

Appendix C – Minutes of meetings with Staff, Governors and School Councils

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1. Meeting with staff of Ladywell Green Infants School and Hafren C.P. Junior School

9th October 2019

Present

Staff:

Ladywell Green Infants School:

Poppy Buckley – Teaching Assistant/Cleaner
Emma Jones-Clements – Teaching Assistant
Susan Jones – Cook/Cleaner
Chanthra Poston – Cleaner
H. Gittoes – Class Teacher
H. Jones – Teaching Assistant
Rachael Owen – Head Teacher
Helen Williams – Cleaner
Sam Hyde – Teaching Assistant
J. Warmington – Assistant Head/ Class Teacher

Hafren C.P. Junior School:

Kate Orehawa – School Administrator
Pauline Morgan – Teaching Assistant
Margaret Allen – ALN Co-ordinator Teacher
Irfon Davies – Planning, Preparation and Assessment Teacher
Martin Copus – Teaching Assistant
Carl Hyde – Headteacher
Lisa Bridges – Class Teacher
Sara Breeze – Teaching Assistant
Hannah Allen – Teaching Assistant
Caroline Ogden – Teaching Assistant
Chloe Matthews – Class Teacher
Iris Strivens-Joyce – Class Teacher

Officers:

Marianne Evans, Senior Manager Education Services
Sarah Astley, Strategic Programme Manager, School Transformation
Richard Williams, Programme Officer, School Transformation
Sarah Christoforou, HR Business Partner (Schools)

Minutes:

Angharad Morgan, Programme Co-ordinator, School Transformation

Sarah Astley welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that this is part of the consultation on merging Ladywell Green Infants School and Hafren Junior School,

which started on the 26th of September and will end on the 7th of November. As part of the consultation, Powys have published a consultation document which is available on the Powys website. Copies of the consultation document were distributed.

The officers present introduced themselves. Staff were advised that the meeting would be recorded to enable accurate minutes to be taken, and that the recording would be deleted once the minutes have been finalised. Staff were asked whether they had any objection to this – no member of staff objected.

It was explained that the Council is consulting on the following proposal, as stated in the consultation document:

‘To close Ladywell Green Infants School and Hafren C.P. Junior School and to establish a new English-medium primary school for pupils aged 4-11 on the current sites of Ladywell Green Infants School and Hafren C.P. Junior School. The current target date is to close the two schools on the 31st of August 2021, with the new school opening on the 1st of September 2021.’

It was explained that the purpose of the consultation is to give anyone interested the opportunity to give their views on the proposal. As well as being able to give their views in writing, this meeting is an additional opportunity for the staff who would be affected by the proposal to ask any questions, and to give their views.

At the end of the consultation period, all issues, comments and feedback received will be summarised into a report which will need to go back to the Council’s Cabinet, who will then decide whether they go forward with the process. If they do, a Statutory Notice would be published, and there would be a further 28 days for people to submit objections. Another report would then go back to Cabinet, who would then decide whether or not to move forward with implementation.

Sarah Christoforou explained that the current consultation is separate to the consultation that would need to take place to implement any staffing changes – if the proposal to merge the two schools does proceed, there would be a further staffing process, and further consultation would take place relating to the staffing structure. Following a decision to proceed with the process, a temporary governing body would be established to take forward the staffing processes. There would be further consultation with staff as part of this process, and eventually a process to allocate people to posts. It was acknowledged that this process can be unsettling for staff, and staff were encouraged to contact Sarah C directly if they have any particular concerns. As the process moves forward, there will be further opportunities for staff to discuss the impact on them.

Staff were invited to ask questions. The following questions were asked:

Member of staff: Could you repeat the timescales?

Marianne Evans: The implementation date would be September 2021, and it is expected that the structure would be finalised by Easter 2021, however some posts would be decided earlier. The staffing process would begin with the Headteacher role and filter down.

Member of staff: Initially we were advised that the temporary governing body would be established in Easter 2020 and therefore the staffing processes would start at this time. However, from looking at the consultation document, it looks as though the timescale has been pushed back.

Marianne Evans: The whole process of establishing a new school normally takes up to two years, from the first paper going to Cabinet to ask for approval to start consultation to the day the new school opens. However, to a large extent the length of time it takes depends on the level of responses received – in some consultations, there is opposition, and we receive a large number of responses. This can be a lot to go through. However, if there are less responses, it can be possible to complete the process more quickly.

Sarah Astley: The timeline in the consultation document is an indicative timeline based on a worst case scenario. Last year the Council carried out the statutory process to merge Llanfyllin C.P. School and Llanfyllin High School to establish a new all-through school in Llanfyllin. The timescale published in the consultation document for the Llanfyllin proposal is similar to the timeline published in the consultation document for this proposal, however the Llanfyllin process moved forward more quickly – the final decision was made in April, which was a few months earlier than what was published in the consultation document.

Marianne Evans: With the Llanfyllin proposal, even though the statutory process was concluded more quickly, the planned opening date for the new school is still September 2020, therefore there is more time to carry out the required staffing processes.

Member of staff: The more time we can have to work through the staffing processes the better as there are many discussions which will need to be had. I see from the consultation document that the intention is that Cabinet considers the consultation report in January/ February. Can that be moved to January? Obviously we don't want to rush things through, but it's important that nothing is delayed. The earlier this can be moved forward the better for the staff, they don't want the process to be delayed.

Also, not linked directly to the merger, we are aware of the wider plans for the site and the buildings – some decisions are due to be made in April 2020. I'm concerned that there would be no governing body or headteacher in place by this time. It's crucial that no decision is made about the site until there is a temporary governing body and headteacher in place. If there are decisions that cannot be made until there

is a governing body and headteacher in place, it's important that the health board are aware of this as it could delay them.

Marianne Evans: We will do what we can to move forward with the process ahead of the timeline published in the consultation document. However, there are situations that can delay the process which are outside our control. For example, when there was a by-election in Brecon and Radnorshire recently, we were unable to take anything to Cabinet. Should there be a general election, this could impact on our ability to take papers to Cabinet.

Sarah Astley: It also depends on the level of responses received to the consultation – we won't know this until the end of the consultation period.

Marianne Evans: In other areas, we have had situations where too little time has been allocated to completing the staffing processes. For example in Welshpool, the Council closed 4 schools to establish 2 new schools. This was done on a very tight timescale and the staffing processes were taking place far too late, which was not ideal – this caused a lot of stress for school staff and officers.

Member of staff: In terms of the temporary governing body, it's only made up of who currently sits on the governing bodies of the two schools. It's important that it's set up as early as possible. However, if it's people that are already on the governing bodies of the current schools, they could be well prepared for the sorts of decisions they will need to make.

Member of staff: Are you not able to tell us when the final decision will be? We were first told April but then the document says December?

Sarah Astley: The document says the final Cabinet decision would be May/June 2020. It could be sooner than that, but it wouldn't be expected to be any later than that. This would be the final decision to move forward with the proposal. Then, the next step would be to set up the governing body, and one of their first tasks would be to appoint the headteacher.

Member of staff: So that would be relatively soon after June?

Sarah Astley: The temporary governing body would be set up soon after the final Cabinet decision, and the headteacher would be appointed soon after this.

Member of staff: Can a temporary governing body be set up ready?

Marianne Evans: Unfortunately not. The current stage is formal consultation. No decision has been made to move forward with the proposal, the only decision that has been made is to carry out consultation. There have been previous occasions where Cabinet have considered the responses received during the consultation period and decided not to move forward with the proposal. We can't move forward

with establishing a temporary governing body now, as this could be seen as pre-determining the outcome of the process.

Member of staff: So if there was a general election, could this then delay the process?

Sarah Astley: If there was a general election which coincided with when we were planning to take a paper to Cabinet relating to this proposal, it's likely that this would mean that we would have to delay. In terms of our current timeline, there is a Cabinet meeting on the 20th January, so we would be intending to take the consultation report to this meeting. It's possible that this could go to Cabinet in December, however the timescales would be quite tight – whether or not this is achievable would depend on the level of responses received.

Member of staff: What is the February Cabinet date?

Marianne Evans: It would be around 3 weeks after the January meeting. The process going forward is that Cabinet receive all the information and the responses, and they decide whether there are any issues that mean that the proposal shouldn't go ahead. If Cabinet support the proposal, the next stage is an Objection Period of 28 days. Another report would then be prepared outlining any Objections received, and this would again be considered by Cabinet. Based on the published timeline, the intention is that this goes to Cabinet in May/June. However, if the first decision is earlier, potentially the timescales would move forward.

Once a final decision has been made by Cabinet to move forward with a proposal, the next step is to establish the temporary governing body who will take forward the staffing processes. Normally we like to have at least 3 terms to take forward these processes. The temporary governing body is made up of members of the two current governing bodies – expressions of interest are sent out to all current governors, so all governors would have an opportunity to be part of the temporary governing body. The temporary governing body would have a large piece of work ahead of them – they would be responsible for setting up the whole staffing structure. Their first decision would be appointment of a headteacher. Following that, they would move forward to work with the headteacher on the staffing structure and the staffing processes. HR would also support with these processes.

Sarah Christoforou: The temporary governing body have other decisions to make as well, for example school name, uniform, policies, so there is a significant amount of work involved.

Member of staff: Given the amount of work involved and that our governors are working, what happens if there are not enough expressions of interest to form a temporary governing body?

Marianne Evans: That has not happened before. If there are vacancies in terms of the membership, they will be carried. Usually, we find that there are committed governors from both schools who want to be part of establishing the new school.

Member of staff: Is the membership of the temporary governing body kept equal between the schools that are merging?

Sarah Astley: We try to keep the membership equal as far as possible. However, this depends on the expressions of interest received.

Member of staff: Would staff governors be allowed on the temporary governing body?

Sarah Christoforou: Yes they would, however there would be certain discussions that they would not be able to part of.

Marianne Evans: Regarding the balance of the membership, often the Chair will come from one school and the Vice Chair will come from the other.

Member of staff: Do members of the temporary governing body continue to hold their positions as governors in their respective schools?

Marianne Evans: They do, so for people who sit on the temporary governing body as well as the current governing body, their workload will increase for a short period of time.

Member of staff: Is there any more you can tell us about the staffing process at this stage?

Sarah Christoforou: If a final decision is made to move forward with the proposal, the first thing for the temporary governing body to do would be to appoint the headteacher. Alongside that, the temporary governing body would be dealing with the staffing structure. As part of this process, there would be another consultation on the staffing structure, with an opportunity for staff to look at the structure and comment on it. If any members of staff aren't in a union, I would advise them to join a union. As part of this consultation process, there would be staff consultation meetings and we would go through the staffing structure. Every single role in the new school would be consulted on. All the comments would be collated and would go back to the temporary governing body. In the majority of school merger proposals, there have been tweaks to the staffing structure following the staff consultation as the staff themselves have come up with potential issues or better ideas. The next stage is to get people into posts. As mentioned earlier, there is something called the management of change principles. The posts in the new school would be ringfenced to the current staff. If there is more than one person for a post, then there would need to be a competitive element, either an interview process or a skills audit. This is where it can get emotional for staff if there is only one post in the

new structure where previously there were two. The temporary governing body along with the headteacher make the decisions, and HR are there to advise, to ensure that decisions are made in a sensible and transparent way. If there is any need to look at redeployment or changing hours or days, HR are here to support with this too.

Member of staff: Would staff have brand new contracts?

Sarah Christoforou: It would be a new contract as it would be a new school. However, because the proposal is that the current schools close on 31st August and the new school opens on the 1st September, staff would have continuity of service.

Member of staff: Would it affect sick pay or anything like that?

Sarah Christoforou: No. The school the staff are currently working at would cease to exist on the 31st August, so they would be issued with new contracts.

Member of staff: When the temporary governing body start to set up the new staffing structure do, will they know what the budget will be?

Sarah Christoforou: Yes, finance officers will also support the temporary governing body, and will ensure that the temporary governing body have this information.

Member of staff: Will the budget correspond to the budget for a school in a new building, or will it be based on the new school being established in the current ageing buildings?

