

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD BY TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 9 JUNE 2020

PRESENT

County Councillor M R Harris (Chair)

County Councillors MC Alexander, G Breeze, A W Davies, P Davies, J Evans, H Hulme and R Powell

In attendance: County Councillor Pete Roberts

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from the Corporate Director (Resources and Transformation).

2. MINUTES

The Leader was authorised to sign the minutes of the meetings held on 12th and 19th May as correct records.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

County Councillor Phyl Davies declared a pecuniary interest in item 5 Home to School Transport as a director of Celtic Travel. County Councillors James Evans and Rachel Powell declared pecuniary interests as the parents of children using home to school transport. County Councillor Aled Davies advised that although he had children using home to school transport he did not believe that his family would be financially affected by changes to the policy and therefore did not have a pecuniary interest.

4. TRANSFORMING EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Cabinet received details of the new programme arrangements and governance to deliver the Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-2030 and noted that the programme was continuing with its implementation during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Four workstreams had been established to deliver the strategic aims:

- Workstream 1: All-age schools and primaries
- Workstream 2: Post-16 provision
- Workstream 3: Welsh-medium provision
- Workstream 4: ALN provision

The Schools Transformation Programme Board was responsible for ensuring that the programme is on track to deliver to the agreed milestones.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1. Notes the programme governance and workstream plans as outlined in this report and appendices A, B, C and D, and**
- 2. Notes the continuation of the programme during the current COVID-19 pandemic.**

The Portfolio Holder for Education and Property thanked everyone involved in the preparation for the re-opening of schools on 29th June.

5. HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

County Councillors Phyl Davies, James Evans and Rachel Powell left the meeting during consideration of this item having declared pecuniary interests.

Cabinet was asked to give its approval to go out to consultation on the new Home to School Transport Policy. The consultation would start on 15 June and run for 6 weeks.

The main areas of change were

- Clarity about the duty to promote Welsh medium provision.
- Removal of the practice of reimbursing 16 – 19 aged learners who travel out of county to study.
- Removal of the practice of providing transport following a change of ordinary place of residence for learners in years 10,11,12 and 13.
- Clarification of the appeals procedure.

The Chair of the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee, County Councillor Pete Roberts, advised that the Committee was content for the policy to go out for consultation and he expanded on the comments made by the Committee as set out in Appendix D to the report. Amongst the points the Committee had flagged up were a lack of information available to parents when deciding schools, clarity over the definition of Welsh language schools and of hazardous routes. There was some concern over the quality of the impact assessment and that the policy was being introduced too soon in 2021. Finally, he urged officers to utilise technology to consult with the public.

The Portfolio Holder thanked the Scrutiny Committee for their comments and advised that he would arrange for a full response to Scrutiny before going out to consultation with the policy. He explained that the Home to School Transport policy was needed to support the Education transformation programme. He advised that catchment areas were not under consideration at this time. He and officers accepted the point made about using technology to conduct the consultation. The Portfolio Holder for the Welsh Language noted that the categorisation of Welsh Language schools was being considered by the Welsh Government so it would be inappropriate for the council do so now. She also noted post 16 learners had been able to take advantage of the increased curriculum opportunities offered by e learning. Cabinet was also advised that the impact assessment was draft and would be updated to take account of any issues raised in the consultation.

RESOLVED to approve the commencement of public consultation on the revised Home to School Transport Policy

(Appendix A) during June/July 2020 and that a consultation report and final draft policy is considered by Cabinet in September 2020.

6. DELEGATED DECISIONS

Cabinet received details of the delegated decisions taken by Portfolio Holders since the start of lockdown.

County Councillor M R Harris (Chair)