CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

DEVELOPING EDUCATION IN CEREDIGION

PLANNING EDUCATION PROVISION TO 2020

January 2009

2005/06
Excellence Wales
Rhagoriaeth Cymru
Tra Chymeradwy – Dysgu Gydol Oes i Bawb
Highly Commended – Lifelong Learning for All

...committed to learning

Mr J E Evans,
Director of Education and Community Services

Cllr C W Davies
Cabinet Member with reponsibility for Education, Culture and Leisure

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Developing Education in Ceredigion Plan.

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Mission Statement

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'To provide and promote knowledge, skills, competencies, experiences, qualifications and attitudes to ensure that the children, young people and adults in Ceredigion fulfill their potential as bilingual individuals and as members of their local and global communities throughout their lives'.

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Education Plan 2009-11

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In an environment of rapid change and increasing pressures to improve learning standards and opportunities the sustainability of the current provision of education in Ceredigion is being challenged. Given the demands upon headteachers and teachers, rapidly falling rolls in schools and the nature and quality of buildings to meet the requirements of the learning environment in the 21st Century the Ceredigion Education Authority has considered the future provision of education in the county.

The principal purpose of the document is:

> *• To identify ways in which the provision of education across Ceredigion will be developed*

> *• To establish and implement the programme that will develop education in Ceredigion.*

> *• To implement options for the organisation of schools, particularly in the primary sector, in the context of falling pupil rolls and its consequence*

> *• To provide a foundation for effective future planning in order to maximize funding which may be available from a variety of sources for capital investment in schools.*

The document provides clarity on the shape of education delivery to the future within Ceredigion. It is also created in conjunction with the policy to review schools in accordance with established criteria. All relevant data on pupil numbers included in this document is based on the January 2008 figures.

The additional document 'Possible Future Options', which remains a discussion document, presents options for provision of education in various localities and offers, where appropriate, progressive stages to reach what is deemed to be the ultimate type of provision by 2020.

It is imperative that it is clearly understood by all stakeholders that **retaining the *status quo* is no longer sustainable**. There exists an opportunity to build a strong basis not only for current learners but for future generations to come. It calls for vision, boldness and co-operation. The document also recognises the fact that there is no single answer for Ceredigion.

It should be noted that the document primarily focuses upon the primary phase but that is not to preclude the inclusion where appropriate of approaches involving secondary schools. A similar and more detailed consultative document upon secondary education provision - embracing provision for 14 -19 and post 16 education – will also be prepared. However, we are committed to providing education for secondary age pupils in all the six major towns of Ceredigion.

Director of Education and Community Services
Swyddfa'r Sir
Glan y Mor
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion

1: Background and Context

1.1 The future provision of education in Ceredigion supports the principle of providing educational opportunities of the highest quality in order to ensure improvement in learners' achievements, which in Ceredigion are of a high standard.

1.2 Both the Wales Assembly Government and Estyn in recent policies and reviews emphasise the need
- to improve service provision through multi–agency approaches
- to ensure that schools are not only fit for purpose but cater for wider range of community purposes
- to make more effective use of scarce resources by removing surpluses in school
- to consider less rigid learning approaches and restricted curricular demands

Indeed Estyn In *"Transforming schools"* (2004) suggests

> *"…The narrow institutional interests of all concerned will have to be set aside if a genuinely collaborative and strategic approach to flexible learning pathways is to be built and thrive. Leaders and managers will need to have the vision, energy, skills and capacity to anticipate and respond to rapidly changing needs and be less protective of their current roles and status. …"*

1.3 It is fitting to consider whether the provision of education in Ceredigion at the beginning of the third millennium is sustainable in the context of the needs of the learner in a rapidly changing environment – social, cultural, economic and technological Education has long been cherished within the county and the priority given by the County Council since reorganisation in 1996 re–emphasises the perceived and real importance of education for all learners in Ceredigion.

1.4 It is important to set the background and context against and within which this document is presented.

(i) The nature of the County

1.5 Ceredigion is a rural, agricultural and thinly populated county with some 75,500 people living in an area of 1,800 square kilometres. Only three towns within the County have populations of 2,000 or more – Aberystwyth (13,000), Cardigan (4,000) and Lampeter (2,000). University Colleges are situated in Aberystwyth and Lampeter which attract 9,000 students to the County during the year

1.6. Following a long period of depopulation, over the past few years, there has been a substantial increase in the population Resident population between 1990 and 2000, for example, rose from 66,400 in 1990 to 75,500 in 2000, a rise of 13.7%. This rise has been achieved through net in-migration in the order of 800 persons annually. This has had a considerable impact on a number of rural communities. According to the 1991 census, 60.4% of the population could speak Welsh.

1.7 Agriculture has been the backbone of the County's economy but quite a high proportion of the population is also employed in areas such as public administration. Although the County's unemployment rate is lower than the Welsh average, there are pockets of high unemployment. The County is included within the European Commission's Convergence Grant Category one of the most underprivileged areas of Europe. A segment of the County is designated as an area of deprivation and may attract additional financial support. Over 11% of school children receive free school meals. In some individual schools the percentage exceeds 30% - even in some rural village schools.

(ii) The Education Service

1.8 Ceredigion County Council gives a high priority to the Education Service within the County and that priority is reflected in the budget delegated to schools. For 2007/08 45% of the County Council (Net) Budget was allocated to the Education Service of which 72% was delegated to schools. Approximately 10,003 children aged 4-18 are educated within the County's Schools: 4871 in the primary sector and 5,132 in the secondary sector. (January 2008)

1.9 In the primary sector, even though the County contains some large schools mainly in the more populous areas of Aberystwyth, Aberaeron, Lampeter, Llandysul and Cardigan - the main characteristic of the County's primary education is the large number of small schools.

- There are currently (January 2008) 70 primary schools in the Authority, four of which are voluntary aided denominational foundations – one Catholic located in Aberystwyth and the other Church in Wales in the South of the County.
- Between September 2006 and August 2007 6 primary schools have been closed.
- The LEA supports 8 schools which have nursery units/classes admitting pupils on a part time basis at the beginning of the term following the pupil's 3rd birthday.
- All the remaining 55 schools admit pupils at the beginning of the term following the pupils' 4th birthday.
- The smaller schools are frequently clustered for the purposes of curriculum planning and in-service training. Until September 1999, many primary schools were grouped under one Governing Body. The Education Act 2002 reintroduces the possibility of a number of schools being grouped under one Governing Body.
- They range in size from 10 to 347 pupils. (Jan.2008)
- There are no classes over 30 pupils at KS1 and 1 class only at KS2
- The main characteristic of the County's primary education is the large number of small schools.
- 54 [77%] of Ceredigion's primary schools have fewer than 90 pupils with 48 schools containing fewer than 65 pupils. (Jan. 2008). Ceredigion has a higher percentage of small primary schools than any other county in Wales.
- The level of financial support per pupil provided to very small schools is comparatively high in comparison with other LEAs in Wales.
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1.10 In the Secondary Sector education is provided in 7 comprehensive schools which cater for pupils aged 11-18 years old.

- School sizes range from 359 to 1,354 pupils.
- Two are designated Welsh medium schools.
- The seven secondary schools within the County have sixth forms which provide for pupils aged 16+. 1052 pupils in the County are educated in these sixth forms. The size of these sixth forms varies among schools, from 98 pupils to 215 pupils.
- Each school provides a range of GCSE, A and AS, as well as GNVQ courses but, by and large, this is done independently of each other.

(*iii) Pupil Places in the Primary Phase*

1.11 The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning has emphasised the need to ensure that schools are fit for purpose and set out the target of school premises being made   appropriate and adequate by 2010. WAG also requires LEAs to address surplus places – due to falling roles in the primary sector which will gradually impact upon secondary schools.

1.12 Based on the PLASC Return in January 2008 and the revised accommodation formula…there were 4,871 pupils and 6,699 places. Thus there was 27.3% unfilled or "spare" places.

1.13 The conclusions of the District Auditor's report on *Planning School Places in Ceredigion* published in February 1998, highlighted:
- that Ceredigion has the highest percentage of small schools in Wales,
- that the money spent per pupil is much higher in small schools;
- That there is a high number of 'spare places' in Ceredigion schools.

1.14 This has been reinforced in subsequent Audit Commission Reports and the ESTYN Report following the inspection of the Authority's "Access to Education" services in 2005.

> *"The Council maintains a large number of primary schools in relation to its primary school population….Small schools are necessarily costly to run from day-to-day and to maintain in a condition that supports education of the required quality in the 21st Century." [ACiW}*

1.15 In the Annual Letter to the Authority in 2004, the Relationship Manager [From the Wales Audit Office] stresses as one of four recommendations to Members the need:

> "Review whether the current level of educational provision in
> Small schools is sustainable in the long term". [p4]

It is also stated:

> "We consider that the growing spare capacity in primary schools is an increasing risk for the Council as the high cost of running the schools inevitably means that the Council faces difficult choices with regard to the funding of other aspects of its services." [pp16 and 17][1]

(*iv) Strategic Dimensions*

1.16 The County Council approaches the establishment and delivery of its policies through a structure of tiered strategic and business plans.

1.17. *Ceredigion 2020* is Ceredigion's main community strategic plan. In addition there are a suite of county strategies which underscore the 2020 vision. They include the *County Strategic Plan*, *the Ceredigion Improvement Plan*, the *Single Education Plan 2006-2008, the Children and Young People's Plan 2008 – 2011* and a range of other multi-agency and departmental planning documents.

1.18 Moreover *Ceredigion 2020* accords with the Welsh Assembly Government's main priorities and involves working in harmony with a number of different agencies and partnerships.

1.19 Lifelong Learning is one of the themes within the Community Strategy. Its aim is to ensure that lifelong learning opportunities are available to all in Ceredigion. The Lifelong Learning theme divides into several priorities as follows:
- 'The Best Start' – ensuring that every child gets the best possible start in education
- Early Years Education
- Formal Education 5 – 16
- Post-16 provision
- Community Learning provision
- Resources for Learning.

1.20 Investing in our young people is seen as the foundation for aspiring to educational excellence and lifelong learning. At a corporate level lifelong learning is seen as essential for both business excellence and full employment. As well as a long tradition of promoting education in the Council's work there are two Higher Education Institutions and a College of Further Education, Coleg Ceredigion, in the County which enrich further the many opportunities for learning.

1.21 The Directorate of Education and Community Services emphasises every learner's achievement and personal fulfillment. However these cannot be taken in isolation from the corporate priority to achieve the following, which are both associated directly or indirectly with access to schools:

- providing learning opportunities of high quality for children, young people and adults within their communities
- safeguarding the future of rural and community schools.

1.22 Ceredigion County Council's *Improvement Plan* sets out the way forward for delivering these priorities alongside clear, measurable targets which focus on:
- access to pre-school age education for every 3 year old
- offering learning-based activity clubs in after-school hours
- ensuring that children excluded from schools are educated appropriately.

1.23 The five priorities embodied in the *Education Strategic Plan 2002 – 2005* have been further consolidated in the Single *Education Plan 2006-08 and the new Children and Young People's Plan 2008 - 2011* under the following headings:
- Raising standards and improving the performance of schools (Focus on learning/Giving a voice to the learner/Developing Leadership)
- Planning school places (Restructuring to improve learning)
- Community focused schools (Integrating school and community).

(v) Primary Phase Initiatives

1.24 The situation regarding the nature of primary schools within Ceredigion was well recognised. In February 1998, the Education Authority published a consultative document entitled *"The Future of Primary Education in Ceredigion".* The document sought:

1. *To identify the best means of obtaining the highest possible standards of education and the richest possible learning experiences for primary pupils within the resources available.*

2. *To identify the best means of fostering school improvement.*

3. *To ensure quality of opportunity for each pupil within the County.*

4. *To ensure that primary education is provided in the most efficient and cost-effective manner, i.e. that it complies with the principles of "best value".*

5. *To recommend an overall strategy for primary education that will lead us successfully into the next millennium and ensure that Ceredigion has the finest educational achievements in Wales. …"*

1.25 As a result the Governing Bodies of a number of schools to the south of Aberaeron expressed a wish to discuss the possibility of establishing an area school.

(*vi) Review of Schools*

1.26 The School Review Policy which was approved by Council in September 2006 and amended in January 2009, will become an integral part of the 'Developing Education in Ceredigion' strategy and will continue to be an ongoing annual process.

1.27 In considering the future of schools the authority has to balance a number of seemingly incompatible objectives:

- Demands for increasing financial support for schools to meet the added pressures on their budgets, while facing tight settlements from Welsh Assembly Government forecasted for the next four years.
- Retaining schools within their communities while facing outside pressures to tackle spare capacity issues.
- Meeting its duty to secure best value while recognising the role and importance that small schools can play in rural communities.
- Ensuring fairness in distribution of resources while accepting that it costs far more on a per pupil basis to operate small schools.
- Make decisions in the context of the overall picture for all children in the County, while respecting the passionate commitment of some communities to maintain the status quo in the face of population decline.
- Initiating change in the best interest of the service, while dealing with the fear of change itself within school communities.

1.28 The fundamental principles of the policy seek to meet these objectives by:
- putting the interests of children first but accepting that change in the way education is provided is inevitable
- supporting small schools to deliver an education that will prepare our children for an ever more complex and competitive world.
- establishing a clear and fair review framework

1.29 A number of trigger points for review have been developed in common with other authorities. If schools meet **two or more** of the trigger points, an early exploration of roll forecasts, changing catchment areas or non-traditional methods of operation will follow **-** a proactive approach intended to help sustain the school.

Each school will be reviewed if:

- Its school roll has fallen or is forecast to fall below 30 pupils in the next three years.

Schools that fall below 30 pupils will not automatically be considered for closure. The review process offers a proactive approach to support and retain schools wherever possible, and in the discussions a variety of options will be considered in order to endeavour to secure the school's future. The Authority has decided that, if there is a change of leadership in a school with less than 30 pupils, the school should not appoint a new headteacher but establish a federation with neighbouring schools.

However, when pupil numbers fall below 20, closure will be unavoidable except, in certain circumstances, where a school of 16 or more pupils joins a federation with other schools on a formal or informal basis.

If the number of pupils in a school, which is part of a federal arrangement, falls below 20, the review process is deferred for a period of 3 years in order to give the school a chance to recover the required number.

- There are serious deficiencies in the facilities and fabric of the building and site.
  These deficiencies are considered serious if they have a detrimental effect on the pupils' education.

- If the school is operating with more than 25% surplus capacity.
- The Governing Body of an individual school or the Governing Bodies of a cluster of school requests a review.

1.30 The School Review Panel met with Governors of 8 primary schools in March and April 2007 and annual reviews continue when schools meet the trigger points.

2: Why develop education provision in Ceredigion?

2.0 A number of issues are critical to appreciate in the considering the development of education in Ceredigion.

(i) Learning

2.1 Focus on improving learning for all, irrespective of background, circumstances, abilities and other differentiating factors is the fundamental priority. Investing in our young people is seen as the foundation for aspiring to educational excellence and lifelong learning.

2.2 Every opportunity should be made to enable learning to take place, using teaching best practice and the most modern and effective resources. Learning should be promoted, facilitated and demonstrated as a continuous formative experience throughout life.

