

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

**CABINET EXECUTIVE
7th November 2017**

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Myfanwy Alexander
Portfolio Holder for Education and Welsh Language

SUBJECT: Plans for Powys Schools Policy (draft) – Vision 2025

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to undertake consultation on a new policy for the development and organisation of schools in Powys. The new policy, if approved, will replace the current Schools Organisation Policy 2015, and will become effective from 1st April 2018.

The following appendices are attached:

- Appendix 1: Plans for Powys Schools Policy (draft) – Vision 2025
- Appendix 2: Integrated Impact Assessment

2. Proposal

2.1 The main aims of the Learning Service are to ensure that children and young people of Powys are supported to be:

- safe, healthy, confident and resilient;
- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives;
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work;
- ethical and informed citizens ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

2.2 It is within this context that the new 'Plans for Powys Schools Policy (draft) – Vision 2025' sets out the authority's policy for the future development and organisation of schools. It will apply to all schools within the authority. If approved, it will be subject to a twelve week consultation period, with the intention that it will become effective from 1st April 2018.

2.3 The new policy will replace the current Schools Organisation Policy 2015.

3. Options Considered / Available

n/a

4. Preferred Choice and Reasons

4.1 It is necessary to introduce a new policy in order that the authority reflects the proposed changes to the Welsh Government's Schools Organisation Code 2013. The Welsh Government recently consulted upon revisions to the Code which includes proposals to strengthen the presumption against closure of rural schools. It includes a more rigorous consultation process and a requirement that all alternative options must be considered in detail prior to any school closure proposals being put forward. It is expected that a revised Code will be introduced over the next few months.

4.2 The new 'Plans for Powys Schools Policy – Vision 2025' is aligned with the revised Code and includes a framework which enables schools to strengthen school-to-school collaboration and to establish new models of governance, in order to achieve improved outcomes and opportunities for pupils, families whilst also generating potential efficiencies.

4.3 A consultation period of twelve weeks will start in late November 2017. A report will then be brought back to Cabinet in the spring of 2018, with an implementation date for the new policy of 1st April 2018.

5. Impact Assessment

5.1 Is an impact assessment required? Yes

5.2 If yes is it attached? Yes

6. Corporate Improvement Plan

6.1 Every local authority has a statutory obligation to manage and plan school places. The Policy relates to the Vision 2025 Corporate Improvement Plan's priority for Learning and Skills, which states that pupils in Powys should have access to education provision that is equitable and access to high quality teaching and learning environments.

7. Local Member(s)

7.1 All local members are affected.

8. Other Front Line Services

Does the recommendation impact on other services run by the Council or on behalf of the Council? Yes

In order to implement school organisational changes, it is necessary to seek support from a number of services, including schools service, HR, finance, legal, governor support, property, ict and communications. Dependent on the nature of the change proposed, it may be necessary to seek additional support within these service areas from time to time – a resource plan has been developed.

9. Communications

Have Communications seen a copy of this report? Yes

Communications comment: The report is of public interest and requires news release and use of appropriate social media to publicise the decision.

10. Support Services (Legal, Finance, Corporate Property, HR, ICT, Business Services)

10.1 Legal: The recommendations can be supported from a legal point of view

10.2 Finance – The Schools Finance Manager notes the contents of the report. Any proposals generated will have to be considered within the current funding envelope of the Schools Service.

10.3 Corporate Property (if appropriate)

10.4 HR (if appropriate)

10.5 ICT (if appropriate)

11. Scrutiny

Has this report been scrutinised? No

12. Statutory Officers

The Head of Financial Services (Acting Section 151 Officer) notes the comments from Finance.

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: “I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report save to remind Members that they must read the Integrated Impact assessment in Appendix 2”

13. Members’ Interests

The Monitoring Officer is not aware of any specific interests that may arise in relation to this report. If Members have an interest they should declare it at the start of the meeting and complete the relevant notification form.

Recommendation:	Reason for Recommendation:
To approve the Plans for Powys Schools Policy – Vision 2025 for consultation	To receive the views of stakeholders on the proposed policy.

Relevant Policy (ies):	Welsh in Education Strategic Plan & 21 st C Schools Programme Band B		
Within Policy:	Y	Within Budget:	Y

Relevant Local Member(s):	All members
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Person(s) To Implement Decision:	Marianne Evans
Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:	1 April 2014

Contact Officer:	Sarah Astley
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Background Papers used to prepare Report: