

**Transforming Education Programme - Post-16 Workstream - 18th May 2021 Cabinet Paper
- Appendix 1 - Proposal for Strategic Management of Powys Post-16 Provision**

Table of Contents

Introductory Section 2
Proposal for the Strategic Management of Powys Post-16 Provision 4
Powys Post-16 Learner Entitlement Criteria..... 9
Strategic Management Board (SMB) Terms of Reference..... 10
Operational Management Board (OMB) Terms of Reference 17
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) 22

Introductory Section

Definitions

ALN	Additional Learning Needs
FAQs	Frequently Asked Questions
FE	Further Education
HE	Higher Education
OMB	Operational Management Board
PL	Professional Learning
Powys post-16 provision	All provision (educational, pastoral, enrichment and careers advice and guidance) by “Powys post-16 centres” (Powys Sixth Forms and Powys Special Schools which support learners aged 16+)
Powys post-16 centres	Powys Sixth Forms and Powys Special Schools which support learners aged 16+
RLSP	Regional Learning and Skills Partnership
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SMB	Strategic Management Board
The council	Powys County Council
The post-16 funding	Welsh Government Post-16 Education Provision Grant for Powys

Document Navigation

For ease of access this document uses document navigation providing a clickable menu to the left of the screen which enables the reader to navigate quickly to the required section. If the menu is not visible move your cursor to “View” in the top ribbon and check the box next to “Navigation Pane”.

Document Purpose

This document sets out the proposal for the Strategic Management of Powys Post-16 provision. The document also includes the [Post-16 Learner Entitlement criteria](#), terms of reference for the proposed [Strategic Management Board](#) and [Operational Management Boards](#) and a set of [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Note

Reference to “Powys post-16 provision” in this document pertains to all provision (educational, pastoral and wellbeing, enrichment and careers advice and guidance) from “Powys post-16 centres” (sixth form provision in both mainstream and special schools).

This proposal does not seek to determine how other providers (colleges etc.) deliver their post-16 provision in Powys. There is, however, scope and encouragement to work in partnership with other providers where collaboration or avoidance of duplication is in the interest of the Powys learner.

Introduction

Powys County Council (the council), as part of its role under the terms and conditions of the Welsh Government Post-16 Grant Funding (herein referred to as “the post-16 funding”), is proposing to establish a new strategic management process to manage the post-16 funding in order to deliver enhanced post-16 [learner entitlement](#). This will comprise a high-level Strategic Management Board (SMB) and two “Powys Post-16 Centre” (Powys Sixth Forms and Powys Special Schools which support learners aged 16+) cluster groups with Operational Management Boards (OMBs). This document sets out how the SMB and OMBs will operate respectively and provides terms of reference for both groups.

The current situation and the case for change

The council’s Transforming Education Strategy sets out a number of Strategic Aims and Objectives to shape the council’s work to transform the Powys education system over the coming years.

The requirement to improve post-16 provision falls under Strategic Aim 2: “we will improve learner entitlement and experience for post-16 learners.”

The purpose of Strategic Aim 2 is: “to ensure that post-16 learners (and 14-16 year old learners) are able to access a broad range of subjects within Powys, with a blended offer of academic and vocational provision, and to ensure that the post-16 sector in Powys is sustainable.

The initial focus of Strategic Aim 2 is to: “focus on enhanced collaboration between schools to ensure a high-quality post-16 curriculum that is accessible to all learners, and is affordable within the funding received from the Welsh Government. This will include more digital learning opportunities where learners are taught via video-conferencing across more than one school.”

The core challenges facing post-16 provision which must be addressed are identified in the Transforming Education Strategy and the September 2019 Cabinet Report (Review of Sixth Form Provision) and are evidenced by the associated data sets hosted on the council’s website alongside the strategy document.

Proposal for the Strategic Management of Powys Post-16 Provision

Proposal

The proposal is to introduce a new structure for the strategic management of Powys post-16 provision. This will comprise a high-level Strategic Management Board (SMB) and two “Powys Post-16 Centre” cluster groups with Operational Management Boards (OMBs).

The cluster groups will operate in the north and south of the county and will be attended by Headteachers (or their deputies) from each Powys post-16 centre in the cluster area. Cluster areas and members of the cluster OMBs is set out below.

The proposal will revise the strategic oversight and management of post-16 provision in Powys. This will ensure that no learner is detrimentally impacted because of their post code. This will also ensure that post-16 provision maximises the opportunities afforded within the post-16 funding received from Welsh Government by removing duplication of provision and ensuring the number of courses is efficiently matched to demand.

Strategic management of provision will enable the council to meet its aim of ensuring that post-16 provision has a broad and balanced curriculum offer through the mediums of Welsh and English and that Additional Learning Needs (ALN) support is properly met.

It is proposed that post-16 provision remains at all current Powys post-16 centres. Under this model it is proposed that all post-16 learners will have a “home base”. It will be the choice of the learner as to which post-16 centre they elect to be their home base however it is expected that in most cases learners will opt to either remain with the centre that has been the base of their studies through years 7 to 11 or to choose the post-16 centre which is the closest travel distance to their home.

1. Strategic Management Board (SMB)

The SMB will determine how the post-16 funding for Powys will be allocated. For the avoidance of doubt, no sixth form will be granted post-16 funding to run any course which is not commissioned by the SMB.

The primary function of the SMB is to commission providers (sixth forms, colleges and other providers) to deliver high quality academic and vocational provision. The secondary function of the SMB will be to oversee quality assurance of the provision it commissions to ensure that provision is of the highest calibre. To achieve these ends the SMB will publish policy and guidance documents which will set parameters around provision and value for money.

The SMB shall also be responsible for forging strong partnerships with other organisations, including universities, colleges, Powys Teaching Health Board (PTHB), Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, Mudiad Meithrin, businesses, the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership and the Public Service Board.

The SMB will be comprised of Powys County Council officers and Powys post-16 centre Head Teacher, Governor and learner representatives. Included in this representation will be Additional Learning Needs (ALN) specialists. The SMB will be a collaborative decision-making body with a strong strategic overview of provision across the county.

2. Operational Management Boards (OMBs)

The OMBs for each cluster will submit annual curriculum proposals to the SMB for post-16 provision in their area. The proposals will include educational, pastoral, enrichment and careers advice and guidance and must comply with the guidance issued by the SMB.

The OMBs for each cluster will be comprised of one nominated senior leader from each of the Powys post-16 centres within that cluster. The OMBs will also have ALN representation and will be supported by a council Challenge Advisor.

The Powys post-16 centres will operate in two cluster groups as defined below:

- **Cluster Group North:**
Bro Hyddgen, Brynllwarch, Caereinion, Cedewain, Llanfyllin, Llanidloes, Newtown, Welshpool
- **Cluster Group South:**
Brecon, Calon Cymru, Crickhowell, Gwernyfed, Maesydderwen, Penmaes

Figure 1 provides a high-level diagram of the proposed strategic management structure.

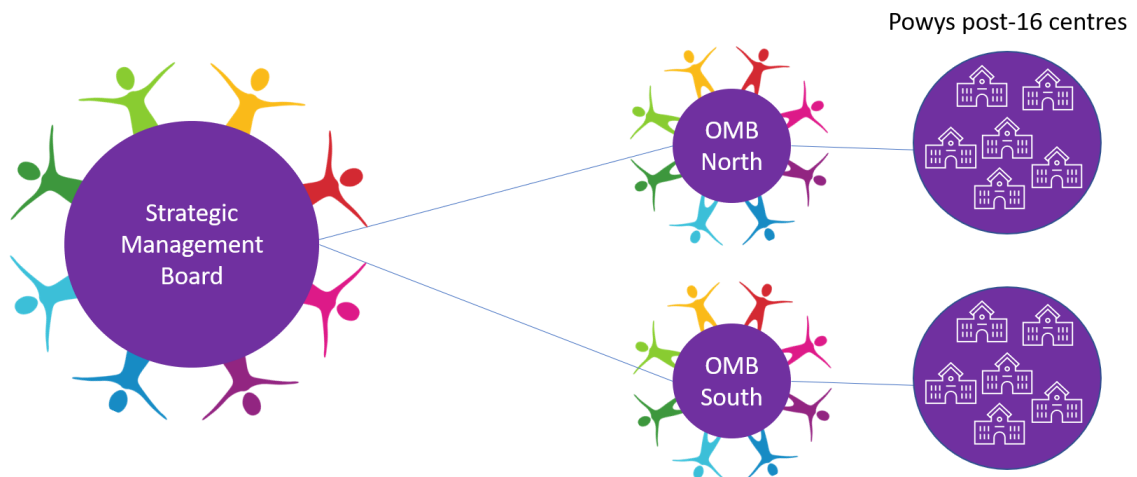


Figure 1 Strategic Management Structure Diagram

3. Powys Post-16 Provision

“Powys Post-16 Provision” in this proposal means all provision (educational, pastoral, enrichment and careers advice and guidance) from all “Powys post-16 centres” (Powys Sixth Forms and Powys Special Schools which support learners aged 16+).

A core underpinning element of the proposal is the concept that there is a “whole-Powys” Post-16 provision on offer for learners.

Under the new proposal learners will have a “home base” (see next section) but will also be able to access all Powys Post-16 centres for their studies. The provision on offer will also be county-wide and where learners are geographically unable to travel to attend a course they would be “collaborative learners” taking the course via e-sgol.

The SMB will have a core role in promoting the Powys post-16 provision and with this will be a central handbook, application and information website (Powys Learning Pathways), Powys Post-16 learner identification badge and Powys Post-16 branding.