2.3 The development of provision, however, will be a huge undertaking for Ceredigion during the next few years. It is essential given the high percentage of spare places, the number of small primary schools, the decrease in pupil numbers and inadequate buildings. These issues are implicit in the Welsh Assembly's drive towards raising standards, not only of learning and achievement, but also in seeking to provide suitable resources and environments.

(ii) National perspective

2.4 In the seminal document *"The Learning Country"* the Minister for Lifelong learning at the Welsh Assembly Government indicated that

"… Policies for Life long Learning must reflect prudent use of funding"

One of the priorities would be *"…to enable small primary schools – including those which serve rural communities –to form groups under one leadership team and one governing body."*

Local Authorities will be expected *"…to make significant investments in order to repair, renovate and replace school buildings and all local authorities to have established Asset Management Plans and Capital Investment Programmes in schools … in order that by 2010 they be in good condition and that they are maintained appropriately".*

".. when formulating plans for building new schools or remodelling school buildings and when establishing budgets there will be a need for local authorities … to ensure that such plans incorporate the future needs of schools…"

"… Local Education Authorities should undertake the leadership role in order to achieve national aims by formulating and implementing local supplementary policies in partnership with their schools"

This and subsequent documents emphasis the need for co-operation between schools including the important transition between primary and secondary schools.

2.5 In the recently published document *The Learning Country: Vision into Action*, the minister for Lifelong Learning emphasises that Local Authorities must establish strategies and implement plans to reduce significantly spare places and provide evidence that Council resources are being invested in costed asset management plans which support an effective capital programme to improve provision. Authorities not able display strategic approaches and a commitment to achieve the Welsh Assembly Government aims will not attract funding.

(iii) Challenges

2.6 In the Relationship Manager's Annual Letter to the Members of the County Council in 2004 amongst the four recommendations appears the following:

*"Review whether the current level of educational provision in small schools is
sustainable in the long term".[1]*

It is also stated that:

*"We consider that the growing spare capacity in primary schools is an increasing risk for the Council
as the high cost of running the schools   inevitably means that the Council faces difficult choices with
regard to the funding of other aspects of its services."*

2.7 The theme reflects the statement in the Audit Commission's Report on *Planning School Places*
which reiterated in subsequent reports on the issue

*"The Council maintains a large number of primary schools in relation
to its primary school population….Small schools are necessarily costly
to run from day-to-day and to maintain in a condition that supports
education of the required quality in the 21st Century"*

2.8 The Minister for Lifelong Learning in *The Learning Country* further exhorts Local Authorities to address
the issue of small primary schools and proposed

*" to support innovatory approaches in small school and in rural schools
In response to the falling numbers of school aged children"*

and

*"to formulate legislation which will enable Governing Bodies to co-
operate or amalgamate from September 2004 onwards."*

(iv) *Initiatives and influences*

2.9 Any discussion regarding the provision of education premises must be informed by a number of issues;-

- the remodelling of the school workforce as a result of the implementation of the **Teachers'
  Workload Agreement** which will impact on the management and organisation of schools.
  This must also be considered in the context of the delivery of the National Curriculum.

- Headteachers fulfil a significant **management function** whilst, in small schools in particular,
  accomplishing a considerable teaching commitment. Such demands militate against
  effective teaching and effective management.

- The implementation of the **"Foundation Phase"** with the greater emphasis upon learning
  by doing and structured play for 3 to 7 year old pupils requires not only the adoption of a
  new curricular approach but also will have an impact upon the need to provide adequate
  facilities in terms of school buildings and premises. The vast majority of our primary schools
  do not have adequate facilities.

- The increasing demand for **educational facilities** appropriate for current learning practices.
  Many schools face increasing cost of maintenance and a significant number are no longer
  adequate to provide for the demands of the National Curriculum.

- In addition the LEA and schools must adopt and implement **Accessibility Policies** in order
  to comply with the *Disability Discrimination Act* such that learners with disabilities have
  access to facilities. The vast majority of schools currently would not comply with the
  requirements legislation.

(v) *An evaluation of key issues*

2.10 A number of key matters have informed the process of preparing the *School Organisation Plan2004-09*
and *Single Education Plan 2006-08* (now superseded by the Children and Young People's Plan 2008 –
20011).

These included:
- increasing demands on staff.
- despite the importance and financial priority given to education, sustaining school buildings and other educational resources is a substantial challenge
- the need to narrow the curricular and attainment gap between Key Stages 2 and 3.
- the importance of leadership at every level – Council and school (including school governors) to create a clear vision for Ceredigion. Sound leadership is a key to further developments
- the use of resources by the community.
- changes in education provision at 16+.

(vi) Approaches adopted by Ceredigion County Council

2.11 The Council has already responded to the challenges and influences. Among the approaches adopted are:

- The establishment of the Working Group on the Development of Education Provision in Ceredigion charged with establishing a strategy for structuring the education service to 2020.
- The adoption of the Policy for reviewing Schools and the establishment of the School Review Panel.
- The closure of a number of small primary schools due to a reduction in pupil numbers
- The leadership of a number of schools by headteachers of neighbouring schools (Informal federations).
- The approval of the establishment of two area schools and the replacement of another primary school
- Promoting effective transition programmes between Key Stages 2 / 3
- The establishment of Integrated Children's Centres.

2.12 The broad framework for a strategy has emerged and accepted as a result of consultation. .Broad actions to implement the strategies within the time-span of the *Single Education Plan* and the Children and Young People's Plan can be summarised as follows:
- implementing the School Review procedure which was amended January 2009.
- open discussions with Governing Bodies and other interested parties on the options included in the discussion document 'Possible Future Options' (May 2008)
- planning of strategies for six strategic towns/secondary school catchment areas

(vii) Influences for change

Falling pupil rolls and surplus places
2.13 One of the fundamental issues which necessitate change in order to sustain education provision of quality is the fact that the number of children in primary schools has fallen steadily over the past few years and in many areas the downward trend is likely to continue for some years to come. The reality is that declining pupil numbers can threaten the quality of educational, organisational and resource provision. It is likely that the increased emphasis upon pupil-led funding could mean that schools with falling rolls inevitably lose resources.

Integrated Multi –agency approaches
2.14 A period of reform of education and children's services is being embarked upon, moving towards a phase of increased integration of service providers for children and families, offering, learning for all alongside integrated child, youth and family services, whilst at the same time developing partnerships with wider community services.

Capital Investment
2.15 Local Authorities will also need to respond to the challenge set by WAG by preparing and displaying intent and commitment to plan and invest in a programmed approach to reduce surplus places and ensure that school in a reorganized climate are fit for purpose.

3: Vision – The School of the Future

3.1 As stated in _Excellent Schools: A Vision for schools in the 21st Century_ (Estyn, 2002),

'**_Schools exist for learners and for learning_**',

and this must be foremost in the thinking when juggling with the realities of geography, demography and financial resources in order to advance educational provision in Ceredigion.

3.2 It is fundamental that in any consideration of developing education in Ceredigion, that there exists a clear view of:

(i) **securing an effective foundation for raising standards through**:
- provision of high quality education
- provision of high quality leadership and management
- provision and analysis of relevant data to support self evaluation
- facilitation of cross-phase co-operation, information transfer and partnership

(ii) **ensuring best value in terms of providing and deploying appropriate resources through:**
- provision of highly trained teaching staff
- engaging parents and families in the support of their children's learning.
- development and utilisation of IT as a learning and communication vehicle within and across the community

(iii) **consolidating and improving provision and enhancing the opportunity to remove school places where it is practicable to do so**

3.3 The _Single Education Plan 2006-08. (SEP) and the Children and Young People's Plan 2008 – 2011_ outlines the various possibilities for greater collaboration between schools. Over a period of time this collaboration could lead the schools / families of schools to become community learning centres. These would offer appropriate learning opportunities for adults and the local community and enable multi-agency integrated provision of services, including child care facilities.

3.4 Below are listed the numerous factors that need to be taken into account in providing opportunities of the highest quality for all learners in the primary schools of the future. These factors include consideration of pupils, staff, management / leadership, parents, language, lifelong learning, site and community.

Pupils
- Provision for pupils from 3 – 11 years
- Junior pupils in classes of not more than 25 pupils with a maximum two year age range.
- Statutory right for access to all areas of the curriculum
- Pupils who are bilingually proficient
- Full members of the bilingual society to which they belong and have pride in the languages, heritage and culture of Ceredigion and Wales.
- Inclusive provision
- Equal opportunities
- Pupils given a greater say in their own education.
- Opportunities for developing independent learning skills / understanding of how to learn.
- Pleasure, success and a commitment to learning
- Safe and supportive environment
- Active learning in the Foundation Phase
- Breakfast clubs and after school clubs
- Opportunities for pupils to express their views on aspects of the life and work of the school. (School Council)
- Opportunities to achieve high levels of health and fitness.

Staff
- All staff have a good understanding of how pupils learn
- Sustain and promote bilingualism   .
- Commitment to their own professional development opportunities
- Staff are motivated and enjoy a good work / life balance
- Aware of recent research on learning e.g. 'Closing the Gap' and act on findings
- Take part in active research
- Effective use of a range of resources

Management / Leadership (Governors / Head)
- High standard of leadership - commitment to learning, clear vision, monitoring and developing the progress of pupils and staff, contribute to community education..
- Systems which allow adequate non-teaching time for the head-teacher to lead and manage.
- Member of the senior management team with responsibility for developing community links and collaborative working with the external Community Co-ordinator.
- All stakeholders involved in school self evaluation – governors, staff, pupils, parents, authority advisers
- Use and development of ICT for example communication, registration, planning, teaching and learning, pupil tracking
- Provide methods for analysing and interpreting data within a culture of self evaluation.
- Promote effective co-operation and transfer of information between stages.
- Respond effectively to new developments e.g. ICT, sustainability.

Parents
- Understanding of the opportunities for parents in the life and work of the school.
- Opportunities for parents to develop knowledge about the curriculum and the learning process through workshops, meetings and guidelines.
- Opportunities for parents to assist in school activities e.g. reading, preparing displays, use of special skills.
- Close partnership between the pupils, school and parents.
- Parents provided with opportunities for life long learning.

Language
- Promote the Welsh language and culture
- Sustain and promote bilingualism
- Provision of Welsh language classes for adults

Lifelong Learning
- Provision of a variety of day and evening classes
- Provision of a range of activities for pupils and adults
- Establishing clubs e.g. IT Club, photography.

Site
- Site and buildings – child centred
- Site, buildings and resources suitable for education in the 21st century:
    - Staffroom and work room
    - Head-teacher's office
    - Medical room
    - Hall
    - Hard play area
    - Green play area
    - Community facilities during the day
    - Family / Child care facilities
- Adequate internal and external facilities for the Foundation Stage
- Adequate facilities for achieving all areas of the curriculum e.g. music, drama, design and technology, physical education
- Facilities for the uses of IT across all areas of learning
- Environmentally friendly school
- Inclusive school

Community.
- School as a community centre – 'The school in the community and the community in the school'.
- School developing partnerships in the community
- School resources and facilities available for community use
- Leisure activities available at the local Leisure Centre
- Incorporation of Health Centre to include medical and social services
- Library, Museum, exhibitions
- Older persons' activities – meals on wheels, visits, meetings.
- Provision of child care facilities
- Promoting safety in the community – in cooperation with police, first aid, road safety
- Sustainable education through Eco School projects
- Promoting healthy lifestyle
- Establishing links with local and national businesses
- International links

3.5 The document *"The Learning Country"* **(2001)** sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to schools being at the heart of their communities:

> *"We want to see a much closer relationship between schools and the communities they serve. We want schools to act as a community resource – not just in school hours but out of hours and in vacations as well. We see them as being integral to community capacity building – providing a basis for delivering, not just education and training … but also a range of other services like family support, health and enterprise promotion …"*

3.6 The concept of Community Focused Schools is closely linked with the future development of schools in the county. Whatever organisational model is adopted, informal or formal federations or area schools, the concept of CFS will need to be developed fully in each school unit.

3.7 The development of community focused schools links in with Ceredigion County Council's strategies and plans as outlined in its Strategy Document 'Ceredigion 2020'. We believe that the development of community focused schools is important in its own right and are also committed to development that complements and supports other priorities.

3.8 The Ceredigion Community Focused Schools' Strategy document and WAG Circular No 34/2003: 'Community Focused Schools' provide schools with guidance on how to begin and develop existing provision and also consider what additional services or activities they might want to offer their communities.

3.9 Community focused schools will help us to deliver the seven core aims of 'Rights To Action':

- *A flying start in life*
- *A comprehensive range of education, training and learning opportunities*
- *The best possible health, free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation*
- *Play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities*
- *Treated with respect and have their race and cultural identity recognised*
- *A safe home and community*
- *Children and young people not disadvantaged by poverty*

Children and Young People: Rights to Action, 2004

3.10 Research has shown that both school and community can be enriched when schools extend their boundaries and, in particular, when school and community engage with each other more fully. The report on the first phase of 'Narrowing the Gap in the Performance of Schools' (October 2005)   identified key factors that contributed to the success of schools working in challenging circumstances.

The study found that where schools engage with their local community this has a direct impact on pupils' attainment and raises their aspirations to progress from school to further education, training and employment.

The benefits of community focused schools have been identified as follows:

For pupils and schools:
- higher levels of pupil achievement
- increased pupil motivation and self-esteem
- specialist support to meet pupils' wider needs
- additional facilities and equipment
- enhanced partnership working with the community
- enhanced status for learning in the local community
- reduced pupil disaffection

For families:
- improvements in child behaviour and social skills
- greater availability of specialist support for families
- greater parental involvement in children's learning
- more opportunities for local adult education and family learning.

For communities:
- better access to essential services
- improved local availability of sports, arts and other facilities
- local career development opportunities
- better supervision of children outside school hours
- promotes community cohesion by re-engaging adults (and in particular parents) in learning – reinforcing relationships between school and home helps regenerate and strengthen communities

3.11 The county's strategy will aim to work in a multi-agency context to:

- *support individual or clusters of schools in delivering their core mission – to improve pupils' ability to learn and to support families*

- *provide a range of activities/learning opportunities outside the school day for children, young people, families and adults*

- *provide a range of additional services, opportunities and information for children, young people, families and the wider community*

- *be sustainable schools that consult with their communities, engage in community life, work in partnership with others contributing to community regeneration*

- *ensure equality of opportunity by improving access to learning and other services in local areas based on the Integrated Learning Community model*

3.12 Community Focused Schools in Ceredigion are being developed in the context of:
- the development of the educational provision in the county and
- the development of Integrated Learning Communities in the six areas

3.13 An **Integrated Learning Community** is defined as an area in which:
- schools work in collaboration either in clusters or as an area group
- there is multi agency provision of services,including child care facilities
- there is a range of life long learning acticities and opportunities for people in the community.

3.14 This developing structure will help to ensure that family-friendly community learning facilities are accessible locally, in each area, and are available beyond the normal school day. It also supports the concept of a wide range of other support services accessible in each area, particularly for vulnerable children, young people and their families.