Marianne Evans: The budget will be based on the current buildings. The temporary governing body will be responsible for the staffing, the teachers and staff of the school.

Sarah Christoforou: Anyone who is on a catering and cleaning contract would be part of a separate consultation, as their contract is with Powys County Council. The Council's managers would be responsible for making decisions about their roles. The temporary governing body could decide to bring another cleaning and catering company, however they do not make decisions on the catering and cleaning staff.

Member of staff: Can you explain how redeployment works?

Sarah Christoforou: If staff are at risk of redundancy and don't have a role at the new school, they would have a notice period and would be put on the redeployment register. There is a corporate redeployment register, schools can choose to be on it, however in the past they have tended not to be on it. Any jobs that are advertised by Powys County Council are sent out to people on the redeployment list before they are advertised on the intranet. If anyone is interested in a post, there will be a discussion and potentially an interview, and if successful they would be redeployed to that role. However, lots of schools recruit themselves and aren't part of the

redeployment register – it would be my job to research employment within local schools. Staff would have to be at risk before they could be put on the redeployment register.

Member of staff: If more than one person is going for a role and you don't get the role and take redundancy, is it correct that you cannot work for Powys for a year?

Sarah Christoforou: There are different types of redundancy. The redundancy where you can't work for the Council for a year is where people took voluntary redundancy or during the severance scheme, and it was to stop people from taking redundancy and then coming back to work for the Council immediately, for example as a consultant. In this scenario it would be a compulsory redundancy situation, therefore it would be a month and a day – staff wouldn't be able to work for the Council, other local authorities or other organisations on the redundancy modification order – semi public sector organisations which recognise continuous service – for a month and a day. The list changes every year. Payroll send the list out to confirm that staff haven't been employed by anyone on the list, and your redundancy will be released.

If staff do get offered a job in that timeframe of a month and a day then people could recognise your service and you might get asked to pay back the redundancy.

Member of staff: Would there still be a break in service if you started working somewhere else on the 15th of September?

Sarah Chrisoforou: If you had been offered that job before you left, it would be deemed that there is not enough break in service – so, for example if you were offered the job before the 31st August. If staff were offered the job on the 14th September and then started on the 15th, there would have been a break of service as the member of staff wouldn't have known about the job before they left. However, this rarely happens with posts in schools due to all the checks and DBS they must do due to working with children. If staff knew about the job before redundancy, then it would impact the redundancy pay. These are the sort of questions that HR will run through at the beginning of the staff consultation.

Member of staff: Is there a frequently asked questions sheet that has got all this information on?

Sarah Christoforou: Yes, we did prepare this information for Welshpool and Ysgol Calon Cymru. However, it cannot be done until a final decision has been made and the temporary governing body is in place.

Member of staff: With the staffing structure, would the current level / pay grades of TAs go across?

Sarah Christoforou: No, there would be a whole new staffing structure. It would be down to the temporary governing body to consider what level / grades were needed in the new school.

Member of staff: Can I ask about the new build? This merger is based on establishing a new school in the current buildings, but is there money set aside for a new building?

Marianne Evans: This consultation is about merging the two schools in their current buildings. There is money provisionally set aside for a new building as part of the Council's plans for the 21st Century Schools programme, however there are steps to go through before this money is made available. In order to draw down the money, the Council must build a very strong case that there is a need for a new build. We are aware though that there are maintenance issues with the current buildings.

Member of staff: If you are on a 39-hour contract but all the jobs are 25-hour contracts, would you get redundancy for those 14 hours?

Sarah Christoforou: If staff were to lose hours, they would get a compensatory payment, but because staff won't lose their continuity of service, this is taxable.

Member of staff: Is that for Teaching Assistants as well, if they lose a grade?

Sarah Christoforou: Yes, it is done on weekly pay. If staff are losing hours or it is a different grade, they will receive a compensatory payment. I acknowledge that this is a big thing for staff, it's emotional and difficult. I appreciate that you may not want to discuss your own personal situation in this forum, however I would encourage you to take the opportunity to have a one to one during any staffing consultation process which takes place in the future, as this would be an opportunity to go through your own personal circumstances. I am willing to come out and speak to you again if you would like me to.

Member of staff: What happens next? Will there be another meeting like this during the next phase of the process?

Sarah Astley: No, there won't be any further meetings as part of the statutory process. The consultation ends on the 7th November, then a Consultation Report will be prepared outlining the issues raised in the consultation period. Staff will be notified by letter when the Consultation Report is published, and during each step of the process. There is another meeting taking place with governors this evening, drop in sessions for parents on Monday and Wednesday and meetings with the school councils at both schools on Monday.

Member of staff: Will the sessions for parents will be a meeting like this?

Sarah Astley: No, it will be more informal, similar to the informal sessions held a few weeks ago.

Member of staff: How long will it take for the Consultation Report to be pulled together?

Sarah Astley: It depends on the amount of responses received, how long they are and how complicated they are. The report must summarise all issues raised during the consultation period, and provide the Council's response.

Marianne Evans: As it is a legal process, we must make sure that all the issues are listed and have been responded to. There have been other authorities that have rushed through the consultation and have faced problems. Our role is to ensure that everything is done correctly and in accordance with requirements.

Sarah Astley thanked all staff for attending and contributing to the meeting, and advised that if they had any further comments to make, they could respond individually to the consultation in writing. The closing date is the 7th November 2019. Staff can respond either by e-mailing school.consultation@powys.gov.uk, or they can fill in the on-line response form on the Council's website.

2. Meeting with governors of Ladywell Green Infants School and Hafren C.P. Junior School

9th October 2019

Present

Governors:

Ladywell Green Infants School:

Richard Lewis – Parent Governor
Debbie Jarvis – LEA Governor
Rachael Owen – Headteacher
Andrew Davies – Chair of Governors

Hafren C.P. Junior School:

Carl Hyde – Headteacher
Martin Copus – Staff Governor
Iris Strivens-Joyce – Teacher Governor
Neil Ainsworth – Chair of Governors
Luke Orehawa – Vice Chair of Governors

Officers:

Marianne Evans, Senior Manager Education Services
Sarah Astley, Strategic Programme Manager, School Transformation
Richard Williams, Programme Officer, School Transformation
Lynette Lovell, Interim Chief Education Officer
Nancy Owen, School Finance Manager
Councillor Phyl Davies, Portfolio Holder for Education and Property

Minutes:

Angharad Morgan, Programme Co-ordinator, School Transformation

Lynette Lovell welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Cllr Phyl Davies, the new Portfolio Holder for Education. Everyone introduced themselves.