4. Home bases

It is proposed that post-16 provision remains at all current Powys post-16 centres. Under this model it is proposed that all post-16 learners will have a “home base”. It will be the choice of the learner as to which post-16 centre they elect to be their home base however it is expected that in most cases learners will opt to either remain with the centre that has been the base of their studies through years 7 to 11 or to choose the post-16 centre which is the closest travel distance to their home.

Included within this proposal is the acknowledgement that facilities at all post-16 centres will be required to be brought up to a minimum level for a “home base” as well as for learning provision. The SMB will make recommendations to the council, which will then be considered by the council’s Transforming Education Programme Board, where any capital spending may be required to improve accommodation or to provide specialist facilities to deliver specialist provision in a particular post-16 centre.

5. Impact on learners

The new proposal would enable learners from each cluster to access courses locally and across the county via face-to-face teaching delivered from within the cluster, or through the online delivery of lessons (e-sgol) across the county. Learners would also be able to access additional courses through partnership agreements between each cluster and other local partner providers (e.g. the college, PTHB, Mudiad Meithrin etc.). Learners who are being taught remotely (“collaborative learners”) will be expected to access their lessons from one of the designated Powys post-16 centres. This may be their home base but could also any one of the post-16 centres across Powys. Each learner will discuss the options with staff from their home base to find a solution which best suits their needs.

Learner wellbeing is central to the post-16 offer and as such it is important that learners attend a Powys post-16 centre wherever possible and to avoid studying at home. This will help learners to become part of the post-16 community and will provide the opportunity to socialise with their peers and to meet with supporting staff and teachers.

If geographically possible, learners would travel at least once per week to the centre that is providing their lessons. If this is not possible it would be expected that the learners would travel at least once per half term to meet with their teachers.

To supplement the distance / blended learning approach the SMB will expect provision proposals to include opportunities for subject cohorts from across the county to be brought together for enrichment days at least once per half term. These days may be run in partnership with further education providers, businesses and other partners.

Learners will also have access to an improved extra-curricular offer. Regular extra-curricular activities such as the opportunity to be part of a sports team, a choir, orchestra, theatre production, chess club, debating team etc. will be coordinated at the cluster level and will form part of the proposals to the SMB. Learners have noted a desire to take part in extra-curricular activities such as these however with some Powys Post-16 centres currently hosting only small numbers of learners the opportunities to establish these activities are rare. The new proposal will mean that the cohort for activities is bigger and therefore that the opportunities to run the activities will be greater.

6. Course funding and quality management

If a course which has been commissioned ultimately is not delivered the SMB shall have the right to claw back any funding which has already been issued to the provider for the delivery of that course.

The SMB shall have delegated authority to determine how 97% or more (as determined by the council annually) of the post-16 grant funding shall be spent. Under the terms and conditions of the post-16 funding the council has the right to retain 3% of the funding.

The post-16 funding will follow the learner whilst teaching and teaching support staff will remain employed by the providers.

All post-16 providers are required to run the Welsh Baccalaureate. Funding for this will be issued as standard.

Where courses are supported by alternative funding arrangements (e.g. Confucius Classrooms) these courses would need to form part of the cluster offer and must be open to all Powys post-16 learners.

7. Course proposals and quality management

All commissioning decisions made by the SMB would be based on ensuring delivery of the learner entitlement objectives, maintaining the highest standards and ensuring value for money.

Courses would only be commissioned from Powys post-16 centres and other providers who are able to evidence the delivery of high-quality teaching and learning which has led to consistently good outcomes in terms of learner progress.

As part of their proposals, the OMB Clusters may propose to offer courses which have their delivery split across two or more providers. This would be in the event that different providers offer different strengths for different modules of a course. For example, for the delivery of a Modern Foreign Language course “Centre A” may offer excellent provision in writing whereas “Centre B” may offer excellent provision in speaking. The two providers may wish to split the course between them in this instance to ensure that the learners receive the best quality of provision.

Consequently, the model makes no assumption that any post-16 centre with a high number of learners on roll is necessarily the best provider.

8. Course proposals to support learners studying through the medium of Welsh

Developing post-16 Welsh medium provision will be a priority for the SMB. In line with the learner entitlement statement, the SMB will pay particular attention to each cluster’s proposals to develop and enhance the opportunities for learners to follow their courses through the medium of Welsh.

The SMB will ensure that all of the Welsh medium element of the post-16 grant is utilised for this purpose. The SMB will set clear and ambitious targets to improve the Welsh medium offer, vocational and academic, aligned to the expectations of Powys’ Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

The SMB will also expect support, guidance and well-being activities to be available in Welsh in both Clusters and will work with Powys Council to support the development of full Welsh medium post-16 provision in line with the Council’s Vision for Welsh Medium Education.

The SMB will also develop strategic partnerships with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, Mudiad Meithrin and other partners as appropriate in order to maximise the Post-16 Welsh medium offer in Powys.

9. Course proposals to support learners with ALN

The proposals must include for ALN provision. Involvement of Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinators (ALNCOs) from each cluster in the planning process is essential. The proposals must meet the requirements of the ALN Post-16 review undertaken in 2020 to support the Transforming Education Programme Post-16 workstream. This includes the following requirements:

- Appropriate entry requirements and support for ALN learners
- An offer which includes a range of courses at foundation level and level 1 and 2
- An offer which includes vocational courses and apprenticeships
- A collaborative offer which identifies specialist vocations that can be offered by post-16 centres in the cluster according to need, local facilities and support from local businesses.
- Collaborative working with Careers Wales to identify appropriate courses and to certify employers and businesses that could support work-based learning programmes.

10. Information, advice and guidance

Strategic management of post-16 provision provides greater opportunity to strengthen the information, advice and guidance offer to all learners.

The SMB will coordinate and quality assure the provision of post-16 enrichment for all post-16 learners to ensure greater consistency, quality and opportunity.

Learner-specific support will be provided by each home base. For example this will include but not be limited to: support with career guidance, UCAS, job and other further education / training applications; positive mental health and wellbeing; coaching and mentoring; and life skills including financial awareness training.

The SMB will also maintain a strategic overview and input into the consistency of information, advice and transition for learners in years 7 to 11 regarding post-16 provision. This will particularly important during the options process where learners are considering their GCSE/level 2 qualifications choices.

Powys Post-16 Learner Entitlement Criteria

The Learner Entitlement criteria set out below has been written by Powys Secondary Headteachers.

In Powys we believe that all learners, regardless of their location, background, language, or ability should flourish and grow without any barriers into capable, healthy, confident, and ethically informed citizens. Every learner will be effectively prepared to contribute fully as ambitious, enterprising, and independent individuals for the ever-changing local, national, and global social and economic demands of the 21st century.

Powys post 16 provision will provide an inclusive and flexible academic and vocational provision for all learners, regardless of their language or ability, so that all learners can access a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum offer through the medium of Welsh and English.

Learners will be effectively supported to thrive through well-planned enrichment activities and through bespoke wellbeing, academic, vocational and career support and guidance. Strong partnerships will be forged between other higher education partners and employers to ensure that all learners can be appropriately advised on their next steps. Purposeful opportunities will be developed to positively respond to pupil and key stakeholder voice.

Provision will be sustainable and deliver value for money through excellent, state of the art, outstanding and modern facilities that will support all learners throughout their lives and meet the needs of the local economy.

Innovative use of digital learning opportunities will support and supplement the offer available to ensure the quality and breadth of provision is sustained.

The leadership and governance will ensure that all provision is of the highest standard and delivered by passionate specialist, and reflective practitioners with a proven track record of excellence, where all staff and learners are highly valued as part of the learning organisation. Outstanding academic, vocational, and extra-curricular outcomes of the highest level will ensure that all Powys learners will have access to their appropriate, meaningful and aspirational pathway.

Powys post 16 provision will foster and develop close links with all Powys schools and learners to develop a strong sense of belonging through effective transitional arrangements and unified pupil centred advice and guidance. Support will be available to ensure all learners make well considered and informed choices, with valuable communications and links formed with all parents and carers.

Strategic Management Board (SMB) Terms of Reference

1. Parties

The Parties to which these Terms of Reference relate are as follows:

- Powys County Council (the council)
- Governing Body: The Governing Bodies of the following Schools (Powys Post-16 Centres):
 - Brecon High School
 - Brynllwarch Hall School
 - Cedewain School
 - Crickhowell High School
 - Gwernyfed High School
 - Llanidloes High School
 - Newtown 6th Form Partnership
 - Penmaes School
 - Welshpool High School
 - Ysgol Bro Hyddgen
 - Ysgol Calon Cymru
 - Ysgol Llanfyllin
 - Ysgol Maesydderwen
 - Ysgol Uwchradd Caereinion

2. Delegations

The council receives income to provide Post-16 education from the Welsh Government in the form of a grant (“post-16 funding”). The council is legally responsible for determining the way the post-16 funding is spent or distributed to provide Post-16 provision in Powys.

In accordance with the Powys County Council Schools Partnership Agreement, the council will provide delegated authority to the SMB to determine how the post-16 funding is allocated.

As the SMB will comprise of both post-16 centre and council representation this will mean that the process is both open and collaborative.

As permitted under the Terms and Conditions of the Welsh Government Post-16 Grant funding Powys County Council agrees to delegate the following functions to the Strategic Management Board:

- Delegated authority to determine through evidence-based decision making which post-16 courses will be commissioned from the Powys Post-16 Centres (secondary and special schools) and other providers to meet the learner entitlement criteria.
- Delegated authority to determine how 97% or more (as determined by the council¹) of the post-16 grant funding will be spent.
- For the avoidance of doubt, this delegation to the SMB means that no Powys post-16 centre will be granted Post-16 funding to run any post-16 course which is not commissioned by the SMB.

