

Pembrokeshire County Council

Cyngor Sir Benfro



CHILDREN & SCHOOLS

**Proposal to Federate Ysgol Gymunedol
Brynconin and Ysgol Gymunedol
Maenclochog**

CONSULTATION REPORT

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July 2019

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Foreword

Pembrokeshire County Council is responsible for promoting high educational standards and for delivering efficient primary and secondary education. Having the right schools in the right places and ensuring that they are fit for the 21st century learner and having effective leaders in our schools are considered central to this and is a challenge facing councils across Wales.

This consultation report summarises the consultation process and responses received to the proposal to federate Ysgol Gymunedol Brynconin and Ysgol Gymunedol Maenclochog

Pembrokeshire County Council will consider this Consultation Report at its meeting on 18 July 2019.

Kate Evan-Hughes
Director for Children and Schools

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1. Introduction

Pembrokeshire County Council has a statutory duty to secure sufficient and suitable school places in its area and to determine whether it is making the best use of the resources and facilities to deliver the opportunities that children deserve.

Preliminary consultation was undertaken with the governing bodies of the two schools on the proposal to federate Ysgol Gymunedol Brynconin and Ysgol Gymunedol Maenclochog. Both governing bodies gave their support to the proposal to proceed to public consultation.

As a result, the Director for Children and Schools submitted a report to the Council in December 2018 on the outcome of that initial consultation and to recommend a way forward. The decision of Pembrokeshire County Council on 13 December 2018 was: that the Director for Children and Schools be authorised to commence consultation on the proposal to federate Ysgol Gymunedol Maenclochog and Ysgol Gymunedol Brynconin.

The subsequent statutory consultation was undertaken during the period 8 April 2019 until 24 May 2019.

This document represents the County Council's responsibility under The Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014 to publish a summary of the responses to the proposals together with the local authority's comments on the local authority's website.

2. Consultation Arrangements

2.1 General Arrangements

The Consultation Document was published on 8 April 2019; this date also represented the beginning of the statutory consultation period. The consultation period ended on 24 May 2019, lasting just over six weeks to take account of the school holiday period. The Consultation Document was distributed or links were sent to all statutory consultees listed on page 5 of that document. In addition, it was distributed or links were sent to those named on page 6 of that document (other than to the regional AM who no longer sits), though this was not a statutory requirement.

The Consultation Document was made available on the County Council's website at www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/haveyoursay and responses could be submitted online.

Paper copies of the proposals were available at both schools.

A press release was issued to the local media to raise awareness of the consultation and to highlight how local people could take part in the process. The County Council also used its social media sites to publicise the consultation process. In addition, the public consultation sessions were publicised by means of a letter / email which was distributed to parents of current pupils at both schools.

The responses received are recorded in **APPENDIX 1**

2.2 Public Meetings

Consultation and information sessions for staff and the public were held as follows:

- 7 May – Ysgol Gymunedol Brynconin 4.00 pm (staff of both schools)
- 7 May – Ysgol Gymunedol Brynconin 6.00 pm (public)
- 8 May – Ysgol Gymunedol Maenclochog 6.00 pm (public)

The Deputy Chief Education Officer, Governors' Support Services Manager and Challenge Adviser attended the meetings to provide information and to respond to questions.

2.3 Consultation with pupils

The Children and Young People's Rights Officer visited both schools on 22nd May 2019 to discuss the proposals and to seek responses from members of the school councils.

The information provided and pupils' responses are recorded in **APPENDIX 2**.

3. Consultation Responses

3.1 Summary of responses received

The responses received to the consultation, where the writer was prepared for the comment to be made public, are recorded in **APPENDIX 1**. Each contribution is followed by the LA's (the proposer) response to each comment received

Eighty five written responses were received. 45% supported the proposal, 41% did not support. 9% did not feel strongly one way or the other. The remainder did not indicate their view.

Clearly, there are divided opinions within the two communities. The Brynconinn community is more in favour of proceeding than is the Maenclochog Community, some of whom feel the leadership of their school has been reduced as a result of sharing their headteacher with another school and do not identify benefits to the current collaboration.

Common concerns, leading to lack of support for the proposal, were that each school would not have its own headteacher and that the federated GB may not treat each school fairly, in terms of budget and time spent at each school by the headteacher. Other concerns related to operational aspects of the collaboration.

Common reasons for supporting the proposal were the opportunity to have a headteacher without a teaching commitment and the financial efficiency arising from sharing a headteacher which would remain within the schools. Many of those supporting the proposal regarded the current collaboration as successful. A small expressed the view that they were happy for this to continue without federation, but there is little support from Welsh Government for such arrangements being long term.

There was support for each community retaining its own school, which would arise from federation.

There was significant support from pupils of both schools to proceed with the federation as proposed. They acknowledged some benefits that had arisen from the existing collaboration and had confidence in the federated GB treating both schools fairly. **APPENDIX 2**.

3.2 Feedback requested by the Local Authority

On the response form, the proposer particularly invited comments on: the proposed name of the federation; the proposed composition of the governing body; the recommendation that there should be only one Headteacher for the two schools.

The proposed name of the federation was 'The Federation of Ysgol Gymunedol Brynconin and Ysgol Gymunedol Maenclochog'. One response suggested that this should be in Welsh as both schools are Welsh medium. The LA acknowledges this and, in a change from the original proposal, proposes the federation should be called 'Ffederasiwn Ysgol Gymunedol Brynconin ac Ysgol Gymunedol Maenclochog'

There was support for the GB having a fair representation from each community.

No viable alternative proposals to federation, other than retaining the status quo, were suggested by respondents, though suggestions were made regarding staffing.

3.3 Date for federation to commence

The proposal that went out to consultation was that the federation should commence on 1 September 2019. However, in view of feedback from the spring term governing body meetings of each school, the Local Authority proposes that the federation should commence on 1 January 2020. This takes account of the time scale between Council making a decision and the start of the new term. With the proposed change in the date of implementation, the GBs and schools can prepare for the autumn term knowing the management arrangements are as they are now. They will have time to prepare new management arrangements to be in place for 1 January 2020, irrespective of the decision made by Council.

APPENDIX 1

Responses to Proposal to Federate Ysgol Gymunedol Brynconin and Ysgol Gymunedol Maenclochog

Total number of responses received – 85

NB percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number

Please indicate which of the following reflects your views on the proposal
(please tick only one)

Response	Number	Percentage of 85
I do not feel strongly one way or the other	8	9%
I support the proposal	38	45%
I do not support the proposal	35	41%
No reply	4	5%
Total	85	100%

Please tell us what your interest in the consultation is? (please tick all that apply)

Response	Number
Ysgol Gymunedol Brynconin	32
Ysgol Gymunedol Maenclochog	35
Pre-school parent	2
Staff	14
Parent	30
Governor	7
Local resident	18
Other, please specify: ▪ Former pupil x 5 ▪ Current school volunteer and parent until July 2018 ▪ Cyngor Cymuned Mynachlog-ddu. ▪ Llandissillio Community Council	9
Total	147

Please provide your comments on the proposal

Forty one out of fifty five respondents who made comments were happy for them to be made publicly available. Fourteen other respondents requested that their comments were not made publicly available. However, their support for or opposition to the proposal is included in the first table above.

Ref	COMMENTS
1	Having got a child in a school which has a shared head I don't think it works. Schools need their own head to function effectively. I have spoken with parents from other schools in the same position and they all say the same
	Response <i>The two schools in a Federation in Pembrokeshire are both in the green category and, in their Estyn inspection in 2017 received 'good' in four areas and 'excellent' in the other. There are examples of successful federations in many parts of the country and, as is clear from the responses here, other parents have different views.</i>
2	I believe the proposal will be beneficial to both schools - I strongly believe that appointing a HT to Brynconin who has a significant teaching responsibility would not allow the school to develop. In my opinion all Pembrokeshire schools regardless of size should have non-teaching HTs to ensure schools are able to make strong progress and be managed strategically.
	Response <i>In many schools, the budget does not allow for a non-teaching Head. By federating, a Head's teaching commitment is removed or significantly reduced allowing the Head to focus on school improvement and leadership.</i>
3	I don't believe that this federation is within either schools best interest. Both schools have a decent number of pupils, so would justify a full time Head at both sites. There are much smaller schools than these with a full time Head. Maenclochog school has suffered due to the losing their Head for 2 days a week for the past year and a half! The behaviour and discipline has deteriorated as well as the day-to-day running of the school and communication with parents. Also, the Head's relationship with the pupils have changed! With no disrespect to the Head as she is doing her best but no one can give 100% to both schools and it's the pupils who are suffering. This federation is only taking place due to being unable to find a Head for Brynconin and for financial benefit. It is not in the children's best interest. Maybe this is the time to ask and look into why there are no new Head's available? They are put under so much pressure and what is expected of them is too much for someone, especially if they have a family of their own too!! I find the admin knows more of what's going on in school than the

	<p>Head. I don't find it acceptable that the day to day running of the school is left to the admin. Also, Maenclochog has no deputy! If the Head is taken out on a regular basis a deputy should be appointed so you have someone in authority at the school every day to make decisions as and when needed. This would also help with discipline! Many prospective parents are weary of no full time Head which could easily result in a child going to another school unnecessary, which also has a financial impact on the school.</p>
	<p><i>Ensuring good discipline is the role of all staff, though the role of a Head is important in this. Were a Deputy to be appointed to Maenclochog, he/she would have a significant teaching role. The staffing structures in the federated schools will be the decision of the federated GB. The single GB may choose to make appointments across both schools. Many of the concerns expressed relate to operational matters which can be resolved.</i></p>
4	<p>Small rural schools are at threat within this county and often strength is in numbers, I believe that a federation between both will secure the future of both sites and enhance learning for all pupils. Mrs Clark is a well-respected head and is capable of bringing the standard of both schools in line for the better. Every child and member of staff will benefit by collaborating on skills, knowledge, experience and funds. Let's trust the leadership team and not get left behind.</p>
	<p>Response <i>The proposer welcomes this response but notes that what is put in place must be sustainable and beneficial when staff change.</i></p>
5	<p>Personally I don't see that there will be too many changes if the federation goes ahead. The main priority is the education of our children. If the federation does not have an effect on them then all for it.</p>
	<p>Response <i>The proposer welcomes this response, but anticipates that the federation will have a positive effect rather than no effect.</i></p>
6	<p>Good evening, at the moment I do not feel that enough information has been given, with regards to what will happen if this federation does not take place, what will this mean for the school?</p>
	<p><i>There can be no certainty at this time as to what will happen if federation does not take place; the GBs and the LA will have to look at options for the leadership of the two schools. Amongst options to explore would be each school having its own headteacher. However, the proposal document refers to difficulties in recruitment. If a school fails in an attempt to recruit a Head, an Acting Head may be appointed in the short term and the option of federating may need to be reconsidered.</i></p>
7	<p>1) The proposal lacks sufficient information and detail with which to make an informed decision. The actual content that is specific and relevant to</p>

Maenclochog and Brynconin schools is very little. Whilst accepting the constraints of a statutory consultation in terms of permitted content, there is no absolutely no reason why supplementary materials, perhaps published by the existing governing bodies, could not have been provided to parents to help them make an informed choice, e.g. realistic opportunities and proposals for additional shared working and pooling of resources based on current staff skills and knowledge, information on alternative options including what happens if the federation does not go ahead. . 2) There is a lack of evidence to support the theoretical benefits of a federation model. Whilst accepting that there are many variables that affect school and pupil information, it is entirely unacceptable that the federation model is being rolled out in Pembrokeshire without some assessment of 'before and after' - we are being asked to take a leap of faith and trust that it is a better model with no evidence (qualitative or quantitative) to support this claim. Of particular concern is the claim that it will be easier to recruit a Head to a federated school - you have no experience of this in Pembrokeshire so how can you possibly know?!! 3) The autonomy of Maenclochog School will be lost. The consultation proposal goes to great lengths to emphasise that the school will continue to serve the community and not lose its identify but how can this be assured if it does not have its own governing body, supported by its own dedicated PTA (which incidentally funds school iPads, transport, learning resources)? Whilst I support the sharing of a Head-teacher across the two schools, I do not support the model of a joint governing body. It is perfectly possible for each school to maintain its own governing body and then work collaboratively on specific issues should the need or opportunity arise, agreeing shared or pooled arrangements (e.g. staff training budget) as necessary but maintaining independence on other issues. I believe the cost savings associated with having one joint governing body versus two are negligible and inconsequential 4) I am concerned about the risk of bias in the proposed structure of the joint governing body. I agree that there should be equal numbers of parent governors, teachers and staff from each school. I am concerned that it will be extremely difficult to ensure there is no bias in the selection of local authority and community governors (7 in total) and their 'independence' will be key to balance out what is likely to be a vested interest on the part of parent governors from each community to favour their school (i.e. Maenclochog parent governors are much more likely to vote to maintain the status quo / benefit Maenclochog school than Brynconin parent governors). 5) The squeeze on educational funding is not sustainable. The issue at the heart of this is a constant squeeze on educational funding which means that increasingly scarce resources have to be spread ever more thinly. The pupils of today are the councillors, doctors, social workers, care assistants and head teachers of tomorrow. In accordance with your statutory well-being duty under the Well-being of Future Generations Act, it makes no sense to reduce support for future generations that will sustain us. I appreciate that Council budgets are under pressure in all areas, but cuts to educational funding make no sense. I also resent the fact that there is pressure (unintended or otherwise) to