3.15 The focus on clusters or areas, as opposed to individual school provision, will ensure that resources are spread equitably across the county and that duplication of provision is avoided.   There is an expectation that all schools / clusters will provide a range of community focussed opportunities appropriate to the needs and capacity of the school and the wider community. Throughout the county many schools are already providing

some community services to their pupils, parents and communities including adult education, family learning, out of school hours learning, ICT facilities and sports programmes.

3.16 Schools / Clusters should have a designated individual with responsibility for community focused schools development. Community Focused Schools should feature within the School Development Plan, either as a specific section or within all key areas.

3.17 Community Focused Schools' development should be built in and not bolted on to school priorities. Governing Bodies should take an active role in the development of community focused schools. The LEA will provide support and awareness raising to governing bodies through the governor training programme.

3.18 It is firmly believed that the development of community focused schools is not just a short-lived project or initiative, but a real opportunity for schools and communities to work together in new ways for the future benefit of children, young people and adults.

3.19 It provides schools and their communities with opportunities to:

- develop local quality services responsive to local need
- become Increasingly involved in the decision making process on the provision of those services and the life of neighbourhoods
- to work together to deliver the outcomes for the locality

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4: Current position, policies and issues

4.1 Demographic features

4.1.1 There is evidence from national and local sources, *(Population Growth in Ceredigion: Implications for Education Authority Planning* 1997) that the trend to population growth through moderate levels of in-migration will continue in the medium term:

- Ceredigion is included in the <u>Convergence Funding Programme</u>, which has the objective of increasing local prosperity and securing employment.

- Population mobility is continuing to increase and there is a continuing trend of population growth in 'remote and rural' areas which, it has been suggested, is caused by quality of life considerations and helped by changes in patterns of work.

- Ceredigion with the lowest UK crime rates, good public education and low unemployment is an attractive destination for migration for both economic and lifestyle reasons.

Population Projections
4.1.2 Two recent series of population projections cover the period of the School Organisation Plan (2004 – 2009):

National Assembly for Wales Projections.
NAfW has published a series of population projections. However, these are not particularly useful for detailed planning as Authorities have been aggregated into regional groupings, Ceredigion with Powys forming a mid-Wales group. This mid-Wales group is forecast to see the highest population growth in percentage terms.

Local Authority Projections.
The Research and Information Section have updated their population projections for Ceredigion county using 2001 Census data as the starting base population together with new sources of migration data and more recent Government Actuary projections of birth and mortality rates. The scenario modelled assumed net in-migration of +1,000 p.a. (slightly higher than that seen in recent years.) The falling birth rates in the population are mitigated by the net in-migration of children aged under 18 (especially of children of in non-examination ages).

TABLE 2: **School age groups- Higher Net In-Migration (ca 1000 persons p.a)**
[projected figs rounded to 50]

AGE GROUPS	2001 (Census)	2006	2011	2016
0-4	3485	3200	3300	3550
5-10	5019	4500	4200	4200
11-15	4213	4500	4050	3850
16-17	1725	1800	1850	1600
Total under 18	14442	14,000	13400	13200

Location of Population Growth

4.1.3 Long-term changes in household structure as well as population growth will lead to increased demand for housing in Ceredigion. The housing market is a complex mix of factors, however, it can be assumed that families with school-age children will be more likely to demand single unit dwellings, rather than, for example, older stock converted to flats. In general new, estate developments contain a higher proportion of school age population than other types of housing.

4.1.4 The main towns, Cardigan, Lampeter, Aberaeron, Llandysul, Tregaron but particularly Aberystwyth, will continue to be the main focus of employment and social opportunity, and, therefore, housing demand. Over

the medium term there will be an increased demand in the lower Teifi valley area due to improved road connections to the south.

4.1.5 The main locations of new housing, particularly new estates, will be on sites on the edge of existing towns. However, the strong demand for existing housing and a limited number of suitable sites for new-build, means that Aberystwyth will continue to exert a strong influence on the housing market over a wide area of north Ceredigion.

4.2 Pupil Numbers and Places

4.2.0 Pupil numbers, particularly in primary schools have fallen steadily over the past few years and in many areas the downward trend is likely to continue for some years to come. In a number of Authorities schools below 100 pupils are deemed to be small and unsustainable given the implications for resourcing both financial and in terms of staffing and accommodation.

In its recent document on school transformation Estyn states:
> "..Many schools in Wales are in rural areas and many of these are small schools.
> There is no direct link between how well pupils do and the size of the school they
> attend. However, the responsibilities and workload demands on teachers in very
> small schools are considerable and the financial resourcing of these schools is
> substantial and demanding on limited budgets. [para 60]

Demographic Profile

4.2.1 The Authority has a well defined and continually refined process for anticipating pupil numbers. It is anticipated that by 2012 pupil numbers in the primary phase will decrease by about 8.1% to a total of 4584 whilst in the secondary sector a decrease of almost 13.7%, to 4429, is anticipated. The anticipated total fall of over 1129 pupils (426 primary and 703 secondary) reflects the national trend of substantial reduction in pupil numbers to 2013.

Forecasting pupil Numbers

4.2.2   Forecasting pupil numbers is not an exact science. Further co-operation between County Council Planning Department and Education and Community Services Directorate has assisted in developing forecasting procedures to compile appropriate details with greater accuracy

4.2.3   The process of confirming anticipated pupil numbers has been refined with the collaboration of the Headteachers of Schools.

Spare places
Primary schools

4.2.4 Ceredigion has a high level of spare places in its primary schools as compared with other unitary authorities in Wales In January 2008 58.5% of primary schools have more than 25% of their places unfilled.

4.2.5 The Authority also has the highest percentage of small schools in Wales ('small' being defined as fewer than 90 pupils). The level of financial support per pupil provided to very small schools is high. The Authority needs to question its arrangements for primary school provision, particularly in view of the high level of spare places. Overcrowding in the primary sector is generally not an issue.

4.2.6 The position is likely to be significantly affected by the implementation of the "Foundation Phase" [in respect of pupils aged 3-7 years] curriculum proposed by WAG which will impact on staffing and accommodation requirements.   Furthermore WAG is giving consideration to an alternative approach to accounting for school places which again may affect the definition of school capacities.

Secondary Schools

4.2.7 The level of spare places in the secondary sector is not as significant an issue for the Authority as in the primary sector. Compared with other unitary authorities in Wales, levels are not excessive, being in the

median to lower quartile. There is however a high percentage of small secondary schools and also a high percentage of small sixth forms. The Report suggested that the Authority should consider whether it wishes to better target its LMS formula to ensure cost effectiveness in this area. There were no schools with problems of overcrowding in the secondary sector at the time of the audit.

4.2.8 As with the primary phase, the capacity of secondary schools will be affected by the anticipated change in accounting accommodation. In addition the current deliberations relating to 16+ provision and the 14 –19 curriculum are likely to have considerable impact on school places.

Audit Reports
4.2.9 An Auditor's report concluded that "in view of the high levels of spare places in close proximity, the Authority should consider whether:

- amalgamations of primary schools would be appropriate
- some parts of schools could be put to alternative use.

School capacities and unfilled places
4.2.10 WAG has provided a new approach to calculating capacities. It is important to stress however that the overall picture concerning an above average level of 'spare places' masks the fact that a small number of urban schools are oversubscribed.

4.2.11 A review of school capacities, following upon the School Condition Survey, indicates that in a large number of settings it is not practicable to reduce the number of spare places

4.2.12 Below is an outline analysis of spare places in the primary sector. The number of pupils set against the capacity of the school – some well above the proportional threshold of 25% considered by WAG. 9 schools have pupils in excess of capacity.

School capacity	<20	21 - 40	41 – 65	66 - 90	91 - 105	106 -150	151 - 200	201 - 250	251 - 300	301 – 350	351 – 400	401 – 450	451+	TOTAL	No schools <90 pupils	* schools over subscibed
Number pupils																
< 20		5	2	1										8		
21 – 40		9	14	4										27		7
41 - 65			8	4										12	54 [77.1%}	1
66 – 90				1	2	4								7		
91 – 105				1		2								3		1
106 – 150						2	3							5		
151 – 200							1	2	1	1				5		
201 – 250																
250 – 300																
301 – 350																
351 - 400											3			3		
401 +																
TOTAL		14	24	11	2	8	4	2	1	1	3			70		9
No school capacity <90	49 [70%]															

School size

Primary Phase
4.2.13 Certain Authorities suggest that schools with falling rolls will lose resources and need to take difficult educational decisions. A school's size is a major factor in determining its cost-effectiveness. It also has a big influence on internal school organisation, particularly whether mixed age classes are necessary. It is further suggested that primary schools of around either 420 pupils (two form entry) or 210 pupils (one form entry) are likely to have sufficient resources to enable them to deliver the primary strategy effectively and fund:

- a broader curriculum and the spread of good practice among teachers
- support staff such as teaching assistants, administrative and SEN support staff to help with workforce remodelling
- enrichment activities for pupils
- ICT and other teaching resources
- SEN provision and counter-measures to deprivation.

4.2.14 As pupil numbers fall decisions have to be taken to attempt to provide adequate resourcing to sustain staff and teaching groups often without resolving the fundamental issues. Indeed WAG and Estyn suggest that schools of below 90 pupils are deemed small and as such present particular problems among which include

- the head teacher having to carry a major teaching load
- limited expertise to cover the full curriculum
- potential volatility because staff changes can have disproportionate and sudden effects

4.2.15 Ceredigion LEA has no defined policy on the appropriate size of primary schools, but deals with each school individually according to the local needs and situation. However it may be appropriate for the Authority to determine a policy when creating a strategy for the future educational provision within the County. Accordingly, approximately 71% of Ceredigion's primary schools are small. This is the highest percentage in Wales.

4.2.16 In considering what may be appropriate models for school organisation within Ceredigion different sizes of schools become apparent:-

(i) A 3-11 primary school of 90 -100 pupils would provide for with four classes for two age groups in the same class : Nursery/Reception; Years 1 and 2 [the two classes conforming to the Foundation Phase]; Years 3 and 4; Years 5 and 6 [combining as Key Stage 2 or the Junior Phase]. The average class size would be 22.5 to 30 pupils.
(ii) A 3-11 school based on a class for each year group, including nursery provision, would cater for between 180 and 240 pupils
(iii) Another possible model would allow 3 classes across two age groups. This can be organised but certain classes would be of mixed ages. The school could cater for about 260 to 360 pupils.
(iv) The next effective level would be based on a two class entry [*i.e.* two classes in each year] for about 350 to 480 pupils.

4.2.17 This table provides an analysis of school sizes in Ceredigion (January 2008).

Size of Schools	SCHOOLS			PUPILS		
	No.	%	Cumulative %	No.	%	Cumulative %
<16	4	5.7%	5.7%	52	1.1%	1.1%
16 – 30	18	25.7%	31.4%	440	9.0%	10.1%
31 – 40	13	18.6%	50.0%	466	9.6%	19.7%
41 – 60	11	15.7%	65.7%	546	11.2%	30.9%
61 – 75	5	7.1%	72.9%	340	7.0%	37.9%
76 – 100	5	7.1%	80.0%	449	9.2%	47.1%
101 – 150	6	8.6%	88.6%	773	15.9%	62.9%
151 – 200	5	7.1%	95.7%	842	17.3%	80.2%
200+	3	4.3%	100.0%	963	19.8%	100.0%
TOTAL	70	100	-	4871	100	-

PRIMARY SCHOOL ANALYSIS Jan 2008 : Pupils by area											
Area		No Pupils									
		<10	11 ~ 25	26 ~ 40	41 ~ 75	75 ~ 100	101 ~ 150	151 ~ 200	201 ~ 300	301+	Total
ABERAERON		1	3	6	4	1	~	1	~	~	16
ABERYSTWYTH		-	2	5	4	4	2	2	~	2	21
ABERTEIFI			1	3	2	~	3	1	~	~	10
LLAMBED		~	1	3	~	~	1	~	~	1	6
LLANDYSUL		~	~	6	2	~	~	1	~	~	9
TREGARON			3	1	4	~	~	~	~	~	8
TOTAL		1	10	24	16	5	6	5	0	3	70

- 33 (47%) schools are below 40 pupils the threshold for a minimum of two teachers based on the current Funding Formula
- These provide for 878 (18%) pupils
- A further 2578 (53%%) pupils are educated in 14 (20 %) schools which have over 100 pupils.

Secondary phase

4.2.18 Secondary schools of fewer than 700 pupils are deemed by Estyn and other agencies to be small. Four of Ceredigion's schools fall into this category and a further three are about or marginally greater than the threshold. Sixth forms of 160 or fewer pupils are considered small, only one school has more pupils in the sixth form than the threshold.

4,2,19 Post 16 and 14-16 provision is the focus of attention at the present time. It is anticipated that the 16+ provision is likely to have a significant effect on the nature and size of buildings within Ceredigion schools. Also, the discussions regarding the curriculum and accreditation for the 14-19 age group could lead to many requirements that will need to be considered in the foreseeable future.

Class Size

4.2.20 The LEA has no specific policies defining class sizes in the Primary or Secondary Sectors – other than the compliance with the statutory requirement to maintain class sizes below 30 pupils in the Foundation Phase and the desirability to maintain such thresholds at Key Stage 2/Junior phase. The internal school organisation is deemed to be the responsibility of the governors and headteachers within the resources available. The complexity of managing the inevitable mixed age/ability class at primary level is recognised by the Authority

4.2.21 At the January 2008 Pupil Census no primary school had classes exceeding thirty pupils.

4,2,22 Appropriate guidance is followed in respect class sizes for certain subject areas at secondary level.

Faith Schools

4.2.23 The Welsh Assembly Government requires Education Authorities to review faith school provision. There are two Voluntary Aided Primary Schools [one Church in Wales and one Roman Catholic Church] within the Authority in addition to two Voluntary Controlled Church in Wales Schools. Such provision meets current needs. Should any significant demands become apparent the respective Diocesan Authority will be consulted.

4.2.24 Although there are a number of pupils from a variety of different ethnic and religious backgrounds in Ceredigion they are mainly concentrated in the Aberystwyth and Lampeter areas where the University institutions attract students from all over the world. Research students in the main may bring their families with them but their residence is of a transitory nature. Consequently there has not been demand for school for specific faith traditions other than Christian.

Language Provision

4.2.25 The Welsh Assembly Government requires Education Authorities to review its Welsh Language provision. Ceredigion Education Authority asserts its belief in the educational value of acquiring two languages and considers that the policy provides adequate provision.

4.2.26 The aim of this bilingual policy is to educate pupils so that they are thoroughly bilingual in the use of both Welsh and English on leaving the primary school so that they may participate fully in the bilingual community of which they are part. The provision made should ensure that every pupil shall be able to communicate with confidence in both languages and that they have an appreciation of the cultural heritage of Wales.

4.2.27 In the primary sector, the majority of schools (62) follow a policy where Welsh is the main medium of the life and work of the school [over 70% of the curriculum in KS2 is through the medium of Welsh]. These schools, in accordance to Welsh Assembly Government directive ('Defining schools according to the Welsh medium provision', 2007) are deemed 'Welsh medium schools'. A further 6 schools follow a policy where Welsh is a medium in the life and work of the school and bilingualism is developed in all aspects of school life. In addition 3 schools are organised such that there are streams which follow one or other of these policies. Individual school prospectus include detail regarding the schools linguistic nature.