¹ The council has the right to hold back 3% of the Post-16 grant funding each year. The council will need to confirm with the SMB what percentage will be retained. This should be done on an annual basis.

As per the partnership agreement, the council will:

- Agree with the decisions of the Strategic Management Board and its Members in conjunction with the SMB and OMB Terms of Reference, so as ensure the funding is allocated to meet the needs of all learners in Powys.

As per the partnership agreement, the schools will

- Agree with the decisions of the Strategic Management Board and its Members in conjunction with the SMB and OMB Terms of Reference, so as to secure post 16 education funding and to meet the needs of all learners in Powys.

Each provider will remain responsible for the quality of provision in their centre as is currently the case. The quality of learning and teaching and the attainment of learners on commissioned courses will be scrutinised by the SMB on behalf of the council.

For the avoidance of doubt this proposal will not alter current governance arrangements or effect the legal duties or responsibilities of governors in schools.

3. Principles and Conduct

That the SMB will undertake the process in a democratic, transparent and fair fashion, encouraging widespread participation and giving equal consideration to opinions and ideas from all SMB members.

Members of the SMB commit to the following principles:

- Selflessness – members shall act solely in terms of the learner interest
- Integrity – members should avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work
- Objectivity – members should act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit and for the widest benefit of the learner
- Accountability – every member is accountable to the public for their decisions and must submit themselves to scrutiny if necessary
- Openness – Members should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner
- Honesty – every member should be truthful
- Confidentiality – every member should respect confidentiality, and where relevant ensure that confidential material is protected and that it is not use without permission from the SMB (as a collective) or for private purposes
- Declarations – every member should declare any interest that could influence discussions or decisions taken by the SMB, and they will be recorded by the secretariat
- Promoting equality and respect for others – every member should undertake their responsibilities with due regard to the need to promote equal opportunity for all and demonstrate respect and consideration towards others

4. Changes to the Terms of Reference

- The Terms of Reference may be amended in accordance with Section 10 “Meeting Operations” and with the approval of the Chair.

- Annual reviews will take place by January of each year ahead of the review of these Terms of Reference in May of each year.

5. Purpose and function of the SMB

The main purpose of the SMB is to ensure that post-16 learners are able to access a broad range of subjects within Powys, with a blended offer of academic and vocational provision, and to ensure that the post-16 sector in Powys is sustainable and meets the learner entitlement criteria.

The primary function of the SMB is to commission providers (Powys post-16 centres, colleges and other providers) to deliver the high quality academic and vocational post-16 provision in line with the learner entitlement criteria. In carrying out this function the SMB will on an annual basis receive a provision proposal for consideration and approval from each OMB which is in accordance with the requirements of section 12 “Assessment of Provision Proposals” of these Terms of Reference.

The SMB will retain strategic oversight of all provision across Powys and will, as a key part of its strategic function, identify additional courses or provision required to broaden and improve the current offer. In doing so the SMB will make recommendations to the council, which will then be considered by the council’s Transforming Education Programme Board, where any capital spending may be required to improve accommodation or to provide specialist facilities to deliver specialist provision in a particular post-16 centre.

The secondary function of the SMB is to oversee the quality assurance of the provision it commissions to ensure that learning and teaching is of the highest calibre by benchmarking learner outcomes against national and international standards.

To achieve these ends the SMB will develop and publish policy and guidance documents which will set parameters around provision and value for money. This will include, for example, guidance on minimum and maximum average class sizes.

Providers commissioned to deliver courses on behalf of the SMB will receive funding to enable them to deliver the courses that have been commissioned.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- Be accountable for steering and providing strategic management of the post-16 offer in Powys in order to deliver the agreed learner entitlement
- To decide the number and range of courses that run across each cluster
- To be responsible for delivering value for money of the post-16 funding
- To develop and publish policy and guidance documents which will set parameters around provision and value for money
- To monitor quality of provision using Alps Education and other quality assurance data
- Courses will only be commissioned from Powys post-16 centres and other providers who are able to evidence the delivery of high-quality teaching and learning which has led to consistently good outcomes in terms of learner progress
- The SMB shall be responsible for forging strong partnerships with all potential post-16 providers, businesses and the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership (RLSP)
- To be responsible for setting and managing the Terms of Reference of the OMB

7. Membership

Membership of the SMB will be as follows:

- The Head of School Service (or their nominated representative) (Chair)
- 2 x Governor representatives (one from each cluster area)*
- The nominated representative Cluster Lead (see next section “Cluster Leads”) from each cluster (one from the North and one from the South*)
- The council’s nominated Lead Officer for Post 16
- The council’s Post-16 Support Officer (secretariat function, no voting right)
- The council’s nominated post-16 Finance Officer
- The council’s nominated ALN Officer
- 1 x Associate Learner representative from each cluster (non-voting)

*In any three year cycle no school can have both their governor representative and their senior leader representative as a SMB member.

8. Cluster Leads

- Each OMB shall appoint one Cluster Lead as their representative SMB member.
- The Cluster Lead must be a Head Teacher.
- The Cluster Lead will chair the OMB for the academic year and will be elected at the end of the previous academic year.
- The Cluster Leads are required to maintain and facilitate communication between the SMB and the OMB.
- The Cluster Leads are required to keep the nominated cluster area Governor representative for the SMB apprised of cluster and OMB activity and decisions.

9. Meeting Frequency

It is proposed that the SMB should meet four times a year.

- Meeting 1 (October)
 - Review examination outcomes.
 - Establish the provisional Powys Pathways offer for the next academic year (VA ALPS etc).
- Meeting 2 (December)
 - Review proposals submitted by each OMB and confirm courses that will be commissioned. The course offer for the next academic year should be finalised and ready for applications to open before Christmas.
- Meeting 3 (January)
 - Consider wellbeing and enrichment provision.
 - Review grant funding income for Post-16 provision (if available).
 - Forward planning (to ensure future academic years are considered).
 - Review of the Terms of Reference for the SMB and OMBs.
- Meeting 4 (May)
 - Review of provision, policy and guidance, protocol documents, special projects, capital spending recommendations; learner needs, digital resources, data reporting systems, LP support, Learning Coach support etc.
 - Agree any changes to the Terms of Reference for the SMB and OMBs.

10. Meeting Operations

- All meetings of the SMB will be held virtually.
- The SMB will be Chaired by a Powys Council Officer, the council will also provide the Secretariat support.
- The Secretariat shall keep a record of meetings and circulate notes to SMB members in a timely fashion.
- At least 5 working days' notice of meetings shall be sent to members via email [or an alternative agreed communication method].
- All minutes and papers shall be held by Powys County Council and made available to all Members via the council's SharePoint site.
- Decisions made by the SMB should normally be by consensus at the Board meetings. Where a vote is required each member shall have one vote.
- A minimum of 5 members shall be present where matters are presented for decisions to be taken. The quorum for voting must also include at least 2 Headteacher representatives and 2 council representatives. A simple majority vote will be required to support any motion. In the event that there is an equal balance in the vote and therefore no clear resolution can be reached, the Chair shall have a second casting vote.

11. Finance

- The SMB shall have delegated authority to determine how 97% or more (as determined by the council) of the Welsh Government Post-16 grant funding ("the post-16 funding") shall be spent.
- Operational management and distribution of the post-16 funding shall remain with the council.
- No courses will be awarded the post-16 funding in any centre without the SMB's approval which will be based on the agreed principles which place the learner first, ensure high standards and are cost effective.
- The post-16 funding will follow the learner to the post-16 centre or other provider commissioned to deliver the course.
- All courses commissioned by the SMB will receive the necessary post-16 funding.
- If a course which has been commissioned ultimately is not delivered the SMB shall have the right to claw back any funding which has already been issued to the provider for the delivery of that course.
- Staff remain employed by Powys post-16 centres or by partner organisations (such as local colleges).
- The council requires that all Powys post-16 centres run the Welsh Baccalaureate. Funding for this will be issued as standard.

12. Assessment of Provision Proposals

This section of the Terms of Reference shall remain in place until such time that the SMB has prepared and issued the requisite policy and guidance documents for Provision Proposals.

Each OMB shall submit an annual proposal to the SMB to deliver high quality academic and vocational post-16 provision in line with the learner entitlement criteria.

The proposals will include educational, pastoral, enrichment and careers advice and guidance opportunities. The SMB will review proposals for provision from the OMB in each cluster and, where appropriate, from other strategic partners.

The OMB will be required to ensure there is a strong balance of Welsh and English medium academic and vocational course provision.

The proposals must meet the requirements of the policy and guidance documents published by the SMB.

The proposals must evidence need (including learner numbers from straw polls and historical precedent) and value for money by demonstrating how post-16 centres within the cluster propose to work together to deliver the offer.

Provision will only be commissioned from providers who are able to evidence the delivery of high-quality teaching and learning which has led to consistently good outcomes in terms of learner progress.

Developing post-16 Welsh medium provision will be a priority for the SMB. In line with the learner entitlement statement, the SMB will pay particular attention to each cluster's proposals to develop and enhance the opportunities for learners to follow their courses through the medium of Welsh.

The SMB will ensure that all of the Welsh medium element of the post-16 grant is utilised for this purpose. The SMB will set clear and ambitious targets to improve the Welsh medium offer, vocational and academic, aligned to the expectations of Powys' Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

The SMB will also expect support, guidance and well-being activities to be available in Welsh in both Clusters and will work with Powys Council to support the development of full Welsh medium post-16 provision in line with the Council's Vision for Welsh Medium Education.