It was explained that the meeting would be recorded to enable accurate minutes to be taken and that the recording would be deleted once the minutes have been finalised. Governors were asked whether they had any objection to this. Nobody had any objection.

Marianne Evans explained that this meeting is part of the formal consultation on the proposal to close Ladywell Green Infant School and Hafren C.P Junior School and to establish a new English medium primary school for pupils aged 4 – 11 on the existing site.

Marianne stated that information about the consultation has been sent to all governors and a Consultation Document is available on the Council's website. Copies of the Consultation Document were handed out. The minutes of today's meeting will be recorded and the comments made will be incorporated into the Consultation Report, however governors were encouraged to provide their own views online or in writing by the 7th of November.

Marianne referred to the potential implementation timescale on page 18 of the consultation document. The formal consultation has started, and will end on the 7th November, the next stage will be for the school transformation team to summarise all the issues raised and provide the authority's response to these issues in a consultation report. The consultation report will then be published, discussed by Full Council, and then considered by Cabinet, who will make a decision on whether to proceed. Should they decide to proceed, a statutory notice would be published, giving 28 days for people to submit objections. A further report will be prepared and considered by Cabinet, who will make a final decision on whether or not to proceed with the proposal.

The indicative timescales provided in the Consultation Document are a worst case scenario, however if the level of response is relatively low, it's possible that the timescales for the statutory process could be brought forward. The Council carried out the process to merge Llanfyllin CP School and Llanfyllin High School last year, and the final decision was made in April which was earlier than planned, so it's possible that a final decision could be made earlier than what's indicated in the Consultation Document.

Governor: If the process is completed more quickly, is it possible that the implementation date could be brought forward?

Marianne Evans: Theoretically it's possible that it could. It normally takes 3 terms to establish a new school, if a final decision was made earlier, we could potentially consider bringing the implementation date forward, however alternatively this additional time would mean that there would be more than enough time to carry out the required processes to establish the new school.

Sarah Astley: Generally, it makes more sense to open a new school on the 1st of September.

Marianne Evans: We have many examples of the time needed to establish a new school. In some cases we have had too little time available. For example, the Welshpool merger of 4 schools into 2 – this involved approximately 80 members of

staff in total. By the time the final decision had been made, we only had 2 terms to establish the school by the September. This meant that work on the staffing arrangements continued into the summer holidays – this wasn't ideal at all.

If the Cabinet do decide to move forward with this proposal, there is a process to follow. The first step would be to establish the temporary governing body, which is made up of the existing governing bodies. To do this, we invite all current governors to express interest in being on the temporary governing body. The workload is quite significant for the temporary governing body.

Governor: How does this impact on governors that are already governors at two schools – can they be governors at two schools and a member of a temporary governing body?

Sarah Astley: I believe that membership of a temporary governing body is in addition to membership of two permanent governing bodies. I'm not aware that anyone has been asked to resign from a permanent governing body to join a temporary governing body.

Marianne Evans: The first thing that the temporary governing body would have to do would be to receive the budget for the new school and move on to appointing a Headteacher. That is a key decision that the temporary governing body has to make. The Headteacher would then be involved in creating the staffing structure for the school. Most of the work for the temporary governing body is developing and implementing the staffing structure, with support from HR. The intention would be to have developed and appointed to a new staffing structure by the spring of 2021, with all decisions being made by Easter 2021, before the new school opens in the September.

It is acknowledged that this is a difficult process for staff in particular. HR were here at the meeting with staff earlier, and will support staff throughout this process.

Cllr Phyl Davies: Certainly, the view of the Cabinet and the Council is that we would want to take this process forward as quickly as possible. However, we can't rush it either, as we must take on everybody's views.

Governor: In the staff meeting earlier today we were told that if there was a redundancy situation, you wouldn't be able to work for Powys for a month and a day. If a decision is made at Easter that you will be made redundant, would your contract end at the end of August and would that mean that you were unable to apply for a job until the 2nd October?

Lynette Lovell: That's right, you would not be able to have another contract with them for a month and a day.

Governor: This consultation is to merge the two schools. The timeline you are proposing seems adequate from the point of view that it will ensure that there is plenty of time to prepare the two schools. The outside pressure which isn't really referred to in the document is the promise of a new building and the plans relating to the well-being centre, which will also have key decision dates. This isn't reflected in the timeline. We need to have a full timeline presented to us before any decision is made – the temporary governing body will need to be in place before any decisions are made.

Marianne Evans: The North Powys Well-being Programme is an additional complexity here. From the Council's perspective, we have an indicative allocation in our capital programme to build a new primary school here. To access the money from Welsh Government we would have to submit a business case, however the case is strong given the condition of the buildings and the pressures the heads are under to maintain them. The additional complexity with the building element is that we are working alongside our health colleagues on the Well-being hub.

Sarah Astley: There are plans to move forward with work on what the site could look like and how the different elements could work together – I believe that this is due to start imminently. We've been working with colleagues in the North Powys Well-being Programme over the last few months, and with yourselves as governors. There has also been extensive engagement around the programme across North Powys. The only assurance we can give is that we will continue to work with you as governors and heads as the programme moves forward.

Governor: The concern is that while the schools are in a period of flux, it's not clear who will be making decisions relating to the site. You have said that there won't be a temporary governing body until a decision is made by Cabinet to move forward with this proposal, the two separate governing bodies will continue, however decisions could be made about how the site is used without the school having a voice.

Governor: That is my view too – you are asking us to agree to the merger but there are other things going on in the background. I find it difficult to make this decision without knowing what else is going to happen in the future. There are concerns that the planned developments for the site will be detrimental to our pupils in terms of the open space available. I think we need more assurances.

