

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD AT COUNCIL CHAMBER -
COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON TUESDAY, 26 JANUARY
2016**

PRESENT

County Councillor W B Thomas (Chair)

County Councillors J H Brunt, S M Hayes, E A Jones, W T Jones, D Mayor,
W J T Powell and P C Pritchard

In attendance

County Councillors AW Davies, MJ Dorrance, H Lewis, JG Morris, GD Price and KF
Tampin.

1.	APOLOGIES	C11- 2016
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors RG Brown and DJ Mayor and from County Councillor SC Davies leader of the Labour group and County Councillor DR Jones, Chair of the People Scrutiny Committee.

2.	MINUTES	C12- 2016
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The Leader was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 5th January 2016 as a correct record.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	C13- 2016
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County Councillor WJT Powell declared a personal non prejudicial interest in items C14 – 2016 Llanbister CP School and C15 – 2016 Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School as an LEA appointed governor of the named receiving school. County Councillor JH Brunt declared a personal non prejudicial interest in C14 – 2016 Llanbister CP School as an LEA appointed governor. He advised that he would be acting as a local member in respect of this report.

4.	LLANBISTER CP SCHOOL	C14- 2016
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Cabinet considered the recommendation of the Schools Organisation Review Panel (SORP) that formal consultation begin on the closure of Llanbister CP School. The SORP had found that Llanbister CP School had met several of the criteria under the School Transformation Policy in terms of standards, pupil numbers, capacity, building condition and finance. The SORP's view was that despite a projected increase in pupil numbers at the school, this would not address the authority's concerns in relation to educational standards and quality of provision at Llanbister CP School and therefore it had recommended the closure of the school from 31st December 2016.

County Councillor John Brunt spoke as the local member and he read out a report that had been given to him by members of the community which alleged

environmental and health concerns at Crossgates School due to exposure to benzene because it was sited next to a filling station. Councillor Brunt argued that Llanbister needed to be retained in the short term at least.

The Cabinet was advised that these allegations would be checked. Cabinet members asked about the capacity of Crossgates school and were advised that there were places for 210 pupils in 7 classrooms with a further 28 places in a mobile classroom currently used as used for a nursery class. Cabinet were reminded that there was a consultation underway on proposals to raise the admission age and end nursery provision. There were currently 140 pupils at Crossgates projected to rise to 150 in January 2020, and 33 in Llanbister, projected to rise to 55 in January 2020. Cabinet also noted that Crossgates was the named receiving school if Llanfihangel Rhydithon and Nantmel schools closed.

The Portfolio Holder and officers answered questions from the Cabinet and political group leaders including questions submitted by County Councillor Aled Davies concerning the costs and savings resulting from the closure of Beguildy primary school. The Portfolio Holder agreed to let Councillor Davies have an answer to his question on whether provision had been made for safe parking at the receiving school which was a commitment made at the time of the decision to close Beguildy school.

Cabinet asked for details of the average journey for children and of the furthest journey. The average one way journey for Llanbister pupils attending Crossgates would be 7.7 miles. Officers would let members have details of the longest journey. Officers were also asked to check whether any pupils had moved to Llanbister school as a result of the closure of Beguildy school. The Portfolio Holder for Education confirmed that all of these points would be addressed during the consultation.

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision:
<p>1. To receive the SORP's draft recommendation in respect of Llanbister CP School.</p> <p>2. To approve the commencement of formal consultation with stakeholders in accordance with the School Organisation Code on the closure of Llanbister CP School, with Crossgates CP School to be named as the receiving school.</p>	<p>To ensure future sustainability of primary education.</p>

5.	LLANFIHANGEL RHYDITHON CP SCHOOL	C15- 2016
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Cabinet considered the recommendation of the Schools Organisation Review Panel (SORP) that formal consultation begin on the closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School. SORP had carried out a detailed review and had found that Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School had met the several of the criteria under the School Transformation Policy in terms of pupil numbers, capacity and building condition. The school’s governing body preferred option was retention of primary provision in Dolau, either through federation with another school or through merging with another school to form one school with a new name. However, the SORP’s view was that these options would not address the issues listed above, particularly in relation to pupil numbers and, therefore, it had recommended the closure of the school from 31st December 2016.

County Councillor Hywel Lewis spoke as the local Member and he referred to the support the school had from the community and noted that no parents had moved their children out of the school. He queried the capacity of Crossgates School to accommodate additional pupils and he referred to documentation that said the capacity of Crossgates was 185. Councillor Lewis said that there was a danger the Council was cutting too many school places. He argued for amalgamation with Llanelwedd Church in Wales School as the school was currently successfully co-operating with Llanelwedd.