The SMB will also develop strategic partnerships with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, Mudiad Meithrin and other partners as appropriate in order to maximise the Post-16 Welsh medium offer in Powys.

As part of their proposals, the OMB Clusters may propose to offer courses which have their delivery split across two or more providers. This would be in the event that different providers offer different strengths for different modules of a course. For example for the delivery of a Modern Foreign Language course "Centre A" may offer excellent provision in writing whereas "Centre B" may offer excellent provision in speaking. The two providers may wish to split the course between them in this instance to ensure that the learners receive the best quality of provision.

The proposals must include for ALN provision. Involvement of Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinators (ALNCOs) from each cluster in the planning process is essential. The proposals must meet the requirements of the ALN Post-16 review undertaken in 2020 to support the Transforming Education Programme Post-16 workstream. This includes the following requirements:

- Appropriate entry requirements and support for ALN learners
- An offer which includes a range of courses at foundation level and level 1 and 2
- An offer which includes vocational courses and apprenticeships
- A collaborative offer which identifies specialist vocations that can be offered by post-16 centres in the cluster according to need, local facilities and support from local businesses.
- Collaborative working with Careers Wales to identify appropriate courses and to certify employers and businesses that could support work-based learning programmes.

Where any provider wishes to run a course using alternative funding arrangements (such as Confucius Classroom) the course would need to form part of the cluster offer to the SMB and must be open to learners across the cluster and across Powys.

The proposals should evidence how learners from each cluster will be able to access courses locally and across the county via face-to-face teaching delivered from within the cluster, or through the online delivery of lessons (e-sgol) across the county.

To supplement the blended learning approach the SMB will expect proposals to include opportunities for subject cohorts from across the county to be brought together for enrichment days at least once per term. These days may be run in partnership with further education providers, businesses and other partners.

The proposals must also include for how OMB cluster-level enrichment activities will be organised throughout the cluster. It is expected that enrichment activities such as sporting activities, trips and visits, careers events, and university taster sessions will be delivered on a cluster basis. It is also expected that some activities and events will also be organised and delivered by the home base as part of its localised provision.

Operational Management Board (OMB) Terms of Reference

1. Parties

The Parties which this Terms of Reference relate are as follows:

- Powys County Council (the council)
- Governing Body: The Governing Bodies of the following Schools (Powys Post-16 Centres):
 - Brecon High School
 - Brynllwarch Hall School
 - Cedewain School
 - Crickhowell High School
 - Gwernyfed High School
 - Llanidloes High School
 - Newtown 6th Form Partnership
 - Penmaes School
 - Welshpool High School
 - Ysgol Bro Hyddgen
 - Ysgol Calon Cymru
 - Ysgol Llanfyllin
 - Ysgol Maesydderwen
 - Ysgol Uwchradd Caereinion

2. Principles and Conduct

That the OMBs will undertake the process in a democratic, transparent and fair fashion, encouraging widespread participation and giving equal consideration to opinions and ideas from all OMB members.

Members of the OMBs commit to the following principles:

- Selflessness – members shall act solely in terms of the learner interest
- Integrity – members should avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work
- Objectivity – members should act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit and for the widest benefit of the learner
- Accountability – every member is accountable to the public for their decisions and must submit themselves to scrutiny if necessary
- Openness – Members should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner
- Honesty – every member should be truthful
- Confidentiality – every member should respect confidentiality, and where relevant ensure that confidential material is protected and that it is not use without permission from the OMB (as a collective) or for private purposes
- Declarations – every member should declare any interest that could influence discussions or decisions taken by the OMB, and they will be recorded by the secretariat
- Promoting equality and respect for others – every member should undertake their responsibilities with due regard to the need to promote equal opportunity for all and demonstrate respect and consideration towards others

3. Changes to the Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference shall be set by the SMB to ensure that strategic management of the post-16 offer continues. Suggestions for alterations to the terms of reference may be submitted to the SMB and should be issued for consideration in December to the SMB.

4. Purpose and function of the OMBs

There will be two Operational Management Boards (OMBS) – one for the north cluster of Powys post-16 centres and one for the south cluster of Powys post-16 centres. The OMBs will bring together all Powys post-16 centres in their cluster areas to prepare the post-16 provision proposal for their cluster.

The main purpose of the OMBs is to ensure that post-16 learners are able to access a broad range of subjects within the OMB cluster and across Powys, with a blended offer of academic and vocational provision, and to ensure that the post-16 offer meets the learner entitlement criteria.

The primary function of the OMB is to provide a platform for Powys post-16 centres (and other post-16 providers where relevant) within the cluster to work collaboratively on agreeing what the post-16 offer will be for the cluster and how educational, pastoral, enrichment and careers advice and guidance will be delivered by the cluster members in a coordinated and sustainable way.

The secondary function of the OMBs will be to discuss operational issues, quality assurance, enrichment activities, professional learning, post-16 improvement, and to review transport arrangements, review learner wellbeing, work experience, UCAS, careers advice etc.

In carrying out these functions the OMB will on an annual basis submit a provision proposal for consideration and approval by the SMB and which is in accordance with requirements set out in the OMB Terms of Reference.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- To work in collaboration with all cluster members to design a curriculum which meets the needs of learners in the cluster and across Powys
- To ensure there is a curriculum offer which offers a breadth of academic and vocational provision in both Welsh and English
- To ensure there is a curriculum offer which meets the needs of ALN learners
- To ensure there is a pastoral, enrichment and careers advice and guidance offer which meets the learner entitlement criteria
- To ensure that the Welsh Baccaalaureate offer is provided by all schools
- To work in collaboration to share best-practice and improve standards of teaching across the cluster
- To work in collaboration to ensure that the offer submitted to the SMB is sustainable, avoids duplication and makes the best use of the post-16 funding for Powys learners
- To work in collaboration to ensure that the offer submitted to the SMB is available to learners across the cluster and across Powys and that no school is delivering a post-16 course which is not accessible to other Powys learners.

6. Membership

Membership of the OMBs will be as follows:

- Head Teacher and a Senior Leader from each Powys post-16 centre in the cluster

- Local Authority ALN representative
- A representative Challenge Advisor
- The council's nominated Lead Officer for Post 16
- The council's Post-16 support officer (secretariat function, no voting right)

The Powys post-16 centres will operate in two cluster groups as defined below:

- **Cluster Group North:**
Bro Hyddgen, Brynllwarch, Caereinion, Cedewain, Llanfyllin, Llanidloes, Newtown, Welshpool
- **Cluster Group South:**
Brecon, Calon Cymru, Crickhowell, Gwernyfed, Maesydderwen, Penmaes

7. Cluster Leads

- Each OMB shall appoint one Cluster Lead as their representative SMB member.
- The Cluster Lead must be a Head Teacher.
- The Cluster Lead will chair the OMB for the academic year and will be elected at the end of the previous academic year.
- The Cluster Leads are required to maintain and facilitate communication between the SMB and the OMB.
- The Cluster Leads are required to keep the nominated cluster area Governor representative for the SMB apprised of cluster and OMB activity and decisions.

8. Meeting Frequency

It is proposed that the OMBs meet 6 times a year; once every half-term. The SMB will issue an annual meeting plan which will align OMB and SMB meetings.

9. Meeting Operations

- All meetings of the OMB will be held virtually.
- The Secretariat shall keep a record of meetings and circulate notes to SMB members in a timely fashion.
- At least 5 working days' notice of meetings shall be sent to members via email [or an alternative agreed communication method].
- All minutes and papers shall be held by Powys County Council and made available to all OMB members via the council's SharePoint site.
- Decisions made by the OMB should normally be by consensus at the Board meetings. Where a vote is required each member shall have one vote.
- A minimum of 5 members shall be present where matters are presented for decisions to be taken. A simple majority vote will be required to support any motion. In the event that there is an equal balance in the vote and therefore no clear resolution can be reached, the Chair shall have a second casting vote.

10. Finance

- The SMB shall have delegated authority to determine how 97% or more (as determined by the council) of the Welsh Government Post-16 grant funding ("the post-16 funding") shall be spent.
- Operational management and distribution of the post-16 funding shall remain with the council.

- No courses will be awarded the post-16 funding in any centre without the SMB's approval which will be based on the agreed principles which place the learner first, ensure high standards and are cost effective.
- The post-16 funding will follow the learner to the school or other provider commissioned to deliver the course.
- All courses commissioned by the SMB will receive the necessary post-16 funding.
- If a course which has been commissioned ultimately is not delivered the SMB shall have the right to claw back any funding which has already been issued to the provider for the delivery of that course.
- Schools staff remain employed by schools or by partner organisations (such as local colleges).
- The council requires that all post-16 providers run the Welsh Baccalaureate. Funding for this will be issued as standard.

11. Submission of Provision Proposals

This section of the Terms of Reference shall remain in place until such time that the SMB has prepared and issued the requisite policy and guidance documents for Provision Proposals.

Each OMB shall submit an annual proposal to the SMB to deliver high quality academic and vocational post-16 provision in line with the learner entitlement criteria.

The proposals will include educational, pastoral and enrichment opportunities. The SMB will review proposals for provision from the OMB in each cluster and, where appropriate, from other strategic partners.

The OMB will be required to ensure there is a strong balance of Welsh and English medium academic and vocational course provision.

The proposals must meet the requirements of the policy and guidance documents published by the SMB.

The proposals must evidence need (including learner numbers from straw polls and historical precedent) and value for money by demonstrating how schools within the cluster propose to work together to deliver the offer.

