgol Mynach and Ysgol Pontrhydfendigaid

Strengths	Weaknesses
Retention of school identity	A separate consultation would need to be undertaken to comply with 'Federation Process of Maintained Schools in Wales (WG 011/2014 Guidance)'
No disruption to staff or pupils	Would not address the low number of pupils
Retain presence in the local community	Need to retain three school buildings
One Governing Body	Would not lead to the required financial savings
No additional transport costs	Cost per pupil would remain 64% in excess of county average at Ysgol Syr John Rhys
	Present and future liabilities would remain with regards building maintenance
	Would not be likely to improve the future viability of the school estate
	Three separate budgets would remain which may create operational difficulties
	Challenge of having one class in the foundation learning phase and the other in Key Stage 2 in order to meet the

	requirements of delivering the Curriculum for Wales effectively
	All three schools would continue to be inspected as separate entities and be required to provide separate returns to Welsh Government.
Opportunities	Threats
Opportunity to share staff expertise across the three sites	Pupil numbers at Syr John Rhys may continue to decline

Likely impact on quality and standards in education

Pupils would continue to access the existing provision therefore there would likely be no impact on the quality and standards in education

Likely impact on the community

It is anticipated that there would be no impact on the community as this is a continuation of the existing provision. The new Governing Body would also need to ensure a balance of members from all three communities.

Likely effect of different travelling times

It is anticipated that there will be no impact on travelling arrangements for pupils as this is a continuation of the existing provision however, if there was further collaboration to ensure pupils access joint activities or events, some additional travel may be required.

Ceredigion County Council is consulting on a proposal to close Ysgol Syr John Rhys. The proposal is as follows:

- **To close Ysgol Syr John Rhys from the 31st August 2025, with pupils to transfer to Ysgol Mynach**

Statutory Consultation details

Consultee Opportunities

Consultees have the opportunity to:

- make representations regarding the alternatives to closure that have been identified by the proposer as well as the main proposal;
- suggest other alternatives to closure which would address the reasons for closure (i.e. the key challenges the school faces which the proposer is seeking to address).

Who we will consult with?

The Local Authority will consult with a range of stakeholders as required by the School Organisation Code, which include the following:

- Parents, carers, guardians and staff members of Ysgol Syr John Rhys and Ysgol Mynach
- Governing body of Ysgol Syr John Rhys and Ysgol Mynach
- Ceredigion County Councillors
- Welsh Government
- Constituency and Regional Assembly Members and Member of Parliament
- Estyn
- Teaching and non-teaching Trade Unions
- MWEPP (Mid Wales Education Partnership)
- Police and Crime Commissioner
- Town & Community Councils
- Church in Wales
- Regional Transport Consortia
- Welsh Language Commissioner
- Pupils at the school – in accordance with the WG School Organisation Code, consultation with pupils will take place in accordance with the Welsh children and young people's national participation standards.

The consultation period

The consultation period will commence on 14 October and will end on 3 December 2024.

The Statutory process

In order to implement the current proposal, the following provides a summary of the procedures as confirmed in the statutory code:

i. Consultation

- Consultation Document (this document) published confirming the details of the proposal – this will be published on the Local Authority’s website in addition to being sent to all stakeholders listed above.
- There will be a 42-day period to respond to the proposal, where stakeholders can:
 - Make representations regarding the alternatives to closure that have been identified by the proposer
 - Suggest other alternatives to closure which would address the reasons for closure (i.e. the key challenges the school faces which the proposer is seeking to address)

At the end of the consultation, a report will be published summarising the comments received and the Local Authority’s response to any issues raised. This will be published on the Local Authority’s website.

- Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider the Consultation Response Report and provide feedback to the Cabinet. This feedback may include recommendations.
- The Council’s Cabinet will consider the Consultation Report, the feedback received during the consultation period, and feedback from the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee and will decide whether to proceed with the proposal, to make changes to the proposal, or to not proceed with the proposal. If the Cabinet decide not to proceed, that will be the end of this proposal.

ii. Statutory Notice

- If the proposal is approved by Cabinet, a Statutory Notice will be published with details including the planned implementation date, and how to object. There will be a period of 28 days for people to submit written objections.
- The Final decision will be made by the full Council.
- If there are objections, an objection report will be published providing a summary of the objections and the Local Authority’s response to them. *It is important to note that only written objections submitted during the Statutory Notice period will be considered as objections and included in the Objection Report. Comments submitted as part of the consultation period will NOT be counted as objections. Should stakeholders wish their consultation responses to be considered as objections, they would need to be resubmitted in writing during the Statutory Notice period.*

iii. Implementation

If the Council decides to approve the proposal, it would be implemented in accordance with the date given in the Statutory Notice or any subsequent modified date.

Detailed below is the anticipated time-line which this process will follow:

Date	Activity
14 October – 3 December 2024	Statutory consultation period (42 days) – opportunity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make representations regarding the alternatives to closure that have been identified by the proposer as well as the main proposal; • suggest other alternatives to closure which would address the reasons for closure (i.e. the key challenges the school faces which the proposer is seeking to address).
13 February 2025	Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee – to consider the responses received to the consultation and to make a recommendation to Cabinet
18 February 2025	Formal Consultation Report together with all responses received presented to Cabinet for decision on whether to proceed with issuing Statutory Notice
February / March 2025	Statutory Notice Period – opportunity to present an objection to the proposal – objections must be made in writing or by email and sent before the end of 28 days beginning with the day which the notice is published
June / July 2025	Council – if objections are presented, an objection report will be presented providing a summary of the objections and the Local Authority’s response, together with copies of all objections received. The final decision on whether to implement the proposal will be made.

How to respond to the consultation

A consultation response form is attached to this document. An online version is also available on the council website on the following link:

<https://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/resident/schools-education/planning-education-provision/>

Completed forms and other written responses should be posted or emailed to the following:

Post: Chief Education Officer, Schools Service, Second Floor, Canolfan Rheidol, Rhodfa Padarn, Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth, SY23 3UE

e-mail: school.reviews@ceredigion.gov.uk

All correspondence should be received **by 3 December 2024**.

If you have any further questions about the consultation process or require a hard copy, please contact us on the details above or phone: 01545 570881

RESPONSE FORM – Proposal to close Ysgol Syr John Rhys

Ceredigion County Council is consulting on the proposal to close Ysgol Syr John Rhys from 31/8/25, with pupils to transfer to Ysgol Mynach.

The following response form allows stakeholders to comment on the main proposal, the alternative options and to suggest other alternative options.



1. Which of the following describes your association with the school affected by this proposal?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/ carer or guardian | <input type="checkbox"/> Prospective parent/ carer or guardian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Governor | <input type="checkbox"/> Staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member of community | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Council |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: please specify _____ | |

2. Please provide any comments on the proposal to close Ysgol Syr John Rhys:

3. Are there any other options that you think the Local Authority should be considering for Ysgol Syr John Rhys, which would address the issues raised in the Consultation Document?

Yes

No

If yes, please outline the alternative option(s):

4. Do you have any concerns about the impact of the proposal to close Ysgol Syr John Rhys on any of the following:

Community

People of protected characteristics *i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation*

Other: please specify _____

Please provide further details below:

5. We are required by the Welsh Language Standards to consider the effects of any policy decisions on the Welsh Language.

a. In your opinion, what positive or adverse effects would this proposal have on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

b. How do you think the proposal could be formulated or revised so that it would have positive or more positive effects on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

c. How do you think the proposal could be formulated or revised so that it would not have adverse effects or have less adverse effects on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

6. At the end of the consultation period, a Consultation Report will be published summarising the issues raised by consultees and the Local Authority's response to those issues.

Would you like to be informed of the publication of the Consultation Report?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide an e-mail address or postal address:

Thank you for completing the response form

Completed response forms should be sent to the following address, **to arrive no later than 3 December 2024** or be emailed to the email address below.

Chief Education Officer,
Schools Service,
Second Floor,
Canolfan Rheidol,
Rhodfa Padarn,
Llanbadarn Fawr,
Aberystwyth,
SY23 3UE

E-mail: School.reviews@ceredigion.gov.uk