Governor: This is a school site, and therefore school land. We have some of the most vulnerable pupils in Newtown who need that open space to be able to let off steam in a controlled environment. If we are going to be hemmed in, it could be to the detriment of our pupils.

Governor: The temporary governing body and the headteacher need to be key decision makers regarding the site and where the different elements are going to be.

Governor: It feels like the Health Board is deciding where they are going to be, and we will end up with what's left.

Sarah Astley: No, that isn't the case. No decisions have been made regarding locations of the individual elements on the site. Work on where the different elements could be located is due to start shortly, and the intention is that all key stakeholders, including you as the two schools currently located on the site, will have an opportunity to be involved in this.

Governor: Councillor Alexander's role as Portfolio Holder for Education expanded and she also became responsible for the North Powys Well-being Programme – Cllr Davies, does your role as Portfolio for Education also include responsibility for the North Powys Well-being Programme?

Cllr Phyl Davies: Councillor Alexander has been the lead portfolio for the North Powys Well-being Programme alongside her role as Portfolio Holder for Education and she continues to be responsible for the North Powys Well-being Programme as part of her new role. I have had some involvement with this Programme as the Portfolio Holder for Property. Having listened to your concerns regarding the site, I would like to emphasise that this is the Council's land, so whilst the well-being hub is a positive development, we will need to be comfortable with the plans for the site. It's likely that there are some compromises that will have to be made, however it is a school site, and our intention is that it will continue to be a school site. Safeguarding will be an important consideration going forward.

Marianne Evans: We have been very clear in the discussions we have had with the North Powys Well-being Programme over the last year and a half or so – we have two schools located on the site which are in dire need of modernisation. There have been difficult discussions around this. We have fought our corner and as officers we are committed to ensuring that a school continues to be located on this site, and to ensuring that the other developments planned for the site will not be detrimental to the school build.

Cllr Phyl Davies: The timing here is unfortunate – this is a positive potential development for the school, however the wider plans are muddying the water a bit. However, I'm here to be your voice as well as the officers – I hope you can have confidence in us.

Governor: We are under no illusions, we know that there is a lot of land on this site and understand that compromises will need to be made, however the open space here is very important to us here, the headteachers, governors and parents will back me up on this. We accept that there is guidance and formulas, but I think you need to step outside the formula here.

Cllr Phyl Davies: We are aware of this. There is separate work that will need to be done relating to the new building, and we will be working with you throughout this process. The interests of learners will be at the forefront.

Governor: What you are saying is giving me confidence. However, I'm still concerned about the timeline. What I would like is to see the temporary governing body established and the headteacher appointed. Once this is done we will have key decision makers in place. I wouldn't want plans for the site to be drawn up and sent out for the public to give feedback on before we have these key people in place.

Cllr Phyl Davies: I understand why you would be concerned, however we are key partners with the health board on this.

Sarah Astley: Just in terms of the development of the site, we have been engaging with you as governing bodies from the start. The work that is due to start shortly relating to the site will involve engaging with key stakeholders, which would include you. The fact that a decision won't have been made to move forward with the proposal to merge the two schools doesn't mean that we won't continue to work with the two current governing bodies on the plans for the site in the meantime. We won't be able to establish a temporary governing body until a final decision has been made to move forward with the proposal, however that doesn't mean that we can't continue to meet informally with the two governing bodies as we have been doing over the last few months.

Marianne Evans: We would always include governing bodies in the design work for a new school build – however the level of involvement does differ in every school. Sometime the whole governing body are involved, sometimes this is left to the headteacher. Some schools like us to draw up the initial designs, some like to start with us from the very beginning. However, in all cases, a key part of the design development is involving the headteacher and governing body. If we started on designs tomorrow, the two current governing bodies and the two current headteachers would be involved, but if we started the design work later on in the process, it would be the temporary governing body and the Headteacher.

Governor: In Welshpool for example, who was approving? Were the schools merged by then or was it the 4 individual schools?

Marianne Evans: The designs were approved after the schools merged.

Governor: The point I'm trying to make is that I know you're saying you will consult with us, but there is consulting, and there is key decisions being made – these are different. As two separate bodies working together, we can give you our views, but the key decision makers have got to be the newly appointed head and the new governing body.

Marianne Evans: Ideally yes, but if we were in a position where we wanted to draw down the Welsh Government money and begin the process, we would work with you until a new governing body is established. The key point in this is that we will engage with you as part of any new build, wherever we are in terms of the process to merge the two schools.

Governor: Is there any regulation that would prevent a joint working party of governors being set up in the interim instead of having a temporary governing body until a decision has been made?

Marianne Evans: No, we would encourage this. If the design work were to start tomorrow, that could be a way for you to be involved in the process – for you to establish a joint working group to be involved in developing the design. There are all kinds of possibilities, but it won't be done without your input.

Governor: Is there one appointed consultant working on the Well-being Programme looking at the whole space, or is it two separate entities?

Phil Davies: One consultant was initially working with the Programme team on this, however this wasn't very successful.

Governor: It seems that the plans are quite open ended and vague. The wellbeing hub needs some of the schools land to work for it to work, and the fact that the plans haven't developed in any way make it difficult to know what is that impact – does the design of the new school need to take account of a certain amount of land which is required to make the well-being hub work, or can we continue and let them have what's left over?

Governor: If the Well-being Development doesn't go ahead, what happens then?

Marianne Evans: We have the funding/indicative allocation in our capital programme, and it needs to be spent by 2025 so we will be pushing forward with the work. If the Well-being Development is delayed, we could commission our designers to start working on this.

Governors: We knew that this merger was on the cards when the 21st Century Schools Programme was published. We knew that and we are quite happy and accepting of the timescales. From what I hear, you are saying that we have real plans and real ambition, and the well-being hub is a secondary priority which may or may not happen.

Governor: Could we be accused of putting the cart before the horse in that a new build school is dependent on what you do with the rest of Newtown. We are looking at population expansion within Newtown. It depends what you do with other schools – we have to do something sensible, you can't just let the situation remain as it is. The Council has to do something pretty drastic because of budgets, so that creates

pressure elsewhere. If we're only building a new school for what we've got now, I'm assuming that you will be taking things like that into account.