Provision will only be commissioned from providers who are able to evidence the delivery of high-quality teaching and learning which has led to consistently good outcomes in terms of learner progress.

As part of their proposals, the OMB Clusters may propose to offer courses which have their delivery split across two or more providers. This would be in the event that different providers offer different strengths for different modules of a course. For example for the delivery of a Modern Foreign Language course "Centre A" may offer excellent provision in writing whereas "Centre B" may offer excellent provision in speaking. The two providers may wish to split the course between them in this instance to ensure that the learners receive the best quality of provision.

Developing post-16 Welsh medium provision will be a priority for the SMB. In line with the learner entitlement statement, the SMB will pay particular attention to each cluster's proposals to develop and enhance the opportunities for learners to follow their courses through the medium of Welsh.

The SMB will ensure that all of the Welsh medium element of the post-16 grant is utilised for this purpose. The SMB will set clear and ambitious targets to improve the Welsh medium offer, vocational and academic, aligned to the expectations of Powys' Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

The SMB will also expect support, guidance and well-being activities to be available in Welsh in both Clusters and will work with Powys Council to support the development of full Welsh medium post-16 provision in line with the Council's Vision for Welsh Medium Education.

The SMB will also develop strategic partnerships with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, Mudiad Meithrin and other partners as appropriate in order to maximise the Post-16 Welsh medium offer in Powys.

The proposals must include for ALN provision. Involvement of Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinators (ALNCOs) from each cluster in the planning process is essential. The proposals must meet the requirements of the ALN Post-16 review undertaken in 2020 to support the Transforming Education Programme Post-16 workstream. This includes the following requirements:

- Appropriate entry requirements and support for ALN learners
- An offer which includes a range of courses at foundation level and level 1 and 2
- An offer which includes vocational courses and apprenticeships
- A collaborative offer which identifies specialist vocations that can be offered by post-16 centres in the cluster according to need, local facilities and support from local businesses.
- Collaborative working with Careers Wales to identify appropriate courses and to certify employers and businesses that could support work-based learning programmes.

Where any provider wishes to run a course using alternative funding arrangements (such as Confucius Classroom) the course would need to form part of the cluster offer to the SMB and must be open to learners across the cluster and across Powys.

The proposals should evidence how learners from each cluster will be able to access courses locally and across the county via face-to-face teaching delivered from within the cluster, or through the online delivery of lessons (e-sgol) across the county.

To supplement the blended learning approach the SMB will expect proposals to include opportunities for subject cohorts from across the county to be brought together for enrichment days at least once per term. These days may be run in partnership with further education providers, businesses and other partners.

The proposals must also include for how OMB cluster-level enrichment activities will be organised throughout the cluster. It is expected that enrichment activities such as sporting activities, trips and visits, careers events, and university taster sessions will be delivered on a cluster basis. It is also expected that some activities and events will also be organised and delivered by the home base as part of its localised provision.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

FAQ Contents

FAQ Contents	22
Jargon Buster	22
Introduction	23
Proposal	23
The case for change	25
Impact on Learners	25
Welsh-Medium Provision.....	26
Additional Learning Needs (ALN)	26
Strategic Management Board (SMB)	27
Clusters and Operational Management Boards.....	29
Staffing	31
Working with partners	32
Funding	32
Applying for a course	34
Tutorial support	35
Examinations.....	36
Miscellaneous	37

Jargon Buster

ALN	Additional Learning Needs
Course provider	Any “Powys Post-16 centre” (Powys Sixth Forms and Powys Special Schools which support learners aged 16+) college or other organisation commissioned by the Strategic Management Board to deliver “Powys post-16 provision” (educational, pastoral, enrichment and careers advice and guidance).
Collaborative learner	A “Collaborative learner” is a learner who is being taught away from their “home base” (the Powys post-16 centre they are registered with) at another centre (either a Powys post-16 centre or another SMB-commissioned partner provider location such as a college) for all or some of their lessons.
FAQs	Frequently Asked Questions
FE	Further Education
HE	Higher Education
Home base	The learner’s “home base” is the Powys post-16 centre they are registered with. The home base post-16 centre will be primarily

responsible for the pastoral care, the academic oversight and the management of their “home learners”.

Home learner	A “home learner” is the term given to learners who are on roll with a Powys post-16 centre as their “home base”
OMB	Operational Management Board
PL	Professional Learning
Powys post-16 provision	All provision (educational, pastoral, enrichment and careers advice and guidance) by “Powys post-16 centres” (Powys Sixth Forms and Powys Special Schools which support learners aged 16+)
Powys post-16 centres	Powys Sixth Forms and Powys Special Schools which support learners aged 16+
RLSP	Regional Learning and Skills Partnership
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SMB	Strategic Management Board
The council	Powys County Council
The post-16 funding	Welsh Government Post-16 Grant Funding for Powys

Introduction

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section has been developed in anticipation of questions which may arise from the proposal and also from feedback following the informal stakeholder engagement undertaken between January and March 2021 inclusive.

Proposal

1. What is the proposal?

The proposal is to introduce a new structure for the strategic management of Powys post-16 provision. This will comprise a high-level Strategic Management Board (SMB) and two “Powys Post-16 Centre” cluster groups with Operational Management Boards (OMBs).

The cluster groups will operate in the north and south of the county and will be attended by Headteachers (or their deputies) from each Powys post-16 centre in the cluster area. Information regarding cluster areas and members of the cluster OMBs can be found in the “Clusters and Operational Management Boards” section of the FAQs.

The proposal will revise the strategic oversight and management of post-16 provision in Powys. This will ensure that no learner is detrimentally impacted because of their post code. This will also ensure that post-16 provision maximises the opportunities afforded within the post-16 funding received from Welsh Government by removing duplication of provision and ensuring the number of courses is efficiently matched to demand.

Strategic management of provision will enable the council to meet its aim of ensuring post-16 provision has a broad and balanced curriculum offered through the mediums of Welsh and English and that Additional Learning Needs (ALN) support is properly catered for.

It is proposed that post-16 provision remains at all current Powys post-16 centres. Under this model it is proposed that all post-16 learners will have a “home base”. It will be the choice of the learner as to which post-16 centre they elect to be their home base however it is expected that in most cases learners will opt to either remain with the centre that has been the base of their studies through years 7 to 11 or to choose the post-16 centre which is the closest travel distance to their home.

2. How was this decided?

The council launched a new strategy for Transforming Education in April 2020. The strategy was developed following extensive engagement with a range of stakeholders during two separate periods between October 2019 and March 2020.

The strategy sets out a new vision for education in Powys: “All children and young people in Powys will experience a high quality, inspiring education to help develop the knowledge, skills and attributes that will enable them to become healthy, personally fulfilled, economically productive, socially responsible and globally engaged citizens of 21st century Wales.”

To achieve this vision the strategy has 4 Strategic Aims; Strategic Aim 2 is “we will improve learner entitlement and experience for post-16 learners”. The initial focus of this aim is to focus on enhanced collaboration between schools to ensure a high-quality post-16 provision that is accessible to all learners, and maximises the opportunities afforded within the post-16 funding received from Welsh Government. This will include more digital learning opportunities where learners are taught via video-conferencing across more than one school.

To achieve this aim the council established the “Post-16 Workstream” in June 2020. The workstream membership includes two Powys Secondary Headteachers as well as key education officers, ALN advisors, human resources, finance and project management support. The workstream first worked with all Powys Secondary Headteachers to set out the Learner Entitlement criteria. From here the workstream then explored three potential models of post-16 provision and evaluated the models against the learner entitlement criteria. Informal consultation was then undertaken with stakeholders from January 2021 to March 2021 inclusive. Stakeholders have included all Powys Post-16 Centre Headteachers (Secondary and Special Schools) as well as other key groups including Governors. Learner Focus groups have also been held with current Powys 6th Form students in order to test assumptions and to gain learner insight. The final proposal has been developed following this consultation period.

3. How does this new model differ from what currently happens in Powys?

The proposal will ensure there is strategic oversight of post-16 provision in Powys. Currently providers identify their course provision either independently or in smaller self-initiated partnerships. Whilst there are examples of exceptional provision across the county there is a need to ensure that all learners have equal access to high-quality provision and to a broad offer of both vocational and academic provision in the mediums of Welsh and English.

Learners will have an equal entitlement to access provision regardless of their postcode. The new model will also ensure that the provision provides good value for money from the post-16 funding. This model will also introduce enhanced county-wide enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities for learners.

The case for change

4. Why should we support what is being proposed?

The proposed changes are designed to transform post-16 education in Powys in response to the demands of the 21st Century in line with the council's Strategy for Transforming Education. The proposal sets out a way in which Powys post-16 centres can work together to maximise the curriculum offer, improve the wider enrichment activities and ensure high quality support is available to all our learners. Taken together these changes will give our learners a passport of opportunity to become active global citizens in line with the ambitions set out in the Curriculum for Wales. As such the initiative reflects the intentions of the National Mission.

The geographical distribution of the Powys population presents a unique educational challenge. This proposal seeks to ensure that all learners, regardless of their postcode, can access the same post-16 opportunities available to other young people across the country through the medium of Welsh and English in line with Powys Strategy for Transforming Education which has as its core purpose a determination to ensure "that post-16 learners [...] are able to access a broad range of subjects within Powys, with a blended offer of academic and vocational provision, and to ensure that the post-16 sector in Powys is sustainable."