	accept the proposal as a decision not to federate will mean the loss of more teaching resource at Maenclochog due to a lack of available funds.
	Response <i>Point 1 has been addressed partly, in the response to 6, above. Successful federations exist in Pembrokeshire and other Local Authorities. However, this is not a guarantee of future success of a new federation., which depends on several factors. In terms of future recruitment of a Head, a federation provides a higher salary and professional development for candidates, which is likely to attract more interest. However, a number of factors impact on the level of interest a post attracts. There is no reason for the autonomy of Maenclochog School to be lost. The PTA is a separate entity from the GB and can continue to exist to support solely Maenclochog School. The proposer welcomes the feedback on equal representation from both schools for parent, teacher and staff governors. The LA would seek to nominate governors who have the interests of BOTH schools at heart and will encourage the GB to do the same for its community governors. One of the keys to a successful federation is to have a GB whose members do not adopt partisan positions. The proposer acknowledges the pressure on educational funding. Any salary savings arising from federation are retained by the schools, not returned to the LA. If either school has to fund all of the cost of its own Head, there are implications for other areas of expenditure that cannot be ignored.</i>
	In order to make the two schools sustainable and offer the strongest educational opportunities for pupils at both schools I believe that this is the most acceptable solution.
8	Response <i>The proposer welcomes that this response recognises sustainability and educational opportunities at both schools as an outcome of the proposed federation.</i>
9	I am a past pupil of Ysgol Brynconin as are my children, and think it's important to the community to have the school at its heart for future generations.
	Response <i>The federation will maintain Ysgol Brynconin as a school in its own community.</i>
10	I went to Brynconin as a youngster, and it's a fabulous school. We need to keep it going! It's essential for the future generations of the people of Llandissilio and the surrounding areas.
	Response <i>The federation will maintain Ysgol Brynconin as a school in its own community.</i>
11	Growing up in Clynderwen and being a past pupil of Brynconin I feel it is very important to have a school in the village and a strong part of our community growing up and now. Especially important for my own children going there.

	Response <i>The federation will maintain Ysgol Brynconin as a school in its own community.</i>
12	I am a former pupil of Ysgol Brynconin and think it is so important to have a school in the community of Clunderwen & Llandissilio, giving local children a learning environment on their doorstep within the local community support. I feel I benefitted from this as a child and hope the next generation get the same chance also.
	Response <i>The federation will maintain Ysgol Brynconin as a school in its own community.</i>
13	I was a past pupil of Ysgol Brynconin and feel strongly about the importance of having a school in the community of Clunderwen & Llandissilio. Having a local school allows the children the opportunity to have better education by making sure the children are learning about local history as well as the curriculum.
	Response <i>The federation will maintain Ysgol Brynconin as a school in its own community. Although some curriculum planning may be shared as a result of federation, pupils in each school can develop similar skills while studying their own, different, local community.</i>
14	I was a past pupil of Ysgol Brynconin. I think it is vital for the community of Clunderwen & Llandissilio to have a local school. Neighbouring schools are at capacity and mean many pupils would face difficulties getting to and from school. Living in the area we benefitted from having a school in our community and it is very important for the next generation.
	Response <i>The federation will maintain Ysgol Brynconin as a school in its own community.</i>
15	I previously put the wrong answer. Closing the school would be a terrible loss to the community.
	Response <i>The proposal is to federate Ysgol Brynconin with Ysgol Maenclochog and to maintain each school in its own community, not to close either school.</i>
16	I believe this will benefit all the stakeholders in both schools
	Response <i>The proposer welcomes this response and the recognition that both schools stand to benefit.</i>
17	I have observed in the period in which the schools have been in a soft form of federation that pupils have benefited from continuity and enhanced opportunities for a variety of enriching experiences. I am glad that the unique identity of the school will be maintained but also that there will be a

	shared ethos and joint working to provide good practice, clear policies and boundaries. Collaboration has already occurred in all these areas. As a long term member of staff I have benefited from clear and supportive leadership following a period of flux.
	Response <i>The proposer welcomes the response and that it is a member of staff recognising the benefits that have resulted during the period of collaboration.</i>
18	In the long term, I think both schools will benefit from joining together. Both schools will be able to support each other by sharing ideas and reflecting upon practices in each school. I also think that it will help with the recruitment of head-teachers in the future as running 2 schools is more of an appeal than being a "teacher-head".
	Response <i>The proposer welcomes the benefits identified by the responder. Future recruitment is difficult to predict, but the response reflects the proposer's position.</i>
19	Difficulty in recruiting head-teachers is a problem across Wales, especially so in Welsh speaking communities. The authority face tough decisions in their effort to keep primary schools open in small communities such as Llandisilio and Maenclochog. Federating these two schools is a reasonable option. Managing a federation of two relatively close schools could be an attractive proposal for an individual now working in a small school, who is looking for professional development. Because of the combination of staff and pupil numbers the head teacher could concentrate on managing both sites and reduce their classroom commitments. The authority would however need to support both schools when adapting the governance of the schools to ensure both communities have equal say. We have been informed that both schools would continue to receive separate budgets and each school will elect a finance sub-committee to decide on how best to use the budget for each of the schools. The cost of certain resources could be shared which would be advantageous for both schools. Financial constraints are putting all schools under huge pressure, and future appointment of staff members would enable any successful candidate to work across both sites, if that was required. I have not any suitable alternative to the proposal of federating both schools.
	Response <i>The proposer welcomes the responder's recognition of the positive aspects of the proposal. However, it is not true to say that each school will elect a finance sub-committee. The GB will decide on its committee structure and, while it will be allowed to choose separate finance committees, in order to ensure collaborative working it is usual for one finance committee to be responsible for both schools. The LA recognises the need to support governance and will provide that support. Reassurance as to monitoring the relative expenditure at each school may be provided by a change in the LA's 'Scheme for Financing Schools (April</i>