4.2.28 Six Language Centres have been established to support pupils of junior school age who are latecomers to the area. Latecomers to secondary school are also offered relevant support in addition to their Welsh lessons.

4.2.29 The Education Authority is aware of the need to secure continuity between primary and secondary schools if the Language Policy is to be effective.

4.2.30 Secondary School Governing Bodies have established policies for Language provision in accordance with the Ceredigion Language Strategy. All schools meet the demand for a range of subjects to be taught through the medium of Welsh. Two of the 7 Secondary Schools are designated Welsh medium schools.

4.3 Admission of Pupils to Schools

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Applications for Places

4.3.1 The Authority has a well established admissions procedure for the admission of pupils both to primary and secondary phases which is currently reviewed.

4.3.2 For the first time since its inception in 1996 Ceredigion experienced over-subscription in one of its Secondary Schools for the Academic Year 2005-06. Existing procedures were implemented to resolve the issue

Admissions Policy

4.3.3 The LEA is currently reviewing its Admissions Policy. The main proposal is to allow pupils to start school at the beginning of the term in which they attain four years of age. If there is a nursery class at the school, children may start at the beginning of the term following their third birthday - usually on a part-time basis. However, legally children do not have to start school until they have attained their fifth birthday.

4.3.4 There is no automatic transfer from a nursery unit/class to the reception class of the associated mainstream school.
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4.3.5 Pupils will have attained the age of 7 years by 31st August prior to being admitted or transferred to a junior school at the beginning of the school year

4.3.6 Children commence their secondary education in the September following their 11th birthday.

4.3.7 Pupils will have attained the age of 16 years by 31 August prior to being admitted to Year 12 (sixth form) of a secondary school at the beginning of a school year.

4.3.8 Parents have to make a written application for a place at whatever school(s) they would like their child to receive his/her education. Within Ceredigion most parents send their child to the school which serves their local area. Traditionally each school has an area which it serves and pupils within that area attend the local school. However, parents may express a preference for a different school.

4.3.9 All schools must admit pupils up to their published admission level. The admission level will reflect the capacity of the school and a child will be allocated a place at a school unless it is full. Once the admission level has been reached, requests for a place at the school have to be refused.

4.3.10 The admission of children to school is controlled by an "Admission Authority". In the case of community schools in Ceredigion the Admissions Authority is Ceredigion County Council (the Local Education Authority or LEA). In the case of a Voluntary Aided School the Admissions Authority is the Governing Body of the school.

4.3.11 Where there are more children wishing to enter a particular school than there are places, the following factors will be taken into consideration - in order of priority:-

1.   written expressed preference and reasons of parents;
2.   the number of pupils that can be admitted to the school;
3.   the geographical area which the school normally serves;
4.   looked after pupils;
5.   specific and exceptional medical and social reasons;
6.   sibling links.

Where more than one child meets these criteria and applicants still remain then the child living nearest to the school will be admitted.

4.3.12 Where possible the Admission Authority must meet the preference, but certain factors will be taken into account. These include:

- the efficient use of resources and accommodation
- the character of a school (generally religious)

4.3.13 Parents have the right of appeal. Where it has nor been possible for a child to be admitted to the school of stated preference.

4.3.14 The Authority does not permit selection, waiting lists or the interviewing of prospective parents.

4.4   Home to School Transport

4.4.1 The obligation on the LEA to provide free transport to facilitate attendance of pupils at school is provided for in Section 509 of the Education Act 1996.

4.4.2 Pupils will qualify for statutory assistance if they are of compulsory school age and attend the nearest school or the school which normally serves the locality in which the pupils live, and also where they live over the statutory walking distances. The distance is defined as being 2 miles in the case of children under 8 years of age and 3 miles in the case of children aged 8 and over.

4.4.3 Assistance may be provided for pupils in certain circumstances on the grounds of:-
    -      Safety;
    -      Medical Condition;
    -      Statement of Educational needs;
    -      A change of residence in a final examination year;
    -      Continuation of an advanced course of study not being available at the designated school;

- Religious beliefs: In the light of the requirements of the Education Act 1993, parents are advised to contact the Director of Education and Community Services to obtain further information prior to expressing their preferred school based on the nature of the religious education provided at that institution being the same as that of the religion or denomination to which the parent adheres.

4.4.4 Pupils who do not qualify for 'free transport' as defined above may be allowed following a written application to the Director of Education and Community Services, to travel on LEA contracted vehicles if there are spare places available. The concession may be withdrawn at any time
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4.4.5 Conveyance is arranged also for those attending College of Further Education.

4.4.6. The rural nature of the County implies high transport costs in order to ensure access to Education. The total net expenditure is £2,636,100

Number of Pupils Conveyed				
	ELIGIBLE	*INELIGIBLE (Spare Seat)*	*TOTAL*	*COST £*
Primary - under 5	0	14	14	338100
- 5-11 years	208	97	305	
Secondary - Yr 7-11	2721	251 [102 paying]	3074	1741900
VI form *[estimate]*	256	11 [11 paying]	278	
Special Education	103	0	103	396300
- Exclusions	6	0	6	
- PR Unit	19	0	19	
F.E. Students	215	104	379	159800
TOTAL	3585	477 [113 paying]	4178	**2636100**

4.5 Staffing

4.5.1 The introduction of the Teachers Workload Agreement and School remodelling has considerable impact on schools. Remodelling the workforce has brought an increase in the number and range of adults in school and has meant that leaders manage more people. For many schools, this has meant focusing teachers' time on teaching and learning and using suitably qualified professionals from outside to take on other roles.

4.5.2 The seven elements of the Workload Agreement seek to enable leaders to lead, provide teachers with time for preparation and assessment, to focus teachers' energies and expertise on teaching and learning by directing a number of tasks to support staff. The last therefore provides opportunities to develop a structure for support staff within school undertaking learning and classroom support, administration and clerical duties.

4.5.3.Within Ceredigion there is evidence that the initiatives are of benefit for teachers but has created more pressures for headteachers given that funding for implementation has been inadequate. In addition whilst WAG seek to encourage the creation of support through the development and employment of Teaching Assistants, schools have sought to engage additional qualified teachers to fulfil the duties of teachers. Not only is there a dearth of available staff but such provision is unsustainable given budgetary constraints.

4.5.4 In a number of situations constraints have led to considerable ingenuity whereby schools are collaborating to share staff or coming together as staff and pupils in order to provide teacher preparation and assessment time. Such arrangements afford additional benefit to pupils learning opportunities given the range of teacher specialisms and expertise available and the enhancement of social interaction in larger peer groups not evident in smaller, more isolated school units.

4.5.5 The constraints of small school units crate difficulties in implementing the Workforce Remodelling agenda. Teaching and Learning Responsibility payments are to supersede management allowances. Such payments are to reflect the focus upon teaching and learning responsibilities. Schools are required to have established structures by December 2008 which reflect such requirements. However funding is not available to establish structures which replicate the extant systems. Opportunities lie by school collaboration through formal agreements involving shared expertise and responsibilities. Given the size of schools in Ceredigion the implementation of appropriate collaborative and federated models may afford the only realistic options to implement the Workforce and Remodelling requirements.

4.5.6 The agenda encouraging greater integration between education and children's services will require increased and beneficial multi-service specialist provision. Pupils and staff can benefit from working with staff in other sectors, such as the health, Social Services, police and youth support services.

4.5.7 Inevitable, as Estyn perceives,

> *"the involvement of a wider range of specialists contributing to learning will bring with it the opportunity for more flexible staffing models and working arrangements. This should make better use of many more people's skills and help them achieve a better work-life balance. There is not a one model-fits-all for schools but thinking imaginatively and flexibly is key to making successful changes in how the workforce can be used. As a result, staff in schools could benefit more from a flexible work-pattern, which could include negotiating their hours of work and holidays to suit learners' needs and their own circumstances. [para 80]*

4.5.8 Estyn also indicates that the statistical profile of teachers in Wales also seems to suggest that greater flexibility in staffing models is required if schools are to retain, develop and sustain the almost 40% of all registered staff in Wales, and the over 65% of headteachers, who are in the 50+ age group. This is reflected in Ceredigion with some 47% of the current primary headteachers reaching retirement age by 2015. In the future all headteachers need to be suitably qualified which could lead to a shortage of applicants for such posts. It appears that there is also a reluctance to apply for headship posts. The solution may lie in formal federated structures.

4.5.9 In its recent publication Estyn suggests the ways forward for schools of the future to include the need to:
- re-think staffing structures in terms of fitness for purpose;
- manage diverse staff roles to support pupil achievement;
- develop staff networking and negotiating skills to support partnership working;
- develop and nurture staff through effective performance management and professional development systems; and
- support new and student entrants in their pre- and post-qualification programmes.

4.5.10 Fundamental therefore will be the adoption of structures across schools in the primary sector in order to establish effective leadership and management which are not sustainable as individual units. Issues relating to leadership include Governing Bodies

4.5.11 Estyn emphasises that:

> *"… For schools to promote lifelong learning and community development, leaders at all levels will require vision and the ability to raise expectations and inspire and motivate others. Leaders will need to work more flexibly in different kinds of management roles. Planning will always require co-operation with outside agencies, including health and social services as well as other education providers such as adult learning. [para 92]*

and the ways forward in relation to leadership and management include the need to:

- transcend organisational boundaries to understand and work effectively with a wide range of partners who contribute to all aspects of pupils' learning, health and well-being;
- improve teaching and learning through motivating and influencing pupils and staff in a changing situation;
- use people's time, resources and accommodation in more ambitious and creative ways;
- .provide greater flexibility in distributing responsibility amongst staff;
- give priority to performance management and to developing all the people who work in schools in accordance with organisational priorities; and
- develop and nurture management teams that work effectively across sectors.

4.5.12. A vital part of the restructuring strategy to reorganise the provision of education within the county could lead to the possible closure or reorganisation of certain schools. Such measures could result in a variation in the staffing needs within the County and changes to the workforce.

A 'Code of Practice for dealing with Staffing Issues in Schools affected by Amalgamations or Closures' has been produced by the Education Department to inform and address these issues. The purpose of the guidance is to safeguard staff to the greatest possible extent by ensuring a consistency of approach in dealing with staffing issues where restructuring of schools takes place. It is intended that the guidance will cover both the appointment procedures and redeployment opportunities and also outline the levels of benefits payable in the event of retirement or redundancy.
It is recognised that staffing decisions are the responsibility of Governing Bodies but Ceredigion County Council remains the legal employer of all staff. It is therefore expected that everyone will work in partnership in order to ensure effective appointments in schools and the protection of existing employees.
Consultation on the contents of The Code of Practice has been undertaken with Trade Unions and Teaching Associations and the Local Social Partnership Group who welcomed the introduction of such guidance. A vital part of the restructuring strategy to reorganise the provision of education within the county could lead to the possible closure or reorganisation of certain schools. Such measures could result in a variation in the staffing needs within the County and changes to the workforce.

4.6 Building Assets

4.6.1 The provision of school facilities which are fit for propose is a target for the WAG. Local Authorities are required to establish robust plans to reduce surplus places and to improve standards of accommodation. In so doing WAG further requires Authorities to exhibit commitment both in terms of principle and also in directing capital resources to the task. The lack of such robust asset management plans and commitment may render Authorities ineligible for capital grant funding.

.4.6.2 Estyn in the document _"Transforming Schools"_ suggests that the schools of the future should have:

- attractive accommodation and modern buildings
- sufficient, well-designed, high-quality
- first-class facilities in which pupils can enjoy healthy meals;
- suitable clean modern provision for toilets and personal hygiene;
- buildings that are accessible to the whole community and have suitable facilities for disabled learners;
- up-to-date facilities, such as IT centres, laboratories, workshops and libraries, for use by pupils, staff, parents and members of the community;
- safe, well-lit and sheltered communal areas and grounds for play and relaxation, encouraging wide-spread community use so that users can take pride in caring for their locality;
- indoor and outdoor sports and play facilities that are available both to pupils and the community; and community services, where pupils and their families have access to a wide range of support, including health and social services.

Asset Management

4.6.3 In collaboration with the Highways, Property and Works Department and schools, the Directorate for Education and Community Services undertake a significant Capital Programme Annually, largely financed through Welsh Assembly Government funding in particular the School Building Improvement Grant.

4.6.4 A survey of all school property in 2000-01 concluded that there existed some £10m of work in order to bring schools to a reasonable standard of repair. A new survey is currently being undertaken. Significant other resources are required to improve and provide new facilities. Whilst the Authority has achieved a considerable amount in providing new facilities such as the provision of a new school for Penweddig, extensive work at Aberaeron Secondary School, extensions at Ysgol y Dderi and Penrhyn-coch and new school for Ffynnonbedr Primary School as well as a proposed area school, it is unlikely that the Authority will meet the challenge set by the Welsh Assembly Government to have all schools fit for purpose by 2010 without a considerable amount of investment.

4.6.5 Indeed a challenge has set each Authority by the Welsh Assembly Government to prepare plans to significantly reduce unfilled places, to have in place robust Asset Management Plans and to make a significant contributions form Council

4.6.6 Responsibility for school premises are divided between the LEA and schools and guidance clearly defines the respective areas of responsibility for elements of capital and repairs and maintenance. School may enter into a Service Level Agreement with the Highways, Property and Works Department in order to access technical advice and support.

4.6.7 The Authority has provided schools with guidance on the respective responsibilities under the disability legislation.

Conditions of Buildings

4.6.8 Currently the primary pupils of Ceredigion are educated in 70 separate schools. About 48 of these schools (65%) were built before 1900. Many of these buildings have been refurbished and in some cases extended and often provide a pleasant environment for teaching and learning. Others are cramped and do not provide facilities which are ideal for the provision of modern day education. The facilities are often inadequate for the provision of physical education, do not provide enough space for early years education and do not lend themselves easily to the effective teaching of science and technology. They can also be expensive to heat and maintain and have insufficient parking facilities. Security is becoming an issue of increasing significance. 11 schools still have external toilets.

4.6.9 Over the last quarter century only two new primary schools have been built within the County but two new Area Schools and a replacement primary school are being planned

4.6.10 Over the last 15 to 20 years it has not been possible to invest to the required level in building repairs and consequently a substantial work remains outstanding. There are ever increasing demands on the limited capital resources of the Authority, which may only add to the current backlog.