5. Why is there a need to change things the current provision?

Despite the continued hard work and dedication from the teachers and senior leaders in our post-16 centres, the current arrangements are not working for all learners in Powys and do not provide good value for money. The current provision limits the courses our learners can access and is not allowing post-16 education to move forward and adapt to the needs of the 21st Century in all our post-16 centres. This has resulted in a fall in the number of post-16 learners choosing to study in Powys and a corresponding reduction in the range of courses on offer in parts of the county. The proposed changes represent an opportunity to refresh and reinvigorate the provision, for staff as well as learners, reflecting current population trends as well as maximising the opportunities arising from the latest technological developments and reducing the environmental and individual burden of excessive travel.

6. Does this proposal address the latest Estyn recommendations?

In addition to addressing the specific recommendations arising from the Powys Estyn inspection of 2019, these proposals have been developed in line with the recommendations from the Estyn Post-16 Partnerships Report January 2021².

Impact on Learners

7. How will these changes affect the learners?

The proposal will over time transform the experiences of Powys learners by providing them with much improved provision and by giving them all access to high quality teaching. If adopted these changes will see many of our young people being taught in post-16 centres across Powys. Included within the proposal is the ambition to update post-16 accommodation and facilities in all post-16 centre to bring them in line with those available to learners in colleges across the country and the

² [Thematic survey report \(gov.wales\)](#)

UK. Our intention is to provide our post-16 learners with access to facilities and accommodation that is in keeping with their young adult status and will allow them to work and socialise appropriately.

8. What does the term Learner's "Home Base" mean?

The learner's "home base" is the post-16 centre they are registered with. The home base post-16 centre will be primarily responsible for the pastoral care, the academic oversight and the management of their "home learners".

The home base will also deliver the Welsh BaccaLaureate to all its home learners (alternative arrangements may be made for individual learners where this provision is more accessible via another post-16 centre). Some learners will be taught all of their subjects in their home base whilst many will be taught in other post-16 centres either face-to-face or remotely alongside learners from other post-16 centres.

9. What is a "Collaborative Learner"?

A "Collaborative learner" is a learner who is being taught away from their home base at another centre (either a Powys post-16 centre or another SMB-commissioned partner provider location such as a college) for all or some of their lessons. These lessons may be a mixture of face to face and virtual learning, including e-sgol. All Powys learners will have the opportunity to access all SMB-commissioned courses offered within Powys. This new arrangement will provide learners with access to a much wider range of courses than currently on offer.

Welsh-Medium Provision

10. What provision will be made for learners who choose to study through the medium of Welsh?

Developing post-16 Welsh medium provision will be a priority for the SMB. In line with the learner entitlement statement, the SMB will pay particular attention to each cluster's proposals to develop and enhance the opportunities for learners to follow their courses through the medium of Welsh.

The SMB will ensure that all of the Welsh medium element of the post-16 grant is utilised for this purpose. The SMB will set clear and ambitious targets to improve the Welsh medium offer, vocational and academic, aligned to the expectations of Powys' Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

The SMB will also expect support, guidance and well-being activities to be available in Welsh in both Clusters and will work with Powys Council to support the development of full Welsh medium post-16 provision in line with the Council's Vision for Welsh Medium Education.

The SMB will also develop strategic partnerships with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, Mudiad Meithrin and other partners as appropriate in order to maximise the Post-16 Welsh medium offer in Powys.

Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

11. Has consideration been given to how the needs of learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) will be met under this proposal?

Provision for learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) is a key focus of the proposal. This proposal has been developed together with ALN council officers and includes their key requirements

for ALN learners. The Cluster groups will be required to submit an annual proposal for post-16 provision to the Strategic Management Board for approval and funding.

The proposals must include for ALN provision. Involvement of Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinators (ALNCOs) from each cluster in the planning process is essential. The proposals must meet the requirements of the ALN Post-16 review undertaken in 2020 to support the Transforming Education Programme Post-16 workstream. This includes the following requirements:

- Appropriate entry requirements and support for ALN learners
- An offer which includes a range of courses at foundation level and level 1 and 2
- An offer which includes vocational courses and apprenticeships
- A collaborative offer which identifies specialist vocations that can be offered by post-16 centres in the cluster according to need, local facilities and support from local businesses.
- Collaborative working with Careers Wales to identify appropriate courses and to certify employers and businesses that could support work-based learning programmes.

Strategic Management Board (SMB)

1. What is the Strategic Management Board?

The Strategic Management Board (SMB) is the body which will determine how the Welsh Government Post-16 Grant Funding for Powys is spent.

The main purpose of the SMB is to ensure that post-16 learners are able to access a broad range of subjects within Powys, with a blended offer of academic and vocational provision, and to ensure that the post-16 sector in Powys is sustainable and meets the learner entitlement criteria.

The primary function of the SMB is to commission providers (Powys post-16 centres, colleges and other providers) to deliver the high quality academic and vocational post-16 provision in line with the learner entitlement criteria. In carrying out this function the SMB will on an annual basis receive a provision proposal for consideration and approval from each Operational Management Board (OMB) which is in accordance with the SMB Terms of Reference.

The SMB will retain strategic oversight of all provision across Powys and will, as a key part of its strategic function, identify additional courses or provision required to broaden and improve the current offer. In doing so the SMB will make recommendations to the council, which will then be considered by the council's Transforming Education Programme Board, where any capital spending may be required to improve accommodation or to provide specialist facilities to deliver specialist provision in a particular post-16 centre.

The secondary function of the SMB is to oversee the quality assurance of the provision it commissions, to ensure that learning and teaching is of the highest calibre, by benchmarking learner outcomes against national and international standards.

To achieve these ends the SMB will develop and publish policy and guidance documents which will set parameters around provision and value for money. This will include, for example, guidance on minimum and maximum average class sizes.

Providers commissioned to deliver courses on behalf of the SMB will receive funding to enable them to deliver the course.

2. Who will sit on the Strategic Management Board?

The Strategic Management Board (SMB) will consist of the following representative members:

- The Head of School Service (or their nominated representative) (Chair)
- 2 x Governor representatives from each cluster area*
- The nominated representative Cluster Lead from each cluster (one from the North and one from the South*)
- The council's nominated Lead Officer for Post 16
- The council's Post-16 Support Officer (secretariat function, no voting right)
- The council's nominated post-16 Finance Officer
- The council's nominated ALN Officer
- 1 x Associate Learner representative from each cluster (none-voting)

*In any three year cycle no school can have both their governor representative and their senior leader representative as a SMB member.

3. How often will the Strategic Management Board meet?

It is proposed that the Strategic Management Board (SMB) should meet four times a year.

- Meeting 1 (October)
 - review examination outcomes
 - establish the provisional Powys Pathways offer for the next academic year (VA ALPS etc)
- Meeting 2 (December)
 - review proposals submitted by each Operational Management Board (OMB) and confirm courses that will be commissioned. The course offer for the next academic year should be finalised and ready for applications to open before Christmas
- Meeting 3 (January)
 - consider wellbeing and enrichment provision
 - review grant funding income for Post-16 provision (if available)
 - forward planning (to ensure future academic years are considered)
 - review of the Terms of Reference for the SMB and OMBs
- Meeting 4 (May)
 - Review of provision, policy and guidance, protocol documents, special projects, capital spending recommendations; learner needs, digital resources, data reporting systems, LP support, Learning Coach support etc.
 - Agree any changes to the Terms of Reference for the SMB and OMBs

4. What legal structure sits behind the Strategic Management Board (SMB)?

The council receives income to provide Post-16 education from the Welsh Government in the form of a grant ("post-16 funding"). The council is legally responsible for determining the way the post-16 funding is spent or distributed to provide Post-16 provision in Powys.

In accordance with the Powys County Council Schools Partnership Agreement, the council will provide delegated authority to the SMB to determine how the post-16 funding is allocated.

As the SMB will comprise of both post-16 centre and council representation this will mean that the process is both open and collaborative.

As permitted under the Terms and Conditions of the Welsh Government Post-16 Grant funding Powys County Council agrees to delegate the following functions to the Strategic Management Board:

- Delegated authority to determine through evidence-based decision making which post-16 courses will be commissioned from the Powys Post-16 Centres (secondary and special schools) and other providers to meet the learner entitlement criteria.
- Delegated authority to determine how 97% or more (as determined by the council³) of the post-16 grant funding will be spent.
- For the avoidance of doubt, this delegation to the SMB means that no Powys post-16 centre will be granted Post-16 funding to run any post-16 course which is not commissioned by the SMB.

As per the partnership agreement, the council will:

- Agree with the decisions of the Strategic Management Board and its Members in conjunction with the SMB and OMB Terms of Reference, so as ensure the funding is allocated to meet the needs of all learners in Powys.

As per the partnership agreement, the schools will

- Agree with the decisions of the Strategic Management Board and its Members in conjunction with the SMB and OMB Terms of Reference, so as to secure post 16 education funding and to meet the needs of all learners in Powys.

Each provider will remain responsible for the quality of provision in their centre as is currently the case. The quality of learning and teaching and the attainment of learners on commissioned courses will be scrutinised by the SMB on behalf of the council.

For the avoidance of doubt this proposal will not alter current governance arrangements or effect the legal duties or responsibilities of governors in schools.

Clusters and Operational Management Boards

5. What is the Operational Management Board (OMB)?

There will be two Operational Management Boards (OMBS) – one for the north cluster of Powys post-16 centres and one for the south cluster of Powys post-16 centres. The OMBs will bring together all Powys post-16 centres in their cluster areas to prepare the post-16 provision proposal for their cluster.

The main purpose of the OMBs is to ensure that post-16 learners are able to access a broad range of subjects within the OMB cluster and across Powys, with a blended offer of academic and vocational provision, and to ensure that the post-16 offer meets the learner entitlement criteria.

