

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD AT BY TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 18 MAY 2021

PRESENT

County Councillor M R Harris (Chair)

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

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from the Chief Executive and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

2. MINUTES

The Leader was authorised to sign the minutes of the last meeting held on 4th May 2021 as a correct record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported. It was noted that Members who are Governors have a general exemption to speak on Education Transformation matters.

4. STRATEGY FOR TRANSFORMING EDUCATION IN POWYS - STRATEGIC AIM 2 'TO IMPROVE LEARNER ENTITLEMENT AND EXPERIENCE FOR POST-16 LEARNERS'

Cabinet considered proposals to establish a new structure for the strategic management of the Powys Post-16 provision. This would comprise a high-level Strategic Management Board (SMB) and two "Powys Post-16 Centre" cluster groups (north and south) with Operational Management Boards (OMBs). All secondary head teachers (including special school headteachers) would be represented on the OMBs. The SMB would have delegated authority for determining how the Powys post-16 grant funding was spent. No provider would be able to obtain post-16 funding to run a course without the approval of the SMB

Strategic management of provision would enable the council to meet its aim of ensuring post-16 provision had a broad and balanced curriculum offered through the mediums of Welsh and English and that Additional Learning Needs (ALN) support was properly catered for. This model built upon the growing collaborative environment fostered between schools during the Covid-19 outbreak and deliver the necessary improvements whilst retaining local ownership of provision, ensuring there was coordination of delivery across the county and ensuring that headteachers and staff play a crucial role in leading the change. The model

would also enable the council to build stronger and better co-ordinated strategic partnerships with providers.

Under the proposal learners would have a “home base” (most likely at their local Post-16 centre) but would also be able to access all Powys Post-16 centres for their studies. The provision on offer would also be county-wide and where learners were geographically unable to travel to attend a course they would be “distance learners” taking the course via e-sgol from their home base.

County Councillor Pete Roberts, the Chair of the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee presented the Committee’s recommendations. It was confirmed that the Portfolio Holder for Education and Property would be a member of the SMB. Officers also confirmed that there would be a role for scrutiny in the final proposal and that a review of facilities and an improvement programme for home based facilities would be undertaken at the earliest opportunity.

County Councillors James Gibson-Watt and Roger Williams also spoke on the paper. They felt that the proposals did not go far enough and stressed the need for a single body to oversee academic and vocational training across all sectors. The Leader and Strategic Lead for Education noted that the establishment of the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership jointly with Ceredigion County Council would bring together work based learning providers, schools, HE and FE sectors.

It was confirmed that a Member Development session would be arranged for all Members on Education including Post 16 arrangements.

It was recognised that there was more work to do, but the establishment of this new structure represented a vital first step making collaboration with providers easier by having a single point of contact.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approves the establishment of a new structure for the strategic management of Powys post-16 provision, from the end of May 2021, in accordance with the proposal document at appendix 1 of the report.

5.	YSGOL BRO HYDDGEN LANGUAGE CATEGORY
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Cabinet considered the results of the consultation undertaken on proposal to alter the medium of instruction at Ysgol Bro Hyddgen to Welsh-medium, introduced on a phased basis, year-by-year, starting with Reception in September 2022.

The consultation form had been completed by 440 respondents with 61.1% supporting the proposal and 37.5% opposing. In addition to the responses to the consultation, the Cabinet had received a large amount of correspondence. The Portfolio Holder thanked everyone who had taken the time to get in touch and confirmed that the Cabinet had read everything sent to them.

County Councillor Michael Williams speaking as a local member outlined the main areas of concern conveyed to him by people who opposed the proposal.

Responding to concerns over the timing of the consultation during lockdown, officers noted that the high number of responses received showed that the consultation had been successful. Councillor Williams also asked about Machynlleth Community Children's Project and was advised that this was linked to the Bro Hyddgen campus build with rooms being provided for the Cylch and MCCP and that all early years provision was subject to tendering once the current contract finished.