4.6.11 The Conditions Survey (April 2008) indicated a repairs backlog of some £7m. The survey finding are summarised below

SCHOOLS as at 1st April 2008			
DETR PPI 1A - % Gross Internal Floor Space in Condition Categories A - D			
DfEE Condition Codes			
Good - Performing as intended and operating efficiently	A		
Satisfactory - Performing as intended but minor repairs required	B		
Poor - Exhibits major defects	C		
Life Expired - Serious risk	D		

Property Category	Total Sites	Category A		Category B		Category C		Category D	
		Total Sites	%	Total Sites	%	Total Sites	%	Total Sites	%
Primary Schools	70	33	**47.88**	36	**51.5**	1	**0.59**	0	**0**
Secondary Schools	6	1	**25.55**	5	**74.4**	0	**0.00**	0	**0**
Total	76	34	**35.73**	41	**63.9**	1	**0.27**	0	**0**

DETR PPI 1B - Outstanding Maintenance by Cost Expressed as % in Priority Levels 1-3		
DfEE Priority Codes		
Urgent work to prevent closure of premises		Priority **1**
Essential work required within 2 years		Priority **2**
Desirable Work required within 3 - 5 years		Priority **3**

Property Category	Total Sites	Outstanding Maintenance Total	Priority 1		Priority 2		Priority 3	
			Total Cost	%	Total Cost	%	Total Cost	%
Primary Schools	70	£3,364,786	£2,872	**0.09**	£2,024,528	**60.17**	£1,337,386	**39.75**
Secondary Schools	6	£3,536,749	£0	**0**	£1,932,884	**54.65**	£1,603,865	**45.35**
Total	76	£6,901,535	£2,872	**0.04**	£3,967,412	**57.34**	£2,941,251	**42.62**

4.6.12 The outstanding maintenance as then defined has been gradually reduced to about £7m, but the natural course of fabric deterioration may mean that other elements are added to the list. A new survey is being undertaken which should inform schools and the Authority of the need. Schools are encouraged to develop planned maintenance programmes which can be integrated with the Authority's proposed programmes. Thus a joint approach to establishing a joint repair and maintenance programme within the resources available.

4.6.13 Despite additional resources being delegated to Governing Bodies to meet responsibilities for repair and maintenance, considerable concern is being express about the level of accountability now vested in Governing Bodies as a result of the statutory requirements of Fair Funding, given the perceived insufficiency of available funding. However the LEA no longer has the flexibility once available to undertake certain elements of school building repair and maintenance since resources have been delegated to accompany the increased areas of accountability. In addition concern is expressed by technical officers that School Governing Bodies are embarking upon remedial or extended work to buildings without consultation and in certain instances may not be fulfilling regulatory requirements

ESTYN Reports
4.6.14 Since the inception of the regular Estyn Inspection regime all schools in Ceredigion have been inspected 2 or 3 times since 1994. Comments are included within the reports on the conditions of school buildings. This can support the development of the Capital Programme – for example, in two instances extensions were added to school whose accommodation was deemed to be inadequate by the Inspectors.

4.6.15 An analysis of Estyn indicates that in general the vast majority of buildings are deemed to be "good" or "satisfactory", The table below illustrates:

Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
4.5%	47%	44%	4.5%

4.6.16 Generally there is a high degree of complimentary comments with particular attention given to cleanliness and hygiene and the maintenance systems. Favourable comments are generally made about school environments and the suitability of surrounding land.

However the principal deficiencies include:

- the lack of space for aspects of the curriculum [for pupils under 5 , no hall, indoor physical education, no library, no playing field]
- the lack of provision of facilities such as indoor toilets, staff room, headteacher's room, storage
- many of the remarks are linked with health and safety issues
- attention is drawn to the inadequacies of demountable classrooms frequently located at a distance from the main school building and toilets

Temporary Buildings

4.6.17 The Welsh Assembly Government is concerned about the number, standard and condition of demountable buildings which exist in schools. They have often been placed as a quick temporary response to accommodation problems at schools. However the older types do dilapidate and require constant maintenance.

4.6.18 In Ceredigion a large number of temporary buildings exist, many of which require maintenance and repair. In addition their removal could reduce significantly the number of surplus places if logistically possible. However their continuation at a school allow additional space to imaginatively meet the demands of the curriculum

4.6.19   The District Audit Report highlighted that:

"… The Authority has high levels of temporary accommodation in both the primary and secondary sectors. As this is included in the capacity measures this can result in future problems of a shortage of adequate accommodation. The capital charges, which result from temporary accommodation, comes to approximately £200,000. "

Under the new Accounting Code of Practice all accommodation incurs capital charges (depreciation….). This includes temporary accommodation.

...Based on actual figures for a number of classrooms in Ceredigion, the average cost per mobile in 1996/97 was £3,600. When mobiles are over 10 years old these charges no longer apply.

We were therefore unable to calculate the total cost of temporary classrooms.

4.6.20   Temporary accommodation in primary schools accounts for about 1100 places in some 38 units. This is about 20% of the available pupil capacity. It therefore appears that the temporary accommodation masks a possible shortage of adequate provision. A proportion of such units could be removed when proposed building projects are undertaken.

4.6.21 The complimentary numbers in Secondary schools are similar. Of the 32 units a number will be removed when proposed building projects are realised

4.6.22 However it has to be recognised the despite having made considerable impact on the reduction of temporary buildings with the extension and refurbishment of Aberaeron Comprehensive School and Ysgol Gyfun Penweddig, numbers are difficult to control particularly when there is a local need to accommodate more pupils.

4.6.23 It is necessary to analyse in detail the location and appropriateness of all temporary accommodation in order to:

- ensure that temporary accommodation is not masking possible future problems of overcrowding
- ensure that unfilled places are kept to a minimum
- ensure that capital charges are not being unnecessarily incurred.

Schools: General Statistical Information Based on January 2008 Data

	Primary	*Secondary*	*Total*
No. Schools	70	7	77
No. of pupils as at Jan 08	4871	5004	9875
Total Capacity	6699	6484	13183
No. Surplus Places	1,878	1480	3358
No. of Schools with Surplus Places	61	7	68
%Surplus Places	28.03%	22.83%	25.47%
No. of Places Overcapacity	50	0	50
No of schools with overcapacity	9	0	9
%Overcapacity	0.74%	0	0.3.8%

Suitablity and Sufficiency

4.6.24 There is increasing need to evaluate schools suitability in terms of facilities and capacity to deliver for example the Foundation Phase and Accessibility particularly for the disabled. The Authority completed a Survey of the condition of school buildings and has progressed a survey of suitability and sufficiency of buildings for the purpose of education Below is an attempt to evaluate and rate the suitability of primary buildings for early years provision, disabled access and number of mobile classrooms in schools.

PRIMARY SCHOOL ANALYSIS 2005

Suitability ~ 1: Good; 2: Adequate; 3: Inadequate; 4: Not suitable
Early Years provision ~ 1: Good; 2: Adequate; 3: Inadequate; 4: Not suitable
Disabled access ~ Yes; No
Disabled provision internal : Difficulties; No Difficulties

Area	Disabled Access: Yes									Disabled access: No									Mobiles [demountables]		
Rating	1	1~2	1~3	2	2~3	3	3~4	4	Sub-total	1	1~2	1~3	2	2~3	3	3~4	4	Sub-total	Total	No Schools	No Mobiles
ABERAERON																					
No difficulties	1	~	~	1	~	1	~	~	3	~	~	~	~	1	1	~	~	2	5	5	7
Difficulties	~	1	~	1	~	2	~	~	4	~	1	~	~	1	3	~	3	8	12		
ABERYSTWYTH																					
No difficulties	6	~	2	~	~	~	~	~	8	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	0	8	10	19
Difficulties	3	1	1	1	2	2	~	~	10	~	1	~	2	~	2	~	~	5	15		
ABERTEIFI																					
No difficulties	3	~	~	2	~	1	~	~	6	1	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	1	7	5	6
Difficulties	2	~	~	~	~	1	~	~	3	~	~	~	1	~	~	~	~	1	4		
LLAMBED																					
No difficulties	~	~	~	3	~	1	~	~	4	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	0	4	2	5
Difficulties	~	~	~	~	1	~	~	~	1	~	~	~	~	~	1	~	~	1	2		
LLANDYSUL																					
No difficulties	2	~	~	1	~	~	~	~	3	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	0	3	1	1
Difficulties	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	1	~	~	1	~	5	~	~	7	7		
TREGARON																					
No difficulties	1	~	~	~	2	~	~	~	3	~	~	~	~	~	1	~	~	1	4	2	2
Difficulties	~	~	~	1	1	1	~	~	3	~	~	~	~	1	1	~	~	2	5		
SUB-TOTAL																					
No difficulties	13	~	~	9	2	3	~	~	27	1	~	~	~	1	2	~	~	4	31		
Difficulties	5	2	1	3	4	5	~	~	20	1	2	~	4	2	12	~	3	24	44		
TOTAL									47									28	75	25	40

The number of schools deemed to be less than adequate [rating 3 or 4] on both criteria is about 25 [30%]. A significant proportion of these display difficulties in terms of internal provision for the disabled.

4.7 Finance/Funding

4.7.0 The Authority is required to fund schools according to agreed, published formulae which comply with school funding regulations. In so doing the Authority sets certain parameters in the primary phase such as ensuring that schools of around 40 pupils are resourced at a level which allows the schools to be staffed by a headteacher and an assistant teacher. At the present time, each legally constituted school, receives a budget on the basis of the Authority's funding formula. When an informal federation is established, it will have more than one legally constituted school so each school will receive its own budget. In a formal federation, there is one legally constituted school even though it may be on more than one site. The one school will receive one delegated budget, although the formula may reflect the multi-site nature of the school.

These, together with elements relating to buildings, may be regarded as fixed costs which inevitably are proportionally greater in smaller schools. Ceredigion currently allocates the highest funding the highest per pupil in Wales, in both the primary and secondary sectors. However,WAG and Estyn have each raised the question of the sustainability of small schools in the current financial climate and in terms of educational viability.

Capital and other funding
4.7.1 The adequacy and condition of the school building and attendant facilities – such as games fields; availability of water in classrooms – is of importance in planning for future provision. The maintenance costs of current assets are high, and a greater responsibility for these has rested with Governing Bodies from 1 April 2000 in accordance with Fair Funding requirements. Governing Bodies are able through Service Level Agreements to acquire the services of the County Council to advise, plan and undertake repair and maintenance work should they so wish. The LEA retains responsibility for the Capital Programme. For 2005-06 £218k has been delegated to secondary schools [*cf £245k in 2004/05*] and £172k [*£ 236k in 2004-05].*

4.7.2 The issue of the suitability and adequacy of school buildings in the context of the demands of the National Curriculum and new initiatives, such as provision of Early Years Education and ICT, will need serious consideration when determining the strategy for the delivery of education in the County

4.7.3 The Authority continues to manage an effective Capital Programme augmented by National Assembly initiatives such as Additional Capital Funding for Schools; Class Size Reduction Grants, New Deal Funding and School Building Improvement Grant. Emphasis has been placed upon upgrade facilities such as laboratories and technology workrooms in the secondary phase – an example being the resources through the Additional Capital Funding Initiative being directed to provide new Design and Technology facilities at Tregaron Comprehensive School and a specifically designed Unit for pupils with Special Education needs at Lampeter Comprehensive School. Issues of continual concern are the provision of indoor toilets in all schools; the standard of school Kitchens and canteens and the renewal of heating systems and roofs. In addition a£5m+ project at Aberaeron Comprehensive School aimed to remove temporary accommodation and which attracted resources from Welsh Challenge Funds and Sportslot. Initial funding for a PFI initiative secured the provision of a new school for Ysgol Gyfun Penweddig by December 2000

4.7.4 Ceredigion Education Authority is conscious of the under investment in the fabric of school buildings and since its establishment in 1996 the Authority has deployed the following capital investment on schools and educational facilities since 2002

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE 2002-08

CATEGORY	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007/08	Budget 2008-09
Essential Schemes	£470k	£470k	£349k	£303k	£305k	£403k	£310k
School Projects	£163k	£192k	£394k	£43k	£37k	£69k	£100k
New Deal for Schools	£ 64k	£ 18k	-	-	-	-	-

SBIG – Formula	£1,141k	£1,996k	£1,168k	£924k	£493k	£900k	£1,116k
SBIG – £9m	-	-		£1,087k	£2.900k	£1,661k	£2,460k
Foundation Phase	-	-	-	-	-	£175k	£86k

*SBIG = School Building Improvement Grant

The more flexible approach provided by the Welsh Assembly Government School Building Improvement Grant has enabled an extension to Ysgol y Dderi and the provision of a new SEN unit at Ysgol Gynradd Aberporth.

4.7.5 WAG provides about £1m per annum to undertake projects which must be over £100k in cost. In addition WAG has allocated £9m per LEA to promote major projects. Ceredigion has already utilised this funding for projects such as:

- Ysgol Ffynnonbedr: replacement school
- Synod Inn: new area school
- Ysgol Gyfun Llambed: remodelling and refurbishment

4.7.6 The Capital Programme will be used to support change which involve:-

(i)   a range of approaches adopted to suit local need;
(ii)   the most effective use of resources to enhance curricular provision, ensuring continuity and progress.

4.7.7 The challenge remains to plan effectively for 2010 and consider strategies for the effective provision of facilities within the context of the concept of community learning centres

Funding Requirement
4.7.8 A programme to provide appropriate and adequate facilities might be conservatively estimated to cost in the region of £11m for repair and maintenance and a further £30m for major capital projects.

4.7.9 In addition any restructuring of the organisation of service provision will have an impact on the modeling of the workforce, an element which is difficult to quantify until strategies and proposals are planned and costed.

Possible Resources

4.7.10 During the period of the Single Education Plan 2006-08 it is anticipated that for the capital elements alone the County Council through its Capital Programme may provide some £0.7m. Two sources from the National Assembly through the School Building Improvement Grant will provide some £2-3m for major projects and £0.9m for projects of a smaller nature. Between 2008 – 2009 an additional £3m will be spent from both funding sources.

4.7.11 As will be elaborated below, if it is to plan effectively, the Authority must explore alternative funding methods and sources such as
- the authority and school formulaic allocations
- Convergence Fund
- capital for voluntary aided schools
- capital receipts
- prudential borrowing.

4.7.12 In designing a reorganisation scheme the Authority should:
- Evaluate the benefits of new school buildings against the much cheaper option of using existing buildings.
- Bring together capital from a wide range of sources.
- Discuss with the WAG options for funding individual schemes and any links to the urban regeneration agenda.
- Consider the revenue implications including what can come from future schools budgets

Analysis of possible capital funding

4.7.13 Consideration has been given to the possible capital funding to the future with an indication of possible options that may occur in the medium term.

Financial Summary

4.7.14 The financial information prepared are best indicative estimates which will need to be fine tuned in the future when further details are known. Also, the rate of inflation in the future will impact on the proposals as they are likely to take place over the long term.

4.7.15 Savings have been estimated at a prudent level and may change based on new information received on the exact detail on the proposal which goes forward.

4.7.16 The balance needs to be funded from any combination of the following subject to approval by Cabinet etc:-

- Grant funding;
- Re-allocation from within the Council's capital programme (WAG's notional education element of General Capital Funding was £1.515M for 2008-09);
- Additional prudential borrowing;
- Receipts from disposal of redundant sites.

4.7.17 The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) is presently grant funding school improvements through the Schools Buildings Improvement Grant (SBIG) and this is a substantial sum each year towards achieving fit for purpose targets. However indications have been received that from 2009-10 onwards, targeting arrangements will apply for allocating SBIG funding and the expectation from WAG is that Councils will need to invest in school buildings themselves in line with capital resources allocated via the General Capital Funding Formula each year.

Estate Specific Issues

4.7.18 Market valuations of primary schools have been prepared at this stage without carrying out detailed examinations of title deeds as this can be done at a later stage when firmer proposals are in place. There may be covenants requiring land to be re-conveyed to the donor (or his heirs in title) or restrictions upon alternative uses. Therefore disposal values have been incorporated into costings at a prudent level, which do not at this stage include any potential increase in value which may be possible from alternative use subject to planning. Discussions will need to take place with the Planning Department concerning alternative use when fine tuning the financial model.