	<p>2019) which requires that <u>“12.6.4 The purchase of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) for LMS Financial Advice and Guidance will be required for a minimum period of three years in the case of newly established school entities or where Federations are put in place. This is to provide an assurance that the new entity is established on a firm financial footing”</u>. This ensures that a federation will receive the support of LA officers in allocating and monitoring its finances for the first three years, at least.</p>
20	<p>I do not see that having a shared head-teacher who is only on the premises for half a week can be advantageous to the interests of either staff, parents, and most importantly children. Over the past two years of soft federation there hasn't been a continuous appointed member of staff in charge during the periods when the head-teacher is off site, instead this role has been shared between current full time teaching staff who have no previous experience and most importantly time. I think for everyone's best interests you need an appointed leader on site to deal with daily occurrences. Also, I do not agree with the need for a joint Governing Body. It would be in both schools best interests for them to be separate in dealing with individual finances and circumstances that are personal to that school. The advantages of shared expertise between staff and children can still go ahead without the need to federate. Furthermore from looking at successful examples of other federated schools in Pembrokeshire, I do not believe the two schools Maenclochog and Brynconin work closely enough as communities for this federation to be successful</p>
	<p>Response Systems can be in place to 'deal with daily occurrences' that do not require the Head's direct involvement. A Head's role is in securing school improvement; one approach is to effectively distribute aspects of leadership amongst staff. The proposal document recognises that this can be further improved. One purpose of the trial was to give teaching staff experience of this during the course of the trial. The federated GB would work with the Head in identifying roles for individuals and the time needed to fulfil them.</p>
21	<p>The trial has demonstrated how both schools can work together and the role of a shared acting executive head-teacher has had a positive impact on Brynconin. I would hope for equity within the proposal and subject to finance, each school should contribute equally to the head-teacher role (and in theory have equal amounts of time). I would hope that where governors are elected to represent one community/school, the numbers from each remain equal (as proposed).</p>
	<p>Response The proposer welcomes the support for the trial and the equity requested.</p>
22	<p>In light of falling numbers and also the difficulties in recruiting head-teachers to small welsh medium primary schools, I feel this federation would be in the best interest for the future of both schools involved.</p>

	Response <i>The proposer welcomes the acceptance of the reality of the situation and the support for the proposal.</i>
23	Having attended meetings and listened to teachers and governors I am in favour of the federation as I feel it is the only way forward for Brynconin following the failure to recruit a head-teacher. My hope is that the federation will raise standards in teaching and provide an opportunity to share resources, which will ultimately benefit the pupils and secure the retention of quality teaching staff.
	Response <i>The proposer welcomes this response and shares the same aspirations for both schools</i>
24	Federation would provide a financial and workforce solution following Ysgol Brynconin's inability to recruit to the head position. The school is the heart of the community and its future is detrimental to maintain a diverse population across the lifespan in the area. Its bilingualism sustains welsh language and culture, enhancing language skill acquisition. The two schools are similar in terms of demographics with similar geography and values making it a good match. The success of the federation seems highly promising based on the outcomes and performance of the school since Mrs.Clarke was established as a federation head during the "pilot"/consultation" phase we have had. 50/50 presence at both schools seems fair which I hope the council will support financially if this is necessary for this equity to occur within federation.
	Response <i>The proposer welcomes most aspects of this response, though is not clear what is meant by the second sentence. The Council will fund both schools separately and it is for the GB to decide how the Head's time is allocated. The LA will not be able to offer additional financial support to achieve this.</i>
25	I do not believe that the proposal is in the best of interest of Maenclochog school and I feel this would just be the beginning of a future merger.
	Response <i>There are no plans to merge the schools. The LA is of the view that the schools should remain separate entities, clearly identified with the community each serves and that this can be achieved through federation. It is also of the view that both schools will benefit.</i>
26	We hope that pupils will continue to receive the best possible education under the new system. I hope that discipline will not suffer as a result of the head-teacher being absent for a period each week
	Response <i>Systems can be put in place to ensure discipline does not suffer. The school and parents need to work together to ensure good discipline while recognising that staff are responsible for securing good behaviour in their own classroom and around the school. While recognising</i>

	<i>that support from a colleague may be needed, this does not have to be the Head at the time of the poor behaviour.</i>
27	I believe that this is the way forward to keep a small community school open. With limited Welsh head-teachers and demands in education, the possibility of a full time head-teacher would be difficult as most head-teachers would prefer a non-teaching post in a larger school. This way the school remains separate in its own community without the worry of amalgamation
	Response <i>The proposer welcomes the acceptance of its position and the recognition that each school retains its position in its own community.</i>
28	In my opinion it will provide strong and consistent leadership to both schools which will in turn help improve quality and standards
	Response <i>The proposer welcomes this response</i>
29	My feeling is that the primary driving force behind the Federation is to save money. This seems to be mainly at the expense of the teacher/classroom support headcount. I feel that we should be doing everything we can to retain small community schools that have a close link with the community surrounding them. The main reason for choosing Maenclochog for my own children was its warm, nurturing and "one big family" feel. I am concerned that federating the two schools will dilute this "feel" due to the merging of two governing bodies who will jointly need to satisfy the requirements of a much wider community
	Response <i>There is no reason for the 'feel' of Maenclochog school to change due to federation or for it to lose its link with its community. The LA saves no money by federation. The schools receive the same formula funding whether federated or not and retain for themselves any savings made through funding only a portion of the Head's salary.</i>
30	I don't not think either school now runs at their full potential
	Response <i>The proposer is not clear whether the responder is attributing this to the current collaboration nor the reasons for making this statement.</i>
31	Schools should have a head teacher for each school. Bulk buying can be done without being a federation...
	Response <i>There are many successful schools that do not have a headteacher of their own. The LA's procurement section has secured favourable purchase prices for many items in schools. The savings on bulk buying by two schools rather than one are not significant and, on its own, not a driver for federation.</i>
32	I believe that the future of a small community school depends on a federation as there are limited Welsh speaking head-teachers being