County Councillor Elwyn Vaughan spoke as a local member and as the Chair of Governors at Bro Hyddgen and he urged the Cabinet to support the recommendation to ensure parity of provision between English and Welsh speaking pupils. He stressed the importance of immersion provision for any pupils requiring support and the need to support pupils with Additional Learning Needs.

County Councillor Pete Roberts speaking as the Chair of the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee explained that the Committee was broadly supportive of the proposal and had been assured by the phased approach being recommended and by responses given by officers that concerns raised about ALN and the need for immersion provision would be addressed. The Strategic Lead for Education confirmed that the Council would work with the school to ensure that appropriate support was provided to any pupils with ALN and said he was confident that children would not be disadvantaged by the proposal. The Scrutiny Committee had asked about the number of pupils moving between Welsh medium and English medium streams, and the school had advised that the numbers were low.

RESOLVED

- 1. To receive the Consultation Report in respect of changing the language category of Ysgol Bro Hyddgen.**
- 2. To approve the publication of a statutory notice to make a regulated alteration to alter the medium of instruction at Ysgol Bro Hyddgen to Welsh-medium, on a phased basis, year-by-year, starting with Reception in September 2022.**

6.	LLANFAIR CAEREINION C.P. SCHOOL AND CAEREINION HIGH SCHOOL - ALL-AGE SCHOOL PROPOSAL
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Cabinet considered the responses received during the statutory objection period to the proposal to close Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School from the 31st August 2022, and to establish a new dual stream all-age school in Llanfair Caereinion from the 1st September 2022. The report set out the objections received and the council's responses to them. In addition to the 31 objections received, Cabinet members had received correspondence directly and the Portfolio Holder and Leader confirmed that all the correspondence had been read by the Cabinet. Having considered the objections, it was recommended to proceed with the implementation of the proposal for the following reasons:

- To improve educational outcomes

- To improve educational provision
- To improve leadership and management
- To improve efficiency in the delivery of education
- To provide more seamless transition between key stages.

Cabinet was advised that should it approve the recommendation, dialogue to explore ways to develop and enhance the Welsh-medium provision in Llanfair Caereinion would continue at pace with the temporary governing body and leadership of the new school. A further statutory process would be required to implement this. This would be reviewed following the establishment of the all-age school in September 2022.

If it became apparent that developing designated Welsh-medium provision in Llanfair Caereinion was not desirable or possible, the Council would reconsider its previous plans to develop Welsh-medium provision within the Severn Valley, to ensure that designated Welsh-medium provision could be offered to pupils in the area. If this were to go ahead, there could potentially be an impact on the all-age school in Llanfair Caereinion.

The local member County Councillor Gareth Jones confirmed that the community remained committed to an all through school in Llanfair Caereinion.

RESOLVED

- 1. To receive the Objection Report in respect of establishing an all-age school in Llanfair Caereinion**
- 2. To approve the proposal to amalgamate Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School in order to establish a new all-age school on the current sites of the two schools, by:**
 - **Closing Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School from the 31st August 2022.**
 - **Establishing a new dual stream all-age school on the current sites of Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School on the 1st September 2022.**

7.	TRANSFORMING EDUCATION STRATEGY - CAPITAL VIREMENTS
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Cabinet's approval was sought for four virements from the 'Other 21st C Schools Schemes' in the Council's Capital Programme to fund works up to RIBA 2 completion stage for the following new projects: Llandrindod Wells Community Campus, Sennybridge CP School, Brecon Campus Development and Gwernyfed High School.

Cabinet noted the comments of the Section 151 Officer and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services on the risk of costs incurred falling to the Council's revenue budget should these schemes not proceed and that these risks needed

to be balanced against the risk of delayed access to future capital funding from Welsh Government.

RESOLVED to approve the following four virements from the 'Other 21st C Schools Schemes' in the Capital Programme to fund works up to RIBA 2 completion stage for the following new projects:

Scheme	Funding amount required
Llandrindod Wells Community Campus	£500,000
Sennybridge CP School	£100,000
Brecon Campus Development (school, PRU, leisure)	£350,000
Gwernyfed High School	£200,000

County Councillor M R Harris (Chair)