4.7.19 When assets are leased to the community they should be for full repairing leases, that is, to include all running costs including maintenance and insurance so that there will be future savings. The Authority considers a five year lease to be the maximum period available before the property is sold to existing leaseholders.

When a school is closed, and the property comes under the ownership of the Authority, the following procedures are adopted regarding the future use of the building

1. consideration is given by the Education Department for possible use by the Department, or by other departments within the Authority
2. where the building is not required by departments within the Authority, consideration is given to requests received from community groups. If short term leases or licenses are entered into with the community groups, these will be on a trial period of 1 – 3 years at no cost to the authority. The occupiers will be responsible for all maintenace, repairs and outgoings. The occupation will be reviewed at six monthly intervals, and if necessary terminated. Following any trial period occupation will be at an economic rent in accordance with the policies of the Authority.

Where 1 and 2 are not applicable, the property will be sold on the open market.

Economic and Grant Specific issues

4.7.20 It has been suggested that in respect of any schools to be retained for community use it may be possible for the community to raise funds through EU Convergence or Rural Development Plan (RDP) programmes in order to acquire the building and refurbish it where necessary. This shouldn't in theory lead to an inflation of the market value and hence return to the Council, but could help to keep the site in community use. It is important to note that Convergence project assessment is likely to be fairly competitive and will look for significant outputs in terms of higher income job creation and sustainability in order to meet the Commission's prescribed priorities.

4.7.21 The principle of additionality in ERDF (Capital) projects will prevent the use of EU Convergence money contributing to any capital building project that should normally be undertaken by Local or National Government in the course of their normal statutory duties. Therefore it seems that EU funding contributions to school capital build programmes is unlikely.

4.7.22 The European Social Fund (ESF) eligibility criteria with respect to additionality of activity have however been a little different in the past and are expected to remain so under Convergence, though again this has yet to be published or agreed by the Assembly. Under ESF, one can in theory take an existing activity and increase its provision where there is a demonstrable need, using the exiting provision finance to match-fund an ESF contribution that finances the extra activity. Under the Convergence Programme this may be of particular relevance in the 14-19 Learning Pathways group, which appears to be a favoured area of investment. However, whilst this might provide a revenue mechanism for the LEA to do more, it shouldn't be a mechanism for making revenue cost savings.

Principles for the financing of the project

4.7.23 All capital receipts obtained from the sale of educational assets should be re-invested into the re-modelling programme. When assets are leased to the community, the income streams should be utilised to support prudential borrowing for Developing Education.

Prudential Borrowing

Prudential borrowing is the ability that the Council has to finance capital expenditure by taking out loans. The implications of this are that the interest costs and the capital sum borrowed require paying annually and therefore need to be budgeted for in the Councils revenue budget. Therefore all prudential borrowing undertaken by the Council is carefully controlled to ensure that it is prudently made and is affordable. Revenue budget savings are potentially available from the remodelling of schools and could therefore be usefully applied to fund prudential borrowing applicable to new schools as well as assisting with the delivery of Education services.

The financing of the proposals may be achieved by:
- o utilizing prudential borrowing which may be funded either by the re-investment of revenue savings achieved from school rationalisation and/or funded by the Council's revenue budget (subject to consideration by the Budget Working Group and approval by Cabinet and Council)
- o Funding will be required to finance up front costs e.g. land acquisition, extensions and this could be enabled by "ring fencing" some early savings and capital receipts identified.
- o Temporary prudential borrowing may need to be taken into account when funding costs up front, e.g. land acquisition, build costs and when disposals are made at a later date.

Formulating a strategy

4.7.24 Timing issues will require careful consideration and a project management approach should be taken to each option that is to be followed through. Where required land needs to be sourced and funded and the area school built and funded before disposals take place, careful thought must be given to the order of some of the options as it may be that timing itself could be critical in the viability and deliverability of funding the

strategy. There is a need to invest more of the capital programme in school buildings in order to attract grant allocations in the future from WAG.

4.7.25 Overall, a lot could be achieved during the medium term if decisions are made at an early stage and for example, land is sourced early on in order that further planning may progress. It is feasible for four area schools, one new school and two extensions/restructuring to take place over a five year period but not if decisions are delayed, land is not identified, funded and acquired early enough, therefore a more likely timescale would be a six to eight year period.

4.7.26 In respect of federal models, at present the one put forward is estimated to cost more than the existing arrangements. Federation will not therefore contribute to the revenue savings required to finance prudential borrowing to build new schools or to extend/improve existing ones, and any extra costs will need to be funded from other savings or sources.

Revenue Cost Implications of Developing Education in Ceredigion

4.7.27 for the purposes of illustrating the potential revenue savings, (Annexe C…..Table iv…Page 72) five of the options likely to take place earlier in the timeframe, were selected for more detailed modelling. The options centre on new or extended schools in Sarnau, Cwrtnewydd, Llanon, Llanarth and Synod Inn.

4.7.28 The model forecasts savings of almost £0.75M per annum if enacted now, rising to over £0.8M per annum if enacted in 2012. There will be additional transport costs to offset against these, but the net savings figures are over £0.5M now and over £0.6M in five years' time.

4.7.29 Other costs will be incurred, e.g. redundancy, premises costs, but most of these will be incurred in the months immediately following closure. Schools would usually close at the end of the summer term, and therefore most of these costs would be incurred during that financial year, with the net savings taking effect from the following April. A small proportion of these costs may be incurred beyond that timeframe, but not sufficient to alter the overall picture.

4.7.30 This model assumes each pupil will transfer to the school nearest his home. Transport costs have been assessed based on each pupil's age and the distance between the pupil's home and the nearest school.

4.7.31 Some pupils are being fed into other small schools, thus reducing the small school supplement required by those schools. Of course, at some point, some of those schools may themselves be the subject of developing education in Ceredigion. This emphasises that individual options cannot be viewed in isolation, but must be seen as part of the bigger picture.

4.7.32 The reason why the savings would be greater in 2012 than now is that a reducing pupil population will result in larger small school supplements being payable.

4.7.33 Transport costs absorb a smaller proportion of the gross revenue savings (approx 25%), and are therefore significant. It should be borne in mind that these costings are very approximate and will be subject to the LEA's policy on transporting pupils from closing schools. The figures in the model are based on basic statutory requirements only.

4.8 Language Strategy

4.8.1 Federal schools or schools that merge, as well as any new primary or secondary schools that will be established in the future will be defined, in accordance with Welsh Asembly Government Documentation 2007, as 'Welsh Medium' schools, which are schools that provide 100% Welsh medium education at Foundation Phase and at least 70% Welsh medium education at Key Stage 2.During the formation of informal or formal federations, consideration will be given to the linguistic nature of the individual schools and their communities. The development of the pupils' language skills and the Welsh ethos within the federation, will be in accordance with the 'Ceredigion Language Strategy Document'.

4.8.2 For further information see 'Ceredigion Language Strategy Document' (December 2007)

4.9   The Foundation Phase

4.9.1 The thrust by WAG to revolutionise education and care provision for children up to the age of 7 will be fundamental not only to the learning and development of children but to the delivery and organisation of learning in schools and a variety of other settings requiring close inter-relationships between a variety of statutory, public, voluntary and commercial agencies. It will have a profound influence on planning for the development of education in Ceredigion.

4.9.2 Early experiences provide the foundation for children's future educational and social development. New approaches to the education of very young children are being introduced in the Foundation Phase for 3-7 year olds. In this phase, the emphasis is on learning through experience of structured activities that focus on the individual pupil and their stage of development both inside and outside the classroom. Estyn suggests that

> *"..This type of approach offers many advantages but also presents considerable challenges in terms of securing the right accommodation, planning a new curriculum and training appropriate staff to implement the programme…".*

4.9.3 In addition there is need for a curriculum for 7-14 year olds that will enable pupils to build successfully on their learning during their Foundation Phase. From age 7, the primary curriculum focuses on the development of pupils' skills through the core subjects of Welsh or English, mathematics and science, while a range of other subjects are often taught in an integrated way. This approach focuses particularly on continuity and progression in thinking, communication, number, and information and communication technology for learners and includes study of the content specified in the National Curriculum subject orders.

4.9.4 The legislative initiatives to provide care provides opportunities to extend the use of facilities in schools before and beyond the school day in conjunction with other agencies and for the benefit of families and communities.

Education for 3 – 7-year-old Children in Ceredigion
The background

4.9.5 Education of 3 – 7-year-old children in Ceredigion is provided in a variety of institutions and by a variety of providers as follows:
a.Schools providing for the whole 3 – 7 age range
Eight Nursery Units were established across Ceredigion during the 1970s. Most of these units are in schools of a substantial size and in the populous areas of the County. An exception to this is Ysgol y Dderi which was established as an area School to serve a number of rural areas when their schools were closed and Cenarth School which gained nursery provision when a new School was built in the 70s of the last century.

b.Educational Provision for 4 to 7-year-old children.
All Primary Schools (except Cardigan Junior School) provide full-time education for children from the term following their 4th birthday. These classes vary according to the number of pupils:
- Reception Class – 4 – 5-year-old children;
- Year 1 Class;
- Year 2 Class – each class led by a different teacher.
- Reception Class and Year 1 (4 – 6-year-old children) – one teacher.
- Reception Class, Year 1 and Year 2 (4 – 7-year-old children.) – one teacher.

c.Educational provision for 3 – 4-year-old children other than those named in (a) above.

Each LEA is required to provide opprtunities to access early years education for children 4 – 5 years old and also 3 – 4 years old.
Following the introduction of the 'Learning Country' document all Local Authorities were urged to work in partnership with institutions providing childcare / early education before a child attends a school for the provision of part-time education free of charge for children following their 3rd birthday.

There are now 33 institutions funded by the Education Authority (January 2008) to provide this service. The provision is made by Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, Waes PPA, and Private Day Nurseries.

These institutions are located in various buildings as noted in the table ranging from dedicated buildings, mobiles on School campuses, village or church halls and rooms within a School.

The Learning Country – Foundation Phase 3 – 7 years old

Buildings, rooms and resources.

4.9.6 In Wales poor buildings and a lack of resources are a feature within a number of locations for the early years (3 to 7 years old). Where they are found the deficiencies will harmfully affect the children's physical and mental development and the standards they achieve. They limit the experiences available for children and therefore have a damaging effect on the development of perseverance and the willingness of the children to participate in more challenging activities. The deficiencies also limit self-directed play and discussions with peers and adults and it has the effect of lowering the children's standards of achievement.

 There is a need for -
- indoor and outdoor environments which are exciting, stimulating and secure and promote children's development and their natural curiosity to explore and learn through direct and indirect experiences;
- an environment which promotes discovery and independence and the placing of more emphasis on the use of the outdoor environment as a resource for teaching children.
- the setting up of bright areas for stimulating play and activities e.g.
    - rôle play
    - small world play
    - creative / artistic space
    - sound and music space
    - small and large physical play space (e.g. climbing frame, slide, gross motor skills e.g. bikes and scooters; tunnels,)
- quiet areas and study areas and teaching areas for older and more able children e.g.
    - quiet space for a story / collective activities
    - an attractive little library
    - a focus for marking / writing
    - sensory resource e.g. dark room full of interesting lights.
    - Retreat / private space for a child needing peace and quiet
    - Tables and resources for children to concentrate on more structured tasks.

- uninterrupted access to the outside 'class' which will include the same facilities as are found inside (the ideal would be to reflect that which was created in the pilot School (Ysgol y Dderi)
- a room / retreat for the staff to meet with workload requirements as well as creating resources and holding meetings.
- An attractive, welcoming and dedicated entrance for the parents
- A suitable floor for artistic / wet activities as well as a floor which is warm and comfortable to work on.
- Indoor facilities outside the room for the material from outside throughout the year.

Current state of buildings belonging to Ceredigion schools and Pre-School Education providers.

4.9.7 When considering the educational requirements of the Foundation Phase the issues below come to the fore –

*a.sufficient internal space to hold the various activities which need to be provided***.**
    - an environment which promotes discovery and independence and the placing of greater emphasis on the use of the outdoor environment as a resource for teaching children.
    - a suitable floor for artistic / wet activities as well as a floor which is warm and comfortable to work on.
    - rôle play

- o small world play
- o creative / artistic space
- o sound and music space
- o small and large physical play space (e.g. climbing frame, slide, gross motor skills e.g. bikes and scooters; tunnels,)
- o quiet space for a story / collective activities
- o an attractive little library
- o a centre for marking / writing
- o sensory resource e.g. dark room full of interesting lights.
- o retreat / private space for a child needing peace and quiet
- o tables and resources for children to concentrate on more structured tasks.

b.sufficient / suitable space directly <u>outside</u> the classroom which will offer the appropriate educational opportunities and safely.
- o an environment which promotes discovery and independence and the placing of greater emphasis on the use of the outdoor environment as a resource for teaching children.
- o rôle play
- o small world play
- o creative / artistic space
- o sound and music space
- o small and large physical play space (e.g. climbing frame, slide, gross motor skills e.g. bikes and scooters; tunnels,)
- o a space for fostering curiosity about the world around them e.g. a garden to foster the senses, sand, water
- o a suitable floor for artistic / wet activities as well as a floor which is warm and comfortable to work on.

c.Ease of access between inside and outside.
- o uninterrupted access to the outside 'class' which will include the same facilities as are found inside (the ideal would be to reflect that which was created in the pilot School (Ysgol y Dderi)

d.Care of the reception class.
- o No more than two age groups within the same class e.g.nursery / reception

e.Educational provision at three years old and childcare conveniently to hand.
- o Education for 3-year-olds which is provided by e.g. MYM on the school site.
- o Wraparound care for part-time children provided by a nearby nursery

f.Working environment.
- o A room / retreat for the staff to meet with workload requirements as well as creating resources and holding meetings.
- o An attractive, welcoming and dedicated entrance for the parents

Issues for futher consideration
1. The creation of a Nursery Unit in the charge of a teacher in the institutions which have reception classes only.
2. The creation of a Nursery Unit in each of the main towns of Ceredigion's Spatial Plan. Llandysul, Cardigan and Tregaron in addition to the schools in the other Spatial towns which have a Nursery Unit – Aberystwyth, Aberaeron and Lampeter.
3. Accepting pupils full time, following their 4th birthday in all of Ceredigion's Primary Schools.(rather than the term following their 4th birthday)

Advantages

a. Evaluation report on Foundation Phase pilot institutions (December 2006) notes the need for individuals with the highest possible qualification to lead Under 5 educational establishments. It is noted that the quality of provision led by a teacher is substantially higher than that of institutions led by individuals who do not have an appropriate qualification.

b. An opportunity to give appropriate status to individuals who have made great efforts to gain a degree qualification.

c. A number of schools with specific classes for children between 4 -5 years old. The inclusion of 3-year-old pupils in these classes would lead to a specific class for children Under 5. This would increase the number of children receiving uninterrupted Education from 3 to 5 in the charge of a qualified teacher.

d. An opportunity to appoint sufficient ancillary teaching staff according to the 1:8 ratio from September 2008 on. This would ensure that the teaching groups were not large and that a teacher would be responsible for a specific team of individuals for the benefit of the children's education.

e. Less pressure on pre-School Education providers who are feeling considerable pressure after coming under the education system.

f. Great need for wraparound childcare provision in addition to education. An opportunity for voluntary organisations to provide care outside school hours for the part-time children and for the children of 2 to 3+ years old.

g. An opportunity for parents to have (sessional) childcare to enable them to target work.

h. Two of these schools have acquired wraparound provision - Integrated Centres – Cardigan and Llandysul – pre-School Education facilities meet the needs of the Foundation Phase and Wraparound Care.