Cabinet noted that there was a consultation underway on proposals to raise the age of admissions which would affect the capacity at Crossgates if the mobile classroom was no longer used for the nursery class. Cabinet asked for the issue of capacity to be clarified in the consultation. The Portfolio Holder also noted some disparity in the projected pupil numbers that needed to be clarified during the consultation. He confirmed that educational standards was not an issue at the school.

County Councillor Aled Davies speaking as leader of the Conservative group argued that a change in admissions policy should not be factored into the calculations on capacity until a decision had been taken.

County Councillor John Morris speaking as leader of the Liberal Democrats group noted that the Council had received the worst settlement in Wales. He felt that the Welsh Government were taking an anti-rural approach which in turn was affecting the funding of rural schools.

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision:
<p>1. To receive the SORP’s draft recommendation in respect of Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School.</p> <p>2. To approve the commencement of formal consultation with stakeholders in accordance with the School Organisation Code on the closure of Llanfihangel</p>	<p>To ensure future sustainability of primary education.</p>

Rhydithon CP School, with Crossgates CP School to be named as the receiving school.	
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County Councillor Brunt abstained.

6.	FORMAL CONSULTATION TO CLOSE TALGARTH AND BRONLLYS COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOLS	C16- 2016
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Cabinet considered proposals to begin formal consultation to close Talgarth and Bronllys Community Primary Schools and to approve an option agreement to acquire the freehold of land to construct a new school at a site in Talgarth. Members welcomed the progress towards the establishment of a new school.

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To commence formal consultation with stakeholders, in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, to close Talgarth CP School and Bronllys CP School, and to open a new 120 pupil School in Talgarth. That Cabinet formally approves an Option Agreement to acquire the freehold of the land which is in private ownership to construct the new school at a site in Talgarth. 	<p>To provide a sustainable model of education within the Gwernyfed Primaries Catchment Area</p>

7.	WELSHPOOL PRIMARY SCHOOLS TRANSFORMATION PROJECT	C17- 2016
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Cabinet considered the recommendations of the SORP on the configuration of primary education in Welshpool proposing the creation of a new 420 place English-medium Church in Wales Primary School and a new 120 place Welsh-medium Community Primary School. County Councillor Phil Pritchard speaking as a Welshpool member said that the scheme enjoyed the support of all the local members, school governing bodies, Welshpool Town Council and residents of the town and he paid tribute to officers in the Schools Service. The Portfolio Holder for Education noted receipt of a letter of support from the Chair of Governors of Ardwyn Nursery and Infants School.

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> That Cabinet receives the SORP's draft recommendation in respect of Ardwyn Infant and Nursery School; Gungrog CiW Infant 	<p>To provide a sustainable model of</p>

<p>School; Oldford Infant and Nursery School and Ysgol Maesydre;</p> <p>2. That Cabinet approves the commencement of formal consultation in accordance with the School Organisation Code;</p> <p>3. That Cabinet approves the submission to Welsh Government of the Strategic Outline Case for funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a new 420 place English-medium Church in Wales Primary School; and - a new 120 place Welsh-medium Community Primary School. 	<p>both English Medium and Welsh Medium primary education on Welshpool town.</p>
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8.	FINANCIAL OVERVIEW AND FORECAST AS AT 30 NOVEMBER 2015	C18- 2016
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Cabinet considered the budget monitoring report for the period up to 30th November 2015. The Portfolio Holder for Finance advised that there had been little change since the last report as few savings had been profiled for the third quarter, but that there had been a very useful meeting of Cabinet and Management Team when Portfolio Holders had been challenged on the savings still to be achieved. He reported that it was likely that the budget for 2015/16 would fall just short of being balanced. He also advised that £265,000 of savings left over from the previous financial year should be delivered by the time of the next report. In response to a question about the use of reserves the Portfolio Holder advised that the draw on reserves would not be as great as reported as services met their savings targets.

<p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the contents of this report are noted by Cabinet; and b. Cabinet supports appropriate action by services to curtail or reduce the reported forecasted service deficits. c. It to be noted that there are Capital virements as set out in paragraph 5.3. 	<p>Reason for Decision:</p> <p>To monitor the Council's financial performance and ensure that spending remains within approved limits and that the 3% minimum general fund reserve is maintained.</p>
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9.	HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT RENT AND RELATED CHARGES INCREASE FOR 2016/17	C19- 2016
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Cabinet considered the level of rents for 2016/17 for Council houses and garages. Powys rents were within the target rent band set by Welsh Government and supported the investment in the Council's housing stock under the Welsh Housing Quality Standard. Cabinet also noted the proposed introduction of service charges which tenants had been consulted on.