	recruited at the moment. Also the fact that they would be a teaching head but in a federated school there is a possibility of a non-teaching head
	Response <i>The proposer welcomes the responder's understanding of the situation.</i>
33	Lack of clear leadership in Maenclochog School on days the head-teacher is at Brynconin School. The loss of a teacher and 3 LSA's during the summer term of 2018 and the school is still facing financial difficulties. Planning proposal for houses in Maenclochog have been passed-number of pupils will increase - greater need for a head to be full time at Maenclochog. Behaviour of children at both schools in need of clear discipline strategies. Neither School is running at its full potential. Too much pressure on one head without the support of a deputy or senior management team. Well-being of staff-current work-load.
	Response <i>Systems can be implemented to improve behaviour and leadership on days the Head is not on site and to develop distributed leadership. All staff have a role in this. Maenclochog School is funded according to the same formula as all other schools in the LA and has to manage its budget, facing the same challenges as other schools. The cost-savings arising from federation will be retained by the two schools, not by the LA. Additional pupils wishing to attend either school will bring an increased budget to the school and the GB can choose to alter the staff and leadership structure. Legislation allows for the dissolution of any federation in the future.</i>
34	Concerned on the leadership of Maenclochog school going forward
	Response <i>The LA will support both schools, whether in a federation or not, on all aspects it identifies as being in need of improvement.</i>
35	I believe that every school should have a head-teacher, we have been privileged to have had our own teaching head at Ysgol Maenclochog for as long as we have. Though unfortunately we live in uncertain times with budget cuts around every corner and the harsh reality is that the budget that affords us a teaching head is gone. Therefore we must look ahead and try to keep both schools viable and thus it seems is the only way in order to save anymore staff redundancies (leaving our children in greater class sizes). The suggestion of being able to "pool" budgets for school improvements is useful as long as it is fairly shared between the two schools.
	Response <i>This response reflects the proposer's position. The LA will actively monitor use of pooled budgets, to ensure fair practice and the federated GB will have to purchase the Service Level Agreement the LA offers for support for financial management.</i>

36	<p>I am happy to support the proposal and realise the soft federation that has been in existence for some time has worked reasonably well. There are advantages to two small country schools working together with shared ideas and resources and helps take some pressure off the individual budgets. However I believe it is critical for the Authority to work closely with both schools and the Governing Body to help make a success of this fairly new concept and create a meaningful succession plan to alleviate future recruitment issues that might arise particularly when it comes to appoint future heads.</p>
	<p>Response <i>The proposer welcomes this response and will support both schools and the federated GB. The LA is active in training and supporting future Heads</i></p>
37	<p>At present I cannot fully support the proposal because not enough information or supportive evidence has been provided by the County Council or Maenclochog and Brynconin schools' governing bodies and current shared head. Unfortunately the consultation document written lacks substance, meaningful information and relevant facts, in essences it sets out a general proposal with little evidential information from which to make an informed decision e.g. savings gained to date, what has been achieved with examples, how things have operated under the trial, what has and has not worked well and why. A significant amount of benefits outlined in the proposal could be gained through co-operative working with other schools both within and without Pembrokeshire and even organisations outside the education sector, therefore, negating the requirement to federate. Consequently the true advantages to federating solely lies in potentially decreased staffing costs and assumed future recruitment attractiveness. These, in the current economic and recruitment climate, are increasingly important, but not enough detail has been provided to stakeholders on how this can be achieved in Maenclochog and Brynconin schools or examples of how it has successfully been achieved in other schools (including those outside Pembrokeshire) been given. As a result of this poor communication the potential for optimum benefit gain under the trail does not appear to have been achieved and therefore correctly or incorrectly suggests little drive or vision on the part of the current leadership if the proposal was to be implemented. Consequently stakeholders are not filled with confidence in the proposal and its future success.</p>
38	<p>Response <i>It is disappointing the respondent feels not enough information has been given. Following a consultation meeting at Maenclochog School, the school provided further information on what had been done during the period of collaboration. While accepting that some of the benefits outlined can be gained in the way described in the response, federation puts the collaboration on a firmer footing in the long term. Federation does not prohibit the schools from collaborating with other schools to gain further benefits. Success in other federations does not guarantee similar success</i></p>