4.10 Integrated Children's Centres

4.10.0 An approach to implementing elements of a holisitic child centred provision is the establishment of Intergated Children's Centres

Integrated Centres

4.10.1 Integrated Children's Centres (ICCs) are based on the concept that providing integrated education, care, family support and health services is a key factor in determining good outcomes for children and their parents, ensuring the best start in life.

4.10.2 In our communities there can be an enormous range of activities taking place relating to families, their education, health and wellbeing. These activities are delivered in all sorts of ways by the statutory and voluntary sectors. Children's Centres are about building what's already good and aiming to make it even better by ensuring all the agencies and organisations involved in delivering services are working in a joined-up way and keeping the child's needs central at all times.

Provision at Integrated Children's Centres

4.10.3 Each ICC will have at its core:

- Early Years Education
- Childcare
- Open Access Play
- Community Education and Training
- Flying Start where appropriate

Which will enable to be accessed:

- A range of professional childcare services
- Family support type activities including parenting classes
- Play sessions
- Tailored sessions on family nutrition and health
- A toy library facility for families
- Access to a range of adult education courses
- Advice sessions on finding a job and benefits

- A learning environment
- A network of childminders working in your area

4.10.4 An ICC will act as a service hub within the community for a wide range of activities relating to child and family health and wellbeing.

4.10.5 Ceredigion County Council has established two centres, one in Cardigan and the other in Llandysul . Others are to planned throughout the Authority.

4.11 Special Education

4.11.1 The educational needs of 99.9% of Ceredigion pupils are currently met within the LEA's schools and the four Specialist Units which are located on mainstream campuses. This means that Ceredigion is one of the most inclusive LEAs in Wales.

4.11.2 Of relevance to the development of education in Ceredigion is the issue of access of which there a three principal aspects:

a) Access to buildings

4.11.3 When consideration is given to building any 'new school' the LEA, in line with regulations will ensure that there is physical access to all areas both within and around the school for those who are wheelchair bound. It will be important also to ensure that there is appropriate access to toilets and changing facilities.

4.11.4 Currently a large proportion of older schools are not able to offer access to wheelchairs and are not disabled friendly. They would not be able to meet the needs of a small number of the school population who require wheelchair access. In such cases, where an admission request is received, each case will be considered and the requirements assessed to ascertain whether reasonable adjustments could be made making efficient use of resources.

4.11.5 If it is not possible to admit a child to the school of choice then the LEA will offer the nearest school that can best meet the child's needs. The LEA will be responsible for funding transport if the distance to the school offered is greater.

4.11.6 With regard to 'access to buildings' for pupils who have sensory needs, advice is sought from the LEA Sensory Service regarding reasonable adjustments.

4.11.7 In certain circumstances it may be apposite for the Authority to plan provision for certain kinds of physical disabilities and conditions at specifically designated school which may serve particular localities.

b) Access to the Curriculum

4.11.8 Ceredigion LEA supports schools in ensuring that each pupil may access the curriculum at an appropriate level according to their age, ability and where relevant their special educational needs. In accordance with the Authority's Special Educational Needs Policy, funding will be made available to schools in accordance with published criteria so that teachers and support staff are able to ensure curricular access through e.g. differentiating the curriculum.

c) Access to print

4.11.9 The LEA employs Specialist Staff who are able to offer advice and guidance to all schools with regard to the most appropriate font / print size and / or specialist equipment that some pupils the may require in order to gain access to print. In general terms, the Local Authority has advised that all print should be Ariel font size 12 as default.

4.12 Secondary Education

4.12.1 Consideration for the development of education in Ceredigion must of essence include the provision for secondary education, which because of the nature of the county and the inter-relationships with the primary sector not only in terms of transition from the Key Stage 2 to key Stage 3 but because of the potential, in certain localities to develop common integrated and coherent learning approaches but also to deliver and share services.

4.12.2 Whilst opportunities will exist for collaborative approaches and strategies, the secondary phase is faced with significant challenges to develop and expand learning opportunities for young people particularly from 14 -19 and specifically post 16. Through the WAG Learning Pathways 14-19 initiative, collaborative approaches are being encouraged across schools, Further Education and Higher Education to provide a broad range of learning and experiences, academic and vocational, in order develop learners' maximum potential and to deliver the published goal of:

> "*95 per cent of young people by the age of 25 to be ready for high skilled employment or higher education by 2015".*

4.12.3 Estyn suggests that to have effective collaboration teaching and training partners need to:
- reflect an agreed common vision;
- establish partnerships that respond to the needs of the learners and the wider community;
- adopt an ethos of mutual trust and respect;
- establish common quality assurance measures for all provision;
- strive to establish best practice across the Network and avoid unnecessary duplication

4.12.4 This agenda is being reviewed separately which, inevitably, will influence the overall provision of education in Ceredigion. Currently a study is being commissioned to consider secondary school issues and particularly 14 – 19 provision. Where appropriate this strategic document will make reference to options and opportunities within particular localities, where constructive and tangible collaboration between secondary schools and their neighbouring primary schools may prove possible.

4.13 Information Technology

4.13.1 In this rapidly changing world of Information Communication Technology (ICT) it is paramount that we provide the opportunities and the resources for pupils and staff within Ceredigion to embrace its full potential. It will be necessary to ensure that all resources are updated to meet the demands of the 21st century and that staff are given opportunities to develop their own professional development. This, in-turn, will have a great impact upon the teaching and learning which will take place within education throughout Ceredigion. ICT will be utilised to enhance all subjects of the National Curriculum in Wales. It should motivate, support and challenge pupils and it can have a great impact upon their teaching and learning.

4.13.2 It will be necessary to provide opportunities for pupils, parents and schools to embrace ICT as a means of communication amongst each other and for parents, pupils and teachers to have access to learning resources and materials from any location. Schools and teachers will also be encouraged to use ICT as a means of sharing good practice and lesson resources.

4.13.3 To achieve these goals IT management, support and infrastructure will be enhanced, to ensure IT equipment can be fully maintained and supported, that data is stored and secured correctly and that printing facilities are networked.

5: Possible Patterns

5.0 In the context of our vision for the future of education in Ceredigion and the current challenges faced by schools, we propose, below, possible patterns for educational provision which will support our pupils and meet the needs of all learners in the 21st century.

5.1 The School Review Policy adopted by the Authority in July 2006 and ammended in January 2009, included a number of options for the future development of schools. These options, and the languge used to describe them, are open to various interpretations. For clarity, this section provides definitions of the various organisational models which are being considered by the authority. These have been clearly described by Estyn in its report 'Small Schools in Wales' 2006, and the authority is broadly in agreement with the definitions provided.

5.2 At the present time, the schools in the county can be grouped into these categories:

- Schools in formal clusters
- Schools in informal federations – shared headship
- One Area School – Ysgol y Dderi

5.3 The more detailed definitions are as follows:

- Schools in formal clusters – collaboration / cooperation

The majority of the county's schools are organised in formal clusters and headteachers and staff work together at a local level on a range of planning and curricular issues. e.g. sharing of INSET days and developing joint policies and schemes of work. It also provides access to wider professional development opportunities and mutual support to reduce workload. Some clusters have developed partnership working further by introducing arrangements for sharing teachers in specialist areas, administrative support and resources.

Headteachers also attend the termly meetings of the area 'family of schools' based on secondary school catchment areas, where various strategies e.g. primary to secondary transition arrangements, assessment, professional development are discussed and developed. Headteachers also attend termly county conferences to discuss county and national curricular and organisational issues.

- Schools in informal federations – shared headship

In this type of arrangement a larger neighbouring school takes responsibility for the leadership and management in the small school. This arrangement is introduced following the vacancy of the headship of the small school. This type of arrangement has been introduced over the past 4 years and at present (April2008) there are six shared headships in the county –

- Cwrtnewydd / Capel Dewi;
- Penparc / Llechryd
- Pennant / Cilcennin
- Talgarreg / Caerwedros
- Penllwyn / Sir John Rhys / Capel Seion
- Rhydlewis / Glynarthen

At present, to meet statutory legislation, each school has to have a governing body and headteacher. In November 2008, the Welsh Assembly Government, published a consultation document on the future orgnisation of federations. If the recommendations are accepted, it will allow informal federations to have one Governing Body for the group, without having to follow the statutory process as in a formal federation. The Governing Body of the school with the vacant headship can decide to either have its own headteacher or headteacher in charge from a neighbouring school. This decision is taken, in consultations with the authority, after due consideration of pupil numbers and future plans for the school. The post of headteacher at the second school is taken by an Assistant Headteacher. This arrangement leads to an increased workload for

the Headteacher in charge working with two governing bodies, and unless clearly defined could provide difficulties with accountability and decision-making responsibilities in areas of personnel management and budget setting. Schools, which have entered into this arrangement, have been provided with the county's agreed job description document, which clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of the Headteacher in Charge and also the Assistant Headteacher at the second school.

- ▪ Area School – Ysgol y Dderi.

Ysgol y Dderi, Llangybi is an area community school. It was opened as an area school in 1976 following the closure of the schools at Cellan, Llanfair Clydogau, Betws Bledrws, Silian and Llangybi. Pupils from Gartheli School, which closed in 1984, also attend Ysgol y Dderi.

5.4 A number of possible options are being suggested for future arrangements of school organisation:

- ▪ Collaboratives (Non-Statutory)
- ▪ Informal or Soft Federation (Non-Statutory)
- ▪ Soft Governance Federation (Statutory)
- ▪ Formal or Hard Federations (Statutory)
- ▪ Area schools (Statutory)

The different types of federations with possible organisational models are as follows. The following information is taken from the Education Act 2002, section 24, and also the School Governance (Federations) Regulations, on the assumpton that the orders for school federations from Welsh Assembly Government will be of a similar nature.

5.5 Collaboratives (Non-Statutory)

Collaboratives are many and varied and schools often find these easy to operate within, as there are no fixed legal arrangements or structures, therefore allowing for easy networking and sharing.
Schools retain their present structures and organisation but collaborate in clusters to develop specific activities as required.

5.6 Informal or Soft Federation (Non-Statutory)

These schools have made a formalized commitment to work together, for example by creating overarching or joint committees on any aspect of teaching and learning or leadership, but each member school retains a degree of autonomy. Some have delegated responsibilities from individual governing bodies to joint committees but they must follow the guidance in the School Governance (Collaboration) Regulations. Under the Regulations, two or more governing bodies may arrange for any of their functions to be discharged jointly; and they may delegate any of their functions (subject to certain restrictions on delegation) to a joint committee.

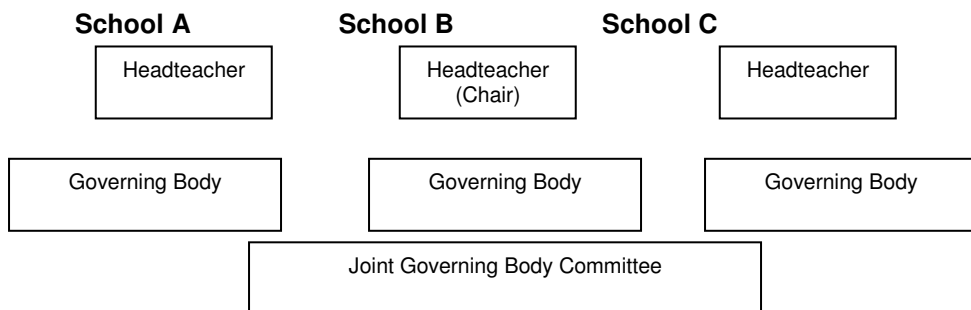- ▪ Executive Headteacher / Assistant Head and separate governing bodies

The informal federations (two schools with a shared headship and separate governing bodies) which have been established within the county should be considered as short term organisational models, leading eventually to more formal federations.

School A   **School B**

Executive Headteacher		Assistant Head
Governing Body		Governing Body
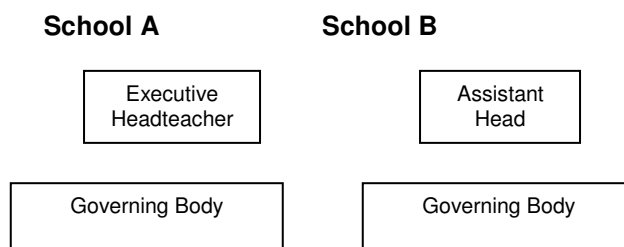
In the case of a larger sized school being part of the federation, a deputy head may also be part of the Senior Management Team.

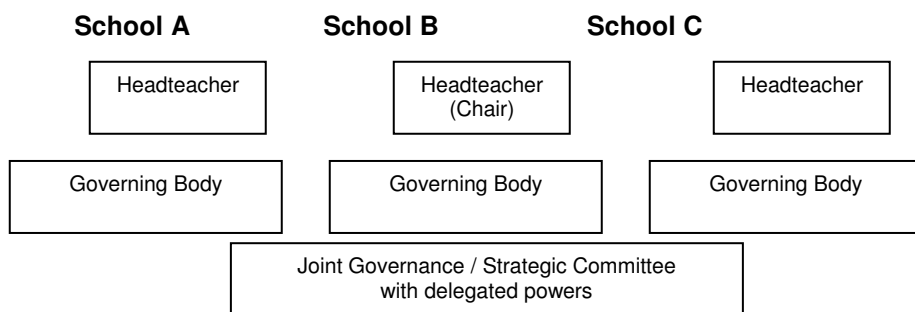- Separate headteachers (Co-Heads) and separate governing bodies

This model - separate headteachers (Co-Heads) and separate Governing Bodies should also be considered an interim step towards the establishment of either a formal federation or an Area School.

School A   **School B**   **School C**

| Headteacher | Headteacher (Chair) | Headteacher |

| Governing Body | Governing Body | Governing Body |

| Joint Governing Body Committee |

5.7 Soft Governance Federation (Statutory)

Soft governance federations are established using Collaboration Regulations, made under Section 26 Education Act 2002. Each school has its own governing body, but the federation has a **joint governance / strategic committee with delegated power**.

All schools share common goals and the joint committee can make joint decisions in some areas, but not all. There is no common budget, but if JSC has budgetary powers delegated to it, they can make prompt budgetary decisions for the group of schools.