Sarah Astley: All the work that has been done so far in terms of this site and the early spatial planning which has been done has been based on a school of 360. This would already be building in some additional capacity compared with the current pupil numbers at the two schools. However, we would need to look in more detail at the size when we get to the actual design work – the capacity of the new building could end up being larger or smaller than this.

Governor: I would like to point out an error on page 15. It talks about the capacity of the new school being 342.

Sarah Astley: Yes, this would be the capacity of the new school on the current site – so it is the combination of the buildings currently occupied by Ladywell Green and Hafren schools.

Governor: This is different to what is presented earlier in the document – on page 5 it states that the capacity of Ladywell Green is 150 and the capacity of Hafren is 210 – the total is 360, not 342.

Richard Williams: School capacity is calculated using a formula which is set by Welsh Government. This takes account of every element of the building e.g. toilets, corridors. Although the capacity is calculated based on the same buildings, the formula has provided a different total capacity when considering the buildings as one school.

Governor: But you are building a school for 360?

Sarah Astley: We have been planning based on the site requirements for a school for 360.

Marianne Evans: The spatial planning that has been carried out so far has been based on the requirements for 360 pupils to see if the site could accommodate 360 pupils. This is the size of the new school being built in Welshpool, and would be the largest school. What happens to the other schools in Newtown will be looked at, however site assessment work carried out around Newtown has indicated that there isn't much space to build new schools. There is a need here and space here.

Governor: Are any other projects in Newtown going ahead?

Marianne Evans: Cedewain is moving forward quite quickly. There were discussions about Welsh-medium secondary provision, we identified some potential land for this, however there are complexities with this. Our focus now is developing a new school here.

Governor: The governing body will be given a budget for the next school year a whole year ahead. How accurate is that going to be as we currently find out our budget in the February?

Nancy Owen: In relation to the current and ongoing projects, if you were going to open in September 2021, we will have to have a discussion with the schools service management team as to what potentially is the cut off date for estimates of pupil numbers which are used to fund the period from September 2021 – March 2022.

At the moment as an example we fund the financial year from April 2020 based on the first Friday after the October/November half term. When we merge schools, we fund based on estimates for the September the school opens, then the financial year that follows, you go back to the normal funding count date

Governor: On page 23 of the Consultation Document you have the potential saving and the funding for the school. This gives an estimated saving of £131,000. For me, the only significant saving would be one Headteacher – that's not £131,000. Where is that figure of £131,000 coming from?

Nancy Owen: The figures in the document and the estimated saving is based on pupil number estimates in the coming years that the current headteachers provided. The current funding formula works on the 30 class size rule. The estimate is based on the estimated pupil numbers at the time of opening, however the actual funding figures will depend on the pupil numbers at the time of opening.

Governor: Were the two figures based on the same pupil numbers?

Nancy Owen: Yes. We have moved the numbers on another year. Based on the pupil number estimates we hold, the school would be funded for 9 classes. Potentially if those pupil numbers and the funding formula stay the same, it could mean less funding

Governor: So, you could potentially have a Year 2&3 class?

Lynette Lovell: You could potentially have a Year 2&3 class. I don't know how the numbers would lie, but that could be the case.

Nancy Owen: The funding formula would dictate the funding that would be provided to the new school, and this would be based on pupil numbers. It will be up to the governing body to determine the class structure within this budget, however the school will have their own priorities. For example, I know of a school where the funding formula suggested 3 classes, however they have planned to keep 4 classes and have made savings elsewhere.

Lynette Lovell: It would be a Headteacher decision. Ideally, you would try and avoid a Year 2&3 class, you would look for another area to make savings – do you merge

Years 3&4? It is for the Headteacher to make the best decisions for the education of the pupils.

Governor: The sensitivity is already coming from the staff, the land, the site and now it's down to the children. This all means that ensuring as long as possible for stage 2 is crucial.

Cllr Phyl Davies: Because of process within Powys, the consultation report will need to be considered by Full Council before going to Cabinet. We don't have another Council meeting until January, however we could call a special meeting if the report is ready earlier. Hopefully we could have that in mid-December which would bring the Cabinet decision to January. So it's quite likely that the process could move forward more quickly.

Governor: Can I get clarification about the budgets – about the information in paragraph 2 on page 24. There is an error here – it says 2022. In this paragraph you talk about a net deficit. I can't see where the £44,000 you refer to on page 24 comes from. We are talking about year 2, and on page 9 Ladywell is £14,000 in deficit and Hafren is £20,000 in surplus. How do you see the wind up process going if the schools have a deficit or a surplus?

Nancy Owen: When a school closes, whatever balance is left at that point in time reverts back to the local authority, but obviously we have to ensure that any budgets meets the requirement of the scheme for financing schools. If there is a deficit, the Council will need to find the funding to cover this. A current schools proposal which went through Cabinet recently, Cabinet approved further restrictions on spend to prevent a deficit balance, and we will be working with the governing body and headteachers of those schools to ensure a zero balance on closure where possible. If a school has a surplus they are able to use this for the pupils in the school currently, however, we have to be really clear that it is not acceptable to have deficits.

Lynette Lovell: We do have a really clear steer from Estyn as well around deficit budgets so that will still continue.

Governor: So, with regard to Ladywell's circumstances at the moment, something needs to be done to ensure that they are not in a deficit position.

Governor: We work hard to get the deficit down. The new funding formula comes in on the 31st of March and we came out of that ok, that then affected my spend this year. My spending changed on the 1st of April to reflect the differences in the funding formula. On the 1st of April 2020, am I able to change my spending plans for or against to make savings or not?

Nancy Owen: Yes, now what we are doing is getting the budgets agreed by the temporary governing bodies, and we are working with both schools to remain within

balanced budgets. If a budget isn't balanced, the school must go away and the request is made by the Interim Chief Education Officer and Head of Financial Services to come back with a balanced budget.

Governor: In Hafren, we are working hard and look at that 3rd year figure, however if the proposal goes forward that won't exist – does that mean we don't need to worry about it?

Nancy Owen: At the moment you are still 2 schools, this is still a consultation. That 3rd year budget will remain on your budget sheet until the decision and process is complete.