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision:
<p>1. The rent increase for HRA accommodation is agreed at 1.4% for 2016/17.</p> <p>2. The new Service Charge regime is agreed for 2016/17</p> <p>3. The HRA garage rent is agreed at 1.4% plus £0.50 weekly for 2016/17.</p> <p>4. The lease charge for garage plots is increased to £100 per annum from 2016/17.</p>	<p>To maintain a viable Housing Service and Business Plan and remain compliant with legislation (part 4 Housing Act 2014)</p>

10.	DECC/2015/0012 - GARREG LWYD WIND FARM CONNECTION	C20- 2016
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The Council had been consulted on a S37 application to establish an overhead electricity line connection to Garreg Lwyd Wind Farm. The local member, County Councillor Brunt, and Beguildy Community Council had submitted comments and Cabinet asked that these be taken into account by DECC. Councillor Brunt advised that he intended to ask for community benefits and highway improvements and for the line to be undergrounded.

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision:
<p>That no objections be raised in respect of DECC/2015/0012-Garreg Lwyd overhead electricity connection but that DECC be asked to take into account the views submitted by County Councillor Brunt and Beguildy Community Council.</p>	<p>In order to comply with the Electricity Act 1989 consultation process.</p>

11.	RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY, STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY	C21- 2016
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Cabinet considered a revised Risk Management Policy, Strategy and Methodology. The Leader stressed the importance of this key corporate policy and it was agreed to put an item on the agenda for Cabinet / Management Team for a discussion on the Cabinet's approach to risk.

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision:
To approve the revised Risk Management Policy, Strategy & Methodology set out in Appendix A to the report.	As part of its arrangements for good Corporate Governance it is necessary for the Council to have a clear statement of its overall policy in relation to managing risks in the delivery of services and also to have a formal strategy outlining how it will identify and control those risks.

12.	COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE GREEN GROWTH WALES INVESTMENT SUPPORT CONSULTATION	C22- 2016
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Cabinet considered a response to the Welsh Government consultation on Green Growth Wales.

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision:
That the response in Appendix A to the report be submitted to Welsh Government	To ensure that the council's views are considered.

13.	WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS	C23- 2016
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Cabinet considered a response to a compliance notice issued by the Welsh Language Commissioner which contained a list of 166 standards to be implemented, most from 30 March 2016, with the remainder from 30 September 2016 and 30 September 2018.

Whilst the Council could comply with most of the standards, Cabinet was advised that it needed to challenge 4 standards to request more time for implementation and 3 standards on the grounds that they were not felt to be reasonable and proportionate. It was estimated that they could add an additional £150,000 p.a. to the Council's costs. Cabinet was advised that a number of Welsh authorities had challenged the standards and that the WLGA had arranged a meeting with the Welsh Language Commissioner which the Council would be represented at.

The Leader confirmed his support for the Welsh language.

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision:
To seek to comply with and implement the majority of the Standards, but request more time for the implementation of some standards and to challenge the other Standards that we do not consider to be reasonable and proportionate for us to achieve, as outlined in the report.	To comply with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, and to continue to support the development of the Welsh language within Powys

14.	THE PAVILION, LLANDRINDOD WELLS	C24- 2016
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Cabinet considered a proposal to transfer the Pavilion in Llandrindod Wells to Grand Pavilion Events Ltd under a 30 year lease. It was acknowledged that there was a risk to the Council, but these risks had to be balanced against the benefit to the community and safeguards had been built in including a 6 monthly inspection regime.

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision
<p>1. To transfer the Pavilion, Llandrindod Wells, including the car parking area to the front of the property, to Grand Pavilion Events Ltd under a 30 year lease, with suitable safeguards in place to protect the Council's freehold interest in accordance with paragraph 2.5 of the report.</p>	<p>To enable Grand Pavilion Events Ltd the opportunity to re-establish the Pavilion as a key community venue for Llandrindod Wells and the surrounding district and retain this locally important building for the economic and regeneration benefits it will bring to the area.</p>
<p>2. That the nominal £50 per annum rental proposed by the Applicants be approved, subject to rent reviews at five year intervals throughout the term, in line with the Index of Retail Prices or similar to be agreed.</p>	<p>In order to ensure that the rental received from the Community Organisation maintains the real value of £50 throughout the lease period.</p>

15.	DELEGATED DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST MEETING	C25- 2016
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Cabinet received details of delegated decisions taken by Portfolio Holders since the last meeting.

16.	FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME	C26- 2016
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Cabinet received the forward work programme. The Leader asked Portfolio Holders to keep the programme updated.

17.	CORRESPONDENCE	C27- 2016
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There were no items of correspondence reported.

County Councillor W B Thomas (Chair)