School A   **School B**   **School C**

| Headteacher | Headteacher (Chair) | Headteacher |

| Governing Body | Governing Body | Governing Body |

| Joint Governance / Strategic Committee with delegated powers |

5.8 Formal or Hard Federations (Statutory)

These are single legal entities, with a single governing body across all schools in the federation. This is in accordance with the Education Act 2002, section 24, and also the School Governance (Federations) Regulations. They allow all categories of maintained schools to federate under one governing body, subject to the procedures stated in the Regulations.
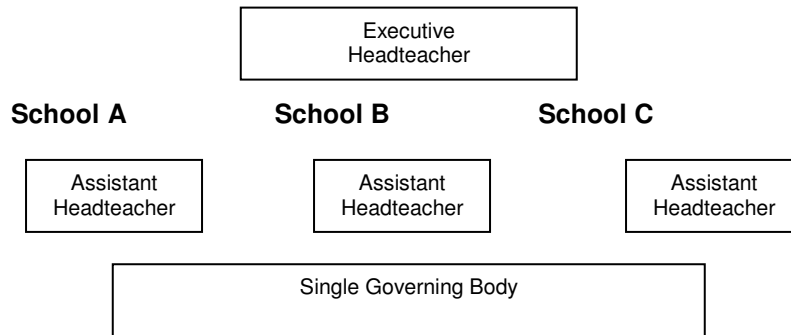
a. Separate headteachers (Co-Heads) and a single governing body

The provisions in section 24 and 25 of the Education Act 2002 allows for a formal federation with a single governing body with the schools remaining as separate legal entities with their own head teacher.

School A   **School B**   **School C**

| Headteacher | Headteacher (Chair) | Headteacher |

| Single Governing Body |
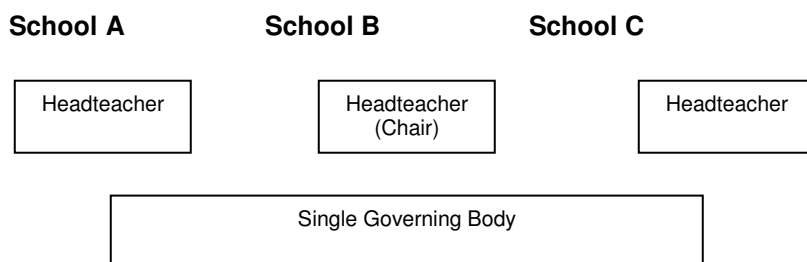
b. Executive headteacher and a single governing body

In establishing this type of federation, two or more schools are 'closed' to create a single 'split – site' school with one head teacher and one governing body. The governing body can continue to operate each school as separate units to include the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2 in each unit, or it can organize schools so that the pupils are grouped by age - Foundation Stage in one school and Key Stage 2 in the other school. This type of grouping offers clear advantages with regard to planning and curriculum development but these could possibly be offset by increased costs and travel. Where Foundation Phase and Key stage 2 are on different sites, care is needed in ensuring continuity between the key phases.

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │   Executive     │
                    │  Headteacher    │
                    └─────────────────┘

  School A              School B              School C

┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
│  Assistant   │   │  Assistant   │   │  Assistant   │
│ Headteacher  │   │ Headteacher  │   │ Headteacher  │
└──────────────┘   └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘

       ┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
       │        Single Governing Body          │
       └──────────────────────────────────────┘
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5.9 Federations are able to provide schools with many new and exciting opportunities to enable them to respond to the challenges of the 21st Century. It enables schools to explore new leadership and management models and develop new structures, roles and responsibilities

It also provides an effective and efficient way of delivering services for children, families and the community including: childcare, recreational activities, health and social care; and adult education.

As federations are established across the Authority, members of staff and governors will be offered training courses, regarding the organisation and development of federations in the future.

5.10 The following lists some of the opportunities and also the challenges that may be faced in developing successful collaboration between schools.

OPPORTUNITIES

For Pupils
- Sharing of staff expertise will be reflected in improved planning and preparation of schemes of work, quality of provision and monitoring of subjects
- Greater opportunities for learning with pupils of the same age from other schools
- Improved opportunities for participating in social, cultural and sporting activities with pupils from other schools
- Increased opportunities to access links with the wider community e.g. International Dimension – (Wide Minds –WiMi)

Staff
- Enhanced performance management provision
- Improved professional development and increased opportunity for leadership for teachers
- Improved teacher morale
- More consultation, shared decision making and teamwork
- Sharing of experience and expertise
- Models of good practice to improve teaching and learning and inclusion

For the heads
- Improved work-life balance
- Less sense of isolation – increased support and joint decision making
- Less stress
- Enhanced professional stimulation and enjoyment
- Saving on planning and administrative time

For the school:
- A structured way for schools to collaborate, learn from each other and share best practice
- Cost effectiveness – economies of scale
- A basis for further partnerships, including cross-phase and with other providers (e.g. 14-19, community services etc).
- A greater base of expertise and knowledge to draw upon for school development
- More adaptable responses to the multiple demands, complexity and ambiguity of the role
- Different perspectives on difficult issues promote better decision-making
- More creative and collaborative leadership
- More completed projects
- Immediate head teacher cover in case of illness or absence
- Recruitment and retention – retaining experienced head teachers whilst attracting more new head teachers
- Developing individuals whilst sustaining continuity of leadership

CHALLENGES
- To have effective and clear communication
- To ensure a clear understanding of roles, responsibilities and accountability
- To establish a positive, professional working relationship between heads
- To have clear and effective communication between stakeholders in setting up the new arrangement.
- To secure the support and commitment of all stakeholders

5.11 Schools in Ceredigion which have worked collaboratively in clusters will be further along the Federation Continuum than schools which have no experience of joint working.

5.12 Small schools of the future will need to collaborate so that they:

- maintain the 'family' ethos that characterises small schools, whilst achieving greater efficiencies through cross-site management and administration;

- .share expertise and resources and improve opportunities for specialist teaching;

- .provide a wider range of learning opportunities and extra-curricular activities; and secure wider social benefits for pupils from isolated rural areas.

5.13 In 2005 the DfES Innovation Unit brought together a group of experienced federation heads to write a guide for those who might want to federate. In this, the authors identified what they considered to be the conditions for a successful federation partnership:

- A sense of **shared identity** between the schools. Geographical proximity and having common aims on curricular and non-curricular activities are extremely beneficial.

- A **common purpose**. Schools need a shared sense of what needs to be done and how, with a joint vision for improving attainment and achievement levels.

- **Leadership**. Partnership working requires strong leadership and federations will benefit from developing and sustaining leadership at all levels.

- A strong **management structure**. Schools must understand and co-operate with this for effective partnerships to grow.

- **Trust**. Trust is fundamental to effective collaboration and should be fostered at every level of management. There has to be a real sense of openness and a willingness to operate in a joined-up way amongst governors, heads and all other staff.

- **A system of review**. Good monitoring / evaluation systems are needed to show what   anticipated benefits of federation are achieved.

- **Commitment**. Both time and resources are needed to ensure that the federation is effective and sustainable.

- **Communication**. Excellent communication mechanisms are required when introducing change, particularly where lots of schools are involved. Federations may develop intranets and various other e-forums.
- **Sustainability**. There must be a clear sustainability strategy in place to enable a collaboration to cope with changes. For example: if the leadership of one of the schools changes; if additional schools wish to join in; if existing schools wish to leave.
- If committing to contracts or expenditure for any length of time, **financial sustainability** is vital.

5.14 Area schools

To establish an area school, two or more schools may be closed and replaced by a new larger school. The new area school may be located either on one of the old school sites or in a new central location

6: Specific principles and policy recommendations

Principles

6.1 The document seeks to present a strategy for the development of education provision based on the following principles:-

i.Integrated Learning Communities
- to develop Integrated Learning Communities as a focus for providing co-ordinated lifelong learning opportunities through out Ceredigion

ii.Standards.
- to ensure the continued improvement of high standards of service in order to support equally high achievements for the learner

iii.Resources.
- to provide resources which are effectively and efficiently deployed at a time of financial constraints and falling pupil rolls

iv.Funding.
- to review the funding approaches for schools

v.Facilities.
- to provide facilities of quality to meet both the demands of learning, economic and social initiatives and needs of communities for the 21st Century

vi.Structures.
- to establish structures for collaborative working across respective agencies, providers for school in order to maximise the efficient deployment of resources and effective utilisation of expertise.

vii.Staff professional development
- to ensure opportunities for the continuous professional development of staff by establishing structures which will also afford the development of leadership and management at all levels thus protecting the work-life balance of all employees

viii.Buildings.
- to establish a programme of capital investment which will ensure that school based accommodation and facilities are fit for purpose

ix.Strategy.
- to gain the commitment of all stakeholders to adopt and implement the strategy.

Policies

6.2 Emanating from the principles, the analyses, the proposed structures and overall strategy are the confirmation and, where necessary, the formulation of policies:-

- to develop integrated learning communities

- to review the funding models of schools

- to reduce surplus places by reorganising school structures on the basis of units, either singularly or collaboratively, with a minimum admission number of half a class size

- to develop a position over time where no class shall contain more than 30 pupils and incorporate more than two age groups

- to provide schools, where necessary on a federated basis, of a minimum of 100 pupils thereby ensure management by a single governing body, leadership by one headteacher and supported by an appropriate teaching and non-teaching staffing structure which would afford a range of complementary expertise and professional development opportunities

- to pursue as necessary the statutory procedures for school reorganisation which include school closure, amalgamations and federations

- to maximise commitment to capital investment by a range of funding approaches including the authority's capital programme, borrowing regimes applicable at the time, external sources such as grants available from the Government in order to plan and resource effectively a strategy for ensuring that accommodation and facilities are fit for purpose

- to establish a corporate structure and encourage partnership relationships with external agencies to promote strategies and programmes benefiting the whole learner

- to review and implement the strategy for bi-lingual education

- to promote early years learning and the implementation of the foundation phase with providers at appropriate locations in order to maximise the provision for participants

- to effect a coherent and cohesive transition from one phase to another

- to encourage effective collaboration between secondary school with feeder primary schools

- to ensure effective collaboration between secondary schools and other education sectors to provide alternative pathways for learners 14 – 19.

- to continue to undertake regular reviews of schools and amend as deemed necessary the trigger criteria for review.

- to implement the authority's transport policy in accordance with statutory requirements in circumstances of school closure.

7: Development process

The process for implementing the development strategy will be as follows

Draft
- Cabinet adoption / approval of consultative document (May/June 2008)
- Scrutiny Committee (June / July 2008)
- Council approval adoption / approval of consultative document (June / July 2008)

Consultation

- Children and Young People's Partnership

- Public consultation (September – December 2008)
  - (i) Publication of draft strategy
  - (ii) Promotion of publication
  - (iii) Public meetings based on Secondary School areas (begin September 2008)
  - (iv) Formal invitation for responses from Governing Bodies, School staff, Community Councils, Staff Associations, Voluntary and Statutory providers, WAG and other relevant bodies
  - (v) Responses by 15th December 2008

Final approval/. Adoption

- Cabinet approval / adoption (January 2009)
- Council approval/ adoption (February 2009)

Implementation Phase.

The document – 'Possible future options - discussion document' remains a discussion document , which will be used as a basis for discussions with Governing Bodies and other interested parties . Discussions in some areas are at an advanced stage whilst others areas have yet to begin the process. It should be stressed that these discussions need to be held over a suitable period of time so that all the issues can be fully conisdered before decisions are made.

Statutory process

Federations
Embodied in the Education Act 2002 and Regulations awaited

School closures/change in the nature of the school
Where school closures or changes in the nature of the school are anticipated in relation to amalgamations and establishment of new schools such as the provision of area schools the following processes, which can take at lease a year, will be instituted:-

- Proposal to proceed in accordance with the Developing Education in Ceredigion Plan agreed by Cabinet and Council i.e. schools will be reviewed in line with the 'School Review Policy' on an annual basis when they meet the criteria identified within the policy
- Consultation with Governors, Staff, Parents and Community.
- Invite the written observations of Governors, staff and parents together with neighbouring schools likely to be affected by the proposals
- Report to and confirmation / approval by Cabinet
- Publication of statutory notices - invitation for written objection *[2 months]*
- If **no** objections received Cabinet to confirm action and Council notified, or
  if **there are** objections the proposal is to be presented to the Minister for Lifelong Learning at the Wales Assembly Government for decision.*{two terms prior to proposed closure: one for deliberation + one term's notice to parents]*

8: The way forward

Developing the provision of Education Provision in Ceredigion : conclusion and summary

8.1. In order to address these challenges the restructuring of education provision must be a prime focus for the Children and Young People's Plan (2008 – 2011) Developments must be viewed within the context of the Council's Community Strategy "Ceredigion 2020".

8.2. Consequently the short, medium and long term goals to achieve restructuring are outlined below

Long term: (2015-2020)

- The concept of Integrated Learning Communities realised in all six areas – Cardigan, Llandysul, Tregaron, Aberaeron, Lampeter and Aberystwyth.

  - schools work in collaboration either in clusters or as an area group
  - there is multi agency provision of services,including child care facilities
  - there is a range of life long learning acticities and opportunities for people in the community.

- Multi-agency working providing activities and services to meet the needs of the pupils, their families and the community at school, cluster and area level. (Core Aims 1 – 7)

- All schools in the County - area schools, federations and clusters of schools - functioning as Community Focused Schools

Medium term: (2011-2015)

- Continue to implement agreed plans and pursue as necessary the statutory procedures for school reorganisation which include the establishment of federations, area schools and clusters:

  - area schools provided where appropriate and practical
  - federations established with primary schools grouped under the same management team and governing body
  - primary and secondary families of schools established in order to plan and present education as a seamless progression

- Continue to implement the school Review Policy when schools meet the points for action.
- Continue to develop all schools in the County - area schools, federations and clusters of schools - as Community Focused Schools
- Secondary school resources for 14-19 improved
- Each school has a staffing structure in place.

Short term: (2008-2011)

- Develop strategy documents for developing and restructuring the education provision in Ceredigion (Primary and Secondary)

- Proposal agreed by Cabinet and Council

- Consultation with Governors, Staff, Pupils, Parents and Community
  - suggestions for school structures in each area presented and discussed

- Implement agreed plans and pursue as necessary the statutory procedures for school reorganisation which include the establishment of federations, area schools and clusters:

- Continue to implement the school Review Policy when schools meet the points for action.

- Implement the Authority's new Language Strategy for schools.

- Federal schools or schools that merge, as well as any new primary or secondary schools that will be established in the future will be defined, in accordance with Welsh Asembly Government Documentation 2007, as 'Welsh Medium' schools, which are schools that provide 100% Welsh medium education at Foundation Phase and at least 70% Welsh medium education at Key Stage 2.

  (see 'Ceredigion Language Strategy Document')

- Provide schools with guidance and support to develop as community focused schools, so that they and their communities work together to:

  - develop local quality services responsive to local need
  - become Increasingly involved in the decision making process on the provision of those services and the life of neighbourhoods
  - to work together to deliver the outcomes for the locality
    (See COMMUNITY FOCUSED SCHOOLS Development Strategy)

- Plans for remodelling school staff are in place
- A school places strategy provided which includes the Foundation Phase and the 14-19 provision.
- To establish a corporate structure and encourage partnership relationships with external agencies to promote strategies and programmes benefiting the whole learner

Financial Requirements

8.3 A programme to provide appropriate and adequate facilities might be conservatively estimated to cost in the region of £11m for repair and maintenance and a further £30m for major capital projects.

8.4 In addition any restructuring of the organisation of service provision will have an impact on the modelling of the workforce, an element which is difficult to quantify until strategies and proposals are planned and costed.

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Printed at the Ceredigion Professional Education Centre