Governor: The new temporary body will get a 3-year budget plan based on the new funding formula?

Nancy Owen: Yes, for example what we are doing with Llanfyllin and will start to do with the new school in the Banw Valley is to work with the temporary governing body to create a structure, the headteacher would heavily support this.

Governor: The temporary governing body will be working with 2 different budgets as it will be for one school on two sites and a different one in a few years when there is a new building.

Nancy Owen: Yes, we will need to model that.

Governor: As soon as the temporary governing body is formed and not when the school is opened, I would be looking for a transitional budget and additional funding to cover additional costs.

Marianne Evans: We do provide a transformation budgets as there are additional costs, i.e. planning, logo, branding. We usually provide a day a week of funding to release the head to work on the staffing structure and other things they have to deal with. We do recognise that there is a cost to merging two schools, however this is not an endless pot. Any costs must be reasonable. There needs to be a good business case. However, the minimum would be funding to cover the headteacher for one day a week.

Governor: I think a lot of the work we would need to do would be getting our parents involved. What we don't want is for some parents to leave the school. I think we are going to have to work very hard in order to ensure that parents are engaged. Would we be able to access funding to engage with parents and get them on board?

Marianne Evans: We recognise that there is a need to communicate the good, positive messages around the development. Sometimes there is a cost to that. Once the temporary governing body is established, there is a staffing structure to work out, there will be finances to sort out and there is an opportunity to engage the parents

and the outside community, which will require a new website, logo, branding and vision.

Governor: When are pupils consulted?

Marianne Evans: The team are going to meet the school councils at both schools on Monday as part of the consultation on the proposal to merge the two schools. There is also a pupil version of the consultation document.

Sarah Astley: As well as the discussion with the school council, pupils are welcome to respond to the consultation. Should the proposal move forward, there would be further opportunities for pupils to be involved, for example they could be involved with the new school name and designing a logo.

Marianne Evans: We have to include the views of learners in the Consultation Report produced.

Governor: What happens if the Cabinet refuse to move forward with the merger?

Cllr Phyl Davies: The only reason the Cabinet would not want to move forward with the merger would be if there were a large amount of objection. Cabinet are mindful that this is the best option for this site. The worst-case scenario would be that this is pushed down the line which we don't want to do as pace is key.

Sarah Astley: Often during consultation periods such as this, we hear from people who feel strongly against something, but we don't hear from many that are in support of proposals. We would encourage you all to respond to the consultation, whether that is to raise concerns, or if you are in support of the proposal.

Governor: If there was a redundancy situation as a result of this proposal, would the school have to pick up the cost of this?

Nancy Owen: At the moment, we are still picking the cost up.

Governor: If we were a new school on the existing site what I wouldn't want us to need to have staff running between the two schools continuously. We want to see it adequately staffed – we are aware of the Builth and Llandrindod situation and know what has happened in that area.

Lynette Lovell: I think you are in a better position here. If you look at Welshpool for example, they are on 3 separate sites and have to travel between them. There are more opportunities for you to move to a staffing structure which is more similar to the structure you would have in one building as you are closer together. In my opinion you probably could run with one lot of admin staff, it is an easier situation.

Rachael Owen: Would Powys help with the costs of moving to one admin team, for example by installing an internal phone system?

Marianne Evans: Yes, Powys would help with the costs of this.

Lynnette Lovell: Hafren used to share the hall with Dafydd Llwyd, so historically there has been movement on this site. I appreciate that it would be different when you are in one building, but it isn't as complex as Builth/Llandrindod and Welshpool.

Rachel Owen: The reduction going into a new building would be cleaning staff and possibly catering and kitchen staff.

Governor: I think in the new building we can see where the savings will be. I think with a new school in the existing buildings, the funding formula will disadvantage us and I would want us to see a factor to ensure that we can operate. We have talked about a transitional budget, but that isn't going to help with the day to day running costs. If we go on the funding formula alone, the pupils are going to miss out.

Governor: I agree. Not only are those pupils going to be shoved into smaller classes, in one building while one or both is being demolished, we will also have lost a lot of staff because we can't afford to pay them. The pupils that are in the school during that transitional period are going to be doubly affected. Parents aren't going to send their children to a school with less teachers and no building.

Lynette Lovell: I can assure you that this won't happen because we want this to be successful. It's true that sometimes there is an impact on the space available for learners during any building phase, however at the end of it the provision for the learners is better.

Governor: The site of the school is working in our favour as we can build the new school on another part with little or no impact on the education of the children, so we have to see that as a positive

Cllr Phyl Davies: Yes, and to retain the green space element you would have a smaller building footprint with a two-storey build.

Governor: On the educational front we have two green schools, on the opening of the new school a new headteacher would be appointed, would we become a yellow school and get additional support?

Lynette Lovell: It isn't necessarily the case – however we don't know how long the national categories will be in place anyway. What would happen is exactly the same as happens every other year – the categorisation visit would be carried out in exactly the same way, and would be categorised based on evidence given by the headteacher and the governing body.

Governor: I thought it was automatic that a school with a newly appointed headteacher would be yellow?

Lynette Lovell: No, only a new head appointment who is a new head. The default would actually be amber.

Governor: As a new school, when would we expect an Estyn inspection?

Lynette Lovell: Next year Estyn are suspending all of their inspections, but they are visiting every school in Wales. The pressure is still on I would say. From this, they will have a really good idea where they will want to inspect the following year. In the current inspection framework, it's usually 2 years before a new school is inspected, but they can turn up at any time.

Governor: How does that affect schools that are categorised, for example schools that are in special measures?

Lynette Lovell: That carries on – if a school is in special measures they will still be inspected.

Governor: There is a bit of a disparity in the equalities information between Ladywell Green and Hafren, for example things like percentage of pupils having English as an Additional Language and Free School Meals. What does this tell us about what's happening in the area?

Richard Williams: The figures are percentages, the number of pupils is small – there are more pupils in Hafren so this would impact on the percentage figure.

Sarah Astley: Also the figures are referring to different pupils – the pupils that are in Ladywell Green now, you would expect these to be in Hafren in the coming years.