	<i>in a new federation, but potential benefits have been outlined. The responses to the consultation challenge the statement made in the last sentence. Other stakeholders have expressed their confidence in the proposal, though it is acknowledged that opinions do differ.</i>
39	I think what ever happens will be in the best interest for the children and what's best to keep these schools running. All the teachers and Mrs Clarke are amazing strong teachers and know they will cope with whatever happens .
	Response <i>The proposer welcomes this response but stresses that any developments must be sustainable when there are changes to staffing in the future.</i>
40	<p>This response was provided in Welsh and the English translation is below.</p> <p>y dym yn rhieni i 3 o blant, dau sydd yn mynychu ysgol Brynconin, ac un sydd eisoes wedi symud i addysg uwchradd, ac yn byw y tu allan i bentref Llandysilio. Rydym yn ddiolchgar iawn bod ysgol mor groesawgar ar drothwy'r drws sydd yn gwreiddio ymdeimlad o gymuned gref yn y plant. Nhw yw'r bedwaredd genhedlaeth o'm teulu i fynychu ysgol Brynconin felly, fel teulu mae dyfodol yr ysgol yn bwysig tu hwnt i ni. Mae ein plant mor hapus yn mynd i'r ysgol yn ddyddiol diolch i'r staff ymroddgar a phrofiadol sy'n gweithio yno. Am hyn rydym mor ddiolchgar. Serch hyn rydym wedi teimlo braidd yn ansicr am y ffederasiwn gydag Ysgol Maenclochog i fod yn onest. Pryderwn ei fod yn adlewyrchiad trist iawn ar ddyfodol yr iaith Gymraeg o fewn ein cymunedau gan ei fod yn meddwl bod llai o gyfleoedd i athrawon iaith Gymraeg i ddatblygu yn broffesiynol i fod yn benaethiaid. Credaf yn bersonol mi ddylai Cyngor sir Benfro amddiffyn cymunedau fel Llandysilio a Maen clochog a sicrhau bod digon o gyfleoedd i annog pobl i weithio ac i fyw yn y Gymraeg o fewn ein cymunedau i atal pobl symud i ffwrdd, felly teimlwn fod dyletswydd ar y Cyngor i gymryd camau i hybu ac amddiffyn yr iaith Gymraeg o fewn ein cymunedau. Rydym hefyd yn gweld manteision i ffedereiddio. Mae'r sgiliau ac arbennigedd helaeth sydd gydag athrawon y ddwy ysgol ei gynnig er mwyn cyfoethogi profiadau dysgu ac addysgu yn mynd i fod yn fantais rwy'n siŵr. Hefyd mi fydd modd i rannu costau hyfforddiant, cynllunio ar gyfer themâu ar y cyd a rhannu adnoddau sydd yn hyfryd. Un o fy ngofidion eraill i yw fy mod i ddim yn gweld sut gall un bwrdd llywodraethol ar gyfer y ddwy ysgol i weithio yn effeithiol. Bydd blaenoriaethau gwahanol gyda'r ddwy ysgol i weithredu arnynt a gweledigaeth wahanol gyda llywodraethwyr yr ysgolion. Mae'n bosib mi fydd hyn yn heriol iawn a chyfnodau o wrthdaro yn ffurfio rhwng llywodraethwyr y ddwy ysgol. Ar ddiwe dd y dydd, wrth wraidd hyn i gyd mae dyletswydd ar bawb i sicrhau bod dyfodol y ddwy ysgol yma yn cael eu hamddiffyn ar gyfer cenedlaethau'r dyfodol.</p> <p>We are the parents of three children - two of which attend Ysgol Brynconin and one that has already moved into secondary education – and we live</p>

	<p>outside the village of Llandysilio. We are very grateful that such a welcoming school is located on our doorstep, which provides children with a strong sense of community. They are the fourth generation of my family to attend Ysgol Brynconin and, as a result, the school's future is very important to us as a family. Thanks to the dedicated and experienced staff that work there, our children are very happy attending the school every day. For this, we are very grateful. However, we have to admit that we feel rather uncertain about the federation with Ysgol Maenclochog. We are concerned that this is a sad reflection of the future of the Welsh language in our communities because it means that there are fewer opportunities for Welsh-speaking teachers to develop professionally and to become head-teachers. Personally, I believe that Pembrokeshire County Council should protect communities such as Llandysilio and Maenclochog and ensure that there are enough opportunities to encourage people to work and to live their lives through the medium of Welsh within our communities and to prevent people from moving away. We therefore believe that there is a duty on the Council to take steps to promote and protect the Welsh language within our communities. We can also see the advantages of federating. I am sure that the extensive skills and expertise that are possessed by the teachers of both schools will enrich teaching and pupils' learning experiences. It will also be a way of sharing training costs, planning themes together and sharing resources. One of my other concerns is that I cannot imagine how having one governing body for both schools will work effectively. Both schools will have different priorities to implement and the governors will have different visions. It is possible that this will be very challenging and could lead to disagreements between the governors of both schools. At the end of the day, everyone has a duty to ensure that the future of both schools is protected for future generations.</p>
	<p>Response <i>The proposal does not impact on Welsh language provision in either community, though it is acknowledged that there may be one fewer post available for a Welsh speaking Head. The concerns regarding governance are also acknowledged but the LA will support the GB to work in the interests of both schools.</i></p>
<p>41</p>	<p>This response was provided in Welsh and the English translation is below.</p> <p>Ysgol Maenclochog!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel very strongly that no direct answers are being communicated to parents • It is the education of the children which is important and as this happens (the federation process ?), I feel strongly that this won't be (?) <i>last word not legible</i>
	<p>Response <i>The proposer has answered all questions asked but acknowledges that some may not like the answers provided. It is of the view that the proposed federation of the two schools provides opportunities to improve the education of children in both communities.</i></p>

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PLEASE PROVIDE ANY ALTERNATIVES YOU HAVE TO THE PROPOSAL

Twenty three responses were received. Seventeen responders were happy for their responses to be made public, six were not.

A	Leave the schools individual and reinstate a head in each
	<i>Response This is an option but the proposal is based on consideration of the potential for school improvement in both schools and efficient use of resources.</i>
B	Keep the Head at Maenclochog, so that the school is running at it's best to attract more pupils! Maybe to save money at Brynconin they could also as Maenclochog change their weekly timetable to that they have 4.5 school day for the children. In regards to attracting a Head, the whole education system needs to be looked at, as no one wants these jobs anymore. I personally know of at least 4 teachers who have given up the teaching profession due to workload and the constant unreasonable expectations from one person!
	<i>Response The timing of the school day is a decision for the GB to make. The difficulty in recruiting Heads is acknowledged.</i>
C	None
	<i>Response None</i>
D	I support in full the sharing of a head-teacher between Ysgol Maenclochog and Ysgol Brynconin (it makes financial and practical sense) and agree that it should be formalised. My alternative proposal is that the existing governing bodies of the two schools are retained (instead of there being a joint one), but that a partnership agreement (MoU / MoA) is signed which lays the foundation for collaborative working on specific and occasional issues (e.g. staff training). This would retain the autonomy of each school but ensure that genuine and carefully considered opportunities for collaboration and the pooling of resources are not missed.
	<i>Response The Welsh Government favours long term formal arrangements for school leadership. Federation arrangements prescribe one GB for the schools in a federation.</i>
E	N/A
	<i>Response None</i>
F	No alternatives