The primary function of the OMB is to provide a platform for Powys post-16 centres (and other post-16 providers where relevant) within the cluster to work collaboratively on agreeing what the post-16

³ The council has the right to hold back 3% of the Post-16 grant funding each year. The council will need to confirm with the SMB what percentage will be retained. This should be done on an annual basis.

offer will be for the cluster and how educational, pastoral, enrichment and careers advice and guidance will be delivered by the cluster members in a coordinated and sustainable way.

The secondary function of the OMBs will be to discuss operational issues, quality assurance, enrichment activities, professional learning, post-16 improvement, and to review transport arrangements, review learner wellbeing, work experience, UCAS, careers advice etc.

In carrying out these functions the OMB will on an annual basis submit a provision proposal for consideration and approval by the SMB and which is in accordance with requirements set out in the OMB Terms of Reference.

6. Who will sit on the Operational Management Boards for each cluster?

Membership of each Operational Management Board (OMB) will be as follows:

- Head Teacher and a Senior Manager from each Powys post-16 centre in the cluster
- ALNCO representative
- A representative Challenge Advisor
- The council's Post-16 Support Officer (secretariat function, no voting right)

7. What is a Cluster Lead?

- Each OMB shall appoint one Cluster Lead as their representative SMB member
- The Cluster Lead must be a Head Teacher
- The Cluster Lead will chair the OMB for the academic year and will be elected at the end of the previous academic year
- The Cluster Leads are required to maintain and facilitate communication between the SMB and the OMB
- The Cluster Leads are required to keep the nominated cluster area Governor representative for the SMB apprised of cluster and OMB activity and decisions

8. How often will the Operational Management Boards meet?

It is proposed that the cluster Operational Management Boards (OMBs) should meet six times a year, once every half-term. The SMB will issue an annual meeting plan which will align OMB and SMB meetings.

9. Who will be the link between the Operational Management Boards and the Strategic Management Board?

Each Operational Management Board (OMB) shall appoint one Cluster Lead as their representative Strategic Management Board (SMB) member. The Cluster Lead will sit on the SMB and will have voting rights on the SMB.

10. Which Powys post-16 centres are in which cluster?

The Powys post-16 centres will operate in two cluster groups as defined below:

- **Cluster Group North:**
Bro Hyddgen, Brynllwarch, Caereinion, Cedewain, Llanfyllin, Llanidloes, Newtown, Welshpool
- **Cluster Group South:**
Brecon, Calon Cymru, Crickhowell, Gwernyfed, Maesydderwen, Penmaes

11. How will Powys-wide provision work? Will the timetables and option blocks be aligned?

Timetables and option blocks will be aligned across the county to allow for whole county collaborative work. Lessons in two option blocks will be running each day; one morning and one afternoon. There will be a travel period in the middle of the day to allow learners to move between centres if travel is required. The intention would be to promote a “travel once – travel smart” approach.

Welsh Baccalaureate lessons will be delivered in each “home base” (alternative arrangements may be made for individual learners where this provision is more accessible via another post-16 centre).

12. How will the views of my school / Powys post-16 centre be represented?

- Each cluster will have one representative (the Cluster Lead) on the SMB; one governor representative from the Cluster area will also sit on the SMB
- All Powys post-16 centres (Secondary and Special Schools which support learners aged 16+) will be represented on the Cluster Operational Management Board

13. Can my school / Powys post-16 centre work with post-16 centres outside my cluster?

Whilst the proposal does not prevent post-16 centres from working with other post-16 centres or providers which are outside of their cluster such arrangements would need form part of the OMB proposal to the Strategic Management Board.

14. How does my school’s self-evaluation and School Development Plan (SDP) reflect the cluster working arrangement?

Any school may aspire to add additional courses to the cluster offer based on the identified needs of their learners. The school could identify this need through its own self-evaluation and then submit a proposal to the Cluster Operational Management Board for consideration. If the OMB is in agreement this could then be included in the annual proposal to the SMB.

Staffing

15. Who is responsible for procuring and managing teaching and teaching support staff?

The responsibility of staff recruitment and management will remain with each post-16 centre. There would be no change to how this is currently managed.

16. How do the proposals affect staffing requirements?

It will be for the post-16 centres to work collaboratively to identify a high-quality and sustainable post-16 offer for the cluster including the associated staffing requirements.

The Strategic Management Board (SMB) will work with the clusters to ensure that the annual post-16 calendar allows for appropriate forward planning with clear deadlines to enable post-16 centres to make timely decisions around staffing.

Should standards from a particular provider not meet the approval criteria then the SMB would have a responsibility to find an alternative provider from within the cluster, or in extreme cases from across Powys via virtual delivery. It will be for providers to ensure that high-quality standards are met and maintained.

17. How will the proposals impact Professional Learning (PL)?

The Strategic Management Board (SMB) will take a strategic role in planning for joint professional learning activities together with each cluster and other key partners.

Working with partners

18. Can I work with colleges apart from the Neath Port Talbot Group of Colleges?

Yes. Clusters are encouraged to enhance and broaden their offer through partnership working with other providers. This may include further education and higher education providers as well as local businesses, training providers, voluntary organisations, the Powys Teaching Health Board, Mudiad Meithrin etc. Any proposal to offer collaborative provision with other partners would need to form part of the Operational Management Board (OMB) annual proposal to the Strategic Management Board (SMB).

The SMB will have a strategic role in engaging and working with partners to quality assure the breadth of provision. As such the SMB would welcome active communication from the OMBs to help to avoid duplication in approaching partners and to ensure there is a Powys-wide offer for learners.

It should be noted that this proposal does not replace or remove any duty from school governing bodies in their safeguarding responsibilities in working with partners.

19. How will the proposal align with the work of the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership (RLSP)?

The Strategic Management Board (SMB) will have a key role in working with the RLSP in achieving its vision “to align the public and private sectors in order to address the supply and demand issues for an effective agile workforce, with the appropriate skill level to attract inward investment to Mid Wales and improve communication networks between sectors to understand and identify learning and career pathways into appropriate long term employment for the citizens of Mid Wales”. The SMB will enable there to be a clear and coordinated link between Powys post-16 centres and the RLSP.

Funding

20. How is funding received for post-16 courses?

The SMB shall have delegated authority to determine how 97% or more (as determined by the council annually) of the post-16 grant funding shall be spent. Under the terms and conditions of the post-16 funding the council has the right to retain 3% of the funding.

Each Powys post-16 centre will receive core funding based on the number of Home Learners in each centre. This is to facilitate a standard set of core entitlement for each learner including the Welsh Baccalaureate, pastoral care and well-being support.

Each SMB-commissioned course provider (Post-16 centre, college or training provider) will receive funding for their course. Operationally this will be managed by the council.

21. What does this proposal mean financially for my post-16 centre?

Powys post-16 centres within the cluster are expected to work within their allocated post-16 funding allocations to provide value for money and to maximise opportunities from the Welsh Government post-16 funding offer.

If a course which has been commissioned ultimately is not delivered the SMB shall have the right to claw back any funding which has already been issued to the provider for the delivery of that course.

Where courses are supported by alternative funding arrangements (e.g. Confucius Classrooms) these courses would need to form part of the cluster offer and must be open to all Powys post-16 learners (subject to the terms of the funding provided).

22. What is the mechanism for clusters to apply for funding to run courses?

On an annual basis each cluster will submit a post-16 provision proposal to the Strategic Management Board (SMB). Funding will be issued to providers who have been commissioned by the SMB and will be on a per-learner basis.

23. How will the Strategic Management Board decide which courses will be available to run in each cluster?

The Strategic Management Board will take a number of elements into account when assessing the proposals. First and foremost will be whether the proposal meets the learner entitlement criteria. In addition, the assessment will include but will not be limited to: evidence of quality; value for money; breadth and balance of the curriculum offer; evidence of need; assessment against national standards; evidence that the proposals meet the learning pathways for all groups of learners (Welsh medium, English medium, ALN).

24. What are the guidelines around subject standards and running courses?

Each year both the Strategic Management Board and each course provider will review standards and outcomes for each commissioned course and will evaluate the progress made by the learners. Their conclusions will inform decisions as to whether each course may continue to be delivered by the current provider.

Evaluation guidance will be developed by the SMB both for its own use and for the use of the OMB and course providers.

25. What is the average class size you are considering for sustainability purposes?

The average class size across the total number of courses being offered should be no less than 12. This is to ensure that overall post-16 provision is affordable and can be successfully delivered and sustained from the post-16 funding.

The SMB will take into account the prospect of annual growth for new courses such as Welsh Medium and ALN provision and may approve an average class size of fewer than 12 in these special circumstances.

26. Who will monitor the quality of teaching at Post-16 in order to maintain standards?

The Governing Body for each Post-16 centre (Secondary and Special Schools supporting learner aged 16+) will be responsible for maintaining standards for each of the courses the post-16 centre has been commissioned to deliver.

On an annual basis the Strategic Management Board will evaluate the quality of courses delivered by each provider and using a range of evidence, including trend analysis, the provider's own self-evaluation and Value added data (ALPS), will determine whether a course should continue to be delivered by the current provider. If the SMB determines that standards in a particular course do not meet expectations then that provider will be served a 'notice to improve' letter in relation to that particular course. The provider will then have one year to address the quality concerns stipulated in the letter.

Applying for a course

27. How do learners apply for courses at the different clusters?

A menu of courses will be available on the Powys Learning Pathways website. This menu will be designed to maximise the number of courses and opportunities for all learners. All applications will be centralised and individual learners from across Powys will be able to apply for a course at the centre (or centres) of their choice. Applications will be through the Powys Learning Pathways website.