Lynette Lovell: You are always going to have this on this site, with free school meals it has always been 20% and over. There is a clear understanding that there are vulnerable learners on this site. It may be that we should consider providing information in other languages for parents of EAL pupils to encourage engagement.

Governor: We have a number of languages, Ladywell have Polish, Bulgarian, Portuguese, Spanish and Vietnamese.

Marianne explained that the notes of tonight's meeting would be reflected in the Consultation Report prepared at the end of the consultation period. It was explained that the consultation period would end on the 7th November, and governors were encouraged to submit individual responses in writing before the end of the consultation period.

Governors were thanked for their participation in the meeting.

3. Meeting with the School Council of Ladywell Green Infants School

Present: Sarah Astley, Richard Williams, Angharad Morgan (School Transformation Team)

Officers from the School Transformation Team met with Ladywell Green School Council on the 14th of October to discuss the consultation on the future of Ladywell Green and Hafren Junior School.

One session was held with 9 pupils from the school council in Ladywell Green. The group were a combination of students from reception to year 2.

The officers explained the proposals for the merging of Ladywell Green and Hafren Infant School and explained the difference between other primary schools in the Newtown area compared to Ladywell Green and Hafren Infant School as most primary schools educate from reception to Year 6.

The pupils were asked several questions and their responses are summarised below:

1. What do you think is good about Ladywell Green School?

- We are all friends
- You play – tag, cars, football and hide and seek.
- In Hafren there is one big playground with a gym
- There are two playgrounds – one for break time and one for snack time.
- We like the teachers.
- We like the school dinners
- We get to go on trips, went to Shropshire Hill

2. Is there anything you don't like about Ladywell Green?

- I don't like people hurting me
- I don't like being called mean
- I don't like people who fuss about me
- I don't like when people snatch

3. What do you think about the buildings and the classrooms?

- Great
- Fantastic
- The toilets are leaking

4. If things were different and Ladywell Green and Hafren were one school what would be different?

- The hall would be bigger
- We would have different yards
- There would only be one headteacher
- New uniform which would be exciting
- New name for the school

5. What do you think would be better if Ladywell Green and Hafren were one school?

- We would be in the same school as our brothers and sisters
- We might be able to get more laptops
- The schools are joint together

6. Is there anything that would be worse or worry you about Ladywell and Hafren being one school?

- Older children might bully you

To conclude the session, the officers explained the next steps in the consultation process. It was explained that the consultation would close on the 7th November, after half term, and the pupils were encouraged to send any further comments to the school transformation team using the contact details on the pupil version of the consultation document, or to their teachers who would be able to arrange for them to be sent on.

4. Meeting with the School Council of Hafren C.P. Junior School

Present: Sarah Astley, Richard Williams, Angharad Morgan (School Transformation Team); Carl Hyde (Headteacher)

Officers from the School Transformation Team met with Hafren School Council on the 14th October 2019 to discuss the consultation on the future of Ladywell Green Infants School and Hafren Junior School.

One session was held with 12 pupils from the school council in Hafren Junior School. The group was a combination of pupils from year 3 to year 6.

Officers explained the proposals to merge Ladywell Green Infant School and Hafren Junior School.

The pupils were asked a number of questions, and their responses are summarised below:

1. What do you like about Hafren Junior School? What's good about the school?

- The grounds
- Everyone is nice and friendly
- Gym
- Lessons
- Teachers – being able to get humorous teachers to teach you
- Competitions and sporting events
- Cross Country
- Creative writing club
- The school is healthy
- We go on lots of trips – we went somewhere that talked to us about Celts and we did some weaving
- In year 5 and 6 you can go to London and Llangrannog
- We go on trips to Liverpool
- The grounds are big so we can have nice big events like, summer fete, visits from tanks and a fire engine, the air ambulance lands there, also used for school sports and sometimes Ladywell pupils use the grounds
- The yard has games painted on the floor, designed by school council
- Mile a day around the ground which gives us more energy
- Gardening club where we grow tomatoes, carrots, peas and corn

2. Is there anything you don't like about Hafren Junior School?

- A friend used to be a bully
- Bring back the swimming pool

- People could respect the library more
- Food in the school – healthy eating
- There could be more clubs in the school - recycling, dance, football and singing club.

3. What do you think about the buildings?

- They need to fix the buildings
- They need to make the buildings cleaner
- The corridor where the headteacher's office is could be used more than it is now.
- The school's bathroom looks quite scary – it looks like the roof is about to collapse on use and there is a door that doesn't have a lock anymore.

4. If the Council was to move forward with the plan to merge Ladywell Green and Hafren Schools, what would be different?

- People wouldn't have the excitement of moving to a new school in year 3
- New uniform
- New logo
- New school name
- There would be only one headteacher
- Where the school be? (It was explained that for the time being, pupils would still attend school in the same buildings – so older pupils would come to the Hafren buildings, and younger pupils would go to the Ladywell Green buildings. However, there are plans for a new building in the future, which all pupils would go to.)

5. Is there anything you think would be better if Ladywell Green and Hafren were one school instead of being two separate schools?

- We would be able to help the younger pupils and help teach them like year 6 do with new year 3's.
- There is a big playground so we will all be able to play
- The older children might help the younger children when they are getting picked on.
- More teachers and more to learn
- Pupils would be in the same school as their older/younger brothers or sisters.

6. Is there anything that would be worse or worry you about Ladywell and Hafren being one school?

- The younger children might get bullied.
- Being a bit squished at dinner time

- On the playground, some people are littering – Ladywell Green pupils don't know about climate change and littering so this could be worse.
- We would need to teach the younger pupils the rules – or there might be new rules
- When we are in class and hear all the construction and the playground being squished.
- The school field being built over.
- The tress would probably have to be cut down and there are hedgehogs nesting in the oak trees along with bats.
- Car parking
- We would need more ice packs
- If nursery children do the mile a day they could run off.

To conclude the session, the officers explained the next steps in the consultation process. It was explained that the consultation would close on the 7th November, after half term, and the pupils were encouraged to send any further comments to the school transformation team using the contact details on the pupil version of the consultation document, or to their teachers who would be able to arrange for them to be sent on.