	Response None
G	I have none
	Response None
H	None
	Response None
I	Provide each school with a Deputy head-teacher, have two separate Governing Bodies, and an Executive Head between them both or train a deputy to be head-teacher at Brynconin with the support of the Maenclochog head-teacher.
	Response The staffing structure is determined by the GB of a school, not by the LA. The staffing proposed by the responder would be at significantly higher cost than at present and each Deputy would have a significant teaching commitment
J	As both schools are Welsh-medium, I would suggest that the name remains in Welsh (as we currently use Ysgol Gymunedol ...) i.e. Ffederasiwn Ysgol Gymunedol Brynconin ac Ysgol Gymunedol Maenclochog
	Response The proposer recognises that this would be consistent with the current Welsh names of each school.
K	Leave the school as it is as the school is rapidly due to expand as houses are being built in the village
	Response There can be no certainty as to when, or by how much, numbers may increase. If numbers increase in either school, the budget will increase and the GB will consider this in its decision making. Regulations allow for a federation to be dissolved in future.
L	If it is to go ahead, it should be as a sharing of the head but not an amalgamation of the governing bodies which should remain separate so that bespoke decisions can be made with good representation from both home/school communities
	Response Welsh Government does not favour arrangements of this nature. It is expected that the one GB with the support of the LA will make decisions in the interests of both schools. Having one GB will also reduce the workload of the Head and staff who contribute to GB meetings.
M	Have a head in each school
	Response While this can be done, as part of a federation or otherwise, each Head would have a significant teaching commitment which would make school improvement more difficult to achieve

N	Employ two younger up and coming head-teachers and move the experienced head to a school than can afford the experienced head
	Response <i>Staff have conditions of service and cannot be compelled to move. The appointment of a Head should be dependent on ability not cost. Salary costs can be expected to increase each year.</i>
O	One thing we urge you to agree to support if the federation goes ahead is that the headteacher's time is split equally between the two schools. It is vitally important that the children, parents and staff of Ysgol Brynconin feel that the feeling of favouritism towards one particular school is not formed by the head-teacher and that both schools have equal opportunities and fair play. In order to ensure that this does not happen in future I feel very strongly that equitable leadership is the means of preventing this happening
	Response <i>This will be the responsibility of the federated GB, advised by the LA.</i>
P	Appoint a deputy head-teacher first
	Response <i>Such an appointment cannot be made until the federation is in existence. The staffing structure is for the federated GB to decide.</i>
Q	Extend the period of consultation so that meaningful quality information be compiled into a true and honest report for stakeholders: 1. Provide historical factual data 2. Provide different scenario saving options giving financial estimates 3. Demonstrate what has actually happened during the trial period showing what has / has not worked well. 4. Provide an overarching vision to give a sense of direction by suggesting possible ideas for future development to benefit both schools. If this information was to be provided I am confident that I would be influenced to support the proposal along with other stakeholders, which would undoubtedly be beneficial when implementing the proposal (if successful). Succession planning and staff development should not only be addressed at individual/federated school level but on a wider county / multi county-wide basis
	Response B <i>The proposer believes sufficient information has been provided. Differences in data have to be treated cautiously; they cannot be attributed to a single factor. Staff development is being addressed on a county-wide basis.</i>

Happy for comments to be made publicly available (17 of 23)

Six respondents requested that their comments were not made publicly available.

If you feel that your response has been influenced (positively or negatively) because of any of the following: your ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, use of Welsh language, BSL or other languages, nationality or responsibility for any dependents, please give details below:

There was one valid response to this question:

It is very important that Ysgol Brynconin remains open and provides a good standard of education through the medium of Welsh for both pupils, parents and the community

Do you wish to be informed of the publication of the Consultation Report? (please tick only one)

Response	Number	Percentage of 84
Yes	36	43%
No	41	49%
No reply	7	8%
Total	84	100%

You are asked to provide email and postal address details only if you wish to receive a copy of the Consultation Report. Other information you are asked to provide is for the purposes of Equalities Monitoring and will be used for statistical purposes only.

Please see separate spreadsheet attached.

We will make your comments publically available as part of the Consultation Report, unless you ask us not to (please tick only one)

Response	Number	Percentage of 84
I am happy for you to make my comments publically available	53	63%
I am NOT happy for you to make any comments publically available	24	29%
No reply	7	8%
Total	84	100%

APPENDIX 2

Information for pupils on school councils and their responses

The Children and Young People's Rights Officer visited both schools on 22nd May 2019 and discussed the plans for federation with members of both school councils. Pupils were provided with an outline of the proposal and were asked a series of questions. Below is the information provided to pupils and their responses, using their own words.

Information provided to pupils on federation proposals

The County Council is thinking of changing something about the way Ysgol Gymunedol Maenclochog and Ysgol Gymunedol Brynconin are run.

They are suggesting that one Governing Body (GB) should run both schools. The two schools together would be called a federation. This GB would have members from each of the GBs of the schools now. You may think this will not make much difference.

However, the County Council will recommend that the new GB should consider having one headteacher for both schools. This means that you will not see the Head at your school every day. We know this has been happening for some time, but there have been two GBs, and the arrangement has been temporary. Now the County Council wants your views on how well it's worked and whether it should continue. The Council has also asked parents and staff what they think.

One reason for thinking of making this change is because it is also getting harder for schools to afford a Head of their own. It is also quite difficult to get someone to be a Head of a school that is the same size as your schools without them having to do a lot of teaching. This makes it harder for them to do the other things that a Head needs to do to make a school better.

Another reason is that the money the GB does not spend on paying the salaries (wages) of two Heads can be spent on other things for the schools. It could be spent on better resources, or to transport pupils from one school to the other to join in activities, or to get more staff.

Some of the money saved might be used to make sure that someone who is not the Head is in charge when the Head is not at one of the schools because it is very important that there is one person who everybody knows is in charge.

Also, schools that do not have many teachers may not have staff with all of the knowledge and skills that the school needs. If the proposal goes ahead, one school can use the talents of teachers from the other school. This could be done by helping other teachers to plan work and to develop new skills. So both schools should get better through working like this.

For example, the Special Needs Coordinator from one school could help pupils and teachers from both schools. The same could happen for a teacher helping More Able and Talented pupils, or someone who is in charge of Numeracy or Literacy.

Adults who already work at one of the schools can't be made to work at the other one as well, though we'd expect many of them to be willing to. Staff who are appointed after the schools federate will know they will have to work at both schools.

The two schools will not be joining to become one school. They will stay as separate schools and each school will keep the uniform it has now, but there will be chances for pupils and staff of the schools to work together. For example, there will still be two School Councils, but they may get to work together and share ideas and learn from each other. This means you will get to know pupils from the other school, so this may make it easier for you when you go to secondary school. It means you may get more chances to take part in sport, music, drama, outdoor activities or other things like this.

