

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD AT A ZOOM MEETING AND IN COUNTY HALL ON TUESDAY, 23 MAY 2023

PRESENT

County Councillor J Gibson-Watt (Chair)

County Councillors J Berriman, J Charlton, R Church, S Davies, M J Dorrance, P Roberts, D Selby and D A Thomas

In attendance: County Councillors G Breeze and J Brignell-Thorp

1.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor S Cox.

2.	MINUTES
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The Leader was authorised to sign the minutes of the last meeting held on 9th May 2023 as a correct record.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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There were no declarations of interest reported.

4.	WELSHPOOL C.IN.W PRIMARY SCHOOL PROJECT VIREMENT
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Cabinet considered a request for additional funding of £150,000 for the Welshpool Church in Wales Primary School Project. The funding would be taken from the unallocated amount currently held within the school's capital budget.

The report set out in detail the reasons why the project had gone over budget. It was proposed that a full review be undertaken and the results shared with the Cabinet, the Transforming Education Programme Board and the Capital Working Group of the Governance and Audit Committee.

Local Member County Councillor Graham Breeze welcomed the proposal to review the reasons why the project had gone over budget. He said that an apology was owed by those who had delayed the scheme to those children who had missed the opportunity to be taught in the new schools but noted that Welshpool now boasted two of the best schools in Wales which served as an example of what schools transformation could achieve.

County Councillor Richard Church, who was another Welshpool Councillor, noted that there were positive lessons to learn as well, and he hoped that other parts of the county would benefit from having high quality schools through the continuation of the schools transformation programme.

RESOLVED

1. that £150,000 is allocated to the Welshpool C.in.W Primary School project to cover the outstanding costs. This funding will be taken from the unallocated amount currently held within the school's capital budget.
2. that a full review of lessons learnt is undertaken, to include both the Welshpool school projects, and that this is shared the Governance and Audit Committee's Capital Working Group.

5.	BIODIVERSITY AND RESILIENCE OF ECOSYSTEMS DUTY, SECTION 6 OF THE ENVIRONMENT (WALES) ACT 2016 - 2022 REPORT
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Cabinet considered a report setting out the ways in which the Council was meeting its legal duties to maintain and enhance biodiversity under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, known as a Section 6 report, in the period between December 2019 and December 2022. This aligned with the Council's Corporate Improvement plan aims of 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener.'

The knowledge of specialist officers was key to underpinning ongoing delivery against the duties under section 6 of the Act and the Council had been able to fund a Biodiversity officer and a Nature Recovery Officer post through grants.

The Cabinet Member for a Greener Powys noted that in addition to the activities outlined in the report, a conference was taking place on 14th June for Town and Community Councils to help them understand and meet their Section 6 responsibilities and that a workshop had been held on 22nd May for County Councillors.

RESOLVED that the contents of the December 2022 revision of the Section 6 report be accepted as reflecting the actions taken to maintain or enhance biodiversity between 2019 and 2022.

6.	CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING BOARD ACTIVITY REPORT
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Cabinet received an update from the Interim Director of Social Services and Housing who chaired the Corporate Safeguarding Board. She reported that good progress was being made against the action plan developed from the recommendations in the Wales Audit Office Safeguarding Audit Report, published in December 2022. The action plan would now be built into the regulatory tracker and reported on during quarterly performance meetings and by the Governance and Audit Committee.

7.	DELEGATED DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST MEETING
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Cabinet noted the delegated decisions taken by Cabinet members since the last meeting.

8.	FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
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Cabinet noted the forward work programme.

County Councillor J Gibson-Watt (Chair)