Arrangements for placements in Special Schools will remain unchanged.

28. What are the entry requirements?

Course-specific entry requirements are detailed on the Powys Learning Pathways website.

The entry requirements for each course will be determined by the provider commissioned to deliver the course. The entry requirements for each course will be reviewed by the Strategic Management Board as part of the cluster submission.

Appropriate entry requirements and support for ALN learners will be required. The entry requirements will form part of the OMB proposals.

29. Do learners have to be interviewed?

The decision about what to do following completion of secondary education should not be made on the basis of a single interview or discussion alone. Additionally, it is recognised that continuing onto Powys post-16 is not always the right option for everyone. The SMB will work with all Powys Secondary and Special schools to ensure that learners receive objective and impartial advice and guidance regarding their post-16 options throughout their secondary school journey.

This will mean that when the learners approach the end of their secondary education they should be in a position to know what pathway they would like to follow next. There is a broad range of options available at post-16 including but not limited to post-16 education with Powys or another further education provider, starting your own business, entering into employment, taking up an apprenticeship and taking up a volunteer placement in the UK or abroad. The SMB will work to support all Powys secondary and special schools in ensuring that this broad range of options and how to pursue the options is known to, and understood by, Powys learners so that they can make informed decisions about their futures.

Where continuation onto Powys post-16 education is identified as the right pathway for a learner, the learner will be provided with the opportunity to discuss their educational and career aspirations, to ensure they understand the breadth of the offer available to them from Powys post-16 provision and to ensure they are supported in making their Powys post-16 application. #

30. How do learners apply for e-sgol courses?

Learners will apply for e-sgol courses in the same way as any other course; through the Powys Learning Pathways website.

Tutorial support

31. Who will provide the Learning Coach/Tutorial support for learners?

Learning coach and tutorial support will be provided by a learner's tutor at their home base. Additional subject-specific support will be available from the teaching staff delivering the learner's course subjects.

If geographically possible, collaborative learners would travel at least once per week to the centre that is providing their lessons. This will help ensure that learners meet regularly with their subject teachers particularly for subject-specific tutorial support. If this is not possible it would be expected that the learners would travel at least once per half term to meet with their teachers.

To supplement the distance / blended learning approach the proposals must also include opportunities for subject cohorts from across the county to be brought together for enrichment days at least once per term. These days may be run in partnership with further education providers, businesses and other partners.

32. How will extra-curricular and enrichment activities be coordinated?

The SMB will coordinate the provision of post-16 enrichment seminars. Each post-16 provider shall host a seminar on one enrichment topic per academic year. This proposal does not look to prescribe what the enrichment topics would cover however examples might include topics such as: personal finances; cultural awareness; further education, training and employment opportunities; volunteering and adventuring opportunities; talks from businesses or previous learners etc.

The proposals from the Operational Management Boards for post-16 provision must include how cluster-level enrichment activities will be organised.

Regular extra-curricular activities such as the opportunity to be part of a sports team, a choir, orchestra, theatre production, chess club, debating team etc. should be coordinated at the cluster level and form part of the proposals to the SMB. Learners have noted a desire to take part in extra-curricular activities such as these however with some Powys Post-16 centres currently hosting only small numbers of learners the opportunities to establish these activities are rare. The new proposal will mean that the cohort for activities is bigger and therefore that the opportunities to run the activities will be greater.

It is also expected that frequent enrichment activities such as sporting events, field trips and visits, careers events, and university taster sessions will be delivered on a cluster basis.

It is also expected that some activities and events will also be organised and delivered by the home base as part of its localised provision; this may include participation in local community events, school Eisteddfodau as well as opportunities to support and mentor younger learners.

33. Who will monitor the progress a learner is making and report to parents?

The course provider is responsible for monitoring learner progress and providing regular reports to parents via the home base in accordance with an agreed timetable across the cluster.

34. How will these changes impact on the social experience for the learners in each school? E.g. a place for coffee, a quiet place for study, a lanyard etc.

Every Powys learner will be provided with an identification badge that enables them to access any Powys post-16 centre site in order to study or work. In practice most learners will probably only access two or three centres within their cluster. Each post-16 centre will have a designated post-16 common room and study spaces that any post-16 Powys learner may utilise. This will include access to libraries and places to meet informally with other learners.

35. Where can a learner undertake research and private study?

Every Powys post-16 learner will be able to study and undertake research in any Powys post-16 centre. Powys libraries will also be promoted as places for research and private study.

36. Will there be central support for e-sgol (IT issues, correct set up, ongoing support, CPD for teachers etc)?

Post-16 learners and teachers will receive support from the IT technician in their home base who will endeavour to resolve any technical problems with e-sgol equipment. The IT technician in any post-16 centre will be able to call on central support from the e-sgol team based in Ceredigion.

37. What will happen if a teacher has a concern about a learner from another post-16 centre?

Individual teachers will be responsible for all the progress and welfare of all learners in their classes as they are now. Any concerns will be communicated with the home base which will support the class teacher in resolving any and all concerns.

38. How does learner support operate if a learner is being taught across different centres?

Learner-specific support will be provided by each home base. This will include but not be limited to: support with UCAS, job and other further education / training applications; welfare and wellbeing support; coaching and mentoring; careers advice and guidance; and where necessary financial support.

Examinations

39. Who enters the learners for examinations?

The home learner must be entered by their home base for their examinations. The home base will be issued the examination fee amount from the post-16 funding.

40. Who does the examination results analysis?

Individual post-16 centres and other providers will continue to analyse their own results. Both the Cluster Operational Boards and Strategic Management Board will also evaluate examination results on behalf of the council as part of their quality assurance role.

41. Who will own the result and who owns the grades?

Every post-16 learner will own their examination results. The home base will 'own' the results of its home learners. Under the proposal each home learner remains on roll at their home base but may undertake one or more courses in other Powys post-16 or SMB-commissioned centres, either face-to-face or via e-sgol.

Miscellaneous

42. Will learners be required to wear a particular uniform?

Post-16 learners in Powys will not be required to wear a uniform. Learners will be required to follow a common dress code and will be required to wear their identification badges at all times.

43. Who is responsible for organising transport between centres?

The Operational Management Boards will work in conjunction with the council's transport team to ensure that learners are able to move between centres. Each OMB will aim to minimise learner movement across Powys. The intention would be to promote a "travel once – travel smart" approach.

44. How will you ensure all Post-16 learners have access to IT equipment?

The SMB will work with the council to ensure every post-16 learner is provided with a suitable device in order to undertake their studies. The SMB will also ensure that each Powys post-16 centre has appropriate study spaces where learners can access IT facilities. A device will be loaned to every new Year 12 learner at the start of the academic year. This provision will not be means tested but will be subject to a loan agreement. All devices must be returned when a learner finishes or stops their Powys post-16 studies.

45. How will the new proposal enable / support / ensure that learner entitlement is delivered via excellent, state of the art, outstanding and modern facilities?

Included within this proposal is the acknowledgement that facilities at all Powys post-16 centres will be required to be brought up to a minimum level for a "home base" as well as for learning provision. It will be for the SMB to identify the minimum standards expected and to bring forward proposals for future investment.

The SMB will also work with partners (colleges, further education, higher education, Powys Teaching Health Board, the council etc.) to identify opportunities both for joint sharing of existing facilities and for joint development of new facilities as the need is identified.

Capital spending will remain within control of the council as it does currently.

46. Will learners be expected to access learning from home or Powys post-16 centres for courses that are being delivered by other Powys post-16 centres or other SMB-commissioned providers?

Learners who are being taught remotely will be expected to access their lessons from one of the designated Powys post-16 centres. This may be their home base but could also any one of the post-16 centres across Powys. Each learner will discuss the options with staff from their home base to find a solution which best suits their needs. Learner wellbeing is central to the post-16 offer and as

such it is important that learners attend a Powys post-16 centre wherever possible and to avoid studying at home. This will help learners to become part of the post-16 community and will provide the opportunity to socialise with their peers and to meet with supporting staff and teachers. If geographically possible, learners would travel at least once per week to the centre that is providing their lessons. If this is not possible it would be expected that the learners would travel at least once per half term to meet with their teachers.

47. Will parents be able to contact teachers from other centres who are teaching their child – how will this happen?

Parents will be able to contact the member of staff who teaches their child regardless of the centre that member of staff works in. Any concerns a parent may have should initially be raised with the relevant staff in the learner's home base who will liaise with teaching staff and if necessary senior leaders from other centres.

48. Who is responsible for promoting this model to learners etc - will there be a prospectus?

The SMB will have overall responsibility for promoting the new provision and for communicating information on courses through the management of the Powys Pathways site. Individual centres will also be required to provide information, advice and guidance to parents and learners.

49. Will there be a common approach to behaviour and expectations across schools?

There will be a common set of expectations demanded of learners across all centres including expectations with regard to conduct, behaviour, commitment and work ethic. Should the conduct or commitment of a learner fall short of these expectations this will be communicated to the home base which will work with the learner in question to resolve any issues.

50. How does the proposal cater for apprenticeship opportunities?

The Regional Learning and Skills Partnership (RLSP) has a core objective to "Establish a regional apprenticeship scheme (including shared apprenticeships) that bridges and aligns public and private sectors and which recognizes the transferability of skills". The Strategic Management Board (SMB) will provide a single point of contact for collaborative working between the RLSP and Powys post-16 centres to promote and provide appropriate advice and guidance to learners regarding apprenticeship opportunities.