Some pupils may not like the idea of going to the other school sometimes to work with the pupils from there. Some may not want to work with teachers or support assistants they do not know very well; of course, they'll get to know them better when they've worked together a few times. It may also seem a bit strange at first not having your headteacher at the school all of the time, though there will always be an experienced teacher in charge at the school. However, overall the County Council thinks what they are planning to do is a good idea. We'd like to know what you think.

Responses from pupils

Ysgol Maenclochog

Questions for School Council

1. How would you feel about there being one headteacher for the two schools?

It will be okay; we are already used to this.

It works well at the moment. Mr X and Miss Y look after us well when Mrs Clark is at Brynconin. For example, if someone hurt themselves, staff would call Mr X and Miss Y, and they would know what to do.

2. How would you feel about one governing body making decisions about the two schools and how they can work together?

It's a good idea, because both schools can get the same chances when decisions are being made about how to spend money. This helps with equality for both of the schools. If they join governing bodies, they are the people that know both schools better, and can talk about different aspects of the two schools.

3. What do you think of the idea of the staff from each school having more colleagues to work with and learn from?

It's a good idea, as they can learn from each other. Staff from Brynconin may have different qualities. It would be good and they can help if they get together and decide who is best to help develop different subjects.

4. What would you like the governing body to do with the some of the money it does not spend on paying for two headteachers?

Someone to clean the toilets

New sports equipment and play equipment would be good, as a lot of ours is broken. For example, all the pumps are broken so we can't use the balls.

New IT equipment, e.g. more ipads, laptops (our current ones have Windows XP), cameras, a drone, etc.

Stop-watches. Ours are broken so we have to use ipads for this, e.g. on sports day.

New LSAs to help out in classes, and we would like an LSA who can help us (the school council) to get more of our ideas put into action, as Mrs Clark maybe is going to be too busy.

New paper and writing books. Pencils, (e.g. in one class we only have one red pencil), glue, art supplies, sharpeners, rulers, etc. We suggest having 2 sets of stationery for each table.

New reading books and a makeover for the library. Some books currently have pages missing. We'd like to sort the Welsh books into one section and separate books out for the different reading levels. We'd like the library tidied up and for someone to get rid of the old stuff that is cluttering it up and no longer used.

New bikes for the little kids. Most of theirs are broken, and we'd like them to have new ones, maybe some double bikes.

5. How would you feel about having chances to work with pupils from the other school?

All agreed they would like it and were very keen to do this. We could make new friends, although it might be hard in the beginning to make new friends. It would help with transition as we could make some new friends to go to secondary school with. We would like to do some of our shows and singing events jointly with Brynconin. Although our hall is too small to get everybody in – perhaps we could use the village halls?

6. How would you feel about working with adults from the other school, who you would not know as well as the ones from your own school?

It would be good if teachers could teach the same thing with both schools, e.g. singing and drama. It could help us with different ways of learning. It would be nice to meet some new teachers. It could be better in some subjects, if Brynconin have some better teachers in some subjects. It might be hard for some people to get used to new teachers. It would be better if staff from the 2 schools could do things like cover sickness. This happened once before and worked well.

Ysgol Brynconin

Questions for School Council

1. How would you feel about there being one headteacher for the two schools?

We're already used to it, as it has been like this for a couple of years. Sometimes, if something happens, the headteacher is not always here to sort it out. However, she is quite close and once she had to come when a child hurt their leg and went to hospital. If something happens, they can call Miss Z and she will sort it out.

2. How would you feel about one governing body making decisions about the two schools and how they can work together?

It's a good thing, as it could be fairer. Currently both schools have advantages and disadvantages, and if it happens we would be equal. For example, Maenclochog gets much better equipment, e.g. for sports and play equipment, also other types of equipment. We have to bring our own pencils, as there are none left in some of the classes. The other school has better, Champions League footballs, but all our footballs have got holes in.

We would like the two school councils to work with the governors on developing the new school.

3. What do you think of the idea of the staff from each school having more colleagues to work with and learn from?

It's a good thing. The staff could become friends and then we could have a happier school. We sometimes have teachers from Maenclochog at the moment. It was hard at first, but now we've got used to them. All agreed this was a good thing and would help both schools improve. However, traveling time could eat into teaching time.

4. What would you like the governing body to do with the some of the money it does not spend on paying for two headteachers?

New balls and sports equipment

More things to help with the Welsh language

More books for the library – some are old and falling apart

New felt pens – the ones we have are ruined. Also general stationery and glues, which run out fast.

We need a counsellor, as there are a few kids with a lot of problems in this school

More trips – currently one or two per year. We'd like to go on educational trips with Maenclochog pupils. We're doing the same things, so we could do something together

New tables and chairs

Fix the broken toilet seats in the girls' bathroom

More chargers for computers

Security cameras – a lot of things go on in school, and cameras could help prevent this

Gym mats – currently we are borrowing them from Crymych

Swirly computer chairs in the IT room

Something to stop little kids climbing on things and ruining stuff

5. How would you feel about having chances to work with pupils from the other school?

All thought this was a good idea. Year 4 and 5 spent a whole day with children from Maenclochog. They visited Porthcawl and learned about nature, did lots of games and activities. It was great fun and it would be good if we could do more days like this. We had a fun day at Maenclochog school on the last day of school last year. Our lightbulbs were being changed. That was really good.

At the moment we find it hard to get enough pupils to form teams for sports such as rugby, football and netball. It would be good if we could do this together.

Our school is going to Cardiff for the Ym Gom finals soon, we made it to this even though we are very small. If we win, we will be on S4C. It would be good next year to do this together with Maenclochog.

6. How would you feel about working with adults from the other school, who you would not know as well as the ones from your own school?

We are used to change, as we lost 2 teachers and the head in one go, we've had teachers off sick for a whole year, and then we lost another head 6 months later. It has affected our learning, as each time you get a new teacher you have to learn in a different way, and it takes some time to get used to them. I like new people, it will be good to get some different teaching styles and could improve our learning. It will good

to learn more, we might learn more things. However, we would need to keep in contact with our current teachers, as we know them and can talk to them.